Chapter 23

Postmodern Transformations of Tourism Development

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Postmodern Transformations of Tourism Development

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Abstract

This chapter examines contemporary scientific approaches to the issues of postmodern transformations of rural tourism development. The contradictions between the present postmodern society and the information-technological development of the rural areas in Ukraine are highlighted. Evidently, Ukraine does not fully use the new opportunities that emanate as a result of globalization of an economy. The main indicators of postmodern influences, such as informational and technological, political, social, socio-cultural, and personal (psychological), are earmarked featured. The characteristics of evolving social relations are also determined as pre-modern (archaic), modern and postmodern relations in the societies in particular context of tourism development. The factors influencing the postmodern tourism consumerism include the awareness of the social crisis, escape from reality, **mundane** avoidance, search for the self and self-realization, overcoming psychological trauma, the illusion of involvement in certain processes, positioning oneself with the upper class, new experience, and information society.

Keywords

Postmodern society; Rural tourism; Postmodern tourism; Postmodern transformations

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1. Introduction

The postmodern transformation of tourism development provokes scientific discussions as to whether postmodernism is our future, and, sometimes, it leads to radically opposite conclusions when assessing its impact. This deserves a special meaning in the study of the tourism development in the countries in transition from the standpoint of the global economy. Modern contradictions in postmodern society, economic and information-technological development of rural areas, and personal development of citizens can form the prerequisites for new areas of tourism. Due to the current social demands of reorienting tourism preferences from the mass segment to the individualized one, from the material infrastrcuture to the growth of the intangible components, the rural communities can get certain chance for developing themselves through streamlining the available opportunities. An important aspect can be postmodern personal transformation of consciousness of a tourist, development of his/her knowledge and cognitive intelligence, and exposing his/her to the technological innovations.

The postmodern influence on tourism is considered in the works of many scholars. The research of Zhang and Hui (2016) focuses on the existential problems in tourism. The authors conclude that modern tourism is a way to make up for losses caused by the rhythm of life, a way to escape from reality, by offering individuality and freedom (the spiritual home of utopia). They focus on the evolution of rationality and the links between tourism and reason (neo-rationalism), which includes both scientific and humanistic rationality. Pernecky′s (2006) research focuses on the study of New Age tourists involving travelers in New Zealand, where it is empirically proven that these are individualists engaged in their search for extraordinary and transcendent consciousness, which aims at personal, spiritual, and emotional growth. An important place in the study of postmodern tourism transformations belongs to behavioral approaches, the results of which are described in a paper by Chinese scientists (Ying *et al.*, 2021). The authors determined that virtual reality advertisements with greater telepresence generated stronger intentions to visit the destination, and this effect was mediated by cognition (educational component) and attachment (entertainment and aesthetics). The results of the study by Bogicevic *et al.* (2019) point out that virtual reality significantly excites the imagination of tourists and encourages them to ″dream″ about a tourist offer before they realize them at the hotel in real.

Studies by Marasco *et al.* (2018) determine the impact of virtual reality created with the latest generation devices required to visit places, attractions, or cultural heritage sites. In this context, the authors presented specific theoretical and practical implications. Kang (2020) emphasizes the predominance of the affective nature of desires and decision-making regarding tourism consumption. The scientific findings of Oktadiana and Pearce (2020) are related to the study about user difficulties in the context of tourism technologies. The researchers have identified many annoying and inconvenient aspects of tourism technology interfaces, as well as problems with Internet access, language difficulties, and planning faults. Wei *et al.* (2020) focus their research on the study of cultural worldview and cultural experience in nature-bound tourist attractions. Their conclusions relate to the practical implications embedded in social psychology. Christou *et al.* (2020) highlight narcissism as a modern tourist phenomenon, which is manifested in the self-presentation of the tourist, where he or she is in the foreground, followed by a tourist attraction. This, according to the authors, creates certain obstacles for tourism promotion at certain locations. Paying tribute to the scientific works of the authors, it is believed that the topic of

rural tourism development in postmodern society requires some deeper research taking into account the current magnitude of social knowledge, information technology, and reorientation of consumer demand for tourism products. The purpose of this article is to identify areas of postmodern transformations of rural tourism development and determine its basic principles in the light of modern postmodern consumers.
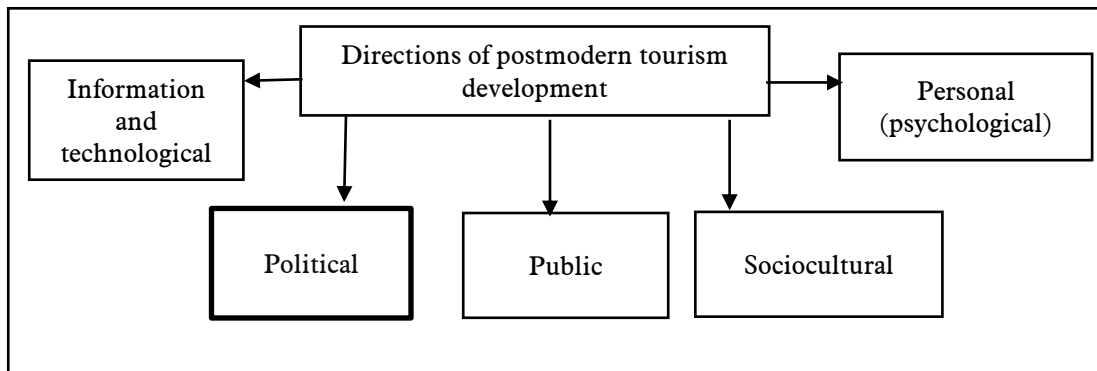

Figure 1: The main aspects of postmodern influence

2. Discussions

The basis of the existing sociological discourse in postmodern tourism is the definition of its two vectors: simulation and search. The first direction is associated with hyperrealistic analysis, imitations, and simulations. The second direction is related to the search for the real, for the deep, for oneself or one's roots. The postmodern tourism defines the attractiveness of natural and rural areas as postmodernist expressions. The first direction is quite successfully implemented in the modern concept of tourism development and has every chance to widely reach a mass consumer. The development of the second direction is determined by the educational-intellectual and spiritual component requiring an appropriate foundation and competencies. The phenomenon of postmodern influences in tourism can be considered from several aspects, as depicted in figure 1. Various aspects are explained as under:

2.1 Information and technological aspect

Rapid technological development and significant social virtualization have led to the emergence of a new type of human consciousness, which is integrated into this process of postmodern tourism. This collective person has the appropriate technological competencies and accompanies his activities by expanding the network of virtual acquaintances, by creating groups for communication, and by carrying a consumer for information. However, modern scientific debates focus on whether such a virtual entity can be considered a personality. Identity issues are increasingly moving into the field of multidisciplinary research, which requires scientists to study themselves thoroughly. Nagy and Koles (2014) identify the virtual personality as a conglomeration of personal, social relations, and material aspects. Soldatova and Pogorelov (2018) in their scientific findings claim the virtual personality not to be unique. It consists of a set of signs, symbols, and virtual material, and is defined as a "repost identity". This identity is not independent in decision-making but has a strong dependence on the signs of support for a virtual dating network determining its status and have nothing to do with reality.

The availability of information technologies at a certain tourist destination is essential for the formation of a virtual personality and virtualization of tourist consumption. World statistics demonstrate that as of early 2021, 96% of the population in Northern Europe has access to the Internet, 93% population in Western Europe. Overall, the global average Internet penetration rate is about 60 percent. The largest number of Internet users in China is more than 854 million and in India about 560 million. However, these countries still have a significant part of the population not having Internet connectivity (Johnson, 2021). The high degree of penetration of Internet technologies contributes to significant virtualization of both the individual and social processes, leading to significant transformational changes in the tourism sector. The household access to the Internet does not reach the world average in rural areas of Ukraine (Table 1), which hinders the development of tourism in the context of attracting mass postmodern tourists. However, this can form the preconditions for those consumers who are in search of a meaning of life, looking for beautiful views, escaping from the urban globalized environment, and wanting a harmony with nature.

Table 1: Access level of Ukrainian households to the Internet, in %

2018	*2019*	*2018*	*2019*
62.6	70.1	47.8	55.9
Urban population		Rural population	

Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine (2020)

2.2 Political aspect

Postmodernism is closely linked to globalization and the emergence of new forms of interaction between political representatives of different countries. In the political context, significantly open borders and existing movement of tourists lead to the nomadism phenomenon. This phenomenon is especially vividly manifested in the case of the migration crisis, which is a consequence of the unequal world development. Undoubtedly, postmodernism erases national borders, strengthens communication processes, and exposes the illusion of understanding between cultures, leading to the development of tourism and intercultural integration. However, the existing unresolved problems of a global scale form the foundation of a civilization crisis with a certain turning point in the modern history of mankind. Considering that world development is characterized by significant polarization between poor and rich countries, between Western and Eastern civilizations, it can be argued that a significant part of the world at this stage is under the influence of a traditional (premodern) society having distinct corresponding characteristics. Postmodernism has developed mainly in Europe, but Western traditions significantly influence the culture of the East. The significant interest of tourists from the West in the culture and touristic heritage of the Eastern countries, the growing magnitude of tourist travel to poor countries are significant examples. A wealthy tourist enjoys the contemplation of a different life, a different culture and customs, causing negative emotions in the local population, realizing their hopelessness and despair. Many of these countries in modern conditions demonstrate high rates of economic and demographic growth and differ from the Western vision of the world, which contradicts postmodern liberal ideals. In this case, society may come to a fierce confrontation, and possibly change the vectors of development discourse.

Peters *et al.* (2019) define postmodernism as a form of anti-fundamental thinking and as anti-philosophy. It is argued that today postmodernism does not provide security, forcing the society to think and live outside the paradigm of fundamentals. In this context, the postmodern paradigm is seen as a prospective intercultural global philosophy, although quite distant. For example, Yin (2018) criticizes the Eurocentric nature of postmodernism and argues that, to preserve their identity in the age of globalization, non-Western nations should go beyond postmodernism. Postmodernism is characterized by the emergence of new social movements: pacifist, feminist, environmental, and social. They have become possible through the spread of the knowledge industry, which the new information age defines as the most significant value. A special place is occupied by ecological movements and the formation of ecological consciousness of citizens, which causes a significant need for the development of ecological tourism in postmodern society, as well as the formation of a special system of ecological values directly related to rural development.

2.3 Public aspect

Postmodern philosophy determines the prospects for the development of society not only from the standpoint of consumption of symbols and images but also from the standpoint of imitation and simulation of cultural goods, which are defined as hyperreality. This is due to the formation of a society of spectacles, the end product of which is the image. The significant mobility of citizens is a specific feature of the postmodern organization of public relations. Conceptually, postmodernism is closely linked to the new economy, which is characterized by the use of high technology and information coupled with a global integration. Some research (Pecheniuk, 2020) defines the basis of the new economy in knowledge and intelligence under the influence of economic growth, priorities of creativity and art, increasing competition among global communication networks, and the dominance of service industry. For the completeness of the study of postmodern society, it is important to consider the characteristics of the evolution of social relations in the context of tourism development, which are illustrated in table 2.

The characteristics illustrated in table 2 are not final and non-arbitrary, because, at different historical stages of social development, there is an overlap of events, repetition at certain intervals, and a shift in the centre of attention, etc. However, the above information indicates the presence of similar features between archaic society (pre-modern) and postmodern society. Common features include the focus on the individual consumer's liberalization and the absence of strict guidelines (while subordinating to global mechanisms in postmodernism). The person's preferences and the choices of his place in tourist consumption have a relevance. Poverty is coupled with challenges of maintaining human integrity in the first place, and a decrease in social contacts and an increase in the fragmentation of life in the second place. The growing marginalization of the population also affects the tourism requiring not only a material component but is also determined by various factors such as quality of education.

In this context, applying neoliberal approaches in the educational environment, which is the basis for further social development, is of considerable concern. The world community is also anxious about the low educational status. Arran (2021) sharply criticizes the modern educational and scientific environment. He argues that the corporatization of universities and the work of scholars on specific research for which funding is allocated, undermines the intellectual movement, fragmentation of research, and, in fact, the refusal to find optimal ways to develop social relations based on philosophical and moral principles of

world development. According to the author, this has led to a significant vulnerability of scientists and marginalization of the university environment, which, along with reducing the overall education of citizens, poses a significant threat to the development of intellectual tourism. However, this is a global trend, not particular to a country.

Table 2: Types of social relations and their features in the context of tourism

Archaic society (pre-modern)	*Modernism*	*Postmodernism*
Individual tourist consumption (pilgrimage, summer accommodation in estates)	Transition to mass consumption of a tourist product	Transition to individual tours based on modern information technologies
The liberalism of tourist travel	Strengthening of state control over the subjects of tourist activity, manufacturability, and predictability of the tourist product	Freedom and mobility of tourist consumption, subordination to global mechanisms
Decentralization, lack of standards of tourist consumption	Standardization and concentration of tourist activity	Decentralization and individualization, but with pronounced global standardization
The integrity of human existence in society, but its miserable existence	Forming a society of consumption, imposing needs that make people their slaves, increasing alienation	Total alienation, reduction of social contacts, fragmentation of human existence, transition of tourist consumption to non-material, emotional level
The majority of the population is marginalized in tourism, they form a low social stratum, the "bottom" has no chance to escape from it.	Formation of a welfare society, the opportunity to take advantage of tourist offers to the lower classes due to the relatively cheap supply and mass tourist consumption	Significant socioeconomic polarization of members of society, democratization, the emergence of a mass marginal layer, precarization, total dependence on external living conditions

It is believed that the poorest countries in the Global South are least affected by neoliberal postmodernist trends, and are least affected by "collapse" too because they are close to nature (Daniel, 2021). The works of Desmond (2017), Ngonghala *et al.* (2017), Fisher *et al.* (2013), Broad and Cavanagh (2015), Alix-Garcia *et al.* (2013), and Cobbinah *et al.* (2015) lead to the assumption that the way out for the current situation in the context of balancing postmodernism influences the tourism activities and recommend the application of the concept of the ecology. According to them, a potentially exploited society has its own ecology, and it presupposes the ecologization of the worldview. The above conclusion is confirmed by the studies of Zhang and Hui (2016), which analyze the integral relationship between mind, modernity, and tourism, with the possibility of eliminating negative aspects of postmodernism by promoting neo-rationalism. According to them, this will lead to the

healthy development of society as a whole. In addition, the authors expect the academic environment to exacerbate the studies on neo-rationalism in the context of tourism theory and philosophy. This will contribute to the formation of a new tourist behavior meeting the unitarity of society, nature, and man, and the improvement of the tourism industry and public life. The concept of neo-rationalism combines Western traditional rationalism with traditional Chinese culture. It is based on the critique of the unlimited influx of pleasure and satisfaction of human physiological instincts. A new humanistic spirit is proposed, which includes the mutual relations between human society, technology, and nature, care for the existence and fate of man forming the desire for the spiritual value of the nation and human existence.

2.4 Sociocultural aspect

Current trends in the creation and consumption of tourism products are characterized by a complex socio-cultural environment that takes into account the history, culture, and lifestyle of people. According to the recommendations of the European Parliament and the Council of Europe, the cultural component is included in the eight basic civic competencies necessary for active public life, personal realization, development, and social cohesion. Undoubtedly, the cultural competence of citizens has a significant impact on tourism. A high degree of its development, wide knowledge of local, state, European and world cultural heritage, understanding of their influence and place on a global scale, insight of cultural and linguistic aspects, skills in determining comprehension of social and economic opportunities in tourism activities lead to a decrease in the prerequisites for the formation and dissemination of tourist emptiness. It is associated not only with material aspects but also with several non-material factors, to include: low level of education, low level of social, economic, and cognitive activity, lack of motivation to travel, discontent for tourist consumption, and lack of a State policy for the development of culture (Pecheniuk, 2019). It should be noted that, in the Ukrainian context, these processes require an appropriate conceptualization and understanding of transformational conversions.

Pecheniuk (2019) identifies the main problems concerning cultural competence in the context of studying the conditions of Ukraine. This is manifested in the distortion of historical memory, disagreements in the vision of culture in the country, slow shifts in society, significant distrust, a propensity for hypothetical support to European values, selective implementation of values in everyday practice, and educational and informational competence of citizens. As Kostiuk (2016) points out, in general, the culture of the 21st century, as in antiquity, continues to be captivated by mythologies and the ″sacredness″ of society. The myths also take on other cultural forms. At the same time, the myth is not only dependent on the cultural context of that time but also acts as a means of social self-identification of individuals and society, indicating a social and psychological phenomenon in itself.

When determining modern tourist destinations, the growth of interest of the postmodern tourist in mysticism, which is associated with the spiritual and cultural sphere and satisfies information and psychological needs. Often, the interest in such travel among tourists is due to overcoming childhood fears, searching for something new, and interest in the past, spiritual and mental images, or mystical motives. The modern world has not completely ruled out mythological behavior, it has been pushed to more hidden levels of the psyche. The interaction of the collective unconscious and the individual, the strengthening of existing myths, and the formation of new ones lead to the creation of a secular religion,

which is defined as a form of modeling the worldview and social behavior of participants in the context of the tourism process.

When analyzing the Ukrainian issue, it should be borne in mind that historically there have been two ways of forming national consciousness in Ukraine: Western, determined by civil liberties, and Eastern, the basis of which is adherence to traditions. In this context, a rather difficult task today is the transformation of the rural areas of Ukraine into well-known tourist centers, considering the lack of development of the infrastructure necessary for the tourism business and the insufficient preparedness of the population for accepting such activities. Ukraine in the historical context, compared to the Western world, entered much later into the enlightenment era and modernism. That is why a significant part of the rural population lives in an eclectic world, where there is a high degree of dependence on the agricultural sector along with the introduction of technological change. However, it should be noted that in places where the tourism industry interacts with cultural heritage and traditions, they begin to work for the tourist, changing the traditional way of life of the inhabitants and their life philosophy.
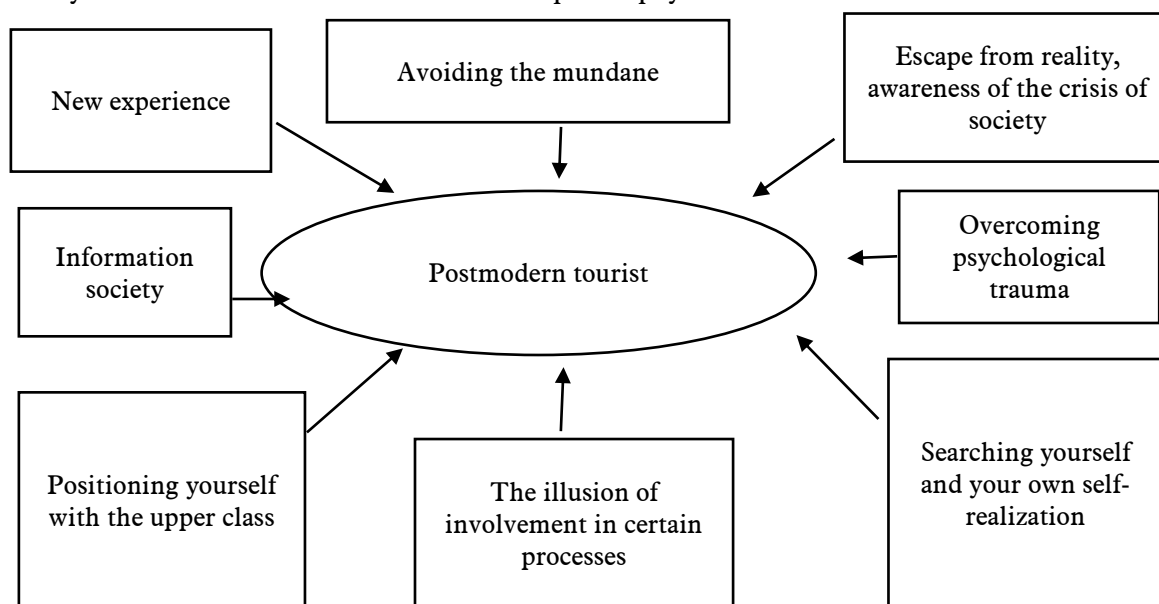
Figure 2: Factors of formation of postmodern tourist

2.5 Personal (psychological) aspect

In the general cultural sense, according to Moshniaha (2014), postmodernism is a new cultural and historical situation, a new order, a type of self-awareness, a thinking, a worldview, and an assessment of human cognitive abilities determining tourist's place in the world. Characteristic features of the postmodern personality include reorientation from the material and spiritual beings to the sensory experience of cognition; focus on spiritual and moral unity, meaningful work and forming an environment of like-minded people; freedom of individual expression, a departure from traditions and religion; emphasis on social status and quality of life; readiness and openness to political, cultural and social changes. Postmodern influences have formed a new personality - the post-tourist. This is a modern type of consumer who has considerable experience of tourist travel but is satisfied with imitation of reality, staging artifacts, and simulation, and is fully aware of the game that he or she enjoys and in which he or she is involved. The main generalizing incentives of consumption are emotions, experiences, and memories. This makes it possible to identify

the factors shaping the postmodern tourist (Figure 2). These include awareness of the crisis of society, escape from reality, mundane avoidance, search for self and self-realization, overcoming psychological trauma, the illusion of involvement in certain processes, positioning oneself with the upper class, new experience, and information society.

Undoubtedly, the development of postmodernism is possible only in a globalized environment, in a consumer society, and wide information space. Postmodern transformations create certain opportunities for tourist destinations. Taking into account the tourism concept of the dream industry in the rural community development strategy can be defined as hyperreality with the appropriate content. These can be a variety of creative objects or events - simulators that are concentrated under a particular brand and are a tourist attraction where tourists become participants in a particular event, experiencing the appropriate emotions, feelings, and experiences. Examples of such objects include theme parks and museums, amusement parks, historical reconstructions of certain events, festivals, mystical tourism, etc. It is worth noting that COVID quarantine restrictions and the progress of online and on-site computer technologies have caused the development of virtual offers of tours and excursions.

The phenomenon of postmodernism has led to the fact that the tourist prefers an artificially created reality and it is much more attractive to him due to its cultural and semiotic filling with signs, meanings and images that promise a much higher emotional level of pleasure than when staying in ordinary conditions. In this sense, the main goal of a tourist trip will not be the physical visit of a tourist destination, but the satisfaction of one's own sensory components and emotional relaxation.

That is why, in postmodern society, it is important to bring out and advertise in the tourism market the very idea of travel, which will contain some properties: emotions and play, a sense of freedom and joy of life, gaining new experiences and impressions. However, some scientists, such as Volkov (2012), Upadhyay (2019) and Yin (2018), point to the negative consequences of postmodernism. These include destruction of national identity and culture, natural environment, depopulation of rural areas, formation of artificial reality to expect tourists, significant mythologizing of sacred places, hypertrophy of the effect of presence, perception of local cultural features as a way of earning, their conservation, absolutization, and hyperbolization, accompanied by a sense of play and falsehood, the illusion of understanding between cultures, the reduction of public space in rural communities, the orderliness of real life and the world, and the spread of the phenomenon of nomadism.

3. Conclusion

Postmodernist transformations significantly affect tourism development and tourism activities, which require a change in the general concept of tourism. A significant leap in the development of information technology has entailed considerable virtualization of tourist consumption and the postmodern consumer of a tourist product. This necessitates the transition of tourism to another level, which will cover the direction of virtual social life. At the same time, today the debatable issues are to determine the positive and negative benefits of postmodern tourism transformations, which can be considered both from the standpoint of mass postmodern tourism consumers and from the standpoint of personal development. Based on modern conditions of access to Internet technologies within rural areas of Ukraine, it can be stated that their level and quality do not correspond to the

average European indicators, which is a significant deterrent to the spread of postmodern influences on the first (unreal, simulation) type of postmodern tourism. However, it can become a platform for those tourists who want to enjoy communication with wildlife, improve the emotional and sensory component, immerse themselves in the authentic environment of rural life, get to know themselves and the culture of the Ukrainian people.

Analysis of the evolution of types of social relations, starting with archaic society, modern and postmodern, in the context of tourism development and determining the place of man in tourism consumption, led to disappointing conclusions, as there are similarities between pre-modern and postmodern tourism, the main characteristic of which is a significant human problem and its place in society. In the first case, it is due to the impossibility to break out of the social bottom; in the second case, there is a significant social alienation, fragmentation of life, and precarization of the individual. The tourist marginalization of the population and the misery of human existence is the common problem.

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