

Harald Pechlaner  
Egon Smeral *Editors*

# Tourism and Leisure

Current Issues and Perspectives  
of Development



Springer Gabler

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Harald Pechlaner • Egon Smeral (Eds.)

# Tourism and Leisure

Current Issues and Perspectives  
of Development

A Festschrift in Honor of Prof. Dr. Peter Keller



**Springer** Gabler

## *Editors*

Harald Pechlaner  
Catholic University of Eichstaett-  
Ingolstadt, Germany

Egon Smeral  
Austrian Institute of Economic Research  
(WIFO), Vienna, Austria  
Österreichisches Institut für  
Wirtschaftsforschung

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## Preface

20 years of Aiest presidency (1994 - 2014): In fact, 20 important years, in which tourism has become an important topic in economy, politics, society and science. Not at least this was the result of Prof. Dr. Peter Keller, who pointed out on different occasions in the framework of its presidency of the Aiest, that only an adequate interplay of business, science, practice and policy copes with tourism needs. It leaps to the eye, that Prof. Dr. Peter Keller emphasized constantly the possibilities of interfaces between politics and science, on one hand as a political actor and manager of the Tourism Department of the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) of Switzerland, on the other hand as a professor at the University of Lausanne. Moreover, it was Prof. Dr. Peter Keller, who put the basic issues and problems of the tourism industry in a nutshell and presented these in a macroeconomic context; furthermore he showed a high involvement in the Switzerland tourism promotion.

Prof. Dr. Peter Keller has always been an ambassador of sustainable tourism policy and science. Sustainable, because it was always one of his concerns to establish the interfaces and links. So he brought up questions of a possible interdisciplinary research and the associated problems and perspectives in tourism sciences. Prof. Dr. Peter Keller has advanced tourism as an economic, political and social phenomenon worldwide and in particular on a European level. He always utilized the Aiest annual conferences of the past 20 years to formulate relevant issues and to bring interesting representatives of the areas mentioned together and to discuss current as well as future problems.

The present Festschrift is meant to show this very commendable work. The invitation to the Aiest members to participate in the Festschrift as a tribute of Prof. Dr. Peter Keller with a self-selected topic, has found widespread support. The wide range of topics, that have been proposed and selected to be presented in the Festschrift, also reflects the broad range of activities of Prof. Dr. Peter Keller:

In the first part "Tourism Research: Selected Issues" there are two basic contributions on selected topics in the development of tourism as a science.

The second part "Tourism Policy and Development" ties in with the first part and documents in particular in the article by Prof. Hansruedi Müller the pioneering role of Prof. Dr. Peter Keller in connection with issues of sustainability and tourism policy. The second part has an economic focus and provides a mirror image of topics, which Prof. Dr. Peter Keller liked to discuss in the framework of his activities: Innovation and tourism policy or the linking of tourism and regional development. In this context, the economic policy project "Innotour"

also represents a pioneering effort with international status, which is a role model.

The third part "Destination Research Management and Governance" addresses key issues in destination research within recent years; as part of his scientific and political activity Prof. Dr. Peter Keller has been greatly involved into this context. The importance of the tourism organization, destination management and marketing was indeed one of his eminent discussion and operation areas. In the fourth part of the Festschrift "Experience: Customer Value and Involvement" questions are set forth, which affect in particular the customer and market perspective. As an economist, it was a concern to Prof. Dr. Peter Keller, to accentuate especially the view of markets.

In the fifth part "Selected Topics in Tourism Research", various contributions are summarized, which are of great importance for the current tourism discussion. These have consciously not been attached by the editors to the aforementioned four parts; they illustrate through their originality the diversity of tourism science problems in the context of business and politics.

Prof. Dr. Peter Keller has gained tremendous achievements for the European and international tourism discussion. The present Festschrift can represent this merit only partially, but sees itself as a big thank-you to a large tourism researcher and policymaker with expertise for the practically feasible from the scientific community, paying particular attention to the Aiest members.

The editors

Eichstaett, Ingolstadt and Vienna in June 2014

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## **Part 1:**

# **Tourism Research: Future Challenges**



# Can Tourism Qualify for Interdisciplinary Research? A European View

*Harald Pechlaner and Michael Volgger*

Prof. Dr. Harald Pechlaner  
Catholic University Eichstaett-Ingolstadt  
harald.pechlaner@ku.de

Michael Volgger  
European Academy of Bozen/Bolzano (EURAC)  
michael.volgger@eurac.edu

## 1 Introduction

This paper adopts a political perspective on the disciplinary status of research on tourism and postulates that in "declaring" itself to be on the way towards becoming "a discipline", tourism research could significantly gain and uphold the recognition by policy and industry. This will not call into question the fact that methodological and content criteria ought to be considered and respected, however. Declarations should endeavour to be accepted not only within by the members of the tourism community but also externally. It should clarify that "becoming an academic discipline" is a scenario that could provide a number of opportunities for tourism research. Academic disciplines as distinct segments of knowledge have always contained a political aspect with political implications and it is this dimension that we intend to emphasize. As such, this paper will deliberately seek to identify any institutional developments and requirements that would be helpful in maintaining the ambition of tourism research as an academic discipline alive, as well as some of the possible consequences. The paper begins by discussing theories and concepts which reflect some insights from the European debate, and will then proceed to discuss case studies from Germany and Australia. We now open our investigation as to whether tourism is an appropriate subject for interdisciplinary research.

A discipline can be defined as "a distinctive body of knowledge with an organized set of rules and conceptual structure for advancing knowledge" (Tribe, 2000, p. 810). Through this, we arrive at one of the main questions, namely that

of specifying the conditions for tourism to become an approved discipline. As this cannot be easily answered – which in itself could already serve as a partial response – the authors re-state some ideas that could prove useful when setting out a direction for the theoretical development of tourism as an object of scientific research. Though these ideas could trigger disagreement (not entirely sub-consciously), they may at least prompt discussions about the scenarios of tourism sciences or tourism disciplines and tourism as an object of academic research. However, the question of whether there are predetermined conditions connecting the formal study of tourism with other forms of scientific research activity must firstly be addressed.

Disciplines are organised bodies of knowledge, involving the creation and transfer of knowledge. Concepts with their own internal logic are linked to beliefs and even to values with predetermined rules constituting the backbone of the discipline as a pool of knowledge. Rules require discipline, which in turn can only prevail where there are prerequisite conditions, such as quality, reliability, validity, etc. Discipline can only prevail where there is a "dominant logic" (Prahalad/Bettis, 1986; Bettis/Prahalad, 1995), as the fulcrum or rather a culture pertaining to a group of researchers with a common research interest or objective. Research cultures may be considered and interpreted differently depending upon the research discipline. However, the adoption of new research topics also permit the emergence of new research cultures that cannot completely ignore the cultural background of the researcher. This will generally facilitate digitalisation and the chances of conveying comprehensive discussion whilst developing global research cultures.

## **2 Discipline requires discipline, or also: Discipline begets discipline.**

Assuming that scientific disciplines are also characterised by a dominant logic in respect to their concepts and theories, there also exists a consensus concerning the methods for creating knowledge and ideas in the theoretical and methodological fields of application (Donald, 1986). This necessitates an appropriate discipline for personal self-control and is particularly needed by those who feel they belong to a group operating in a similar field of research. This seems to be a fundamental institutional pre-condition, in order to attain the goal of establishing a recognised scientific discipline. One could say that the disciplinary self-control of the many might contribute to transforming an interest and field of research into a recognized discipline.

The question could be asked: why would they want to do that? Certainly, a unified effort towards the creation of a discipline might be advantageous for researchers interested in the phenomenon of tourism, provided it were possible to raise the reputation of all those concerned. By focusing on the subject of a scien-

tific work as well as the theories and methods for the development along with an elaboration of problems and solutions within the *community*, they could contribute to a new self-awareness. A self-awareness, under certain circumstances, could also constitute the basis for a nascent discipline. From this institutional perspective, the remaining question that needs to be clarified is how a community might be developed and whether the motivation of the individual researcher is sufficient to arouse their interest in contributing to this community.

There could be other factors accelerating the development of a discipline that do not directly relate to the research environment. These include the increasing economic importance of tourism, together with the consequent critical discussions and debates. Offering solutions to related problems might seemingly fuel tourism research and enhance its reputation. At this point the question arises as to where tourism research should look to find its methodology. Does tourism research utilise the methodology of the traditional scientific disciplines or even of inter-disciplinary fields? One would tend to assume that researchers would make use of the prevailing accepted methodologies with which they are already familiar. By way of a quick response, a new object of study will most likely be analyzed and resolved using already established disciplinary methods and resources. Existing research seems to suggest that established disciplines with their theories and methods do indeed have a significant impact on the subject of tourism.

Much has been already been written and intense discussion has taken place on the question of whether or not tourism now actually qualifies as an independent discipline (see e.g. Goeldner, 1988; Tribe, 1997, 2006; Leiper, 2000; Jafari, 2001; Airey, 2008, 2013, Volgger/Pechlaner, 2014). At times the impression exists that this is desired in order to demonstrate more self-confidence vis-à-vis the "mother disciplines". On the topic of institutional criteria for an independent discipline, a principal theme relates to establishing institutions for research and education, scientific societies and professional academic journals and publication series (Jennings, 2010). Many support a close relationship between research and teaching as a condition for the establishment of a discipline (Tribe, 1997). A close connection between research and teaching is supported by the fact that the researcher can put his research to educational use. On the other hand, it can also be developed when teachers are able to resort to a *body of knowledge* that can be regarded as independent and relevant for utilisation. Integrating authentic tourism literature into teaching seems often easier than taking it as a basis for further research. This could be due to the researchers' belief that theories and methods can only be found in the established disciplines. On the other hand, it may also be that in the eyes of some researchers tourism research has as yet to prove distinct and suitable theories as well as their empirical substantiation according to the standards of the scientific community.

According to Leiper (2000) and Goeldner (1988), the disciplinary status of tourism has always been supported by tourism researchers increasingly relying on data taken from tourism journals. This in turn reduces their reliance on the theories and methodologies of other disciplines. Another group of researchers adopts the position that tourism is first of all an object of study and at least at this moment cannot be considered a fully developed discipline (i.e. Echtner/Jamal, 1997; Airey, 2008, 2013, Volgger/Pechlaner, 2014; Pechlaner/Reuter, 2012; Keller, 2011; Bender, 2004) – however, without denying its potential development towards an independent discipline. There is nevertheless, a broad spectrum of consensus purporting that tourism no longer necessitates coupling to one specific *mother discipline* but rather strives for adhering to inter-disciplinary criteria. Peter Keller, in particular, has taken part in such debates within the AIEST, repeatedly raising questions about the future of tourism and its disciplinary orientation.

Reference should be made to the increasing *body of knowledge* relating to tourism and hospitality. It should also be noted that the *tourism sector* has a recognisably stronger leaning towards research than the *hospitality sector*, which is more industrially oriented. Nevertheless, many tourism researchers would probably agree that reliance on the theories and methodologies of other disciplines should continue, as the current *body of knowledge* must be seen as insufficiently integrated (Keller, 2011), lacking independent corroboration with many researchers whom still consider it necessary to publish in the most widely-read journals. In the context of research, it has therefore been necessary for authors to openly cite one of the more established disciplines and publish in their specialist journals when making their findings. This could also obstruct interdisciplinary links in publishing that could simultaneously inhibit innovation. Thanks to the established review processes, new intellectual development is based on previous assumptions and existing theories and therefore the link to prevailing knowledge is sometimes prevalent.

The current state of tourism research is perhaps best encapsulated in a multi-disciplinary approach. Traditional disciplines are rarely called into question and there is a general acceptance of a so-called basic "parallel co-operation" (Pechlaner/Reuter, 2012). Researchers from different disciplines may jointly determine research issues, even if theories and methodologies remain pertinent to established disciplines. Yet even this practice is not quite that straightforward. It should be reiterated that there is considerable temptation for research groups within the same discipline to downgrade multi and interdisciplinary associations into mere disciplinary interest groups, or to form subgroups with an insular disciplinary view.

In academic debates on tourism, fluctuations in the multi and inter-disciplinary fields can be observed with the latter tending to minimise the distinction be-

tween established disciplines whilst attempting to promote an integrated approach – especially with regards to methodologies. The development of new theories and methodologies is the often proclaimed objective, despite the fact that such attempts may fail already in the attempt of defining shared concepts. Schummer (2004) utilises the example of nanotechnology when citing examples of when borrowing from other disciplines may be desirable.

In some cases, the trans-disciplinary approach could be a way to supersede prevailing notions, leaving aside disciplinary boundaries whilst at the same time attempting a new approach. Trans-disciplinarity refers to researchers undertaking integrated and problem-oriented research. In this context one of the major obstacles is a lack of appropriate terminology, which entails the risk of superficiality. In contrast, extra disciplinary study prioritises the creation of knowledge outside existing boundaries (Tribe, 1997) and the point of departure is explicitly determined by the problems and the commitment to finding solutions. As such, theory remains strictly tied to the practice. Whether a new discipline can be created as the result of a trans-disciplinary approach or whether it is actually avoided makes for an excellent topic of debate (Buckler, 2004). Moreover, within this context a post-disciplinary approach comes into play, focusing mainly on academic issues, while the trans-disciplinary discussion remains oriented towards the practical level (Tribe, 1997). Issues of mobility or customer value along with increasing debates within the tourism industry (on topics such as crises, tourist safety, tourist health, demographic change, climate change and resilience) may call for a conscious abandoning of the traditional schemes of perceived disciplinary boundaries (Volgger/Pechlaner, 2014).

Whilst broadly surveying these definitions, it becomes increasingly clear that tourism could be somehow connected to almost all concepts of ways to cross or overcome traditional disciplinary boundaries. However, the multi-disciplinary approach points to what is probably the most likely positioning of tourism research at this juncture. To date, there has been little integration of tourism research results in the general body of knowledge, since a coherent path towards that has not yet been developed. Consequently, there has hardly been any movement towards a real inter-disciplinary approach, something Keller refers to as "multi-disciplinary trap". This is also supported by an increasing number of journals in the field of *hospitality*, *leisure* and *tourism* that most often represent inter-disciplinary approaches in aspirational terms. In reality, the tendency is more towards multi-disciplinary and is scarcely capable of promoting inter-disciplinary co-operation due to established networks (of reviewers) or networks dedicated to the culture of specific disciplines.

Inter-disciplinary research applied with discipline is necessary in freeing science from a "multi-disciplinary trap", which would partially inhibit the generation of new knowledge, as Keller has stated. Inter-disciplinary research applied with

discipline can serve as a balance between new and established knowledge as well as innovative and embedded knowledge. When inter-disciplinary research is applied with discipline, then it may pave the way to the development of an independent discipline, by virtue of its having reached its own maturity.

### **3 Discipline requires referencing to the fundamental questions**

An inter-disciplinary perspective could potentially be the first step towards the development of a discipline – but is such a development needed and would it prove useful? Perhaps we shouldn't be too optimistic about the real prospects for tourism research and instead be prepared to take a more practical approach, capable of leading to a further development in the "disciplines of the phenomenon of tourism". According to the authors, tourism research should increasingly tackle the fundamental questions governing tourism on an ongoing basis.

"We know the meaning of a hotel, but we don't know what is hospitality": an apt characterisation by a tourism researcher (Pechlaner/Volgger, forthcoming). The acceptance of tourism as an independent field of research in its own right can only develop if we are able to link specific questions of that field with the fundamental questions concerning science and the creation of knowledge in general. Tourism research can only grow if it consistently provides new answers to the questions of what tourism, hospitality, vacation or travel may be by focusing on specific examples. However, this must be done without ever losing sight of its meta-connections and fundamentals. Only then will tourism become acknowledged as an independent field of research in its own right, dealing not so much with its development as a discipline, but rather with the approach in finding solutions to pressing issues as well the support of its claim for excellence in research and education. If this were to happen, it would also have the end-result of enhancing the reputation of a dedicated scientific community which was specifically focused on tourism.

It is of primary importance to organise empirical research on tourism in such a way that the resulting insights can be absorbed into a central body of knowledge. An essential criterion for its evaluation is the contribution made to strengthening this body of knowledge. Efforts must be made to consistently test the basic assumptions governing the phenomenon of tourism, repeatedly modifying and extending them where necessary. In such conditions, it becomes difficult to separate applied research from basic research (Pavitt, 1991), as "the aim of research – and particularly that of applied research – is to help to find ways of improving the human condition for future generations" (Keller, 2011, p. 3).

One of the main underlying issues is that the increasing differentiation of the various research objectives and questions – particularly in journals – could foster an orientation in tourism research focusing on these specific issues and their



attempted solutions. At the same time, the basic and highly important challenges that include a definition of what is fundamental, might be vanishing. In this context, research questions tend to be predominantly based on already existing knowledge rather than a renewed orientation towards tourism practitioners. As such, there is a constant conflict with respect to the "relevant" issues, characterized by a highly dynamic structure. Could it be that the research objectives and the provided responses on the one hand and the specific problems in practice with their corresponding attempts at solutions on the other hand are actually shifting apart? Are we seeing an increasing gap between the tourism academia and the tourism practice? May we possibly be observing the creation of a "disciplinary gap" between research and practice?

This also leads to on-going debates with regards to the fundamental assumptions, showing that tourism corresponds to a "pre-paradigmatic science" whilst there are currently no agreements on essential definitions, theories and methods (Kuhn, 1977; Bieger, 2004). The reason for this could be that tourism allows many diverse disciplinary perspectives to be adopted. Additionally, although it is considered an applied field (Keller, 2011) because of its close proximity to the industry, sometimes its orientation towards practical issues dissipates. Universities and research policy define the rules governing an academic career, often without considering that some of these rules do not provide incentives to tackle practical issues (e.g. by somehow overestimating the importance of journals or not taking into account other modes of communication permitting closer interaction with industry practice). Moreover, many universities promote communication with the industry whilst at the same time obstructing transfer of knowledge between research and teaching. As a result, there is insufficient scope available for consistent research. Even more problematic and partly contradictory is the on-going practice linking university financing exclusively to research outcomes. This results in publication rankings that are biased against an interdisciplinary approach, simply because the research community and its mechanisms of evaluation favour specialist journals linked with a disciplinary background.

#### **4 Discipline requires dedication to the relevant questions in practice**

It could be argued that the proximity of tourism to industry practice might be of higher importance than its development towards an academic discipline. Given the insight that "there is nothing as practical as a good theory" (Lewin, 1951), the advancement of tourism as a discipline requires it to be practically relevant. In turn, by ignoring sound theories the tourism practice will in turn, weaken itself. It is vital to develop the basic research questions out of a practice and out of a profound comprehension of practice. This also means however, tourism