



*Tertiary Sector Economics*

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**SPATIAL REFLECTION  
OF A TOURIST DESTINATION**

**Abstract**

The spatial reflection of a tourist destination refers to the physical and geographical characteristics of a destination that play an important role in shaping its attractiveness, transport accessibility, tourist activities, and experiences. The cultural heritage of a destination, including its traditions, customs, festivals and local art, has become a major attraction for tourists seeking authentic experiences and immersion in different cultures. Thus, proximity to natural, historical, and cultural attractions can make a destination more attractive. Destinations that are perceived as safe and well-managed are more likely to attract visitors. In addition, the accessibility of a destination through the transportation network, such as airports, roads, and public transportation, can affect its popularity among tourists. Thus, the destination is also a function of the mechanism that triggers the necessary infrastructure, temporary accommodation, catering and medical services, shopping centers, and recreation areas, which are crucial for attracting and accommodating tourists.

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**Problem Statement**

The globalization of markets and production constitutes the mainstream of modern socio-economic development. The former is an abstract concept, while the latter materializes through territorial concentration. Territorial concentration of production causes populations to gravitate towards industrial centers, thereby reflecting the geographical division of labor.

In his work «Theory of the Location of Industries» (1909), Alfred Weber considered industrial location as part of the general problem of the geographical location of economic activity. Weber believed that location is determined by specific economic advantages in production arising from the location where expedient activity is performed.

In contrast, Perroux (1970/1955) proposed the concepts of «growth poles» and «development centers», which he defined as compactly located enterprises within dynamically growing industries that possess a «development impulse» influencing the territorial structure and dynamics of the economy. In his opinion, at growth poles, enterprises of leading industries form «industrial complexes» that make it possible to achieve induction (polarization) effects. Perroux viewed economic space as an abstract force field, within which tension increases with socio-economic development, and in which certain centripetal and centrifugal forces interact.

However, determinants and conditions contributing to the territorial concentration of economic activity have constantly evolved. Since the beginning of scientific and technological progress, these factors included primarily specialization of production and non-productive elements such as research and development (R&D), information, and management. This trend was reflected in the formation and operation of industrial parks, serving as convenient areas for placement of various enterprises.

In this context, we are speaking of the territorial concentration not only of industry, but also numerous other activities enhancing its functioning. However, the concentration of industrial city-forming factors complicated the possibility of full recreation for agglomeration residents (employees of enterprises and institutions of various kinds), necessitating the search for territories where recreation would be complete and comfortable.

### **Literature Review**

In contemporary specialized scientific literature, the terms «growth pole» and «growth center» are widely employed to differentiate between the functional and the geographic aspects of space. A growth pole represents a set of industries, while a growth center denotes the geographic manifestation of the pole, a specific city.

Boudeville (1968) demonstrated that economic space is functionally related to geographic space, where both function and territory are united through a common property known as «polarity». In his opinion, a growth pole is a city that hosts a set of leading industries possessing significant momentum to initiate the development of ancillary industries interconnected through demand and consumption linkages.

Lishchynskyi (2019, p. 71), drawing on the views of Parr and Friedman, asserted that any city with specific growth features can be a growth pole. The author argues that abstract economic space and geographic space need not be identical; rather, they exist within a system of continuous intermetamorphosis.

Space reflects the coexistence of objects, their lengths, structures, and their relative locations, characterized by distance and direction. Initially, the territories of underdeveloped countries appear spatially homogeneous, but as development advances, they inevitably polarize. Thus, spatial polarization of certain types of expedient activities bears resemblance to the concept of their concentration.

Territorial polarization is a process that reflects the functional relationship between areas with the reciprocal phenomena in opposite parts of a territory (Po-

larization, n. d.). This is evident in cases where spatial poles, geographically distant from each other, are connected by a feedback loop (global tourist destinations and industrial agglomerations). In this case, at least two areas exhibiting reciprocal phenomena must be identified within a territory before we can speak of its spatial polarization. These areas can be either specific territorial units within a country's administrative division or the country itself. According to the three-sector economy hypothesis, the secondary and tertiary sectors display signs of reciprocal economic activities. Feedback refers to the influence of the result of a system's functioning on the nature of its subsequent operation. There are both positive and negative feedback effects (Feedback, n. d.).

Positive feedback is a type of feedback that causes the system to respond to a disturbance in a way that increases the magnitude of the disturbance. That is, «A produces more B, and B in turn produces more A» (Keesing, 1981). In contrast, negative feedback affects the system in a way that reduces the output of its functioning. This leads to increased stability within the system, while error and inertia decrease (Feedback, n. d.).

In the phase of tertiary civilization, automation in the primary and secondary sectors has reached such a level that the need for labor is significantly reduced, but there is a growing demand for labor in the tertiary sector. This situation is characteristic of modern industrialized countries and the future post-industrial society (Three-sector hypothesis, n. d.).

The tertiary sector of the economy is a set of economic activities that create and/or provide intangible goods (Savchuk, n. d.-a). Lishchynskyi (2019, p. 74) notes that the idea of growth poles is based on the notion that a powerful center should bring benefits to the surrounding areas.

In an interview with the Financial Times, Gita Gopinath, First Deputy Managing Director of the IMF, observed that the automation of production in recent decades has sounded a warning after economists wrongly predicted that a large number of workers laid off from automobile assembly lines would find better opportunities in other industries. «The lesson we learned is that this was a very bad assumption. It was important for countries to ensure that the people who were unemployed were actually engaged in productive work» (Pavlysh, 2023).

One of the main economic activities within the tertiary sector is the tourism industry, although the question of whether individuals in this sector are really engaged in productive labor is subject to debate. Nonetheless, the impact of tourism exports on the national economy surpasses that of other types of exports. Every US dollar spent by international tourists in 37 countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) generates an average of 89 cents in domestic value added, compared to 81 cents for exports in general. Additionally, domestic tourism serves as the foundation of international tourism in most OECD countries, with residents spending an average of up to 75% of total tourism expenditure within the country (OECD, 2020, p. 2).

## **Methodology**

This study is based on open sources of information from official institutions and employs various scientific methods, including abstract-concrete reasoning, system-structural analysis, synthesis, induction, and deduction. The authors draw upon several economic theories and approaches, in particular focusing on theories of industrial location, concepts of local initiative, and models of the life cycle of a tourist destination.

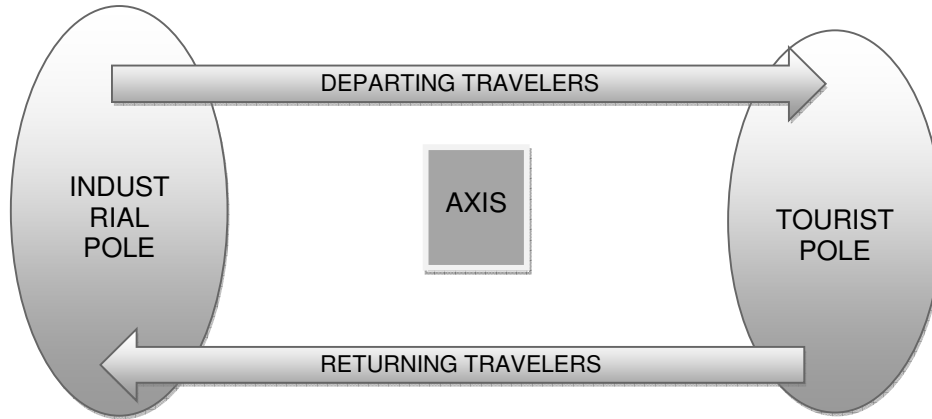
## **Research Results**

Consumption of a tourism product coincides with its production in time and is «tied» to the territory where recreational and tourist resources are located. Natural and anthropogenic recreational resources serve as the foundation for tourism activities. The quality and quantity of these resources not only determine the intensity of business processes but also whether they will be initiated at all. Thus, there is a critically low level of accumulation of tourist attractions below which the tourist pole (center) will not establish, and a critically high level above which it will also be unable to function, albeit for different reasons.

The state of critically low accumulation of tourist attractions occurs at the point when their commercialization costs are identical to the profits received. This pertains to investments aimed at aligning recreational resources with safety standards necessary for their utilization in the process of expedient activity. Conversely, a critically high accumulation of tourist attractions results in excessive anthropogenic pressure on the area of the tourist pole (center). This is manifested in the escalating tensions between the local population and tourists, leading to irreparable damage to recreational resources.

Thus, the territorial polarization of economic activity implies feedback between them and the existence of a certain center, axis or plane relative to which the territory is symmetrical (see Figure 1). Feedback ensures the movement of employees from the industrial agglomeration to the tourist pole for recreation and their subsequent return to their place of permanent residence (work). Positive feedback entails the continual development of advanced services within the destination's industry structure, which are sought after by tourists employed in advanced roles at the agglomeration's enterprises. A higher level of visitor service in the global tourist poles will motivate tourists to look for a job that will enable them to maintain a high level of tourist consumption. In this way, positive feedback will contribute to the permanent development of the global tourist pole.

Figure 1

**Spatial polarization of industry and tourism as reciprocal types of expedient activities**

Source: authors' elaboration.

At the same time, most tourist poles operate under negative feedback, which ensures the sustainability of their tourism systems. In a certain sense, the state of symmetry (Gr. «συμμετρέϊν» – «to measure together»), defined as harmony and proportionality or arrangement of points or parts of an object in space, with one half mirroring the other (Symmetry, n. d.), can be destroyed by asymmetry. Asymmetry (derived from the ancient Greek «Ἀσυμμετρία» – «incommensurability», from the ancient Greek «Μετρέω» – «to measure») refers to the absence or violation of symmetry (Savchuk, n. d.-b). This asymmetry can lead to both development and decline.

Thus, the processes of smoothing the spatial polarization of expedient activities can be classified into two types: symmetrical and asymmetrical. Symmetrical smoothing occurs when the poles of production activities simultaneously undertake deconcentration measures. Asymmetrical smoothing happens when a part of activity shifts to the periphery from only one pole (center) of specialization or to another center, which can also be considered a pole of expedient activity within the respective space. Lishchynskyi notes that spatial concentration (polarization) at the regional level has from time to time been visualized through deconcentration at the national level (Lishchynskyi, 2019, p. 155).

From the perspective of spatial polarization of economic activity, geographically small states should be considered as a whole, with tourism concen-

trated in specific recreation areas and industry in agglomerations. Conversely, territorially large states, given their recreational diversity, may have several regions where economic activities are polarized. In such cases, the poles of economic power must utilize infrastructure of varying quality and capacity. For example, tourism poles do not require the same energy capacities as industrial agglomerations or diverse types of freight transport. Instead, they should have a larger number of temporary accommodation facilities, catering services, and passenger transport options.

Gorina (2017, p. 103) contends that spatial polarization is an objective condition for the development of the tourism market, driven by disparities in the distribution of natural resources, climatic characteristics of regions, cultural and historical contexts, uneven availability of transportation and communication networks, resort and entertainment infrastructure, asymmetry in the allocation of recreational resources, and other factors. In essence, the author views polarization in tourism as the concentration of expedient activities aimed at providing tourist services in areas abundant with recreational and tourist resources. Consistent with this perspective and building on the content of the definition of «polarization», we consider it as the interaction of activities at a certain taxonomic level within a territory, which are unsuitable for joint execution but exhibit some form of feedback between them. As a result, residents of industrial agglomerations should have areas nearby free of environmental pollution and conducive to recreation. The term «nearby area» refers to a travel time comfortable for a tourist to reach the tourist pole (vacation spot).

At the same time, Lishchynskyi (2019, p. 139) notes that in many developed countries, agrarian, intermediate and non-central urban regions have become drivers of economic growth in recent years. For example, in Italy, due to the specifics of the country's landscape, industrial zones have emerged around railway stations in historical settlements, while recreation areas have been developed along the coastline. This is how many satellite towns emerged, such as Scala, Marina, Lido, Stazione.

The expansion of cities through the absorption of adjacent territories primarily stems from the imperative to accommodate new economic functions, the implementation of which in cities is a requirement of the time, while the existing urban boundaries can no longer offer sufficient land resources. From this perspective, it is characteristic that cities with centuries or even millennia of history have followed this pattern: a new city emerged next to the old one (to accommodate new functions), which eventually absorbed it (Kosheliuk & Thomann, 2021).

Such organization of expedient activities was observed during the industrial era when proximity was paramount. However, in contemporary times, residents of post-industrial centers such as London, Berlin, Osaka, Detroit, or Kyiv can consider destinations such as Sharm el-Sheikh, Honolulu, Phuket, and Antalya as their «lidos», while viewing the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, and other national parks as their «Kleingartens», thanks to air travel. Consequently, spatial polariza-

tion, as a functional relationship of reciprocal activities within the same territory, is transitioning to a global dimension amidst the diminishing impact of distance in the world economy. Thus, its axis of symmetry relocates to third countries, indicating an international dimension of spatial polarization in tourism. As stated by Hill, «the advent of commercial jet travel has effectively shrunk the globe» (Hill, 2007, p. 43).

In terms of travel time and cost between the global poles of spatial polarization, the poles may be located in different countries on different continents. However, it is important to note that in the event of de-globalization, these poles will end up in different dimensions. This could result in these poles causing an excessive convexity of the economic landscape within their respective countries, which previously existed but was balanced by the presence of the other pole. As a result, the poles may evolve into larger centers, becoming focal points for various imbalances.

According to the IMF, the increasing fragmentation of the global economy could lead to a decline in global GDP. The disruption of trade links is anticipated to adversely affect low-income countries and less affluent consumers in advanced economies (Ivanov, 2023). Nevertheless, metropolitan areas will likely continue to function and add value, while destinations that lose visitors may experience stagnation or even decline. For both, the imbalance will be reflected in the need to seek new opportunities and establish a new axis of symmetry relative to which the other pole will be chosen. Therefore, in order to overcome stagnation and smooth out the negative effects of international tourism, globalized tourist poles facing economic adversity will have to reorient themselves towards other global agglomerations untouched by the current de-globalization processes.

The problem with this state of affairs is that global tourist poles, thanks to construction technologies brought in from outside, are beginning to be created in technologically backward agricultural countries, where they become a kind of center of economic growth there. Thus, according to a group of researchers (Zarębski et al., 2019), tourism is perceived as a spatial phenomenon that has a significant impact on both society and various sectors of the national economy, in particular, the construction industry, transport and trade.

Gorina (2017) notes that the most important substantive and system-forming feature of the economic space is the unity of the spatial location of production factors and the spatial organization of relations between economic entities at different levels of their interaction in the development of a given territory. That is, the development of the poles is associated with spatial elasticity, where the movement of flows affects the development of the pole, while its growth affects the nature and direction of resource flows, which opens up wide opportunities for the application of system-structural analysis and mathematical research methods.

At the same time, the definition of «economic landscape» is circulating in the scientific literature, which should be identical in content to the concept of «economic space», since the landscape is not only located in space but is also its



expression. However, according to Lösch (1940), the economic landscape is a system of market networks created by product sales zones in a certain territory, where a given volume of demand is satisfied at the lowest cost. In other words, the economic landscape is not merely a depiction of space as a static set of economic actors, but rather a reflection of their effective cooperation for the benefit of stakeholders, which gives us reason to extend these characteristics to space in general.

If, according to Weber, it is possible to produce a given product in one place at lower costs than in another within an industry setting, tourism offers few such opportunities. Most natural and anthropogenic recreational resources are largely unique, and not many foreign tourists will travel to China to see the Eiffel Tower. Since consuming a tourist product involves fulfilling a person's recreational need, it is these needs that determine travel. In this context, the availability of recreational resources in a certain territory should be seen as conditions that contribute to the development of its tourism function. Therefore, the more a territory is saturated with various recreational resources, the more likely it is to be considered by tourists as a place to visit or, in other words, as a destination.

Etymologically, the term «destination» comes from the Latin «destino», meaning «destination, location». Tourism researchers interpret this term to mean a specific geographical space (Destination, n. d.), while economists focus mainly on the functions that attract masses of tourists to a given territory (Table 1).

Obviously, one or more attractions located in a given area do not have such a gravitational pull, nor are they sufficiently self-sustaining to attract a critical mass of tourists, from which they can be considered destinations. It is the infrastructure aimed at creating comfortable conditions for visitors to stay around these attractions that creates a powerful allure. At the same time, it should be noted that the clichéd term «tourist infrastructure» has undergone a radical rethinking since the introduction of IT in business. In fact, all populated areas have some form of tourist infrastructure. The point is to be able to offer its elements to the visitor, and IT provides this capability.

Coase's (1937) theory of the firm was based on the premise that transactions within an organization are cheaper and faster than in the open market. Today, transactions in the market are typically faster and cheaper, making them one of the driving forces in the process of deconcentration of production.

Thus, Milne and Atelievich (2001) are convinced that tourism should be viewed as a transaction process that is simultaneously driven by the global priorities of transnational corporations, geopolitical forces and broader forces of economic change, as well as by local complexities where residents, visitors, workers, governments, and entrepreneurs interact at the «coalface» of the industry. Today, thanks to instant accessibility, markets are flooded with offers of goods and services that were either inaccessible or too complex to access before the introduction of IT. Tourism has already adopted elements of the sharing economy, which do not create additional anthropogenic pressure on the environment.

Table 1

**Definitions of the term «destination»**

Approach	Author(s)	Definition
Geographical	A. Burkart and S. Medlik (Burkart & Medlik, 1974, p. 46)	A geographical unit visited by a tourist.
	World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2019).	A physical space in which a tourist spends at least one overnight. It includes a combination of tourism products and tourism resources. It has territorial boundaries defining its management, images, and perceptions defining its market competitiveness.
Functional	European Commission (2000)	An area which is separately identified and promoted to tourists as a place to visit, and within which the tourism product is coordinated by one or more identifiable authorities or organizations.
	Oxford Tourism Dictionary (Medlik, 2003)	Countries, regions, cities and other territories that attract tourists are the main locations of tourist activities, tourist flows and their costs; places of maximum concentration of tourist attractions, means of accommodation, food, entertainment, other services and economic, social and physical impact of tourism.
	Malska M. P., Hrytsyshyn A. T., Bilous S. V., Topornytska M. Y. (Malska et al., 2022, p. 169)	Any geographical unit in which tourism development forms and determines the economic specialization of society. This is its fundamental difference from the territory with significant tourist potential, rich tourist resources and developed infrastructure.

Source: compiled by the authors.

At the same time, a number of researchers point out that a territory can be considered a destination if it meets the following criteria:

- 1) the availability of transport and tourism infrastructure;
- 2) the presence of highly attractive anthropogenic and natural attractions;
- 3) and the availability of organizational potential for product promotion in the tourism market.

However, these arguments are controversial because models of the life cycle of tourist destinations include stages that do not conform to these criteria. For example, the famous Tourism Area Life Cycle model developed by Butler (1980) identifies six stages in the life of a tourist destination: exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation, and either decline or rejuvenation. However, until the destination is realized as such, it is difficult to ascertain its potential as a future tourist attraction during the early stages of its development. Therefore, the key indicators of the next stage are the dramatic changes in the number of visitors, the condition of the natural environment and tourist infrastructure, as well as the attitude of the local population towards tourists. In other words, this approach is applicable to established destinations, while emerging destinations do not lend themselves to identification. On the other hand, the certainty that a particular recreation area will become a destination arises only when both large companies and local authorities see it as an investment opportunity with a pre-agreed development plan.

Murphy's (1985) and Taylor's (1995) theoretical approaches emphasize local initiative and advocate for an active role for community members in shaping and developing tourism in their area. The community approach views local residents as agents who are capable of planning and participating in tourism development and who are influential enough to be heard when they are concerned and who have the ability to control the performance of the tourism industry to some extent. Murphy (1994, p. 284) is certain that if host communities identify the types of tourism they want to develop in the long term, they will be able to shape the type of industry that best meets their needs.

Therefore, it is worth considering an area as a tourist destination starting from the moment when it reaches the so-called «development phase», characterized by a significant number of tourist arrivals. During the peak season, the number of visitors should equal or even exceed the number of permanent residents living in the area. At this stage, the destination experiences an excessive anthropogenic load and rapid deterioration of infrastructure, resulting in dissatisfaction among the local population. It is necessary to organize a system of planning and control of expedient activities at both the local and national levels.

As a new country or region is incorporated into the global «quilt» of tourist destinations, the emerging industry can be characterized by a relatively high level of local involvement, as noted by Milne and Ateljjevic (2001). However, as visitor numbers increase and integration into the global tourism system deepens, local industry structures soon begin to be characterized by the presence of either foreign or local elites. Local residents may end up receiving few economic benefits while being forced to endure the inevitable losses associated with rapid growth in the number of tourists. As a result, both communities and areas dependent on tourism find themselves with little prospect for local control and limited potential to achieve more sustainable forms of local development.

The «consolidation phase» is marked by a relative slowdown in arrivals, but the absolute number of tourists increases to the point where it consistently ex-

ceeds the local population. The tourism market, with the participation of tourist transnational corporations, matures, and the territorial concentration of tourism activities ensues. This is manifested in the increasing dependence of the local workforce on the development of local tourism. At this stage, it is appropriate to speak of the emergence of a pole of tourist activity, since the subsequent stage of the destination's development is characterized by an absolute decline in arrivals.

The decline in the intensity of visitor inflows results in the underutilization of temporary accommodation facilities. Businesses specializing in tourist services transition to a stage of fierce competition, leading to an increasing number of market exits by the least adapted companies, which are mainly local businesses struggling to compete with TNCs. Consequently, economic activity in the destination stagnates amid the growing complexity of environmental and social issues.

Neglecting environmental, social, or economic issues inevitably leads to the decline of a destination, while its rejuvenation depends on whether businesses and local authorities find ways to address these issues. Rejuvenation is typically achieved by incorporating the region's new recreational resources in tourist circulation, which, to some extent, results in changes in the destination's specialization and provides momentum for the repeated life cycle. In this case, the destination becomes a reference point for the duration of the spatial polarization of recreational activities.

It should be noted that allowing a destination to reach the decline stage in its life cycle would be unreasonable. As already mentioned, the need to organize a system of planning and control of expedient activities arises at the development stage, and it is at this point that stakeholders should start working on a program to re-profile the destination's activities and align its development with global trends. It is even better if the destination is established on the basis of a pre-agreed development plan that takes into account all the threats and shortcomings that could lead to its decline and includes a package of measures to prevent this.

Smith (1994) classifies destinations into six types:

- 1) Ethnic destinations – places promoting ethnic traits and lifestyles of local communities.
- 2) Cultural destinations – places promoting the conservation of traditional ways of living.
- 3) Historical destinations – places promoting historical events related to monuments.
- 4) Environmental destinations – places promoting natural attractions.
- 5) Recreational destinations – include mainly sports centers.
- 6) Business destinations – places promoting commerce, transactions and meetings, conferences combined with recreation and leisure.

When talking about a particular destination, it is important to keep in mind the following factors. First, the destination must be characterized by both physical and psy-

chological attributes. In other words, its image is shaped not only by physical elements but also by the individual's feelings associated with intangible qualities of the place (such as local hospitality, ambiance, and the various emotions experienced by visitors).

Second, different people place different values on the same destination. Because of this diversity of tastes, the tourism business has the potential to thrive anywhere. Demand for a particular tourist destination is directly linked to its image, which often differs from reality. In tourism, stereotypes are cognitive images that act as powerful magnets, so it is hardly advisable to abandon them in favor of more modern, but not yet marketed images.

Ferreira Lopes (2011, pp. 311-312) notes that the image of a destination emerges as one of its most important assets, having the greatest influence on decisions made by tourists when choosing a destination. Ultimately, it increases the likelihood of commercial success or failure of any destination.

## Conclusions

It is evident that tourism activity exerts anthropogenic pressure on destination territories, resulting in a «zero-sum game» effect for the destination itself, while the benefits generated for all market agents are purely economic. To mitigate the negative effects of the spatial polarization of tourism activity, it is necessary to minimize the adverse impacts of tourism on destination territories. In this way, the tourism industry can approach a «positive-sum game» scenario in terms of its impact on destination communities. Therefore, there is reason to consider destinations as a form of spatial polarization of tourism activity, since destinations do not only exist in space, but tourism in them shapes and determines the economic specialization of the societies within these destinations.

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