

# Pilgrimage tourism - conceptualization and current directions in research from the point of view of geography

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## **Abstract**

*The study represents a probe into the issue of conceptualization of pilgrimage tourism based on a study of Slovak and foreign literature. Our aim was to present the theoretical and methodological fundamentals of a pilgrimage tourism analysis, including the formulation of basic definitions, application of research methods, identification of tourism system (object, subject, product) and determination of the position of pilgrimage tourism among disciplines of geography. The research was based primarily on qualitative paradigms and methodological approaches, which allowed us to approach its holistic understanding. The interdisciplinarity presented through religious and tourism geography, in turn, allowed us to capture the full breadth and depth of the phenomenon of pilgrimage tourism in the sense of an attempt to conceptualize it. The research of religiosity, pilgrimage and pilgrimage tourism was suppressed by the communist regime in the Central European Area and experienced its Renaissance at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.*

**Keywords:** Analysis, Conceptualization, Pilgrimage, Pilgrimage tourism, Religion, Religious tourism, Research

## **Introduction**

There are few phenomena or research questions and problems that would be perceived so ambiguously or inconsistently in terms of terminology, access to study, hierarchization and position in the system of individual sciences such as pilgrimages, peregrination and pilgrimage tourism. This ambiguity stems from the different historical, religious and cultural contexts, as well as from the nature of pilgrimage activities, which are perceived differently by believers themselves.

Our ambition is to present the geographical, i.e. spatial, aspect of the study of peregrination and pilgrimage tourism, while understanding these phenomena within the scope of Christian traditions and Christian culture, with an emphasis on knowledge coming mainly from European schools of geography. Such reductionism was necessary because of an effort to achieve a deeper understanding of the relationships and links between the individual elements of pilgrimage tourism, as well as its very essence in Slovakia. It is therefore not an expression of abandoning the idea and pursuit of a comprehensive geographical approach to studying the phenomenon of pilgrimage and pilgrimage activities. Moreover, the synthesis of the present knowledge is based on an interdisciplinary accent, because in addition to the geographical bases (sub-disciplines) we also rely on the knowledge of religion and theology, sociology or history, or economics and ethnology.

The aim of our paper is to present the theoretical and methodological basis of pilgrimage tourism research based on the study and excerption of scientific works of domestic and foreign (mainly Polish, Anglo-Saxon) provenance. The detection of the territorial relations between the elements that make up the pilgrimage tourism, and the discovery of their functional patterns, provide a way of at least approaching its holistic understanding.

Presented spatial theories and models constituted on the basis of historical, empirical and philosophical foundations are concepts that emphasize qualitative (postmodernist, positivist, humanistic) paradigms and methodological approaches in its research (in terms of Korec, Rusnák, 2018; Wilczyński, 2011; Čuka, 2011a).

Within the Central European space, which was almost the entire second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, influenced by the communist regime and the regime also interfered with science and research topics, we observe some vacuum in the study of religions, religiosity of the population, pilgrimage and pilgrimage tourism (Bunčák, 2001; Krivý, 2001; Očovský, 1993; Matlovič, 1997, 2001b). The Renaissance of research occurred in the 1990s, when the Polish religious-geographic school in Cracow under the leadership of prof. A. Jackowski started to develop intensively (e.g., 1995, 2003).

In the theory of tourism geography, several research directions have been profiled and formulated over time, and almost in each of them we can identify elements and features of pilgrimage tourism in the application level. These include (Kurek et al., 2007):

- The Tourism Participation Model and the Jafar Jafari's Tourism Model,
- The Concept of Tourism as a Meeting,

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- Theory of Peripheral Places according to Christaller,
- Diffusion of Innovation Theory,
- Butler's Model for the life cycle of a tourist destination,
- The Concept of Recreational Space Formation,
- The Concept of Recreational Functions of Tourism,
- The Concept of Spatial and Functional Organization of Tourism,
- The Concept of Territorial Recreational Systems,
- The Conception of Recreational Space Perception,
- The Concept of recreational urbanization,
- The Concept of Tourism Conflict,
- The Concept of Tourism Functions.

P. Čuka (2011b) supplemented above-mentioned world trends in tourism theory by the following:

- Guiding Concept,
- The Concept of Tourism Products,
- **Religious Tourism Concept,**
- Concepts of Environmental and Alternative Tourism,
- Cartographic Concept and GIS Applications.

As we have already indicated, the issue of pilgrimage tourism will be presented from the point of view of particular geographical disciplines research, namely geography of tourism and geography of religions, but in many respects we will also touch on aspects of religious tourism, which is often identified with pilgrimage tourism. Within the Slovak school of geography, characterized by regional dominance (e.g. Krogmann, 2007a, 2007b; Golha, Krogmann, 2011; Matlovič, 2001a; Eliášová, 2004; Bublín, 2008, 2010a, 2010b, 2011; Čuka et al., 2009; Čuka, 1992, 1996, 1998), or a functional-chorological approach (Mariot, 2001, 1983), such a procedure is applied for the first time, its output being an effort to conceptualize pilgrimage tourism. The following heptagon documents the relationships between the various disciplines examining pilgrimage tourism (Fig. 1).

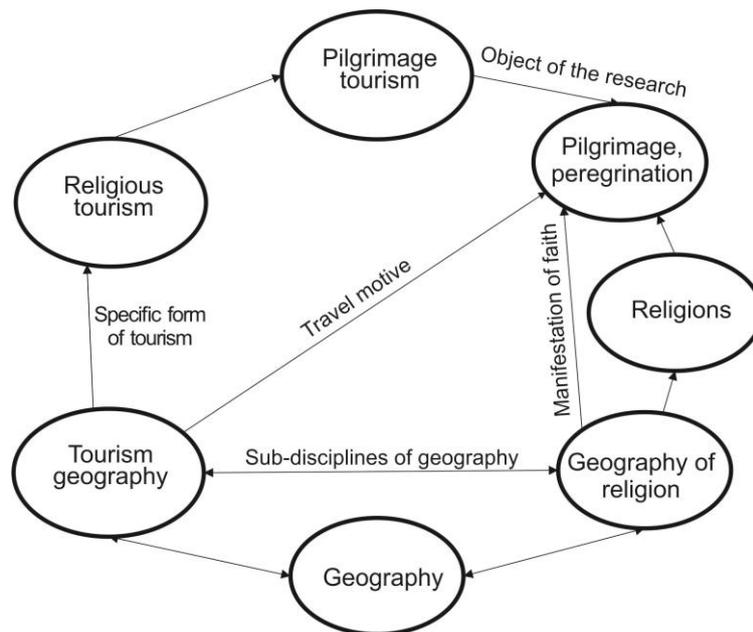


Fig. 1 Relationships and links between various geographical disciplines examining pilgrimage tourism  
 Author: own research

### Material and Methods

Pilgrimage tourism is a spatial phenomenon and its research (as well as any other phenomenon) is a set of organized activities, including study, prediction, experimentation, testing, verification and generation of scientific knowledge. In the field of thought processes, two pairs of classical methods are most commonly used, namely analysis - synthesis and induction - deduction, supplemented by “abduction”, which is a combination of these and denotes the process of deriving conclusions that broaden our knowledge (Hendl, 2008). The selected methods of research depend to a large extent on its type or on the set objectives, but another important criterion entering into the constitution of the methodological apparatus is the researcher's own individuality. It is reflected in the form of creativity, philosophy of life, opinions, approaches, values and knowledge that determine his scientific work more than the surrounding environment or financial and material security.

In the past, any geographical research has emphasized a quantitative paradigm based on a positivist philosophical direction (Korec, Rusnák, 2018), but is currently being replaced by the “new geography” (Čuka, 2011a), which has an interdisciplinary character and emphasizes qualitative methodological procedures. Therefore, all the research techniques and procedures currently used in pilgrimage tourism research are some kind of universal tools and concepts, also applied in history, sociology, ethnology, religion and other sciences.

They can be considered as basal analytical and hermeneutic methods, in terms of the generally accepted model application of the research procedures organization in the study of tourism (including pilgrimage), which has a systemic character (Matczak, 1992). The analysis may have several dimensions, ranging from elementary in the form of a review study (Kim, Kim, King, 2019; Durán-Sánchez et al., 2018; Krogmann et al., 2017, Matlovič, 2001a), motives for pilgrimage (Liro et al., 2017; Bubelíny, 2011; Lopez, 2013; Lois-González, Santos, 2014; Olsen, 2013; Kim, Kim, King, 2016) through historical which for example describes the development of the pilgrimage center and its historical-geographical specificities (Bubelíny, 2008, 2010a, 2010b; Cánoves et al., 2012; Zajicová-Nadaská, 2003; Golha, Krogmann, 2011; Krogmann, 2007a; Dancák, 2005; Jackowski, 1990), up to the statistical one, which may take the form of quantification of structures (i.e. tourism infrastructure and superstructure), number of visitors - pilgrims (Chantziantoniou, Dionysopoulou, 2017; Bond, et al., 2014); religious structures of regions of different hierarchical levels (Očovský, 1993; Nolan, 1987; Jackowski, Smith, 1992), impacts on the local economy (Terzidou, Styliadis, Szivas, 2008; Kömürçü, Saribaş, 2016; Bogan et al., 2019; Vukonić, 2002) etc.

The historical-geographical method is closely related to historical analysis, which is used to determine the historical-geographical aspects of the pilgrimage destinations genesis in the sense of studying the transformation of profane space into sacred space. On this basis we can identify the main milestones in the historical development of pilgrimage centers (phasing) with a focus on the religiosity of the place and its specifics. In our opinion, the study of historical processes is crucial for understanding the current state of the pilgrimage center, which is reflected in traditions, cultural-historical attractions, but also in the character and structure of infrastructure, etc (Čuka, 1996, 1998; Čuka et al. 2009; Bubelíny, 2008, 2010a, 2010b; Dancák, 2005; Golha, Krogmann, 2011; Krogmann, 2007b; Zajicová, 1998). The use of this method presupposes the study of source materials that need to be subjected to critical analysis. The study results are also different models of the genesis of pilgrimage centers, which can be further compared with the development of other (European) pilgrimage sites, analyze their related characteristics and differences necessary for verification of spatial patterns of pilgrimage tourism development in them. Research efforts may also result in the prediction of further development of pilgrimage centers (in terms of the "life cycle" concept according to R. Butler, 1980), thus at least partially explaining how tourism operates in the area (Butler, 2006; Čuka, 1998, 2003, 2007; Gregorová, 2009, 2012; Bubelíny, 2012).

Understanding the territorial patterns of the pilgrimage's center development, modeling it, and analyzing the transformation of its functions must necessarily be based on scientific observation. If it has the character of empirical research, it allows us to capture certain moments of objective reality as a starting material for establishing the general context (Benčo, 2001).

In order for the observation to be empirically beneficial, it must be implemented as follows:

1. establish the objects of observation (these may be pilgrims, pilgrimage routes, pilgrimage center equipment);
2. draw up an observation plan (during the annual pilgrimage, during holidays);
3. make observations.
4. repeat the observations (during various pilgrimages within a year or several consecutive years);
5. evaluate the observations (interpret results and implement research findings).

Most often, information about the spatial organization of pilgrims, pilgrimage activities, the organization of pilgrimages, transport accessibility of the pilgrimage center, etc. are obtained by the above method (Čuka, 2011; Bubelíny, 2010a, 2010b, 2011, 2012; Horák et al., 2015; Olsen, 2013; Cánoves et al., 2012).

The observer often verifies the results of the observation using other methodological procedures - interview, questionnaire, poll, narrative interview, etc. These qualitative methods, which geography understands as adopted, auxiliary procedures, belong to the group of sociological methods. They provide highly subjective information, e.g. the structure of pilgrims, their motives for pilgrimage, the perception of the pilgrimage center, the interaction of foreigners (pilgrims) versus autochthonous inhabitants of the country, the region in which the pilgrimage center is located, etc. (Wu et al., 2019; Horák et al., 2015; Cánoves et al., 2012; Kim, Kim, King, 2019; Chantziantoniou, Dionysopoulou, 2017). The information gathered in this way constitutes the primary research, i.e. the basis for identifying specific features and phenomena operating in the pilgrimage tourism system

The perception of the pilgrimage center by its visitors (pilgrims), is an interactive process taking place between man and the socio-cultural environment, based on the story of everyday experience. Pilgrims' “own true images” of the pilgrimage center allow us to explore the motives of their attendance, spatial behavior during the pilgrimage, and reveal their preferences in attendance at other pilgrimage centers (Silverman, 2009; Korec,

Rusnák, 2018; Walmsley, Lewis, 1993). If the methods of environmental perception research are based on a behavioral platform, their ambition is to create a geographical theory of human spatial behavior (preferences or non-preferences of pilgrimage centers). Based on a humanistic approach, they focus their attention on the relationships between time and space in the daily life of an individual (Gregorová, 2009; Korec, Rusnák, 2018; Walmsley, Lewis, 1993; Čuka, 2011b; Wilczyński, 2011). Tourism geography uses perceptual methods to study the system of tourism participant - recreational landscape and its perception. In our case, we could transform this relationship into a pilgrim - pilgrimage center and its perception (Kim, Kim, King, 2019; Terzidou, Styliadis, Szivas, 2008; Kömürcü, Saribaş, 2016; Liro et al., 2017).

We have so far pointed out the use of qualitative methods in pilgrimage tourism research and now we will complete the description with relevant quantitative ones. The collection, sorting, categorization and analysis of statistical information and the creation of databases may relate, for example, to: the character of the tourism infrastructure and suprastructure, the attendance of individual pilgrimage centers and their attractions, as well as the religious structure of the inhabitants of regions of different hierarchical levels, etc. (Bubelíny, 2008, 2010a, 2010b, 2011, 2012; Čuka et al., 2009; Krogmann et al., 2017; Bogan et al., 2019; Wu et al., 2019; Horák et al., 2015; Cánoves et al., 2012; Kim, Kim, King, 2019; Vukonić, 2002). The database of statistical data can be drawn up not only from the study of literature, i.e. from secondary sources (statistical lexicons, data from statistical offices, population censuses, etc.), but also from field work, which creates primary data - mentioned polls, questionnaires, physical census of the tourism objects or pilgrims during pilgrimages etc. Cartographic methods and GIS provide spatial expression of the data and their visualization. Using them we can express the intensity of the examined phenomena in space (cartogram, carto-diagram), or draw the distribution of sacral and profane objects forming a pilgrimage center (scale reduced image of the pilgrimage center).

In general, we could call these methods cabinet or camera methods (Ivanička, 1983; Čuka, 2007, 2011a). They are complementary to field research, which represents a fundamental method for the geographer to study the features and characteristics of tourism (including pilgrimage tourism).

Based on field research, it is possible to discover causal connections of phenomena affecting the development of tourism in a pilgrimage center. As we have already indicated, field research is a part and complement of many other methods, such as: observation, interview, survey, but especially field measurements and mapping work. From the perspective of the tourism geography, it is possible to formulate several basal groups of characteristics defining pilgrimage tourism, identified through field research (adapted according to Kurek et al., 2007).

These include:

- size, seasonality, length of stay and frequency of arrivals at the pilgrimage center,
- spatial features of pilgrimage tourism,
- way of organizing the pilgrimage and pilgrimage tourism,
- motives for the choice of pilgrimage center,
- leisure activities during the stay at the pilgrimage center,
- the cost of staying in the pilgrimage center,
- perception of pilgrimage center (preferences, non-preferences).

The presented qualitative and quantitative methodological procedures appear to be the most beneficial from the point of view of pilgrimage tourism research. However, the synergy of several methods, which will be based on their triangulation, makes it possible to penetrate even more deeply into the studied problem. Triangulation is a specific and non-trend-based approach to data evaluation and processing, and the concessions obtained on the basis of quantification based on its principles are always an added value of research. The combination of methods deliberately aims to understand the breadth and depth of the subject matter, and is not an attempt to express objective and absolute truth (Flick, 2009; Flick, von Kardorff, Steinke, 2004).

### **Definition of pilgrimage tourism and overview of the basic terminology**

Geography, including the tourism geography, uses a certain terminology, i.e. a conceptual apparatus, to describe and explain phenomena as well as the relationships between them. Many terms are understood differently in different disciplines because their symbolism is multilayered and has a wide range of meanings, not only mentioning a phenomenon or process, but the whole aspect (Čuka, 2011a).

The geographical definitions point out to spatial relations and relations arising between tourism and environment, or recreational landscape. The economic impacts of consumption at the destination, in turn, emphasize economic definitions. Sociological definitions draw attention to ways of spending leisure time and definitions based on managerial concepts focus on tourism actors (Gregorová et al., 2015). The introduction of non-geographical definitions is beyond the scope of this paper.

The geographical understanding of tourism thus accentuates the spatial patterns of its functioning and the holistic regional-landscape relations which it currently applies (Fig. 2). In this sense, the first more relevant definition of tourism was given by P. Mariot (1983), according to which tourism is a social activity conditional on relocating the population to parts of the landscape, characterized by interactions of landscape elements capable of causing a temporary change of residence. Otrubová (1983) understands tourism as all forms of

traveling for relaxation, recreation, learning, entertainment, culture and sport, while the visitor's stay is reflected in the economic life of the visited place.

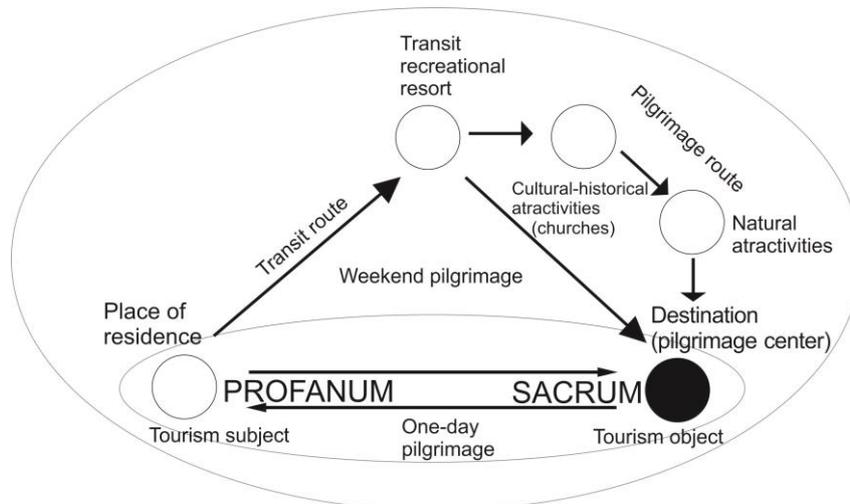


Fig. 2 Spatial model of pilgrimage tourism  
Source: Gregorová, 2015; Gúčik, 2010 – completed and modified

In a period of globalization and the development of mass tourism, it is important to explore its nature on three levels (Kołodko, 2009): spatial (geographical), temporal (historical) and interdisciplinary (synthetic) level. In principle, tourism is a socio-economic phenomenon occurring in space and time.

According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), tourism is the activity of a person traveling temporarily to a place outside his/her normal environment (outside his/her place of residence) for a period shorter than specified, for a purpose other than exercising a gainful activity at the place visited (Petrů, 2007). In principle, it is possible to identify with the definition, or it should be extended to include currently important aspects.

Tourism is therefore defined as a temporary stay away from the place of permanent residence in order to restore the mental and physical resources and needs of a person, or to meet his/her mental and physical needs, provided that the stay is not directly connected with raising funds; and is performed in accordance with ethical and moral values (Čuka, 2011a - modified).

Motivation factors, i.e. reasons for participation in tourism, are also a long-term researched issue. Already in the 1950s Hunziker and Krapf identified five basic motives: 1. exploring the surroundings, 2. religiosity and religious emotions, 3. recognizing important phenomena of contemporary life, 4. healing stays and prophylaxis, 5. enjoying nature (Čuka, 2011a). Based on the motives, that we will discuss in more detail later on, we can typologize the participants and the forms and types of tourism (Fig. 3).

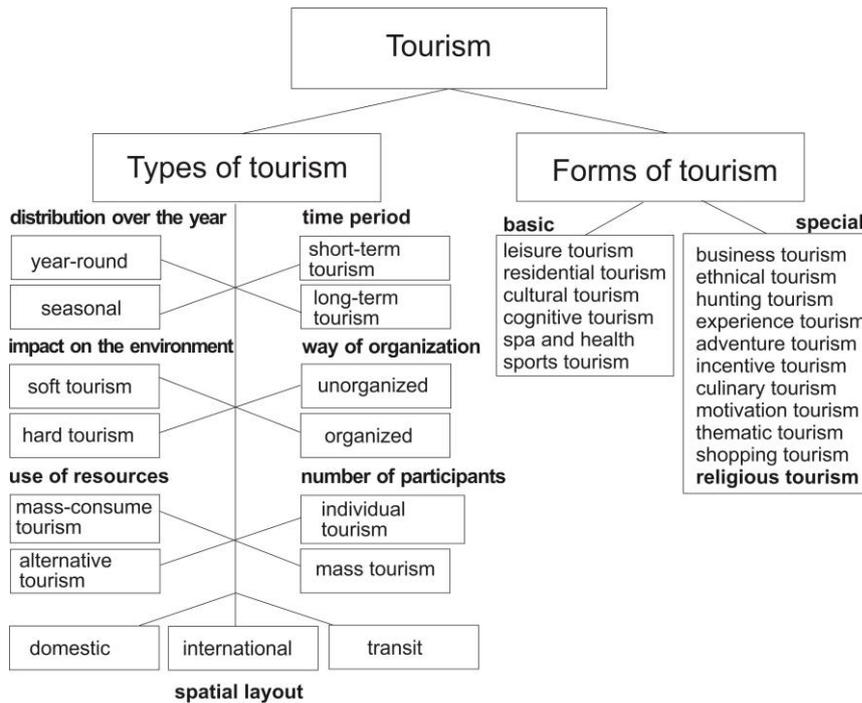


Fig. 3 Types and forms of tourism  
 Source: Zelenka – Pásková, 2002 –modified and supplemented

Another example of the application of motivation research in the classification of tourism forms is the categorization of J. Warszyńska (1999):

- (a) cognitive tourism (related to the internal need for personal, cultural, development),
- (b) leisure, recreational tourism (motivated by the need for mental regeneration and physical forces),
- (c) religious tourism (it has religious or faith-related motives),
- (d) business tourism (linked to the organization of business travels and trips).

Travel motive is the most important aspect in distinguishing and specifying tourism. Religious tourism, faith tourism and pilgrimage tourism are thus selected in the tourism geography. Religion or faith is understood as a tradition-based system of beliefs about the world and the forces that control it and in this system of beliefs it reflects the relationship of man to the variously understood "sacrum", which takes on expression in religious doctrine, world and organization (Banek et al., 1992). Thus, if we understand the terms religion and faith as synonymous in the sense of Matlovič (1997, 2001b), Halbwachs (1997), Eliade (1959), Banek et al., 1992, then these two terms can be identified.

Religious tourism is therefore defined as "all tourist travels, the main motive of which is visiting sacral and religious objects or towns. Unlike pilgrimage tourism, it is understood as a broader term. Religious tourism, for example, may be attended by members of religious systems who do not have a pilgrimage practice within the cult – e.g. many Protestant churches (Matlovičová et al., 2015, p. 481).

Pilgrimage tourism is a part of religious tourism. It denotes tourist travels, the main motive of which is religious or also religious-cognitive reasons, while part of the journey is devoted to participation in pilgrimage as part of a religious cult. The pilgrimage is organized and is generally governed by strict ritual rules. It includes other elements of religious cult – e.g. prayers, worship, meditation and other forms of religious ceremony. The pilgrimage tourism destinations are sacred places - cult centers or sanctuaries (Matlovičová et al., 2015, p. 481).

In relation to the already introduced, generally valid and accepted geographical definition of tourism, **pilgrimage tourism can be defined as part of a (subtype) religious tourism whose participants (pilgrims) temporarily leave their place of residence to visit the holy place (locus sacer) for religious, spiritual reasons, where they practice activities related to religious cult.**

Pilgrims, i.e. participants in the pilgrimage, do not perceive themselves as participants in tourism, nor are they considered to be tourists (Čuka, 1996). Pilgrim is a person who performs pilgrimage. Pilgrimage equally represents the physical and spiritual world of the person who sets out for it, it is a journey through time and space with a transcendent goal, but also with the effort to heal physically or mentally (Coleman, Elsner, 1997). Pilgrimage is one of the public manifestations of piety; it can be seen as a journey to any sacred place (loca sancta) which is made because of religious motives (Matlovič, 2001b; Gavenda, 2004). The pilgrimage can also be interpreted as an ascetic exercise, because the pilgrim voluntarily abandons the established order (Dancák,

2005). According to Jackowski (1995), pilgrimages are characterized by man (homo religiosus), geographical space (profanum) and sacred place (sacrum).

Sacrum, according to Matlovič (2001b), cannot be precisely defined, it is typically a religious value, decisive for the destiny of human being and the real world. It is a place separating holy space from outer, profane space (Jackowski, 2000).

**The position of pilgrimage tourism in the system of disciplines of geography (geography of religion and religious tourism)**

Pilgrimage activities are part of research in several sciences. One of them is the geography of religion, or religious geography, which was established in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but the early beginnings of interest in religious-geographical issues can be found in antiquity. During its development, several research directions have been developed: a) religion’s impact on the landscape, b) religions and cultural clashes, c) religious ecology (Matlovič, 2001b).

The geography of religion in terms of metageographical works (Mičian, 1984) is defined as a partial analytical scientific discipline of human geography, which examines spatial aspects of religious systems and their interactions with other elements of the landscape (physical-geographical and human-geographical) sphere. (Fig.4). The most important tasks of geography of religion include (Matlovič, 1997):

- research on the role of the environment in the evolution of religious systems, in particular their institutional aspects;
- research into the transformation of the environmental role under the influence of religious systems,
- research into spatial diffusion and spatial organization of individual religious systems,
- research into geographical distribution of religions.

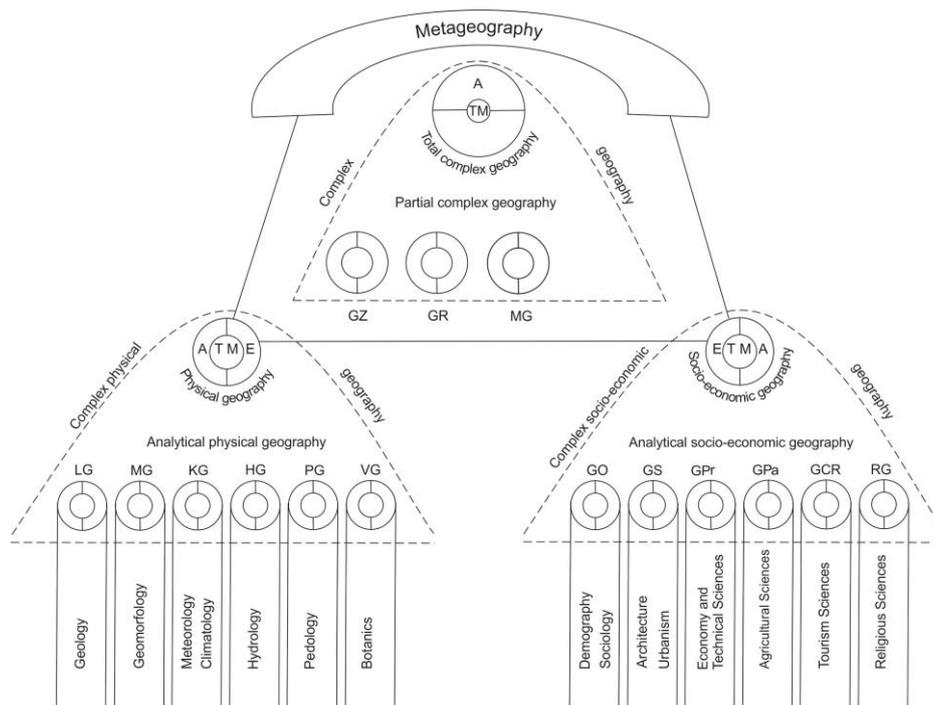


Fig. 4 System of geographical sciences  
Source: Mičian 1984

The geography of religion works closely with history, sociology, ethnology, religion, etc. (Fig. 5) exploring the following scientific topics (Jackowski, 2003):

- geographical environment (space) and religion,
- spatial development of religious systems (in territories of different hierarchical level),
- **pilgrimage and migration for religious reasons,**
- religions and types of settlements (with religious function),
- the impact of religions on the economic development of settlements,
- religions and tourism,
- religions and environmental protection,
- regionalization of areas with religious function,

- religious cartography.

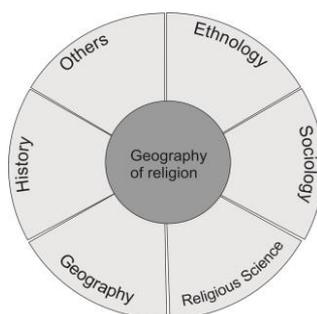


Fig. 5 The position of geography of religion in the system of geographical and related sciences  
Source: Jackowski, 2003

Religious geography was initially clearly situated within the framework of cultural geography, and later began to be understood as a discipline lying at the intersection of cultural and social geography (Matlovič, 1997). Religion is part of the spiritual sphere of man, manifested by different traditions and practices. The numerous sacral buildings, usually valuable in both historical and architectural terms, are its external expression. This issue is the subject of research into cultural geography (Jackowski, 2003). Leaving the position of perception of religious geography as a part of cultural geography is not possible if we consider religion as part of culture and culture as a motive for participation in tourism (Čuka, 2011a; Lochmannová, 2015). In this sense, cultural tourism can be differentiated into (Tanaš, 2008):

- urban tourism,
- rural cultural tourism,
- ethnic tourism,
- military tourism,
- tourism of industrial and technical monuments,
- tourism of living history,
- cultural and natural tourism,
- exotic tourism,
- culinary tourism,
- hobby-oriented tourism,
- **religious tourism,**
- dark tourism.

Religious tourism is part of cultural tourism also from the perspective of economists. According to them, it is associated with the traditions of world religions and its most frequent manifestations are pilgrimages, characterized by features such as participants, religious act and pilgrimage site. Religious tourism differs from cultural tourism by religious motives and by refusing to designate its participants as tourists but pilgrims (Rinschede, 1992). The pilgrimage place can be a city, village, settlement or landscape feature (holy mountain, holy river). Pilgrimage activities, linked with religious ceremonies, make it necessary to build adequate infrastructure at the destination (Gúčik, 2010; Ryglová, 2009).

Within the Slovak school of geography, several works appeared in connection with religious geography, which can be thematically organized into groups or research directions (Matlovič, 2001b):

- theoretical and methodological issues of geography of religion,
- analysis of religiosity and religious structure of the population,
- analysis of ecclesiastical territorial organization,
- **the issue of pilgrimages and relevant religious infrastructure,**
- study of relations between religions and geography.

Š. Fekete (1974) is considered a pioneer of geographical research in pilgrimage towns in Slovakia. Today, however, the differences between cultural, religious and pilgrimage tourism are blurring, or the boundaries between them are very difficult to identify (Krogmann, et al., 2017).

### Structure and system of pilgrimage tourism

Tourism (including pilgrimage) is an internally integrated system, a unified set of elements between which there are interrelationships and bonds. In terms of scientific knowledge and cognition, this system is made up of three subsystems: subject, object and product. As a subject we consider a tourist participant, i.e. a pilgrim - homo viator, a travelling man (Jackowski, 2003). The object consists of a destination (pilgrimage center, pilgrimage locality or pilgrimage site) together with tourism enterprises and tourism institutions (accommodation and catering facilities, stalls with devotionals). The product (Beránek et al., 2013), in our conception is a pilgrimage itself. In addition to internal bonds, the system also shows interactions with the external environment,

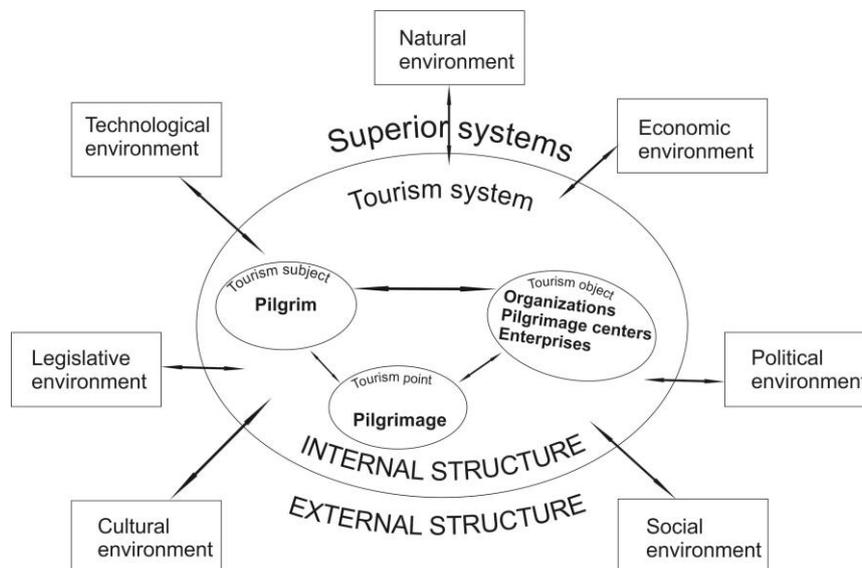
which may take the form of a natural, economic, social, cultural, political, legislative and technological environment (Kaspar, 1995). The consequence of the relationship with the external environment is the openness of the system, which causes mutual influence of its elements (subsystems) and individual types of environment (Table 1).

**Table 1** Attributes of tourism systems

Attribute	Explanation – description
<i>Openness</i>	The system is functional on the principle of interactions between its elements and on the principle of information exchange with the surrounding environment.
<i>Functionality</i>	The system operates on the basis of subjects, connections and phenomena that shape recreational functions.
<i>Hierarchy</i>	The system is a unified whole consisting of hierarchically stored subsystems. Each subsystem has different characteristics, so it is not possible to obtain a universal tourism product.
<i>Dynamism</i>	The system operates cyclically and it is based on feedback and reactions.
<i>Alignment</i>	All reactions are directed to tourism.
<i>Connectivity</i>	Other elements (outside the system) are also used in the creation of tourism products.
<i>Stability</i>	The system has features of heterogeneity, complementarity and self-renewability.
<i>Objectivity of existence</i>	The system is based on the form of tourism offer, needs of actors and complexity of needs.

Source: Zmysłony, Nawrot, 2009

Pilgrimage tourism acts as an organized unit composed of elements with relationships within and outside its system. We differentiate the structure of pilgrimage tourism into internal and external (Fig. 6).



*Fig. 6* System and structure of pilgrimage tourism  
Source: Kaspar, 1995; Gúčík, 2010 – completed and modified

We consider the subject, the participant, the most important of all three elements of the pilgrimage tourism system. It can take the form of a tourist, a visitor or a resident. According to the length of stay we distinguish: a) excursionists or same-day visitors, i.e. persons whose stay does not exceed 24 hours b) tourists, i.e. persons whose stay lasts at least one overnight stay and max. one calendar year (Michalová, et al., 2001). Pilgrims form a group of same-day visitors and tourists. If they participate in the whole program of pilgrimages, usually two days during the weekend, they are tourists, but if they only stay on certain parts of the program and perform only some religious acts, they are in the sense of abovementioned characteristic (Fig. 7).

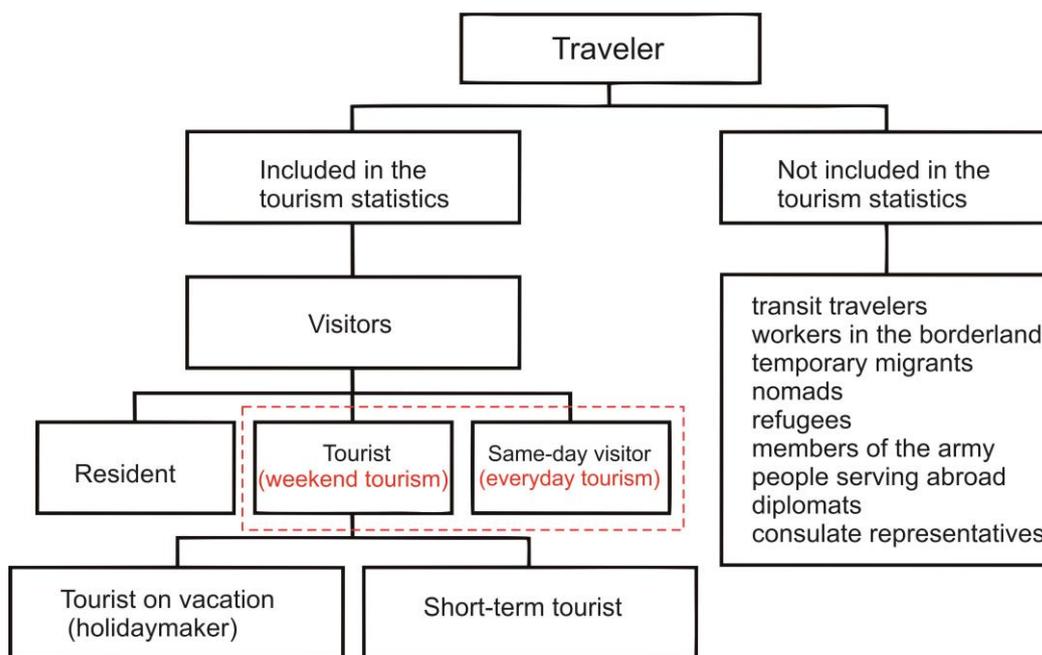


Fig. 7 Structure of visitors in (pilgrimage) tourism  
Source: Gúčík, 2010 – modified

Krogmann (2007a) identifies two categories of people participating in religious/pilgrimage tourism. The first, minor category, is the arrival of visitors with narrowly defined area of interest on religious topics motivated by professional conferences (most often priests). The second category are believers coming to religious places for religious holidays (pilgrimage), for general church consecration festivals, religious camps or for spiritual exercises.

Since (pilgrimage) tourism is an open system, it is strongly influenced by the surroundings, the external environment that creates superior, interconnected structures.

The natural environment is the most important of all elements of the external system. Although pilgrimage tourism has a spiritual dimension, pilgrims, as participants in tourism, come to pilgrimage sites also for the purpose of physical and mental regeneration. However, the predominant mental regeneration must take place in an attractive environment without disturbing effects on components of the physical-geographical sphere (in particular soil, water, air, vegetation). The attractiveness of the pilgrimage center is assessed by pilgrims primarily through factors of undisturbed environment and good technical facilities of destination, which are a precondition for its further development.

We consider the growth of disposable incomes, better income distribution, stable monetary system, etc. as economic factors having a positive impact on tourism development. Negative effects include economic crises, declines in industrial production, an unstable monetary system, or a disadvantageous conjunctural situation. The economic environment carries several functions, for pilgrimage tourism the most important are: a) income function (purchase of religious and non-religious items in stalls or other sale sites, accommodation, food, transport of pilgrims, other payments), b) employment function (jobs for organizers, sellers, clergy, employees of municipal offices, providers of accommodation and catering, etc.), c) production function (creation of values – consumer goods and non-consumer goods - intended for pilgrims, consumption of goods and services), d) function of impact on the state balance of payments (Kaspar, 1995; Bubelíny, 2012).

The social environment affects the tourism system on the part of the subject (pilgrim) as well as on the side of the object, i.e. the destination. Pilgrimage tourism does not classify visitors according to socio-economic status, but applies elements of solidarity, which is not a common manifestation in other types and forms of tourism (Eliášová, 2004). The social environment is created by pilgrims with their families, friends or acquaintances participating in the pilgrimage. Within this community, it is necessary to explore the pilgrim's company on pilgrimage, sex of pilgrims, age structure (pre-reproductive, reproductive, post-reproductive age), the highest level of education attained (none, primary school, secondary school, university), etc. On the other hand, pilgrimage activities also affect the social environment of the permanent population around the pilgrimage site.

The political environment fundamentally determines international tourism, but in the past it has also strongly influenced its religious form. In the period 1948-1989, tourism in the then Czechoslovakia took the form of a state-political function - from the highest government positions there was a tendency to control and supervise it. The society supposed to become atheistic, all religious beliefs were rejected, nor were officially identified in the census. This situation lasted until 1991 (Očovský, 1993). During the period of socialism, the

state authorities had a significant influence on the standard of living of the population, determined the level of business activity, the extent of leisure time in society. Politics of “socialist state” had to be based on the Communist Party's policy, based on the conclusions of the Congress, which set the economic and social program for a certain period (Piteková, 2007).

Pilgrimage tourism as one of the types of tourism had even worse conditions for development, while religious motivations of all kinds were rejected by the regime. Pilgrimage activities were banned, pilgrims persecuted, pilgrimage sites destroyed. In the years 1948-1989, the state's negative attitude towards faith caused riots in some areas and led to politically motivated pilgrimage activities. Although the overwhelming majority participated in pilgrimages because of religious reasons, part of the pilgrims (especially young men) understood their participation as an expression of disagreement with the political system at the time, as well as a public manifestation of faith (Novodvorská, 2007).

Government policy can affect the tourism environment through government financial assistance, the amount of subsidies provided by local authorities, the taxation of natural persons and legal entities, social security policy, the amount and dates of public holidays, school periods, care for historical monuments, freedom of movement, cooperation with specific countries, etc. (Horner, Swarbrook, 2003).

The cultural aspect is of great importance for pilgrimage tourism. Travels for religious reasons, as we have already mentioned, are part of cultural motivation (Kaspar, 1995). In the pilgrimage activity, cultural values directly or indirectly develop. In general, by participating in tourism, one develops his cultural interests and expands the range of basic knowledge, thereby increasing his educational level and thus contributing to the general cultural level (Gúčík, 2000). Pilgrims coming to the pilgrimage destination come from different regions of the state or abroad. They bring various manifestations of behavior, cultural habits, manifestations of folk religiosity and so on (acculturation, cultural assimilation) to the destination. At the destination (pilgrimage center) there are clashes of different cultures that interact with each other (Hladká, 2005):

1. culture of the principal region (the point of beginning) - includes everything that is typical of all the inhabitants of the region from which the pilgrims come. It basically includes the population of a regional area, a nation, or nations participating in a pilgrimage.
2. recreational culture - this includes everything that is typical for a group of people coming from one region for recreation. In pilgrimage tourism it represents a culture of pilgrims from one settlement, religious association or parish.
3. Service culture - represents everything that is typical for a group of people in the receiving region (destination) that is in direct contact with tourism. It represents habits and customs of the local population in the pilgrimage site.
4. culture of the target region - is the sum of everything that is typical for all the inhabitants of the receiving region. It includes the resulting clash effect of all the cultures mentioned.

### Conclusion

The uniqueness of geography as a scientific discipline lies in the clarification of the issue of human-geographic relations. The tourism geography has enriched this research with other theories and concepts; e.g. participant of tourism - recreational landscape, model of spatial development of recreational center (Butler, 2006). Moreover, religious, or pilgrimage tourism has developed another aspect of this relationship into the study of the landscape's dichotomy and its perception as sacrum - profanum (Čuka, 2011a).

Our ambition was to present theoretical and methodological basis of pilgrimage tourism research. The elements of which it is formed and the spatial bonds that apply between them were judged on a historical, empirical and philosophical basis. Formulation of basic definitions, application of research methods, identification of the system (object, subject, product) and study of the position of pilgrimage tourism in geographical disciplines based mainly on qualitative paradigms and methodological approaches were aimed at approaching its holistic understanding.

The emphasis on interdisciplinarity (Fig. 12) allowed us to capture the multi-aspect and multi-sector of tourism phenomenon and especially pilgrimage in the sense of an attempt to conceptualize it.

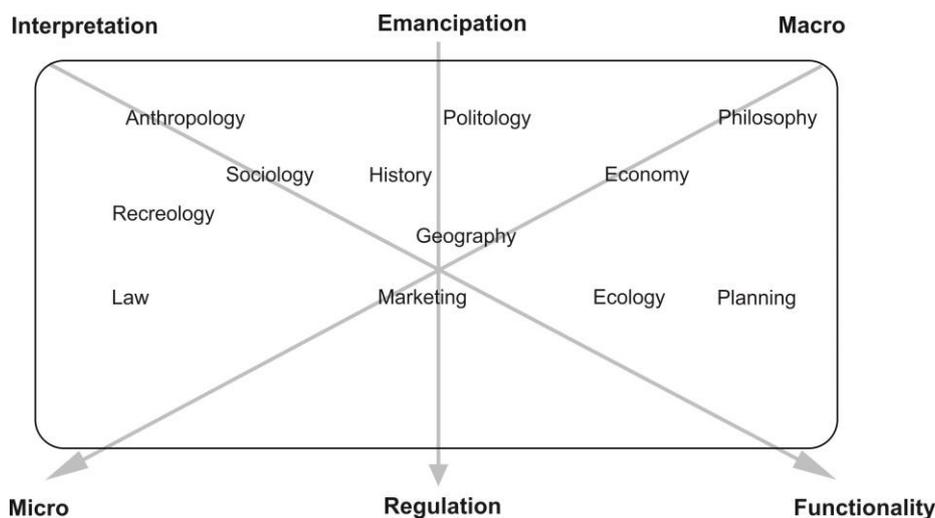


Fig. 12 Interdisciplinary matrix of (pilgrimage) tourism research  
Source: Winiarski, 2008

In the new millennium, there has been an increase in the interest of experts, not only geographers, in research into issues related to religious or pilgrimage tourism. The first more relevant work (WoS) of this kind was published in 1968 and since then there has been a constant increase in scientific contributions on several aspects of religiosity and pilgrimage (Durán-Sánchez et al., 2018).

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