# Tourism Attraction System

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## INTRODUCTION

Over the last couple of decades, the interest for the overall system of tourism attractions of both tourism scholars and practitioners is dwindling. The phenomenon of tourism attractions is narrowed semantically and in terms of its content to the real tourism attractions, that is, those already accessible to tourists and featuring prominently in tourism marketing, such as the Niagara Falls, the Great Pyramid of Giza, the Louvre Museum and so forth. It is no surprising, therefore, that research interest in tourism attractions is reduced almost exclusively to marketing, while their development aspect is mostly ignored. The un- or underdeveloped tourism attractions are treated mostly as other tourism resources.

Given the theoretical underdevelopment of the tourism attraction phenomenon, the purpose of this chapter is to present the System of Tourism Attractions developed at the Institute for Tourism over the last two decades. It captures numerous and complex relationships that exist in the attraction microcosm between the elements of tourism attractions (potential and real) and the tourism system as a whole. It is unique, integrated, functional, multidimensional system that represents their phenomenology and, at the same time, provides a practical interactive

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tool for record-keeping purposes in form of the Registry and Atlas of Tourism Attractions. In this way the system fills the current gap in tourism attractions research where the integrity of the process by which tourism resources are converted into tourism attraction products has not yet been sufficiently explored and researched.

A development of the Tourism Attraction System can be, broadly, divided in two stages. In the first stage, the focus of attention were the tourism attractions and the key causal links between them, resulting in the functional classification of tourism attractions as a theoretical framework and a specification of data to be recorded for each attraction—a draft register entry page (Kušen, 1999; Kušen, 2002a, 2002b; Kušen & Tadej, 2003). The System itself and the practical model for the functional document management of the System through the Registry and Atlas of Tourism Attractions (Kušen, 2010) were created in the second stage. In outlining theoretical underpinnings and development and testing of the System, this chapter is divided in the two main parts. The first part deals with the phenomenology of tourism attractions and defines both their form and their relationship with other elements of a tourism system. The second part is focused on the relationship between attractions and destinations to create the System of Tourism Attractions. At the end, the synthesis provides an overview of the newly acquired knowledge on tourism attractions as a synergy of both research stages.

## FIRST STAGE: THE FOCUS ON TOURISM ATTRACTIONS

The main objective was to collect, integrate and systematize the available knowledge and information dealing with the phenomenon of tourism attractions in the broadest possible sense. Methodologically, the deductive-inductive approach was used. Theoretical framework derived from the literature was tested simultaneously through a series of case studies. Interactions between the results of the deductive theory building and the test results of case studies assumed a creative course and yielded a series of original results: the functional classification of tourism resources, a functional classification of tourism motives/activities, a basic functional classification of tourism attractions and a marketing and development assessment of tourism attractions. For practical purposes, specification of data to be recorded for each attraction—a draft register entry page—provided a foundation for the System of Tourism Attractions.

### *Tourism Attractions Theoretical Framework*

When the research into tourism attractions was undertaken during the 1990s, it became evident that scientific and professional literature neglected research into tourism resources that attract visitors especially when it came to their developmental component and function and, especially, within the framework of the long-term planning of tourism development. Only a couple of papers were explicitly dealing with the integrated understanding of the tourism attraction phenomenon.

Mill and Morrison (1985) functionally positioned tourism attraction well in the broad structure of a unique tourism system. This system is presented graphically in the form of a wheel that consists the four key segments, market, travel, tourism destination and marketing, and the four activities that link them together: the travel purchase, the shape of travel demand, the selling of travel and reaching the marketplace. Tourism attractions are located in the third quadrant (tourism destinations) and are highlighted as the especially attractive factors of tourism supply. However, a comprehensive and all-inclusive system of tourism attractions was missing. Few years later Lew (1987) made an ideographic typology of tourism attractions by summarizing data from some 40 papers published by some 30 authors. Most of that research was pragmatically focused only on very few individual and mutually poorly connected parts of attraction phenomenology. As such, it failed to provide a complete explanation or comprehensive picture of the complex mechanism that interlinks not only tourism attractions but also many other elements of tourism. It was Leiper that, in 1990, published a paper under the pretentious title *Tourism Attraction Systems*, an article that failed short in capturing comprehensiveness of such a system. Then, there is ample literature dealing with this issue, yet all of it only partially, in outlines or in passing. In the more practical terms, the paradigm of prevalent attitudes toward tourism attractions is illustrated by a rather less known book—*The ICM Guide to World Tourism Attractions* (2000). The book provides an overview of 222 most significant real tourism attractions worldwide, for example, those attractions that are already well established on the global market. The attractions are classified as Amusement, Cultural, Historical Tourism Market, Human-made, Natural and Religious, with some assigned to two categories. In the context of this discussion, it is important as it best illustrates an ad hoc approach to development of typology of tourism attractions prevailing even today.

### *Definition of Tourism Attractions*

Given the state of Tourism Attraction Research, it is important to discuss the meaning of tourism attraction. The most common perception of tourism attractions is that they are dominantly visual sensations that arouse strong emotions in visitors. There is impression that a large segment of the profession shares this romantic view of tourism attractions. Professional and scientific publications and dictionaries offer a host of tourism attraction definitions. Differences in definitions reflect mostly context in which they are created. Tourists (consumers) experience tourism attractions in one way, whereas geographers, marketing experts or long-term tourism planners have different perceptions.

In line with the objectives of this research, a more complex definition was required, deriving from the basic principles that a system of tourism attractions is a subsystem of a larger tourism system. Within this system, tourism attractions are considered to be a source of energy that moves the entire wheel of a tourism system. They are a magnet that attracts visitors to visit a tourism destination and act as the primary generator of destination tourism development. From this perspective, two aspects are overlooked in the prevalent approach to tourism attractions—the importance of a long-term development vs. short-term marketing approach and the considerations of motives that drive travel decisions with the strong focus on leisure travel, while non-leisure travel motives are mostly ignored.

Probably the most comprehensive definition of tourism attractions is given by Lew (2000, p. 35) that provides a good starting point for dwelling into key issues in tourism attraction definition:

Attractions are more than just a site or an event in a destination. They are an integral part of a larger tourism system that also consists of tourists and markers. Attraction typologies vary considerably depending on whether they are being used for marketing or planning purposes. No site, sight or event is an attraction in itself. It only becomes one when a tourism system is created to designate and elevate it to the status of an attraction. Almost any object—real or intangible—may be designated as having some special quality that allows it to be elevated through advertising to the status of an attraction. The only intrinsic requirement of the object is that it is associated with a location. This differentiates attractions from other consumable goods. Rather than bringing the goods to the consumer, the tourist must go to the attraction to experience it. Thus, the system that creates and supports an attraction must have three major components to exist: an object or event

located at a site, a tourist or consumer, and a marker, an image that tells the tourist why the object or event is of interest …

Lew (2000, p. 35) then continues to specify characteristics of a tourism attraction and their relationship with other tourism resources as well as principles of their evaluation:

…The objects from which attractions are created are typically environmental and cultural resources….From the perspective of the tourist, they consist of objects to see, activities to do and experiences to remember … The assessment of attractions is a common part of planning and marketing and is undertaken to understand the competitive advantage of one place over others. Attractions are inventoried, and their potential for development (or need for protection) are studied. No single agreed-upon typology of attractions exists to conduct an inventory, in part because most places have their own distinctive qualities. Attraction inventories have been approached in one or more of three ways. The most common approach is to group attractions into nominal categories (also referred to as formal and ideographic). Such categories include cultural artefacts and nature. Examples of the former include special structures (buildings, bridges, and monuments), communities, theme parks, cuisine and works of art. Nature includes mountains and other scenery, vegetation, climate and nature preserves and parks. Depending on the place and the purpose of the attraction inventory, other types of categories are often combined with the nominal ones … attractions may also be classified into cognitive or perceptual categories (see cognition), such as authenticity, educational, adventurous and recreational. They can be inventoried based on their organizational or structural characteristics, including isolated or clustered, urban or rural, low or high capacity, and seasonal or year-round attraction (see seasonality). The cognitive approach to attraction inventories is used when the destination image is of primary interest for marketing purposes. The organizational approach is used when undertaking community planning and controlling the development process are the main concern.

Although comprehensive, this definition contradicts the adopted principles of attraction being part of the larger tourism system and where both real and potential tourism attractions as well as leisure and non-leisure motives are treated as equally important. The main propositions of this definition are not particularly effective in building an integrated and well-rounded system of tourism attractions.

From the perspective adopted in this research, the potential tourism attractions—those tourism resources that can be turned into real tourism

attractions, resources with the immanent 'seed' of tourism attractive-ness—should not be excluded from the overall body of tourism attrac-tions. Based on a critical analysis of available literature and results of case studies, the following definition of tourism attractions was developed and adopted in subsequent development of the Tourism Attraction System: potential and real tourism attractions represent the basic tourism resources of every tourism destination. They determine destination's tourism prod-uct and its overall development. The essence of tourism attractions lies in the fact that they attract tourists and satisfy their needs, travel motives and activities. All potential and real tourism attractions are strongly spatially related, either as spatial elements or their existence is spatially limited to a certain area, which forces tourists to travel in order to experience them.

### Tourism Attractions as a Part of Tourism Resource System

As the literature of that time has not successfully dealt with the dis-tinction between potential and real tourism attractions nor proposed a coherent Tourism Attraction System/framework, there was a need to functionally position both real and potential tourism attractions within an integrated system of tourism resources. Lew (1987), in the already mentioned analysis of 30 or so studies dealing with tourism attractions, concluded that in most studies potential and real tourism attractions were considered the basic resources upon which tourism had developed. However, Lew also concluded that researchers had not completely com-prehended the multi-layered meaning of terms related to the nature of tourism attractions as phenomena that appears in a physical environment, as well as inside the heads (thoughts) of tourists. Despite the analysis of a large number of works by a large number of authors, his Framework of Tourism Attraction Research remained literally just a framework replete with interesting views on the phenomenon of tourism attractions, but lacking a real synthesis.

In contrast to Lew, Leiper (1990) built his system of tourism attrac-tions on real tourism attractions and shaped it exclusively on the basis of the relationship between the tourist and the real tourism attraction. This kind of approach is very important for the marketing purpose. However, by overlooking potential tourism attractions and neglecting evaluation of the entire tourism destination attraction base for planning purposes, such an approach fails to ensure a system of tourism attractions satisfying equally marketing and planning purposes.

All tourism attractions (potential and real) are tourism resources, but all tourism resources do not necessarily have to be tourism attractions. A non-selective use of the term tourism resource instead of potential tourism attraction is not wrong in principle, but this benign terminological practice becomes an obstacle in construction of a functional system of tourism attractions with respect to the goals and tasks that are posed before such a system. Therefore, the results obtained through research on tourism resources are presented in a form of a Contribution to the Functional Classification System of Tourism Resources (Table 7.1).

**Table 7.1** Contribution to the functional classification system of tourism resources

A. Basic tourism resources (tourism resource base)
   1. Potential tourism attractions
   2. Real tourism attractions
B. Other direct tourism resources
   1. Tourism accommodation and catering facilities
   2. Supporting tourism facilities
   3. Human resources for tourism
   4. Income from tourism
   5. Tourism development zones
   6. Tourism places
   7. Tourism destinations
   8. Travel agencies
   9. Tourism organizations (tourist boards, associations, etc.)
   10. Tourist information and promotional materials
   11. Tourist information system
   12. Tourism education of the local population
   13. Tourism attractiveness of surrounding destinations
C. Indirect tourism resources
   1. Preserved environment
   2. Geographical and transit position
   3. Transport connections
   4. General education level of the local population
   5. Financial potential
   6. Communal and social infrastructure
   7. Quality of spatial organization
   8. Facility design, exterior design, green surfaces
   9. Safety, security and political stability
   10. Other resources

*Source:* Kušen (2002a), p. 17

In this table, tourism resources are divided into three groups: (1) basic tourism resources (tourism attraction base) comprising of all potential and real tourism attractions; (2) other direct tourism resources, grouping all tourism resources that are managed or significantly influenced by the tourism industry; and (3) indirect tourism resources, featuring all resources on which tourism industry depends but over which it does not have much of an influence.

### *Tourist Motives and Activities*

The preceding discussion has focused on the need to consider both real and potential tourism attractions when building a Tourism Attraction System that can serve the short-term marketing needs as well as the long-term planning goals. The second aspects lacking in the theoretical discourse on tourism attraction were that of the motives driving travel decisions, in particular reference to the non-leisure travel. Lew (1987, p.554 ) begins his discussion on the essence of tourism attraction with a witty remark: 'Without tourism attractions there would be no tourism (Gunn 1972:24), but without tourists there would be no tourist attractions'. This is just a succinct way to describe the nature of tourism and the preordained bond that exists between tourists, tourist needs and motives for travels and the completely defined types of tourism attractions. Thus, the types of tourism attractions of a destination influence the types of tourism that can be developed. To overcome this gap, the basic functional classification of tourist motifs/activities (Table 7.2) was developed. It was based on the OECD's international classification of international visitors (*OECD, 1992*, p. 194). It installs equality between leisure- and non-leisure-motivated travels, which is very important for the subsequent definition, classification and evaluation of tourism attractions.

### *Basic Functional Classification of Tourism Attractions*

Now, with a working definition of tourism attractions satisfying both marketing and planning purpose and clear positioning of tourism attractions within Tourism Resource System, the foundations were set for development of the basic functional classification of tourism attractions. To date, in both scholarly and professional writings, there is a stubbornly held division of tourism attractions into natural and cultural (human-made), and, sometimes, events are added to them. The current classifications of

**Table 7.2** Basic functional classification of tourist motives/ activities

1. Leisure motives/activities
   1.1. Rest/recuperation
   1.2. Sport recreation
   1.3. Leisure education
   1.4. Pleasure and entertainment
2. Non-leisure motives/activities
   2.1. Business travel
   2.2. Medical treatment
   2.3. Professional education
   2.4. Travel conditioned by traffic infrastructure—transit
   2.5. Other obligations

*Source:* Adapted from Kušen (2002a), p. 37; Kušen (2010), p. 414

tourism attractions are one sided (they comprise only real tourism attractions); they are formal (providing a basic division into natural and anthropogenic); they are narrowly described (without significant evaluation); they are non-systematic (without a clear articulation of their vertical and horizontal hierarchy); they are pronouncedly non-functional (they cannot be included either directly or in any general terms into the modern documentation systems or analytical procedures inherent to the tourism resource management processes or the process of planning long-term tourism development). Most of all, they do not reflect the level of theoretical development of tourism in general.

While some authors have expanded the range of tourism attractions, their categories and typology, they have failed to achieve an integrated and closed functional system that would comprise the key multidimensional relationships between the types of tourism attractions, their characteristics/properties and the sites where they are located. Of the existing classification, the most comprehensive is Lew's (1987) Composite Ideograph of Tourist Attraction Typology, where nine categories of attractions are defined, based on a matrix of nature, human and nature-human interface across the top and general environments, specific features and inclusive environments along the side (Table 7.3).

The WTO (1993) also attempted to classify the tourism attraction resources into natural resources, cultural and historical heritage for tourism, climate conditions and infrastructure and tourism services. Classification of tourism attractions was also attempted by Mill and Morrison (1985) in their book *The Tourism System*. Their classification starts with the two basic cat-

**Table 7.3**   Lew's Composite Ideograph of Tourist Attraction Typology

| Nature | Nature-human interface | Human |
|---|---|---|
| General environment: | | |
| 1. Panoramas | 4. Observational | 7. Settlement infrastructure |
| Mountain | Rural/agriculture | Utility types |
| Sea coast | Scientific gardens | Settlement morphology |
| Plain |   Animals (zoos) | Settlement functions |
| Arid |   Plants |   Commerce |
| Island |   Rocks and archeology |     Retail |
| | |   Finance |
| | |     Institutions |
| | |   Government |
| | |   Education and science |
| | |   Religion |
| | |   People |
| | |   Way of life |
| | |   Ethnicity |
| Specific features: | | |
| 2. Landmarks | 5. Leisure nature | 8. Tourism infrastructure |
| Geological | Trails | Forms of access |
| Biological | Parks |   To and from a destination |
|   Flora |   Beach |   Destination tour routes |
|   Fauna |   Urban | Information and receptivity |
| Hydrological |   Other | Basic needs |
| | Resorts |   Accommodations |
| | |   Meals |
| Inclusive environment: | | |
| 3. Ecological | 6. Participatory | 9. Leisure superstructure |
| Climate | Mountain activities | Recreation entertainment |
| Sanctuaries |   Summer |   Performances |
|   National parks |   Winter |   Sporting events |
|   Nature reserves | Water activities |   Amusements |
| | Other outdoor activities | Culture, history and art |
| | |   Museums and monuments |
| | |   Performances |
| | |   Festivals |
| | |   Cuisine |

*Source*: Lew (1987) p. 558

egories of tourism attractions—natural and man-made—and then divided further according to purely marketing needs. With the intention of creating a functional classification of tourism attractions, other sources also did not venture off the beaten tracks and therefore could not achieve the set goal.

In filling the existing gap in the theory and practice relating to tourism attractions as argued so far, it was clear that the functional classification of tourism attractions that was proposed must already contain the embryo of a system of tourism attractions in which the DNA of that system is stored. To this end, the first stage was completed with the basic functional classification of tourism attractions. The classification, built on the existing literature and, furthermore, developed, tested and refined through many case studies, was completed at that stage and has not required much change since then.

The basic functional classification (Fig. 7.1) divides real and potential tourism attractions into 16 basic types. Each type of attraction has its number. Types of attractions are ordered according to the approximate time of their creation. Moreover, the order in which types of attractions are

| LINKS | CODE | BASIC TYPES OF ATTRACTIONS | GRUP OF ATTRACTIONS | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1. | GEOLOGICAL FEATURE | NATURAL | ORIGINAL | TANGIBLE |
| | 2. | CLIMATE | | | |
| | 3. | WATER | | | |
| | 4. | FLORA | | | |
| | 5. | FAUNA | | | |
| | 6. | PROTECTED NATURAL HERITAGE | | | |
| | 7. | PROTECTED CULTURAL HERITAGE | CREATED | LEISURE RELATED | INTANGIBLE |
| | 8. | THE CULTURE OF LIFE AND WORK | | | |
| | 9. | FAMOUS PERSONS AND HISTORICAL EVENTS | | | |
| | 10. | EVENTS /HAPPENINGS | | UPGRADED | TANGIBLE |
| | 11. | CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS | | | |
| | 12. | NATURAL SPAS SANATORIUMS | | | |
| | 13. | SPORT AND REKREATION FACILITIES | | | |
| | 14. | TOURISM PATHS, TRAILS, ROADS AND ROUTS | | | |
| | 15. | ATTRACTIONS FOR ATTRACTIONS | | | |
| | 16. | TOURISM PARAATTRACTIONS | | NL* | |

* NON LEISURE

**Fig. 7.1** Basic functional classification of tourism attractions (*Source:* Kušen (2002a, b), p. 61)

listed reflects several types of grouping. First six types belong to natural and the next ten to human-made attractions. In a similar manner, first nine are authentic, while the remainder are modified. Then, all but the last group can be considered leisure driven, with the last 16th belonging to non-leisure attractions. The classification also makes distinction between tangible attractions (Types 1 to 8 and 11 to 16) and non-tangible (Types 8, 9 and 10).

Importantly, the basic classification has also captured complexity of tourism attractions, as there are three basic types of tourism attractions that include parts of other types of attractions. These links are presented in the first column of the table. For example, Protected Natural Heritage (Type 6) includes parts of Types 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. The Protected Cultural and Historical Heritage (Type 7) includes parts of Types 8, 9, 10 and 11. Likewise, Type 14—Tourist Trails, Roads and Routes—includes parts of Types 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13.

At the very outset, it has become clear that the complexity and diversity of attractions belong to the types of attractions as defined by the basic functional classification which was calling for creation of a detailed classification system dividing the basic type of attraction into sub-types. The method of drafting a detailed classification system was the same as in creating the basic classification system, which means that every basic type of tourism attraction was divided further into a required number of functional sub-types. The sub-types, which are organized and presented as a table, are given codes that link each sub-type with the higher-order attraction type.

Such an approach to the classification system ensures conditions for the creation of a Registry and Atlas of Tourism Attractions. An example of the approach to creation of a detailed classification is presented in Table 7.4, where geological features of a destination (Type 1) are divided into several sub-types at two levels.

### *Evaluation of Tourism Attractions*

While the basic functional classification of tourism attractions together with the detailed classifications offers a comprehensive attraction typology, to fulfill the ambition that such a mechanism serves both planning and marketing purposes, there was a need to evaluate each tourism attraction. Such an approach was already called for by Lew (2000). He has advocated creation of a Registry of Tourism Attraction and stressed out the need to evaluate each resource and plan their develop-

**Table 7.4** An example of a subdivision of types of attractions belongs to the geological features of a destination

1. Geological characteristics of a destination
1.1. Relief
1.1.1. Hills and mountains
1.1.2. Lowlands
1.2. Islands
1.3. Karst
1.4. Individual structures
1.4.1. Natural beaches
1.4.2. Grottos and caves
1.4.3. Karrens and rocks
1.4.4. Karst sinkholes and fields
1.4.5. Pits
1.4.6. Canyons, cliffs and waterfalls
1.4.7. Bays and fjords
1.4.8. Mountain tops and viewing points
1.4.9. Eruptive formation
1.4.10. Sediments and similar structure
1.4.11. Fossils
1.4.12. Ichnofossils
1.4.13. River sediments
1.4.14. Exploration fields and mines
1.4.15. Meteorites

*Source:* Kušen (2002a) p. 69

ment for/integration into tourism system. He has also defined several aims of tourism evaluation as well as some criteria to be used in the evaluation process. However, the system of tourism attractions has not been properly structured and enclosed into a functional whole with real tourism attractions.

Thus, the process of evaluation of tourism attractions was added to the basic functional classification of tourism attractions (Table 7.5). Similar to the development of basic classification, the evaluation system was developed and tested on several case studies. The evaluation consists of seven types of tourism attraction assessment belonging to two basic aspects of evaluation—development and marketing. Development potential of each attraction is assessed based on (1) category (international, national, regional, local), (2) seasonality, (3) length of stay (visitation, overnight), (4) carrying capacities and (5) place in a broader system of tourism attrac-

**Table 7.5**  Evaluation of tourism attractions

1. Development assessment
    1.1. Category (international, national, regional, local)
    1.2. Seasonality
    1.3. Length of stay
    1.4. Carrying capacities
    1.5. A broader system of tourism attractions
2. Marketing assessment
    2.1. Tourist accessibility
    2.2. The extent of tourist use

*Source:* Kušen, E. (2002a), p. 176

tions. The marketing assessment consists of evaluation of visitor accessibility and the extent of tourist use. The development assessment of tourism attractions is primarily intended for the long-term planning and protection of the tourism attractions. In contrast, the marketing assessment serves mostly the marketing planning and management.

Finally, such an approach to tourism attraction evaluation facilitates organization and management of tourism attractions documentation. For example, to establish a Tourism Attraction Registry, a data-sheet for each attraction has to be created containing results of the proposed evaluation. The evaluation should be done by tourism experts trained in the attraction assessment. The most demanding and sensitive is the evaluation of the importance/category of tourism attractions (international, national, regional and local), which replaces the existing non-functional division into primary and secondary tourism attractions and the assessment of the *carrying capacity*.

### *From Theory to Practice: Creation of Registry and Atlas of Tourism Attractions*

The cumulative result of the research conducted during this stage was the *Tourism Attraction Registry Data-Sheet*. The Registry of Tourism Attractions was defined as two-dimensional file, at the level of one data-sheet per tourism attraction (Table 7.6). However, with the coding system used to mark each attraction's data-sheet, the Registry as a whole gets a third dimension based on the functional classification of tourism attractions that determines the order of Registry entry. Thus, all the partial research results were directly incorporated into the Registry data-entry

**Table 7.6** Draft of a Tourism Attraction Registry data sheet

1. Data-entry fields in the tourism attraction data-sheet
2. ID (ordinal) number
3. Code of attraction type/sub-type
4. Code name
5. Name of attraction
6. Short functional description
7. Location—geographic coordinates
8. Category
9. Seasonality
10. Length of stay
11. Carrying capacity
12. Broader Tourism Attraction System
13. Visitor accessibility
14. Extent of tourism use
15. Entry date and addition

*Source:* Kušen, E. (2002a), p. 177

sheet, and, as such, they have indirectly determined the framework of the System of Tourism Attractions.

In addition to Registry, the Atlas of Tourism Attraction can also be easily created. A variety of maps can be created by entering the site (geographic coordinates) of a particular tourism attraction on a cartographic (topographic) background. The Registry and maps complement each other and represented an efficient tool for result verification. The Atlas of Tourism Attractions also contains a collection of thematic maps that facilitate visualization of the attraction base, their spatial distribution and a more comprehensive interpretation of data contained in the Registry.

The first stage ended with a draft of the Registry page of tourism attractions in an analogue form. Thus, nearly all conditions were established for the final testing of the proposed classification and evaluation of tourism attractions at the level of a tourism destination, as well as for the creation of a system of tourism attractions.

## SECOND STAGE: TOWARD A SYSTEM OF TOURISM ATTRACTIONS

Although tourism attractions are independent entities, they are also *inseparable from the tourism destination* in which they are located. Therefore, in contrast to the research during the first stage that focused on the individual tourism attraction, the goal at this second stage was

to explore the relationship between tourism attractions within tourism destination or, in other words, to develop a method of evaluation of a tourism destination attractiveness. Therefore, the definition of the basic tourism destination, especially its spatial positioning and boundaries, becomes a prerequisite for its attraction evaluation and, thus, is the first task at this research stage. As a focus of research shifted from the individual tourism attraction evaluation to the evaluation of destination attraction base, a need has also emerged to expand and upgrade the content of the Registry data-entry sheet (Table 7.7). However, the main goal was to create a System of Tourism Attractions whose multidimensional structure would reflect almost all of the relationships existing within the microcosm of tourism attractions. Thus, a third dimension was added to the Registry of Tourism Attractions—that of the tourism destinations. The addition of that third dimension facilitated an attraction synthesis and a concept of the tourism spatial organization, thus providing an invaluable tool in the process of tourism planning from the destination point of view.

**Table 7.7**  A contribution to the classification of key data (characteristics) for each tourism attraction

| Key data | Original | Interpreted | Evaluated |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Name of attraction | X | | |
| 2. Code/type | | X | |
| 3. Location | X | | |
| 4. Short functional description | | X | |
| 5. Natural/human-made | | X | |
| 6. Tangible/non-tangible | | X | |
| 7. Potential/real | | X | |
| 8. Category | | | X |
| 9. Seasonality | | | X |
| 10. Length of stay | | | X |
| 11. Carrying capacity | | | X |
| 12. Broader system of tourism attractions | | | X |
| 13. Tourist accessibility | | | X |
| 14. The extend of tourism use | | | X |
| 15. Relevant tourist activities | | | X |
| 16. Specificities 1, 2, 3 | | | X |
| 17. Data-entry date | X | | |

*Source:* Kušen (2010), p. 419

Similar to the first stage, the research in the second stage combined inductive and deductive approach. Concepts were developed based on the available literature and then models developed, tested and refined through the series of case studies. These were mostly various planning documents conducted by the team of the Institute for Tourism, mostly for Croatian tourism destination and regions and in Croatian language. The results of the case study research were published in the article *A System of Tourism Attractions* (Kušen, 2010). In the following year, this System was registered with the State Intellectual Property Office of the Republic of Croatia, under the title Tabulation of Tourism Attractions, as industrial design (Kušen, 2011). Finally, in late 2013 the digital Registry of Tourism Attractions, as a derivate of the previous, analogue Registry, was developed and tested on the case study of the land-locked County of Koprivnica-Križevci in Northern Croatia.

### *Attraction Evaluation of the (Basic) Tourism Destination*

As already discussed, one of the cornerstones of the System of Tourism Attractions is tourism destination. Many published texts deal with the topic of tourism destinations, specifically, tourism destination management from a marketing standpoint. They are, generally, very similar and often repetitive. For the task at hand, a good starting point in understanding the interactive link between tourism attractions and a tourism destination is Dawkin's (2003, p. 134) definition of a region:

> A region will be defined as a spatially contiguous population (of human beings) that is bound either by historical necessity or choice to a particular geographic location. The dependence on location may arise from a shared attraction to local culture, local employment centers, local natural resources, or other location-specific amenities.

To derive definition of a destination that would fit the purpose of development of the System of Tourism Attractions, the spatial aspects of a destination were especially important. Without them it would be impossible to achieve the optimum result in shaping a comprehensive System of tourism attractions. A discussion on tourism destination definition below is a summary of the earlier work—an early discussion on spatial boundaries of tourism destination (Kušen, 2002b) and definitions presented in the later article on the System of Tourism Attractions (Kušen, 2010).

In geographic terms, a tourism destination is a clearly defined area; it is always part of the area strongly marked by prominent physical characteristics, potential and real tourism attractions as well as spatial relations between them and other elements of the tourism offer. There are two types of destinations: a *basic* tourism destination where fundamental tourism metabolism enfolds and which cannot be divided any further and a complex (higher-order) *tourism destination* which is represented by the aggregated characteristics of the basic tourism destinations belonging to it. A basic tourism destination consists of an area featuring one or more tourism places (towns/villages) located close to each other and their functional surroundings. An often referenced example of this is the Opatija Riviera of the Northern Adriatic in Croatia, a stretch of 25 kilometer of seaside walkway connecting three tourism places (Opatija, Lovran and Volosko) and two villages in the hinterland (Veprinac and Kastav), established in the eighteenth century initially as the key infrastructure for the prevalent medical tourism. This example vividly illustrates how certain tourism and recreational facilities could not be provided within the boundaries of any individual town or village but only within their functional surroundings— in a tourism destination (Fig. 7.2).

Theoretically, the boundaries of a basic tourism destination are changeable, and the rate and type of change depends on the development of the tourist places (towns/villages) and the surrounding functional area. Despite that, for the practical reasons of tourism attraction base management and research of tourism development potential, the boundaries of a basic tourism destination need to be fixed for a foreseeable period and, more often than not, adapted to an existing administrative-territorial division (municipality or city). Real tourism attractions, with a tourism infrastructure and supra-structure in the basic tourism destination, define the destination tourism products; however, potential tourism attractions, with other direct and indirect tourism resources, determine the type and structure of a possible long-term tourism development. An area without potential and real tourism attractions simply cannot develop into a tourism destination. On the other hand, an area that is underdeveloped in tourism terms but has significant attraction potential can be considered as a potential tourism destination whose attraction base must be evaluated, protected and developed.

The basic tourism destinations can be categorized in terms of the value and quality of their destination tourism product. Such cases of destination categorization are already emerging in practice, for instance, star ratings ranging between 1 and 5. All of the basic tourism destinations should also preferably be categorized in terms of their tourism potential (especially in
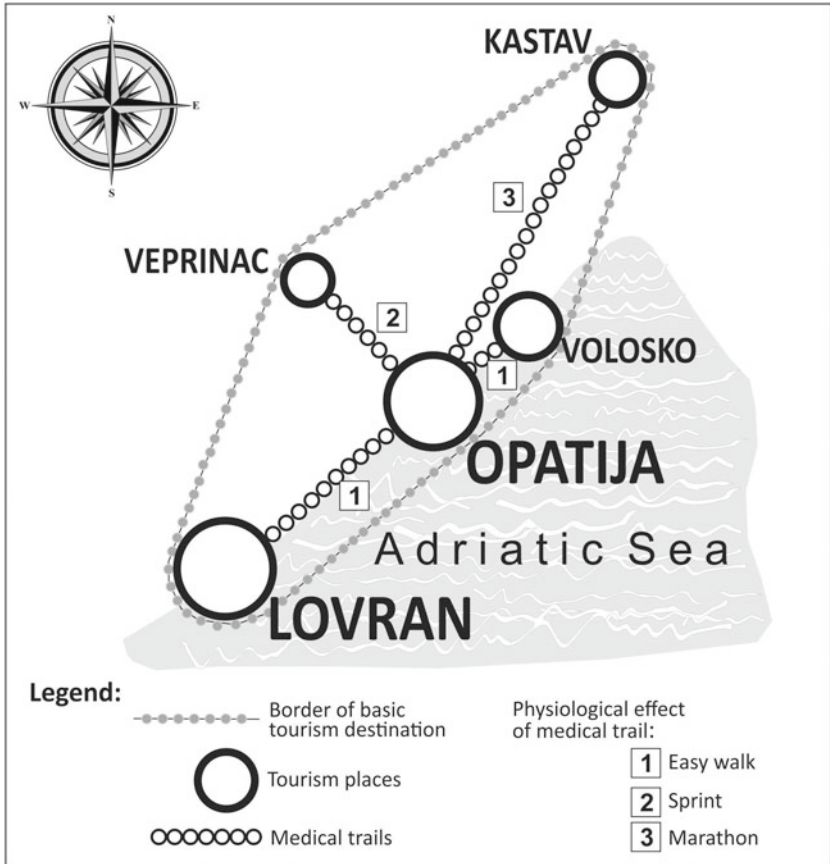
**Fig. 7.2** An illustration of a basic tourism destination consisting of a cluster of tourism places—Riviera of Opatija (Northern Adriatic, ca. 1900)

view of their potential tourism attractions). Of course, this is only possible if all potential and real tourism attractions within a specific tourism destination have previously been identified and evaluated (Fig. 7.3).

Basic destinations, as well as complex (higher-order) destinations, represent a framework for the establishment of a Registry of Tourism Attractions. Furthermore, they also serve as a framework for the tourism evaluation of a broader area, which is not only a sum of evaluations of the relevant tourism attractions as it also includes the quality of their spatial distribution within the boundaries of a given tourism destination.
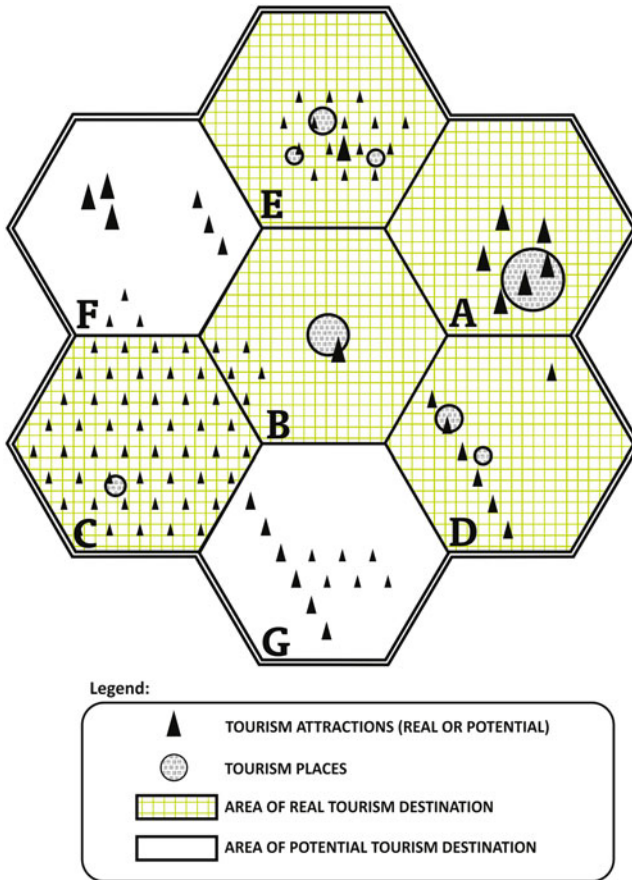
**Fig. 7.3** A schematic of the relationship between tourism attractions and basic tourism destinations and tourism places (*Source:* Kušen (2002a) p. 44)

### Functional Classification of Tourism Attraction and Registry from a Destination Perspective

The results of the case studies showed that the functional classification of tourism attractions worked well, while only the detailed classification (sub-types) experienced some minor adjustment or expansion. However, with the introduction of the destination dimension, it is the ensuing

documentation—the Registry data-entry sheet—that needed more significant change (Table 7.7). Data was divided into three groups: original (taken over from other documents), interpreted by experts and evaluated by trained tourism professionals. Moreover, new data on individual tourism attraction and its relationship to a destination was added, such as divisions into natural vs. human-made, tangible vs. intangible, potential attractions vs. real attractions and so on. Likewise, data on tourist activities that can take place at the attraction as well as the possibility to add some unexpected special features was also introduced. Simultaneously with the ongoing work on the analogue version of the Registry, an integrated and detailed Tourism Attraction System was completed. The two are not the same, although they are very similar; a Registry is an operative practical instrument, while a system is a theoretical model.

### *Tourism Attraction System*

A proposed Tourism Attraction System is, firstly, an innovative and partial elaboration of parts of the Tourism Resource System relating to tourism attractions and tourism destination, and it is elaborated within the framework of their functional phenomenology. It is built on the principle that it has to be relevant to both tourism theory and practice in order to ensure creative and rational management of tourism resources in general and tourism attractions in particular and that it should facilitate long-term sustainable tourism planning and provide a foundation for establishing and maintaining a modern tourism attraction documentation system.

A proposed functional System of Tourism Attractions (both potential and real) comprises a series of precisely defined relationships: between tourism attractions, between attractions and other tourism resources and between all of them and the non-tourism components of a basic tourism destination. It is presented as a three-dimensional table in the shape of a cuboid with five mutually interconnected tables printed on each of its five visible sides.

The essence of the system is merging of the two classifications—the Classification of Tourism Attractions (Fig. 7.1; Table 7.4) and Classification of key data for attraction and tourism destination as a whole (Table 7.7). In this way a three-dimensional system of tourism attractions was created, which ensures that every tourism attraction has a precisely determined position, in terms of the type of attractions to which it belongs

and the characteristics that make it recognizable. A series of relations (relationships) that arise from the previously systematized and redefined autonomous segments of the tourism base have been incorporated into both classifications and in the *System* as a whole

The System is wholly 'open', which means that it can be built upon as needed in all directions. However, without full apprehension of its internal structure, every arbitrary change will destroy its basic meaning. Moreover, familiarity with its internal structure is necessary to overcome all problems that may arise in its use, primarily due to the specific nature of a certain type of tourism attractions.

Finally, the System can be applied and used in practice. It provides all necessary inputs for establishing maintaining tourism attraction documentation (i.e. Registry and Atlas of Tourism attractions). It is equally useful in planning a long-term tourism development as it provides a complete insight into the basic tourism resources (potential and real tourism attractions). It facilitates creation of an optimum destination tourism product based on the full familiarity with a destination's tourism attraction base. For tourism policy and decision makers, it can assist in formulating optimum strategic decisions for the development of tourism within their jurisdiction. Finally, when it comes to the long-term development planning and creative land-use management, it ensures that tourism is treated equally to other sectors. As for local communities, the System allows them to participate efficiently in the creation of plans for the economic, social, cultural and spatial development of their communities.

Moreover, the System offers entrepreneurs an insight into the structure of tourism potentials in a particular tourism destination. It also helps tourism associations to efficiently fulfill a range of their tasks and obligations. It also helps in rational use of funds as it replaces a prevalent practice according to which numerous very important tourism strategies and action plans were based on superficial or incomplete insights into tourism attraction base as attractions were only partially identified, randomly systematized, inadequately or erroneously evaluated and, typically, not properly recorded.

The concept of the System is physically represented by the shape of a three-dimensional ceramic model (a cuboid of 6.0 cm by 8.8 cm by 22.5 cm) with tables in Croatian. Accordingly, every tourism attraction and its key characteristics are determined precisely with the help of coordinates in the model (System). The model is presented in Fig. 7.4 with a
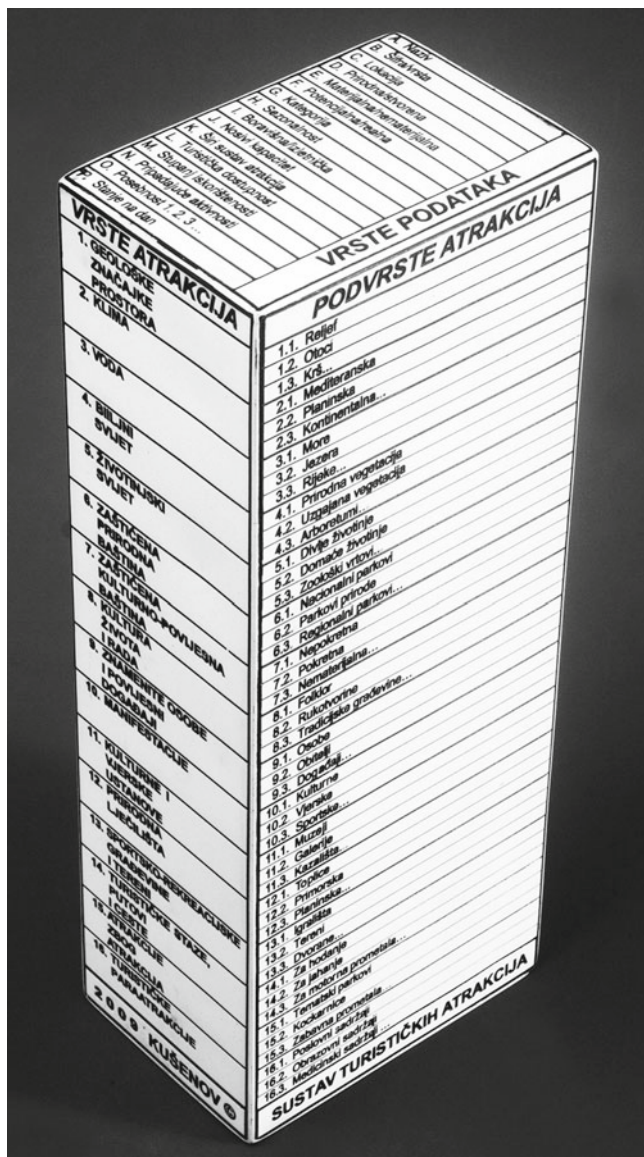
**Fig. 7.4** Photo of the model (Kušen's System of Tourism Attractions, 2010) (*Photo:* Kušen, E)

**TYPE OF DATA**

A. Name · B. Type/code · C. Location · D. Natural/created · E. Tangible/intangible · F. Potential/real · G. Category of importance · H. Seasonality · I. Excursionist/residential attraction · J. Carrying capacity · K. Wider system of tourism attraction · L. Tourism accessibility · M. Degree of usage · N. Activities · O. Special features · P. Condition on a given day

| TYPE OF ATTRACTION | SUB. TYPES | GROUP OF ATTRACTIONS |
|---|---|---|
| 1. GEOLOGICAL FEATURES | 1.1. Relief | NATURAL — ORIGINAL — TANGIBLE |
| | 1.2. Islands | |
| | 1.3. Karst... | |
| 2. CLIMATE | 2.1. Mediterranean climate | |
| | 2.2. Mountain climate | |
| | 2.3. Continental climate... | |
| 3. WATER | 3.1. Sea | |
| | 3.2. Lakes | |
| | 3.3. Rivers... | |
| 4. FLORA | 4.1. Natural vegetation | |
| | 4.2. Cultivated vegetation | |
| | 4.3. Arboretums | |
| 5. FAUNA | 5.1. Wild animals | |
| | 5.2. Domestic animals | |
| | 5.3. Zoos... | |
| 6. PROTECTED NATURAL HERITAGE | 6.1. National parks | |
| | 6.2. Nature parks | |
| | 6.3. Regional parks... | |
| 7. PROTECTED CULTURAL HERITAGE | 7.1. Imovable heritage | CREATED — LEISURE RELATED — INTANGIBLE |
| | 7.2. Movable heritage | |
| | 7.3. Intangible heritage... | |
| 8. THE CULTURE OF LIFE AND WORK | 8.1. Folklore | |
| | 8.2. Handcraft | |
| | 8.3. Traditional constructions... | |
| 9. FAMOUS PERSONS AND HISTORICAL EVENTS | 9.1. Persons | |
| | 9.2. Families | |
| | 9.3. Historical events | |
| 10. EVENTS/HEPPENINGS | 10.1. Cultural events | |
| | 10.2. Religious events | |
| | 10.3. Sport events | |
| 11. CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS | 11.1. Museums | CREATED — UPGRADED — TANGIBLE |
| | 11.2. Galleries | |
| | 11.3. Theatres... | |
| 12. NATURAL SPAS SANITARIUMS | 12.1. Spas | |
| | 12.2. Seaside sanitariums | |
| | 12.3. Mountain sanitariums | |
| 13. SPORT AND RECREATION FACILITIES | 13.1. Sport and recreation grounds | |
| | 13.2. Ballparks | |
| | 13.3. Gyms... | |
| 14. TOURISM PATHS, TRAILS AND ROADS | 14.1. For walking | |
| | 14.2. For riding | |
| | 14.3. For motor vehicles... | |
| 15. ATTRACTIONS FOR ATTRACTIONS | 15.1. Theme parks | |
| | 15.2. Casinos | |
| | 15.3. Fun and leisure vehicles... | |
| 16. TOURISM PARA-ATTRACTIONS | 16.1. Business facilities | NON-LEISURE |
| | 16.2. Educational facilities | |
| | 16.3. Medical facilities... | |

SYSTEM OF TOURISM ATTRACTIONS   2009   KUŠEN'S ©   |   SYSTEM OF TOURISM ATTRACTIONS   2009   KUŠEN'S ©

**Fig. 7.5** Two-dimensional model projection (*Source:* Kušen, E. (2010), p. 422)

two-dimensional projection of the Model in English (Fig. 7.5), facilitating reading the model in the photo.

The table on the front side of the Model represents the basic division of tourism attractions (Fig. 7.1), and the table on the right lateral side represents their detailed division (part of Table 7.4). The back side features a table that depicts the different groups into which the various types of tourism attractions are classified. The table on the top side of the Model contains a basic division of mandatory data for each tourism attraction. The left lateral page contains just a table net where the data on the front and top sides of the Model can be cross-referenced.

### *A Registry of Tourism Attractions*

Testing the basic components of the System of Tourism Attractions during the first and second stage has confirmed its practical value in creation of the tourism attraction documentation system—the Registry and Atlas that have, after the entire System was created and successfully tested, got its final form initially in analogue format and, subsequently, in a digital format that offers limitless possibilities for expansion.

A Registry of Tourism Attractions of any tourist destination, basic or of a higher order, is a method for keeping written data about all potential and real tourism attractions. Its functionality lies in the multidimensional connectivity between data entered in its analogue version and the added interactive possibilities in the digital version. This Registry is open to the expansion of data in all directions, including keeping data on other direct and indirect tourism resources. However, it also offers connectivity with a cartographic tourism attraction data management system, especially the Atlas of Tourism Attractions. If applied correctly, it can change the current practice of managing tourism attractions in Croatia and elsewhere, whereby great financial resources were wasted. Over the past 20 years, a large amount of money was invested into collecting tourism attraction data when various tourism plans and other documents were drafted. However, the data has not been managed, if it was kept at all.

As part of the aforementioned Croatian-Hungarian project based on Kušen's System of Tourism Attractions and the analogue Registry of Tourism Attractions, it was possible to create a digital version in late 2013, toward the very end of the Second Research Phase. This digital version offers numerous new solutions that only digital technology can provide and which can return the tourism attractions to marketing in their full extend. Due to the unlimited amount of information available through the digital Registry, and because of the ability to promptly update and organize data, some parts of the Registry data can be made available to the final user, an individual tourist, in marketing purposes.
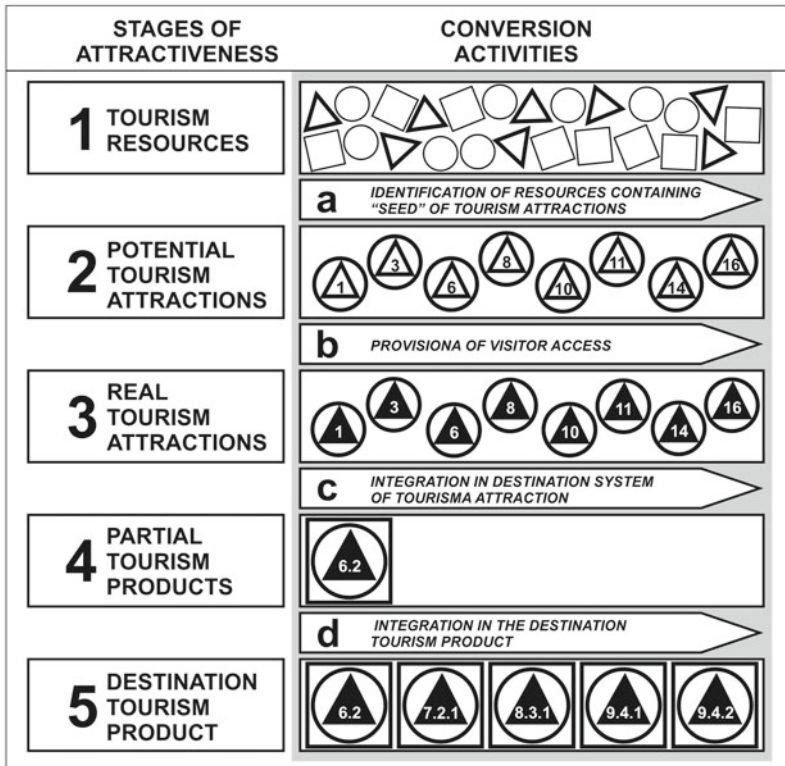
## Synthesis: Conversion of a Tourism Resource into a Tourism Product

A System of Tourism Attractions as a theoretical model with the accompanying Registry and Atlas of Tourism Attractions with its practical value represents a synthesis of the two stages of this research. Moreover, the

synthesis of the knowledge obtained as a result of this research provided an answer to the question as to why *the rules and causalities that so unambiguously exist among the components of the attraction microcosm are of interest to such a small number of people*. The answer lies beyond the dogmatic and non-creative interpretation of the *conversion* property and function of tourism. Namely, the Synthesis procedure yielded the integrated process, mechanism and course of conversion of a tourist resource into a tourist product (Fig. 7.6). To be precise, recent tourism theory and practice have omitted several important links from that chain. Which links are missing? Let us start with conversion.

The conversion property of tourism is one of the postulates upon which tourism, as we know it, is based. It is elaborated and taken over from an earlier publication (Kušen, 2010). The conversion function of tourism makes it possible to include into the economic process many assets which are, otherwise, not considered commodities and do not have an adequate market value. This function of tourism is applicable to many assets that do not have character of commodities or do not have an economic value. The tourism economy is possibly the only factor that can convert them into commodities, explore them economically or transform them into revenue. First and foremost, these are potential and real tourism attractions, but some other resources as well, for example, the population with their awareness of tourism value and tourism culture. One of the characteristics of tourism conversions is the fact that, in principle, these assets are not altered during the conversion process, on a condition that the tourism industry treats its tourism assets as a good master, i.e. uses them rationally.

A typical characteristic of the conversion function of tourism is that its effect is economic valorization of those assets that cannot be converted into commodities in any other way or only rarely. With the help of tourism, cultural, historic and other social assets become economic resources. Without tourism, they would not even exist as a tangible asset let alone have a market value. Rational exploitation of most of these resources, natural, for example, will not result in their depletion, whereas the exploitation of cultural and historical monuments wear and tear is spread over their long lifespan, which is regularly extended through conservation work, funded most commonly from proceeds of tourism as a result of their tourist valorization. Their economic exploitation does not reduce their original value but, rather, increases it, though that is also subject to market developments. Most of these resources are firmly linked to a location,
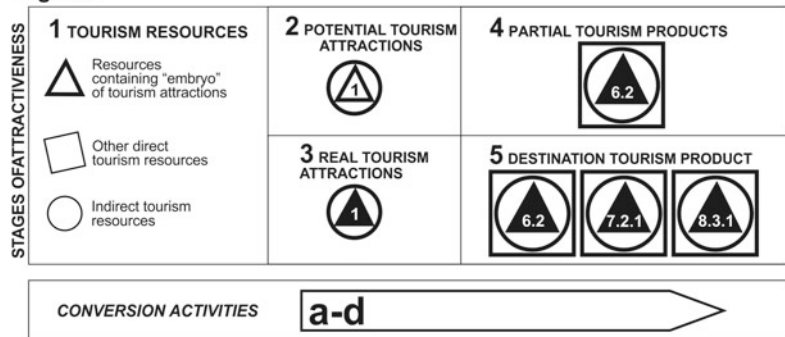
**Fig. 7.6** Process of conversion of a tourism resource into a tourism product

i.e. they cannot be moved or copied. Therefore, their aforementioned tourism conversion into sellable commodities coincides with the conversion of those resources into monopolies. Such tourism assets generate tourism rent, which are not expressed by their individual market price, but as part of a total value of tourism products, tourism services and products of other participants in the tourism supply into which that original price has been incorporated.

The multidimensional Tourism Attraction System makes it easy to understand the process of conversion of a tourism resource into a tourism product, the very essence of the conversion phenomenon in tourism. Its mechanism and processes are influenced by natural and social conditions. Within that process, tourism resources pass through different but unavoidable attraction phases, (1) as tourism resources, (2) as potential tourism attractions, (3) as real tourism attractions, (4) as partial tourism products and (5) as parts of a destination tourism product. Such conversion is contingent on very specific activities. A change in a particular attraction phase will occur only under the impact of the following activities: (a) identification and registration of resources that contain 'the seed' of tourism attractiveness, (b) ensuring accessibility of a potential tourism attraction, (c) integration of a real tourism attraction into the attraction framework of a tourism destination and (d) integration of a partial tourism product into a destination tourism product, as illustrated by Fig. 7.6.

There is no awareness on how important it is to identify and register such tourist resources that contain the seed of tourist attractiveness (a); therefore, there can be no data on potential tourism attractions (2) as a separate attraction phase or, if there is data, it is exceptionally rare and typically incomplete. The absence of these two links within the process of converting tourism resources into tourism products is the main reason for the lack of understanding and non-acceptance of the concept of the new Tourism Attraction System and Registry of Tourism Attractions. Moreover, the underdeveloped integration of real tourism attractions into the attraction framework of a tourism destination (c) and partial tourist products into a destination tourist product (d) makes tourism destination management more difficult.

In short, the System of Tourism Attractions has realized most of the previously set partial goals; for example, it offers a new, innovative approach to the tourist-destination development within a general tourism system

by putting emphasis on tourism attractions. It also offers functionality within its internal attraction structure, but also from all other aspects of a wider tourism system. Moreover, it has become applicable in most procedures in tourism theory and practice. Furthermore, it contains a functional classification of tourism attractions and a method for determining their properties. Finally, it also offers a three-dimensional model, which shows the internal connectedness of its components. All of these important properties of the System are surpassed by its ability to serve as a base for a Registry of Tourism Attractions.

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