

Ensayo

The king, the animals and the tourists: The sociology of prestige in tourism research

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Doubtless, the knowledge-based platform, vindicated by Jafar Jafari, created a strong dependency on what can be measured. Jafari's genius and his generosity illuminated the path for many researchers, but they unfortunately misunderstood the lesson. The expansion of tourism research was prone to adopting quantitative, metric-based instruments and intrusive methods that led the discipline into a gridlock. As a mentor, Jafari has sought to help his followers discern between the unfounded viewpoints that have dominated tourism research and knowledge-based arguments. The interpretation of the knowledge-based platform caused collateral damage to the epistemology of tourism in three main spheres: *the architecture of research (or field work)*, *the selection of methods (tourist centrality)*, and *the obsession with measurement (metrics)*. The dissociation between researchers and their object of study, combined with the obsession with metrics and tourist centrality,

distorted the observer-observed causality, leading the discipline to understand the truth through the tourist's eye. Additionally, the present essay holds that part of the current editorial problems affecting professional research should be traced to an obsession with measurement (and the metric culture). This includes the monopoly (power) of global publishers, the manipulation of the H-index, the barriers faced by non-native English speakers, and the dilemma of prestige. The paper lays bare the paradox between autonomy and academic prestige, with serious implications for the fields of tourism research and epistemology. It holds that senior researchers play an ambiguous role. On the one hand, they keep the rules of a formal game with a rigorous peer-review process that frustrates many scholars. On the other hand, they open the door to new game publishing by low-tier publishers, thereby maintaining certain academic autonomy. These dynamics ultimately help reconsider the nature of metric culture and the problems generated in tourism and academic prestige.

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