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## TOURISM, ANTHROPOCENE AND CAPITALOCENE: THE STATE OF THE ART OF SCIENTIFIC PRODUCTION

**Abstract.** *From the geological perspective, the Anthropocene is considered the current geological epoch, replacing the Holocene, positioning humanity as a force that has substantially interfered on life on the planet. Nevertheless, from the perspective of environmental history, critical researchers believe that the most appropriate is the idea of Capitalocene, since the current environmental crisis is the result of the capitalist model of production and consumption. In the field of tourism, the theme of climate change has been increasingly disseminated and addressed in national and international publications, however, the Anthropocene or the Capitalocene are still little explored, even though tourism activities can be seen as one of the mechanisms used for capital reproduction. In this way, the article mapped the state of the art on the Anthropocene or the Capitalocene and tourism. Research has shown that, after 2014, some scholars have looked into the relationship between tourism and the Anthropocene. However, research is still incipient, focusing on some specific topics. The idea of Capitalocene is even less addressed, with a few researchers taking ownership of research in the field of tourism. Thus, there is a gap between research and the teaching of tourism itself, especially when it comes to more critical research, placing tourism as a key activity in the context of the experienced environmental crisis.*

**Keywords:** *Tourism, Anthropocene, Capitalocene, environmental crisis, capitalism, state of the art.*

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## **ТУРИЗМ, АНТРОПОЦЕН И КАПИТАЛОЦЕН: СОСТОЯНИЕ ИЗУЧЕННОСТИ ПРОБЛЕМЫ**

*С геологической точки зрения антропоцен – это текущая геологическая эпоха. В антропоцене, сменившем голоцен, ключевым элементом геологической среды выступает человечество, которое обрело силу, существенно изменившую в жизнь на планете. Тем не менее, некоторые ученые, изучающие историю окружающей среды, говорят о том, что наиболее подходящей для текущего этапа развития геосферы, является идея капиталоцена, поскольку современный экологический кризис является результатом капиталистической модели производства и потребления. В статьях, посвященных туристической тематике, все чаще поднимаются вопросы изменения климата и его влияния на туризм. Но при этом вопросы антропоцена и капиталоцена практически не изучены, при том, что туризм выступает видом экономической деятельности, и способствует умножению капитала. Статья освещает вопросы взаимосвязи таких феноменов, как антропоцен, капиталоцен и туризм. Изучение литературы показывает, что взаимосвязь между туризмом и антропоценом начала изучаться преимущественно после 2014 года, однако до сих пор такие исследования разрознены и узкоспециализированы. Идее капиталоцена уделяется гораздо меньше внимания, публикаций по данной теме крайне мало. Таким образом наблюдается разрыв между теоретическими исследованиями и практикой туризма, особенно когда речь идет о критическом взгляде на туристическую деятельность, которая играет важную роль в существующих экологических проблемах.*

**Ключевые слова:** *туризм, антропоцен, капиталоцен, экологический кризис, капитализм, современное состояние.*

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## Introduction

*"[...] We will die one after the other, the white people as well as us. All the shamans will finally perish. Then, if none of them survive to hold it up, the sky will fall".*

*(Davi Kopenawa Yanomami)<sup>1</sup>*

The idea of Anthropocene – the 21st Century *zeitgeist* (Moore, 2016) – emerged a few decades ago. From the geological perspective, it is considered the current epoch, a substitute for the Holocene epoch (Crutzen, 2002). However, the evidence for this unfolding is not limited to geological alterations, but also to global environmental changes, which involve different ecological processes that make life on Earth possible, thus it is a concept related to environmental history.

Critical scholars understand that the Anthropocene – as a historical argument and not a geological one – does not reveal aspects of society that need to be made clear. Awareness of the difficult planetary situation has been growing, but the reality of a crisis is often not fully understood nor interpreted and this makes actions more difficult (Moore, 2016).

In the field of tourism, the theme of climate change has been increasingly disseminated and addressed in national and international publications. Nevertheless, the Anthropocene or the Capitalocene are topics that are still not very referred to tourist activity, although this can be seen as one of the economic mechanisms used for capitalist reproduction, as well as for the expansion of capital to territories with landscapes that can be explored (Bianchi, 2009; Palafox-Muñoz, 2016; Cañada, 2016; 2017; Fletcher, 2019). In addition, tourism appropriates and uses the idea of Anthropocene, appealing to the vulnerability of certain localities in the face of global environmental changes, under the aegis of the "last chance" or the "visit before it disappears".

In consonance, with the advent of the Capitalocene, an increasingly prominent strategy is to try to take advantage of this "end of nature" as a new tourist product (Fletcher, 2019). This strategy can be seen as a paradigmatic example of capitalism of disasters (Klein, 2007), in which crises created by the capitalist processes themselves are explored as new forms of accumulation (Fletcher, 2019). In the words of McBrien (2016: 116) "Capital was born from extinction, and from capital, extinction has flowed".

Faced with this context, the objective of this article is to comprehend how theorists have been focusing on tourism in the context of the Anthropocene / Capitalocene. For this, an analysis of the state of the art at an international level was carried out, using the Portal of Journals of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES) in Brazil and the Google Scholar platform as a database. In these platforms, searches were made for the combined terms: tourism + Anthropocene and tourism + Capitalocene, in Portuguese, Spanish and English. It was found that the results on the platforms were similar (though on the Capes Journal Portal the results were more limited).

The research about the state-of-the-art on this field research has the challenge of mapping and discussing academic production, highlighting aspects and dimensions that have been featured and privileged in different places (Ferreira, 2002). This survey will provide an overview of the field of tourism and how theorists face the dilemmas related to these concepts/ideas.

## Environmental crisis and the Anthropocene

Over time, a vision of development has been consolidated as a linear evolution, of an aspect essentially economic, based on the appropriation of natural resources and oriented by perspectives of efficiency and economic profitability, all in order to achieve the Western lifestyle

<sup>1</sup> Epigraph of Davi Kopenawa Yanomani, in Albert, B.; Kopenawa, D. (2013). *The falling sky: words of a Yanomami Shaman*. Harvard University Press.

(Escobar, 2014; Gudynas, 2012). This conception of what development is has corroborated to a model of capitalist production and consumption that has been threatening the integrity of ecosystems across the planet.

The way in which nature has been explored and used without limits, aiming at this “development”, has made possible the insurgency of an environmental crisis. It became evident that this crisis is precisely a symptom that the planet has surpassed its capacity to renew itself (Guerra, 2009); constituting itself as one of the contradictions of capital, which degrades material and social bases of its own reproduction (Harvey, 1989; O'Connor, 2002; Quintana & Hacon, 2011).

In the case of a complex phenomenon, the environmental crisis is linked to the multiple dimensions of life (Layrargues, 2011), and for this reason, one cannot confuse an environmental crisis with an ecological crisis, because its impacts are not limited to degradation, depletion and extinction of natural “resources” or biodiversity. The crisis directly impacts the social, political and even economic fields (Guerra, 2009). As highlighted by Layrargues (2011), it is not only the relationship between humans and nature that is destabilized, but also social relations. This includes the fair sharing of benefits and burdens arising from “development”, since the crisis affects social groups with inequality, as it reflects the classic contradictions inherent to capitalism (Quintana & Hacon, 2011). For its maintenance or expansion, the capital externalizes the negative effects, socializing the environmental degradation, the depletion of natural resources and the loss of bio and sociodiversity (O'Connor, 2002). It is necessary to think, then, who – or what – is, in fact, responsible for the crisis?

In the context of this global crisis, is the Anthropocene, a technical term coined by scientists to label the impacts of human activities on the planet's biogeochemical systems and, consequently, a new geological era on Earth (Figure 1) (Steffen, Crutzen & McNeill, 2007; Steffen et al., 2011; Malhi, 2017; Moore, 2018) and which has been used in a broad cultural and political context

(Malhi, 2017). Although in the 19th Century there were already publications on the relationship between men and the rest of nature (Steffen, Crutzen & McNeill, 2007), the first definitions about the Anthropocene and what would be its impacts on planet Earth (Artaxo, 2014; Steffen et al., 2011) began to emerge in the 1980s. Also, more recently, the reformers' debate about human impacts on terrestrial life had already been dissipated by the “Limits to Growth” Report of the Club of Rome in 1972 (Steffen et al., 2011).

The term became popular with Dutchman Paul Crutzen, Nobel Prize in Chemistry, in 1995, who published a series of materials discussing its definition and what was the human influence in the new geological epoch, replacing Holocene to Anthropocene as the new designation of the planet's current geological epoch (Crutzen, 2002; Steffen et al., 2011; Steffen, Crutzen & McNeill, 2007; Artaxo, 2014; Moore, 2016). Being formally recognized by the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) in 2017 (Ross, 2020), the idea of Anthropocene was widely spread among reformers, to the point of being considered in the new Human Development Report of 2020, of the United Nations Program for Development (UNDP), which exposes that planetary imbalances are directly related to social ones and these imbalances reinforces crises, inequalities, risks and pressures, including the COVID-19 pandemic (UN, 2020).

Among the forms of human influence, Artaxo (2014) and Zalasiewicz et al. (2010) cite changes in the climate, acidification of the oceans, alteration of the phosphorus and nitrogen cycle, loss of stratospheric ozone, changes in land use, changes in the integrity of the biosphere associated with the loss of biodiversity, use of water resources, water load aerosol particles in the atmosphere, new elements in chemical pollution. All of these factors call attention to planetary limits, to planetary change at an unprecedented rate, and, finally, to the Sixth Great Mass Extinction or defaunation (Zalasiewicz et al., 2010). Another indication of a “human age” would be the fact that, in 2020, the total production of material from

human activities, known as the “anthropogenic mass” surpassed the total living biomass of the planet (approximately 1.1 tera-tonnes) (Elhacham et al., 2020). It is noteworthy that extinction is not simply the biological process of extinction of species, but also of cultures and human languages (McBrien, 2016) in a process of cultural homogenization and, also, of ethnic extinction. It is, therefore, a threat to the cultural plurality of the planet.

Due to the global processes linked to the Anthropocene, distant wild environments are perceived as disappearing or are increasingly fragmented and, therefore, threatened and unable to sustain themselves. In this context, in addition to a geological era, the Anthropocene is characterized as a social fact and constituted by powerful global imagery operating in the global-local nexus, which is estimated to have very serious consequences not only for the natural environment, but also for the race human life, including its future existence (Crutzen, 2002). However, there is no consensus as to when the Anthropocene began. It can be said, however, that it was long before Rachel Carson's publication of *Silent Spring* – a book that is considered a milestone in the global environmental movement.

Some scholars understand that from the 19th century until 1945 the first phase of the Anthropocene took place. After that year, the second phase began, called “Great Acceleration” (Steffen, Crutzen & McNeill, 2007; Steffen et al., 2011), which was based on global industrialization in the post-war period, technical and scientific development, nuclear arms race, population explosion and rapid economic growth in some nations (Steffen et al., 2007). In addition, according to the theory of Steffen, Crutzen and McNeill (2007), in 2015 humanity entered a third phase, in which there is the recognition that human activities are affecting the structure and functioning of the terrestrial system.

Other researchers argue that it was with the advent of the Industrial Revolution – not in its beginning, but in the 19th century (Crutzen, 2002; Steffen, Crutzen & McNeill, 2007; Steffen et al.,

2011). Others, which was between the beginning of European modernity, in the 16th century and the fossil fuel revolution, in the second half of the 18th century, a period in which work and productivity advanced like never before (Altvater, 2016).

Latour (2015) points out that there is nothing completely new in the concept of Anthropocene, since conflicts over territories and their resources are as old as the human race and that the warnings about the consequences these 'land grabs' have on the environment are as old as the Industrial Revolution. Thus, there are those who claim that the beginning in the 15th century was the Anthropocene mark. For the environmental historian Jason Moore (2016), when stating that the boom in the burning of fossil fuels marks the beginning of the Anthropocene / Capitalocene, one ignores the fact that there was a strong change in the landscape at a global level between 1450 and 1750 and that it was with the exploration of the Americas that began the accumulation of capital. According to the author, in the three centuries after 1450 there was a series of landscape, class, territorial and technical transformations. The transformation of the landscape reached speed, scale and scope, between five and ten times greater than anything seen in Medieval Europe. Not for nothing, the Brazilian anthropologist Viveiros de Castro (2013, oral information) argues that some indigenous peoples are like “specialists at the end of the world, because many – from the Guaranis, in Brazil, to the Maias, in Mexico – have already experienced the destruction of their worlds”.

### The idea of Capitalocene

The Anthropocene moved quickly from a proposal for geological periodization to a broad multidisciplinary debate (Moore, 2016; DeSoto, 2017). For DeSoto (2017, p. 113, our translation), becoming “a mega concept whose hegemony is difficult to escape”. And if the Anthropocene – as a historical rather than a geological argument – deserves appreciation due to its vanguard and ability to give visibility to the need to overcome



the dualism between man and nature (Moore, 2016), on the other hand, the most critical theorists understand that this term can 'mean anything, for anyone' (Moore, 2016), and can become a "white blackbird", just as it happened with sustainable development (Latouche, 2004).

Thus, this concept was also appropriated by the social sciences, on the basis of which critical scholars preferred to use the nomenclature and the idea of "Capitalocene", since, as Harvey (1989) expresses, the accumulation of capital uses constant processes of destruction to generate new forms of accumulation. The environmental crisis is the result of the capitalist mode of production (Palafox-Muñoz, 2017; Ramírez, 2017). However, it is worth noting that the use of "Capitalocene" is not just a substitution of terms. Moore (2016) highlights that the debate on Capitalocene brings three elements that the Anthropocene does not bring:

1) the history of capitalism is a history of relations of labor, capital, power and exploration of nature;

2) the history of capitalism cannot be reduced to the burning of fossil fuels, it involves successive waves of conquest and appropriation of "cheap nature";

3) the Capitalocene challenges the Eurocentric view of capitalism that emerged in England in the 18th Century.

One of the main criticisms of this perspective is that, even when it seeks to transcend – it maintains the Cartesian dualism between man and nature (Moore, 2016). In addition, it confuses what human beings are and what they can do through capital. Also confuses a historical condition of economic organization with an innate aspect of the human being (McBrien, 2016): 'humans are oppressing the great forces of nature'. Other criticism is that it presents an apolitical picture, as highlighted by Moore (2016, p. 81):

*[...] the origins of modern world are to be found in England, right around the*

*dawn of the nineteenth century. The motive force behind this epochal shift? Coal and steam. The driving force behind coal and steam? Not class. Not capital. Not imperialism. Not even culture. But...you guessed it, the Anthropos: humanity as an undifferentiated whole.*

This obscures the fact that the transformative effects highlighted by proponents of the Anthropocene are not due to human activity indiscriminately<sup>2</sup>. The Capitalocene and the environmental crisis were not driven by everyone, because not everyone has the same power to influence economic structures. From the enslaved people used for the development of European capitalism, through marginalized or exterminated indigenous communities, to the people who in the 21st Century suffer from poverty and labor exploitation, most of the population has not contributed or contributes to the crisis (Moore, 2016; Ramírez, 2017). Nor is the responsibility for population growth as Malthusians or Neomalthusians defend (Whitehead, 2014), but for the relationships that favor capital accumulation (Moore, 2016; Ramírez, 2017; Fletcher, 2019). What is proclaimed is that the change in the current catastrophic state can only happen by overcoming the capitalist system.

As highlighted by Ramírez (2017, p. 8, our translation), "although the concept of Anthropocene is useful to mark a change in the geological history caused by human activities and show its negative impacts, it lacks precision so as not to be manipulated and justify more of the same". In addition, the Anthropocene argument could not explain the current crisis, for a basic reason: it is a prisoner of the very structures of thought that created the crisis (Moore, 2016).

As one of the fronts of action in the face of the environmental crisis, there are measures for the conservation of nature and the consequent valorization of natural areas. The degradation of

<sup>2</sup> The Brazilian indigenous thinker Ailton Krenak (2019, p. 20-21) used to say: "There are five hundred years that The Indigenous people have been resisting, I am most worried about the whites, how are they going to escape this. We resisted expanding our subjectivity, not accepting this idea that we are all the same" [Translated by the author].

ecosystems, resulting from a search for “development”, through the territorialization of capital and consequent domination of spaces (Harvey, 1989; Lefebvre, 2000) has been noticeable for some time, but the accumulation of capital added new forms of expropriation, commercializing nature and re-signifying it as capital, to the detriment of several other meanings attributed to it by social groups that are guided by other logics of production and consumption and social relations with nature. Added to the primary expropriations (land issue and exploitation of commodities), the exploitation and commercialization of biodiversity, the privatization of goods in common use, the sale of carbon credits, the patenting of traditional indigenous processes and techniques, and of other populations, the exploitation of genetic materials without fair allocation of bonuses, among other ways of monetizing green and greening capital (Quintana & Hacon, 2011; Arias-Henao, 2017; Palafox-Muñoz, 2017).

### State of the art about tourism in the context of the Anthropocene/Capitalocene

But how does tourism fit into this debate? It can be said that this occurs in different ways: with the defense of ecotourism as a proposal to mitigate the impacts verified in the Anthropocene; with global measurements of carbon dioxide produced by the travel industry, with an emphasis on air and sea transport; with studies on the tourism sector's responsibility for climate change and its impacts on tourism; in the valorization (exploitation) of the preserved natural areas, especially those that are “at risk of disappearance”, due to the tourist activity; the way in which the tourism sector perpetuates the dualism between man and nature; among several others.

It is undeniable that the global imaginary of nature is based on and reproduces images of untouched nature (Diegues, 2004; Saarinen, 2019) and the sacralization of nature (Rodríguez-Darias & Santana-Talavera, 2011), while, paradoxically, the ideal of untouched nature gives protected

areas an exchange value (Rodríguez-Darias & Santana-Talavera, 2011; Palafox-Muñoz, 2017). At the heart of the capitalist mode of production, nature comes to have exchange value, that is, natural “resources” acquire an economic value that justifies the interest of capital, since it allows its reproduction (Palafox-Muñoz & Vilchis-Onofre, 2019). In this context, tourism is emerging because it has the “power” to integrate remote conservation areas into global capitalist markets (Saarinen, 2019). Areas that often overlap with the “golden hordes” (Turner & Ash, 1975): Arctic, Antarctica, Tuvalu, Amazon, Mount Kilimanjaro, island countries and oceanic islands, small glaciers and snowy peaks in some countries such as Argentina and Bolivia (Lemelin et al., 2009; Eijelaar, Thaper & Peeters, 2010; Dawson et al., 2011; Stewart et al., 2016; Fletcher, 2019; Moore, 2019a; Cheer, Milano & Novelli, 2019), among many others.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to understand what other approaches researchers and theorists have given to the relationship between the tourism sector and the Anthropocene or the Capitalocene. Which of these concepts have been appropriated by theorists and in what geographical and historical contexts?

The first point to be highlighted is that studies in the field of tourism that appropriate the concept / idea of Anthropocene are not yet incipient. Replacing the Anthropocene with the Capitalocene, they are even more scarce. Although a quick search for the phrase “tourism and Anthropocene”, for example, results in tens of thousands of manuscripts, when analyzing them it appears that only a portion really concerns the intersection of these themes. In addition, despite the emergence of debating the Anthropocene, it is only more recently that scholars of tourism have engaged in conceptual debates around the theme (Gibson, 2019).

One of the greatest exponents in the theme is the researcher Amelia Moore, from the University of Rhode Island, who has several articles, books and book chapters dedicated to the theme, especially having the Caribbean as a geographic

frame (Moore, 2015; 2019a; 2019b). Two other important researchers are Martin Gren, from Linnaeus University and Edward Huijbens, from University of Akureyri, Iceland, who published several works in partnership (Gren & Huijbens, 2014; 2015; 2019). It was these researchers who published, in 2014, the work "Tourism and the Anthropocene", which introduced the concept of Anthropocene to tourism studies, exploring and outlining the scientific, political and ethical challenges of the theme (Gren & Huijbens, 2014). After that, year after year, the number of publications grew, with greater representativeness in recent years (2019-2020).

In general, studies have been dedicated to explaining how international tourism has been characterized as one of the main forces that have contributed to planetary limits (Gren & Huijbens, 2014; Amelung et al, 2016; Hall, 2015; Svensson Sörlin & Wormbs, 2015; Ooi, 2017; Cheer & Lew, 2017; Cheer, Milano & Novelli, 2019; Ross, 2020), though it is a difficult task to measure the real impacts of tourism (Hall, 2015). In view of this, tourism studies should be considered as part of a complex socio-ecological system (Amelung et al., 2016) that has been under tension by the COVID-19 pandemic (Christin, 2020; Höckert et al., 2020; Oackes, 2020). In this context, the idea of sustainable tourism is confronted by different authors who question this term and point out that it is an oxymoron (Svensson Sörlin & Wormbs, 2016; Mostafanezhad & Norum, 2019; Hagimont, 2020).

These researchers oppose or question the political-economic discourse that positions tourism as an activity that generates jobs, captures foreign exchange, promotes development and economic stability (Escalera-Briceño & Palafox-Muñoz, 2015). In addition, it is called "industry without chimneys", with few negative impacts and always inferior to the benefits it generates (Gascón, 2012; Nicholls, Higgins-Desbiolles & Rigney, 2016).

Another research front takes the opposite path: if tourism impacts the environment on the one hand, the activity is also dependent on the environment (Hall, 2015). Thus, some researchers

have devoted themselves to mapping and discussing how climate change and other environmental changes have impacted on patrimony heritage and vulnerable tourist destinations (Hall et al, 2016) such as the Caribbean (Moore, 2015), the Australian coast and the Greater Barrier Reef (Cheer, Milano & Novelli, 2019). Here there is room for metaphors used to address these reflections, such as Gren and Hockert (2020) with the work "Hotel Anthropocene". Also, studies like Hayward's (2021) demonstrate how tourism can become just one element in a complex context such as Christmas Island, in the Pacific Ocean, where exploration takes place by different economic sectors. Norum, Kramving and Kristoffesen (2015) demonstrate how whale watching in the Arctic is influenced by the notions of Anthropocene.

It also includes changes in occupation patterns and on type of tourism/tourist, with a real "reinvention" of tourist destinations (Moore, 2015) – which, in reality, is a facet of capitalism of disaster. This aspect appears to be more an appropriation of the idea of Anthropocene for economic purposes than an alternative to the situation.

Also considering the strategies, alternatives and possibilities in view of this panorama (Hall et al., 2016; Burns, 2017; Huang, Feng & Lin, 2017; Gren & Huijbens, 2019; Christin, 2020), being among the most reformists to those with a radical tendency alternatives, in a break with the capitalist system and the hegemonic mode of production and consumption. Among the strategies, think about management, governance models, consistent policy formulation, mainly in the areas of cooperation, financing, research and education (Hall et al., 2016; Dredge, 2017; Gren & Huijbens, 2019); innovations, such as landscape design (Huang, Feng & Lin, 2017); strengthening experiences with greater commitment to ethics and environmental conservation, such as tourism of proximity (Rantala et al., 2020), the slow food movement (Fusté-Forné & Jamal, 2020) and compassionate conservation (Burns, 2017).

There is also a range of critical studies, some



of which resort to the idea of the Capitalocene, questioning whether it is humanity in an indiscriminate way that has been impacting and pressuring life on Earth. Works such as by Spector and Higham (2019) and Cohen and Spector (2019) explain about this when relating to space tourism, demonstrating, through critical theory, that the factors that led to the Anthropocene are now being expanded out of planet Earth – in fact, would it be possible to speak now of a touristification of space?

Escalera-Briceño and Palafox-Muñoz (2018) also use the idea of Capitalocene to explain how the process of capital accumulation by the “leisure industry” and the production of the tourist space have been negatively impacting the environment.

Fletcher (2019), on the other hand, does not bring the idea of Capitalocene, but critically approaches the “end of nature” as a strategy of exploring the landscape and territory, and capital accumulation, configuring itself as a disaster capitalism – the which can also be included in what Ooi (2017) called “ugly tourism”. It is even evident that enterprises located in vulnerable areas have appropriated the idea as a commercial strategy, as is the case in the Bahamas, studied by Moore (2019a). Moore (2019b) examines the idea of Anthropocene precisely as a strategy to allow the accumulation of capital by transnational companies in places that suffer from economic and social inequality and that, as mentioned previously, often overlap “Golden hordes” (1975).

A range of authors turn to political ecology theory to support their research. These studies bring to the debate elements such as environmental subjectivities and negotiation processes, as in Shangri-la, China (Zhang, 2019); the sacralization of nature and how tourism appropriates and explores these regions and the idea of untouched nature giving them new “anthropogenic” meanings (Saarinen, 2019). Or yet, how this anthropogenic imaginary involves market-based solutions, raising questions about the avatars of “green” or “sustainable” tourism (Hagimont, 2020) and the “reconciliation” of capitalist accumulation with environmental limits in sustainable

tourism (Mostafanezhad & Norum, 2019).

The imagery linked to “extinction” is one of the most influential frameworks for which tourists experience the world today (Saarinen, 2019). Fletcher (2019) points out that the experience of contact with nature “fixed in time”, untouched, gains secondary importance. This is because, the experience of the loss of this nature acquires greater importance. In this aspect, tourism in the Capitalocene can be understood as a form of what Klein (2007) calls disaster capitalism.

In the work *Anthropocene ecologies: Entanglements of tourism, nature and Imagination*, edited by Mostafanezhad and Norum (2020), several authors lend their theoretical background to show how political ecology represents a field of study with the potential to support critical studies on the Anthropocene. The work includes texts that were published in the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* in 2019, in a dossier on political ecology of tourism, including the manuscripts of Cheer, Milano and Novelli (2019), Fletcher (2019), Moore (2019b), Mostafanezhad and Norum (2019) and Zhang (2019).

Finally, some authors make an effort to consolidate the Anthropocene as a research area for scholars of tourism (Gren & Huijbens, 2014; 2015; Huijbens, 2015; Moore, 2015; 2016; 2019; Johansson, Ren & Duim, 2015; Gibson, 2019; Mostafanezhad & Norum, 2020; Corbari, 2021; Huijbens et al., 2021) and a concern about how these concepts are being worked on tourism education / teaching (Prince, 2020; Teruel-Serrano, 2020), including the need for a broader approach to political ecology (Rose & Carr, 2018; Mostafanezhad & Norum, 2020) and the decolonization of research (Oackes, 2020). These last two elements are even more important because of the low number of international publications made in countries of the global South and in regions most impacted by the effects of the environmental crisis.

### Final considerations

The theme of climate change, as an eminent global concern, is already widespread in the

tourism literature, however, climate change – in reality, the collapse of the climate, since climate change is natural – is only one of the indications of something bigger: an environmental crisis that makes visible an “era of humans”, the Anthropocene.

However, it is necessary to unveil the apolitical character with which the themes of climate change and the Anthropocene have been dealt with. In this way, critical authors prefer to use the term Capitalocene, stating that indiscriminate human activities are not responsible for these changes, but the capitalist mode of production. Not only that, the Anthropocene idea can be used just as the idea was used around climate change. Changes in the climate have given rise to a new wave of economic growth, based on “climate businesses” (Arias-Henao, 2017; Palafox-Muñoz, 2017).

Tourism, in turn, is an economic activity that serves to the accumulation of capital which, through its space-time adjustments, is inserted in the “marginal” territories. What is defended, then, is that the relationship between the Capitalocene and tourism is that through tourism, nature is mercantiled. At this historic moment – with the advent of what scholars call a third phase of the Anthropocene – tourism takes advantage of the fragility of certain ecosystems, biomes or localities, which are threatened by global changes. And this is due to the *marketing* of called threatened nature and what has been called “last chance tourism” or, to better characterize by capitalism, disaster.

The intertwining of the themes “Anthropocene” and “tourism” give rise to several reflections that demonstrate the importance of analyzing tourism in the light of global environmental changes, which are evidence of this geological epoch. Despite the fact that there is a diversity of research dealing with the impacts of tourism, the relationship between climate change and tourism, among other topics, studies that appropriate the terms Anthropocene and Capitalocene are still incipient, with the vast majority of publications from English language and European scholars<sup>3</sup>.

The importance of the appropriation of the terms lies in the fact that tourism is no longer ahistorical and uncritical topic and is positioned in a broad global context: the environmental crisis. However, when appropriating the idea of Anthropocene or Capitalocene, the researchers demonstrate the understanding of the roots of the crisis experienced. It is in this sense that unveiling the state of the art is important. By mapping the state of the art it is possible to understand who and how the topic is being approached. What is verified is that the precursors of the theme in the field of tourism support the expansion of the research scope. However, there is more and less critical research, with few appropriating the term Capitalocene. This demonstrates, in a way, that the roots of the experienced environmental crisis have not yet been fully understood. The unveiling of the structures behind the environmental crisis and disaster capitalism becomes a challenge for future research in the field of tourism.

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