



Characterization of Tourism Players Through Key Concepts of Discourse Analysis

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ABSTRACT: With the increasing use of discourse analysis (DA) methodology in the humanities and social sciences, including tourism, there is a need to determine which subjects are necessary to understand and elucidate their discourses. Tourism, as a multifaceted phenomenon, tends to have a multitude of actors in its formulation and implementation, which tends to make research even more complex. This paper provides a bibliographical study to outline these themes, their importance in tourism and the circumstances of their discourses for an analysis of the proposed methodology based on the three key DA concepts: power, ideology and hegemony. As a result, this paper identifies six major groups of players: state and government; tourism trade; tourists; local residents; academy and media. As an implication, it is hoped that this paper will contribute to the advancement of discourse analysis methodology in tourism, particularly in the field of public policy.

Keywords: Discourse analysis; Tourism; Players; Methodology.

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INTRODUCTION

Discourse analysis (DA) is a recent methodology, grounded in four schools of thought: postmodernism, critical theory, social critique, and post-structuralism, as stated by Nogueira (2001). Its significance lies in understanding how discourses – which, in this context, are not viewed as stagnant, isolated, and inert – shape the actions of players on a phenomenon, whether it be social, economic, or spatial. In other words, discourses are driving elements of actions and intentions, whether intentional or not, of how players think, envision, and perceive their own role in reality and materiality, as affirmed by Greimas and Landowski (1979).

According to Magalhães, Martins & Resende (2018), these discourses are found in five spheres: public discourses, which reflect the political and ideological positions of public agents and, therefore, the institutions to which they are linked; media discourses, those that are intentionally propagated in the media, such as radio, television, newspapers, and social networks; institutional discourses, articulated by companies and institutions; academic discourses, which reflect the positional tendencies of researchers within a field of

study; and “daily” discourse, related to contexts of individual and subjective perceptions, which, when combined with other individual and subjective discourses, become collective.

A crucial step in discourse analysis is to identify and conceive who the essential players are for the investigation and research under this methodology. Given the range of players who are indirectly or directly impacted by a political action, this choice becomes very complex from the researcher's perspective. Tourism, as a phenomenon whose reality is intertwined with the decisions of a succession of players, does not exclude itself from this complexity. Being an open system, characterized by being impacted by a series of demands and actions from different players, whether from the governmental sphere, business strata, or the demands of the tourists themselves, the task of identifying which players' discourses need to be observed becomes even more intricate, given their multiplicity, as stated by Hall (2001). Thus, the research of a DA primarily begins with identifying who these players are.

The starting point is to understand that the discourses of these players are reproduced based on three key concepts, essential for DA investigation: power, ideology, and



hegemony, as pointed out by Fairclough (2003). The concept of power allows for the observation of how certain groups dominate and shape social relations through discourse. Ideology, in turn, reveals the ideas that sustain and perpetuate these unequal power relations, showing the players' intentions. Hegemony analyzes how these discursive practices maintain social order and the dominance of hegemonic groups. By identifying these elements, DA reveals how players, through their discourses, reproduce, naturalize, and sustain social asymmetries, offering a deep understanding of the dynamics of power and domination in society.

This paper aims, as a general objective, to define the players in tourism based on the key concepts of discourse analysis through a bibliographic study of tourism and public policy authors, listed in the bibliographic references and cited throughout the text. Specifically, this paper presents their importance in tourism and the circumstances of their discourses for research under the aegis of the discourse analysis methodology. As a justification, it is recognized that in tourism, unlike other social sciences and humanities, research under DA is still very incipient, closer to non-existence. Therefore, the intention of this

publication is to connect tourism researchers with DA, aiming to provide a tool for bridging the two fields, contributing to scientific investigation in the area, but notably, in the field of tourism public policies.

THEORETICAL REFERENCE

Nogueira (2001) explain that DA discusses the institutionalized practices of science, emphasizing that their properties depend on the positions of the players, making it impossible to standardize them. DA rejects the positivist and deductive origins, grounding itself in four schools of thought: postmodernism, critical theory, social critique, and post-structuralism.

Postmodernism, as explained by Harvey (1992), is a reaction to modernism, rejecting the idea that scientific discussions can be based on universal and objective issues. Lyotard (1989) argues that, in the academic milieu, postmodernism refuses the belief in absolute truths, emphasizing the diversity of life forms and the historically contingent nature of beliefs. This perspective emphasizes the coexistence of multiple viewpoints, challenging the pursuit of definitive truths, which are seen by postmodernism as overly positivist.



Critical Theory, according to Morrow (1994), emerged as the foundation of DA, criticizing the distinction between empirical and normative issues and the separation between science and the personal values of players. Critical theory advocates that scientific production should incorporate the subjective component of individuals who construct social reality. This approach proposes that society should be understood as a historical and dynamic totality, influenced by historical, cultural, political, and economic players. Instead of seeking universal laws, critical theory argues that understanding society requires considering its contingent and contextual nature.

Social critique, as evidenced in Foucault (1979), is fundamental to DA by demonstrating how power is a constant construction and investigation. The author suggests that power manifests through discourse, allowing individuals to exert influence on social and personal change. Power is seen as a dialectical element, being exercised both in the reaffirmation and resistance to hegemonic discourses. Thus, discourse analysis reveals how power is reproduced and contested in different social contexts.

Post-structuralism, according to Burr (1995), agrees that language is the basis for the

construction of personal identity and a social phenomenon. This perspective emphasizes that language is not fixed but open to questioning and contestation, being a site of variability and power relations. Nogueira (2001) argues that discourse is a means of reproducing identities and conflicts, where power relations manifest and are contested. Discourse analysis allows understanding how linguistic specificities reflect the intentions and actions of social agents, contributing to the comprehension of contemporary social dynamics.

From this foundation, DA has gained relevance in applied social sciences and humanities research, such as Sociology, Anthropology, Political Science, and Public Policies. According to Magalhães, Martins & Resende (2018), and Nogueira (2001), the growing importance of this methodology is due to its ability to scientifically interpret reality without being restricted to rigid theoretical perspectives and deductive approaches.

Magalhães, Martins & Resende (2018) emphasize that DA investigates the scientific nature of the discourses of individuals, institutions, or hegemonic social groups. According to Batista, Sato & Melo (2018), it seeks linguistic tools to reveal, through discourses, power relations, treating



language as a social practice that influences and is influenced by society. Fairclough (2003) explains that discourses, present in texts, music, artworks, and more recently, in social media posts, contain key elements such as power, ideology, and hegemony. By identifying who articulates the discourses that contain these elements, it is possible to begin investigating the players' intentions, which reveal mechanisms that promote social asymmetries and naturalizations.

DA, therefore, does not view discourses merely as sets of words, but as social practices that reflect and influence reality. By critically analyzing who carries these discourses, it helps to uncover and unveil how these players behave in relation to mechanisms of power and domination, allowing a deeper understanding of social practices and power relations in society, that is, how a player, through their discourse, can promote power and domination relations among groups, individuals, and institutions. As a transdisciplinary methodology also applicable to tourism, interpreting Moesch (2002), it is observed that it is a complex phenomenon with contradictory dimensions, allowing for an in-depth analysis of its practices. Marujo (2013) highlights that tourism players shape power relations, justify investments, maintain

power, generate profits, and establish public policies. Given the multiplicity of players in tourism, due to its open system, as presented by Beni (2004), the complexity of research based on DA begins, first of all, by identifying who the tourism players are capable of significantly representing a discourse with the quality to change tourism reality and finally substantiate it in the territory.

In light of Fairclough's theory (2003), this discourse is loaded with power, ideology, and hegemony. These concepts are central to understanding the discourse and the intentions and, therefore, the players and their actions. Power, the first key concept in DA, refers to the effects of domination that allow certain groups to control and constitute social relations. Discourse, imbued with intentions, can define or restructure society, its identities, and cultural bonds, with power being a central instrument in this process.

Ideology, another essential key concept, is the set of ideas that sustains and allows the creation of unequal power relations. By analyzing the ideologies present in discourses, it is possible to understand the social agents' intentions and how they contribute to the domination or naturalization of social structures.



Hegemony, the third key concept, observes the discursive practices that demonstrate the reproduction and maintenance of order, highlighting the influence of groups or institutions over others and generating, with opposition to it, a counter-hegemony, a resistance to its permanence.

Observing the discourses of these central players, based on the context of power, ideology, and hegemony contained within them, it is possible to identify the main players for a discourse analysis.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

As a methodology, this paper characterizes the players of tourism through a bibliographic study. According to Sousa, Oliveira & Alves (2021), it is essential because it identifies whether there are already scientific works on the subject, helping to define the problem and choose an appropriate method, based on previous studies, allowing a better understanding of the phenomenon under study. According to Fonseca (2002), these references are based on consolidated literature, whether from papers, books, or any scientific publications. Unlike DA research in the tourism area, there is, to some extent, a consolidation when observing who the players operating in

tourism are. Interpreting the text by Panosso Netto (2011), these players are found in two positions: those who administer it and those who are "affected" and "impacted" by this management. Thus, understanding Hall (2001), it is enumerated that despite the complexity and wide range of tourism players, the players and their discourses are also found in these two distinct fields.

Observing Beni (2006), with the theory of Hall (2001) and Panosso Netto (2011), it is perceived that, on one side, tourism administration is generally done by two major groups: the State and the tourism trade. They are essential because they provide resources, both financial and human, and manage the daily operations of tourism through established equipment and companies. Kingdon (1995) reinforces this position by noting that resources can only be made available and distributed for a specific purpose through public and private initiative. On the other hand, the impacted are those to whom the actions of the tourism trade and the State are directed. Burns (2002), upon realizing that people, not businesses, are impacted by tourism, through an anthropological study to identify who they are, concludes that this framework includes tourists and local residents. As a caveat, the State and the productive sector



are also impacted by their actions. However, they have political and economic power to mitigate the negative impacts they create and maximize positive impacts, a position impossible for local residents and tourists, as observed by Baldissera and Bahl (2012).

This categorization aligns with the five spheres of discourse proposed by Magalhães, Martins, & Resende (2018): public discourses are from public agents, that is, the players of the State who make public policies, which ultimately have the primacy of the common good. The State, moreover, is historically the greatest promoter of tourism in Brazil, especially in the establishment of infrastructure and the provision of credits and facilities, as well as the transfer of public resources, explains Beni (2006). Institutional discourses come from the players belonging to the tourism trade, whose aim, distinct from that of state players, is profit, causing actions and discourses to also be dissimilar. On the other hand, there is the "daily" discourse, intrinsic to the individual perception projected into a collective perception. Here, tourists and local residents emerge, creating their discourses due to the good or bad management of the first two, explains Burns (2002).

However, observing these same spheres,

media and academic discourses are found. Within tourism literature, the role of these two entities as players who shape and transform tourism practice, and consequently as discourse articulators, is scarce. However, within public policy literature, there is a consolidation of these players as bearers of discourses on other phenomena. Kingdon (1995), Faria, Karam & Santos (2017), and Magalhães, Martins & Resende (2018) define them as essential. The media and academia, argue Faria, Karam & Santos (2017), despite the thesis of neutrality rhetoric, have intentions that support the other two discourses, either supporting one group or another, depending on the circumstances. In tourism, whose reproduction as a phenomenon, from the perspective of the capitalist structure, (Moesch, 2002), it is noted that these players act as intermediaries, supporting or denying the actions and impacts generated by governmental or productive sector actions or by tourists and local residents or eventual coalitions.

To conduct the methodological research based on DA proposed in this paper, it is necessary to define the research players using the key concepts of power, ideology, and hegemony, as guided by Fairclough (2003). The concept of power, central to DA,



refers to the effects of domination that allow certain groups to control and constitute social relations. To identify power in discourses, it is essential to analyze how players articulate their intentions and strategies to maintain or alter the social structure. This involves mapping who holds power and how it is exercised through discourses, focusing on discursive practices that reinforce or challenge domination relations.

Ideology, the second key concept, according to the same author, is the set of ideas that sustain and allow the creation of unequal power relations. Analyzing the ideologies present in discourses allows understanding the underlying intentions of social players. This process involves deciphering implicit and explicit messages in discourses, understanding how they contribute to the naturalization of social structures or resistance to them. Ideological analysis is crucial to reveal the interests and objectives of different groups involved.

Hegemony, the third key concept, concludes Fairclough (2003), observes the discursive practices that demonstrate the reproduction and maintenance of social order. The analysis should focus on identifying hegemonic discourses that seek to legitimize and perpetuate the power

position of certain groups, as well as counter-hegemonic discourses that resist this domination. This allows understanding how different players influence and are influenced by power dynamics and how these relations are contested or sustained in the studied context. Finally, based on the concepts of power, ideology, and hegemony, it is possible to categorize the main research players for discourse analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Beni (2006) observes that the State is central to the development of tourism, considering the context of Brazilian tourism management. Kingdon (1995), when analyzing the role of the State in the formulation of public policies, and ultimately in the creation of public discourses, divides these into two subgroups: those who hold political power and those who do not. In the Brazilian context, the tourism players within the State who hold political power include the heads of the executive branch — the President of the Republic, governors, and mayors —, the mainly tourism managers, members of the legislative branch — creators, regulators, and supervisors of laws and other normative instruments —, and appointees of autonomous agencies and



other tourism interest associations. These individuals have a latent position of influence in the political arena, and their discourses direct and/or prioritize a scenario that is more plausible to be implemented, being significant in the decision-making process, according to the same author.

Those without political power are divided into two: those in leadership, advisory, and managerial positions and stable civil servants. The former are appointed by those with political power, and their discourses reproduce the actions of their appointers. However, as they control the functioning of the administration with the capacity to influence those with political power, the discourses of these players do not merely delineate influence or direction; instead, they manifest the scope of actions to be implemented in tourism management, as stated by Kingdon (1995).

The other group consists of public servants, who, due to the component of administrative stability, can observe greater continuity of management and assume a less imposing position and intercede for political interferences, as the same author points out. In their discourses, which are essentially technical, the rituals and dynamics of the implementation of actions and intentions are revealed, marked by the

availability of budgetary and material resources by these players, which can delay or accelerate their implementation, as defended by Batista, Sato & Melo (2018).

The ideology of the players concentrated in the State group permeates, in a democratic logic, which is Brazilian, the political group elevated to power through elections, as defined by Dearing & Rogers (1996). According to the authors, the ideology of those holding political power is materialized through personal positions embodied and aggregated in political parties. Observing the ideology of the State players through the political parties of those holding political power, which consequently guide the actions adopted and the appointees who will carry out this work, from those in leadership, advisory, and managerial positions. The ideology of civil servants, on the other hand, is not explicit in their actions and, consequently, in their discourses, since their work, according to Brazil (2022), is restricted to the demands of their immediate superiors and the principles of legality and impersonality.

The productive sector or the tourism trade, the second group of tourism players, is observed to participate for, as described by Faria, Karam & Santos (2017), greater bargaining optimization, through self-



organization into interest groups. It is common, across municipal, state, and national levels, for entrepreneurs to gather in associations with common characteristics based on the services they offer, as Sousa (2024) points out. Thus, there are associations of entrepreneurs in the hospitality, food and beverage, and travel sectors, for example. Despite a large number of members, these associations act in a unified manner in public and political arenas.

Therefore, for a Discourse Analysis (DA), it is essential to observe how the institutional discourse of these associations. Thus, for a DA, attention should be paid to the players in leadership and management positions, as they have the capacity to influence actions and public policies, argue Magalhães, Martins & Resende (2018). In tourism, they can be observed through their participation in political and governance instances of tourism, such as the National Tourism Council and regional and municipal tourism councils, for example.

According to the same authors, the discourses of players in the productive sector have three main components: a) defending their interests; b) articulating and consolidating their ideas within a situation occurring in reality; and c) defining action

proposals for policy formulation agendas, identifying actions favorable to the productive activity, through the promotion of actions or public policies that favor their interests, such as tax reductions, deregulation, or fiscal incentives, and other economic arguments, such as the importance of the free market, competition, or innovation, and claims of increased employment, economic growth, or business efficiency. Given their economic capacity, it should also be observed to what extent these demands encompass the totality of actions, to perceive their characteristic of coercion or opposition of ideas from other groups, notably those from civil society, argue the authors.

The ideology of private players is emphasized by an acceleration of these economic interests, clearly aiming for their profit and the reproduction of invested capital. Tourism, as a social practice shaped by the capitalist structure, finds in this group the reproducers of hegemonic practices, fostered by the technical unicity of their actions. Therefore, this conception will guide the interests, and hence, the discourses, concludes Santos Filho (2008).

The other group, the impacted ones, which for didactic purposes are coined in this work as "civil society," as Kingdon (1995) argues,



has an imbued diversity and complexity. In the specificity of tourism, given its open nature, it encompasses multiple players who alter and are impacted by it. This includes, firstly, tourists and local residents. According to Kingdon (1995), Burns (2002), and Faria, Karam & Santos (2017), individually, these players do not have potent political strength to influence their positions and speeches, hence the need to aggregate them into interest groups or incorporate other players to amplify this influence. These are, according to the authors, academia and the media.

Tourists are the tourism players with the greatest complexity in research through the DA methodology, given the difficulty in capturing their numerous considerations, which, undoubtedly, depend on the tourism destination, involving thousands of people, as Urry (2007) explains. Given the difficulty in gathering this discourse, which is confined to the acceptance or not of that tourism practice in the specific territory, Faria, Karan & Santos (2017) explain that these discourses occur after the use itself, through evaluations and satisfaction surveys, and the created propagations — virtually or by word of mouth, for example. In tourism, the everyday discourses of tourists can also be evaluated in this way,

whether through feedback created and sent via email after the trip or by rankings on specialized websites evaluating the tourist experience, as concluded by Zucco *et. al.* (2018).

Local residents are the most impacted by tourism. They provide support, whether as labor, within formality or informality, or as a critical political actor of tourism praxis, affirms Panosso Netto (2011). According to Burns (2002), this political conception arises from the impacts of tourism on the destination, which can be more beneficial — job creation, income generation, economic development, allocation of public resources — or harmful — socioeconomic inequality, environmental degradation, price increases, and exhaustion of public services. The ideology that shapes the discourses of these players is the perception of residents between greater approval and disapproval of tourism itself, given these impacts, the author argues: when it tends to be approved, the discourse supports tourism, mainly due to its economic nuances; when disapproved, repulsions are expressed, substantiated in conflicts, which can be temporary or permanent, potentially generating repulsions and frictions between residents and tourists.



Academics, who encompass academia, researchers, and universities, as players, do not gather in governance associations and do not always hold political power to alter the implementation of any action but have a component that should be highlighted: the technical and intellectual rhetoric, point out Faria, Karam & Santos (2017). With it, academics have the possibility of languages and discourses that minimize, but do not exclude, a biased stance of rhetorical consonance for any other players, which, in essence, create influences for constructing alternatives for deliberate actions.

Thus, through scientific publications, academic discourses can serve as a basis — or not — to corroborate distinct implementations, and if not, sustain critical arguments against them. Their non-neutrality, materialized by the researcher or the collective of academics, is raised when studying their ideologies, which permeates their subjective conception and instigates, not entirely, the methodologies of interpreting a phenomenon, hypotheses, or problem situations, conclude Magalhães, Martins & Resende (2018).

This ideological component, according to the same authors, in the DA methodology, should be evaluated, as the conjectured discourses, as well as bibliographic,

methodological references and methods, besides the results and reflective final considerations of any research, are also thought and shaped by it. Consequently, it is necessary to perceive the contradictions in the discourses, from the ambiguity of the academic interests reproduced sometimes to the interests of the tourism trade, sometimes to the local residents, sometimes to only one of them, or sometimes to none of them, defend Magalhães, Martins & Resende (2018).

The media, as guided by Steinberger (2017) and Faria, Karam & Santos (2017), have an important factor: they exert direct influence on all other players, with a decisive impact on public opinion. These convictions, the authors observe, have the power to modulate actions from four fronts: a) on the State subject, by altering the implementation of a measure already during its implementation — in the executive branch — or modulating the legislative process — in the legislative branch — ; b) highlighting negative impacts or mitigating them, directing this to local residents; c) acting as a form of promotion for the tourist destination, encouraging (or not) the displacement and tourism to a specific locality; and d) on the trade, recognizing that the media can create repercussion



crises — positive or negative — about the activities carried out by entrepreneurs.

According to Steinberger (2017), the media have greater representation and the possibility of capturing the essence of their discourses in content producers — editorial offices, journalists, columnists, publishers, producers, media content and digital influencers, etc. Moreover, they are fundamental players, both in print and on the internet, as they build representations of the tourist phenomenon. Thus, the media discourse, permeated by the ideology of its political line — be it conservative or progressive, as the author exemplifies — brings out the contradictions of tourism. Therefore, media discourses become, in essence, a representation of the daily practices and issues of the others, concludes Faria, Karam & Santos (2017).

However, as an ideological contingent, the position of the media reinforces the latter, being referred to as hegemonic or commercial media. Conversely, alternative media has the capacity for a plurality of opinions, with an approach that tends to align more with local residents and less with the productive sector, which it tends to view critically, argues Santos (1981).

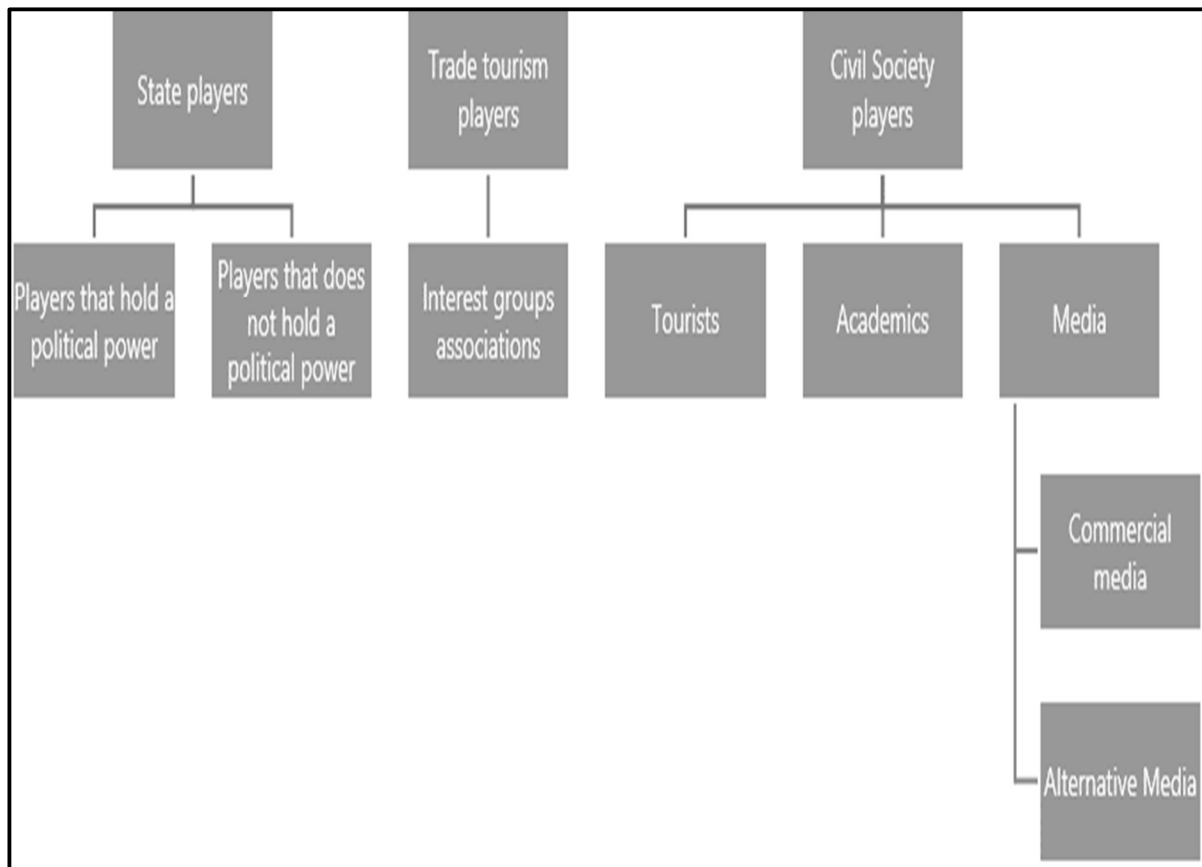
The ideology — whether of commercial or alternative media — is echoed in their

discourses, or in their language, such as in reports, editorials, news papers, or columns. According to the author, the ideology of commercial media is hegemonic and reproduces the interests of capitalist reproduction, and therefore, those of the trade players. Thus, their discourses tend to aim at generating profit for entrepreneurs and investors.

Alternative media, is counter-hegemonic and tends to focus its discourses on social, political, and environmental issues that may not receive wide coverage from commercial media. This includes topics such as social justice, human rights, and inequality, often critical of power structures, the establishment, and dominant institutions, as it seeks to expose social, economic, and political problems that may be neglected by commercial media, Santos (1981) adds. Discourses should observe these components to elucidate and uncover the strategies and intentions behind these discourses by recognizing these elements in the public opinion actions of the media.

Thus, as illustrated in Figure 1, by understanding the players of tourism and their ideologies, the researcher can begin to comprehend the components present in their discourses, to conduct a Discourse Analysis (DA) study:

FIGURE 1 – Tourism players in a DA research



Source: By the author, 2024.

CONCLUSION

The research conducted in this paper aimed primarily to define the players of tourism for a discourse analysis based on the key concepts of power, ideology, and hegemony. Through the analysis of the discourses of different groups involved in tourism, six main groups of players and their interconnections with these key concepts were identified.

Within the realm of the State, there are those who possess political power, such as heads of the Executive branch, members of

the Legislative branch, and tourism managers, who direct and prioritize the implementation of actions. Those who do not possess political power, such as public servants, play a significant role in the management and implementation of policies, influencing the actions to be carried out.

In the tourism trade, entrepreneurs and tourism business owners were observed to seek to optimize their actions in interest groups to influence public policies and actions favorable to their economic interests. Their ideology is profit-oriented



and aimed at the reproduction of invested capital.

In civil society, tourists, local residents, academics, and the media stood out. Tourists and local residents have varied interests, which can lead them to support or criticize tourism depending on the perceived impacts on their lives. Academics play a critical role in analyzing and proposing alternatives for tourism actions, while the media exerts direct influence on public opinion, which can be commercial, reproducing the interests of the productive sector, or alternative, counter-hegemonic, critical of power structures.

Based on this analysis, it is concluded that this paper can contribute to connecting tourism researchers to discourse analysis, providing a tool to investigate tourism, notably its public policies, and the social dynamics involved, thus expanding the field of study and research in this area.

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