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Tourism research in non-English-speaking academic systems

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ABSTRACT

While tourism knowledge is expanding, the scholarly production of tourism academicians working outside English-speaking systems still remains partly unexplored. This paper is an attempt to address this gap in knowledge as it aims to compare the scholarly production of English-speaking and non-English-speaking systems. More specifically, this article reviews the published academic work produced in English-speaking and three non-English-speaking systems (France, Iran, and Italy). Overall, our analysis unveils a rather fragmented scenario as the tourism knowledge produced and published in the four systems has been shaped by different power structures. However, the findings also show common patterns, such as the predominant role of business-related studies over socio-cultural approaches to tourism in all the systems.

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Introduction

In mapping the evolution of tourism research, Ballantyne, Packer, and Axelsen (2009, p. 151) point out that 'as the field has grown, research approaches and locations have become more diverse'. Despite this, the scholarly production of tourism academicians working outside English-speaking circles still remains partly unexplored by scholars. Indeed, most of the previous studies conducted to unearth the major trends in tourism studies (see Ballantyne et al., 2009; McKercher, Law, & Lam, 2006; Xiao & Smith, 2006) tend to focus on the scholarly journals within the English-speaking world.

Undoubtedly, language differences represent one of the reasons behind the existing gaps among the different academic systems, as discussed by Dann (2011) and Dann and Liebman Parrinello (2009). While non-English-speaking scholars often publish in English in order to obtain international visibility (with some linguistic and institutional difficulties), only in some circumstances English-speaking scholars would disseminate their research accomplishments in other languages (e.g. Mandarin or Spanish) (Dann, 2011). In some instances, there have been efforts from the English-speaking world to reach out other academic planets. For example, the initiative of publishing the *Annals of Tourism Research* in Spanish from 1999 to 2009 should be regarded as an attempt to bridge the English and Spanish worlds. Also, some journals, such as *Tourism*

Geographies, include abstracts in a number of languages. Despite this, it is important to critically reflect upon the colonial and post-colonial structures of power that have led to the establishment of English as the *lingua franca* in academic and non-academic worlds.

Historical, political, and socio-cultural reasons, mainly grounded on established structures of power (Tribe, 2006), need to be considered to explain the important role of English-speaking academic circles in the global scenario. Besides language barriers, the question arises as to whether paradigmatic, theoretical, and methodological differences concerning approaches to research exist among different academic systems. As such, different philosophical assumptions about the production of knowledge may also lead to divergent ways of 'representing' tourism research. Disagreements among the various academic worlds also exist if methodological issues are referred to. For example, the English-speaking quantitative–qualitative methodological debates occurring since the 1970s have been more nuanced within the French and Italian systems. These discrepancies are also due to the fact that the development of tourism as a field of inquiry or (in)discipline (Tribe, 1997) has been characterised by substantial differences in the various socio-cultural contexts.

Within this scenario, little is known about the scholarly production of non-English-speaking systems. This paper is an attempt to address this gap in knowledge as it aims

to shed light on the scholarly production of both English-speaking and non-English-speaking systems. More specifically, this article focuses on published academic work produced in English-speaking and three non-English-speaking systems (France, Iran, and Italy) and critically discusses similarities and differences between these three systems and the English-speaking world. In the following article, firstly we will provide an overview of the development of tourism studies in three academic systems, namely the French, the Iranian, and the Italian. Secondly, we will identify and analyse the scholarly production of these systems. Finally, we will critically discuss the similarities and differences among the publications produced in the various systems.

Overall, this study's contribution to knowledge is threefold. First, it partially shifts the focus from the English-speaking academic world, which tends to dominate the global academic scenario with its values and paradigms. Second, it contributes to recognise other academic systems, which are relatively neglected by English-speaking scholars. Third, it paves the way for a more comprehensive understanding of the academic tourism community, one which contemplates different tourism academic systems, languages, epistemologies, and cultures.

Literature review

The epistemology of tourism studies

In order to understand the nature and development of tourism studies we need to cast light on the philosophical assumptions underpinning this field of inquiry. More specifically, we need to reflect upon the epistemological assumptions implicitly or explicitly accepted by many tourism scholars. Epistemology, namely a branch of philosophy focusing on the theory of knowledge, plays a crucial role in understanding the nature of tourism knowledge. Tribe points out that

The epistemology of tourism thus inquiries into the character of tourism knowledge, the sources of tourism knowledge, the validity and reliability of claims of knowledge of the external world of tourism, the use of concepts, the boundaries of tourism studies, and the categorization of tourism studies as a discipline or a field. (1997, p. 639)

By emphasising a dichotomy between tourism as a 'phenomenon' of the outside world and tourism as 'studies', Tribe (1997) conceives the latter as a limited and 'preferred' representation of the former. In this respect, as any other forms of knowledge, tourism knowledge is socially constructed and reiterated. Based on Lewin's (1935) notion of 'force-field', Tribe (2006)

maintains that tourism knowledge is produced through a phenomenon mediated by several actors and factors, namely person, rules, position, ends, and ideology.

Importantly, the idea that tourism knowledge is socially, culturally, and politically constructed (Hall, 2004; Tribe, 1997, 2006) paves the way to the possibility that the representation of tourism as a phenomenon is not universal but varies among different contexts. Despite relatively homogenous national traditions, we need to acknowledge that academicians' paradigms and scholarly practices differ within national traditions, universities, and departments (Tribe, 2010). This is also due to the fact that universities and departments are 'structures [that] have immense power to direct time, supply funds and corral research to fit a particular faculty strategy' (Tribe, 2006, pp. 371–372). In this respect, despite the plethora of studies on tourism knowledge created within English-speaking academic journals (see Ballantyne et al., 2009; McKercher et al., 2006; Mura & Sharif, 2015; Tribe, 1997, 2006; Xiao & Smith, 2006), less is known about the production of tourism knowledge outside the English-speaking world. As such, in the following paragraphs we will discuss how tourism knowledge is 'constructed' in three non-English-speaking academic systems, namely France, Iran, and Italy.

Tourism research in France

Issues concerning the nature and epistemology of tourism studies (mainly whether tourism should be regarded as a field, a discipline or in-discipline) have been subject of debate in France (Borret, 2005; Ceriani-Sebregondi et al., 2008; Darbellay & Stock, 2012; Groupe-ment de recherche tourisme: Lieux et réseaux (GDR-CNRS), 2001; Hoerner, 2000, 2002; Knafo, 2005; Origet du Cluzeau, 2000; Vicériat, Origet du Cluzeau, & Balfet, 2005). In a scenario where research-based programmes and vocational courses have been conceived as separate areas, subject to different institutional identifications and funding sources, the development of tourism has followed two different patterns. The first has led tourism studies to develop as a sub-field of what have been perceived 'traditional disciplines', such as geography, sociology, psychology, economics, history, management, and urbanism. Within this scenario, studies on tourism have been conducted by scholars belonging to any of the traditional disciplines. Importantly, those operating within traditional disciplines have had access to potential public research funds. The second pattern has led to the development of tourism as a distinct field or in-discipline, mainly characterised by a vocational nature. In this respect, those labelled as tourism scholars have worked

outside traditional disciplinary boundaries, mainly with the intent to answer problems for the industry (which would also provide atomised and limited forms of financial support) (Laporte & Poulain, 2013). One of the attempts of legitimising tourism studies was followed by the idea of creating the (meta)discipline *tourismologie* (Hoerner, 2000, 2002), which has led to the creation of PhD programmes in 'tourism studies'. However, this direction is questioned due to a lack of consensus in terms of identification of core research questions, paradigms, methodologies, and methods that could be specific to tourism.

Moreover, two important initiatives to recognise tourism research were the creation of a research unit named *Unité de Recherche en Sociologie du Tourisme International (URESTI)* (Research Unit in Sociology of International Tourism), led by Lanfant from 1990 to 1994 and an inter-disciplinary group of research called *Groupement de recherche (GDR) tourisme: lieux et réseaux* (Research Group Tourism: places and networks) led by the geographer Cazes from 1997 to 2003. While other initiatives have been discussed (Darbellay & Stock, 2012), at the current time none of them has been able to produce a more coherent, sustainable, and recognised academic field or discipline. This is mainly due to the regulations guiding higher education and research in France, which tend to create barriers to those operating outside traditional disciplines, such as cultural studies, education studies, gender studies, and food studies. The regulation of academic careers in France does not facilitate the development of tourism studies as each traditional discipline has its own national body (which acts as a 'gate keeper') in charge of assessment, evaluation and qualification of academicians. Since selection procedures are disciplinary, PhD holders from an inter-disciplinary or in-disciplinary background are at risk of not qualifying in any of the disciplinary sections of the national body.

At the current time, several opportunities can be forecast for the future legitimisation of tourism studies in France. Higher education courses in tourism have been expanding since the late 1960s. In this regard, the professional orientation of universities from the 1970s onwards has encouraged the development of tourism-related programmes in universities and private institutions in higher education (Bonneau, 2012; Seraphin, 2012; Vellas, 1998). However, the number of students joining these courses tend to be relatively small to be considered as a priority by universities' vice-chancellors (Laporte & Poulain, 2013). Therefore, only few dedicated faculties/schools within universities exist. Tourism programmes mostly belong to other faculties/schools – for instance law, geography, modern languages, history,

etc. (Bonneau, 2012). According to Laporte and Poulain (2013), this is due to the structure of French studies in tourism. Indeed, most of the students are completing a diploma (in tourism, hospitality or culinary arts) in hotel schools – which are independent from universities – before pursuing a *licence* (bachelor's degree) in universities.

Finally, the issue also concerns funding opportunities for scholars. In French universities, financial resources for research are relying on public funds for about 70% (David, 2016). Also, both actors of the industry and academia are spread between private and public institutions and at different levels (locals and national). In this context, the fragmentation of tourism as an economic sector and the weak importance given to tourism policy-makers by the French government (Viard, 1998) is leading to an absence of grants for tourism (Poulain, 2011).

Tourism research in Iran

The development of tourism research in Iran cannot transcend the development of the tourism industry and tourism education in this country. Despite its high potential, tourism in Iran is underdeveloped (Ziaei, Saeidi, & Ahmadi, 2012). Ahmadi and Nikbin (2012) believe that improving the higher education system in tourism according to the current situation and future needs of this industry is necessary to reform the structural system of the tourism industry in Iran.

Tourism education in Iran is at its infancy as it is still absent in various educational grades (Ahmadi & Nikbin, 2012). Research shows that the main challenge in tourism education is the lack of an appropriate educational system based on the specific context of Iran and latest world progress (Ahmadi & Nikbin, 2012). In Iran tourism training dates back to 1935 when the tourist attraction and advertisement office was established. In 1963, the Ministry of Culture established a hospitality college. Then, holding the first short courses on tourism, founding the first college for hospitality by the Ministry of Education in 1966, sending mobile training groups to all provinces in 1969 and also sending tourism and hospitality instructors to Italy in 1975 were the most important actions to improve tourism education before the Islamic Revolution.

With the advent of the Islamic revolution and 8 years of war against Iraq, tourism training was abandoned for a decade. After the war (1988), in order to boost the economy and increase exchange income from other sources other than oil, due to high potentiality of the country in the field of drawing foreign tourists, the *Iranian Tourism Organization* was established. This

organisation was merged and divided many times in order to continue its activities more independently.

After the Iran–Iraq war, the quality and quantity of tourism courses improved. Different tourism and hospitality courses were provided in all levels at vocational schools, diploma, bachelor, and master degree. The involvement of English-speaking institutions in Iranian tourism education did not go beyond some vocational courses depending on the government's attitude at the time. In higher education, the establishment of tourism management courses at the bachelor's degree level in 2000, at the master's degree level in 2004 and the creation of hospitality management at the bachelor's degree level in 2004 at *Allameh Tabatabai University* in Tehran represented the climax of tourism education development during the years after the revolution. In the last 5 years, the focus of the tourism majors' development has been on master levels. The founding of tourism planning in 2007, tourism programming and geography in 2004, and ecotourism in 2010 are among them. Ultimately, *Science and Culture University* registered students in PhD programmes. According to Ziaei et al. (2012), only five universities accepted students in the field of tourism until 2005. However, after *Payame Noor University* and *Islamic Azad University* started to offer tourism programmes in 2006, the number of faculties accepting tourism students rose to 244 units in 2011.

There have been few studies about the development of tourism research in Iran. The results from a search on Google Scholar imply that research in this field in Persian language in journals approved by the *Ministry of Higher Education* dates back to 15 years ago (Ghavidel, 1999). According to Bayat, Badri, Rezvani, and Sabokbar's (2013) study on rural tourism research in Persian language, Iranian rural tourism studies started in 2002. Bayat et al. (2013) divide this time process into two eras. From 2002 to 2007 (first era) there were only a few studies in this field while from 2007 (second era) the number of studies on tourism increased noticeably. Although there are several journals in the fields of geography, rural studies, and management which publish tourism articles, there are only two journals that specifically publish academic articles in tourism (Tourism Studies by *Allameh Tabatabai University* and Planning and Development of Tourism by *Mazandaran University*).

Bayat et al.'s (2013) study shows that researchers in the fields of geography, agriculture, sociology, architecture, natural resources, environment, and management have played the most important role in rural tourism research, so that 62.5% of all studies have been conducted by geographers. The main reason for the presence of researchers from other fields in tourism studies

can be due to its multidisciplinary nature and approach. Apparently, the tourism courses in higher education in Iran have been developed under the shadow of other fields including geography, social science, management and economics in response to the market's needs and also copying other countries.

According to Chianeh, Nasrollahzadeh, and Abdollahi (2012), the main problem of higher educational training in tourism is due to inefficient collaboration among university, industry, and policy-makers. In this regard, the shortcomings of the educational system to fulfil the needs of the tourism industry and also the presence of lecturers from other fields play an important role (Chianeh et al., 2012; Ziaei et al., 2012).

Chianeh et al. (2012) suggest that for the reformation in the tourism section, the investment in the higher education system should be taken into consideration. After the 1979 Islamic Revolution, due to the vast political effects influencing the tourism industry and the oil dependent economy, the positive effects of tourism as an important economic sector faded and were ultimately ignored for many years (Chianeh & Rezatab-Azgom, 2012). In this circumstance, tourism had a weak presence and it was always kept aside by policies and enormous national development plans. As a result, it could not be developed as an independent field and this status quo was also reflected in the development of tourism studies. However, after the formation of President Rohani's cabinet and the signing of nuclear agreements, the development of the tourism industry in Iran has become more and more part of the government's agenda. It is expected that these changes would lead to positive developments for the tourism industry, education, and studies in the near future.

Tourism research in Italy

Since tourism represents one of the most important sectors of the Italian economy (Becheri & Maggiore, 2016), studies have been conducted about its origins and developments (Barucci et al., 2001; Boccella & Lambert, 2010). Despite the abundance of studies about tourism and its economic and socio-cultural contributions to the Italian scenario, less has been written about the development of tourism research in Italy.

Perhaps one of the most comprehensive overviews of tourism studies in Italy is provided by Costa and Martiniotti (2001). According to their analysis, traditionally the study of tourism in Italy has not been confined within academic/university circles. Rather, in general courses related to tourism in Italy have been offered by non-academic institutions and bodies, such as public and private regional organisations. In this respect,

Italian 'regions' or *Regioni*, namely the 20 first-level administrative divisions that constitute the country, have taken a prominent role in offering tourism-related courses. Moreover, second-level institutional bodies, also known in Italian as *province*, have also played a role in providing educational opportunities in tourism. Both public and private organisations have been offering a diverse array of tourism courses at different levels, including professional master's degrees, certified short-term courses, trainings, refresher courses among others (Costa & Martinotti, 2001). In other words, tourism knowledge in Italy has been produced and disseminated by both academic and non-academic bodies.

It is only in the last 15 years that tourism research has become more visible within Italian university circles. In order to understand its development, it is necessary to explore the complex changes that have interested the Italian university system since 2000. Before 2000, university courses in Italy, also known as *Corsi di Laurea*, consisted of 4-to-6-year studies, which allowed students to earn a *Laurea*. Although there is no agreement on the equivalent value of *Laurea* in the English-speaking system, this title could be equated to a bachelor's degree with honours or a Master's degree. However, it is important to emphasise that traditionally *Laurea* has been perceived by Italians as a prestigious degree, which also confers the title of Doctor or *Dottore* (which is a designation different from the Doctor of Philosophy earned upon completion of a PhD or Doctorate).

Importantly, within this scenario there were no university courses entirely focused on tourism (Boccella & Lamberti, 2010). Rather, only some tourism-related modules, such as Tourism Geography, were offered in what they have been regarded as 'more established' disciplines and courses, such as geography, economics, business, sociology, and anthropology. Courses in tourism were only offered in *Corsi di Laurea breve*, namely 3-year university courses that allowed students to acquire a diploma, such as *Diploma in Economia e Gestione dei Servizi Turistici* (Diploma in 'Business and Management of Touristic Services') (see Costa & Martinotti, 2001). This diploma, however, was not equivalent to *Laurea* as the latter carried a higher legal value and social prestige. Also, since the beginning of the 1990s some universities have offered master's degrees in tourism, such as the *Master's programme in Economics and Management of Tourism* offered by Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Yet, the number of programmes in tourism at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels was limited.

It is only in 2000 (after most of the European countries, including Italy, signed the Bologna Declaration in 1999 to align the different university systems) that tourism research became more legitimate within the Italian

university system. More specifically, after the Bologna Declaration, 4-to-6-year university courses were abolished and a new system was implemented. This new system (also known as 3+2 system) consists of a 3-year degree (*Laurea di primo livello*), followed by a 2-year degree (*Laurea Specialistica*) or a 'first-level' master's degree (*Master di primo livello*). 'Second-level' master's degrees (*Master di secondo livello*) and Doctoral Programmes can be accessed only after completing a *Laurea Specialistica*. More specifically, the 'Decree of the Ministry of Education, University and Research' of 4 August 2000 introduces 42 groups of disciplines at the undergraduate level, grouped based on similar learning objectives, including the cluster 'Tourism Sciences' (*Scienze del Turismo*). Moreover, the new system also contemplates 104 groups of disciplines at the postgraduate level, including the group 'Planning and Management of Tourism Systems' (*Progettazione e Gestione dei Sistemi Turistici*) (Costa & Martinotti, 2001).

Within the new system, it is true that tourism research has become more recognised. However, due to its multidisciplinary nature and approach, 'tourism studies' cannot be confined within a specific discipline or field of inquiry. Rather, within the Italian scenario tourism courses can be part of different departments or faculties, such as economics, geography, sociology, anthropology, law, and art. In this respect, an analysis of the tourism courses offered in Italian universities still highlights a fragmented and complex scenario, in which the study of tourism is conceived and articulated from often anti-thetic perspectives. It is important to emphasise that these divergent ontological and epistemological positions about tourism should not be regarded as a hindrance. Instead, they are crucial to spark paradigmatic debates necessary to understand the complexities of tourism as a phenomenon. Ugolini (2007) points out that multidisciplinary and inter-disciplinary programmes are crucial to critically analyse the different forces (both global and local) that shape tourism. Within the Italian scenario, for example, the study of tourism should not transcend the analysis of both global socio-political and economic macro forces (e.g. globalisation) and local cultural trends (e.g. the specific socio-cultural fabric of a specific geographical areas). Importantly, geographers, economists, historians, art historians, sociologists, anthropologists, biologists all play an important role in unearthing the complexities of tourism.

Methodology

This article is based on a review of the published scholarly production in English-speaking and three non-English-speaking systems (France, Italy, and Iran). The

reason behind the choice of these three non-English-speaking systems lies on the authors' biographies. More specifically, the authors of this paper are three scholars from Italy, France, and Iran respectively, who have been trained partly or fully in their respective education systems (Italy, France, and Iran). Moreover, this work focusses on the analysis of the keywords included in the papers published in major tourism academic journals. The exclusion of other forms of publications (e.g. books, conference papers, book chapters, etc.), although somehow arbitrary, was dictated by practical reasons and limited resources. Despite this, we contend that the material published in journal articles provides an important insight into the tourism scholarly production.

The journals chosen for this analysis were selected based on different criteria. One of them considered the ranking of the journals. For the journals in English, all the papers published between 2011 and 2015 in the A* tourism journals listed in the Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) journal quality list, namely the *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *Journal of Travel Research*, and *Tourism Management*, were selected. Also, these four journals are the top four tourism journals listed on Thomson Reuters' Social Sciences Citation Index with the impact factor of 2.275, 2.480, 2.905, and 3.140, respectively. Moreover, they have been ranked as the top four tourism journals on the SCImago Journal Rank (SJR). The SJR indicator is an

index to assess and compare journals listed in the Scopus database (Elsevier B.V.). For the non-English-speaking worlds – Italy, France, and Iran – the journals were chosen after consulting established members of the tourism scientific community in each country.

Following these criteria, five journals were selected as representative of the Italian system – *Turistica, Rivista di Scienze del Turismo* (in English since 2012, the issues in English are not included in the analysis), *Turismo e Psicologia, Rivista Italiana di Diritto del Turismo*, and *Annali del Turismo*; two of the French system – *Mondes du Tourisme* (some articles, written in English, are not included in the analysis) and *Revue Espaces*; three of the Iranian system – *Journal of Planning and Development of Tourism, Journal of Social Tourism Studies*, and *Journal of Tourism Studies*. For each journal, the articles published in the last five years at the date of the analysis (2016) were included in the analysis. The keywords contained in the articles of these journals were considered as units of analysis based on the assumption that they provide an indicative measure of the content of the articles (McAdoo, 2015). Overall, we collected 9206 keywords for the English-speaking system; 1131 for the Italian system; 3518 for the French system and 1057 for the Iranian system.

All the keywords were coded and grouped into broad categories. Following similar previous studies (Ballantyne et al., 2009; Xiao & Smith, 2006), we identified a list of categories, which were used to code the keywords. These are (1) Typology of tourists; (2) Environment; (3) Community & Development; (4) Alternative Experience/Product; (5) Socio-cultural Aspects & Change; (6) Geopolitical Regions/Focus; (7) Literature/Research/Methods; (8) Marketing & Management; (9) Economics; (10) Industry & Transportation; (11) Hospitality; (12) Recreation; (13) Impacts; (14) North America; (15) Tourism; (16) Third World; (17) Sociology; (18) Governance; (19) Education; and (20) Information Technologies. As some of the keywords could be included in more than one of these categories, in several instances we also read the papers to contextualise the keywords. All the keywords were coded independently by three scholars, who then met regularly to compare and discuss the way the keywords were categorised. In this phase, emphasis was placed on finding consensus in the categorisation of keywords in order to achieve consistency and minimise discrepancies.

Results

The results of frequency analysis show that the top three groups of keywords in the English-speaking (total 57.32% including theoretical and methodological approaches, 23.92%; marketing and management, 21.85%; and

Code	English	Code	Italy	Code	France	Code	Iran
7	23.92%	18	28.59%	4	22.01%	8	24.55%
8	21.85%	4	18.36%	6	12.20%	7	18.16%
4	11.55%	6	12.33%	18	11.46%	6	16.93%
6	7.43%	7	10.61%	8	10.99%	4	11.32%
5	6.96%	8	9.75%	5	8.01%	18	6.28%
18	5.10%	19	3.73%	20	7.98%	1	4.26%
3	4.39%	5	3.35%	11	5.39%	3	4.15%
2	3.63%	9	2.20%	7	4.42%	9	2.80%
9	3.30%	1	2.10%	2	4.39%	20	2.80%
1	3.14%	3	2.01%	1	2.45%	5	2.69%
20	2.82%	2	1.91%	19	2.33%	2	2.35%
11	1.24%	11	1.72%	3	1.62%	11	1.46%
10	1.20%	20	1.43%	10	1.59%	10	0.90%
19	1.14%	13	0.96%	12	0.74%	13	0.45%
13	0.94%	10	0.86%	9	0.18%	15	0.45%
12	0.63%	17	0.10%	13	0.18%	19	0.45%
15	0.43%	12	0.00%	16	0.09%	12	0.00%
17	0.19%	14	0.00%	14	0.00%	14	0.00%
14	0.07%	15	0.00%	15	0.00%	16	0.00%
16	0.06%	16	0.00%	17	0.00%	17	0.00%

Figure 1. Percentages of groups of keywords.

alternative experience/product, 11.55%), Italian (total 59.27% including governance, 28.59%; alternative experience/product, 18.36%; and geopolitical regions, 12.33%), and Iranian (total 59.64% including marketing and management, 24.55%; theoretical and methodological approaches, 18.16%; and geopolitical regions, 16.93%) systems contain more than half of all the keywords. In the French system, the top four groups of keywords exceed 50% of all the used keywords (total 56.66% including alternative experience/product, 22.01%; geopolitical regions, 12.20%, governance, 11.46%, and marketing and management, 10.99%).

Three groups of keywords related to marketing and management (English-speaking, 21.85%; Italian, 9.75%, French, 10.99%, and Iranian, 24.55%), alternative experience and product (English-speaking, 11.55%; Italian, 18.36%, French, 22.01%, and Iranian, 11.32%), and geopolitical regions (English-speaking, 7.43%; Italian, 12.33%, French, 12.20%, and Iranian, 16.93%) are among the top five keywords in all systems. On the other hand, codes related to the third world, North America, and sociology are among the five least used groups of keywords in all systems.

Figure 1 shows the percentage of each of the 20 groups of keywords which have been used in each system. To construct the figure, the English-speaking system was used as the reference. The colour spectrum varies from black (the highest percentage in the English-speaking system; theoretical and methodological approaches, 23.92%) to dark red (the lowest percentage in the English-speaking system, the third world, 0.06%). As it can be seen, there are some differences between the four systems and these differences become more significant for some codes. For example, the difference between the rank of scores of education (14th in the English-speaking, 6th in the Italian, 11th in the French, and 17th in the Iranian system), theoretical and methodological approaches (1st in the English-speaking, 4th in the Italian, 9th in the French, and 2nd in the Iranian system), and economics (9th in the English-speaking, 8th in the Italian, 15th in the French, and 8th in the Iranian system) in the four systems exceeds five.

Discussion

Overall, when the scores obtained in the four systems are compared, the findings portray a rather heterogeneous and fragmented picture. Indeed, a general overview of the results seems to highlight the distinctiveness of each system and the differences existing among them. For example, while studies on governance (code 18) were quite predominant within the context of

the Italian system, they did not score as high in the other systems. To a certain extent, the high score of 'governance' in the Italian system could be explained by the fact that one of the five journals selected to represent the Italian scenario (*Rivista Italiana di Diritto del Turismo*) is a specialist journal that focuses on law and legal matters related to governance. Also, studies concerning theoretical and methodological approaches to tourism (code 7) are more prominent in the English-speaking system than in the other contexts. In this regard, the findings highlight the leading role of English-speaking countries in theory-building and knowledge development in tourism among the four systems considered. However, publication strategies might differ between the different systems in regards to their structure. Indeed, the core of the scientific production might be published either in disciplinary journals or monographs in the French and Italian systems.

These rather obvious differences are not surprising as in each of the systems considered the development of tourism as a field of inquiry has occurred based on unique socio-cultural circumstances, political structures of power, and educational paradigms. As a consequence, it is inevitable that differences among the four systems exist in terms of what 'legitimate' tourism knowledge is and how tourism knowledge is produced and represented. Tribe (2006) contends that several forces and structures of power, namely what he refers to as 'knowledge force-field', act together to shape the interpretation and representation of tourism as phenomenon. As a consequence, tourism knowledge needs to be conceived as the product of a selective process in which tourism as phenomenon is 'filtered' and 'formed' by various power structures, namely person, rules, positions, ends, and ideology (Tribe, 2006).

Importantly, the heterogeneity of the findings also invites us to reflect upon the differences existing within different Western systems. Indeed, with the exclusion of Iran (whose geopolitical location is not regarded as part of the 'West'), some English-speaking countries, France and Italy all belong to the Western world. Yet, interestingly they all present differences in terms of tourism knowledge production and representation. While colonial and postcolonial theory in tourism (see Chambers & Buzinde, 2015; Hall & Tucker, 2004) has rightly argued that structures of power exist between dominant Western ontologies and epistemologies and subordinated non-Western ways of knowing, our findings challenge the idea of a homogenous 'West'. It is true that Western countries share similar ontological and epistemological assumptions about the world, tourism, and the ways of knowing them; yet, France,

Italy, and some of the English-speaking worlds are also grounded on different traditions, which influence how tourism is studied.

Despite this rather fragmented scenario, some similarities seem to emerge if the rank of some of the scores obtained across the four systems are examined. The group 'Management/marketing' (code 8), for example, scores high in all the systems (2nd in the English-speaking system; 5th in the Italian; 4th in the French; and 1st in the Iranian). Moreover, in all the systems this group scores higher than group 5 (socio-cultural aspects and change) and group 17 (sociology). This seems to indicate that in all the four countries the published material has tended to privilege the managerial aspects of tourism over its socio-cultural dimensions. In this regard, the findings seem to support Higgins-Desbiolles (2006), who points out that despite its important socio-cultural implications, business-related views often tend to play a dominant role in the way tourism is conceptualised. In this sense, the results suggest that the call for a critical turn in tourism studies (Aitchison, 2006; Ateljevic, Pritchard, & Morgan, 2007) has been relatively ignored by tourism scholars, irrespective of the scholarly system they belong to. While Airey (2015) and Tribe and Airey (2007) regard tourism as a mature field of inquiry due to its focus on both managerial and socio-cultural aspects, the findings of this study seem to provide an opposite scenario, especially in the English-speaking system.

Another similarity that characterises all the four system is the interest shown by scholars on specific types of tourism (code 4) and geopolitical regions (code 6). In this respect, in all the four system scholars tend to place emphasis on the micro aspects and circumstances of tourism development. In other words, tourism is often investigated as a highly localised phenomenon, whose dynamics and development cannot be disentangled from local spaces and places. This approach can lead to both positive and negative implications for tourism knowledge. It surely produces relevant empirical material about the relationship between tourism and local development, facilitates our understanding of the implications of tourism for local communities and encourages more sustainable forms of tourism based on the specificity of the context. However, this focus also represents an obstacle for a more comprehensive understanding of tourism as it may jeopardise wider conceptualisations of tourism, which are crucial to build wider theories and concepts. As tourism knowledge still draws on other disciplines and lacks more coherent theoretical underpinnings (Airey, 2008), equal attention needs to be paid to both theory-building and local/practical aspects.

Conclusion

While studies documenting the tourism scholarly production and representation exist (Airey, Tribe, Benckendorff, & Xiao, 2015; Tribe & Xiao, 2011; Xiao & Smith, 2006; Xin, Tribe, & Chambers, 2013), relative little research has been conducted and published in English about non-English-speaking countries. By comparing the scholarly work published in leading English-speaking, French, Italian, and Iranian tourism journals, this paper attempted to unveil and discuss similarities and differences between English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries. Overall, the findings unveil a rather fragmented scenario as the four systems considered and the tourism knowledge produced and published within their boundaries have been shaped by different structures of power. This reiterates the idea that tourism knowledge is not value-free but needs to be contextualised within both local and global socio-political forces (Tribe, 2006). Moreover, the results of this study also underline that differences exist within the Western systems considered. In this regard, it needs to point out that although Western countries share similar paradigmatic stances, they are also characterised by heterogeneous ontologies and epistemologies in terms of tourism production and representation. Despite this rather fragmented scenario, the findings also unveil common patterns, such as the predominant role of business-related studies over socio-cultural approaches to tourism in all the four systems.

Overall, this study's contribution to knowledge is three-fold. First, it partially shifts the focus from the English-speaking academic world, which undoubtedly tends to dominate the global academic scenario with its values and paradigms. Second, it contributes to recognise and legitimate other academic systems, which are often relatively neglected by non-English speakers. Third, it paves the way for a more inclusive academic tourism community, one which contemplates different tourism academic systems, languages, epistemologies, and cultures.

Despite its contributions, this study also presents a number of limitations. One of them, for example, concerns the choice of focusing on journals to represent the tourism scholarly production. While journals are important platforms to disseminate research, it needs to be remembered that tourism knowledge can also be circulated in other channels, such as books, conference papers and book chapters. Also, it needs to be remembered that as tourism crosses disciplines and fields of inquiry, issues related to tourism are also published in non-tourism journals (e.g. sociology, anthropology, geography, marketing, etc.). Moreover, this study only focuses on three non-English-speaking systems (France,

Iran, Italy), which obviously are not representative of other non-English-speaking countries. Based on these considerations, more research needs to be conducted to explore the epistemological foundations of tourism knowledge production and dissemination in other academic systems. Not only should future studies consider journals but also other forms of publications and disciplines in mapping the development of tourism knowledge. Furthermore, as information about tourism studies in other systems in English is lacking, scholars should explore other systems, such as Asia and South America. By mapping the state of tourism knowledge in various academic systems, tourism scholars would be able to have a more in-depth understanding of the global and local structures of power underpinning the production and representation of tourism knowledge.

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