

EJTHR – AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL DEVOTED TO RESEARCH IN TOURISM

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We are very pleased to present our first issue of the European Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Recreation (EJTHR) to the scientific community. It is published three times annually designed to establish an effective liaison among the members of the academic community of tourism at an international level.

Underlying the decision of launching this new scientific publication there is a set of concerns, common to many of the current researchers in the tourism field. Among these concerns we would first like to emphasise the fact that tourism is a transversal activity in all modern societies, with dissemination effects in all activity sectors, even in apparently remote fields; and this almost omnipresence of tourism in modern societies is increasing at an “astonishing” rate, making it even more difficult for researchers to grasp it in its entirety.

In the second place, there is a great heterogeneity of approaches and languages, deriving from the several social and human sciences that participate in the discussion around tourism, and the consequent need to incorporate all scientific contributions in holistic models, of multidisciplinary nature; that is, the EJTHR intends to participate in a serious and extensive debate that is taking place a bit all over the world, towards overcoming the multiple partial and parallel (disciplinary) conceptions of the tourism phenomena, in favour of integrative conceptual models.

A third concern inherent to the conception of the EJTHR arises from the observation of the relative scarcity of publications specialised in this scientific field, in light of the exponential growth of studies and innovative contributions by a relatively young scientific community, impetuously developing and that effectively needs to submit the results of its work for peer review.

The international scientific congresses and periodic publications are the major means to disseminate and share knowledge, allowing research

results to be critically scrutinised by the scientific community. As valuable as the results of a research may be, if they are not communicated to the international scientific community, they will always be of minor importance. In practical terms, not communicating means not existing.

As for any other community aspiring to become global, the scientific community of Tourism is made of researchers connected to universities and research centres, located in several countries. And this clearly national nature – arising not only from the unique cultural and linguistic specificities of each country, but mainly from the heterogeneous sociopolitical contexts and different socioeconomic realities that characterise the development of tourism in each country – represents a big obstacle to a true integration of the tourism scientific community at a global level.

To oppose these more “ethnocentric” factors, there is a set of internationalisation dynamics that allow a minimally acceptable level of international knowledge sharing. A significant part of researchers participates in international consortia or research projects and the number of international scientific congresses has grown exponentially (for instance, the *Conference Alerts* website refers to over one hundred international conferences, with annual incidence, devoted to Tourism). However, sharing experiences and knowledge in international conferences does not mean that the results of research should not be disclosed in specialised periodic publications.

In the past twenty years there has been an exponential increase in the number of Masters and Doctoral Theses in the field of Tourism, and in Universities and Polytechnic Institutes across Europe we have been witnessing a clear reinforcement of staff teachers and researchers in the Tourism subject areas. Thus, besides being a pungent economic sector, tourism tends to become an autonomous field of scientific research. Being a multidisciplinary research field, since no general consensus regarding its real epistemological status has until now been achieved, the Tourism study field has benefited from contributions deriving from numerous scientific subjects (Geography, Economy, Sociology, History, Anthropology, Psychology, Management and Marketing, among many others). And this multidisciplinary nature of tourism is the natural expression of a largely acknowledged fact: tourism is, indeed, an extremely complex reality, that may never be properly grasped in light of any other scientific subject’s reading principles. Therefore, there is an increasing need of a multidisciplinary integration in the Tourism field of study.

However, the complexity of tourism comes not only from the fact that it is a multidisciplinary field, but also from the fact that this is an activity in constant evolution and continuously interacting with all the other spheres of society: leisure and work, technology and transport,

consumption patterns and lifestyles, history and heritage, culture and environment, etc. In fact, we will only truly understand tourism phenomena if we understand the society where those phenomena originate from. The challenge is, hence, colossal, and to be successful, we need to encourage information sharing among tourism researchers.

Bearing in mind the diversity of subjects that address tourism issues, the 89 members of the EJTHR Editorial and Advisory Board belong to a great variety of scientific fields, namely: tourism sciences, sociology, economy, anthropology, psychology, geography, ecology, law, accounting, administration, management, marketing, history and political sciences.

The EJTHR is a publication that aims to disclose the research that, in light of the independent reviewers' criteria, effectively contributes to strengthen the field of 'Tourism Sciences, in all its approaches, with particular emphasis on the academic perspective. Nevertheless, the deliberate option for the academic perspective on tourism shall not prevent the EJTHR from supporting applied research, since the scientific field of tourism arises from a constant interaction between the levels of theoretical conceptualisation, seeking explanatory models, and the empirical levels that allow those models to be tested.

"European..." – this adjective included in the designation does not mean that this publication will only be constrained to publications by European researchers or that it will not be interested in global tourism phenomena. Despite its name, the EJTHR pages will reflect all issues that are relevant for tourism in global terms, and, similarly to the publication, in this inaugural issue, of a paper by Dogan Gursoy, researcher at the University of Washington, the future issues of this periodic publication will include papers written by researchers from all continents.

The adjective "European" is related to the specific positioning intended for the EJTHR: that the European Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Recreation becomes a significant reference for European researchers in the Tourism field. This positioning is also explicit in the structure of the Journal's Referee Board, whose members are mostly European (79.8%) and come from over a dozen countries. In the same context, we opted for the publication in English, so we can provide an appropriate response to this purpose of internationalising knowledge.

We hope that our Journal is well accepted by its readers, who are, after all, the major reason for the EJTHR to be created. In addition, we hope that the published papers represent the adequate nutrients for a scientific germination and anchorage for many projects, which can also find in EJTHR a partner for its assertion amongst the international community.