Tourism, Assessment and Participation in the Tourist Destinations' Transition: A Literature Overview

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Abstract. Contemporary reflection on urban transformation highlights how tourism dynamics profoundly alter 'mature' destinations. The impacts of overtourism are multifaceted: whilst, on the one hand, they lead to the commodification and gentrification of cities, on the other, they generate social injustices that manifest as forms of tourismophobia. There are numerous initiatives aimed at the sustainable transformation of destinations, ranging from ETIS to local containment measures. There is growing interest in innovative theoretical paradigms and new governance tools. However, translating these approaches into concrete transition initiatives is a complex challenge. In this context, evaluation is crucial for incorporating diverse perspectives and promoting fairer decision-making processes. At the same time, the co-evaluation of tourism dynamics requires further study. This paper explores the intersection between tourism, evaluation and community participation to understand the role of local communities in the analysis and governance of urban transformations in destinations affected by overtourism. Through bibliometric analysis, the study maps the scientific landscape. The results confirm a fragmentation in the use of co-evaluation in tourism, highlighting the scarcity of research applying an integrated and pluralistic evaluation to promote transition processes and participatory governance of destinations. Furthermore, the study highlights the partiality of engagement approaches, both in stakeholder mapping and in the adoption of effective tools, concluding that it is necessary to develop methodological frameworks that integrate evaluation with the empowerment of residents, shifting the focus from the mere measurement of overtourism to its democratic and inclusive management.

Keywords: Evaluation methods · Destination co-governance · Local communities

1 Introduction

1.1 Commodification from an Economic to a Multi-value Perspective

In the contemporary debate on urban context dynamics, tourism plays a central role, acting as a catalyst for significant changes in the cities. These changes are geared toward promoting the interests of the hospitality sector, leading in the long term to the erosion

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O. Gervasi et al. (Eds.): ICCSA 2026 Workshops, LNCS 16762, pp. 311–327, 2027.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-032-30524-4_20

of residents' ability to exercise the right to the city [1]. In contexts under pressure, these changes exacerbate existing social conflicts and injustices and generate new ones, causing multidimensional impacts on local communities, transforming the city from a privileged place of life (both private and collective) into a strategic economic asset or a resource to be allocated for rapid tourist consumption [2]. Although the pandemic had interrupted research on the impacts of tourism, there is now renewed interest in this topic, partly because of the rise of revenge travel [3] and the explosion of remote work, which are driving greater mobility and temporary living precisely in response to the Covid crisis itself. This latter phenomenon is described through neologisms such as workation or digital nomadism [4]. These new forms of temporary living can generate geographical asymmetries and social injustices and increase the risks of tourism development in local areas. These two new tourism models join other forms of tourism already established and layered across various destinations, ranging from the well-known cruise tourism (a sub-segment of broader mass tourism) to the luxury segment, including educational, second-home, work, health, sex, beach, religious, and sports tourism, to which are added - among other niches - dark tourism, geotourism, and film tourism (also known as cinema-induced tourism). An ongoing democratization of travel has significantly contributed to the diversification of these demand segments, driven by the expansion of the low-cost carrier (LCC) sector and large cruise ships. For this reason, Canestrini argues that today anyone can be defined as *homo turisticus* [5]. In this sense, the term overtourism does not describe a new phenomenon, but rather serves as an indicator used in the literature to represent an increasingly prominent theme in the debate on different models of tourism development [6].

Examining the impacts of overtourism means recognising how tourism is causing significant alterations to urban contexts under pressure, which must be analysed in a holistic and multidimensional way. Focusing exclusively on spatial aspects, considering changes affecting the real estate market, it is recognized that tourism monoculture contributes to the real estate market crisis [7], the erosion of private residential space, and the gentrification [8] of high-demand neighbourhoods. These phenomena manifest through a reduction in housing supply for residents [9] and an increase in housing costs. This is linked, on the one hand, to the explosion of the sharing economy [10] and the resulting increase in short-term rental listings on market platforms. However, on the other hand, other forms of anomalies also coexist, developing particularly in coastal or ski destinations. One of these concerns the rise in accommodation facilities intended to house the community of seasonal workers in the sector. This community, whose residence is temporary, populates these destinations on a seasonal basis and is concentrated around the entry into the local market of large hotel chains, operating in the high-end and luxury sectors. These international entities alter market dynamics by converting a portion of the housing stock into accommodation for their own staff, while simultaneously offering rental prices below market rates for existing properties [11]. Furthermore, by raising the quality standards of the accommodation supply, in the medium term, they force local entrepreneurs to sell those family-run accommodations that cannot compete with the new standards, triggering a chain reaction that facilitates the entry into the market of other hotel chains. Another segment is linked to the increase in second homes. In this case, temporary communities linked to return tourism purchase a portion of the real

estate stock to use during vacations, making it unavailable on the rental market [12]. Added to this is the growth of timeshares, which are also linked to return tourism.

A further aspect of overtourism is the progressive erosion of public spaces in contexts under pressure. The emergence of numerous commercial activities catering to tourists' needs (particularly in the HORECA sector, the ultra-luxury fashion sector, and the souvenir industry) strongly influences the appearance and character of squares and streets, whose image adapts to visitors' expectations, in favour of which the complex identity values - which originally contributed to their charm - are subjected to significant simplification, falsification, or folklorization [13]. Neighbourhood services are giving way to restaurants, clothing stores, and souvenir shops. The increase in tourists is driving the expansion of the market segment linked to food services, leading to the transformation of entire neighbourhoods into dining districts: this phenomenon has been observed in numerous Italian cultural cities and is described as *foodification* [14], affecting both public space (due to the increase in outdoor dining areas) and private space (due to the change in use of building ground floors, replacing neighborhood shops and public services). In the most exclusive tourist neighbourhoods, local services are being replaced by luxury clothing boutiques, while in neighbourhoods affected by mass tourism, there is a proliferation of shops selling souvenirs of fake local handicrafts. These and many other phenomena collectively contribute to the growing commodification of areas with strong tourist appeal, which are progressively losing those complex and intangible values that helped shape their tourist image [15]. This image has also been strongly influenced by social media, which shapes the way tourists perceive, temporarily inhabit, and commodify places, to the point of leading to the emergence of so-called "selfie parks" [16].

While research in the 1980s had already identified the six stages of the life cycle of destinations [17], hypothesising that the saturation of places (the "maturity" stage) foreshadowed their subsequent decline, today there is a recognised urgency to consider solutions to mitigate and achieve the sustainable transformation of tourism. In this regard, the concept of sustainable tourism transition is gaining traction in academic circles; it is particularly compelling when linked to issues of spatial and social justice, as it emphasizes how strategies for the sustainable transformation of the tourism sector must take into account the impacts of such strategies on the communities - including non-human ones - that inhabit the areas affected by these strategies [18, 19]. This is linked to a growing interest in the concept of degrowth as it applies to tourism [20, 21], which defines a framework for a just and sustainable transition in tourism, aimed at respecting the environmental and social limits of destinations [22].

1.2 "Tourismophobia" and Local Communities' Role

Tourism monoculture leads local communities to engage in informal forms of resistance, voicing their needs through public protests. These movements [23], termed turismophobia [24], highlight the erosion of residents' rights. The concept of "tourismophobia" was coined in the media to describe the spontaneous (and often aggressive) reactions of dissent by residents in contexts of high tourist pressure, assigning a negative connotation to such reactions. *Tourismophobia* can be seen as residents' expression of a sense

of unease regarding an exclusionary system. Such energy could be valuable in identifying mitigation solutions if residents are actively involved in decision-making processes. In this sense, local communities can play a central role in defining innovative policies within urban contexts subject to high tourist pressure.

The principle of community involvement is now recognised by European policies as a pillar of the just transition [25], aimed at shared development and the legitimisation of plans and projects for the transformation of their living environments. In fact, the inclusion of multiple perspectives in decision-making processes is not only an ethical principle but is fundamental to the sustainable development of urban contexts, and communities' informal knowledge is a key resource for co-designing shared solutions.

Starting from Ostrom's reflections [26], we recognise the need to counter the top-down/bottom-up dichotomy with a collaborative urban governance approach [27], which interprets the city as a common good and as a horizontal decision-making platform, capable of managing conflicts and ensuring the sustainability of interventions through the construction of adaptive multi-helix models [28]. Within this framework of growing participatory urban democracy, the role of communities in the dynamics of sustainable transformation and destination governance can be crucial and operates on multiple levels: (1) bringing conflicts to light and ensuring that relevant issues are raised; (2) contributing to the development of shared solutions; (3) supporting the regeneration of cities' intrinsic values. Based on these premises, the role currently played by local communities and their contribution to the management and planning of destinations must be further explored.

1.3 Assessment Applied to Tourism Trends: What are the Key Issues?

The issue of tourism dynamics is inherently complex and multidimensional, as it involves a wide range of economic, social, environmental, and territorial factors. This complexity is reflected in the absence of a single, universally accepted evaluation approach: over time, in fact, research has developed and applied a wide range of tools, techniques, and methodologies - often quite different from one another - each designed to analyse specific aspects of tourism's impact on destinations. This results in a complex methodological landscape, in which even very different - and not always compatible - approaches can be interpreted as complementary, as they can provide a partial yet meaningful view of the phenomenon. This heterogeneity requires a systematic overview of the main methodologies adopted to understand their scope of application, potential, and limitations.

At the European level, tourism sustainability is assessed using the ETIS, which, despite the limitations acknowledged in recent literature, serves as a reference framework designed to guide destinations in measuring and managing their performance regarding sustainability [29]. Among the widely used approaches in the field of tourism assessment are the hedonic evaluation method [30] and the calculation of willingness to pay [31]. Other approaches make extensive use of techniques such as regression analysis [32] and contingency analysis. In recent years, research has explored new frameworks and indicators for tourism sustainability. For example, tourism carrying capacity is calculated to define threshold limits for destinations [33]. Evaluation objectives range from assessing tourism impacts to evaluating destination performance and real estate valuation.

In this fragmented context of evaluation use, local communities can play a central role when involved in the predictive evaluation of urban transformations in stressed contexts, where such evaluation is not interpreted as an approach to monitoring policy effects, but rather guides projects ex ante through the adoption of an evolutionary approach [34], in which the various stages of the decision-making process take into account the synergy among stakeholders. In this sense, the shift from a classical evaluation approach to a participatory evaluation (PE) approach is decisive [35, 36]. In the tourism sector, the need for co-evaluation is accentuated by the requirement to balance economic growth with social and environmental impacts, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data and framing decision-making processes within a multidimensional perspective.

In recent years, evaluation research has expanded its scope, developing methodologies capable of capturing this complexity to inform sustainable urban transformation policies. A contribution is offered by families of multi-criteria methods, such as SMCE [37]. Other innovative approaches include spatial or spatial-temporal evaluation methods, which make use of geographic information systems (GIS). The validation of these approaches applied to tourism, the integration of different tools, and how diverse perspectives are incorporated into the context of sustainable destination transformation remain largely unexplored, with particular reference to how (and to what extent) communities are included in decision-making processes, how the social fabric of territories is shaped, which engagement tools are employed, and at what stage of the decision-making process people are involved. A review of the literature on participatory evaluation applied to tourism is therefore necessary to identify new trends.

In synthesis, this article explores the link between urban transformations driven by tourism dynamics and the role played by communities in evaluating these dynamics. The paper presents a comparative review of recent literature and defines the following research objectives: O1) to explore current research trends in the adoption of participatory evaluation approaches in the assessment of tourism dynamics; O2) to understand which research areas are under-explored or saturated. The following sections are structured as follows: Sect. 2 presents the methodological approach; Sect. 3 presents the main results; Sect. 4 describes the conclusions.

2 Methodology Workflow

The steps followed in constructing and analysing the relevant scientific landscape are outlined below: a. selection of the database and identification of themes; b. bibliometric analysis of the scientific landscape and selection of the most relevant contributions; c. summary of the results (Fig. 1).

Phase A.: Selection of the Database and Identification of Themes. The phase involves database selection and the identification of themes, considering a review of both academic and non-academic literature, with reference to international authors, policy documents and international organisations working on tourism from the perspective of urban studies, sustainable territorial development and spatial planning. At the same time, some fieldwork and reports on operational research experiences enabled the definition of situated and real-world research questions, stemming from the desire to interweave the study of urban dynamics linked to tourism, the need to redefine the leading role of local

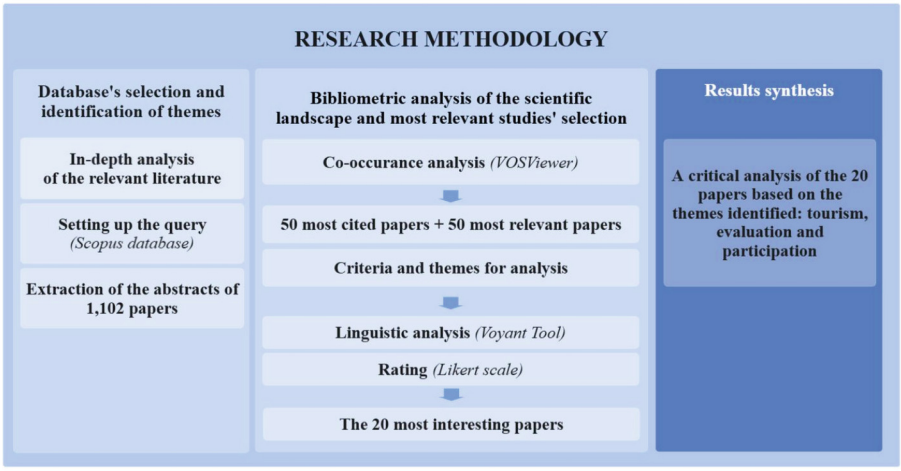

Fig. 1. Methodological framework adopted for the literature review

communities, and the role of evaluation as a tool for legitimising and guiding public policies. The subsequent phases focus on the research and analysis of recent scientific literature concerning the use of evaluation for the analysis and design of urban transformations in contexts under tourism pressure, and the various roles played by communities in sustainable tourism conversion processes. The results of this initial thematic survey enabled the main topics of the review to emerge, in relation to which it was possible to identify the relevant thematic area and the most appropriate database of scientific contributions. In particular, the Elsevier SCOPUS database was selected as the primary source. This allowed for the selection of a compendium of articles that intersected the fields of tourism, assessment and community participation in various forms. Starting from the identification of the main thematic fields (*tourism*, *assessment*, and *community participation*), a search string was progressively defined, and the three main labels of the research were identified as: tourism, assessment, and community participation. Each label was associated with its relevant recurring synonyms, identified following the initial explorations of the database: The topic "tourism" was associated with *destination; overtourism; touristification; foodification; hyper-tourism; mass tourism*. The second topic, 'assessment', was associated with *impact*; assess; assessing; *appraisal; evaluation; value; valuating; evaluating*. The topic 'community participation' was subdivided into two more specific labels: *community; communities; inhabitant; citizen; locals; resident; third sector; association; civil society*; *bottom-up; grassroots; participatory; participation; engagement; involvement; inclusion; participating; involving; engaging; including*. Furthermore, the results emerging from the initial searches highlighted a multitude of articles relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, with clear thematic polarisation due to the historical moment in which the review was conducted. To mitigate this effect, an additional filter was added to narrow the scope, excluding the terms: *covid; pandemic; health*. Subsequently, the search was restricted to the period 2020–2026, and subject areas relating to Health Sciences were excluded to reduce the prominence of

biomedical and biochemical approaches linked to the assessment of territorial dynamics and to ensure consistency and comparability among contributions from disciplinary fields more closely aligned with the research perspective. The scope is limited to the following document types: *article; conference paper; review; book chapter,* and contributions in English. Papers in *all open access, gold, green* were considered. Following this screening, the number of articles stands at 1102 (extracted on 14 October 2025).

Phase B.: Bibliometric Analysis of the Scientific Landscape and Selection of the Most Relevant Contributions. This phase, involving bibliometric analysis of the scientific landscape and selection of the most relevant contributions, was carried out using VOSViewer (VV) software to identify emerging research clusters and the main thematic nodes in recent literature. To this end, the database was extracted and then imported into VV.

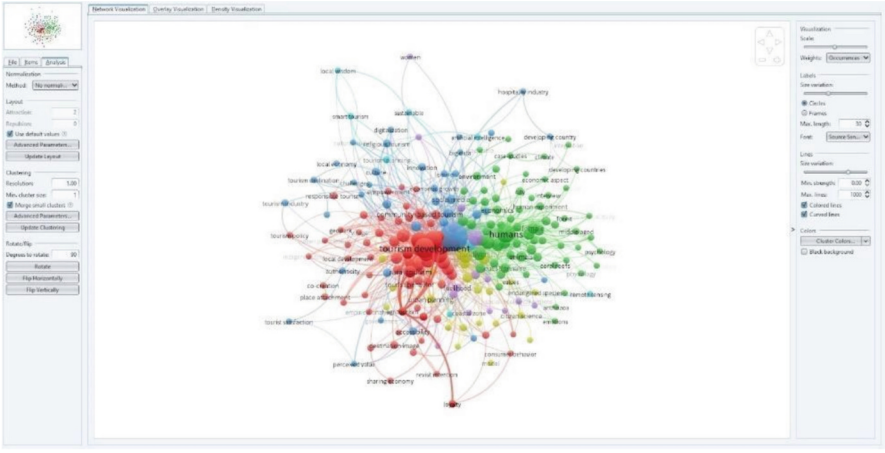

Fig. 2. Terms Co-occurrence Network

The analysis involved constructing a co-occurrence network between terms extracted from titles, abstracts and keywords. Furthermore, inclusion/exclusion thresholds were set for the most frequent and relevant terms. At the same time, a thesaurus was constructed to standardise the overall vocabulary and aggregate terms, followed by database cleaning, which involved the exclusion of words relating to the origin of the articles (China, Indonesia, etc.). Furthermore, those lemmas which, despite appearing as different words, convey the same underlying meaning (e.g. *community's engagement* and *community's involvement*) were merged into a single term. Lemmas referring to sector-specific terminology (e.g. literature review, research, conclusion, open access, etc.) were excluded from the count. In conclusion, it was possible to visualise the Terms Co-occurrence Network, which includes a mapping of 222 terms (Fig. 2). Following an exploration of the scientific landscape, the research continued with an in-depth analysis of several articles, particularly relevant to the research topic. This analysis began with the selection of two groups of papers, on which an initial systematic review was carried out based on the content of the abstracts and developed methodology.

Phase C.: Summary of the Results. From the corpus of 1,102 papers, two subgroups, each comprising 50 scientific contributions, were examined in depth. The 50 articles defined by Scopus as 'most relevant' (based on the match between the query and the document metadata) were analysed, followed by an in-depth examination of the 50 most cited articles. Certain contributions were excluded from the two groups according to the following rules: a) a document is excluded from the second collection if it already appears in the first (redundancy); b) a document is excluded if it lacks an abstract or a link to access the full text (methodological error); c) a document is excluded if it is entirely irrelevant to the research (substantive error). A criteria system was developed (Fig. 3), grouped into three dimensions: scope of the research, evaluative aspects, and participatory aspects. The first dimension included: type of contribution (review, case study, basic research article), scale of the research (XS = local, S = regional/territorial, M = national, L = international), geographical context (continent). The second dimension included: methodological approach adopted (qualitative, quantitative, mixed), evaluation objective, and evaluation method(s) adopted in the research. The third dimension included: definition of stakeholders, objective of participation, phase of involvement, participation tools.

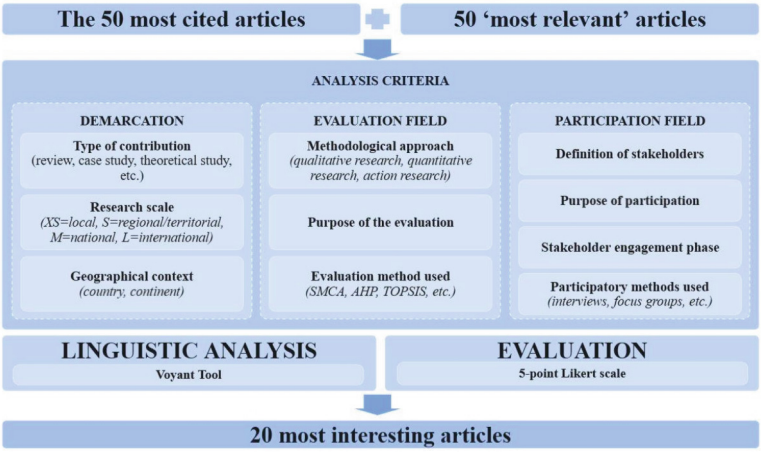

Fig. 3. Criteria for selecting scientific papers

The Voyant Tool (VT) is used to analyse the frequency of terms used within the papers, providing a further *overview* to help verify the selection of documents to be examined in greater depth. Specifically, the text of each paper was imported into the VT (Fig. 4), excluding the following content from the analysis: *title, abstract, keywords, affiliations, acknowledgements, and thanks*. The creation of a word cloud allows the salient aspects of the analysed documents to emerge, basing the analysis not only on the content of the abstract but also on the content of the entire document.

Therefore, the five most frequent words are selected to construct a thematic classification of the documents. Each paper was assessed for its relevance to the research topic using a five-point Likert scale, according to the following scoring system: 1 =

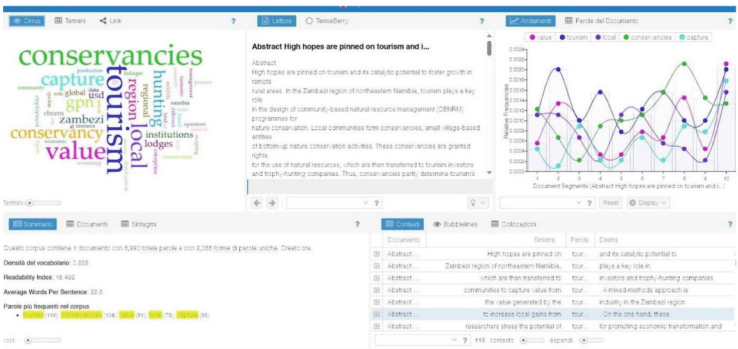

Fig. 4. An example of structured textual analysis using the *VT*

very irrelevant, 2 = irrelevant, 3 = somewhat relevant, 4 = very relevant, 5 = highly relevant. This enabled us to construct a relevance ranking for each contribution, based on which the papers with the highest scores were examined in greater depth. The summary of results is presented in the following paragraph.

3 Results of the Literature Review

The results are divided into two parts. The first (3.1) provides a summary of the main issues that emerged from the bibliometric analysis carried out using VV and supports the definition of criteria for a more in-depth examination of the sub-segment of papers analysed subsequently. This thematic analysis (3.2) focuses on issues more closely related to evaluation, tourism models and participation in decision-making processes, and examines the contributions in greater depth by carrying out a critical analysis of the identified publications.

3.1 Results of the Bibliometric Analysis

An analysis of the selected publications reveals that output is concentrated in the year 2024 (267 articles). The country with the highest output is Indonesia (123). Among the top ten countries by number of scientific publications, four European countries feature: the UK (103), Spain (93), Italy (67) and Portugal (53). The theme of sustainable tourism development takes centre stage, with a rich cluster of labels related to the theme (e.g. *sustainable development, sustainability, sustainable tourism, environmental sustainability, climate change*). It can be argued that all other thematic groups revolve around this theme, which is central to recent debate. The role of cultural heritage emerges, with numerous *labels* associated with it: *cultural heritage, heritage, cultural tourism, heritage conservation*, etc. Linked to this group of words is also the theme of rural development (e.g. *rural development, rural areas, rural economy, village*, etc.).

Furthermore, there is a growing interest in the theme of gender identity and the role played by various intersectional communities in the management and enjoyment of destinations. This is supported by the presence of many labels associated with this theme

(e.g. *woman, young-adult, female, male*, etc.). Furthermore, a progressive broadening of the definition of *stakeholder* is hypothesised, which also includes non-human agents, placing the risks that tourism dynamics pose to ecosystems at the centre. This is evident from the presence of a very dense cluster that includes terms such as: *non-humans, humans, animals, biodiversity, nature conservation, national parks*, etc. It is suggested that these aspects will represent a research trend in the coming years, as the cluster includes terms that are relevant in terms of frequency of use and citation period (from 2023 onwards). Associated with this group is also a sub-segment of *labels* relating to the theme of the sea, featuring terms such as *seaside, seashore, coral reefs, water quality, coastal waters, marine ecosystem*, etc. This suggests that interest in the participatory assessment of tourism dynamics in coastal areas is growing.

Among the models of sustainable tourism, the following emerge as predominant: *agrotourism*, *community-based tourism* (CBT), *ecotourism*, *smart tourism*, *regenerative tourism*, *geo-tourism*, *religious tourism.* As regards participatory tools, only the use of social media, interviews and questionnaires is highlighted. This could suggest that, although participation is a key element of the research, recent literature does not explore the use of innovative tools (typical of the social sciences and planning) for the inclusion of communities in evaluation processes (e.g. *living labs*, *deliberative processes*, *e-participation*).

Artificial intelligence is given only marginal attention, being associated solely with the theme of tourism marketing; however, it is suggested that this may be a bias resulting from the absence of papers currently in the process of being published in the compendium. Furthermore, there is a low frequency of certain potentially interesting topics: *degrowth*, *foodification*, *touristification.* One theme that appears is that of impacts. This term is linked to various *labels*, the most interesting and recently introduced in the literature being "*spatial analysis*". In relation to this, several *labels* appear: e.g. *spatial-temporal analysis, geographical information system, urban planning*. These *labels* are linked to the theme of spatial assessment, where an exploration of the scientific landscape does not reveal any specific assessment methods.

Nevertheless, the following terms appear: *assessment method, risk assessment, qualitative analysis, empirical analysis, and quantitative analysis*. No multi-criteria methods (AHP, MCDA, ANP, etc.) emerge in the scientific landscape. Among other *labels* linked to the theme of impacts, the following appear: *overtourism, quality of life, SDGs and tourism village.* The theme of values also appears infrequently and, when present, is linked to the theme of their protection and conservation, their perception or co-creation, as well as to the connection associated with the theme of destination image.

3.2 Results of the Critical Analysis

Based on the shortlist (100 papers), here is an overview of the most frequently addressed topics. About the scope of the papers, the topic of coastal areas features in 10 studies, with a focus on island areas appearing in 3 studies. Some studies (8), on the other hand, deal with the topic of destination image and *destination branding*, which is particularly interesting. Several contributions mention certain models of tourism governance (Destination Management Organisation = 9; Smart Tourism Destination = 2). There are 3 studies on the role of gender identity. About the overarching theme of digitalisation, there

are a wide variety of studies that include reflections on big data, artificial intelligence, the use of social media and *sharing economy apps*. There are 7 such studies. Of particular interest is the role played by CBT, which is explored in various forms across 5 studies. About the theme of evaluation, among the evaluation methods appearing within the hundred studies analysed, several studies (19) explore the Partial Least Squares Regression (PLS-SEM) method by analysing the results of questionnaires administered to various stakeholders.

Some studies adopt multi-criteria approaches, but only one study uses the AHP method [38], whilst a single study [39] mentions spatial evaluation approaches, with a focus on Public Participation Geographic Information System (PPGIS) methods. It can be surmised that only a marginal space is allocated to multi-criteria or spatial evaluation methods.

Regarding the theme of participation, the stakeholders can be classified into eight categories: local authorities, communities, the third sector, the business sector, destination governance bodies (e.g. DMOs), tourists, universities, and non-human agents. The role of local communities is recognised in 74 studies, whilst local authorities are included in 61 studies. The tourism business sector is considered in 53 studies. Only 9 studies consider the role of universities [40], whilst an even more marginal role is reserved for natural systems, included in 3 studies [41]. Tourists are considered in 34 studies, whilst destination management organisations are cited in 27 contributions. The third sector constitutes a marginal group and is cited in 16 studies.

Moving on to a critical analysis of the most relevant studies, and looking at both evaluative and participatory aspects, many studies focus on assessing the impacts of tourism on 'mature' destinations or, in other cases, on comparing perceptions of tourism among residents in tourist and non-tourist locations [42–46]. Salam et al. [47], for example, use a strictly qualitative evaluation model based on interviews and *focus groups* to measure the impacts perceived by authorities and the third sector on the resort of Bali. This study acknowledges the adoption of a partial perspective, based on gathering the opinions of only certain types of stakeholders and adopting a qualitative approach to evaluation. Another study [48] also adopts a qualitative approach to analyse how residents understand and address the socio-spatial impacts of urban transformations caused by tourism in Málaga. The article explores how the community interprets changes regarding housing, public spaces, services and opportunities for participation. The primary method used is semi-structured interviews, exploring the concept of *restorative justice* in the tourism context. This study considered only the perspective of residents who had lived in Málaga for at least five years, excluding other perspectives. Other studies [38, 49, 50] focus on assessing the effects of implementing community-based organisational models (CBT). For example, Ngo & Creutz [38] propose an approach aimed at assessing the multidimensional sustainability of CBT in a Vietnamese context. The assessment is carried out through interviews with residents, the use of the fuzzy AHP approach and the adoption of the Sustainability Barometer. Natalia et al. [50], on the other hand, use a methodology based on *Design Thinking* to identify key constructs relating to organisational design and its impact on strengthening CBT in San Pablo. In this case, questionnaires and interviews were conducted with a limited number of participants. Other studies focus on evaluating the performance of destinations against specific sets of criteria. Nguyen [51] assesses

the compliance of the Ba Na tourist area with the 'Set of criteria for the evaluation of destinations' issued by the Vietnamese Ministry of Culture, Sport and Tourism.

Regarding spatial approaches, one study [39] analyses the adoption of Public Participation Geographic Information Systems (PPGIS), highlighting the opportunities associated with the use of these tools in participatory destination management processes. Other studies explore evaluation in the participatory design of tourism services. Grammalidis & Grammatikopoulou [52] propose an ICT-based methodology adopting a bottom-up approach whereby the tourism offering is co-designed by the community. The study focuses on the promotion of tourism in rural or marginal areas, without addressing the issue of participation applied to the de-touristification of contexts under pressure. Whilst some studies aim to measure residents' perceptions regarding their involvement in destination governance [53], others seek to assess the extent to which community participation in tourism governance improves residents' perceptions of tourism in the destination [54–56]. Riyanto et al. [55] examine the influence of community involvement on residents' perceptions of tourism impacts, as well as the consequent effects of these perceived impacts on the well-being of residents, by analysing data from 175 interviews in the coastal context of Malang. The data were analysed using the PLS-SEM technique. The study concludes that community involvement improves people's perception of the impacts of tourism. One study [56], based on data from 415 residents of Orlando, examines the effects of resident involvement and the economic benefits of tourism on their psychological, social and political empowerment, quality of life and sense of place. Here too, the PLS-SEM approach is adopted.

Some studies assess the role of destination image (and, more generally, of imagery) in the development and management of destinations, highlighting how the destination image influences visitors' travel choices and how *place branding* contributes to sustainable tourism development [57–59]. Aidoo et al. [57] use the PLS-SEM approach to analyse data collected from participants during a cultural festival in Ghana. The results reveal that *place branding* has a significant impact on the sustainable development of destinations.

4 Conclusion

The analysis highlights several areas of research that could be explored further. Regarding evaluation objectives, although the use of evaluation in the context of tourism dynamics is now well established, further studies are needed to assess the impact of co-design and participatory co-governance processes, particularly in so-called "mature" tourism contexts. In this sense, evaluation must become a planning tool and must incorporate diverse perspectives [60] through truly inclusive forms of participatory evaluation. This may include the integrated application of SMCE evaluation approaches [37], capable of incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data and multiple perspectives. This entails paying greater attention to how community engagement can support de-touristification and the sustainable conversion of destinations *under pressure, using* engagement techniques aimed at creating an environment conducive to the equitable participation of all stakeholders. This may represent a particularly relevant area of research, aimed at verifying the crucial role of communities in generating counter-projects [61] and in promoting resilience in contexts of *overtourism.*

Furthermore, it is necessary to adopt specific multi-stakeholder models for interpreting social contexts, to include crucial segments of the community, such as young people and children, whose perspective is fundamental for equitable and future-oriented tourism planning. On the other hand, it is necessary to integrate tools from the social sciences and planning. In this regard, the Territorial Living Lab [62] is cited as a possible tool. Finally, regarding issues more closely related to tourism models, although there are many approaches to sustainable tourism development cited in the various in-depth studies examined in this essay (e.g., CBT, slow tourism, ecotourism, etc.), it is necessary to fully integrate the principles of degrowth [20]. In this sense, among the various models, the theoretical model of the Doughnut Economy [22] offers an interesting perspective that deserves further exploration to understand its application in the tourism sector. Adopting the DE would entail the obligation to link tourism development primarily to respect for carrying capacity and the quality of life of residents, steering development toward new popular ecologies.

Finally, several thematic clusters are emerging that scientific literature could focus on soon. On the one hand, there is growing interest in the role of destination image (and, more generally, tourism imaginaries), and on the other, the theme of coastal and island tourism contexts, with particular attention to those in the Mediterranean. Although the role of imaginaries in influencing the success of destinations is recognised, there is a lack of studies on how the destination's image and, more generally, tourist imaginaries influence the regeneration of destinations. Furthermore, it would be desirable to explore how these imaginaries can be co-produced or co-transformed by local communities within a degrowth framework [63–65]. In this regard, some interesting examples could form the basis for further research in the future [66].

A second theme, which according to the analyses is attracting growing research interest, concerns coastal and island contexts. These contexts, particularly island ones, are recognised as places where tourist overcrowding accelerates profound urban and social transformations. Coastal areas and islands, along with their communities, are currently facing dramatic challenges in resisting touristification. Therefore, reflecting on coastal and island contexts offers an opportunity to test new methodological and operational approaches in particularly complex settings, as well as providing a chance for redemption for fragile communities in need of useful and immediate responses. This study has several limitations, which the authors take care to highlight. In particular, the review cannot be considered a "systematic review." The selection of articles included in the study adopted a rigorous approach but does not follow a codified methodology (e.g., PRISMA); consequently, it may involve a certain degree of subjectivity or selection bias in the analysed documents. Second, the search was limited to a single academic database (Scopus), excluding contributions found in other databases. Furthermore, the search considered only bibliometric literature written in English, excluding non-bibliometric and regional perspectives. The review considered only scientific publications from 2020 onward, excluding earlier contributions. Finally, the classification of documents was carried out using a qualitative scale; therefore, the assigned rating may include a certain degree of bias. The analysis and interpretation of the results and the identification of gaps were conducted by the authors using a critical approach and are therefore subject to an additional degree of uncertainty.

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