Semiotics: It's About Time!

The Evolution of Semiotics in Tourism Studies

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Bachelor Thesis

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Abstract

Tourists travel with certain perceptions/images in their mind to a destination, which results in modifying the meaning of a destination. Nonetheless, tourists are also shaped by the travel experience itself. These images (perceptions) are employed by tourism marketers to attract tourists. Thus, it is crucial to comprehend semiotics in tourism since it helps identifying images that are used in not only tourism marketing, but also academic debates. The quantitative data show that semiotics in tourism became more interesting for scholars in the past ten years. In this field the USA, Europe and Australia are the leading publishers. Likewise, tourism can make use of semiotics in a theoretical, but also practical way. Furthermore, there are many unexplored areas in tourism where semiotics could be of an advantage; yet, it is underemployed. Hence, this paper seeks to explore the various existing semiotic approaches within tourism. By conducting a systematic literature review differences and similarities of the application of tourism semiotics can be identified. The findings indicate there is no main theoretical framework, which the scholars used to analyze representations of destinations. Instead, the theories of the main contributors within semiotics and tourism (Roland Barthes, Charles Sanders Peirce, Dean MacCannell) were applied to some extent differently and only partially by the academic researchers. Consequently, it can be argued that scholars combined various methods and chose not to use semiotics as a lone standing method because the former gives them a more holistic picture of destination representations and how it is communicated.

1. Introduction

"[...] destinations are culturally meaningful and we make sense of them through images, myths and signs " (Lichrou, 2008, p.36)

Nowadays the tourism industry becomes increasingly competitive and marketers are using a selection of pictures to communicate to the public to influence their decision-making (Hopkins, 1998; Urry, 2002; Nelson, 2005). These images can be derived from various sources such as photographs, books, movies; advertising, etc. and it is one of the most essential tools to communicate (Hall, 1997). Simultaneously, images of a destination play a significant role, when it comes to tourist decision-making (MacKay and Fesenmaier, 1997; Jenkins, 2003; Nelson, 2005). Nonetheless, how meaning is produced and attached to these imageries is a vital aspect of culture (Hall, 1997). Hall (1997) further explains, "meaning is constantly being produced and exchanged in every personal and social interaction in which we take part" (p. xix). Correspondingly, these illustrations can be regarded as representations that link meaning and language to a culture (Hall, 1997). According to Hall (1997) there are two systems of representations. One is the mental representation, which compromises a set of images and concepts. Each of them has a certain meaning and is about how they relate to each other. The other one is how language filters the different images and concepts.

Pictures, words and others that have a meaning attached, are called signs (Hall, 1997). In other words, it is anything that represents something else (Berger, 1984). Signs and the interpretation of them are closely related to identity, since it shapes how we see the world, how we make sense of what we experience and how we would like to represent our culture and ourselves (Hall, 1997). Tourists have certain perceptions before they travel to a destination and adjust its meaning. Conversely, tourists as people are shaped by the travel experience. Likewise, they visit certain destinations because of its specific representation. Tourists make

sense of these places "through images, myths and signs" (Lichrou, 2008, p. 36). Not only in tourism, but also in language people search for differences. The distinctions support us in comprehending ourselves, others, societies and cultures (Berger, 2011). This is consistent with what MacCannell (1976) justified: "...sightseeing is ritual performed to the differentiations of society" (p. 13). In order to analyze these images, the theory of semiotics can be employed. Subsequently, sign systems (can be viewed as the same as semiotics) became common in tourism studies in the last two decades (Sternberg, 1997; Echtner, 1999; Mehmetglu and Dann, 2003). As a result of the interrelated processes of travel experiences, signs and meanings (Krippendorf, 1987), it is essential to scrutinize semiotics as a tool to analyze tourism.

As stated by Jenkins (2003) semiotics can examine "...the content and composition of photographs and how these combine to communicate through signs and symbols various messages about the places they depict" (p. 314). A considerable amount of research studied the theorizing and understanding representations in advertisements, newspaper, magazines, travel guides brochures, websites and photographs by tourists (Wyckoff and Dilsaver, 1997; MacKay and Fesenmaier, 1997; Urry, 2002; Markwick, 2001; Jenkins, 2003; MacKay and Couldwell, 2004; Scarles, 2004; Prentice, 2004; Bruner, 2005 Molina and Esteban, 2006; Singh and Formica, 2007; Hunter, 2008). These media support potential tourists in the process of interpreting signs (Metro–Roland, 2009). Additionally, each tourist views images differently as Markwick (2001), Rose (2001) and Jenkins (2003) suggested. Tourism illustrates sign relations and what distinct perceptions are attached to signs (Culler, 1988). The production of touristic sights depends on semiotic mechanisms (Culler, 1988). Subsequently, tourism offers many sites and media full of signs. Besides, Dean MacCannell (1976) can be considered as one of the first making this link and many other authors followed up (Culler, 1988, Urry 2002; Lau, 2011; Knudsen and Rickly-Boyd, 2012). He employs Peirce's semiotic approach and applies it to tourism. Instead of having 'a sign represents something to someone'; MacCannell (1976) creates new terms: 'an attraction marks a sign and read by the tourists'. Similarly, an attraction (in any form, object or image) symbolizes something, (marker or the mediator) to a sign, which is determined by the tourist's perception (this perception is socially determined). Furthermore, the tourists mostly get in contact with the marker of a sight through a representation of the sight. It can be seen as any information given about the sight such as guidebooks, pictures, posters, advertisements, books, movies etc., which is read or seen prior the visit of the sight. It is to note that it merely refers to the information itself, and not to the information carrier. MacCannell (1976) did this more in theory; however there were other authors who used semiotics in a specific case such as Cohen (1989). He investigated texts in advertisements, photographs maps illustrating the promotion of trekking in northern Thailand. He discovered that certain words and layouts were used to persuade tourists into a promised authentic experience. Congruently, Uzzell (1984) examined photographs of brochures and exposed the composition of different objects in the picture or how differently composed pictures shape the tourist experience. Brown (1992) on the other side argued that tourism bases on symbolic experiences and these symbols are used to represent a destination, which is congruent with Dann (1993). He argued that the effectiveness of brochures lies within the symbolic images. Selwyn (1993) goes a step further and investigated a greater amount of tourist brochures, looking at text and images. He especially, focused on four kinds of representation, namely beaches, food, local people and sites. Selwyn (1993) did not only examine this on a denotative level, but went beyond this meaning and interpreted images and texts on a connotative level, which is a deeper interpretation. Moreover, Cooper (1994) even claimed that images in tourism are used to manipulate the experiences of tourists. These experiences are described in brochures as mythical and dreamlike.

Conclusively, numerous researchers in the field of tourism have utilized semiotics. It can be seen that each researcher attempted to expose the construction behind the communicated tourist experiences. Each of them revealed a pattern in the visual as well as the textual representation, which persuades or describes a tourist experience. Nonetheless, these authors mainly employed semiotics in cultural tourism. Yet, within tourism there are various disciplines or forms of tourism, where semiotics can be employed. To be precise in almost any kind of tourism, semiotics can be used, as tourism requires advertisement or destination representation to make it attractive for potential tourists. The forms of tourism can be broadly defined in two ways. One is the mass tourism, which is the prepackaged products, where everything is determined for the tourists and it is experienced within a larger group. The other form of tourism is alternative tourism, which addresses tourists preferring more personal and unique tourism experiences. According to Hathaway (2007) the following is a list of specific interest tourism as illustrated in scientific literature:

- Business Tourism
- Convention Tourism
- Culinary / Gastronomic Tourism
- Cultural Heritage / Ethnic Tourism
- Dark Tourism
- Environmental / Eco-Tourism
- Farm Tourism
- Genealogy Tourism
- Health / Spa Tourism
- Religious Pilgrimage Tourism
- Sex Tourism
- Space Tourism
- Sports Tourism
- Volunteer / Service-Based Tourism

This list is a selection of disciplines in tourism; depending on definition of each author, the list can be extended or even shortened. There is no main list in scientific journals; besides the one by Hathaway (2007), only non-scientific sources were found. Thereby, it cannot be argued that this list is complete, but it incorporates the main disciplines as compared with other sources (e.g. Medical Tourism International (2013); Kumar (2013); Baku (2013)). Although, there is a large list of various forms of tourism, it is expected to see semiotics mostly applied in cultural and heritage tourism, as the background analysis showed that meaning making is partly determined by culture.

1.1 Research aim

According to Echtner (1999) tourism marketing "...is viewed as sign system that creates, codifies and communicates certain 'mythical' tourism experiences" (p. 54). This is probably why many scholars examined tourist brochures, which is one of the main ways to promote a destination (Echtner, 1999). Nevertheless, there is no main theoretical framework supporting the analysis of destination representations (Pennington and Thomson, 2010). Correspondingly, Smith (2005) explains that semiotics is "...underemployed in tourism image research" (p. 402), yet crucial (Pennington and Thomson, 2010). Furthermore, as stated by Ribeiro (2009) although the research that has been done on tourism representation is immense (e.g. Thurot and Thurot, 1983; Adams, 1984; Mellinger 1994; Bruner, 2005), not much research

employed semiotics (such as Jenkins, 2003; Berger, 2004; Mehmetglu and Dann, 2003). Conclusively, it would be of interest to examine the differences and similarities, when semiotics is applied in tourism by employing a systematic literature review. This can be useful in the article selection, also to not exceed the capacity of this study. The results of this research can provide suggestions for future research studies. Hence, it would be of support to consider the semiotic approaches in general and then to study how it has been applied so far in tourism. Thus, the following main research question should be answered:

➢ How have semiotics been applied in tourism studies?

In addition, there are several sub research questions to be answered. The literature review should answer the following:

- What are the origins of semiotics?
- Who are the founding fathers and how do they differ when defining semiotics?

As well as, the results from the search in the databases serve as a sample for the quantitative analysis. For this the following questions are raised:

- What trends can be identified in academic research when looking at the publications made in tourism journals?
- Who are the leading academic researchers in the field of semiotics in tourism?

For the final chosen articles qualitative analysis should provide answers to the following sub research questions:

- How can we grasp the diversity when looking at the information in the peer-reviewed articles published in tourism journals?
- What are the similarities and differences when looking at the different semiotic approaches applied in tourism studies?
- What trends can be identified within the results of the peer-reviewed articles?

The main objective of this thesis is to provide a detailed research on how semiotics is applied in tourism studies. It aims at investigating a selection of articles to illustrate the similarities and differences of how semiotics can be applied. To conclude, the research objectives comprises of the following:

- ❖ To understand the nature of semiotics and how it relates to tourism.
- ❖ To determine a trend in the publications made in tourism journals.
- ❖ To identify the leading academic researchers in the field of semiotics in tourism.
- ❖ To assess the various studies of semiotics in tourism by comparing them based on similarities and differences.
- ❖ To review how semiotics is applied in the selected tourism studies.
- ❖ To evaluate findings, recommendations and how it can affect future studies.

In order to reach the objectives, first a literature review will discuss what semiotics generally deals with. Then the methodology will explain how the articles are selected, so it can be used for the quantitative as well as for qualitative analysis. Finally, the results will be discussed in a separate chapter and conclusions will be drawn and suggestions given for future studies.

2. Literature review

2.1 Semiotics

In order to understand how semiotics is applied in tourism, it is crucial to examine first in detail what semiotics is. According to Echtner (1999) and other authors (e.g. Hall, 1997; Lawler, 2007; Lekis and Whitworth, 2011; Berger 2011; Lau, 2011; Knudsen and Rickly-Boyd, 2012), Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce laid the groundwork for the modern semiotics. Nonetheless, Roland Barthes is often referred to as well (Smith, 2005; Swartz, 2008; Berger, 2011; Stokowski, 2011). Hence, the following section will explain in detail what semiotics meant to these different people.

2.2 Saussure

Firstly, Ferdinand de Saussure defined semiotics as the "science that studies the life of signs within society… I shall call it semiology, from the Greek *semeion* 'signs' (p.16). Or in other words semiotics is "the study of the social production of meaning from sign systems; the analysis of anything that can stand for something else" (Griffin, 2012, p. 332). According to Saussure, a sign consists of a signifier and signified, which strongly depends on language. The signifier can be a form or image and the signified can be an idea or concept (Hall, 1997). Saussure mainly focuses on the former semiotic approach. However, not only words and images, but also objects can signify meaning.

2.3 Peirce

Charles Sanders Peirce takes a step further according to Hall (1997) and pays greater attention to the relationship between signifier and signified and named it referents. Peirce suggests three interrelated factors, instead of two as in the case of Saussure. This triadic relationship includes the sign (signifier that represents the object), the designatum (object or concept) and the interpretant (the person who interprets the sign) (Echtner, 1999). Consequently, a sign means not only something, but it also has a certain meaning to a certain someone (Echtner, 1999).

Moreover, according to Peirce, there are three different kinds of relationships, which can be established between the sign and the denotatum, or signifier (Lie, 2013). The relationship can be iconical when the sign becomes an icon; it shows a similarity to what it stands for and tries to resemble the signified, i.e. the interpretation. An example of this could be a portrait of e.g. Buddha. The relationship between the sign and the denotatum, or signifier can also be indexical. Then, the sign becomes an index, or in other words an indication, a symptom or a pointer for something. For example smoke is an index for fire. The third one is the symbolic relationship. A sign can also be a symbol, which forms the relationship between the sign and the signifier in a symbolic way. Here, the signifier is arbitrary and the relationship to the sign must be learned. For example, everyone agreed upon the condition that the letters B O O K refer to a book, although the letters do not look anything close to a real one. Everyone first has to learn that a book is called a book and that it is written the way it is, so that we know that the word BOOK refers to a real book (Lie, 2013).

2.4 Barthes

Lastly, Roland Barthes examines the relationship not only from a denotation level, but also from a connotation level, which illustrates the deeper meaning of an object for instance. According to Barthes, there are three levels of signification, of creating meaning, which are denotation, connotation and myths/ideologies (Lie, 2013). The first level, denotation, is connected to the relationship between the sign and the signifier and a denotative sign system is defined as "a descriptive sign without ideological content" (Griffin, 2012, p. 336). Denotation could be described as the "obvious" or "common-sense" meaning of a sign (Chandler, 2013), it is the superficial or literal meaning of a signifier.

The second level of signification is connotation and it "derives from the signifier of a denotative sign" (Chandler, 2013). Connotation is on an individual level and gives personal meaning into what the sign stands for and refers to (Lie, 2013). This level adds meaning to the obvious, literal meaning of the sign.
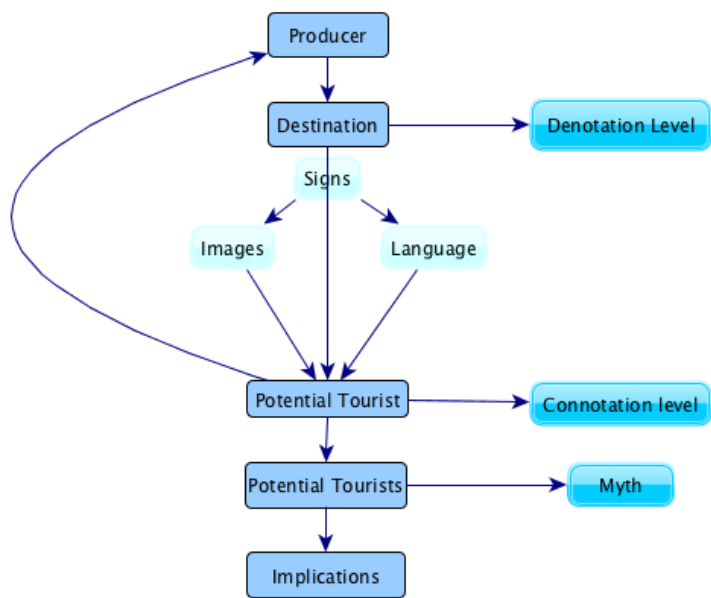
These two levels are combined to produce myths/ideologies, which is the third level of signification (Griffin, 2012). Myths/ideologies is on a collective level, as the sign reflects the culture from a particular worldview (Chandler, 2013), which is shared within a culture. According to Griffin (2012), ideology is the "knowledge presented as common sense or natural, especially when its social construction is ignored or suppressed" (p. 338). According to Barthes "their [myths] function is to naturalize the cultural - in other words, to make dominant cultural and historical values, attitudes and beliefs seem entirely 'natural', 'normal', self-evident, timeless, obvious 'common-sense' - and thus objective and 'true' reflections of 'the way things are'" (Chandler, 2013).

2.5 Conclusion semiotics in general

Overall, the study of semiotics has three main parts, which are the sign itself, the schemes in which those sings are organized and the culture in which those schemes and signs perform (Lie, 2013). It should be mentioned that a sign could not be seen separately from its system (Griffin, 2012). The way we interpret certain objects can be seen as the way we process certain information (signs) and attach meaning to it. To understand the production of meaning, a sign, an object and a subject are needed. The sign creates meaning and refers to an object, which is the tangible form we grasp through our senses. It could also be called an image (Griffin, 2012). Peirce refers to the sign as the denotatum (Lie, 2013) and Barthes calls it the signifier (Griffin, 2012). The subject makes use of the sign; it is the interpretation of the sign (Lie, 2013). Barthes refers to this as the signified (Griffin, 2012). In other words or more simplified words, semiotics can generally ask two questions. One refers to the nature of meaning and the other specifies how various words, products, images or myths produce meaning (Mick, 1986). This refers to the constructionist approach of representations. Henceforth, the view "acknowledges that neither things in themselves nor the individual users of language can fix meaning in language. Things don't *mean*: we *construct* meaning, using representational systems – concepts and signs" (Hall, 1997, p. 25). This emphasizes the crucial role, which especially tourism marketers can play in conveying a certain meaning to the potential tourists. Thereby, the graph 1 below illustrates how semiotics seems to be applied to tourism concluding from the background analysis. It portrays the producer representing a destination on a denotation level as it reflects more what the majority would interpret in an image. The producer can be referred to the one who produces brochures, advertisements or guidebooks. This person could be a city marketer or a travel book author. Each producer might represent the destination in a different way. When looking at the different promotion materials of a destination, several signs (a sign = image= denotatum (Peirce)= signifier) can be identified. Additionally, a

sign consists of two systems of representation. The set of images refers to a physical form or also called signifier (Saussure). In order to filter these images a common language is needed or a common meaning that is attached. This is also known as signified (Saussure). This, furthermore, explains how a potential tourist would interpret different signs of destination, which is represented in promotional material for instance. The relationship between the sign and the real destination/tourist attraction can be iconical, indexical or symbolic (applying Peirce's idea of the sign-object relationship). Moreover, the different meanings attached, for instance through the potential tourist, is referred to as the connotation level. The meaning is determined by the potential's tourist's personal background. How the destination/tourist attraction is as a physical form can be named as the denotation level and the last level is the myth, which indicates the collective meaning for instance. These three levels of signification (connotation, denotation and myth) or attachment of meanings come from Barthes and help us understand how at different levels various meanings can be attached to one single destination/tourist attraction.

It is to confirm whether this graph is still applicable after the analysis and how semiotics is applied in tourism studies.

Graph 1 Preliminary conceptual framework regarding semiotic theories in tourism

3. Methodology

To answer the research questions, a systematic literature review will be employed. According to Khan et al. (2010) "a literature review earns the adjective "systematic" if it is based on a clearly formulated question, identifies relevant studies, appraises their quality and summarizes the evidence by use of explicit methodology." By using this method, we will be able to identify the various semiotic concepts and how they are used in tourism from a quantitative perspective as well as a qualitative perspective. According to Benedet et al (2012) some authors argue that this will help others to reproduce the research. In that way biases or random errors could be decreased. This is because otherwise too many articles would be needed than this

research can hold. Besides, it supports understanding the analysis of the selected articles in-depth; so what the nature of semiotics is and how it is linked to tourism. The quantitative analysis will help identifying, which countries or authors are leading in this field. Subsequently, the following steps will be undertaken: Choosing databases, choosing sources, keywords, search and selection of articles, analysis and prioritizing information and writing the synthesis (Yount, 2006).

3.1 Databases

All databases of Wageningen University are available for this research; however by selecting a certain subject the selection results can be ceased. In this case the subject is 'Leisure, Recreation, and Tourism'. The results of this search will be further analyzed according to the keywords, which are linked to these databases. A database is perceived to be suitable for this thesis if it includes one of the following keywords: 'tourism' and/or 'social sciences'. Nonetheless, the remaining databases do not all reflect the nature of this thesis; therefore the abstract or the keywords of the articles will be reviewed on its relevance. Besides, the language of the database needs to be in English. Based on the abovementioned criteria, the following databases are perceived to be suitable for this thesis: 'Scopus', 'Web of Science', 'Google Scholar, 'SocINDEX'. Google Scholar was taken out from the selection as it gave too many results to be narrowed down.

3.2 Sources

This research will mainly focus on journals, rather than books and reviews. This is because journals can be seen as primary sources where the authors are the one who mostly conducted the research (Yount, 2006). Furthermore, they have to be articles and thereby it does not include interviews or book reviews in a journal. However, when these appear in the results, they could be used for the general literature review to answer the sub question about what the nature of semiotics is. Moreover, it is useful to choose tourism journals to make it a more precise search intertwined with the research questions. The year of publication is in the first place not too relevant, as this research will approach the articles by conceptual relevance in the first selection round. Nonetheless, only the most recent articles were included. This is because the most recent, so from 2005 on, most likely already referred to past articles, which would make it unnecessary for the final analysis. It is to note that this reasoning refers to the qualitative analysis and is not applicable for the quantitative data selection. Furthermore, the journals have to be tourism related journals and in English to be considered.

3.3 Keywords, search and selection of articles

Within the database, there are still many journals to be found. Nevertheless, many databases can be accessed through keywords (Yount, 2006). To compress the materials, the following keywords were chosen according to the research questions: 'semiotics', 'tourism and semiotics', 'tourism marketing', 'semiotics and tourism marketing', 'tourism representation'. After terminating the keywords, the search will be done electronically through the Internet database itself. To select from the various available journals, only the one in English are considered as well as by reading the abstracts, we can make a choice regarding the research questions.

When starting the selection, the keywords 'semiotics' and 'tourism marketing', as well as 'tourism representation' was too vague and therefore had to be changed. To have a more precise search, the words 'semiotics' and 'tourism' were combined. Likewise, variations of these word combinations had to be made to avoid overlooking certain results. Quotations would make the database search only for that certain word

order. Leaving out the quotations the database would search for these words, but not necessarily in that order. Furthermore, initially 'tourism representation' was searched for and then within these results 'semiotics'. However, to not miss certain results 'tourism representation' was combined with the key word 'semiotics'. One time with quotations and the other time without. It is to note that especially within the database of 'web of science' the quotations did not matter, as the results were identical. At last, the keyword 'semio*' without any quotation (this is not necessary since it only involves one key word) was considered to not cover the keywords 'semiotics' as well as 'semiology'. Moreover, within the search results the keyword 'tourism' had to be searched in order to narrow down the results. Consequently, the following keywords were considered and used:

1. 'tourism and semiotics'
2. Tourism and semiotics
3. 'tourism marketing and semiotics'
4. Tourism marketing and semiotics
5. 'tourism representation' search within results 'semiotics'
6. Tourism representation and semiotics
7. Semio* search within results for 'tourism'

3.4 Analysis and prioritizing information

Since it is about identifying the similarities and differences when using semiotics in tourism, it is appropriate to analyze the articles by organizing information conceptually. Furthermore, it is vital to be able to categorize the information into levels of importance such as high, medium and low (Yount, 2006). Highly important articles are the ones that directly relate to the research questions. Medium important articles provide compatible background information. The last category would include information, which only refers indirectly to the subject. At the end, around 10 to 15 articles should be selected that can further be studied. This is because adding too many articles will make the overview disorganized and it would exceed the capacity of this research. This concerns mainly the qualitative analysis.

The quantitative analysis requires indicating exactly the numbers of results that were obtained during the selection process (47 results). This will support the comprehension of how this research was done. This number does not have to be reduced as for the qualitative analysis since it does not require knowledge about the content of the articles and therefore, it can be effortlessly included. Additionally, it pinpoints by a graph how the publications of the total results are distributed over the years. Furthermore, with several other graphs the leading countries, continents, universities and academic researchers are identified. As mentioned in the previous paragraph the importance of this research is the qualitative analysis and less the quantitative. Nevertheless, a small part is included to show a more descriptive side of the research. This will complement the qualitative findings.

3.5 Writing the synthesis

Once the overview is created, the synthesis can be written. The results will be then discussed and from there an overall conclusion will be drawn and possible future recommendations can be made.

4. Quantitative results

This section deals with the quantitative results by first portraying the database results and then how these results were decreased through several criteria. This is followed up by the descriptive analysis regarding the publications made over the years in tourism journals, as well as illustrating the leading countries, continents, universities and academic researchers. In the following table 1 illustrates the different amount of results within the certain databases and various keywords.

	Scopus	SocIndex	Web of Science	Total
'tourism and semiotics'	20	2	18	**40**
Tourism and semiotics	30	3	18	**51**
'tourism marketing and semiotics'	6	0	4	**10**
'Tourism marketing' and semiotics	11	0	4[1]	**15**
'tourism representation' search within results 'semiotics'	6	0	7	**13**
'Tourism representation' and semiotics	4	1	7	**12**
Semio* search within results for 'tourism'	36	3[2]	20	**59**
Total	**113**	**9**	**78**	**200**

Table 1 Database results

200 results • 1. Results from all the databases

47 results • 2. Reducing the identical articles

32 results • 3. Leaving out the articles that did not indicated 'semiotics' in the key words specified by the authors, their abstract and title did not show relevance for the research.

15 results • 4. Excluding the articles that were not accessible and including the most recent articles.
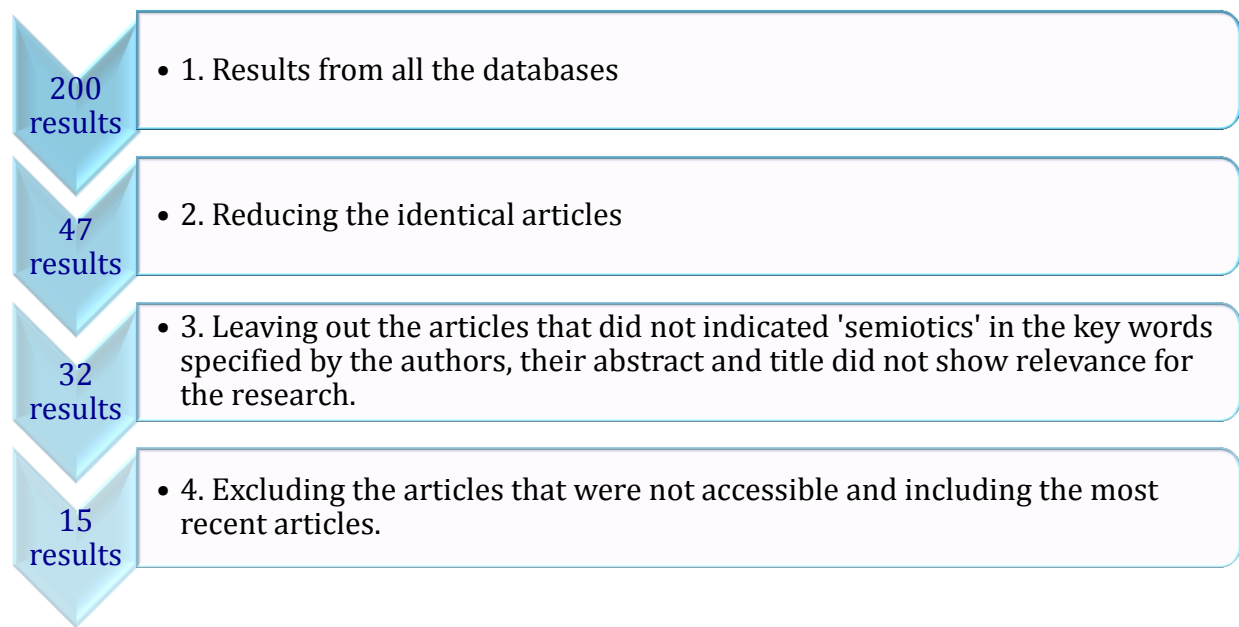
Figure 1 Selection process

[1] With quotations there were no results
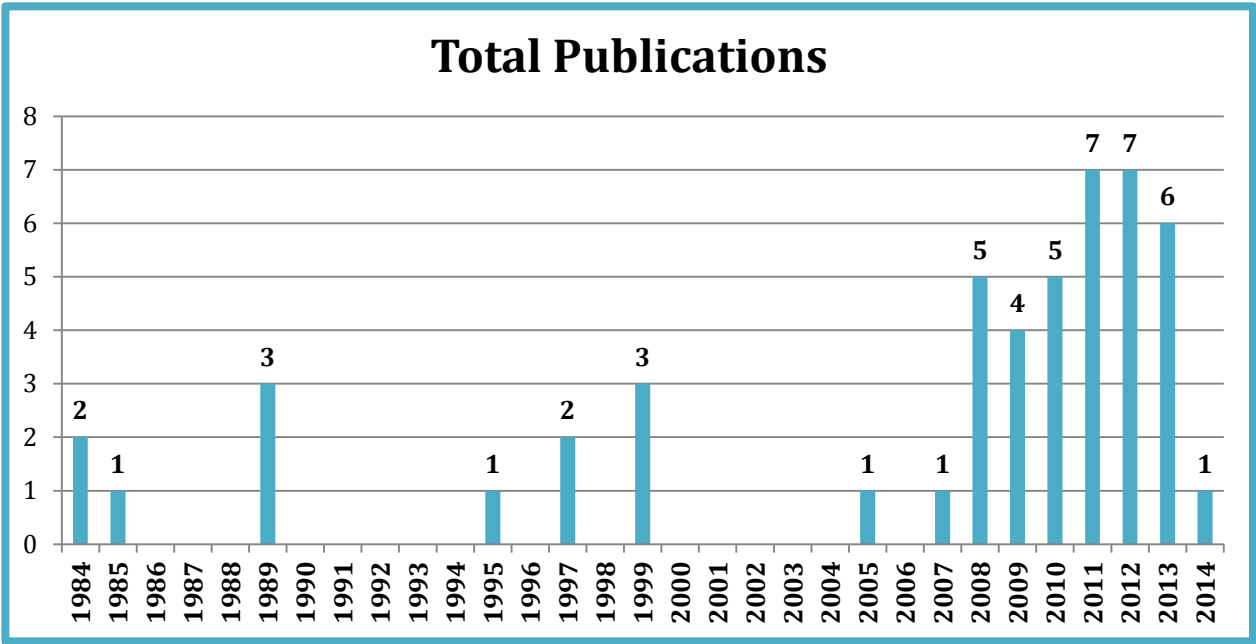[2] Search within results not possible

Figure 1 shows the selection process for the articles. After entering all chosen keywords into the databases, 200 results were left. Additionally, all the identical articles had to be removed, which resulted in 47 results. To ensure as much as possible relevance of the content, three criteria had to be taken into account. The first criteria relates to the keywords, which the authors indicated for their articles. This is because sometimes a result of the database selection was considered by the computer search, simply because the author mentioned it once in his article. Nonetheless, this does not automatically mean that it is important for this research. If it is indicated in the keywords by the authors, then it can be considered as important enough by the authors to be in the keywords of their article. The keyword search was done through the computer search. To certify the way of selection two other criteria were contemplated. These were the abstract and the title of the article. If the title of the article included semiotics and a tourism related topic, it was clear that this article would be useful for this paper. However, if the title did not include any of these words, the abstract was read in order to decide on the article's relevance. Having excluded irrelevant articles after looking at the three criteria described, 32 articles were left. The final step includes controlling whether they are accessible at all. Finally, only the most recent articles were considered as indicated in the methodology section. After using the mentioned filters, 15 articles remained (see also appendix table 3).

4.1 Descriptive results
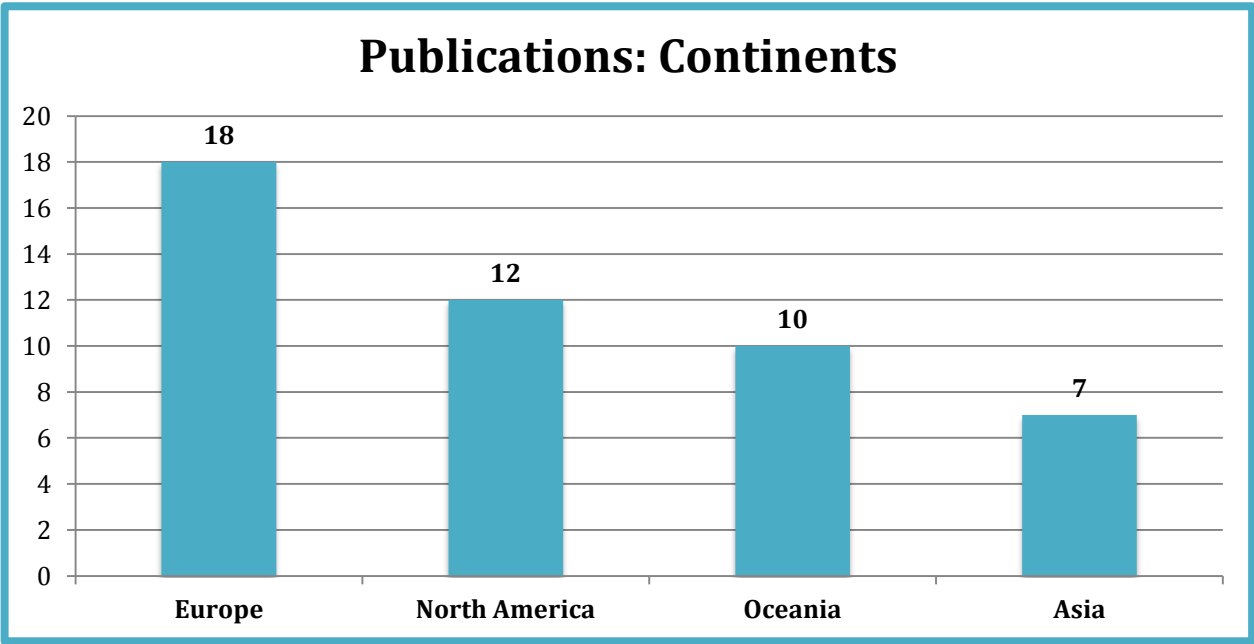
4.1.1 Publications

This section deals with descriptive results of the 47 results from the selection process. The aim is to see, how many publications were made over the years, to see which countries, continents, universities and journals published the most. Furthermore, this section will elaborate on the citations made for each article. All of these descriptive results can help portraying in quantitative ways how semiotics is applied in tourism studies. Consequently, it will complement the qualitative results.

The graph 2 below shows within the results how many publications were made in each year. There is a clear tendency to be seen. The most articles were published within the last ten years, indicating the increased interest of semiotics in tourism. In addition, it can be seen that the first result starts in 1984, which includes two articles and the most recent is in 2014, which included only 1 article. This can be explained as 2014 is a still ongoing year and probably more publications can still be made. In addition, the table shows for some years (1986-1988, 1990-1994, 1996, 1998, 2000-2004, 2006) no publications were made and that the publications generally increased over the years (from 2008 on). This can be reasoned by the authors who stated that more research should be done on semiotics of tourism were from 2003 (e.g. Smith, 2005; Ribeiro, 2009) on. The statement made by several authors can be the cause of the increased publications made. In the background analysis it was argued that semiotics in tourism is underemployed, but important (Smith, 2005). This is similar to the results of this table. From the chart, it can be seen that there were no publications between the year 1986-1988, 1990-1994, 1996, 1998, 2000-2004 and 2006. This can be explained by the relevance of tourism in general or because the visual in contemporary tourism industry increased (Rakic and Chamber, 2012). Nowadays, it is simple to access or make photographs by means of smartphones and others. This is similar to what Rose (2012) argues that we are living in a visual culture. Additionally, it could be argued that the relevance of tourism generally increased and this is why semiotics in tourism also increased.
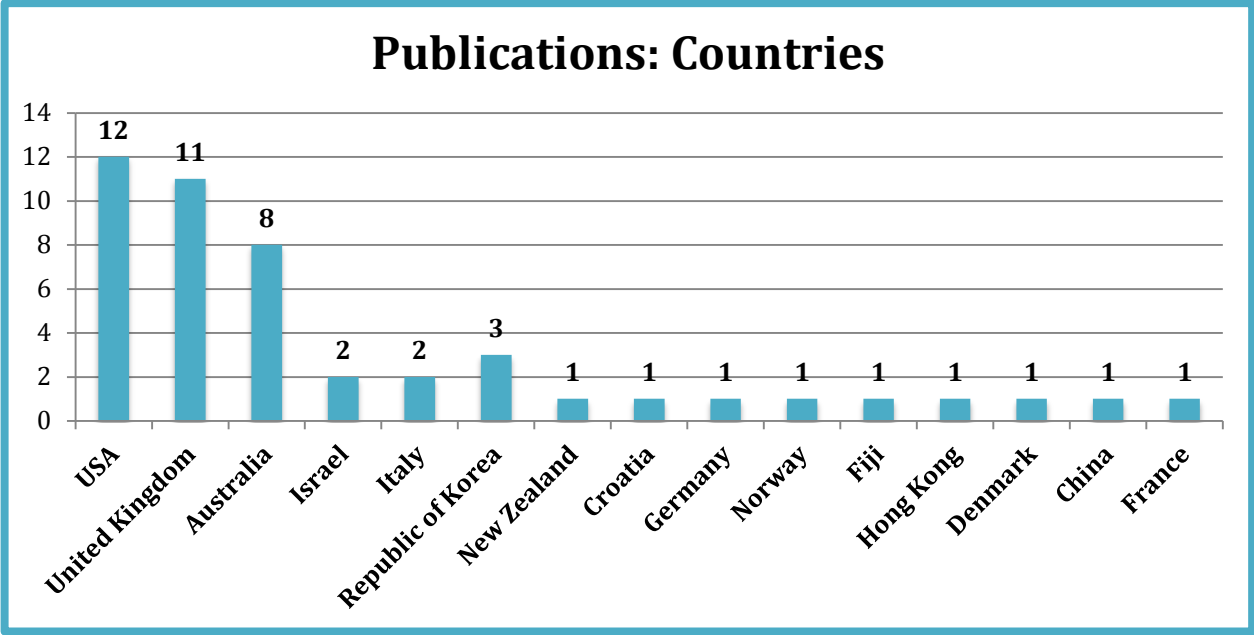
Total Publications

Year	Publications
1984	2
1985	1
1989	3
1995	1
1997	2
1999	3
2005	1
2007	1
2008	5
2009	4
2010	5
2011	7
2012	7
2013	6
2014	1

Graph 2 Total results with the publication years

The next graph 3 portrays the publications made regarding continents. This analysis is done since it provides better insight in which countries of which continents are leading in the field of semiotics of tourism. Europe (with 18 publications) made the most publications and it is significantly more than the other continents. North America (12 publications) is second and Oceania (10 publications) is on third place. Asia has around half of the publications than Europe, which shows a crucial difference. The difference between North America and Oceania is not significant as they only differ in two publications.
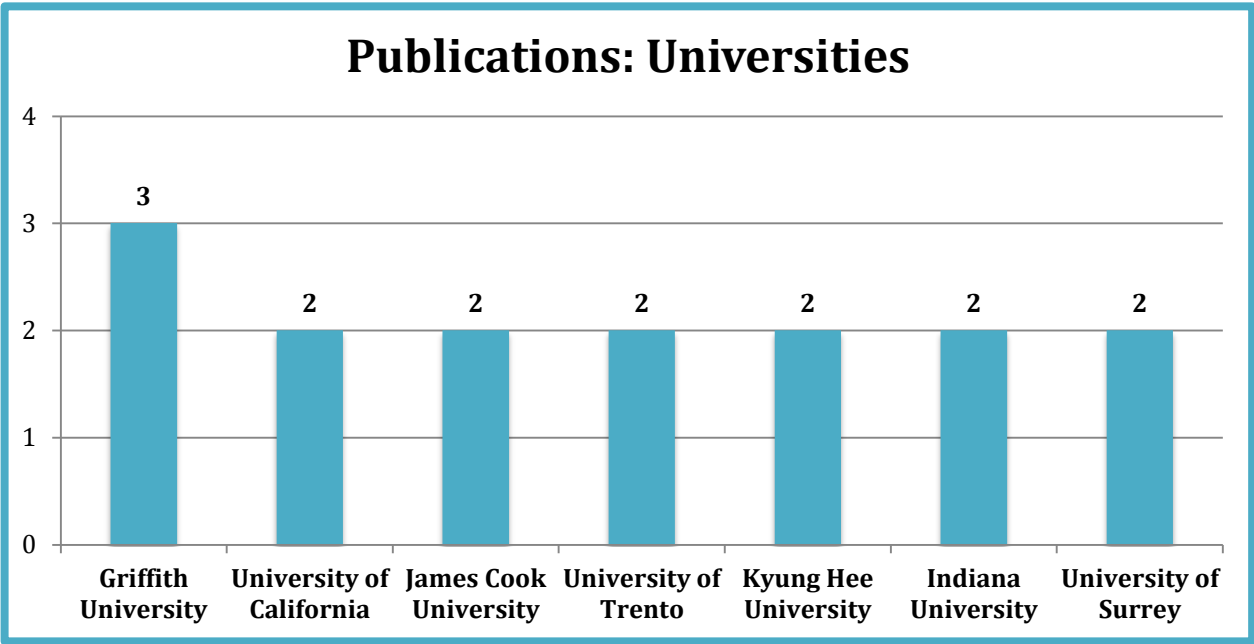
Publications: Continents

Continent	Publications
Europe	18
North America	12
Oceania	10
Asia	7

Graph 3 Distribution of publications per continent

The graph 4 displays the publications made regarding the country. It illustrates which countries published the most in the field of semiotics in tourism. The difference is more obvious comparing the top three countries with the rest. The other countries made on average one publication and no more than three. The country with most publications has 12 publications out of 47, which is the USA, whereas United Kingdom is following right after it with 11 publications. This is not a significant difference. Moreover, Australia is on the third place with 8 publications. The difference is more significant between the USA and the Australia.
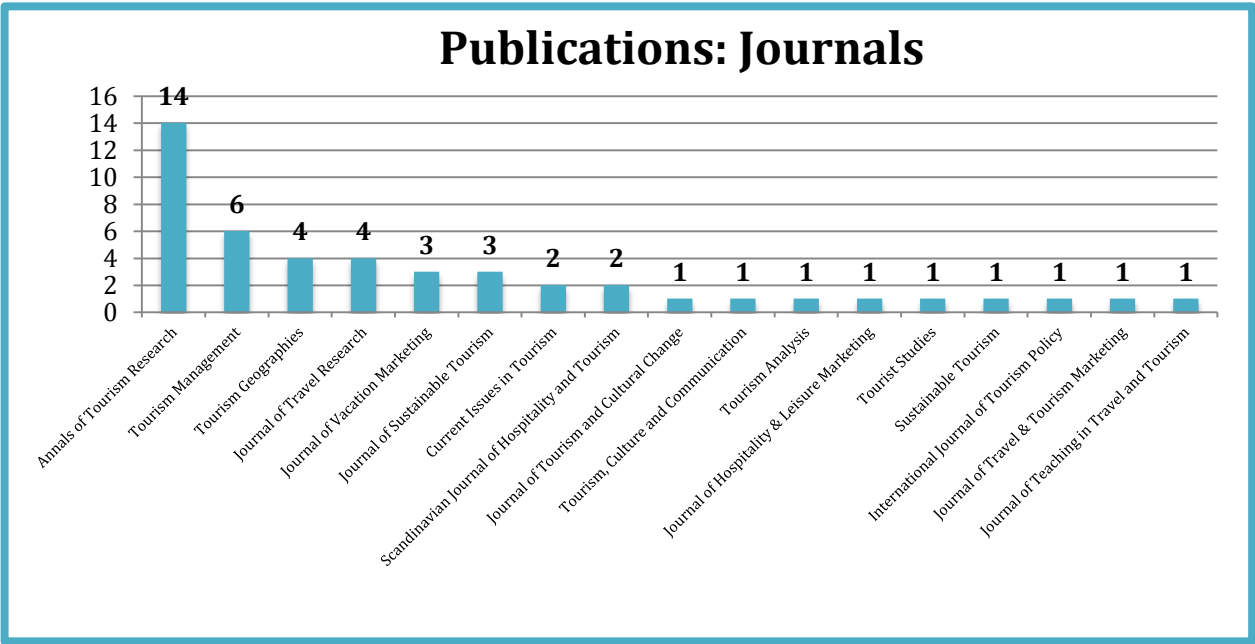

Graph 4 Distribution of publications per country

Likewise, it was interesting to not only see which countries or continents are the leading ones, but to specify it by looking at the universities (graph 5). What is noticeable is that there is no concentration of research in a particular university. Usually, each university is specified in a certain discipline; nonetheless with semiotics the research is spread and none of the universities mainly specified on it. Moreover, Griffith University (3 publications) is the first and the rest are all at the same place (six universities with each 2 publications). Nonetheless, this is not a significant difference to be considered. The other 35 publications made only each one publication. For clearer display, these are not in the graph. It is to note that only the first seven universities were included in the graph to ensure clarity of the results.

Graph 5 Distribution of publications per university

The last graph 6 concerning the publications relates to the tourism journals. Here, it can be seen that *Annals of Tourism Research* (14 publications) is the dominant journal in the field of semiotics in tourism. The second one is *Tourism Management* (6 publications), which are around half of the publications made compare to the *Annals of Tourism Research*. Nevertheless, the *Annals of Tourism research* publish in numerous different fields, therefore this result should be no surprise. The third is *Tourism Geographies* (4 publications) with the *Journal of Travel Research* (4 publications). Out of all *Annals of Tourism Research* can be seen as one of the first journals. However, exact year of founding cannot be found anywhere in order to give more informative results. The differences among the other journals are not significant.
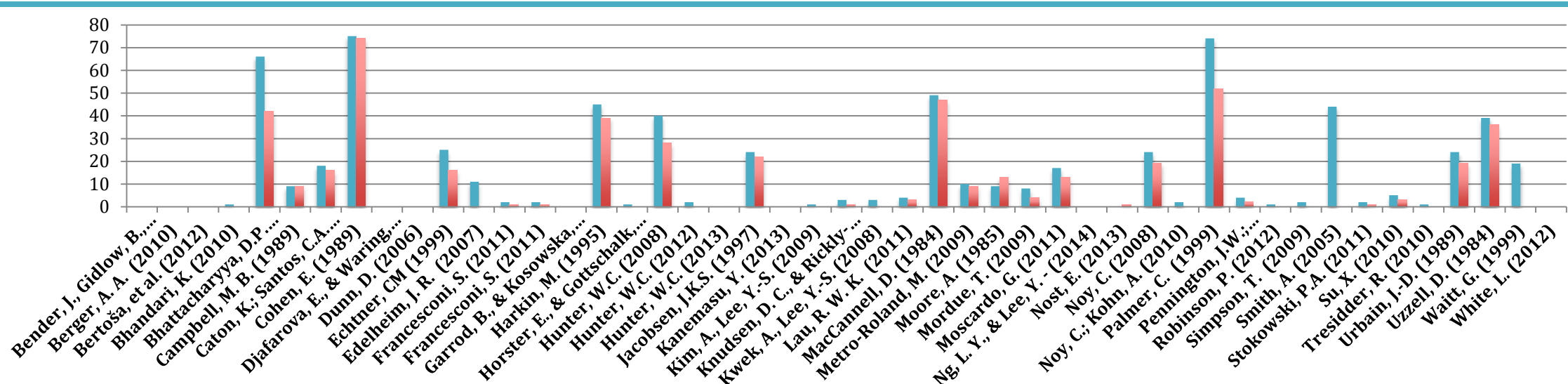
Publications: Journals

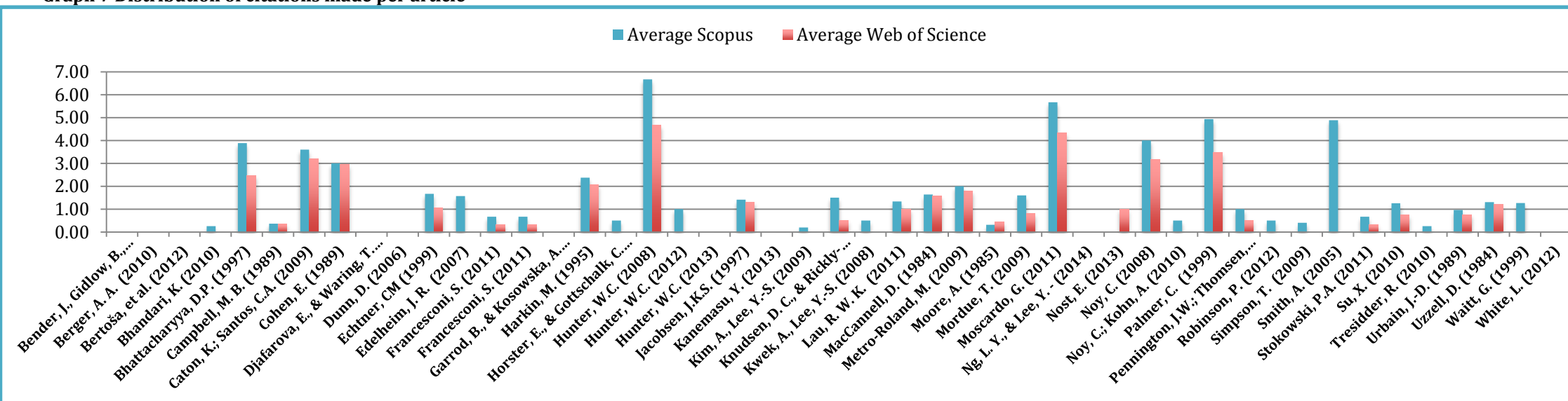**Graph 6 Distribution of publications per journals**

4.1.2 Citations

The graph 7 is about the citations made within the databases 'Scopus' and "Web of Science''. 'SocINDEX' was not utilized, as it does not display the citations made for the articles. The highest citation number (74 and 75) in both databases has Cohen (1989) and the second highest is Palmer (1999) (74 in 'Scopus' and 52 in 'Web of Science'). Bhattacharyya (1997) is within 'Scopus' third with 66 citations, but in 'Web of Science' only fourth with 42 citations. The third highest is MacCannell (1984) in the database of 'Web of Science' with 47 citations and on the fourth place with each 49 in 'Scopus'. The dominant authors are Cohen (1989) and Palmer (1999).

The preceding graph 8 displays the average of citations each author received. It is the total number of citations divided by the number of years available. This is important to consider, as certainly the articles from 2013 or 2014 cannot possibly have more citations than an article that already exists since 1984. Additionally, the absolute numbers above should be seen in perspective and might be biased. It is to note that the numbers in the chart are rounded up to two decimals. Consequently, the highest citation rate has Hunter (2008) with 6,67 citations in 'Scopus' and 4,67 citations in 'Web of Science'. The second highest is Moscardo (2011) with 5,67 and in 'Web of Science' 4,33. Palmer (1999) follows with 4,93 in 'Scopus' and in 'Web of Science' 3,47. Surprisingly, Moscardo (2011) is second highest even though the content was not much pertinent compared to the other authors (see also qualitative results). Again, Palmer (1999) is among the most cited. Hunter's (2008) first place can be related to the fact that he is represented with three publications (the highest overall).

Graph 7 Distribution of citations made per article

Graph 8 Distribution of citations made per article regarding citation rate

4. 2 Preliminary conclusion

When considering the quantitative aspect of the way semiotics is applied, it can be seen that USA is the leading country in this field and Europe the leading continent. This means to obtain information about this subject, it is wise to consider USA, Europe or Australia. Regarding universities, Griffith University is leading with three publications out of 47; however the difference is not significant. It is more important to note from this chart that the research of semiotics in tourism is not concentrated at any university. This can be due to the tourism development of these continents. It might be that more material is available there and it is more accessible than in Asia for instance. Furthermore, the criteria given in the beginning that the articles need to be in English also eliminated certain countries. For instance, the Middle East might publish more in Arabic, which does not mean that their research is not relevant in the field of semiotics.

Firstly, 'Scopus' generally generated relatively more citations for the articles than 'Web of Science'. This has to be taken into account when looking at the results. This issue can be caused by the amount of available articles in the databases. 'Scopus' might have more articles in their database than 'Web of Science'. This was also seen during the selection process, 'Scopus' generated on average more results (see also table 1). Nevertheless, it cannot be proved when looking at the database itself. Unfortunately, the websites of both does not indicate how large their databases are. Moreover, the most cited articles were not analyzed in this paper as they were considered as outdated. Nonetheless, the top three initially non-analyzed articles of the absolute citation numbers were briefly analyzed, after seeing them as most cited. The analysis can indicate why these authors' articles were most cited. Interestingly, Cohen (1989) and Bhattachryya (1997) and Palmer (1999) all three referred to MacCannell's work '*The Tourist*'. With exception of Cohen (1989) they all mention Roland Barthes as the founding father of semiotics. This is to refer to the implications images can have by relating the theory of mythology too. Interestingly, neither Ferdinand de Saussure nor Charles Sanders Peirce was mentioned in these three articles. Nevertheless, the work of MacCannell (sight/marker/sign) is similar to the work of Peircean's semiotic approach since both theories incorporate three aspects of meaning making unlike Saussure who only considers the sign and the signified of meaning making. Besides, Peircean's semiotics is an extension of Saussure's semiotics. This could explain why neither Saussure nor Peirce was mentioned in the most cited articles. Furthermore, Bhattachryya (1997) and Palmer (1999) refer to Cohen's work. Especially, Bhattachryya (1997) uses Cohen's work as the basis for his theoretical framework. MacCannell who counts as one of the first who made the link between semiotics and tourism (this might explain why he was frequently cited), was mentioned the third highest in one of the databases. Overall, the most cited articles are from before 2000. Even though a difference was seen when the average citation rate was considered. Here, Hunter (2008) was the most cited, which was not considered in the qualitative analysis. Yet, his other two articles were addressed. His way of working should not differ greatly, as the other two articles are relatively similar. He uses visual methodology to analyze tourist destination, which might be interesting for many to cite as it involves multi-aspects. Furthermore, Palmer (1999) was under the top three most cited, when looking at the citation rate. Subsequently, it is an article that should be recognized in the field of semiotics in tourism studies, regardless of the fact that it was only briefly analyzed in this paper.

5. Qualitative results

Having categorized the information of the articles into five main themes (the dimensions of the research, the main semiotic theories within the study, semiotics as a tool, contextual factors and the recommended future studies), the results will be presented in the following section. This mainly includes the similarities of information. Differences among the articles are not that significant as the specific case studies can vary. The categories are the result of firstly reading the methodologies of the articles as the main research question is about how the semiotics is applied, so it is crucial to analyze, which tools were used in the studies. This information was synthesized and after that the articles were read as a whole to not overlook important information. Secondly, the information was categorized in general categories first (see also appendix table 5). Out of these general categories, the following themes resulted.

5.1 The dimensions of the research

The first category relates to the dimensions of the research. It presents the overall first impression when comparing the articles. Firstly, it is important to consider the topic of the study since this might determine certain methods and why semiotics is more emphasized in some cases and in others not. The broad topic of the study can be defined as the overarching field of research the authors have chosen to examine. When attempting to identify the various topics of the articles, the general topic inclined towards representations, mainly destination image. The authors' motivation ranged from closing certain literature gaps over to help marketers making better strategic decisions. Likewise, the definition of a destination ranged from a city to a country to even a single tourist attraction. This means a destination image could involve different representations. For instance, Caton and Santos (2009) looked at promotional materials from a study abroad program. Nonetheless, one could also research a certain place, such as the Hunan Province (Hunter, 2013) or compare two nations Washington DC and Canberra as White (2012) did. It does not have to be a large place; as for instance Pennington and Thomson (2010) analyzed one picture of people dining in a restaurant. The way semiotics of tourism is defined does not differ significantly and what medium they use to analyze is congruent with the first background analysis. An appreciable amount of studies were conducted on comprehending representations in advertisements, newspaper, magazines, travel guides brochures, websites and photographs by tourists (Wyckoff and Dilsaver, 1997; MacKy and Fesenmaier, 1997; Urry, 2002; Markwick, 2001; Jenkins, 2003; MacKay and Couldwell, 2004; Scarles 2004; Prentice, 2004; Bruner, 2005 Molina and Esteban, 2006; Singh and Formica, 2007; Hunter, 2008). This is in consonance with the overall tendency of the article's topics. It relates to representations, mainly destination images. It is noteworthy to mention that the media the researchers investigated were mainly promotional materials. As Echtner (1999) claims it is because tourism marketing can be seen as a sign system, which communicates an experience, many researchers investigate tourism brochures. Thereby, it should be no surprise that the analyzed articles mainly referred and examined tourist brochures or guidebooks. Moreover, it is not only about what the underlying meanings in promotional materials, but semiotics can also support explaining other processes, such as the tourist experience.

Hence, after examining the methodologies of each study, it can be seen that many authors did not use semiotics as a lone standing method (see also graph 9), yet rather combined it with mainly content analysis and/or discourse analysis (Caton and Santos, 2009; Noy and Kohn, 2010; Stokowski, 2011). For instance, Hunter (2012, 2013) argues in both of his articles to use visual methodology as this incorporates first a content analysis to categorize images. Secondly, it involves the semiotic interpretation of the images on a

connotative and denotative level to see the meaning on an individual, but also collective level. The last level is the synecdoche and synthesis, which are about identifying the implications of the images and its meanings. Furthermore, Hunter (2012, 2013) was not the only one using semiotics in combination with other methods. The last part of the visual method is similar to a discourse analysis, which can identify implications of the images. Likewise, the denotation and connotation level of interpretation can help illustrating hegemonic views as Stokowski (2011) cited Barthes (1977) "the collective power of sign systems is in their ability to shape myths – dominant ideologies that bring together denotations and connotations in broader meanings that pervade social life" (p. 25). Both, methods are able to determine hegemonic views, but using different media. In this case, semiotics is about images and discourse analysis is more about language. Hence, it can be argued that scholars combined various methods and chose not to use semiotics as a lone standing method because the former gives them a more holistic picture of destination representations and how it is communicated. Additionally, these articles divert from focusing more on tourists experience and how they process images/representations (e.g. Smith, 2005; Tresidder, 2010) to merely concentrating on how the place is represented (e.g. Dunn, 2006; Simpson, 2009). This is the result of the indirect perspective and interpretation by the author. Nonetheless, their focus or reasoning for certain topics and theoretical frameworks varies widely regarding the details.

1. Content Analysis	Categorizing promotional material
2. Semiotics	Giving meaning to signs in images
3. Discourse analysis	Identifying hegemonic views through language

Graph 9 Semiotics in combination with other methods

5.2 The main semiotic theories within the study (Ontology)

The main theories involve the basic understanding of the researchers on how they perceive reality or how they lay the theoretical framework of their research. Besides, there was a considerable amount of authors who used semiotics without indicating what the nature of semiotics is and who might have laid the foundation for it (e.g. Noy and Kohn, 2010, Moscardo, 2011). This might be because the researchers did not consider semiotics to be such an important aspect in the study to be further elaborated. They simply applied semiotics by trying to identify various signs in the images and interpret it from their point of view. However, there were three main authors who were repeatedly mentioned. Their theories are summarized in a graph 10 after a short section on contextual factors.

The most employed theory refers to the Peircean's semiotic approach (Hunter, 2012, 2013; Metro-Roland, 2009; Pennington and Thomson, 2010; Stokowksi, 2011). Nevertheless, not all of the Peircean's semiotic theory was used. They mainly included the sign-object relationship (index, iconic, symbol). Only few also included the rest of the theory, meaning what a sign is and what an object is and how someone might interpret it (e.g. Metro-Roland, 2009). Additionally, Metro-Roland (2009) explains that "Peirce's categories of icon, index and symbol offer a way of understanding how tourists discriminate sites and

determine what to give their attention to when moving through a place" (p. 277). Even though in this analysis Peircean is the most mentioned author, it is in contrast with what Metro-Roland (2009) argued. She claims Peircean's semiotic approach is not much utilized and instead the Saussurian approach was more frequently used. Saussure; however was only employed once out of all the examined articles. The reason for this could be the way Metro-Roland (2009) has chosen her references to support her arguments. This can be due to the systematic selection of articles by her as employed and used by this research. Consequently, the references of hers might be more biased than in this paper. To see which tendency is precise, more research needs to be done by incorporating more articles to analyze.
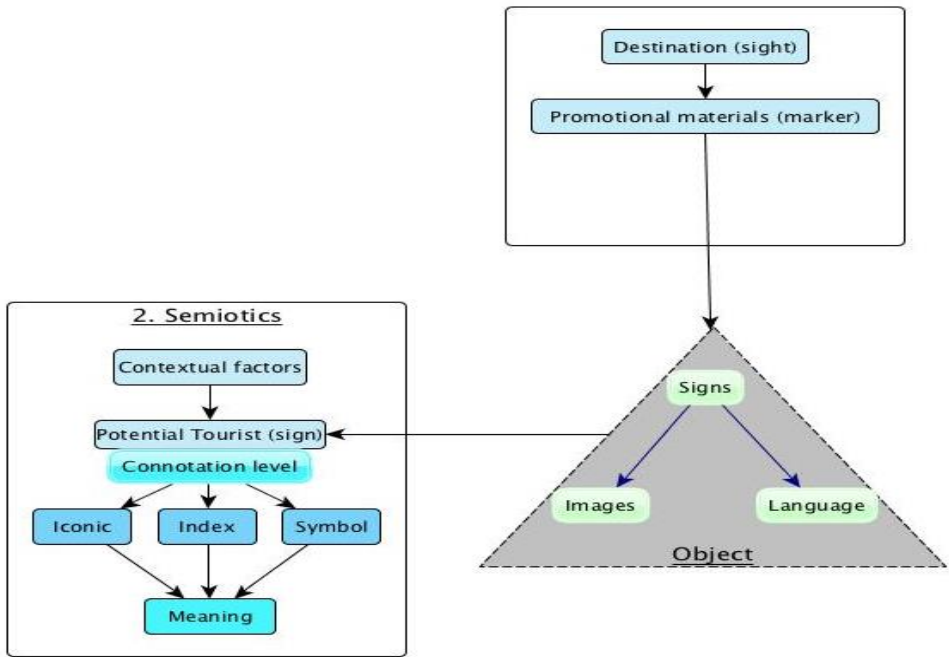
Besides, many researchers connected the aspect of denotative and connotative meaning with semiotics. Although Roland Barthes went into detail with his theory about the three levels of signification, where the denotative meaning is the first level of signification and the second and third level includes the connotative meaning, these authors did not follow the steps of Barthes's theory. They used the definition of connotation and denotation as a way of identifying meaning. According to Rose (2001, as cited in Hunter, 2012) "in semiotics, the representation is considered as a sign and interpreted as denotative, or analogical to reality, and connotative, or supplemental to reality" (p. 91). Additionally, Stokowski (2011) refers to Barthes (1977) that "the collective power of sign systems is in their ability to shape myths – dominant ideologies that bring together denotations and connotations in broader meanings that pervade social life" (p. 25). This shows the relevance of identifying meaning on two different levels and semiotics supports revealing hegemonic views. Nevertheless, Barthes was not always referred to when the researchers mentioned these two terms; yet the terms 'connotation and denotation' were used frequently. Likewise, the definitions for these terms are similar and are indifferent in the way they are implemented.

Another frequently cited author was MacCannell (e.g. Smith, 2005, Dunn, 2006; Noy, 2008). When he was cited, they related to his theory of sight/markers/sign, which was in his book '*The Tourists*'. Only one article dealt with the '*performance*' theory of MacCannell relating to the performance of tourists and how places are staged. It is noticeable how many mentioned his theory of sights/markers/sign, but did not adjust his theory. Moreover, as indicated in the general literature review Roland Barthes and Dean MacCannell were considered one of the main contributors for semiotics and semiotics of tourism. MacCannell was probably mentioned as he counts as one of the first who made the link between semiotics and tourism as indicated in the general literature review and it is seen in the quantitative analysis as well. It should have been no surprise to see both authors regularly mentioned in the examined articles.

5.3 Contextual factors that determine the meaning

Another category concerns the way meaning is determined. This is an important category as it says much about how the authors understand meaning that can be identified through semiotics within tourism. The results show that the authors acknowledge that there are some kinds of contextual factors determining the meaning. However, when it comes to what kind of factors, the opinions vary minimally. Many agreed that the cultural context or the cultural associations or influences play a crucial role. In contrast, to this Tresidder (2010) plainly mentioned external factors existed, which would influence the meaning. This is relatively vague compared to how the other authors defined it. They came up with conventions and norms and social factors. Nonetheless, what was noticeable is that not only wider cultural and social influences exist, but also the way an individual process certain information and how certain previous experiences shape their perceptions. Overall, the main factors mentioned are the cultural background, previous experience and the social influences. This is because the scholars are aware that meaning is determined through contextual

factors and cannot simply exist beforehand. The aspect of contextual factors is also mentioned with the main theories in the graph 10 below.

Graph 10 Summary of the main semiotic approaches
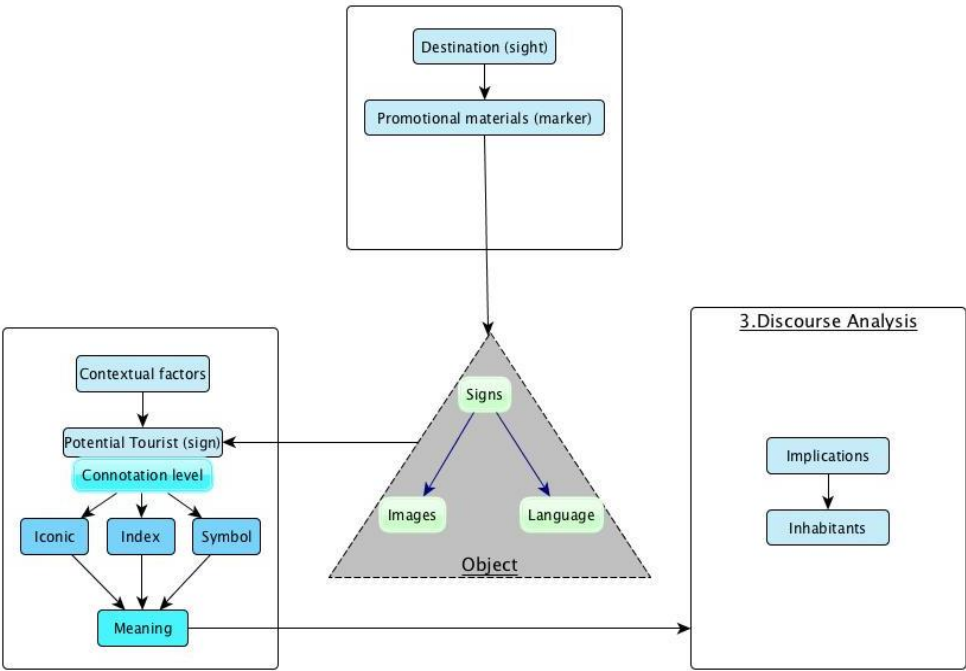
5.4 Semiotics as a tool

This category describes how semiotics can be used as a means to identify certain knowledge. So how the various authors view semiotics to determine specific meaning. Generally, the authors used either an application of semiotics or they theoretically discussed semiotics within tourism. Yet, it does not merely function as a theory, but it can also be appropriated as a method. For instance, Hunter (2012) explains, "semiotic analysis can be an affective visual method for identifying and interpreting types of signs and for evaluating their relationships" (p. 96). Furthermore, Noy (2008) argued semiotics could be seen as a vision-induced medium. Similarly, it is about things we see and attach meaning to. In line with this are Pennington and Thomson (2010) who claim semiotics is "strictly a tool for the analysis of representations the destination marketer can better predict a representations effect on various market segments"(p. 48). This is a stricter definition of semiotics as a method than the others because it indicates that it is only a tool for marketers. On the one hand, it is not only about identifying meanings, but on the other hand it is to understand the tourist experience at the destination. For instance, Metro-Roland (2009) illustrates that Peirce's semiotics can "provide the philosophical foundation for addressing the epistemological issues involved in being a tourist and interacting with the world outside ourselves" (p. 278). Semiotics deals with identifying meanings and how these meanings influence tourists when they visit a place. For this Stokowski (2011) did a longitudinal study on community change and how it can have an impact on tourists. She argues that images are formed over time and is the result of actual experiences (e.g. memorable trip events). Yet, Noy (2008) describes, "semiotic and multi-modal research addresses the dimensions that must be considered in the study of inscriptions. There approaches hold that, when observed closely, meaning-making (semiotics) processes seldom include only one mode of expression" (p. 513). Tourists read certain meaning from tourist

guidebooks and this creates expectations. Nonetheless, the actual place or tourist attraction might not always be according to their expectations (Dunn, 2006). Beyond creating expectations, images can reinforce hegemonic views, stereotypes and/or other cultural implications too (Noy and Kohn, 2010; Stokowski, 2011; Hunter, 2012; Rickly-Boyd, 2012). Caton and Santos (2009) argue "representations can become problematic because they can reinforce stereotypes that privilege dominant groups at the expense of others" (p. 1). Another example gives Moscardo (2011) by claiming that "content/semiotic analysis provides evidence that there exists a persistent, dominant or hegemonic social representation of the tourism planning /development process" (p. 433). Congruently, Edelheim (2007) explains that these 'hidden messages' are in tourist's brochures and should be avoided. This can have cultural implications and as Gottdiener (1995, as cited in Simpson, 2009) stated "we must instead treat them (images /representations) socio-semiotically as signs that contain codified ideologies materialized in the social order" (p. 75). Overall all of these authors agree that semiotics can be used to identify these issues and it stereotypes or hegemonic views should not be reinforced.

As identified in the first category discourse analysis was frequently used to determine hegemonic views. Thereby, both approaches can be employed (see also graph 11). Supplementary, some only related to the social perspective of semiotics, which is called socio-semiotics (e.g. Tresidder, 2010), so to identify hegemonic views for instance. Others used a multi-modal approach of semiotics (e.g. Noy and Kohn, 2010); meaning is determined by different factors and not only by the social factor as the socio-semiotics suggests. For this reason, some authors attempted to establish new conceptual frameworks. In these new frameworks, semiotics plays partially a role and it is part of a larger and multi-perspective approach. For instance, Smith (2005) developed a conceptual framework, which describes how re-imaging processes affect the tourist's images/representations. He argues that synecdoche and connotation are crucial processes in which we can understand how a city image can be changed. In this case, the connotation principle was taken over from semiotics. Moreover, Tresidder (2010) created another conceptual model. This model can help revealing the relationship between the tourist brochures and the tourists, who reads it. He claims it is "a device to aid marketing practices and decision making across a range of market oriented problems by highlighting the semiotic language of tourism that underpins both the marketing process and the individuals understanding of tourism as a cultural category" (p. 596). Interestingly, he did not mention any of the founders of semiotics; rather he mentions other researchers that seem to be less favored among the articles that were analyzed in this paper. In addition, he brings in other terms such as 'interactive participant' to refer to the tourists and 'signposts' to refer to the meaning created by the marketer and received by the tourist. It incorporates more or less the same elements, as when other authors combined content, semiotics and discourse analysis or used visual methodology, whereas, visual methodology does not include the textual analysis. Nevertheless, this might be because he wanted his findings to sound unique and interesting to consider. The nature of these terms goes back to the basic understanding of semiotics and its main contributors. This can be in contrast to what Pennington and Thomson (2010) argue that there is no main theoretical framework. It is in contrast because the authors who also next to Pennington and Thomson (2010) established new frameworks were before 2010. This means before Pennington and Thomson (2010) made this statement and consequently they reviewed articles that did not establish theoretical frameworks.

Concluding, it should be said that some results were not mentioned previously in the background analysis, such as that semiotics can be used as a means to identify underlying ideologies in promotional materials in tourism (Noy and Kohn, 2010; Stokowski, 2011; Hunter, 2012; Rickly-Boyd, 2012). The articles mentioning this are also more recent articles and this was probably not recognized issue in the past. In

addition, the graph 11 below portrays how discourse analysis fits into the whole picture of the categories analyzed so far.

Graph 11 The role of discourse analysis in the findings
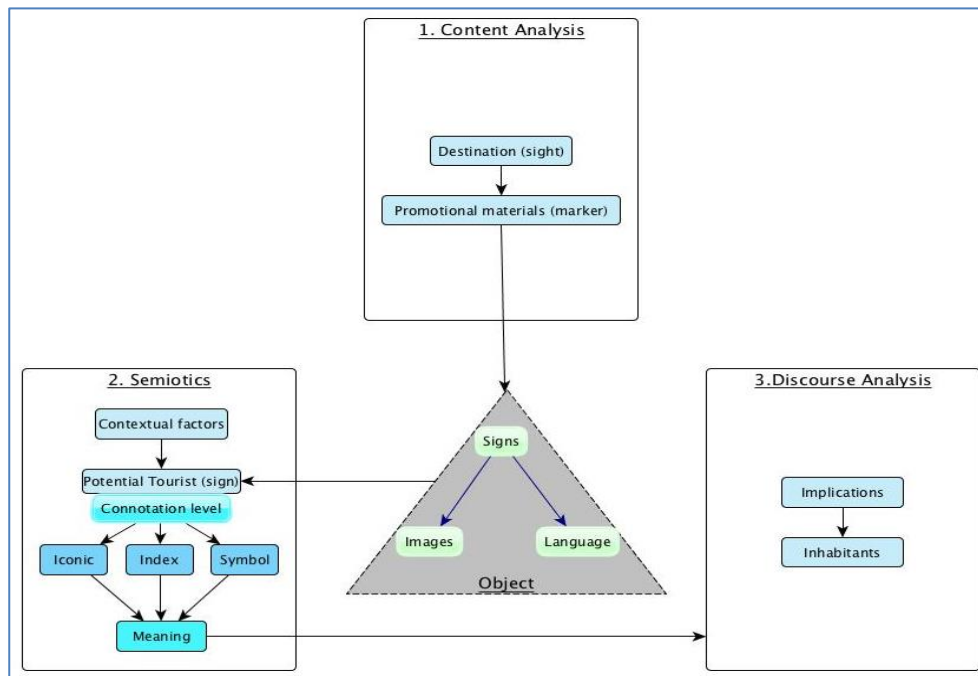
5.5. Recommended future studies

Recommended future studies suggest what other researchers should consider to study in the future. Likewise, out of 15 articles there were only five articles describing future study recommendations. The recommendations are similar in a way as they realize that the 'managerial and economic part' (Edelheim, 2006) should not be the main focus, but rather looking at cultural representations and its implications (Edelheim, 2007; Stokowski, 2011) for instance. Edelheim (2007) demonstrates "tourism needs to be regarded from more dimensions – in both education of future tourism professionals and in current-day tourism management circles (...) The socio-political and cultural messages that are otherwise created do nothing to improve the life of marginalized groups in society" (p. 23). This is similar with what Stokowski (2011) explained. Furthermore, Stokowski (2011) points out that Butler's life cycle of tourism development should be adjusted, which refers more to the "measures of tourist visitation, not measures of symbolic construction that mobilize or influence community action " (p. 41). Besides, Hunter (2013) explains "future research on Hunan destination image should focus on identifying other potential synecdochical themes and their online sources; employing multi-method approaches to explore the relationships between visual representations and verbal narratives, and; implementing studies that identify resident self-identity and visitor experience firsthand" (Hunter, 2013, p.110). This is comparable with what Caton and Santos (2009) stated in their recommendations. They argued as Stokowski (2011) that the tourist experience is important to analyze; however the resident perspective should be more often considered. The differences are only small improvement suggestions within their own study. For instance, Hunter (2012) focused on online destination

images and argued this should be more often considered. Or as Stokowski (2011) explained that the patterns of images in news should be considered across various development settings (e.g. rural, urban etc.).

Finally, the authors recommended viewing representations from multiple perspectives and not only from a 'managerial and economic' perspective (Edelheim, 2007, p. 23). Although a considerable amount of authors indicated so, another appreciable amount tried to address such issues already by using a multi-modal approach of semiotics, instead of simply employing social semiotics (e.g. Tresidder, 2010). So, why do some authors still feel the need to view representations from more perspectives and not only how it can benefit tourism marketers? This might be because images still reinforce stereotypes and the authors would like to create awareness, so tourism marketers would use other images, more diverse images to represent a destination. Another argument could be considering from what department the authors are. This would explain the focus on a more economic perspective or a more multi-social aspect. Nonetheless, Palmer (1999) and Bhattachryya (1997) already mentioned these aspects, although their articles were initially not considered as they were classified as outdated, it shows that this issue is still relevant. An overall recommendation for future studies will be elaborated on at the end of the paper.

5.6 Preliminary conclusion

The graph 12 illustrates the conclusion of the findings on how semiotics was applied within tourism studies. At the end of some categories parts of the graph were already displayed. This graph shows the full picture. It portrays how the authors mainly used semiotics in combination with other methods such as content analysis and discourse analysis. Content analysis is to categorize images and/or text. Likewise, semiotics is to identify meaning. The images or languages that are represented in the promotional material possess various signs, which the (potential) tourists reflect upon. This process of meaning making is determined by contextual factors, which were described in the findings. The meaning making arises on a connotation level, where the sign can have an indexical, iconical or symbolic relationship with the object. Consequently, the meaning, which is derived from the promotional materials by the tourists, has implications for the representation of the inhabitants at the destination. This is a key aspect as the scholars repeatedly mentioned this point. To pinpoint this aspect they mainly used discourse analysis, where the texts were at the center. Finally, it can be said that the preliminary conceptual framework was vague compared to this graph. It illustrates exactly what kind of theories the authors preferred to use and in what kind of relation.

Graph 12 Summary of the main qualitative findings

8. Conclusion

"Precisely because images matter, because they are powerful and seductive, it is necessary to consider them critically" (Rose, 2012, p. 350).

This part will attempt to critically investigate the findings with respect to the previous circumstances of the topic as defined in the beginning, to evaluate these and to answer the main research question (how have semiotics been applied in tourism studies?). This paper has discussed in how far semiotics can be related to tourism and in how far it is relevant. The overall conclusion is the importance of semiotics in tourism. The combination of tourism and semiotics has gained recognition among academia in the past ten years, which indicates the importance to continue exploring this field. Semiotics in tourism is not only a field of research, but also a field of practice. Consequently, it continues to grow and develop. Likewise, tourism can make use of semiotics since it can be applied in various fields. This indicates the diverse use of semiotics and its advantage. Furthermore, there are still many unexplored areas in tourism, other than cultural/heritage tourism where semiotics could be of an advantage. One of the advantage relates to tourism marketing, such as semiotics can be regarded as a tool, which is more cost-efficient than other marketing tools. On the one hand, it can be seen that all authors used semiotics to identify meanings in order to problematize certain issues such as underlying ideologies or cultural implications. This was mainly an academic discussion about the topics. On the other hand, they use semiotics to comprehend how certain representations are interpreted in order to make suggestions of improvement within marketing strategies when portraying certain images.

Tourism with all the images of destinations and tourist attraction is itself a sign system, which constructs, organizes and conveys a tourist experience and certain meaning to tourists. These representations can be found in all kinds of promotional material, from digital to printed versions. Especially digital media, in contemporary days where online media (e.g. social media) is more accessible than ever, becomes more and more significant. The background analysis indicated that not much research was done in this field and this is why a systematic literature review supported to portray how semiotics in tourism was utilized over the years.

By first using a background analysis and a general literature review to explain how semiotics is related to tourism, then a systematic review to provide quantitative and qualitative results, the main research question could be answered. The quantitative data show that semiotics in tourism recently became more attractive and the leading continents are the USA, Europe and Australia. Furthermore, the qualitative analysis helped illustrating the differences and especially the similarities regarding the way semiotics is applied. Besides, the background analysis indicated that there is no main theoretical framework to analyze representations of destinations. In addition, the results of the qualitative analysis show each author had various ways to analyze representations. It is remarkable to see that semiotics was rarely employed as a lone standing method, but rather combined with content analysis or discourse analysis to touch upon multi-perspectives of meaning and its implications (e.g. hegemonic views). Although the first impression shows all authors employing semiotics in tourism, the difference lay in the underlying assumptions and the practical applications. Moreover, the theories of the main contributors of semiotics included only parts of each contributor's theories. To summarize, MacCannell was used to explain how a piece of information of a destination could help generating meaning for the potential tourist to interpret a destination or tourist attraction (sign/marker/sight). Peircean's semiotics was used to explain how the sign and object are related. In other words, how a destination or tourist attraction relates to the piece of information about the destination or tourist attraction. There are three kinds of relationships, indexical, iconical and symbol. The meaning depends on contextual factors such as social, cultural backgrounds and personal previous experiences. Additionally, a meaning can be interpreted on a denotative as well as connotative level. This is how in general the theories of semiotics were incorporated. Hence, it can be argued that the scholars combined various methods and chose not to use semiotics as a lone standing method because it gives them a more holistic picture of destination representations and how it is communicated. This is congruent with Rose (2012) who argued in favor for mixed methods regarding visual methodologies. Semiotics is part of visual methodologies as also seen in the analysis. According to Rose (2012) "[...] some studies that choose to use more than one method in order precisely to explore the diverse meanings that particular images carry at their various sites in their study, image and reception" (p.349). These are important findings as they can help completing the picture of this phenomenon, which is not only about tourism marketers, but also the tourists and inhabitants of the destination involved. This research complements the existing literature and emphasizes the importance to keep on exploring this field as there is still much unexplored. This will help to enrich the existing literature and highlights the diverse use of semiotics in tourism.

8. 1 Limitations

Although the research helped answering many important questions, there were some unavoidable limitations. In this research qualitative data overruled and the quantitative findings served to bring added value to the overall findings. Consequently, qualitative data is highly subjective and can hardly be generalized. Nonetheless, employing a systematic literature review minimized the bias. This, still, has some implications for the selection process (selection bias). For instance, when choosing the keywords for the

databases, other authors might have prioritized and argued for other keywords than were chosen in this paper based on their background analysis. However, the articles were selected under certain reasoned criteria and this is why some other articles were not included. Thereby, the possibility exists that important information was deserted. Moreover, during the selection process the keywords had to be adjusted to make the results useable. Additionally, the computer search system could have errors by the time the search was done, so that some articles are not displayed or accessible, whereas they exist in the database. Indeed, some articles appeared in the database, and yet not accessible. Hence, these articles could not be included in this research. This cannot be avoided, as this is a risk to be taken into account when making conclusions about the findings. Nevertheless, the chosen articles can serve as examples for the semiotics of tourism within tourism journals since the results mostly are congruent with what existing literature has found out already. Moreover, including other journals than tourism journals might have resulted in different findings and more precise findings. This limitation can have a large effect on the final results, as including more journals and more articles, can greatly affect the trends within semiotics in tourism. It would be wise to include the outdated articles. Including other than tourism journals, would make the decrease the clarity of the results and thereby, it cannot be recommended.

Besides, each researcher might interpret the data differently, thus results might be distinct. This is a limitation as it can affect the reliability of the data. If there are distinct results, generalizations cannot be made and the value of the research is reduced. Also, the data can be influenced by the researcher's bias. For instance, Metro-Roland (2009) found out that the Saussure was more frequently used compared to Peircean and in this paper Peirce was repeatedly used. From the author's side, a lack of reliable data might occur since these researchers might have also limitations in their research, which was not pointed out. Overall, it is difficult to assess and demonstrate rigorously, when not all information are accessible and subjectivity always exists. To summarize, this research should have been done more extensively if the capacity were given in order to ensure more precise and highly informative findings. One way would be to include other researchers to validate the findings in order to make generalization. This can affect the findings depending on each researcher's personal or cultural background.

Another limitation relates to the quantitative results. The comparison between the USA and Europe was done in a relative way. The USA is tremendously larger than one of the smaller countries in Europe. Thereby, it can be doubtful whether it is an appropriate way of comparing. In addition, the selection process only allowed English written articles. This might explain why some other countries (e.g. African countries and the Middle East) are not represented in the results. For instance, Dubai is a well-visited destination; however their main language is Arabic rather than English. At this point such articles were not included; yet they can contain relevant information on the way semiotics is applied in the tourism field. This; nonetheless is unavoidable, unless researchers in each of the displayed language can be included.

8.2 Future recommendations and research

Having pointed out the limitations, this section gives suggestions on future studies. As from the beginning pointed out and reasoned, the qualitative analysis overweighs. Nonetheless, to give additional relevance to the research, one could expand the research on the quantitative data. For instance, one of the limitations was the way the USA and Europe were compared. Incorporating statistics on population size and GDP can support the arguments made and extend the analysis. Furthermore, a more precise comparison can give stronger arguments. This would only enrich the findings and do not greatly affect what has been found

out so far. The findings have some limitations as it did only include tourism journals and other related articles might have been published in semiotic journals and not in tourism journals. Where an article is published is up to the scholar. Hence, for future research it is advisable to incorporate more articles to investigate. One of the ways is to include all journals, or to not only include the most recent articles, but also the considered outdated articles, to have a more precise analysis. Hence, one can also see how it came to Pennington and Thomson's (2010) statement about Saussaurian's semiotics being more employed in tourism than Peircean's semiotics. Furthermore, the examined articles mainly looked at how meaning in promotional materials are conveyed; nonetheless none of the researchers considered contacting tourism practitioners to consolidate their opinions with the scientific literature. This can be useful to create awareness about the stereotypical views that can be enforced by the images. Moreover, all analyses repeatedly emphasized how tourists process meaning as if the promotional materials already convinced them. None of the researchers focused on how tourists might resist certain representations, despite Tresidder (2010) who elaborated on it. It can support tourism marketers as well as academics understanding this phenomenon better and create a more complete picture of tourism representation and the tourist experience by researching this aspect.

Another issue is the mentioned list of tourism disciplines in the beginning. Besides, the field of cultural and/or heritage tourism, none of the other disciplines were used. It can be argued that business, convention, and sex tourism do not work in particular with images that have strong meaning. Thereby, these are not suitable for semiotics. Additionally, images in gastronomic tourism convey rather obvious images of food. However, even here semiotics can be employed, when examining how the restaurants are generally represented. This is the same for farm, spa, sports, and space tourism. This is because these fields are assumed not to reinforce great social implications. Whereas, the disciplines of tourism that focus more on the social aspect of culture, meaning the people of a certain destination, they are more likely to represent images that carry implications with them. For instance, religious pilgrimage tourism or genealogy tourism offer images representing more than the religion for instance. It might be the special experience or the individual emotions that are tight to the trip, which makes it interesting for marketers to see how this can be represented. Moreover, researchers have not examined the field of dark tourism. Dark tourism has many connotations, which can let tourists experience various emotions and yet these destinations are well visited. This can be of interest to see how semiotics can help tourism marketers to put promotional materials together without making tourists feel uncomfortable and to not reinforce hegemonic views. Especially, dark tourism destinations can involve many hegemonic views because of the history. Furthermore, sustainable tourism was also not used as a case study. Sustainability or ecotourism are used frequently that probably more 'educated' tourists are not sure what lies behind. Consequently, they might resist these phrases and images reflecting these terms. This is an interesting aspect to examine whether semiotics can help identifying resistance. Another type of tourism that can have implications are the volunteer tourism, where images of the Other are frequent. These can reinforce stereotypes as also mentioned in the analysis. By examining these fields, it can aid tourism marketers making smarter decisions. These studies are rather new and this might explain why they were not employed yet. Another reason might be due to the background analysis as it was argued that meaning is determined by culture. Thereby, cultural or heritage tourism are most likely to be used, which is confirmed after the analysis. Finally, it can be said that these last disciplines are in particular interesting (especially dark tourism with its many connotations) to examine regarding semiotics in tourism. The others are less of interest as they do not display immediate implications or do not offer many 'meaningful' images to investigate. Likewise, the list in the background analysis can give some more incentives and ideas on future research directions.

At last, the conceptual framework, which was created to summarize the main theories used by the researchers should receive more attention by doing more research and applying it to destinations to see whether it is appropriate to combine these theories in such a model. Combining methods can help portraying the possible contradictory meanings in images and this itself is crucial to point out. Nonetheless, one main theoretical framework could also overlook the complexity and miss out on important aspects. Finally, it can be said that Peircean's approach of semiotics is already an extension of the Saussurian semiotic approach as confirmed in the background analysis and MacCannell's theory is based on Peircean's approach. Thereby, it can be said that both theories are appropriate to use within tourism studies. This is important as in the future it can help as a start for researchers to analyze destination representations. The theories take many aspects into consideration for instance the contextual factors determining meaning, the basic components of semiotics and how it relates. Other methods such as content analysis and/or discourse analysis can still be used for more in-depth analysis. More importantly combining will give a more holistic view on how semiotics can be applied in tourism studies as some authors already attempted to do so. Once the framework can be confirmed, scholars can use this to start their destination representation analysis and it can be seen that semiotics is in the heart of the analysis and should not be neglected in the field of tourism.

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10. Appendices

Table 2 Dataset for the quantitative analysis

	Author (Year)	University	Journal	Scopus	Average Scopus	Web of Science	Average Web of Science
1	Bender, J., Gidlow, B., Fisher, D. (2013)	Lincoln University	Annals of Tourism Research	0	0.00	0	0.00
2	Berger, A. A. (2010)	San Francisco State University	Journal of Teaching in Travel and Tourism	0	0.00	n/a	0.00
3	Bertoša, et al. (2012)	University of Zagreb	Tourism, Culture and Communication	0	0.00	n/a	0.00
4	Bhandari, K. (2010)	University of West Scotland	Tourism, Culture and Communication	1	0.25	n/a	0.00
5	Bhattacharyya, D.P. (1997)	Wittenberg University	Annals of Tourism Research	66	3.88	42	2.47
6	Campbell, M. B. (1989)	University of California	Annals of Tourism Research	9	0.36	9	0.36
7	Caton, K.; Santos, C.A. (2009)	University of Illinois	Journal of Travel Research	18	3.60	16	3.20
8	Cohen, E. (1989)	Hebrew University	Annals of Tourism Research	75	3.00	74	2.96
9	Djafarova, E.,; Waring, T. (2012)	Northumbria University	Tourism Analysis	0	0.00	n/a	0.00
10	Dunn, D. (2006)	Northumbria University	Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change	n/a	n/a	D/n/a	n/a
11	Echtner, CM (1999)	James Cook University	Tourism Management	25	1.67	16	1.07
12	Edelheim, J. R. (2007)	Southern Cross University	Journal of Vacation Marketing	11	1.57	n/a	0.00
13	Francesconi, S. (2011)	University of Trento	Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change	2	0.67	1	0.33
14	Francesconi, S. (2011)	University of Trento	Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change	2	0.67	1	0.33
15	Garrod, B.,; Kosowska, A. (2012)	Aberystwyth University	Tourism Analysis	0	0.00	n/a	0.00
16	Harkin, M. (1995)	University of Wyoming	Annals of Tourism Research	45	2.37	39	2.05
17	Horster, E.,; Gottschalk, C. (2012)	University of Bremen	Journal of Vacation Marketing	1	0.50	n/a	0.00
18	Hunter, W.C. (2008)	Cheju National University	Tourism Management	40	6.67	28	4.67
19	Hunter, W.C. (2012)	Kyung Hee University	Sustainable Tourism	2	1.00	0	0.00

20	Hunter, W.C. (2013)	Kyung Hee University	Tourism Management	0	0.00	0	0.00
21	Jacobsen, J.K.S. (1997)	Kyung Hee University	Annals of Tourism Research	24	1.41	22	1.29
22	Kanemasu, Y. (2013)	University of the South Pacific	Annals of Tourism Research	0	0.00	0	0.00
23	Kim, A., Lee, Y.-S. (2009)	Griffith University	International Journal of Tourism Policy	1	0.20	n/a	0.00
24	Knudsen, D. C.,; Rickly-Boyd, J. M. (2012)	Indiana University	Annals of Tourism Research	3	1.50	1	0.50
25	Kwek, A., Lee, Y.-S. (2008)	Griffith University	Journal of Hospitality & Leisure Marketing	3	0.50	n/a	0.00
26	Lau, R. W. K. (2011)	Open University of Hong Kong	Annals of Tourism Research	4	1.33	3	1.00
27	MacCannell, D. (1984)	University of California	Annals of Tourism Research	49	1.63	47	1.57
28	Metro-Roland, M. (2009)	Indiana University	Tourism Geographies	10	2.00	9	1.80
29	Moore, A. (1985)	University of Southern California	Annals of Tourism Research	9	0.31	13	0.45
30	Mordue, T. (2009)	University of Teesside	Current Issues in Tourism	8	1.60	4	0.80
31	Moscardo, G. (2011)	James Cook University	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	17	5.67	13	4.33
32	Ng, L. Y.,; Lee, Y. - (2014)	Griffith University	Journal of Vacation Marketing	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
33	Nost, E. (2013)	University of Kentucky	Tourism Geographies	0	0.00	1	1.00
34	Noy, C. (2008)	University of Surrey	Annals of Tourism Research	24	4.00	19	3.17
35	Noy, C.; Kohn, A. (2010)	Hadassah Academic College	Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change	2	0.50	n/a	0.00
36	Palmer, C. (1999)	University of Brighton	Tourism Management	74	4.93	52	3.47
37	Pennington, J.W.; Thomsen, R.C. (2010)	University of Aarhus	Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism	4	1.00	2	0.50
38	Robinson, P. (2012)	University of Wolverhampton	Current Issues in Tourism	1	0.50	0	0.00
39	Simpson, T. (2009)	University of Macau	Tourist Studies	2	0.40	n/a	0.00
40	Smith, A. (2005)	University of Macau	Tourism Geographies	44	4.89	n/a	0.00
41	Stokowski, P.A. (2011)	University of Vermont	Tourism Geographies	2	0.67	1	0.33
42	Su, X. (2010)	University of Vermont	Tourism Geographies	5	1.25	3	0.75
43	Tresidder, R. (2010)	Sheffield Hallam University	Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing	1	0.25	0	0.00
44	Urbain, J.-D. (1989)	Université François Rabelais de Tours	Annals of Tourism Research	24	0.96	19	0.76
45	Uzzell, D. (1984)	University of Surrey	Annals of Tourism Research	39	1.30	36	1.20

| 46 | Waitt, G. (1999) | University of Wollongong | Tourism Geographies | 19 | 1.27 | n/a | 0.00 |
| 47 | White, L. (2012) | Victoria University | Current Issues in Tourism | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 |

Table 3 List of the final articles for the qualitative analysis

Author (Year)	Title	Journal
1. Caton, K.; Santos, C. A. (2009)	Images of the Other: Selling Study Abroad in a Postcolonial World	Journal of Travel Research
2. Dunn, D. (2008)	Imagining Alexandria: Sightseeing in a City of the Mind	Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change
3. Edelheim, J. R. (2007)	Hidden messages: A polysemic reading of tourist brochures	Journal of Vacation Marketing
4. Hunter, W. C. (2013)	China's Chairman Mao: A visual analysis of Hunan Province online destination image	Tourism Management
5. Hunter, W.C. (2011)	The good souvenir: representations of Okinawa and Kinmen islands in Asia	Sustainable Tourism
6. Metro-Roland, M. (2009)	Interpreting Meaning: An Application of Peircean Semiotics to Tourism	Tourism Geographies
7. Moscardo, G. (2011)	Exploring social representations of tourism planning: issues for governance	Journal of Sustainable Tourism
8. Noy, C. (2008)	PAGES AS STAGES: A Performance Approach to Visitor Books	Annals of Tourism Research
9. Noy, C.; Kohn, A. (2010)	Mediating touristic dangerscapes: the semiotics of state travel warnings issued to Israeli tourists	Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change
10. Pennington, J. W.; Thomsen, R. C. (2010)	A Semiotic Model of Destination Representations Applied to Cultural and Heritage Tourism Marketing	Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism
11. Simpson, T. (2009)	Materialist pedagogy: The function of themed environments in post-socialist consumption in Macao	Tourist Studies
12. Smith, A. (2005)	Conceptualizing City Image Change: The 'Re-Imaging' of Barcelona	Tourism Geographies
13. Stokowski, P.A. (2011)	The Smile Index: Symbolizing People and Place in Colorado's Casino Gaming Towns	Tourism Geographies
14. Tresidder, R. (2010)	What No Pasties!? Reading the Cornish Tourism Brochure	Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing
15. White, L. (2012)	Imagining the nation: signifiers of national capital status in Washington, DC and Canberra	Current Issues in Tourism

Table 4 Brief summaries of the articles

1.   Conceptualizing City Image Change: The 'Re-Imaging' of Barcelona

This article involves the conceptualization of city image change in the case of Barcelona. One of the main theories they use to explain the processes of image change is synecdoche and connotation to do so.

2.   Pages as stages: A Performance Approach to Visitor Books

The second article deals with visitor books and it is argued that visitor books can be seen as stages. In his article he explains in four ways how visitor books can be seen as a performance.

3.   This article Imagining Alexandria: Sightseeing in a City of the Mind

This article is about literary imagining in the case of Alexandria. The researcher employs semiotic to explain how Alexandria is imagined in literature. This researched as it is argued that Alexandria does not reinforce many connotations for tourists to be interested in.

4.   Interpreting Meaning: An Application of Peircean Semiotics to Tourism

Metro-Roland (2009) applies the Peircean semiotics to various tourism examples. She furthermore argues that this is a better approach than Saussure's semiotic approach.

5.   Images of the Other: Selling Study Abroad in a Postcolonial World

Caton and Santos (2009) analyzed promotional materials of the SAS program in order to identify underlying ideologies. For this they use a three-step method, which includes content, semiotic and discourse analysis. The authors argue that certain images are reinforcing stereotypes and this should be avoided in such promotional materials.

6.   Mediating touristic dangerscapes: the semiotics of state travel warnings issued to Israeli tourists

To comprehend how touristic dangerscapes are mediated, the researchers Noy and Kohn (2010) investigate travel-warning articles by using a combination of discursive and multimodel semiotics. They argue that the system of tourism and media regarding dangerscapes is a unique relationship and should be therefore explored.

7.   A Semiotic Model of Destination Representations Applied to Cultural and Heritage Tourism Marketing

Pennington and Thomson (2010) created a semiotic model of destination representations, which they applied to the cultural and heritage tourism marketing. As a result marketers could make more informed decisions about their marketing strategies.

8.	*What No Pasties!? Reading the Cornish Tourism Brochure*

This article deals with Cornwall's tourism brochures by presenting a conceptual model about how meaning is conveyed from tourism marketing to the individual consumer or tourist. The author investigates tourist's experiences and the interpretation process when a tourist sees an image. This model should guide marketing practices.

9.	*Imagining the nation: signifiers of national capital status in Washington, DC and Canberra*

This article is about monuments and landmarks of Washington DC and Canberra and how they signify the national capital. For this they apply observational research, secondary research, and semiotic analysis. They argue that this field uncommon in research literature and thereby should be considered.

10.	*The Smile Index: Symbolizing People and Place in Colorado's Casino Gaming Towns*

Stokowski (2011) explores how tourism is represented in community newspapers. It is to explore media and how it creates symbols. One of the things that are identified a kind of smile index, which shows how people and the place are symbolized in Colorado's casino by using content analysis and social semiotics.

11.	*Exploring social representations of tourism planning: issues for governance*

Moscardo (2011) employs content and semiotic approach in order to examine social representations of tourism planning and in how this has issues for the governance. Furthermore, the author analyses various tourism planning models to give an overall recommendations about making better decisions in tourism development.

12.	*The good souvenir: representations of Okinawa and Kinmen islands in Asia*

Hunter (2012) uses visual research method in order to examine how souvenirs represent Okinawa and Kinmen islands in Asia. He in particular examines photographs to identify cultural representations as well as representations of the destination in general.

13.	*China's Chairman Mao: A visual analysis of Hunan Province online destination image*

This article deals with the visual analysis of Hunan province by looking at online images. He uses a combination of content analysis-semiotic analysis. He argues that this field is uncommon, but useful.

14.	*Hidden messages: A polysemic reading of tourist brochures*

In this article the author attempts to analyze tourist brochures by using content and semiotic approaches. He tries to show how these hidden messages convey certain hegemonic ideas and this should be take into consideration by producers as it can have societal implications.

15.	*Materialist pedagogy: The function of themed environments in post-socialist consumption in Macao*

Simpson (2009) wanted to comprehend how themed consumer space in Macao functions. Consequently, he examined the way Macao is constructed as a themed cityscape of casinos, hotels and entertainment zones creates destination by using a socio-semiotic approach to reveal the themed environments the way it is constructed.

Table 5 General categorizations of the articles

Topic	Reason	Medium	Main theories	Methods
Representations in tourism	Reinforce stereotypes	Non-profit study abroad promotional materials	Postcolonial theory Barthes (connotation and denotation levels)	Content, semiotic and discourse analysis (based on Albers & James)
Representation destination	Not many connotations for tourists	Scientific sources, a guide and 2 books	Hegemony MacCannell's semiotic of attraction	Literature review
Online tourism destination image	Underemployed in research	Websites	Photographs as representations Peirce (sign-object relationship)	Content analysis, semiotic interpretation, synecdoche, synthesis (visual methodology)
Souvenirs +representations of destinations and cultural representations		Photographs	Tourism theory Peirce (sign-object relationship)	Visual method
Environment tourists tour (theory)	Mostly Saussure→show Peirce is better approach	Scientific review +tourism examples	Semiotics of Peirce in tourism	Literature review
Tourism development+ social representation theory	dge to make iate decisions urism ment	Tourism planning models	Social representation theory	Content/semiotic analysis
Hidden messages in brochures (representations)	Hegemonic views→improve	Tourism brochures	Polysemy Hegemony Barthes (myth) Cohen (intrinsic	Content and semiotic analysis (based on Jenkins)

			and extrinsic meanings)	
Macao's built environment	Understanding +function of Macao's themed consumer space (ideologies)	Scientific sources	Post-socialists consumption Baudrillard (hyperreality)	Socio-semiotic approach (refers to Gottdiener) Literature review
Performance model	Meaning lies in attributes as performances	Visitor books	Language and Performance approach and framing (MacCannell) Theory of utterance	Semiotic multi-modal analysis
System of tourism and media (destination image)	Unique relationship	Press articles (digital and print)	Not based on any specific semiotic theory	Discursive and multi-modal semiotic analysis
Tourism representations	Seeing dynamic model→more informed decisions	3 different examples	Peirce (sign-object relationship)	Semiotic analysis based on model
City re-imaging	Conceptual framework	Scientific review, image	Based on semiotic principles MacCannell (sight/marker) Barthes (connotation)	Semiotic, Cultural and perceptual analysis
Tourism in (representation) community contexts	Exploring media creating and using symbols	Photographs in community newspaper	Peirce main focus (sign-object relationship) Barthes (denotation and connotation level)	Longitudinal interpretive study (based on semiotics and content analysis)
Tourism experience+ interpretation process	Conceptual framework to guide marketing practices	Tourist brochures	Discourse of tourism Interactive participant (Kress&Leeuwen) Level of access to information (McClinchey)	Social –semiotic reading
Nations (representations)	Literature gap	Photographs	Saussure (sign and signified)	Observational research, secondary research and semiotic analysis