



Tourism coopetition: An introduction to the subject and a research agenda



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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Tourism coopetition
Collaborative network organizations
Bibliometric analysis
Research agenda

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to verify the current status of the research on coopetition applied to Tourism. In order to overcome the lack of tools for analyzing competitive advantage generated by relational components, this paper suggests the use of the coopetition construct as a methodological tool for analyzing the cooperation in networks for the management of tourism destinations. To that end, we performed a bibliometric analysis on 'tourism coopetition' in scientific research papers published from 1995 to 2015 and indexed in the Web of Science and SciVerse Scopus databases. This helped us to conclude that coopetition is a behavior representing the key organizational methods of tourism destinations, especially when considering the interdependence and complementarity of this sector; thus, it should be a fundamental topic of tourism research. In this sense, the paper presents a research agenda in order to establish coopetition as key to understanding the behavior of all those involved in tourism at a particular destination.

1. Introduction

Literature recognises the terms *coopetition* or *co-opetition* as a new way of doing business in which cooperation occurs between competitors (Bengtsson & Kock, 2000; Della Corte & Sciarelli, 2012; Fang, 2006; Lado, Boyd, & Hanlon, 1997; Luo, 2007; Lorgnier & Su, 2014; Wang & Krakover, 2008; and others). The word was used for the first time by the businessman Raymond Noorda in 1992 in relation to the technology industry.

Two books, targeted to non-academic audiences, were the first works that presented the term as a concept or as a management system. These books inspired many academic studies that followed later. The most famous is the book '*Co-Opetition*' written by Brandenburger and Nalebuff (1996) and considered the seminal work on this subject (Stein, 2010). However, the book '*Coopetition: Global Tourism beyond the Millennium*' by David L Edgell and Todd Haenisch was published a year earlier, in 1995 in the United States, and was especially focused on tourism. The authors presented coopetition in the tourism environment as a process and as an attitude that must prevail if tourism was to become the giant in industry as acclaimed by economic forecasts. Written in a non-technical language, it introduces the term to the tourism sector, although it does not show how to implement a coopetition system in the management of tourism destinations in a practical way (Taylor, 1996).

Nevertheless, some issues should be clarified if one wants to understand how this new concept can improve the management of a

tourism destination. Firstly, the tourism destination is a unit of analysis in which the internationalization process is part of its development path. In this context, the construct does not yet have a paradigm status (Padula & Dagnino, 2007; Rusko, 2011, 2014), but the evolution of markets and networks indicates that it is a key point in the "*octopus strategy*" used by global corporations (Cygler, Gajdzik, & Sroka, 2014). In this sense, coopetition allows the corporations to create an environment where competition exists among networks and no longer among companies individually, thus belonging to one network that covers most of the players in an industry is seen as a successful strategy (Castro & Roldán, 2013; Cygler, Gajdzik, & Sroka, 2014).

Secondly, the tourism sector is of great importance to many countries because it forms a large productive chain that involves many actors and industry sectors. In fact, the total amount of direct and indirect activities that interact in the tourism industry forms a large system with different sub-systems. In this context, the sector allows interdependence among stakeholders when developing a destination, therefore building a coopetition environment.

Finally, in this sector Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) frequently promote the development of a tourism destination by setting a local and global strategy to enhance the destination in the international scene. This approach brings together a wide variety of firms that complement each other when developing a tourism destination, and where the stakeholders share a common goal (Della et al., 2012; Hitt, Dacin, Levitas, Arregle, & Borza, 2000; Rispoli & Tamma, 1995).

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Despite this verifiable reality, the research in tourism based on cooptation perspective is very scarce (Bouncken, Gast, Kraus, & Bogers, 2015; Kylänen & Rusko, 2011). We are convinced that it is important to develop new research based on relational component to study the tourism destinations. It is a complementary way for the traditional approaches about tourism destinations that are worried about the natural assets or infrastructure. All these considerations alert us to the fact that a review of cooptation in tourism in isolation of other sectors is still necessary.

As a first step, this paper presents a brief theoretical review and the status of studies on tourism cooptation through the analysis of scientific papers indexed in the *Web of Science* (WOS) and *SciVerse Scopus* (Scopus) databases from 1995 to 2015. Although, we found few papers that applied cooptation in the tourism sector, we have defined some features of the current state of research on 'tourism cooptation', including: the number of papers on tourism cooptation over time; the main journals which have published articles; the analytical perspective used for researching tourism cooptation, the countries and researchers university affiliation that have published papers related to cooptation; and the main topics that the researchers relate to cooptation. Additionally, this paper proposes a concept of tourism cooptation and a research agenda for applying the construct to the context of destination management.

2. From “cooptation” to “tourism cooptation”: highlighting the relational component of tourism destinations

In academic literature, the concept of cooptation is elementary. It is applied to a relationship between two companies or to inter-organizational networks. The existence of cooperation and competition at the same time is what differentiates cooptation from other interactions among companies (Bengtsson & Kock, 2014). Therefore, cooptation is a behavior that generates a network relationship where cooperation and competition coexist. When this relationship occurs among a network of companies or in the economic sector, and it is managed as a continuous process, the result is a system.

Similarly, Padula and Dagnino (2007) consider cooptation to be an actor's system whose interaction is based on a partial goal – pursued by each individual-, and a congruent and joint interest. They explain that cooptation is a more realistic view of relationships among enterprises than competition. It is a coupled system where participants maintain some interdependence without losing organizational separation (Luo, 2004).

The initial model proposed by Brandenburger and Nalebuff (1996), shows this concept as a network in which cooptation occurs horizontally (among competitors and complementary enterprises), and vertically (among suppliers and customers). Indeed, it is a management strategy looking for better returns (Castaldo & Dagnino, 2010). In this sense, Lorgnier and Su (2014) claim that this hybrid neologism should occur within an organization, among organizations, or on a network scale, aiming to create value for protecting the same from competitors and to share resources, knowledge, and new ideas.

The relational component underlying this concept could also be considered under a perspective of capital social, being a network of relationships that adds value to its participants, by allowing them to access network-embedded resources (Adler & Kwon, 2002). In this sense, Castro and Roldán (2013) defined three key dimensions in inter-organizational relationships for performing better in international markets: the structural, relational, and resources. Cooptation is a construct that focuses on the relational dimension that acts as a mediator of the other two dimensions in order to improve the system results. This relational component is key in applying the concept to the tourism sector. In this sector, cooptation is a suitable perspective to its analysis due to the existence of a large number of networks that cooperate, despite competition. These networks are formed especially when the objective is to enter an international market, as well as, to

improve the performance in this market. It is important to note that when a tourism destination seeks to improve its ability to attract international flows, the cooptation network includes local and multinational companies. Along these lines, there are also several studies on the importance of inter-personal relationships on the firm's competitiveness to enter the international context (e.g., Harris & Wheeler, 2005).

Thus, the firm and its suppliers or complementary organizations compete by the distribution of ordinary income (profits), and consequently, the negotiations between them are a form of competition (Brandenburger & Nalebuff, 1996; Stein, 2010). Furthermore, when we focus on the tourist, there is also a common goal among the firms: They need to improve the tourism attractiveness and productivity; however, at the same time, they compete for the tourist's individual budget. In summary, the tourism destination is a unit of analysis that forms a strategic network with a shared goal, representing a collective enterprise. That is why it can be considered a suitable context to generate cooptation networks, because its structure often has:

(1) High presence of SMEs, which get better returns and business opportunities through network operations (Della et al., 2012; Maulet, Lazzarretti, & Petrillo, 2006);

(2) High presence of different companies with complementary products and services creating a degree of interdependence between the companies (Bengtsson & Kock, 2000; Gnyawali & Park, 2009).

(3) A form of government or an organization that gathers several companies in the sector in order to promote the development of the destination (Della et al., 2012; Wang & Krakover, 2008);

(4) Co-location, cultural proximity, and interconnection (Kylänen & Mariani, 2012; Lazzarretti & Capone, 2006; Maulet et al., 2006).

(5) High external competition generating the need for unity among the players in order to compete in the market, leading to sharing promotion costs, to designing marketing strategies together, and to sharing risks and knowledge (Czakov, 2009; Poulis, Yamin, & Poulis, 2012; Ritala & Hurmelinna-Laukkanen, 2009).

(6) High internal competition between enterprises in different sub-sectors, because the tourist's budget is unique, therefore, all companies compete with each other, although they form networks of complementary or competing businesses (Bengtsson & Kock, 2014).

3. Theoretical background: cooptation framework

Due to the interest of this concept for tourism destinations, it seems necessary to first review what has been published about cooptation in literature on management and organizations.

On the one hand, most of the models that represent cooptation are based on the behavior of participants according to the different tendencies to cooperate or to compete (Lado et al., 1997). Other models deal with the different positions and contexts in the productive chain that can generate cooptation (Bengtsson & Kock, 2000; Garrafo, 2002; Luo, 2004). However, it should not be forgotten that the driving force of cooptation relationships is the heterogeneity of resources of the companies involved. This driving force sometimes gives the company, acting alone, competitive advantages, but other times requires a joint effort when accessing resources which are not available to all (Bengtsson & Kock, 2000). Thus, more recently, authors are analyzing the critical success factors in management strategies based on cooptation (Chin, Chan, & Lam, 2008), as well as, the influence of cooptation in the competitiveness of a region or destination (Della Corte & Sciarelli, 2012).

On the other hand, the perspective of Systemic Competitiveness (Esser, Hillebrand, Messner, & Meyer-Stamer, 1996; Esser, Hillebrand, Messner, & Meyer-Stamer, 2013) distinguishes four levels of analysis: Micro, Meso, Macro, and Meta. This perspective applied to the set of cooptation systems (Fig. 1) considers the policies, the public administration and society at a Meta level, which would mean an optimization

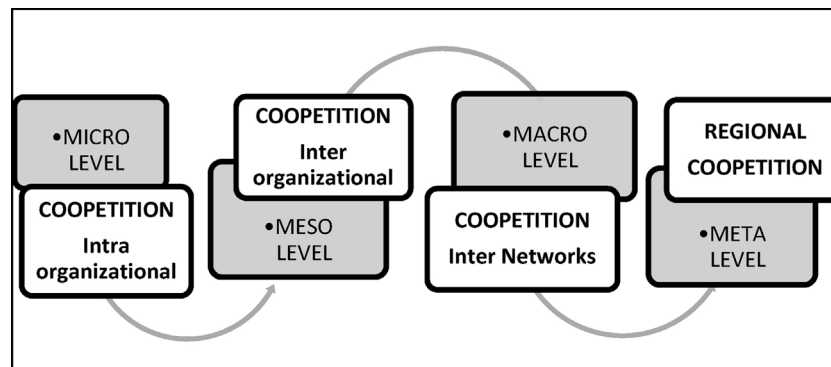


Fig. 1. Levels of Coopetitive Strategy.

of all organizational levels of society. The Meta level is expressed by the governance and industrial or sectorial competitiveness, where it establishes political and economic patterns designed to develop a holistic economic structure (Esser et al., 1996). Coopetition from a sectorial or territorial point of view (i.e., Macro Level) is a behavior that represents an ability to generate competitiveness through the optimized use of resources by collective action, i.e., to generate “capacity for *coopetitiveness*”. The companies’ effort to improve their products and production efficiency using coopetition strategies is presented at the Micro level. However, these companies are involved in synergistic networks where their efforts are supported by externalities and institutions generating specific policies in order to create “coopetitive” advantages, and therefore, they work at a Meso level. In turn, this group is conditioned by a macroeconomic and political-administrative context, which also acts on public-private networks of cooperation.

According to Esser et al. (1996) the Meta level analyses the capacities of local, regional, and national agents to create favorable conditions for economic and social development. So, it generates structures at the societal level, and improves the capacity of different groups of stakeholders to articulate their interest. Thereby, the formation of a competition System that integrates an economic sector represents a Meta level of this organizational behavior.

Particularly, in terms of the tourism sector, and following Esser’s analytical framework, coopetition is presented at all levels of competitiveness. From the destination perspective, coopetition can be achieved at the macro and meso level (see Fig. 1).

Thus, a destination can be better understood as a mixed entity, composed of several components that can work with or against one another (Fyall, Garrod, & Wang, 2012). In sum, collaboration is a natural response and practically one of the few strategies that can be used for comprehensive development of destinations, especially considering the high degree of interaction between stakeholders (Wang 2008). The result, in practice, is verified by the growth of Collaborative Network Organizations (CNO) and Destination Marketing Organizations (DMO) in tourism destinations. The DMOs, for instance, act as facilitators for the relationship between actors, therefore, as a hub for the formation of a network of cooperation and for the tourism destination’s internationalization process.

Despite being a common form of organization at the destinations, the amount of research is still limited on this type of network of management and marketing in tourism destinations. Fyall et al. (2012) illustrate that the reasons for this, in part, are due to the difficulties that the researchers have in reaching the people responsible for the management of the destinations themselves (e.g. Formica, 2002; Murphy, Moscardo, & Benckendorff, 2006; Okumus, Altinay, & Roper, 2007; Pike, 2004; Vengasayi, 2006). However, the authors also highlight the lack of methodological tools for analyzing partnering and collaborations in tourism destinations. Thus, the focus of analysis is concentrated on competitive relationships between companies or between destinations supported mainly by the theories of competitiveness based on

Porter (1980) and Ritchie and Crouch (1999, 2003), among others. In this sense, some authors are developing new theories, models, and categories of collaboration applied to destinations (Fyall et al., 2012; Oliver, 1990; Wang & Xiang, 2007; Wong, Mistilis, & Dwyer, 2010; and others).

In practice, coopetition as a strategy for the development of tourism destinations and tourism products is being widely used. Nevertheless, sometimes it is an organized strategy, that is, carefully planned, and other times it simply emerges and is unintentional. For instance, one can see the strategy covering the north coast of France where seven non-profit organizations, three public corporations and one for-profit company have settled a coopetition network for the development of the sports tourism industry. Lorgnier and Su (2014) studied the effects of coopetition on this group in order to understand how value was created at the network level. The authors confirm that the pooling of resources enhances financial performance and economies of scale, due to sharing basic knowledge and dominant logical resources. That occurs in a context of complementarity of heterogeneous resources within the coopetition network (Lorgnier & Su, 2014).

Another example of a planned coopetitive network between border destinations or with shared tourism attractions is the Iguassu Destination located in the south of Brazil. This tourism destination has created an inter-organizational network that represents a hub of coopetition. Iguassu is internationally known for a natural attraction (Iguassu Falls), which is shared among the three border areas of Brazil-Argentina-Paraguay. These countries are competitors for the attraction of international tourist flows; however they jointly created the PoloIguassu Institute. In this way, they bring together companies and institutions from the three countries with the aim of developing the Iguassu Destination, as the area encompasses the three countries (PoloIguassu, 2014). This international network, where the basic principle is coopetition, performs actions of co-marketing, social inclusion programs, training for tourism infrastructure improvements, and seeks joint solutions to local problems, among other initiatives. This role of the surrounding regions to generate coopetition between firms and the public sector within the service industries was an example analyzed by Kylänen and Rusko (2011) as well. The Pyhä-Luosto tourism destination in Lapland (Finland) was the context of analysis where coopetition was one possible main strategy on a large-scale.

Approximately ten businesses located in Santa Claus Village in Lapland (Finland), and the Aquafan and Mirabilandia theme parks in the Romagna region area an example of the use of coopetition to develop the tourism sector there. In this case, the willingness of small networks of firms to cooperate on the basis of mutual trust was verified. On the other hand, the destination management organizations consider these theme parks as coopetitors serving the same destination and entertainment activities enriching the assets set in the area. In general, this coopetition network has produced mutual learning.

A common way to visualize coopetition between tourism firms is the agreement among air companies, such as the airline-airport consortia

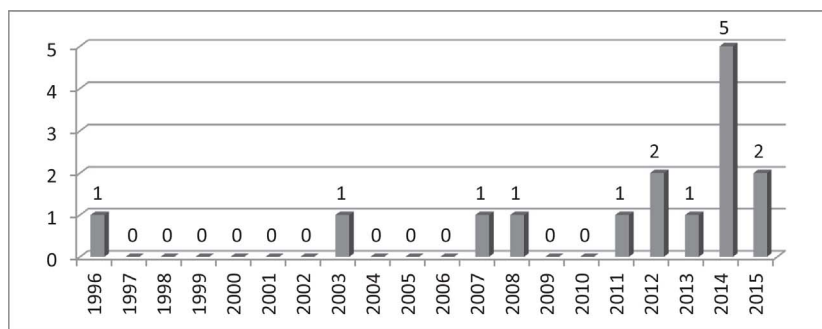


Fig. 2. Publications on 'tourism cooperation': 1995–2015.

(see Tinoco & Shermann, 2014). The agreements between hotels and tourism agencies, as well as, transport businesses, are other current ways that lead to cooperation in many tourism destinations. Some cooperation networks are vertical, between firms and their suppliers; in this case, the competition is for general benefits – i.e., they compete for the largest percentage of the total margin-. However, in most cases in the tourism sector cooperation is evident in integral networks, i.e, there are vertical, horizontal, and diagonal networks with a common goal of developing a tourism destination. Along these lines, enotourism is another economic activity that uses cooperation as a strategy to develop the sector. The wine industry acts together with tourism firms to co-create a modality of tourism that contributes to different industries (see Taylor, McRae-Williams, & Lowe, 2007; Francioni, Vissak & Musso, 2017). In this sense, various local areas are developed, for instance: the region of Valley Vineyards in South Brazil, and well-known areas of Australia, France, and Italy.

While some researchers study competition, cooperation or partnership, others are applying their efforts to studying the mix of these behaviors, which is cooperation. Definitely, this mix is a more realistic representation of the networks formed in a tourism destination. On this research line, Eriksson (2008) establishes a scale to verify the behavior between organizations. In this scale, he sets at the ends 'pure cooperation' and 'pure competition', but in the middle 'cooperation based on cooperation' or 'cooperation based on competition'. The four types co-exist in a tourism destination, and sometimes in the same inter-organizational network. Despite that the majority of the theoretical approaches have been related to collaboration or cooperation in the context of destinations, there are some researchers who have dedicated their analysis to the new perspective: cooperation-competitive.

The purpose of the previous sections has been to introduce the idea of cooperation to tourism destinations. In order to establish the status and review the studies that analyze cooperation in a tourism context, we present a bibliometric analysis in the following sections.

4. Method and research phases

In order to identify the research on tourism cooperation, we searched in two electronic databases: *SciVerse Scopus*, and *Web of Science (WOS)*. They were chosen for being the largest databases of literature anonymously reviewed and available on quality websites (Falagas, Pitsouni, Malietzis, & Pappas, 2008; Meho & Yang, 2007).

Prior to the analysis of tourism cooperation, we performed an extensive review of literature on cooperation. We did this based on the papers published in the last 20 years in the cited databases that present the word 'cooperation' in the paper's title and/or keywords. Therefore, 284 papers were reviewed in order to understand the construct in a general view, its theoretical and practical evolution, as well as, the use of the same in the business world. It was observed that the industrial sector used the cooperation behavior much more: 24% of the papers were focused on this sector. While, in the last 20 years, the tourism sector has been concentrated on by only 7.5% of the researches.

However, we verified a growing trend in the number of papers published on cooperation in every area: since 1995 5 papers were found in the databases and in 2015 50 papers were published.

During the second phase, we focused on finding and understanding tourism cooperation studies. Specifically, the key criteria to search the published papers were: (1) the words 'cooperation and tourism' or 'cooperation and tourism' had to be in the title of the publication or in the authors' keywords; (2) the publication had to be in Scopus database in the subject area of Social Sciences & Humanities; and in the principal collection of the WOS database; but in Science Citation Index Expanded (SCI-EXPANDED); Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) or Arts & Humanities Citation Index (A & HCI); (3) the paper had to be published in the period 1995–2015; both years included; and finally; (4) the kind of publications had to be in the paper category (article; review or book review). The result was 15 articles considered valid after the exclusions of duplicated papers.

5. Current status of research in tourism cooperation

Based on the analyzed data, there was a book review, published in 1996 by Gordon D. Taylor about the book written by Edgell and Haenisch (1995), but other publications on cooperation in the sector of tourism did not appear until 2003. The publications that research cooperation in the tourism sector present a large gap in the scientific community: only 15 papers have been published in 20 years (Fig. 2). The result is a peculiar situation if one considers the condition of interdependence among tourism companies to offer an integrated tourism product at a destination.

These 15 articles were published in 14 different scientific journals. Seven journals are related to tourism and hospitality, and others to management themes. As regards the authors, we identified 35 researchers of different university affiliations (Fig. 3). The countries publishing articles on this subject were considered regarding the academic affiliation of the researcher.

Taking into account the total number of papers, two were theoretical and 13 publications were empirical studies. These tourism studies present cooperation more frequently as an explanatory variable. Table 1 presents the title of the papers, authors, year of publication, and the purpose of the research.

This relational perspective and the concept of cooperation are derived from the strategic management area. It is, therefore, important to understand how the authors defined cooperation when they applied this concept in tourism studies (Table 2). The first publication analyzed refers to cooperation as a management tool to balance the benefits of the industry (Taylor, 1996). However, the vast majority of publications simply defined it as simultaneous behavior of competition and cooperation (Aldamiz-Echevarría, Aguirre, & Aparicio, 2014; Grängsjo, 2003; Guo, Zheng, & Ling, 2014; Taylor et al., 2007; Tuohino & Konu, 2014; Wang & Krakover, 2008). Lorgnier and Su (2014) and Van der Zee and Vanneste (2015) also underline that cooperation is a way to balance the competition disadvantages with the benefits of cooperation. Mean-

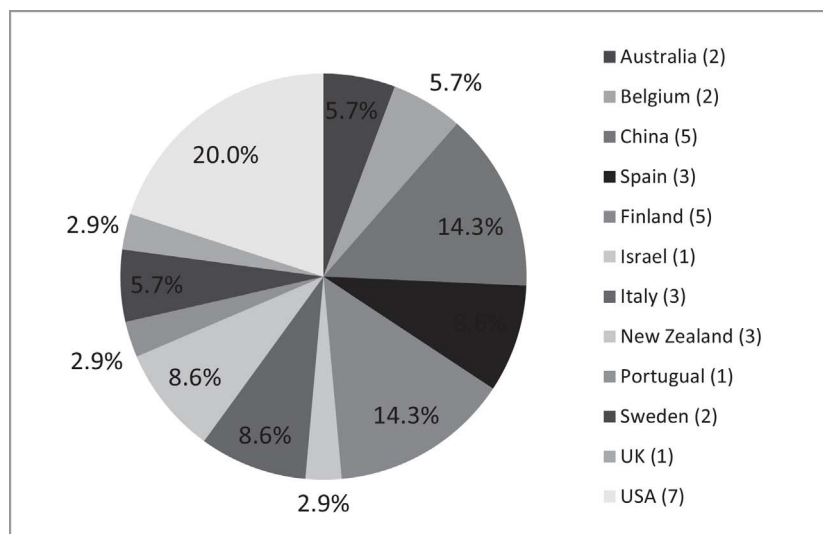


Fig. 3. Research on tourism cooptation: researcher's affiliation.

while, definitions that specify the idea of a network into the destination or among markets (inter destinations) is clearer in [Kylänen and Rusko \(2011\)](#), [Kylänen and Mariani \(2012\)](#), and [Della Corte and Sciarelli \(2012\)](#). It is also worth noting the “constructive tension” among firms or networks/systems highlighted by [Della Corte and Sciarelli \(2012\)](#). [Tinoco and Sherman \(2014\)](#) return to the idea that cooptation is a market tool or technique. In summary, all papers on the cooptation perspective in tourism studies consider a simultaneous behavior of cooperation and cooptation, but the difference is the focus as a technique, strategy, behavior or management tool (See [Table 2](#)).

6. Core topics and features of cooptation research in tourism

[Von Friedrichs Grängsjö \(2003\)](#) carries out empirical research on the implementation of cooptation in networks of tourism destinations. His analysis was carried out in a peripheral area in Sweden. In the village there are many small enterprises, furthermore it is situated in a relatively isolated, rural area, and it is both a tourism destination and a place of permanent residence for local people. The author considers that there exists a high interdependence between tourism businesses, which need to work together to develop a quality destination; therefore, there is inseparability between competition and cooperation. The motivation and the values of the individual entrepreneurs influence the commitment to work together. In this context, the power structure defined the network form, because in some cases there was a presence of a dominant activity or partnership. The final results indicate two different sets of values within a destination that determine the way that the companies engage in networking.

[Taylor et al. \(2007\)](#) checked the influence of entrepreneurial characteristics on collaborative behavior on a micro-cluster of wine tourism organizations. The authors relate their work to cooptation, but it is not the main theoretical base. The effects of industry, place and respondents' entrepreneurial characteristics are used as exogenous variables in a regression analysis. The results of this study indicated that industry does seem to be more important than place in the formation of cooperative networks, and in this case, the members of the wine tourism industry are more cooperative than members of the tourism or hospitality industries. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the cluster size can be a factor of influence on cooperative activities.

Otherwise, [Wang and Krakover \(2008\)](#) focused on the use of cooptation as a way to jointly market the destination by the stakeholders. The interview results indicate four relationships with various degrees of formalization, integration, and structural complexity. The relationship among the stakeholders can be pure competition, pure

cooperation, cooptation based on competition or cooptation based on cooperation. In this work, practical approaches about the balance between cooperation and cooptation were presented, as well as the balance between individual benefits and common benefits to achieve success for both the destination and their individual businesses. This research indicated some drivers to cooptative relationships, they are: Leadership of a local DMO, maturity of the destination marketing approach, distance of the marketing campaign, and the strategic choices of the destination.

Furthermore, [Kylänen and Rusko \(2011\)](#) examined the importance of intentionality for a relationship of cooptation, alongside with the co-location factor, especially in micro-clusters or regions, which share geographical boundaries. The authors consider that the proximity of public, semi-public, and private organizations in the tourism sector creates a strategic operational environment where cooptation may be coincidental and serendipitous. At that point, [Kylänen and Mariani \(2012\)](#) analyzed cooptation strategies used among geographically circumscribed destinations. They link this construct to co-location factors and the influential of shared resources by different countries in a formation of a network between them. Through an in-depth qualitative approach they present exploratory and descriptive research about 10 business cases in two tourism destination areas; Lapland, in Finland and the Riviera Romagnola in Italy. This case analysis was structured to obtain insight on the history of the destination, the overall structure of business, the collaborative network among stakeholders, the cooperative and cooptative dynamics between the companies, with a focus on practices, motives, and the institutional environment.

The factors for the formation of competitive advantages by strategic management based on cooptation for tourism destination were studied by [Della Corte and Sciarelli \(2012\)](#). This study also verifies the disadvantages of cooptation strategies. These authors combine the resource-based perspective through a relational point of view, as well as the absorptive capacity model and the competition perspective. A list of independent variables and relative qualitative measures to cooptation is presented in this research. Through the correlation analysis, they identified that the cooptation strategy was able to guarantee a better influence on performance results achieved by interviewed firms.

[Pesämaa, Pieper, da Silva, Black, and Hair \(2013\)](#) examined the inter-personal and inter-organizational commitment in the context of small companies in tourism, which operate cooperatively. Their work underlines the role of trust and reciprocity as precursors for commitment. This research is based on a co-operation perspective more than on a cooptation perspective because the sample was 254 members of two successful small business co-operatives in Northern Minnesota, but they

Table 1
 Synthesis of the papers published among 1996–2015, on tourism cooperation.
 Source: Elaborated by authors.

Authors Year	Purpose/Main results	Context
Taylor, G.D (1996)	Book Review of the book: “Coopetition: Global Tourism beyond the Millennium”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● General tourism ● Inter-organizational networks to develop a tourism destination ● Public and private sector
Grängsjö, Y. V. F. (2003)	The purpose of this paper is to discuss a co-opetitive theory of business derived from the results given by a networking study of tourism destination marketing dominated by micro businesses and independent entrepreneurs. The results of the study show that there are two different sets of values in the destination and these determine and distinguish the form that the firms are involved in a network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● General tourism ● Inter-organizational networks to promote co-marketing of the tourism destination ● Private sector and prevalence of small businesses
Taylor et al. (2007)	The objective was to verify the behavior of wine industry organizations and tourism organizations operating in a wine tourism cluster. The concept of micro-clusters is examined in terms of trust, networking, collaboration and other activities, based on concepts of game theory and sunken costs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enotourism ● Inter-organizational networks to develop a cluster tourism ● Private sector ● Sectors: Tourism and wine industry
Wang and Krakover (2008)	The paper presents an analysis of the business relationships among the tourism industry stakeholders conducting collaborative destination marketing activities. It indicates that different relationships of cooperation, competition and coopetition coexist among the tourism stakeholders. Four cooperative relationships with various degrees of formalization, integration, and structural complexity are involved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● General tourism ● Inter-organizational networks to promote co-marketing of the tourism destination ● Public and private sector
Kylänen and Rusko (2011)	They used the concept to analyze the intentional and unintentional coopetition in tourism regions that share geographical boundaries, presenting advantages of using coopetition for tourism development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● General tourism ● Inter-organizational networks to develop a surrounding region ● Private sector and prevalence of small businesses ● Border tourism
Della Corte and Sciarelli (2012)	The paper tries to verify a coopetition relationship as a source of competitive advantage or rather of disadvantage. Theoretical hints are tested empirically on a sample of firms in Italy operating in the tourism industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● General tourism ● Inter-organizational networks to develop a tourism destination ● Private sector
Kylanen and Mariani (2012)	This paper analyses the temporal dynamics of inter-organizational relationships in Finnish and Italian theme parks. It shows that coopetition among tourism businesses often shift from a prevalently short-term basis to a long term one, when the stakeholders understand the benefits of the coopetition strategy in terms of enhancement of the brand image of the destination and attraction of a higher number of visitors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tourism theme parks ● Inter-organizational networks to develop a surrounding region ● Private sector and prevalence of small businesses ● Border tourism
Pesämaa et al. (2013)	The paper performed an analysis through structural equation modeling in order to examine inter-personal and inter-organizational commitment in the context of small business co-operatives in the tourism sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● General tourism ● Inter-organizational networks to develop a tourism cooperative of small business ● Private sector
Lorgnier and Su (2014)	It performs a SWOT analysis in order to verify the value co-creation in B2 B using coopetition networks in the sports tourism sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sport tourism ● Inter-organizational networks to develop a specific tourism activity ● Non-profit organisations
Guo et al. (2014)	The study investigates the concentration on the increase of market share by establishing cooperation between online travel agencies. The coopetition behavior acts as a balance in this network. The results are based on economical game analysis of an online supply chain consisting of a hotel and an OTA (Online Travel Agencies).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● General tourism ● Inter-organizational networks to commercialize tourism services ● Private sector ● Sub-sectors: Accommodation and travel agencies
Aldamiz-Echevarría et al. (2014)	It presents an analysis of the factors that can promote the generation of a cluster and its successful maintenance, identifying the coopetition relationships among stakeholders. The research was performed in a gastronomic tourism cluster.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gastronomic tourism ● Inter-organizational networks to develop a cluster tourism ● Private sector
Tuohino and Konu (2014)	The research verifies who the local stakeholders of three different tourism destinations consider how responsible for the development of the tourism destination (if identifies) and why. It indicates that leadership seems to be context-dependent. Competition, cooperation, and coopetition all occur in the different regions, but in different ways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● General tourism ● Inter-organizational networks to develop a tourism region ● Public and private sector
Tinoco and Sherman (2014)	This empirical research study finds evidence of positive influences of airline consortia for all key stakeholders; however the majority of benefits appears to be felt by the airlines and the associated airport. It is still unclear how much benefit is passed on to the passenger. Regardless, the research results clear a path for a better understanding of the positive results of consortia in this turbulent industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● General tourism ● Inter-organizational networks to develop a sub-sectoral consortia ● Private sector ● Sub-sector: Airlines
Werner et al. (2015)	The paper analyses the Rugby World Cup (RWC) 2011 in New Zealand, considering how the regional tourism organizations (RTOs) collaborate with each other as part of developing a nationwide approach to the event, while simultaneously competing for visitor nights and spending. The central question is how coopetition among the RTOs affects knowledge transfer dynamics between RTOs in the RWC 2011 context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sport event tourism ● National and regional Inter-organizational networks to develop a MICE tourism ● Public and private sector
Van der Zee and Vanneste (2015)	This paper presents an overview of the current state of research into tourism networks. The aim of this study is to get a better understanding of why the promising theoretical claims of potential benefits of networked collaboration in tourism destinations are hardly supported by empirical evidence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● General tourism ● Inter-organizational networks to develop a tourism destination ● Public and private sector

Table 2
Coopetition definition in the papers published between 1995 and 2015.
Source: Elaborated by authors.

Authors Year	Definition
Taylor (1996)	Coopetition is a management tool, which integrates the many benefits of tourism with people, countries, and continents to improve the global quality of life and provide a foundation for understanding, peace and prosperity
Grängsjö (2003)	Co-opetition means that competitors can have both a competitive and a co-operative relationship with one another at the same time. He uses the concept of Brandenburger and Nalebuff (1996)
Taylor et al. (2007); Guo et al. (2014); Aldamiz-Echevarría et al. (2014); Werner et al. (2015)	Coopetition is cooperation and competition simultaneously
Wang and Krakover (2008)	Coopetition explains that organizations do not always engage in either competitive or cooperative relationships with each other; rather, both relationships can oftentimes co-exist. In this stream of literature, the term coopetition is defined as simultaneous cooperation and competition (Brandenburger & Nalebuff, 1996)
Kylänen and Rusko (2011)	Coopetition is simply defined to be simultaneous cooperation and competition between firms (Luo, 2004) regardless in what part of the value chain, supply chain or supply network these two will emerge (cf. Bengtsson & Kock, 2000)
Della Corte and Sciarelli (2012)	Coopetition is that of a company which has some cooperation relationships with firms that are, at the same time, competitors in some other market (Dowling, Roering, Carlin and Wisnieski, 1996) or mainly in the same market. This takes the definition of coopetition as a constructive tension among firms or networks/systems that develop interplay of collaborative relationships, being competitors in some markets or mainly in the same markets
Kylanen and Mariani (2012)	Coopetition, namely the co-presence of cooperation and competition, is a new strategy that goes beyond the established business paradigms of competition and cooperation. This type of strategy is relevant in tourism destinations, for instance in theme parks, where competing, co-located companies also collaborate
Pesämaa et al. (2013)	The authors did not present a definition of coopetition
Lorgnier and Su (2014)	Coopetition is the simultaneity of competition and cooperation that can provide a balance between the cooperation's benefits with the competition's risks
Tuohino and Konu (2014)	A relationship that includes aspects of competition and co-operation is referred to as coopetition
Tinoco and Sherman (2014)	Coopetition are collaborative techniques in order to adapt to a dynamic and competitive market. These collaborative methods manifested in two categories: simple dyadic value-added partnerships, and more sophisticated forms of coopetition where supply chain members have both relationship types – competition and cooperation – at the same time (Kotzab and Teller, 2003).
Van der Zee and Vanneste (2015)	Coopetition is a tourism network to assist in finding a balance between competition and collaboration which increases both stakeholder and destination performance

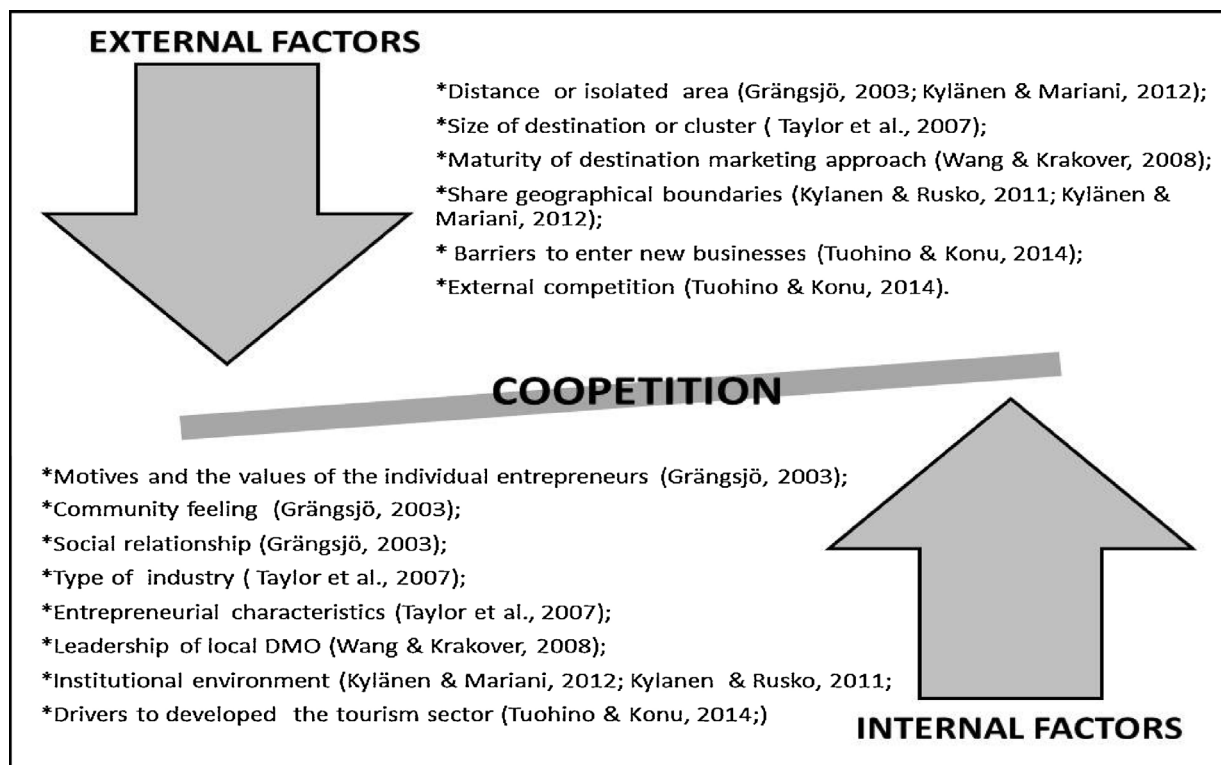


Fig. 4. External and Internal factors of coopetition behavior.

also made reference to the term. Aldamiz-Echevarría, Aguirre, and Aparicio (2013) performed empirical research on a tourism cluster and, although they adduced coopetition as a strategy, this theoretical base was not used in the analysis.

Recently, an interesting paper was presented by Tuohino and Konu (2014) in order to verify if the stakeholders identify who was the most

responsible actor (?) in the development of tourism. The results reflect different levels of maturity in governance and coopetition relationships. They performed a case study approach using thematic interview data collected in three areas in Finland. The conclusions were highlighted according to three main questions: the competitiveness and competition within the areas, the leaders of tourism development at key tourism

destinations, and the entry barriers to new businesses. Some regions analyzed are driven by both public and private actors, while others are driven mainly by public or private actors. The competition between companies was mostly reported to be healthy, but challenging, and in some cases, there was a clear presence of a strong actor. Entry barriers for new businesses in all regions were low. These variations in the context result in different ways of cooptition.

In 2014, there were more than three kinds of research on the tourism sector. They verified cooptition in the field of sports tourism (Lorgnier & Su, 2014), online tourism networks, the hotel sector (Guo et al., 2014), and the formation of a consortium between airlines and their stakeholders becoming a cooptitive network (Tinoco & Sherman, 2014).

Finally, in 2015 two papers were published. The first was a qualitative case study about the impact of cooptition between RTOs (Regional Tourism Organizations) in the knowledge transfer dynamics. The case was conducted by Werner, Dickson, and Hyde (2015) to analyze the Rugby World Cup 2011 in New Zealand. Twenty-five semi structured interviews with CEOs and senior managers from RTOs were conducted both pre-event and post-event. The conclusion was that cooptition could hinder the sharing and transfer of knowledge in a destination marketing and mega-events context. The second paper of this year was a study of Van der Zee and Vanneste (2015). The research was a bibliometric analysis on network collaboration in tourism destinations. The conclusions indicated that progress is hampered by the lack of integration within the field of tourism network studies. The citation analysis identified the existence of different sub-fields of research, and among them, cooptition is one of the key research fields.

The analysis performed showed that the authors use both external and internal factors to better understand the cooptitive behavior at different levels. These are the cooptition behavior drivers in tourism destinations (Fig. 4).

7. Conclusions and research agenda

This study aims to verify the status of published research on tourism competition between the years 1995–2015, in order to propose an agenda for future research. The bibliometric study indicates that the tourism competition is an issue that needs more research focus and effort. The number of papers remains low; there is not a specific model to tourism competition, and the nature of the cooptition relationship compared to other constructs, needs to be clarified. However, the 'cooptition' construct can be a source for developing methodological tools to analyze collaborative networks in tourism destinations, which Fyall et al. (2012) point out as missing.

The development of a destination is increasingly focused on community and collaborative approaches (Wang & Krakover, 2008). This sector has different stakeholders (public and private) interacting together to holistically develop and internationalize the destination. The high interdependence and complementarity of the tourism value chain is highlighted in all analyzed studies, because it is a push source of cooptition networking which represents the best way to develop the tourism destination in an integral way (Wang, 2008). In fact, it is a way to develop Systemic Competitiveness (Esser et al., 2013), that is, cooptition strategy acts on Micro-Mesa-Macro-Meta level.

Additionally, the studies focus on the benefits produced by the use of this strategy as a source of improving the brand, image, and attractiveness of the destinations, as well as, the shared marketing, value co-creation, innovation, and shared knowledge among others. The factors considered as drivers of cooptition behavior are both external and internal to the tourism destination. However, the total definition of these factors as well as their measurement indicators, and their relationship within a tourism system is not clarified in the literature analyzed. The cooptition theoretical background used in tourism analysis is based on other areas with different approaches, but perfectly fit the collaborative networks that form the tourism destina-

tions.

Cooptition is a positive strategy that can generate opportunities to micro and small enterprises (Bengtsson & Kock, 2014), which may contribute to the development of the tourism destination. The great atomization of supply in this sector is a condition to the internationalization of the firms, so the joint work provides better access to resources and markets. Another feature present in tourism destinations is the degree of partnering or formation of collaborative networks, as well as the frequent search to achieve a governance level.

Studies in cooptition have categories to analyze the context that leads to cooptition behavior, as well as the dynamics of networks and the results of using this strategy at both intra- and inter-organizational levels. In the tourism research available on cooptition these categories are also observed, however the studies are more focused on inter-organizational levels or between destinations, in order to improve the attractiveness and competitiveness in the national or international market. Considering this status of research, the construct 'tourism cooptition' tends towards a systemic perspective, which is well suited to studies of tourism destinations and their components. The trend of studies on cooptition indicates that this construct could be the beginning of a new paradigm that will help to explain why some tourist regions develop more than others regardless of their natural or infrastructure conditions. The destination cooptition level is a resource, i.e., a source of competitive advantage. In particular, it shows the maturity level of the entrepreneurial network in a tourism destination.

On the other hand, according to this analysis we can conclude that cooptition could be a complementary perspective to the destinations competitiveness theory, as well as a complement for the theory based on resources and capabilities. In summary, the general studies on cooptition and its use in tourism research demonstrates a similar path of research on competition. Since, firstly the focus was on competition as a result and, secondly as a process, resulting in models to measure competitiveness. The cooptition construct seems to follow the same path, seen as a behavior resulting by a partnership, and secondly as a process that generates a capacity, i.e., a source of cooptition advantage. Thus, it follows the path to a paradigm. However, many key points about cooptition should be researched in order to provide a solid background.

However, some key questions remain unanswered: What are the determinants which promote the formation of a cooptitive system, and what is the model that will help us to explain this construct and how we can measure it in order to generate an auxiliary tool for management in tourism destinations? Contributions to cooptition research on the tourism sector are focused directly on questions of how to analyze, design, and manage strategic systems for improving tourism destinations as an integral product. Developing a fundamental agenda on cooptition centered on research in the domain of collective entrepreneurship management is likely to require input from multiple disciplines. In this sense, we suggest a research agenda focused on three questions:

- **What do we need to confirm?** What is the role of cooptition in the tourism sector? And more specifically, what is the role of cooptition networks in the internationalization process of the tourism destinations and their firms? What concept defines cooptition in tourism in order to consider it as an explanatory construct for the destination operation from the supply perspective? What circumstances can influence the success or failure of the developing of a Tourism cooptition Network? Is the capacity of cooptition the differential factor which can explain the different levels of development of tourism destinations with similar conditions? Why do competitors located in the same tourism destination cooperate and under what circumstances?
- **What do we need to know?** Identify questions that are likely to be salient over the next years: What influence has tourism cooptition

on other constructs like competitiveness, tourism productivity, value co-creation, innovation, internationalization or shared knowledge? Is the tourism co-competition a source of competitive advantage?

- **How are we going to find the answers?** Design models that can explain and measure tourism co-competition. To analyze the inter-organizational behavior in the tourism destination when there is a governance level considering it as a CNO, i.e. under the perspective of tourism co-competition. To study tourism destinations as a collective entrepreneurship based on a co-competition strategy.

Finally, we suggest the further development of theories on co-competition, particularly for the tourism sector, and their application on destinations in order to generate a theoretical-empirical base to the management and analysis of tourism destinations. The great similarity in the way of developing a tourism destination with the theoretical foundation of the co-competition construct is noteworthy. The inter-organizational relationships of a destination are of a co-competitive nature. Therefore, if appropriately managed, co-competitive advantages may be obtained through efficient relationships to improve the economic and social regional development, as well as the internationalization of firms and destinations. Hence, co-competition is indeed a core concept to tourism destinations.

Acknowledgments

We thank the CAPES Foundation, Ministry of Education of Brazil, for the support for research performed through the process No. 0387/14-2.

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