From exclusive health and climatic resorts to affordable summer holidays: ENIT's seaside tourism promotion in English over the years

by Elena Mattei
(Università Ca' Foscari Venezia)

ABSTRACT: This paper traces the evolution of seaside tourism from early forms of bathing and thermal tourism through an analysis of ENIT's English promotional production. With the goal of understanding the factors behind the spread and success of mass seaside and coastal tourism in specific Italian regions, the paper discusses how the concept of balneotherapy became intertwined with different kinds of leisure and entertainment activities throughout the 20th century. This research specifically explores if and how changing sociocultural trends and the needs of foreign tourists were reflected in ENIT's publications, advancing hypotheses on the institution's role in shaping and reproducing narratives related to the consumption and appreciation of water and marine environments. The categorisation and analysis of ENIT's brochures and magazines and their publication trends allowed to identify the geographical areas and types of thermal and coastal tours promoted over time. A qualitative investigation of key terminology contributed to an understanding of varying connotations depending on the time period and geographical region. The results are crucial to understanding the historical, socio-economic shift that preceded and informed the mass promotion and commodification of seaside tourism, from the 1930s onwards, as a regenerating and widely accessible holiday opportunity and as one of the root causes of unsustainable forms of contemporary tourism.

KEYWORDS: Italian Government Tourist Board; bathing tourism; seaside tourism; mass consumption; diachronic analysis

INTRODUCTION

The therapeutic and healing properties of natural waters and spas have been known in Europe since Greek and Roman times, even though their peak in popularity came after the Industrial Revolution (Urry and Larsen 33-35; Berrino 72-74). Indeed, the rapid urbanisation and spread of polluting factories in Europe were a strong contributing factor to many physical diseases, from which citizens would recover by visiting spas or maritime environments. This paper traces the development of a semantics and 'geography' of water and seaside tourism in Italy by mapping and analysing the written production of ENIT since its inception (1919), while also tracking changes in such narratives during the postwar period, particularly in the 1950s and during the Italian economic miracle (from the 1960s onwards).

To do so, the paper integrates historical and social perspectives to ensure an understanding of the topic and statistical analysis of documents gathered for the DIETALY research project. The article specifically outlines publication trends, including information on the number of documents published on bathing tourism. This was possible by annotating such documents according to year, genre, main tour type and geographical location of the sites promoted. The materials are then analysed within the social, cultural and political context to determine whether and how Italian tourism promotion in English adapted to the trends and needs of foreign tourists visiting Italy. Quantitative data were also useful to infer hypotheses on the types of tourists ENIT was addressing. Particularly, such data were key to shed light on what kinds of needs promotional discourse promised to satisfy, by shaping a specific imaginary or consumer behaviour of each area that still persists today.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY: TOURISM TRENDS AND ENIT

Various scholars have explored how the historical context and both national and international socioeconomic trends affected ENIT's perception of the cultural and economic value of the tourism industry (Syrjāmaa; Hom 118-119), while others have advanced hypotheses on whether the adaptation of certain imaginaries played a crucial role in the success of mass seaside (Berrino, Battilani, *Vacanze*) tourism. In this sense, promotional materials become a source of evidence to explore the role of ENIT in adapting to and perpetuating such phenomena, while establishing a particular relationship to an increasingly foreign audience. This process may also shed light on the origins of specific tourist behaviours and needs, while offering avenues for discussing the potential effects of particular narratives on imaginaries of our times.

FROM WINTER TOURISM FOR THE ÉLITE TO EARLY FORMS OF SEASIDE TOURISM

Most scholars contend that seaside tourism in Italy was initially characterized by an elitist emphasis on climate and health, mirroring the values of the Belle Époque era

(Berrino; Syrjāmaa 52-54, 91; Corbin 19, 73). The focus on luxurious health resorts on the Ligurian Riviera and the Venice Lido in the first decade of ENIT's production catered specifically to the need to enjoy the sensory and therapeutic experiences, which had permeated the second half of the 19th century. Such period was indeed marked by social instability of the British aristocratic élite, due to an increasingly overwhelming industrialisation process and the impossibility of travelling outside national borders during the Napoleonic wars (Scattareggia).[1] Also, pulmonary diseases that could not be cured with modern medicine were spreading, and the Ligurian Riviera offered facilities for both healing and entertainment purposes, inspired by the French Riviera, a famous site for *tourisme mondain* (Berrino 53-54, 61-66).

Such an emphasis on the élite, however, has raised questions among scholars as to whether this choice was deliberate and seen as a strategy to add a layer of exclusivity to the narratives, as occasionally happens in contemporary tourism discourse (Dann), or signalled a slow process of adaptation to new consumer behaviours (Syrjāmaa). However, the increasing focus in the '30s on both insular and southern places such as Sicily or the island of Capri indicates a shift in ENIT's perception of the tourist experience, due to both increasing international competition and the arrival of American tourists that favoured exotic places with a hot climate (Berrino 258). Italian culture had also been a subject of interest in American society because of mass migratory movements at the beginning of the century which, however, perpetuated an image of poverty and backwardness (Diggins). In this context, Mussolini's rise to power and specifically the process of state centralization in the 1930s marked the beginning of an era in which the government attempted to shape, in part through the pages of ENIT's *Travel in Italy*, an image of a modern tourist site, possibly to reach national and international consensus (Aliano 253).

TOURISM PROMOTION IN FASCIST ITALY: A 'NEW' IMAGE OF THE (DESTI)NATION?

If the promotion of that time shows particular attention to an American audience, especially to address post-WWI economic instability after preliminary resistance to less élitist forms of tourism, according to some scholars the fascist regime failed to counter the negative connotations associated with Italy's image as an ancient, premodern land steeped in romantic traditions—a perception that had long captivated British tourists (Aliano 238; Hom 10). This is particularly evident in the government's attempts to promote material and moral progress – as well as a sense of safety – by improving transportation and infrastructure, and by addressing health concerns in cities and thermal establishments (Berrino 205-209, 215-223; Hom 117, 118, 121-125).[2] Indeed,

[1] During the Napoleonic wars, indeed, travel restrictions in Europe encouraged British aristocracy to search for sensory experiences and landscapes evoking the bucolic and sublime.

[2] As will be shown in the analysis sections, the topics of transport and health tourism feature prominently in ENIT's post-WWI production.

many thermal sites lacked proper hygienic and sanitary conditions but, nonetheless, some of them were starved of investment.

It is important to highlight that an interest in improving the destination image of a country was shared by other European countries, with different political organizations (such as France or the U.K.). This was done through policies that favoured the centralization of power and guaranteed investments in the transport and infrastructure sectors (Syrjāmaa 274). For this reason, the dissemination of tourist materials for promotional purposes does not seem to correlate with the presence of a Fascist dictatorship (Syrjāmaa 50-52, 66, 351, 339). However, as Syrjāmaa and Aliano note, the increasing centralisation of power in the '30s – seen by tourism representatives as a way to coordinate promotional efforts – led to a period of stricter supervision of ENIT's activities (Aliano 236; Syrjāmaa 240-241). In ENIT, this was achieved through the promotion – and this is evident in the analysis of *Travel in Italy*'s magazine issues – of values and symbols associated with fascism, such as fascist youth summer camps in Cattolica (also highlighted by Syrjāmaa, 339) or new cities with fascist architecture. The magazine, which was conceived for an American audience, is even described by Aliano as a "unique mixture of tourist industry marketing and fascist Italian propaganda" (253) that wished to show a new Italy, "rejuvenated by Mussolini's fascist regime" through the distribution of over 50.000 copies (237).

The perceived importance of tourism promotion as a vehicle for shaping attitudes and perceptions was rooted in centuries of travel narratives that continued to play a key role in fostering romantic expectations about Italy. This, however, stood in contrast to Mussolini's attempts to project a vision of a 'new Italy' (Aliano 228). In the 1920s and 1930s, American culture was heavily influenced by travel accounts of an increasing number of American writers and tourists who had visited Italy, either as former soldiers or as members of the Lost Generation following the economic depression. By 1929, indeed, Americans had become the second largest group of international visitors to Italy, following Germans and followed by British and French tourists (Battilani, *anni* 114-115), and they accounted for 16.5 percent of all foreign travelers. Consequently, the Italian government specifically targeted them with various propaganda efforts (as also shown by Podda in this issue, 9-10), while American travel writers gained significant and growing influence over public perceptions (Aliano 234).

Although Fascist Italy invested heavily in tourism promotion and propaganda to reshape the country's image, Aliano reveals that the actual destination's perception often clashed with the projected image for both historical and political reasons. Travel writing and reporters' accounts, perceived by readers as more authentic and authoritative, heavily influenced Italy's destination image (252). From a communicative perspective, these efforts were strategic and effective, as they sought to offer more spontaneous narratives compared to the consumerist discourse to which Americans were highly accustomed (Syrjāmaa 236, 336). Unfortunately, personal reflections and idiosyncratic narratives presented in travel writing and disseminated among Anglo-American populations did not always paint a new image of Italy (Aliano 231). In this context, Diggins argues that one of the main cultural influences on the reception and experience of Italy as a destination was the long-established anglophone taste for an

ancient past – developed from the 18th century onwards (Urry and Larsen; MacCannel) – which later morphed into a perception of 'eternal' backwardness (Diggins 21).

The same romantic view of Italy, however, fueled an American fascination with Mussolini. In a time of social instability, uncertainty, and rapid cultural change—exacerbated by the arrival of Italian immigrants, often described as illiterate, dishonest, and corrupt (Diggins 10-13)—Mussolini was seen by American journalists and writers as a means of liberating Italians from social and cultural stagnation through a renewed sense of justice, order, and patriotism. Diggins argues that many Americans initially defended Fascism, justifying it on the grounds of efficiency, discipline, and progress achieved through willpower and statesmanship (69-72). Mussolini was perceived as a "pragmatic" and charismatic leader who dismissed outdated democratic ideals in favour of a more realistic approach to governance.

In conclusion, while Americans recognized the transformations occurring in Italy, Fascist propaganda did not significantly alter American travel narratives (Aliano 253). Nonetheless, this focus on the new order Mussolini could bring, coupled with the intense tourism promotion as well as positive press reports, influenced American popular opinion, and possibly contributed to increasing the number of American visitors to Italy (Diggins 24, 41-43).

THE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN AMERICAN AND POPULAR CULTURE: TOWARDS MASS TOURISM

It is clear, thus, that the development of tourism was always significantly driven by political and economic interests (Tizzoni 155). If the tendency to associate coastal settings with the idea of regeneration is not modern, we witness to some extent a decreasing popularity in the physical healing properties of waters to fully encapsulate the notion of leisure and affordable entertainment from the 1930s. This was mainly the result of the striving to promote areas in which thermal sites were too expensive to be renovated and modernised in a competitive way. Also, other areas were not very remunerative, as was the case of Emilia (which later became the Emilia-Romagna region), in which only Salsomaggiore was known for saltwater treatments (Berrino 92). Therefore, new businesses were experimented with, such as beach tourism,[3] especially in Rimini and Riccione, which were the first localities to offer affordable villas and guesthouses for bourgeois and middle-class segments (Corbin 221; Battilani, *Vacanze* 265; Battilani and Fauri 32; Berrino 125, 140, 202). The Ligurian region, particularly, experienced a decline as a travel destination following a post-war decrease in wealthy *hivernants*[4] (Berrino 177). Venice, once a symbol of luxurious social life, gradually came to be seen, by journalists, as a symbol of inauthentic, consumer-driven tourism—a shift echoing critiques found in cultural and artistic movements like Futurism (Erbani; Berrino 166-167, 207).

[3] The first example of beach tourism as we know it today may be found in Livorno (Berrino).

[4] Term that refers to Northern European members of the aristocracy (mostly Englishmen, originally) who spent their winters in regions with milder climates, often for health reasons (Nash).

The slow shift towards mass tourism from the 1950s onwards, during and after the Reconstruction period post-WWII, is indicative of broader social changes, with Italy positioning itself as a destination for all social classes in an age of growing economic prosperity and infrastructure development. While the early 20th century focused on attracting élite tourism, mid-century promotional efforts increasingly catered to a wider audience, leveraging modern advertising techniques proposed by American marketing literature (De Iulio and Vinti) and through mass media, which made Italian cultural production accessible to foreign tourists (Krippendorf 10-11; Hom 61). For example, the collective desire for sun, sea, fun was reflected in popular movies such as *Sapore di sale* (1963).

The renewed appreciation for Italy's natural landscapes and cultural heritage, including folklore, had undergone a significant shift during and post the Second World War, fuelled by popular movies (Hom 141) and songs (e.g. *Capri-Fischer*, 1943; *Roman Holiday*, 1953; *An American in Rome*, 1954), which also promoted a sense of peace and harmony with nature. *Capri-Fischer* (*The Capri Fishermen*) celebrated the idyllic atmosphere of the island of Capri, painting a romantic picture of the life of a fisherman there, symbol of freedom and escape. Cultural productions in the post-1950s did indeed play a crucial role in shaping Italy's identity as a tourist destination, creating a collective imagination of Italy as an uncontaminated paradise and a rich repository of cultural traditions (Hom 3-9, 59-60). Diggins' scholarship aligns with this position and enriches the discussion by arguing that the cinema of famous neorealist directors had a positive impact on American perception of the Italian population and its 'innocence' during the fascist dictatorship, with the aim of rehabilitating its political image (426). For example, in Rossellini's *Roma città aperta* (*Open City*, 1945), Italians are portrayed as heroic and idealistic individuals "willing to die for ideas" (426) and fight against an imposed ideology that had only brought them misery.

In summary, the evolution of seaside tourism in Italy reflects a dynamic interplay between economic interests, promotional narratives and cultural shifts, which underscores the evolving identity of Italy as a destination, somehow influenced by ENIT's production (Syrjāmaa). It remains to be explored how the country promoted its diverse natural and historical assets and shaped a geographically diverse destination image that continues to appeal to different tourist segments.

METHODS

To categorise and quantify the type of bathing tourism and geographic areas promoted in English by ENIT in the 20th century, a mixed methods approach was developed. First, the corpus created for the DIETALY research project was consulted (Mauro 3-8 in this issue), to search for and select both brochures and magazines that promoted coastal and thermal areas.[5] In particular, the magazines *Travel in Italy* (1930s) and *Italy* (1950s)

[5] As reported by Mauro in this issue, the database is the output of a thorough research and digitization of ENIT's promotional production since its inception, with a focus on the 1919-1959 period. However, the author was able to retrieve brochures also from the 1960s-1980s period.

were examined, as they were found to cover such themes in abundance and with systematicity.[6] Among all the magazines issues retrieved from the database and studied (162), 20 were excluded from further analysis as they did not feature articles on bathing tourism.[7] On the other hand, materials deliberately promoting other types of tours, or either too specific or general topics or areas, were discarded. For example, brochures describing cities, tours of Italy or topics such as Italian arts and cuisine were excluded, together with material on lakes and mountains. The final database consists of 141 documents and 152 magazine articles on the topic. Its composition is presented in Tables 1-2 and Figures 1-2.

TIME PERIOD	*NO. OF BROCHURES*
'20s	13
'30s	29
'50s	4
'60s	2
'70s	4
'80s	3
Total	**55**

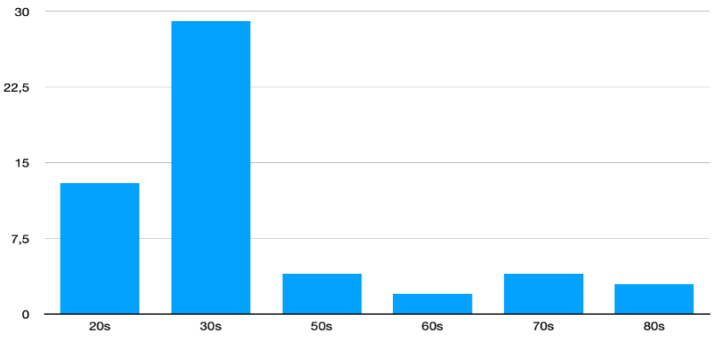

Table 1; Figure 1: Number of brochures per year on bathing tourism.

TIME PERIOD	*NO. OF MAGAZINES*	*NO. OF ARTICLES*
'30s	37	64
'50s	49	88
Total	**86**	**152**

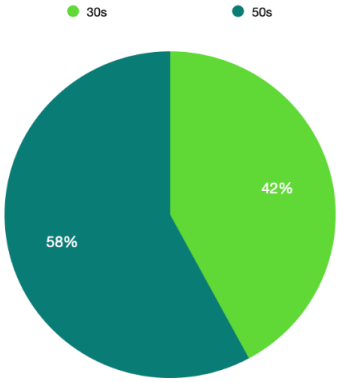

Table 2; Figure 2: Number of magazines and articles[8] per year on bathing tourism

[6] From this search, ENIT's multilingual magazines *Ospitalità Italiana, Notiziario Turistico* and *Italia* (pre-WWII) were excluded due to a lack of English content covering the topics of this research. *Italy's Life*, additionally, was not analysed due to the absence of a sufficiently representative sample in our database. The brochure *Italy* dating back to the '20s-'30s was excluded for the absence of entirely original versions throughout its production period. See Agorni in this issue for more information on this particular type of documents.

[7] The research presented in this article is part of a larger research involving the corpus analysis of key terms related to different types of tours. For reasons of space, the analysis of words and collocates referring to bathing and seaside tourism is not included in the current paper.

[8] The quantitative data related to the number of articles for each magazine deserves critical attention. While the number of articles devoted to the topic of bathing tourism does not increase greatly

Each file was read carefully to compile a new database with information on the year, period, genre, tour type, purpose, geographical area and articles titles (for magazines) of each document. Specifically, the category *tour type* was used to label the various forms of tourism promoted throughout the years, and consists of seven sub-categories or themes: *climate, spa, seaside, cultural, nature, entertainment, landscape*. Additionally, the category *purpose* was added to encode lexical and prosodical nuances when promoting a tourist site that could affect its imaginary. For example, Ligurian Riviera tourism in the '20s was coded as *leisure,* as a synonym for socialite tourism, as opposed to *therapy* for documents promoting only the cure of diseases.

This categorisation process enabled the identification of changing trends in tour type, purpose and geography over the years. This was key to exploring if and when the concept of physical therapy became intertwined with leisure and entertainment activities in particular areas. Quantitative data were also useful to infer hypotheses on the types of tourists ENIT was targeting, and what kinds of needs it promised to fulfil, while also shaping a specific imaginary or consumer behaviour of each area that still persists today.

PRODUCTION TRENDS: REPORT AND DISCUSSION

BROCHURE: GEOGRAPHY OF THE SITES AND TYPE OF TOURS PROMOTED EACH YEAR

The categorisation of brochures according to tour type and its distribution across the nation led to the quantification of documents describing particular areas and activities over the years. Figure 3[9] offers an overview of the promotional efforts in various geographical regions. As can be seen from the graph, the production of brochures describing the overall national heritage is stable and extensive (14 brochures), including documents that range from descriptions of the therapeutic properties of spas (*Health Resorts Seaside and Watering Places in Italy*, *Spas in Italy*, 1930s) to brochures promoting seaside environments (*Seaside resorts*, 1933) and various marine settings and beaches for holiday purposes in the '50s and '70s (*Seas of Italy; Holidays and Italian Seas; Italy – an ideal holiday for all the family*).

in the postwar production (58% compared to 42%), the amount of space devoted to various themes on the magazine of each period differs. Indeed, the magazine Italy consists of more issues and pages per issue, but devotes the majority of space to columns (such as interviews with tourists, foreign press reviews, journalists recounts, news about upcoming festivals in each region, exhibitions, fairs, congresses, excavations) that are printed systematically. Therefore, the consistent choice of topics related to coastal tourism signals an intention, in *Italy*, to create a particular imaginary of the national natural heritage.

[9] In this figure, the category *Island* refers to any island that is not a region (like Sicily and Sardinia).

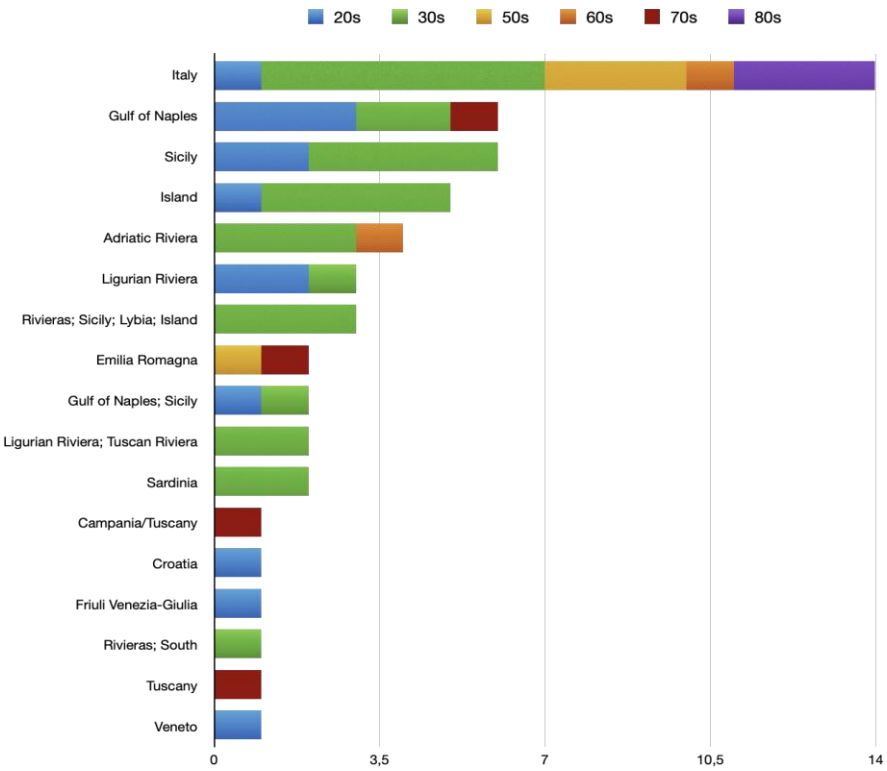

Figure 3: Number of ENIT brochures on specific regions across time periods.

In the 1920s, ENIT's promotional efforts were concentrated in a few key areas, namely, the Ligurian Riviera, the Gulf of Naples (*Sorrento as a Health Resort*) and the island of Sicily (with a focus on Taormina as a health resort), while some attention was devoted to elitist climatic resorts in what is present-day Croatia (*Abbazia: Its Climatic Conditions, Sanitary Institutions and Therapeutic Indications*) and the Veneto region (*Abano and Its Thermal Cures*), as well as other insular areas (*Rhodes,* a former colony)[10], a trend that increases in the '30s. In the same period, stable promotion of the Ligurian Riviera is accompanied by an increasing focus on the Tuscan Riviera (mostly Viareggio) and the Adriatic Riviera, which includes attractions such as Lido di Venezia, Grado, Rimini, Riccione, Grottammare, as well as Italian former colonies such as Fiume and Abbazia (Rijeka and Opatija, respectively; both in Croatia today), and Portorose (Portorož, today in Slovenia). Brioni (Brijuni, Croatia) and Tripoli (Lybia) are mentioned as well.[11] The Naples Riviera remains popular but is surpassed by the consistent promotion of islands in the central and southern regions (Capri, Amalfi, Sardinia, Sicily). From the '50s onwards, brochures of the Emilia-Romagna region and Adriatic Riviera are more frequent (*Riccione – The Green Pearl on the Adriatic Coast*, 1950), followed by an interest in Gabicce Mare (*La Riviera delle Muse*, or "The Muses Riviera", 1963).

[10] The specific date of this brochure was not retrievable, even if historical experts date it back to the 20-'30s period. To avoid the addition of a category, this document was included in the '20s category.

[11] While Brioni is described in one document, Tripoli appears in "Winter and Spring Sunshine in Italy", a brochure published in three editions in 1930s.

These insights are complemented by an analysis of the category *tour type* over the years, the results of which are shown in Figure 4. As can be seen, the types of tours promoted in ENIT's brochures on coastal and bathing tourism changed during the 20th century. Climatic and thermal attractions, such as rivieras with mild temperatures and regenerating balmy air, coupled with entertainment opportunities such as casinos (e.g. the Ligurian Riviera) or sites with mineral springs and modern reception facilities, dominate the '20s-'30s period. This is evident when looking at the categories *climate/thermal* (8 brochures, among which are *The Spa of Agnano, Brioni, The Adriatic, '30s*); *climate* (6 brochures); *climate/cultural* (6 brochures, among which is *Syracuse*, 1936); *thermal* combined with *climate* and *cultural* (2 brochures). In this paper, the category *climate* indicates coastal areas with a mild climate and luxuriant vegetation frequented by members of the élite in exclusive resorts.

In the '30s, brochures emphasising the quality of the air and the mildness of climate are still present, even if more strongly associated with the distinctive features of the vegetation and the cultural heritage of each tourist site (in particular Sicily and Naples). This may be seen in brochures labelled with the categories *Climate/Nature/Culture* (1) and *Cultural/Nature* (3).

Another prominent type of leisure promoted in the '30s by ENIT is that of seaside tourism promoting bathing in the sea. Indeed, the category *Climate/Thermal/Seaside,* which combines weather, hot springs and the seaside, occurs six times in the '30s, accompanied by *Climate/Seaside* (4) and *Climate/Seaside/Cultural/Thermal* (3).

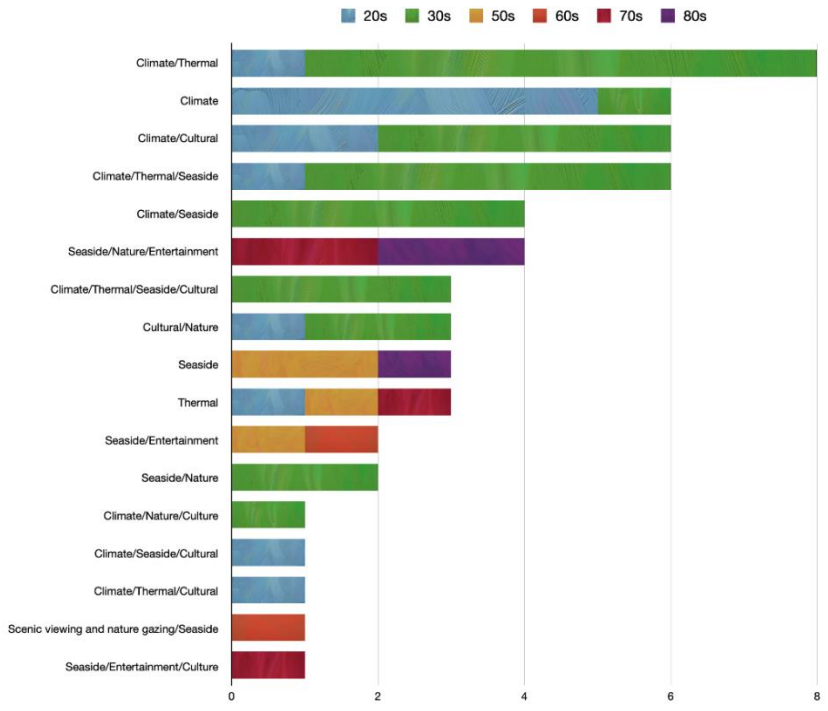

Figure 4: Types of tours across time (for each brochure).

As is evident when looking at the bar-graph colours representing the '50s-'80s, seaside tourism does not lose its appeal, even if fewer brochures are produced on the topic. This might be due, however, to the increasing popularity of magazines and their registerial and generic shift towards various forms of reporting, a phenomenon that is discussed in section 4.4. If narratives about mild temperatures and thermal facilities dominated the first part of the century, seaside tourism becomes the main topic of this genre from the '50s onwards, even if brochures on thermal facilities are still produced throughout the '50s, '60s and the '70s (*Thermal baths in Italy – the oldest therapy in the most modern thermal baths*). This is evident when looking at the categories *Seaside* (3), *Seaside/Nature/Entertainment* (4) and *Seaside/Entertainment,* sometimes still associated with *Culture* (3). The latter categories also denote an interest in adding value to coastal locations through frequent references to either acts of gazing, exploration of the natural and wild beauty of the environment or entertainment options.

BROCHURES: DISCUSSION

The results reported above reflect shifting promotional foci throughout the 20th century. An interest in promoting mostly climate and health tourism in the '20s and '30s is evident, while seaside tourism localities are present from the 1930s onwards, with varying connotations depending on the area.

Geographically speaking, the most important areas and those documented by ENIT are the Liguria region and the Lido of Venice for winter or "climate" tourism. Promotional materials from the 1920s, such as the *Ligurian Riviera* brochure, emphasised the natural beauty and mild climate to attract Northern European tourists in response to harsh competition from the French Riviera (Syrjāama 69, 93, 108). It thus seems that ENIT reproduced the imaginary[12] of *tourisme mondain,* which had surged in the second half of the 19th century, following the example of the competing French coast, and which continued to differentiate that area during the belle époque (Zanini 3-10).[13] Thus, promoting already well-known places might have been considered a safe option and an effective way to disseminate well-established imaginaries reminiscent of luxury tourism among new audience segments. An excerpt from the introduction to the Ligurian Riviera brochure (1920) confirms the emphasis on natural beauty and amenities to attract Northern European tourists (emphasis added):

> A **radiant world** of blue and green and gold and silver; of azure sea and sky; of olive gardens and hills wooded with ilex, cypress and myrtle; of oranges and lemons glowing amid their

[12] Imaginaries are defined by the *Encyclopedia of Tourism* as "unspoken schemas of interpretation" or socially shared representations of a site that merge with individuals' personal imagination, shaping perceptions and influencing tourists' behavior (Salazar 1).

[13] Both Berrino and Syrjāmaa affirm that these trends were adopted later in Italy and that ENIT's promotion moved slowly in this direction, struggling to adapt to the new clientele, sometimes still trying to appeal to more affluent clientele. Often, it is not clear who the target audience is because the information about thermal places is too detailed for an audience to attract and not practical enough for those already in Italy.

> glossy foliage; of fields of violets and hedges of roses and trees of pomegranate and magnolia pouring out their perfumes upon the sea breezes; of bright sands and shady groves […] The **climate** of the Ligurian Riviera is a most attractive one. From autumn until March it is mild, averaging about 9 degrees centigrade; rainy days are very rare; and winds of short duration. For this winter season **no better resort** could be chosen by **those who would escape** the damp fogs of northern lands, and seek to exchange rigid cold and snow for the restorative laughter of the sun, the regenerating oxygen of balmy air, and the agreeable mildness of a springlike climate tempered with the freshness of sea breezes […] **Amusements** are not wanting since, beside the usual **seaside recreations** – bathing, boating and fishing – there are in all the principal centres, tennis courts and golf links: concert halls, theatres, casinos, with all kinds of attractions, and good seasons of Opera.

The image of the Veneto and Tuscany regions in the early period, similarly, coincides with that of deluxe thermalism sites, also as a consequence of Hapsburg-Lorraine investments in Tuscany[14] (Berrino 96-98). Interestingly enough, the Gulf of Naples is often the subject of brochures from the early period. This fascination with the area was due to its unique geological formations (e.g. Phlegraean fields and Vesuvius, Berrino 26-27, 100-103) and thermal waters, as well as the discovery of the archaeological remains at Pompeii, in an age in which the desire to understand natural phenomena and see the evidence of human progress was still present, despite the growing appeal of sensory experiences in the *sublime* and *picturesque* on the part of the British aristocracy (Berrino 11, 74). Indeed, industrialisation had led to a search for both the scientific results of progress (such as the chemical composition of water and thermalism) as well as places not affected by modernisation and still uncontaminated.

As stated by Syrjāmaa, one of the main values promoted by ENIT in the 1920s was exoticism, which is represented through frequent descriptions of luxuriant vegetation and marine environments, the beauty of the landscape and the mild climate for health purposes (69-70). The predilection for luxury tourism imaginaries does not fade, but instead centres on spas, climate, sensory experiences and golf in natural surroundings, aimed to captivate new audience segments with an alluring sense of exclusivity (91). Brochures from that period might have been strategically produced and distributed to address themes related to health, the perception of danger and disorganisation when travelling to Italy (Berrino 215-216, 221, 226) and the climate, considered too hot. Indeed, six out of 13 brochures produced in the '20s were labelled as having therapeutic purposes, because they basically consisted of scientific essays or reports of medical practitioners visiting thermal springs and establishments to analyse the chemical properties of their mineral waters and their potential for curing a series of inflammatory diseases (Berrino 88) (*Abano and its thermal cures; Sorrento*).

From the 1930s onwards, Italian islands such as Sorrento, Capri, Amalfi and Rhodes were promoted with an increasingly exotic focus. Such destinations, indeed, resulted

[14] The Hapsburg-Lorraine were the rulers of the Austrian Empire that occupied Italian territories until the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861, after the Independence Wars led by Garibaldi. In the first half of the 19th century, the Hapsburg-Lorraine wished to recreate here the same atmosphere of luxury winter resorts of Central Europe. Considering the rich heritage of thermal waters and rivieras in Italy, public and private investors saw in various regions the opportunity to invest in new lucrative businesses.

attractive to British people but especially to Americans and their post-war, post-financial crisis "Lost Generation",[15] who did not fear summer heat and already appreciated tropical areas such as Florida. Summer maritime tourism began to be promoted while maintaining a focus on élite tourism, car races and sports such as polo and sailing, typical of Fascist times (Battilani, *anni* 131). This might be attributed to investments in tourism in that period, primarily to achieve economic returns after the global financial crisis and to differentiate the nation's offerings in an increasingly competitive environment. Localities such as Sicily, Naples and the northern Adriatic Coast continued to be promoted (Berrino 224), as confirmed by ENIT production.

The first signs of seaside tourism promotion are evident in the '30s, with more systematic attempts to promote the Eastern Adriatic Riviera and its shores, as shown in the previous section. The beaches of Venice (the famous *Lido*), as well as Grado, Rimini,[16] Riccione, Abbazia (Opatija), Fiume (Rijeka) and Portorose (Portorož), are described as sites for beach tourism, such as sunbathing, and sports, with major benefits in terms of physical and mental health due to the presence of pristine salt water (Berrino 120-122).

As results show, some areas that had gained a reputation for sophistication remained well-known in the '30s (Ligurian Riviera, the Lido of Venice, the Tuscany region with Pisa, Livorno, Viareggio); others became known for affordability, especially for the bourgeois segments that were increasingly establishing themselves.

Finally, brochures from the postwar period show signs of a change of audience and type of tours, which is more indicative of the increased wealth and financial prosperity of postwar Italy. Such brochures, indeed, adopt the newest trends of mass consumption, leveraging American symbolism as well as advertising language such as "sea, sun, sand, sex and spirit" (Berrino 257; Battilani, *anni* 107; Diggings). In this sense, the 'exotic' is not exclusive anymore, and any worker or family can afford it by spending some exciting and all-inclusive vacations on the beach, as is evident in the following passage (Introduction of *Italian Seas: Romagna's Adriatic Riviera*, 1970s, emphasis added):

> The real holiday-by-the-sea, easy-going, incomparable, and with something more, a sort of great "happening", pleasant and unpredictable. It is **villeggiatura complete** in every detail, from the time one gets up until cocktails. **For swimmers**, a chair-lift sweeps **you** over the pines from the hotel to the beach. Or **one can camp out** in a tent between the woods and the water, spending a night at sea with the fishermen. […] It is the holiday of holidays, sun and sea, pines and food for the imagination, up-to-date night-clubs and romantic solitude; eighty miles of joie de vivre, with the **constant alternative** of natural or man-made amenities, varying from hearty

[15] The *Lost Generation* refers to the demographic cohort that came of age during World War I, generally encompassing those born between 1883 and 1900. The term, coined by Gertrude Stein and popularized by Ernest Hemingway, highlights the sense of disillusionment and aimlessness felt by many survivors of the war. Raised in increasingly literate, consumer-driven societies, the Lost Generation were also impacted by socioeconomic hardships, among which the Great Depression that followed the Wall Street Crash (1929).

[16] In Rimini, considered from the '30s the symbol of "Italian beach culture par excellence" (Hom 131-132), the accessible travel package became, with time, an opportunity to effortlessly experience an alleged authenticity of the destination and alleviate the anxiety linked to an uncontrolled globalization (Hom 218).

> social life to silence. […] For more than five months, from May to the middle of October, it is the bathing capital of Europe; the most grandiose, fantastic, and lively complex of resorts of the entire continent. The most serene: climate moderately warm, people of proverbial cordiality and discretion, international atmosphere of friendship and mutual respect without barriers. The most varied with every type of attraction, sightseeing and pleasant surprises. The most central in relation to the whole of Europe. The most adaptable to any need […].

The inclusion in this excerpt of highly evaluative and emotionally charged language, including superlatives and varied definitions of the destination that appeal to potentially any social group (Dann 2, 123), differs greatly from the '20s narratives. In the *Ligurian Riviera* brochure, indeed, only one target audience (those escaping the rigid climate of Northern countries, Hom 130) is explicitly mentioned in the text.

MAGAZINES: GEOGRAPHY OF THE SITES AND TOUR TYPES PROMOTED EACH YEAR

The analysis of the magazines that was carried out on both the numbers of issues and articles yielded results that mostly align with those of the brochures. Out of 64 articles on the topic (as reported in the Methods section) in *Travel in Italy* (1930) and 88 articles in *Italy* (1950s), 39 (60.9%) and 71 (80.7%) focus on particular regions.

As can be seen in Figure 5, Sicily, other islands, the Gulf of Naples, the Ligurian Riviera and the Lido of Venice are key regions often promoted by ENIT. While Sicily as a destination covers 24 out of 152 articles, with a steady increase in the postwar period (12.5% as a relative frequency in the '30s, 18% in the '50s), the promotion of insular areas (Brioni, Capri, and Rhodes), the Istrian peninsula (and particularly Yugoslavia, today Croatia), the Naples and Ligurian Rivieras is shared equally in the '30s (6.3%), with a decrease or even absence of promotion of the Liguria region and present-day Croatia in the '50s. Similarly, both the Lidos of Venice and Rome as well as Tripoli feature in 4.7% of '30s magazines (e.g., "The hills, the lakes and the sea around Rome", *Travel in Italy*, August 1933).

Genoa, as a modern port for transporting tourists from Europe to Italian southern regions and islands, is promoted in two articles.[17] There is one *open sea* article, and it refers to "holidays afloat" (*Travel in Italy*, June 1933), i.e. cruises. The popularity of such Lidos as well as colonial tourism sharply decreases or even disappears in the '50s, which mostly feature articles about the islands (10%, including Procida, Partenope Islands, Amalfi, Elba), the Gulf of Naples (6.8%; Torre del Greco is mentioned as the "town of coral", *Italy*, February 1957), the Emilia-Romagna region, the south of Italy and Sardinia (5.7%). Increased attention is paid to open sea experiences (4.6%), mostly "under-water exploring" and "tunny-fishing" (November 1957). The area of Venice is found in only one article describing Chioggia, while articles on the Friuli Venezia-Giulia region describe Lignano Sabbiadoro as a seaside destination.

[17] This article is included in a *Travel in Italy* special edition called "Autumn/Winter 35-36".

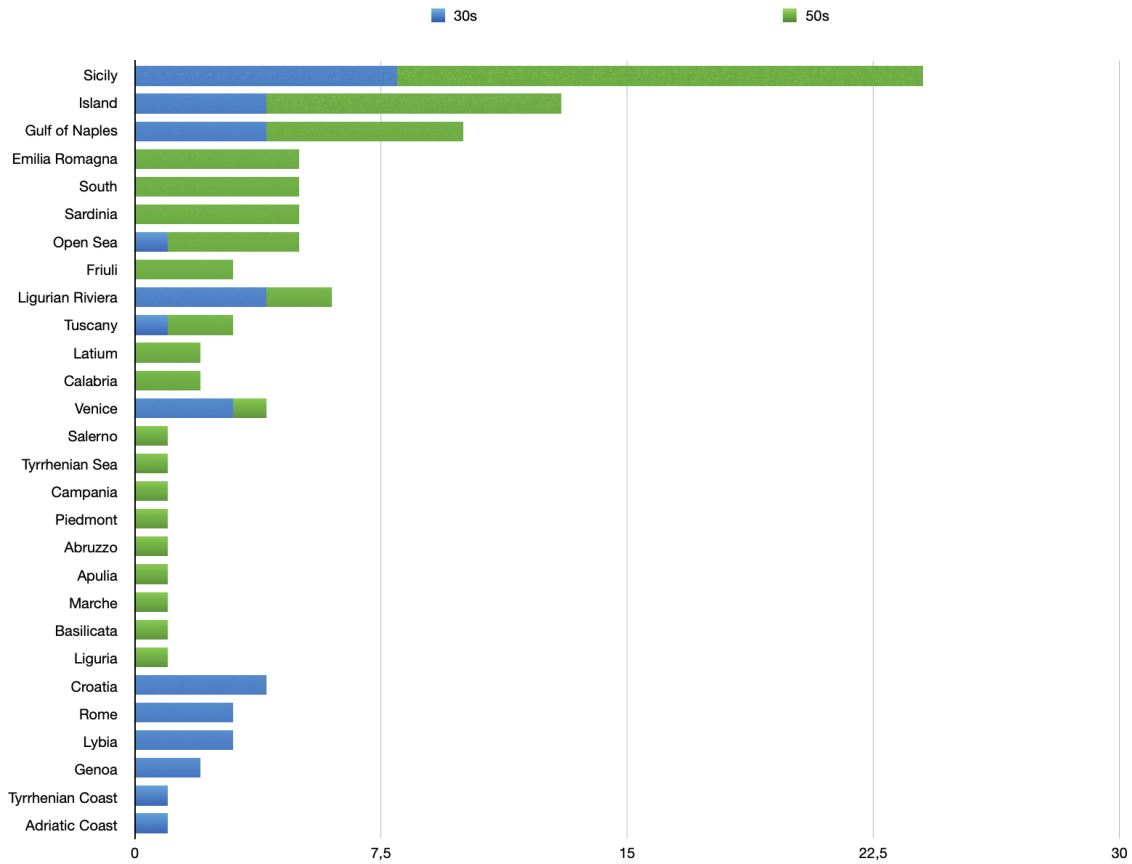

Figure 5: Number of ENIT magazine articles on specific regions across time periods

Due to difficulties with the identification of just one type of bathing tourism promoted in each article of each monthly issue, a list of tour types was selected for each number, in order to explore tourism trends across the years. Table 3 reports the raw and relative frequency of the occurrence of each theme for each main period:[18]

TOUR TYPE	*'30S*	*REL. FREQUENCY*	*'50S*	*REL. FREQUENCY*
Climate	17	26.5%	0	0%
Thermal	7	10.9%	7	8%
Seaside	13	20.3%	6	6.8%
Transport	6	9.4%	19	21.6%
Culture	0	0%	13	14.8%

[18] The relative frequency was introduced to show the impact and systematicity of each type on the overall narrative in the period of reference. Specifically, such measure allows to calculate how many issues of each magazine figure at least one article on a particular tour type across time.

Scenic viewing and nature gazing	0	0%	20	22.7%
Nature	1	1.6%	4	4.5%
Entertainment	0	0%	3	3.4%
Sport	3	4.7%	0	0%
Fishing/Craftmanship	0	0%	3	3.4%

Table 3: Number of issues with at least one article on each tour type.

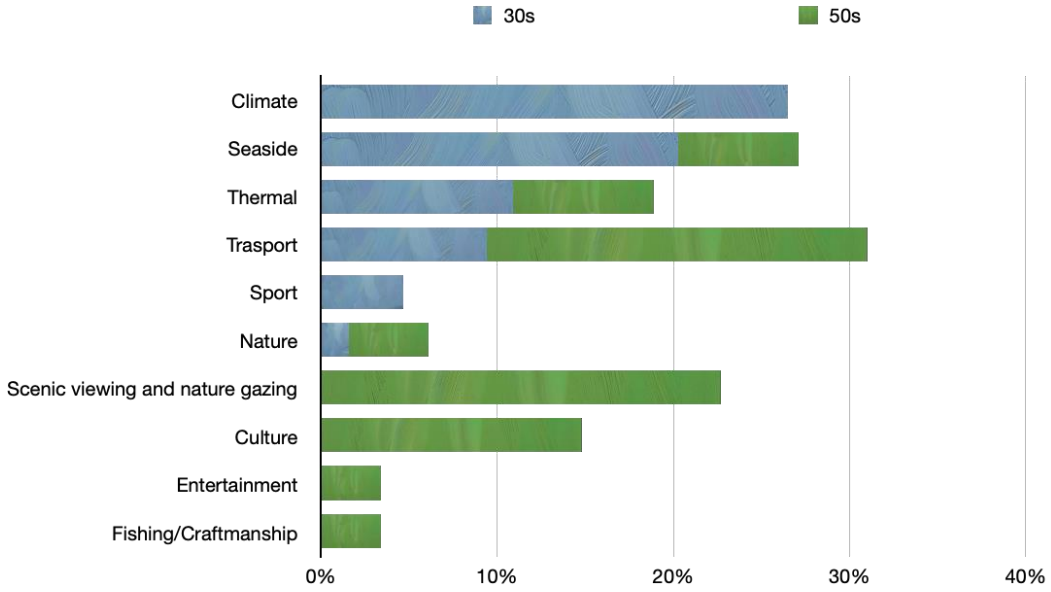

Figure 6: Sum of the relative frequencies of each tour type across the years.

As can be seen in Figure 6, the most frequent type of tours is that involving means of transport (31%). This category was included in the analysis of the magazines due to the large presence of entire articles devoted to the description and explanation of various travel benefits and improvements, including ticket reductions and modern (re)constructions of railways, roads, and ships throughout the decades to reach coastal destinations and enjoy seaside activities. Such changes were promoted and disseminated to facilitate tourism flows. Examples of such interest are found in articles of *Travel in Italy*, April 1933 (e.g. "Motoring to Venice over the new bridge"), February 1934 ("From Naples to Palermo by sea or by air"), August 1955 ("By train through Italy – Brindisi, Naples, Rome"; "Sea and rail cruises") or July 1955 ("Calabria, a new country").

Climate or winter tourism is prominent in the '30s ("Sunshine in winter", January 1933) but disappears in the '50s, as is also shown in the analysis of brochures, while seaside and thermal tourism are key drivers in the '30s but decrease in the '50s. Seaside tourism is described especially in the summer issues' articles of *Travel in Italy* (June 1934, "Cheap Holidays", "Seaside Holidays"; Summer/Autumn 1934, "An ideal seaside resort: Brioni", "Summer at the sea", "Rome as a summer resort"; July 1935, "Tyrrhenian Sea

shores", "Summer on the Adriatic coast"). In the '50s, articles promoting seaside holidays are found, for example, in May 1955's "The Adriatic Coast of Romagna"; in July 1955 with "The fascination of Sardinia", "The Bathing beaches of Massa and Carrara"; in July 1959 with "Secret sea" and "In tents").

Two new categories appear in the '50s: *Scenic viewing and nature gazing* (22,7%) and *Culture (14,8%)*. These labels define a type of tourism narrative that portrays natural environments as repositories of a rich and diversified heritage that makes a particular destination unique. Few references to seaside life are made; conversely, coastal areas are described as pristine and authentic paradises or as sites where popular culture and local folklore take the stage in a socially shared form of consumption. Examples of the first category are articles entitled "Italy a magnet" (March 1955), "Impressions of Sicily" (October 1957), "Naples, Piedigrotta and songs" (September 1957), "Country of the sea" and "The violet coast" (September 1958). Articles promoting popular culture and exotic trends are instead: "The fascination of the south" (July 1959),[19] "Sicily in the cinema" (November 1957),[20] "The Enchanting Archipelago where the Mythical Aeolus Reigned" (June 1959), "The Mediterranean and the tendency towards the South" (February 1959) and "Created Landscapes" (December 1958).

Finally, the attention to sport or racing defining '30s promotional narratives (4.7%) is replaced by an interest in local activities, which are described as entertaining (Fishing/craftmanship and entertainment, 6.8% total). Therefore, articles such as "High speed boat racing in Venice" (June 1934), "The principal international motorboat racing events in Italy", "The motor-car race for the Grand Prix of Tripoli" (May 1935) disappear, leaving room for the promotion of events such as "Festivals of the sea" (July 1955) or "Slaughter of the tunny fish in the sea around Trapani" (June 1957).

MAGAZINES: DISCUSSION

The analysis of magazines covering the 1930s-1950s shows a significant change of trends, except for the category of *transport*, which steadily increases and reaches a peak in the '50s. This shared interest in promoting Italy as a modern and well-connected destination was crucial to attracting flocks of American and European tourists. Americans, according to many scholars and especially historians, were increasingly interested in visiting foreign places with a hot climate (and especially Italy, Hom 141), which could remind them of familiar places such as Palm Beach (May 1935) or, later, Pearl Harbor in the '50s (Battilani, *anni* 114; Berrino 258). In the '30s, Venice is still considered a refined social centre; the Lido, conversely, is compared to "a terrestrial paradise in the remote flowering Pacific islands" ("Venice in summer", Travel in Italy,

[19] It is interesting to note that in *Italy*, a good number of references to hot climate – as opposed to mild climate - in southern regions is described in positive terms (December 1959, "Some like it hot", referring to Marylin Monroe's movie).

[20] Movie stars are the main characters in many other issues (e.g. "Audrey in Rome", April 1958).

Special Number SA 1934). Such narratives highlight an atmosphere of relaxed freedom and independence that offer a "free and easy life" ("Venice in summer"), i.e. a liberating escape from rigid social norms into idyllic and exotic places. Similarly, islands, Sicily and Southern Italy are viewed as a pristine site for a genuine encounter with nature.[21] The desire to welcome larger masses of international tourists is evident, especially from 1935, when ENIT publishes an issue with an article entitled "An invitation to the land of sunshine" (June 1935), and particularly in the issue of April 1935, where a picture of Mussolini appearing in the first pages of magazine is accompanied by a handwritten text warmly and explicitly inviting tourists to visit Italy.

The need for 'emotional therapy' and spiritual regeneration in response to the industrialisation that permeates the 20th century is shown to slowly replace the focus on physical needs in different ways across the century. On the one hand, aristocratic forms of winter tourism for *hivernants* incorporate an increasing number of exclusive opportunities for entertainment and leisure (Berrino 53) which are replaced, in the '30s and in other rivieras, by more affordable *villette* and *pensioni* for seaside tourism and sunbathing.[22] On the other hand, in the '50s, the transformation of formerly élitist sites, such as Venice, into places for collective consumption encourages foreign tourists to appreciate both shared, festive moments in social settings and quiet gazing at uncontaminated *landscapes*, thus reassigning to nature a romantic connotation (Berrino 250; Urry and Larsen 4, 113). This is spread through popular movies and songs, such as "Capri-Fischer"[23] (Berrino 249) or "Luna caprese" (1955) (Prato), which emphasise a sense of peace and sensory freedom after the atrocities of the war, inflicted by human society and progress. This finding aligns with Aliano's belief that, before the spread of the 'economic miracle' or post-WWII global economic expansion, we observe the return of a nostalgic, romantic, sensory gaze, a symptom of the *spleen* sentiment caused by "the demon of speed" and "super-fast electric trains" (January 1958), and which avoids the increasing collective gaze to favour landscapes "of peace, wild solitude, immense silence scarcely marred by the notes of a cuckoo and the muffled voices of passers-by" (January 1959, quoting the writer Grazia Deledda). Within this context, we may interpret foreign tourist interest in *the dolce far niente*, 'slow living' Southern populations as a response to the discomfort of stressful lifestyles and strict work schedules, which would not allow 'time to waste' (January 1958) (Aliano 244-247).[24]

[21] It is interesting to note how the '30s magazines define the Venice Lido as "undoubtedly the leading seaside resort in Europe" or a "refined social world centre" (July 1934) which is replaced, in terms of popularity, by the Romagna's Adriatic Riviera, the "bathing capital of Europe". However, the history of these tourist sites shows how the two resorts remained very different in terms of evoked imaginary and correlated social status, thus showing a strong destination image.

[22] A reason for the decline in popularity of winter tourism sites was the decrease of *hivernants* after the war and the first wave of American tourists, among which former soldiers (Berrino 203).

[23] Tunny fishing is promoted as an entertainment activity in the article "Sicily in the cinema".

[24] The phrase *dolce far niente* translates from Italian as "the sweetness of doing nothing" or "the sweet art of idleness". It encapsulates the pleasure found in leisure activities or simply the enjoyment of being idle without feeling guilty or pressured by time. This concept has deep cultural roots in Italy, where it is often associated with a relaxed lifestyle that prioritizes pleasure and enjoyment over productivity and

On the other hand, formerly famous tourist sites such as Venice, for example, become hubs for consumer tourists that maintain a role, also thanks to festivals (Venice Festival, August 1935) and later international art exhibitions (such as the Biennale), in line with the new trends of mass tourism and entertainment. Such events were promoted by a variety of organizations (ENIT included) and were attended by many visitors, possibly shaping a shared, collective gaze towards "esperienze che stordiscono"[25] (Berrino 166, 239). As a result, large crowds came to signify the presence of something both noteworthy and engaging (Urry and Larsen 16, 40-46).

In the magazines, besides the growing attention to seaside tourism documented by journalists in various sections of each issue, there is also a strong interest in promoting cultural heritage and its large consumption through exhibitions and fairs recreating ancient traditions and cuisine. We may find many examples in various issues, in *Travel in Italy* (with *Third Arts and Crafts Fair* in Florence, April 1933) but especially in *Italy* (*Venice Film Festival*, March 1959; *The Festival of Italian Cuisine* in Bologna, January 1957). In *Italy*, heritage is often celebrated through the 'authoritative' eyes and recounts of correspondents, foreign press (as in "Fascination of Sardinia", July 1955) or visiting tourists. An example is the section "What they think of Italy", in which tourists describe, through first-person pronouns, their experience. Another example is the article "Italy a magnet" by Frances Toor (March 1955), which begins with a personal account of the writer's cruise trip in the Mediterranean Sea, followed by a detailed report on a word exchange with an American tourist.

ENIT's post-WWII magazines thus changed both in terms of content and register, shifting towards a more personal and narrative style. Indeed, as reported by Syrjāmaa, the systematic production of periodicals and editorial content featuring the opinions of foreign experts and tourists' questions – such as the recurrent sections "Letters to Italy" or "We have been asked" – was probably suggested after Giuseppe Toffano, ENIT's managing director, expressed concerns about the efficacy of ENIT's promotion, claiming that tourists were less likely to visit Italy if they saw material that was too overly persuasive (336-338). Such changes aligned with the travel board's vision for more authentic tourism promotion.

The spread of mass consumption practices from the '50s, which is considered by historians and economists a key period for the Italian socioeconomic development that laid the ground for the economic miracle (Battilani, *Vacanze*), was due to a combination

haste (Hom 52). While the concept has been romanticized, particularly in English-language guidebooks, its origins date back to the Industrial Revolution period, in which a newly formed Italy struggled to integrate an economically underdeveloped South into the unified state (Hom 54). Accordingly, the South was portrayed in a negative light by Northern European travelers and writers, and the phrase became emblematic of this perception, characterizing the Italian labor force as indolent and lazy. The term "dolce far niente," therefore, was not just a benign description of enjoying leisure but was also laden with pejorative connotations, associating idleness with economic and cultural poverty.

[25] In English the clause could be translated into "experiences that befuddle, cloud the mind".

of factors. These include 1) the establishment in many neoliberal societies[26] of paid summer holidays, in a period denoted by a peak in mass production and easier accessibility to goods and services, and 2) the advent of mass media, which made cultural production accessible, also by "itemizing representations of Italian culture" through films, songs, books, visual arts and posters (Hom 61). Indeed, the latter became crucial to differentiating Italy as a tourist destination, creating a symbol system and shaping collective imagination for German and American tourists, who were eager to return to Italy after the war (Battilani, *anni* 114; Hom 141). The opening of new airports in the post-WWII period played a pivotal role in establishing Italy as a renowned destination for beach tourism, facilitating access for international visitors and promoting the appeal of sun, sea, leisure, and health in the decades that followed (Battilani, *anni* 126; Berrino).

One could say, then, that post-WWII ENIT production sought to reproduce and enhance a collective and cultural imaginary that had reached foreign countries through the mass appeal of movies, songs and advertisements from the '40s onwards. Italy was thus portrayed as a repository of an idyllic, natural paradise, whose aesthetic beauty was further highlighted and amplified by its widespread recognition abroad. For this reason, the 'consumption of the spectacle' also spread through the collective gaze of enjoyment and appreciation of local heritage and practices, such as fishing events (especially in Southern regions), festivals and exhibitions. This is evident in a piece in March 1958, in which such efforts to reproduce a "landscape" (a term quoted in the article), or imaginary, through tourism are openly discussed, together with the psychological reasons why they are effective (mostly, the desire to escape from the ordinary). However, the positive consequences of promoting mass imaginaries are already under discussion in *Italy*, December 1958, when Alberto Spaini writes a piece called "created landscape". In this article, he sees it as inevitable for "social tourism" to change direction and focus on preserving cultural heritage as well as creating new green areas to redirect an increasingly unsustainable flow of tourists:

> But care must be taken to quickly control and channel this phenomenon to prevent it degenerating from an element of development and progress into a source of individual discomfort and damage to the national economy. […]

CONCLUSION

By examining the evolution of seaside tourism in ENIT's promotional publications, this paper highlighted the impact of late 19th-century imaginaries on the development of 20th-century mass tourism.

[26] Market deregulation and limited government intervention are typical features of neoliberalism, the dominant ideology of the late 20th century (Ferguson 166). Such processes undoubtedly contributed to the increasing circulation of wealth, symbols and services, including tourism.

Throughout its first 60 years, ENIT played a pivotal role in reproducing and reinforcing particular narratives to attract a foreign audience. Initially, this involved promoting élite tourism in climatic or thermal sites within a highly competitive European context; over time, however, ENIT's focus shifted to cater to a broader audience to adapt and further stimulate the tourist demand that was increasing, especially in the U.S. This included promoting seaside destinations not only for their therapeutic benefits but also as sites of leisure and mass enjoyment.

Results show specifically that the type and geography of bathing tourism promotion slowly changes in brochures from the '50s onwards, while previously still relying – albeit partially – on elitist forms of tourism. From the '70s, we witness a decrease in terms of brochure production and a growing number of highly evaluative and all-inclusive, ego-targeting linguistic strategies. These are aimed at reaching a wider audience and promoting seaside tourism, especially in the Emilia-Romagna region, as a recreational activity, or "holiday", supported by a wide variety of services and opportunities.

The increasing popularity of magazine production from the '50s also shows a representation of bathing tourism that changes connotation and favours wild, insular and southern areas and modern infrastructure to support a spreading mass economy. In line with historical sources (Syrjāmaa; Berrino), seaside tourism in the Romagna Riviera was already promoted in the '30s, although promotional efforts in that period mostly focused on cultural, sportive and all-year-round bathing practices at Lido di Venezia and on the Ligurian Riviera. Conversely, post-WWII tourism practices are depicted as part of a package of multisensorial, cultural experiences tied to each region's heritage, reflecting a shift in foreign visitors' expectations, moulded by a spreading popular culture influenced by American values and customs. The latter, indeed, slowly pervaded Italy in postwar periods, also due to the economic influence of the Marshall recovery plan (Valenzani). This "Americanization" of leisure (Cavazza and Scarpellini), which emphasized consumption as a pathway to happiness, had a profound influence on European tourism. The appropriation of cultural elements, including souvenirs, was seen as a means to experience exclusive authenticity in an uncontrolled and increasingly accessible market (Stewart 146; Hom 142, 185, 218).

From a critical perspective, ENIT's promotional activities mirrored and influenced Italy's broader socio-economic changes, by attracting diverse tourist demographics and boosting economic growth (Syrjāmaa). This was achieved through narratives promoting a unique blend of cultural and natural *landscapes,* while simultaneously disseminating the imaginaries shaped by popular culture and America's Lost Generation. Sicily's growth as a seaside and cultural tourist site in ENIT's publications attests to this trend and to the desire to meet Germans' perception of Italy as a repository of a mythical past (Pagenstecher 4-6[27]). Overall, we might argue that the co-

[27] The page numbers refer to the version translated by Ciro Riccardo.

existence of *modern* and *premodern* elements contributed to shaping an alluring image of Italy and its shores. The period of economic recovery and market deregulation that characterized post-WWII Italy surely played a key role in encouraging affordable travel and infrastructure development.

In conclusion, the evolution of seaside tourism as a regenerating and accessible holiday opportunity in Italy reflects a dynamic interplay of health, leisure, economic motives and cultural trends. Tracing this evolution in ENIT's promotional efforts helps to understand the factors behind the proliferation of mass seaside tourism, while highlighting the critical role of promotion in both reproducing imaginaries and spreading a mass consumption culture that would have an impact on the tourism industry in subsequent decades. In this sense, the materials and insights provided in this paper and in this Special Issue represent the starting point for future research on the promotional narratives designed by ENIT after the economic miracle. Indeed, analysis of the discourse of that period will shed light on ENIT's role in contributing to the systematisation of practices of summer and seaside tourism, in a time of growing concerns over environmental and infrastructural sustainability of the tourism sector.

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Elena Mattei is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at *Ca' Foscari* University of Venice, where she is working on the National Research Project *DIETALY* in collaboration with the Italian National Tourist Board. Shortlisted for the *Paul Fortier Prize*, she is publishing a Routledge monograph on Instagram tourism discourse and collaborates with John Bateman. Her research interests include the annotation and statistical analysis of tourism multimodal corpora through *Systemic Functional Linguistics* frameworks. The objective is to promote regenerative travel, a topic also discussed in interviews with *Randstad Research* and *La Repubblica*.

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8443-3633

elena.mattei@unive.it
