

Film and Tourism: Attracting Travelers with Moving Images, Traveling to Destinations Experienced on the Screen, Types of Media and Travelers, and the Web of their Mutual Relationships and Effects

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the paper is to analyze and evaluate the influences and consequences of film on tourism. Film induced tourism means that tourists visit places that were portrayed in a movie, on video or on television, either before or after its production, attracted to the place's portrayal.

In short, it is about a firsthand seeing of sights that were seen before on screen. It also means the business of attracting as high numbers as possible of tourists to those places through images.

When combining television and cinema screens, film is considered today's most powerful visual medium and art form, with a global reach unprecedented in human history. The simultaneous increase in international tourism has produced special types of film and media, and relationships with tourism.

These types and relationships cover areas such as types of film and media induced tourism, types of film tourists, activities and methods of marketing and promotion, actual effects of film productions on tourism, and other consequences of film and media induced tourism.

The research therefore addresses and questions the several and complex layers of positive or negative influences, benefits and disadvantages from the specific media form of film on global tourism. It turns out that the strands of this web of relationships and effects go both ways, and requires considerable insight and sensitivity on behalf of travelers, destinations, and filmmakers.

For the future, this means that the technological development of media forms, increasing traveler sophistication and demands, and a continuously rising awareness of global issues and challenges for the tourism industry, promises further aspects of future research in this area.

Therefore, the paper adds to the body of knowledge that connects media research with social consequences to put high demands on, yet likewise to benefit the here analyzed stakeholders and forms of travel.

Key Words: Film Tourism, Media Tourism, Destination Marketing Companies (DMCs); Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs), Tourism Marketing.

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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Film and Media as Related to, and Relevant for Tourism

Film and media induced tourism is called by various names, such as film tourism, movie tourism, screen tourism, film-induced tourism or movie-induced tourism images (Hamzah, Aminudin, Mustapha and Ismail, 2016: 456). In the following, for simplicity's sake, the term film tourism will be mostly used. When the relationship between film and media is stressed, the term film and media-induced tourism is used.

Accordingly, film tourism means that tourists visit places that were portrayed in a movie, on video or on television, either before or after its production, attracted to the place's portrayal. In short, it is about a firsthand seeing of sights that were seen before, or will be seen shortly on screen. It also means the business of attracting as high numbers as possible of tourists to those places through images (Hamzah, Aminudin, Mustapha and Ismail, 2016: 455; Roesch, 2009: 6-8).

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Tourism-Inducing Types of Media

Before the mid-20th century, popular main media consisted essentially of written works such as travel writing or novels, or of static images such as paintings that could act on the public's imagination. Examples are especially the European Romantic writers and painters of the 18th and 19th centuries, who created idyllic or idealized tales or images of nature, adventures, faraway exotic locations, battle scenes etc. (Beeton, 2016: 6).

Except for radio, modern popular media has stimulated tourism mainly by visual advertising in photography, television and film (Hamzah, Aminudin, Mustapha and Ismail, 2016: 456). Thus, most of the world's lasting or iconic tourist sites were originally publicized in written media, which would seem to limit the effect of visual media on the status of those sites (Connell, 2009).

However, the modern world's rise of mass media and communication together with public mass transportation in the 20th century, created a new paradigm of the relationship between media and tourism (Siripis, Scarles and Airey, 2013; Ţuclea and Nistoreanu, 2001: 26-27; Zoeteman, 2011).

Moving images mean television or cinema. The long-term, episodic experience of television series, compared to one-off movie viewings, position television to sustain the viewers' interest in the displayed sites (Filmby Aarhus, 2012; Vagionis and Loumioti, 2011: 354-355).

However, television viewers are less personally involved in the story if there is a narrator, while the closed film story allows for more intense engagement of the spectator. Also, cinema can rely more on image, while the smaller television screen must draw more on sound effects (Beeton, 2016: 4-9; Roesch, 2009: 6).

Both, however, have in common the so-called "framing effect" of visual media, in that they project images into the viewer's minds that not only portray visual reality but create an independent visual phantasy, which can blur

the borders of what is real and what is imagined (Beeton, 2016: 6-9; Connell, 2009; Siripis, Scarles and Airey, 2013; Țuclea and Nistoreanu, 2001: 27; Vagionis and Loumioni, 2011: 359-360).

This is relevant for the different types of tourism that is induced by film and other visual media.

FILM AND TOURISM

Types of Film Tourism

Film tourism can be categorized in many ways, each offering classifications from different viewpoints (see for example Beeton, 2016: 9-19, 52-54; Croy and Heitmann, 2001: 188-189; Roesch, 2009).

Here they are named and ordered as per their authentic proximity to the original film or to its production site, namely: 1) on-location film tourism, 2) off-location film tourism, 3) literary film tourism, 4) commercialized film tourism, 5) film as a souvenir, 6) one-off events, 7) mistaken identities, and 8) armchair traveling.

1) On-Location Film Tourism

On-location film tourism, maybe the most widely associated form of film induced tourism, involves the film as the main motivation for the travel, either to the filming location for its own attraction factor, or as part of a holiday, or as a film experience like a pilgrimage (Beeton, 2016: 48-49; Hamzah, Aminudin, Mustapha and Ismail, 2016: 456).

For instance, Austria's most iconic film musical, *The Sound of Music* (1965), spawned a still existing tour and dining experience on location of the original Trapp villa which is now a museum and hotel, bookable event site including dinners and weddings (Roesch, 2009: 48).

Also, areas can suddenly surge in public attractiveness, such as the Australian mountains, horse culture, and outback shown in *The Man from Snowy River* and *Crocodile Dundee* (Beeton, 2016: 27-28). Travel to locations deemed culturally worthy can induce near-religious feelings of authenticity or depth. One example could be the UNESCO world heritage site of Petra's Khazneh (The Treasury) in Jordan, hewn into sandstone cliff and location for *Indiana Jones*.

2) Off-Location Film Tourism

Off-location film tourism includes guided tours to film studios or theme parks, as the tours of the Universal, Paramount or Fox Film Studios, or celebrity tourism such as Hollywood tours to celebrity residences. Here, tourist motivations are often a perceived value transference from the celebrity to the tourist (Beeton, 2016: 41-43, 199-200).

3) Literary Film Tourism

Literary film tourists relate their prior reading (usually of the novel) on which the film is based to its location. Recent examples of works of fiction which were successfully turned into films are Dan Brown's bestsellers turned into Hollywood productions, located in Rome and the Vatican.

4) Commercial Film Tourism

Commercial film tourism exploits a film's success to steer tourism to attractions that are however mainly fabricated, or in the form of commercialized tours to film locations, or to specific sets or surroundings.

5) Film-as-a-Souvenir Tourism

Film as a souvenir means that the film is viewed after a real and direct location experience by the tourist, either to reward the travel experience, or by viewing the film later accidentally.

6) One-Off Event Tourism

One-off events represent attendances of filmic events such as movie premieres or film festivals, such as *Sundance*, Toronto or Cannes.

7) Mistaken Identity Tourism

Mistaken identities induce tourists to visit places where the film's action took place, or where its fictional story is set, but not where it was indeed shot. Examples (see for instance Beeton, 2016: 72-75) are *Braveheart*, depicting Scotland yet mainly filmed in Ireland; *Seven Years in Tibet*, depicting Asia yet filmed in the South American Andes and European Tyrol; or the series *Baywatch*, which was set in Malibu, scouted in Sidney, yet shot in Hawaii. Tourists might even visit the site fully conscious of such discrepancies, such as travel to the Egyptian desert in memory of *The English Patient*, even if the precise location is all but impossible to find.

8) Armchair Traveling

Finally, armchair traveling takes viewers to exotic locations around the world from the safety of their homes, in the form of documentaries, newscasts or action reality shows. This is the visual form of historic travel writing or modern travel guides, and the contrast between location and consumption can fuel escapism or romanticized impressions.

Types of Travelers

Similarly to the different categorization approaches of film tourism, the travelers themselves can also be grouped in a variety of ways (see for instance Croy and Heitmann, 2001: 189-190; Roesch, 2009: 10-12).

In addition, film tourists represent all economic strata and social classes. On that basis, one can for instance differentiate between "serendipitous tourists", who happen to be on a location that is portrayed in the film, "general film tourists", who are attracted to the film set as a part of their other tourism activities, and "specific film tourists", who specifically search for places they have previously seen on screen (Croy and Heitmann, 2011: 192-194; Vagionis and Loumioti, 2011: 354).

For general, but even more for specific film tourists, the main motivation is to see the film's backdrop firsthand because of the aesthetical impression it has left on them, or to absorb its atmosphere or setting for heightened identification. Serendipitous film tourists are more likely to rationally disengage themselves from the backdrop,

while specific film tourists might, even consciously, ignore that they are motivated by a fictional story rather than by a concrete scenery.

Interestingly, this replacement of rationality with a projection does not diminish their attraction to the destination, or their personal motivation, even if they are usually very well informed about the film location, its history and topology. Their psychological profile is then related interestingly to the activities, techniques and power of destination marketing and promotion.

Destination Marketing and Promotion

Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) try to create an image of the location in the tourists' minds. They use different marketing activities or techniques, depending on the sequence of the film's showing and the related tourist travel.

Accordingly, the four relevant stages are firstly the time when the potential tourists are still at home before traveling, secondly when they are on the way and traveling to the location, thirdly when they have arrived at their destination, and finally when they have returned home again to process their experiences (Beeton, 2016: 51-60; Connell, 2009; Croy and Heitmann, 2001: 194-196; Siripis, Scarles and Airey, 2013; Vagionis and Loumioti, 2011: 355; Zoeteman, 2011).

When they are still at home, the DMO's main promotion techniques will consist of media advertising in all forms to re-activate the movie experience, such as travel shows, brochures, or internet advertisement. When the tourists are on the way, their focus will be on highly visible outposts such as billboards, tourist reception and information centers, or interactive media.

With the tourists on site, the real physical experience is complemented with hands-on marketing such as maps, cultural training and interaction advice, or round-up media transmissions.

Finally, post-consumption of the experience is facilitated with souvenirs, memorabilia, photo development or advanced viewing technology in form of tie-in products such as high-resolution screens (Siripis, Scarles and Airey, 2013; Vagionis and Loumioti, 2011: 356-357; Zoeteman, 2011).

Effects of Films on Tourism

Direct and causal influences of films on tourist numbers are by their nature difficult to measure, so evidence is mostly circumstantial. For instance, it is said that the 1935 film *Mutiny on the Bounty* was one of the first feature films to cause major location tourism, in this case to Tahiti (Roesch, 2009: 8).

Actual measurements have however even been taken for *The Sound of Music*: out of 300,000 yearly film tourists to Vienna, 70% claim that film musical as the main motivation for their visit (Beeton, 2016: 34; Roesch, 2009: 8).

As another example, several events increased Australia's tourist value in the 1980s, such as the Commonwealth Games, the Australian Grand Prix, or the World Expo. This period also saw the release of some of the best-known and profitable films in Australian film history, such as *Mad Max* and the mentioned *The Man from Snowy River* and *Crocodile Dundee* (Beeton, 2016: 27-28).

In the same period, American tourism to Australia increased by 25%, more than in any other developed country, while horseback tourism even increased ten-fold. Incidentally, during this period Australian film exports were nationally encouraged and subsidized, with the explicit goal to drive tourism (Beeton, 2006: 183, 185).

Other locations have reported significant rises in tourist numbers up to three years after a film's release. Examples of locations with growth rates between 150% and 300% are The Wallace Monument in Scotland after *Braveheart*, National Park in Sydney after *Mission Impossible II*, or Lyme Park and Amersham in England after *Pride and Prejudice* and *Four Weddings and a Funeral*.

Interestingly in this context, research points out that while an attractive plot can enhance tourist motivation to visit the film's sites, the plot does not in itself have to be attractive to entice location travel; the attraction of the film's action or its backdrop can all by themselves trump even negative, sad or tragic plot developments (Beeton, 2016: 27-29; Roesch, 2009: 32).

Examples of plots positively influencing tourists' attraction to the film's landscape is the *Lord of the Ring* trilogy filmed in New Zealand, while *Titanic* seems to have propelled cruise travel unimpeded by the tragedy in history and on screen (Beeton, 2016: 43-45, 120-123; Beeton, 2006: 183; Connell, 2009; Filmby Aarhus, 2012; Hamzah, Aminudin, Mustapha and Ismail, 2016: 455; Ţuclea and Nistoreanu, 2001: 28).

Other Consequences of Film Tourism and Media-Induced Tourism

Any visual media production can improve from valuable insights that tourists give the producers with their inquiries, ideas, or location requests and suggestions. A location can benefit from an improved image due to its successful promotion, which can affect the region's economic status by attracting new businesses, or by improving its employment, transportation, infrastructure, or hospitality value (Croy and Heitmann, 2011: 194-196; Roesch, 2009: 49-52; Ţuclea and Nistoreanu, 2001: 29; Zoeteman, 2011).

Film tourism can also mitigate the up-and-down effects of seasonal tourism due to the availability of the location year-round. Yet increased tourism to the area might erode exactly the attraction that the film created, such as pristine nature or untouched surroundings.

Social costs might include disturbance of those residents living in or around the filming location, furthermore vandalism, capacity problems, traffic congestions, environmental pollution, price inflation during filming, an overflow of kitschy and overpriced souvenirs and memorabilia, crews leaving behind set pieces, and locals' feelings of abandonment with their problems after filming (Beeton, 2006: 184; Connell, 2009; Croy and Heitmann, 2011: 196-199; Roesch, 2009: 52-53; Zoteman, 2011).

It will be up to film tourists, film productions, and film locations to manage their relationship in ways that brings out the best in, and for each of them. With film, media and tourism increasingly interconnected in our globalized world, each will have the power and the responsibility to further shape and develop their relationship.

CONCLUSIONS

The relationship between film and tourism, and between film, media, and tourism, promises to become ever more relevant in our ever more media-shaped and ever more globalized world. The student numbers for film and media studies are rising worldwide. This trend is generally seen as positive by film and media representatives, such as movie or television producers, or university and college film studies departments.

However, it is occasionally and in certain aspects deplored by representatives of traditional media studies, such as university departments of Comparative Literature or Art History. Others reconcile the traditional and modern

media areas by invoking that they share the same field, just with different artistic and technical requirements and expressions.

Given the interwoven character of literary and filmic productions, as also highlighted earlier, we can expect tourism to play an increasing role in mediating, connecting and even advancing our views on literary and visual arts and creations.

This due to tourism being a global key industry in the 21st century, which happens to connect people on several levels, the physical mobility being one of them, enabling mental mobility and creative and productive insights and outputs to shape our understanding of all fields involved: of tourists and their specific cultural travel motivations, of film aficionados and their willingness to personally and in real life act out, but also to consume the previously admired and more passively consumed on-screen scenarios, and of both the tourism and the film industries to relate their knowledge of these interrelationships for their own and maybe also for altruistic purposes.

Finally, the psychological profiles, motivations, influences, manipulations and advantages of all players involved will also deserve closer and ever more detailed examination and explanation. From educational, economic, social, ecological, artistic and creative points of view, sharing our human interests and inspirations with current and future generations might be one of the most moving tasks and images we can accomplish during the stories of our lives.

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