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MOVIE INDUCED TOURISM: A NEW TOURISM PHENOMENON

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Abstract:

At the turn of the century, the tourism industry underwent a transformation triggered by the sweeping processes of globalization. The traditional forms of tourism were supplemented and expanded by the introduction of new postmodern tourist forms, bringing new and different tourist offers to the marketplace. One of these new forms is the film tourism, a rapidly growing and important new tourism trend, in which the choice of the tourist destination is directly motivated and inspired by the movies. Film tourism establishes a link between the movie characters, locations and stories, and the film-tourists, who are inspired to immerse themselves and relive again the movie-generated and movie-driven emotions at the location of the movie. The film tourism increases the overall economic effects of tourism and establishes a new link between the film and the tourism industry, both of which provide not only pleasure and satisfaction for the film tourist, but also spiritual enrichment and novel learning experience.

Keywords: film, tourism, tourist, location, character, film studio.

JEL classification: L82; L83

INTRODUCTION

The desire to travel is as well a desire to get away from the monotony of everyday life, to break daily habits, to stop the time, to experience a novelty and variety - something that will confirm our existence. To be somewhere else together with other people in another climate and environment means to be a part of another story and another experience. Everyone fulfils these wishes in their own personalised and unique way.

Some of the most well-known and still expanding world industries that can satisfy this drive, in an almost identical way, but through different means, are certainly film and tourism.

In the former case, while watching a movie, one enters a new world and a new story, meeting new heroes and characters, thereby experiencing a variety of emotions. Within a two hours projection, one partly satisfies their need to get away from the reality, free of charge, without leaving their living room.

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In the latter case, one physically visits another place, a reality surrounded by attributes at their choice. To do so, one needs to travel, leaving their home and allotting financial means that would enable them to make their desire come true.

Both film and tourism are basically industries that offer an opportunity to relive or experience, see and learn novelties through entertainment and pleasure.

The latest world research trends are exactly in the direction of merging and teaming up these two sectors that already have similar goals. These researches have started when tourist influx data showed an ascending movement caused exactly by a popularity of a certain movie. Certain movies have been noted to impact tourist trends. These movies were neither produced with such an intention nor aimed at increasing tourist influx. They were no marketing or tourist campaigns or advertisements for certain places or regions. Their screening, however, 'incidentally' induced a drastic change of tourist migrations to the sites screened. This 'incidental phenomenon' motivated the tourist sector to commence a research, and it was only by the end of the nineties that it acquired its new name *movie-induced tourism*.

Certainly, this tourist segment falls under the umbrella of cultural tourism, like all of its precursors (fine arts, literature, etc.). This new trend presents even a bigger challenge, particularly for the tourist sector, taking into account not only the economic impact of each branch alone, but also the economic impact coming out of their joined forces. Henceforth, new researches have begun involving the other stakeholder - the film sector. A need to involve other institutions automatically rises up in order to link these two sectors at the state level.

Therefore, it is necessary to start building an 'intentional' strategy in the film-induced tourism. One of the leading countries carrying out in-depth researches and offering recommendations at state level concerning film-induced tourism is the United Kingdom (Olsberg 2007). A key finding coming out of this research is that "both film and television contribute to wider 'branding' of UK people, society and culture, which has a very strong influence on creating a desire to travel".

The country seriously takes into account the influence of film upon tourism not only because of its worldwide promotion, but particularly because of its economic impact (*Rob Roy* and *Braveheart* alone led to a financial income of 30 million dollars solely through to tourism).

Other such examples are New Zealand and Australia, which became top tourist destinations owing to the popularity of movies. The screening of movies such as *Piano*, *The Last Samurai*, *The Lord of the Rings* shot on the territory of New Zealand and *Crocodile Dandy*, *Mad Max* and *Mission Impossible 2* filmed in Australia triggered a boom of tourists in these countries.

World famous studios, producing numerous movies, are a tourist destination themselves, e.g., Hollywood and Bollywood, whereas Kustendorf and Nu Boyana could serve as an example within our neighborhood.

The increased number of visits of the film-cities Berlin and Budapest where many cult scenes of famous movies are shot is due exactly to this phenomenon.

One does not need to mention the countless number of TV series that unendingly reel on the world televisions and raise viewers' curiosity to closely discover and experience new people, new cultures and new customs and entice them to visit exactly the countries where they are produced.

This new tourist trend opens a new door both to future tourist and to employees within the film and tourist sector, and in particular to promoting an entire country with

all its spirit, resulting in the very reason of their existence — a positive economic impact.

In order to make a sound fusion between these two branches and fully exploit their benefits (both economic and promotional), it is necessary to understand the principle which the film tourism operates on, that is the exact way in which the film influences viewers (the future tourists) and their decision making when choosing a certain tourist destination.

ANALYSIS OF FILM TOURISM

There is a wide range of explanations and definitions of **film tourism**. Basically, it is a film-induced tourism:

1. On-location tourism that follows the success of a movie made (or set) in a particular region (Beeton 2005)
2. This newly defined tourism niche refers to a post-modern experience of a place that has been depicted in some form of media presentation - an experience that is highly personalised and unique to each individual based on their own interpretation and consumption of media images. (Macionis 2004)

The second definition provides an explanation of the cause of this phenomenon, as it is more related to the consumer's individual experiences of film locations and leads to its deeper analysis.

In that sense, the terms of film tourist and tourist film destinations need to be defined, as they are constituent segments of film tourism.

Film tourists are tourists whose travel motivation was film-induced.

Tourist film destinations are exclusively related to places, locations, events and characters promoted on the cinema screen.

Travel motivation becomes a main research subject for many tourist theoreticians. There are many theories providing some answers to this topic, none of them full and complete; however, each subsequent search for a new answer initiates a new and further investigation.

What induces the tourist in their choice of a destination, besides marketing means and their previous experiences?

Indirect tourist stimuli, like the movie, could also influence the destination choice. Over the last 10 years there have been a variety of analyses on the exact manner in which the films influence the tourists in their choice of a certain destination. They are, however, never complete because they deal with the unbounded nature of a more profound human psychological sphere. And it is even more so in this case which deals with the individual privacy and emotions that play a major role in choosing a destination.

In his paper, titled *Understanding the Film-Induced Tourist*, 2004, Macionis explains this phenomenon through the "push and pull" theory (Dann 1977). Pull factors are those which attract a tourist to a given destination (e.g., sunshine, beach, sea), whereas push factors are the ones predisposing the tourist to travel (nostalgia, fantasy, romance, self-actualisation).

In the case of the film-induced tourism, the "3 P's" concept — place, personality, performance — represents the pull factor, whereas its impact on motivation – fantasy,

escape, status, prestige, search for self-identity, ego enhancement, vicarious experience of the tourist - represents the push factor.

FILM TOURISTS, 3P's PHENOMENON, "PUSH-PULL" FACTOR

According to Macionis (*Understanding the Film-Induced Tourist*, 2004), there are three types of film tourists:

- serendipitous
- general
- specific

The more an individual becomes a specifically motivated film-induced tourist, the greater the need to search for self-actualisation. For such a tourist, visiting chosen film sites represents a personal reward (Table 1).

Table 1. Continuum of Film-Induced Motivation

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <i>Increasing interest in film</i> | | |
| Serendipitous Film Tourists | General Film Tourists | Specific Film Tourists |
| Those who just happen to be in a destination portrayed in a film | Those who are not specifically drawn to a film location, but who participate in film tourism activities while at a destination | Those who actively seek out places that they have seen in film |
| motivations: | motivations: | motivations: |
| Social interaction Novelty | Novelty Education Nostalgia | Self-actualisation Pilgrimage Self-identity Fantasy Romance Nostalgia |
| <i>Increasing self-actualisation motivations</i> | | |
| <i>Decreasing importance of authenticity</i> | | |
| <i>Increasing importance of Push Factors</i> | | |

Unlike traditional tourist, the film-induced tourist, according to Macionis, is not very much concerned about authenticity. Film-induced tourist replaces authenticity with something personal. When choosing a destination, traditional tourist places crucial meaning to authenticity, whereas the film-induced tourist to the film, since the seen place, storyline and the character remain in their memory as they have seen and experienced them. Thus, the need for authenticity for the film-induced tourist is decreased (Table 1) and replaced with their fantasy.

The "3P's" concept (pull factor) actually involves the three important attributes due to which a film-induced tourist decides on a certain destination.

a. Place

- shown (seen) on a movie or television
- **location** where the movie is shot (or a particular scene), fictional or true, or a location which, due to its tourist attraction, also becomes a film location
- **studios**, sets of large proportions that are tourist attractions in themselves (Hollywood)

The desire is to visit a place which becomes appealing because it was seen on a movie. The Piano film was also the first promoter of New Zealand's beaches (Waitakere region, Kareakare beach).

b. Performance

- country (region) where a movie or TV series is produced that provokes tourist's curiosity (at the level of **screenplay**, **storyline**, customs, tradition).

The impact of the storyline (performance) could be explained as an escape from the real world and living through a vicarious experience seen on a movie, or a need to be a part of another storyline or screenplay, as part of the tourist's fantasy. The Steel Magnolias and Field of Dreams movies fall into this category of films.

c. Personality

- need to visit a place where famous **actors** (or main **characters**) played famous scenes (moment of identification).

Braveheart is a movie that has brought great tourist popularity to United Kingdom – Scotland, owing to its main protagonist, the hero character, William Wallace. Mick Dundee is a prototype for Australia, whereas Monte Carlo has been visited, among others, by fans of the famous agent 007, James Bond.

Table 2. Push and Pull Factors in Film Induced Tourism

| Pull factors Location | Personality | Performance | Push factors (Internal Drive) |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|---|
| Location attributes | | | |
| Scenery | | | Ego enhancement |
| Landscapes | Cast | Plot | Status/Prestige |
| Climate | Characters | Theme | Fantasy/Escape |
| Cultural origin | Celebrities | Genre | Vicarious Experience |
| Social origin | (stars) | | Search for self-identity |
| Activity origin | | | |

In terms of investigating push factors (internal drives) of film tourist, according to Macionis, there is a range of possible motivations: ego-enhancement, fantasy/escape, status/prestige, and need for self-identification. The critical internal drive or push motivation of a film tourist is the tourist gaze of a film. Beeton defines this as a seek-out for landscapes, people, experiences and fantasies portrayed through films. Attractions seen in a movie are not associated only with the allure of filmed landscapes, but also with reasons for travel, escape and nostalgia. People travel because they are pushed by their internal motivations and simultaneously pulled by external forces of

the destination attributes. Hereby, it turns out that the more one is a film tourist, the greater the importance of push factors (Table 1— at the end of this continuum, the specific film tourist must physically be present in the image seen in their favourite film and relive their favourite moments /scenes).

CONCLUSION

Understanding the essence of this type of tourism could have an impact on future post-modern tourist trends. It is a fact that film-induced tourism becomes a significant part of the tourist market. A large portion of analyses and researches on film-induced tourism are in terms of understanding film impact on potential film tourist. This generates an exceptional possibility to create a new film-induced tourism strategy, which in many countries has already become factual, as they have already perceived the enormous importance of this post-modern tourist trend:

1. Increase of cultural value of a film location. (Film is a medium communicating with a range of cultural meanings and values. Many heritage sites that serve as film locations gain popularity, because these places acquire particular meanings through film narration)
2. Enhancement of a destination image and increase of awareness for the host city.
3. Compensation for seasonality problem in the tourism (film locations can be all-year, all-weather attractions).
4. Locating certain destination in a film is an attractive marketing drive that results in an increase of tourist numbers, succeeding where traditional marketing efforts fail.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FILM-INDUCED TOURISM FOR REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Having been introduced to the powerful impact of movie on tourist destinations and their image, it is impossible not to directly consider the Republic of Macedonia. For the Republic of Macedonia, a good strategic campaign is more than necessary - in terms of strengthening its image (historical, cultural and traditional), and in particular regarding tourist context. All the past campaigns have remained without any clear feedback by the consumer. Except for the data of the State Statistical Office, according to which the number of tourists in the period January-July 2010 decreased compared to the number for the same period in 2009 — domestic tourists decreased by 2.4%, foreign tourists by 3.6%; number of nights spent by domestic tourists decreased by 2.2%, while those by foreign tourist decreased by 5.1% - there are no other relevant data on the campaigns impact.

Tourism, as a distinct branch, is one of the most immediate promoters of Macedonia as an attractive destination. However, without a full media support and collaboration, tourism remains to struggle on its own, left to the mercy of individual campaigns and efforts to attract tourists.

The situation in the film sector (competition criteria for feature films announced by the Film Fund, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia no.70/06, Article 2 of the Rulebook) indicates more an incidental strategy than a strategically organised goal.

In terms of a worldwide image of the Republic of Macedonia, film-induced tourism becomes a significant area that might wisely and efficiently help in that sense. If the problem of the Republic of Macedonia is identified through the prism of film-induced tourism (lack of foreign co-productions, absence of promotion of cultural, historical and traditional values via feature movies, absence of a nation branding strategy via feature film, lack of statistics on the impact of Macedonian film on promotion of the Republic of Macedonia), then necessary steps for its resolution could be undertaken.

Macedonian film history is not at all shorter than any other one. Macedonian cultural, historical, traditional and natural treasures are attractions themselves, and placed in a context of a film storyline could even add up to their appealing effect. Having recognized the enormous impact of film and television upon wider branding of its people, society and culture, British film strategy agency Olsberg/SPI, in its in-depth research on film impact on tourism in the United Kingdom, offers recommendations and guidelines for building the country's future film tourist strategy. A number of films are pointed out that have gained the status as cult and timeless in terms of their significance, besides their commercial and touristic effects (which was not the intention behind their production): *Braveheart*, *Rob Roy*, *Loch Ness*, *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, *Notting Hill*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Harry Potter*.

In the Macedonian long, but rather poor film history, there are still films that could obviously compare hypothetically to the above mentioned ones. From the period of transition, such movies are Antonio Mitrikeski's *Across the Lake* and Mitko Panov's *The War is Over*. By chance or not, both directors belong to the same generation and both graduated from the Lodz Film Academy in Poland. Their talent, persistence and professionalism as well their analytic capability and courage to undertake topics and genres communicating in a familiar film language are an encouragement to reflect further on the idea of creating a film tourist strategy for the Republic of Macedonia. A strategy that would link experts from both film and tourist sectors in order to promote and brand the Republic of Macedonia as a desired destination via feature film. Finally, one should not disregard the reason behind the increased interest in research on film-induced tourism in the recent twenty years - its positive economic benefit.

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