

# **THE ROLE OF CINEMA ON THE TOURIST DESTINATION IMAGE FORMATION PROCESS: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS**

## **ABSTRACT**

Tourism literature widely acknowledges that images of tourist destinations are a product of all the experiences of an individual, being influenced by a series of information sources, of both commercial and spontaneous natures. Among the spontaneous ones, figure a list of cultural products, such as the cinema. In this context, since the films are autonomous information sources, which in theory are not associated with the tourist market interests, the information they transmit is perceived as more reliable than conventional publicity. Thus, cinema acts directly on the organic image, the one not influenced by advertising efforts, creating and perpetuating associations about the places it depicts on the collective imagery. This situation may result in conflicts between the stakeholders of cinema and tourism, which can have different or even antagonist interests. In this context, the present article aims to provide a bibliographical state of the art about the influence of films on the tourist destinations' image, contextualizing the cinema on the image formation process. It also seeks to highlight opportunities for the tourism stakeholders, listing good practices and success cases of the relationship between cinema and destination marketing.

**Key-words:** cinema, tourist destination image, destination marketing.

## **RESUMO**

É amplamente reconhecido na literatura que a imagem dos destinos turísticos é produto de todas as experiências do indivíduo, estando sujeita a influências de uma série de fontes de informações, tanto de carácter comercial como espontâneo. Nestas últimas, estão incluídos diversos produtos da indústria cultural, entre estes, o cinema. Neste contexto, sendo os filmes agentes autónomos, ou seja, teoricamente não associados a interesses do mercado turístico, as informações que veiculam são percebidas como mais credíveis que a publicidade convencional. Desta forma, o cinema age diretamente sobre a imagem orgânica, aquela não influenciada por esforços publicitários, criando e perpetuando associações no imaginário coletivo sobre os lugares que retrata. Tal situação pode gerar conflitos entre os stakeholders do cinema e os do turismo, que podem ter interesses diferentes ou mesmo antagônicos. Neste contexto, o presente artigo visa realizar um levantamento bibliográfico sobre a influência dos filmes na imagem dos destinos turísticos, contextualizando o papel do cinema no processo de formação, além de destacar as oportunidades para stakeholders do turismo, listando boas práticas e casos de sucesso na relação do marketing de destino com o cinema.

**Palavras chave:** cinema, imagem de destinos turísticos, marketing de destinos.

## **1. Introduction**

The image of tourist destinations is the product of all the experiences of an individual. As such, it may be influenced by a series of information sources from both commercial and spontaneous nature. Amongst the latter, figure all kinds of products of the cultural industry, including movies. Therefore, media products promote, confirm and reinforce the images their public hold of the places they depict, playing an essential role on the destination image formation process (Bozbay, 2008; Campo, Brea, & Muñiz, 2011; Shani, Wang, Hudson, & Gil, 2009).

The films in particular serve as a source of information about destinations, since they generate awareness, and thus directly influence their organic images. Besides that, films can create positive associations and aggregate value to a place. When such influence motivates visitation the phenomenon of film tourism is characterized. It consists on the visit to a destination or attraction as a result of its depiction on a film (Beeton, 2005; Connel, 2012; Hudson & Ritchie, 2006).

In this context, films can be faced as an effective tool to change the image of destinations and generate visit intentions. Thus, the present article aims to gather a significant body of knowledge about the influence of cinema on the image of tourist destinations, exploiting their role on the image formation process, as well as highlight the opportunities for the stakeholders interested on the tourism activity and examples of good practices to take advantage of these opportunities.

To do so, an extensive literature review was performed, especially on papers about the destination image and diverse aspects of film tourism, focusing on the role of this phenomenon on the destination image formation process. Such review confirmed the importance of films on the tourist destination image formation process, unfolding as well several suggestions and success cases on the relationship between destinations and movies.

It is expected that this joint of knowledge will be useful to the stakeholders involved on the film tourism phenomenon, especially those whose interests lay upon the tourism at the destination depicted. Thus, the study is intended to generate the necessary expertise for these stakeholders to take the best benefit from the opportunities created by film tourism.

## **2. Tourist Destination Image Formation**

The mental image, as a cognitive function of the brain, consists in a joint of supposed knowledge about the world that surrounds the person who holds this image (Boulding, 1956). Such set of truths includes, among others, information about places other than the one where the person lives, which is denominated “tourist destination image”, since any place is a potential tourist destination. In this context, for the purpose of this work, the definition of destination image adopted is the one brought by Baloglu & McCleary (1999), according to whom, it is an atitudinal construction that consists on the mental representation of the knowledge (beliefs), feelings and the general impression of a person about a place.

The image of destinations is subject to the influence of information from different sources, including those of commercial, as well as spontaneous nature. Gunn (1972) divides the image based on each one of those sources in three categories: organic, which is based on sources

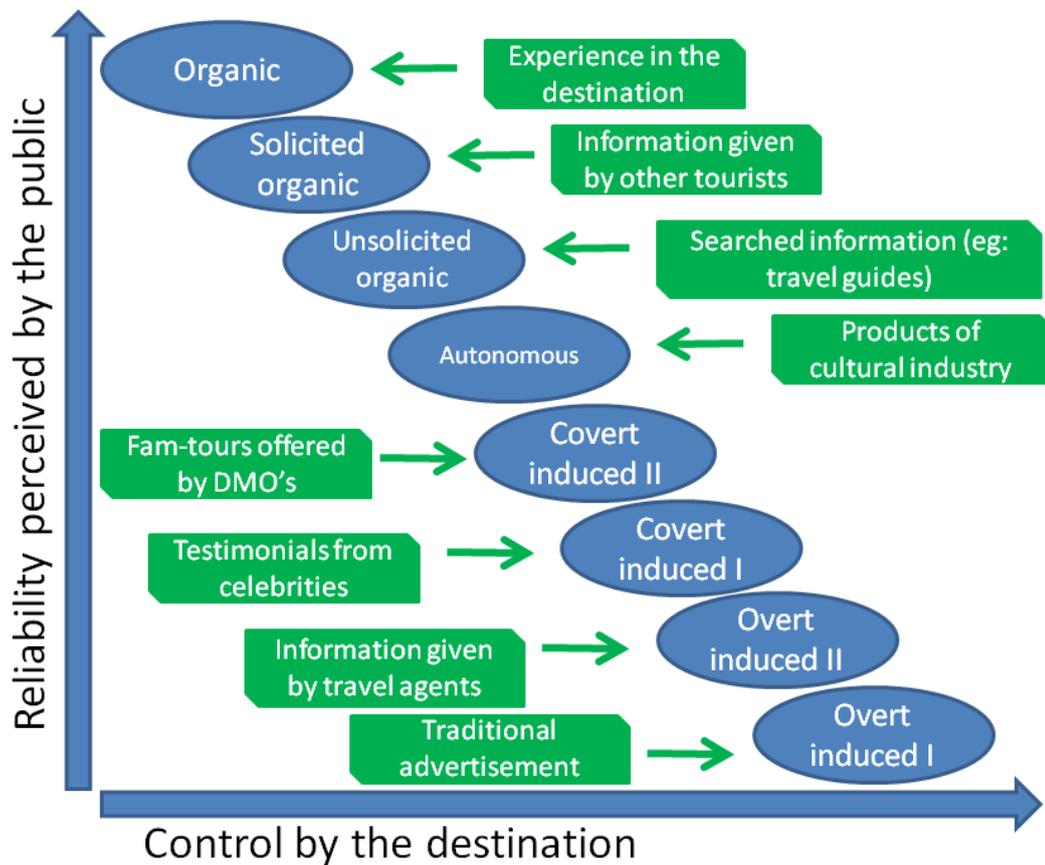
unassociated with the tourism interests; induced, which is the product of advertising efforts; and complex, the sum of the two former categories. The first one is perceived as more reliable, due to its non-commercial nature (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Campo, Brea & Muñiz, 2011, 2011; Hudson & Ritchie, 2006; Hudson, Wang, & Gil, 2011; Kim & Richardson, 2003; Shani, et al., 2009).

A more detailed division is proposed by Gartner (*apud*. MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997), who presents eight categories of destination image formation agents, which vary in levels of control by the promoter of the image and reliability perceived by the public. Those variables are inversely proportional, as demonstrated on Figure 1.

This hierarchy is supported by Beerli & Martín (2004), who state that autonomous and organic sources exert greater influence on the destination image formation than the advertisement promoted by the destination itself.

Besides the different sources of information, destination images are also formed by different ways of processing that information. However, there are differences among the academic visions about the components that integrate this image (Gallarza, Saura, & García, 2002). Aiming to ease this lack of theoretical consistency, Echtner & Ritchie (2003) proposed a multidimensional model for the definition and measurement of the tourist destination image, graphically represented on Figure 2. According to this model, the image formation can range between extremes of three dimensions: “formed by attributes / holistic”, “formed by functional characteristics / formed by phsycological characteristics”, “formed by common traits / marked by unique features”.

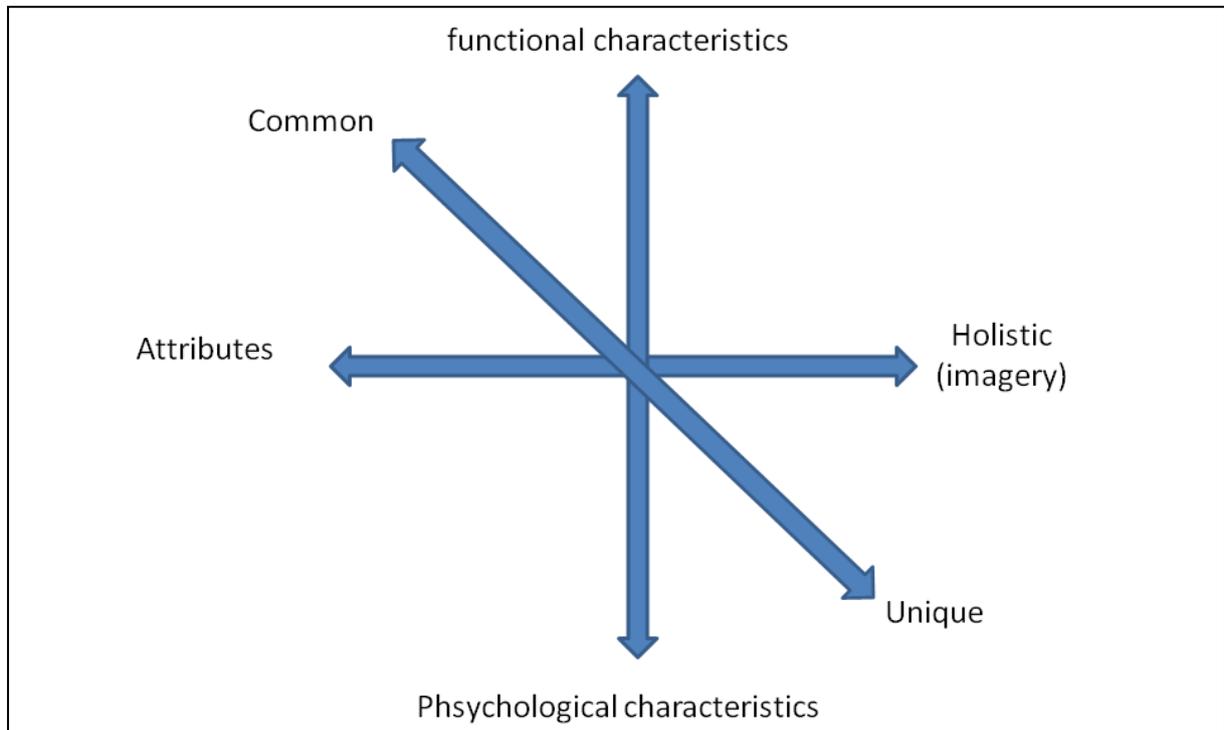
**Figure 1:** Destination image formation agents



Source: the author, adapted from Gartner (MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997)

The latter study of Bigné, Sánchez & Blas (et. al., 2009), confirms the importance of considering the affective evaluations as well, originating a new dimension: “formed by cognitive evaluation / formed by affective evaluation”. The consideration of these two extremes has a great importance on understanding the influence of films on the destination image, which occurs both by cognitive and affective evaluations.

**Figure 2:** Tridimensional model for definition and measurement of the tourist destination image



Source: Adapted from Echtner & Ritchie (2003)

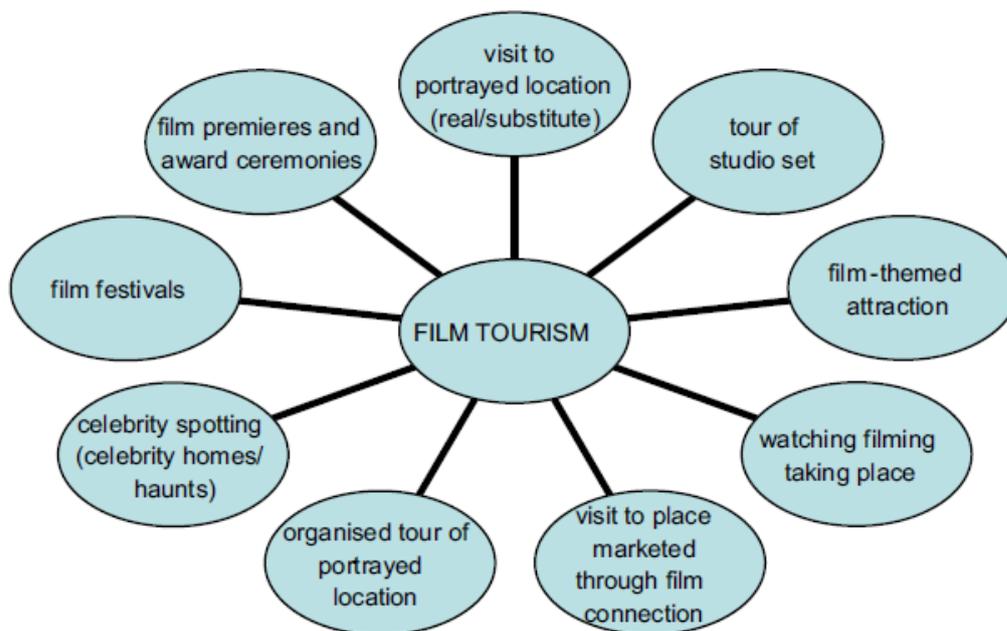
### 3. The Role of Cinema

The mass communication agents promote, confirm and reinforce the images their public holds of the places they depict. Doing so, they play an important role on the tourist destination image formation and destination decision making process (Campo, Brea & Muñiz, 2011, 2011; Shani, et al., 2009). As media Products, films can also influence the behavior of its spectators. When this influence includes their impression and desire to visit a tourist destination, the phenomenon of film tourism is characterized. Film tourism relates to any

movement of people directly or indirectly motivated by audio-visual products (Beeton, 2005; Connell, 2012; Hudson & Ritchie, 2006). Therefore, it includes various kinds of motivations and trip modalities, as shown in Figure 3.

In order to comprehend the characteristics of this phenomenon, as well as the specific dynamics resulting of the effects of the moving image on the spectators' mind concerning to the places depicted, film tourism has been intensely studied, especially in the last decade. Conell (2012) divides the speeches found on film tourism literature in two categories: the first one features a totally applied approach, while the second one presents a conceptual/theoretical focus. Table 1 presents the main studies of each category used on this literature review.

**Figure 3:** The scope of film tourism



Fonte: Conell (2012)

**Table 1:** Main themes of film tourism literature

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Examples of studies</b>
<b>1° speech: applied studies</b>	
<b>The influence of a film on the image that a specific public holds of a destination</b>	Warnick, Bojanic & Siriangukul (2006), Shani (et. al., 2008); Hahm & Wang (2011)
<b>The impact of a film on the image that it's public hold of the destination depicted</b>	Campo, Brea & Muñiz (2011)
<b>The influence of a film on the image and visit intention that different publics hold of a destination</b>	Hudson, Wang & Gil (2011)
<b>The role of a movie on the attraction of tourists to the depicted place</b>	Im & Chon (2008);
<b>Marketing opportunities generated by film tourism</b>	Hudson & Ritchie (2009)
<b>Integration between film tourism and destination branding</b>	Croy (2010), O'Connor & Bolan (2008), O'Connor, Flanagan & Gilbert (2008), O'Connor, Flanagan & Gilbert (2012)
<b>2° speech: theoretical studies</b>	
<b>Film tourism and the vicarious consumption of places in the post modern context</b>	Schofield (2006), Kim & Richardson (2003)
<b>Analysis of the motivations of the film tourist</b>	Macionis (2005), Jewell & McKinnon (2010)
<b>The relation between cinema, cognitive and affective images and destination familiarity</b>	Kim & Richardson (2003), Jewell & McKinnon (2010)
<b>Feelings involved on the film tourism experience</b>	Jewell & McKinnon (2010)

Source: The autor

The impact of cinematic productions on the places where they are filmed include direct and immediate ones, generated by the presence of filming crews; as well as more lasting and intangible effects, which are product of the demand generated as a consequence of the depiction or allusion to the destination on the film, which characterizes the film tourism phenomenon. In this context, the next topic approaches the main effects of films on the tourist destinations, focusing on their influence on the destination image formation.

### *3.1 Different effects*

As great part of the studies in the area shows, films influence the destination image (Campo, Brea & Muñiz, 2011; Hahm & Wang, 2011; Hudson & Ritchie, 2006; Hudson, Wang & Gil, 2011; Kim & Richardson, 2003; O'Connor, Flanagan, & Gilbert, 2008; Noëlle O'Connor, Flanagan, & Gilbert, 2010; Shani, et al., 2009), specially in the absence of visitation; as well as the destination decision making process (Beeton, 2004; Hudson & Ritchie, 2006; Hudson, Wang & Gil, 2011; O'Connor, Flanagan & Gilbert, 2008); and finally, the amount and the profile of tourists visiting the destination (Croy, 2010; Hudson & Ritchie, 2006; Hudson, Wang & Gil, 2011; Im & Chon, 2008; Jewell & McKinnon, 2008; O'Connor & Bolan, 2008; O'Connor, Flanagan & Gilbert, 2008; Shani, et al., 2009), with all the consequences this entails.

The first study to investigate the relationship between film tourism and destination image was accomplished by Kim & Richards (2003), who using an experimental model, concluded that people who had seen the film “*The sound of music*” had greater interest in visiting Vienna than the ones who had not, besides confirming differences between the destination image held by the two groups.

However, a similar study performed by Warnick, Bojanic & Siriangkul (2006) concluded that the fact of having watched the film “*The beach*” didn’t increase the intention of visiting Thailand, although the country's image was changed, both negative and positive. This proves that the effects of films on the destinations they depict vary from case to case.

One of the studies that most clearly confirmed the influence of a film on a destination’s image was the one realized by Campo, Brea & Muñiz (2011), who studied the effects of the film “*Vicky Cristina Barcelona*” on Barcelona’s destination image. The study found that the images that contribute to the positioning of the destination in the mind of the consumer were significantly different after viewing the film.

This result supports the idea that the way a destination is represented in a film can have an enormous influence throughout the world, helping to perpetuate an image and a particular view. It is inferred from this that cinema can be considered a creative, innovative and strategically necessary factor for positioning tourist destinations in the minds of consumers (Campo, Brea & Muñiz, 2011; Kim & Richardson, 2003; O'Connor & Bolan, 2008; O'Connor, Flanagan & Gilbert, 2008; Şahbaz & Kiliçlar, 2009).

Gammack (2005) states that media products serve as information sources for places on which the public has little or no, which according to Im & Chon (2008) and Şahbaz & Kiliçlar (2009), can be perfectly applied to movies. Since films provide an initial awareness, Shani (et. al., 2009) defends the idea that, especially for distant and little known destinations, even a negative exposure in a film can be advantageous.

In a divergent view, several authors point out that the impacts of films on the destinations they portray are not always positive (Campo, Brea & Muñiz, 2011; Gammack, 2005; Hahm & Wang, 2011; Im & Chon, 2008), since if a movie, even popular, depicts a predominantly negative image about the place in question, it will not boost tourism in this place, and may even discourage it (Beeton, 2004; Campo, Brea & Muñiz, 2011; Kotler, Haider, & Rein, 1993; O'Connor, Flanagan & Gilbert, 2008).

In addition to the direct damage to the destination image, films can attract a profile and volume of tourists different from the ideal, and so cause the typical impacts of poorly planned mass tourism, as well as specific impacts, such as: replacing an existing market with a less profitable one; theft of objects related to films, leading to increasing of security issues; concentration of tourist activity in areas used as locations for the films, and difficulty to maintain the tourist demand over time due to over reliance on film tourism (Connell, 2012). Naturally, such impacts negatively influence once more the destination image.

It is so inferred that films can influence the image the public hold about the destination depicted in different ways, depending on the aspects highlighted. However, such influence goes beyond the mere exposition of landscapes. It may as well occur by one's identification with the characters for example.

This kind of attraction occurs through cognitive and psychological processes such as the formation of new cultural landscapes (Jewell & Mc Kinnon, 2008) and the vicarious consumption of places (Stern & Krakover, 1993; Schofield, 2006; Riley & Van Doren, 1992). It is also favored by the context of appreciation of symbolic values lived on the post-modern world (Kim & Richardson, 2003; Stern & Krakover, 1993). Such aspects may influence even

the image of destinations that are not in fact depicted on the film, but represented by another place, what Conell (2012) denominates “place substitution”.

Nevertheless, the description of those processes is beyond the scope of this article. Hence, the next topic focuses directly on the role played by each element of a film on influencing the destination image.

### *3.3 Elements of influence*

Films affect the desire for visiting a destination through three elements: place, by portraying attributes, landscapes and canaries; personality, associated to the destination through the cast, the characters and the celebrities in the film; and performance, synthesized on the plot, the theme and the gender (Macionis, 2004). Various studies dedicate to define the weight of each one of those elements on the destination image.

The results of Shani (et. al., 2009) point to the possibility that the landscapes and cultural aspects depicted have greater relevance than the plot and the context in which it takes place. Thus, according to this author, in a film that portrays beautiful landscapes and social problems, the former would influence more the latter.

In a divergent view, Kim & Richardson (2003) state that the influence of films on the cognitive and affective images of tourist destinations tends to be consistent with the film’s content. Another relevant aspect of the study of Shani (et. al., 2009) is that 22 from the 34 attributes tested changed significantly after the participants saw the movie, while their general image remained relatively the same.

Associating this result to the tridimensional model for definition and measurement of the destination image proposed by Etchner & Ritchie (1993), it can be inferred that films have the potential to change the image when it's formed mostly by attributes, but has little effect on the holistic image. Thus, films are more efficient as a tourism marketing tool targeting the public that tends to form their destination image by the evaluation of individual attributes.

Another important aspect about films as a tool for destination marketing is their at least theoretical unbiased nature. This characteristic generates advantages to films as a destination image modification agent, which is better approached on the topic below.

### *3.3 Films x Conventional advertisement*

As a theoretically free from bias and interests autonomous publicity piece, films are perceived by tourists as more credible than traditional advertisement on what concerns to providing information about destinations (Campo, Brea & Muñoz, 2011; Hudson & Ritchie, 2006; Hudson, Wang & Gil, 2011; Kim & Richardson, 2003; Shani, et al., 2009), which increases their power of influence upon the image of those destinations.

Contextualizing the effect exerted by cinema on the tourist destination formation process proposed by Gunn (1972), it is concluded that films act on the organic image, helping to create it through vivid ideas, since it's recognized as less biased (Schofield, 1996). On the more detailed division proposed by Gartner (apud. MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997), cinema is classified as an autonomous source of information, as illustrated on Figure 4, since it's less manipulable, and consequently more reliable, than traditional advertisement, which figures as an overt induced I source.

For this reason, as well as for the personalization positional offered by cinema, the image induced by a film is memorized and retained more permanently than the one induced by advertisement (Riley & Van Doren, 1992), lasting for decades (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006).

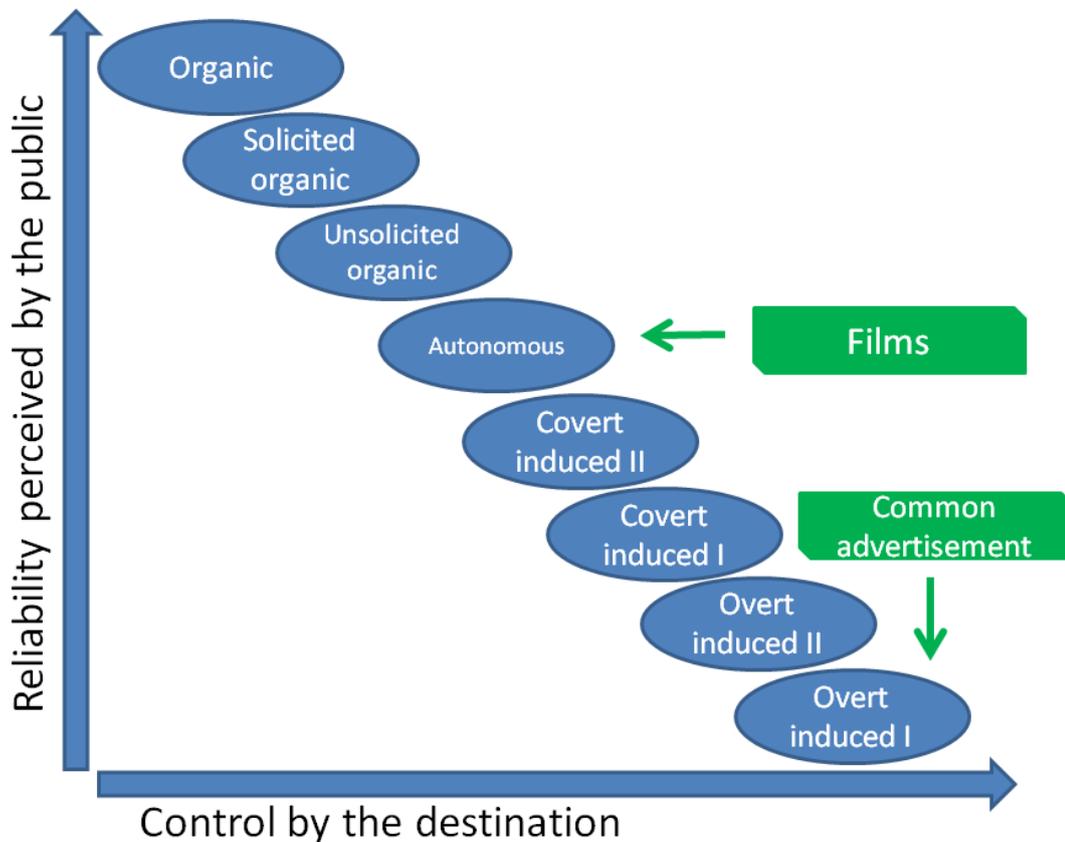
In addition to this, commercial films are potentially viewed by millions of people in the whole world, an audience unreachable by a regular tourism promotion campaign (Hudson, Wang & Gil, 2011). Thus comparing the effects of cinema on destination images with the ones of common touristic advertisement, it is concluded that the images influenced by films are perceived as more reliable, have a significantly greater range and last a lot more, as synthesized on Table 2.

**Table 2:** Comparison between the potential of films on influencing tourist destination images and the one of common advertisement

<b>Advertisements</b>	<b>Films</b>
Biased and little reliable	Free of bias and credible
Quickly forgotten	Lasts for decades
Limited range	Potentially seen by millions of people in the whole world

Fonte: The author, based on Campo, Brea & Muñiz, (2011), Hudson & Ritchie (2006); Hudson, Wang & Gil, (2011), Kim & Richardson (2003), (O'Connor, Flanagan & Gilbert, 2008) Riley & Van Doren (1992), Schofield (1996) e Shani (et al., 2009).

**Figure 4:** contextualization of films and traditional advertisement among the destination image Formation agents



Source: The author, based on Gartner (apud. MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997)

The contributions of the authors in this Chapter confirm the importance of films as influencers of the tourist destination image, as well as of the destination decision making process and the visitation itself. It is inferred from this that as a matter of such importance to the destination, cinema must not be neglected by managers, under penalty of suffering from potential impacts, besides losing valuable opportunities, which are described in the following chapter.

#### **4. Opportunities to the destination managers**

Since film tourism reaches a great variety of markets, it offers something to all kinds of consumers, just like films themselves. Therefore, Destination Management Organizations (DMO's) must use it as a platform for their marketing campaigns (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006). However, there are no some obstacles to the full exploitation of this powerful tool, which if not well handled, may lead films to produce the opposite effect

##### *4.1 Difficulties and conflicts*

A conflict between the interests of the stakeholders of the tourism and cinema is commonly verified. The former are concerned with the effects of films on the image of the place and the latter with the success of their productions (Beeton, 2004; O'Connor, Flanagan & Gilbert, 2008). Such objectives can sometime be antagonistic, as in the cases in which the creation of an interesting story includes highlighting, or even inventing negative aspects of the destination.

However, as Campo, Brea & Muñiz (2011) observe, if the purposes of the film producers are consistent with the ones of the DMO, a mid-term can be accorded, so the success of the film is compatible with the development of the desired destination image for its potential target market. Therefore, the challenge for destination marketing professionals is finding the best way to use images, stories and emotions to capture the attention of tourists and create a favorable brand image (Morgan & Prichard apud. O'Connor, Flanagan & Gilbert, 2008), although not having control upon those elements (Gunn, 1972; O'Connor, Flanagan & Gilbert, 2008).

When such alignment isn't made, DMO's might need to develop or adjust their image management strategy according to the way the destination is portrayed on films (Beeton, 2004; H. Kim & Richardson, 2003; Warnick, Bojanic & Siriangukul, 2006).

However, rather than having to adapt their strategies to the images transmitted by films without their participation, DMO's may work together with the film producers to ensure their interests. The next topic describes practices to be performed with this intention.

#### *4.2 Good practices*

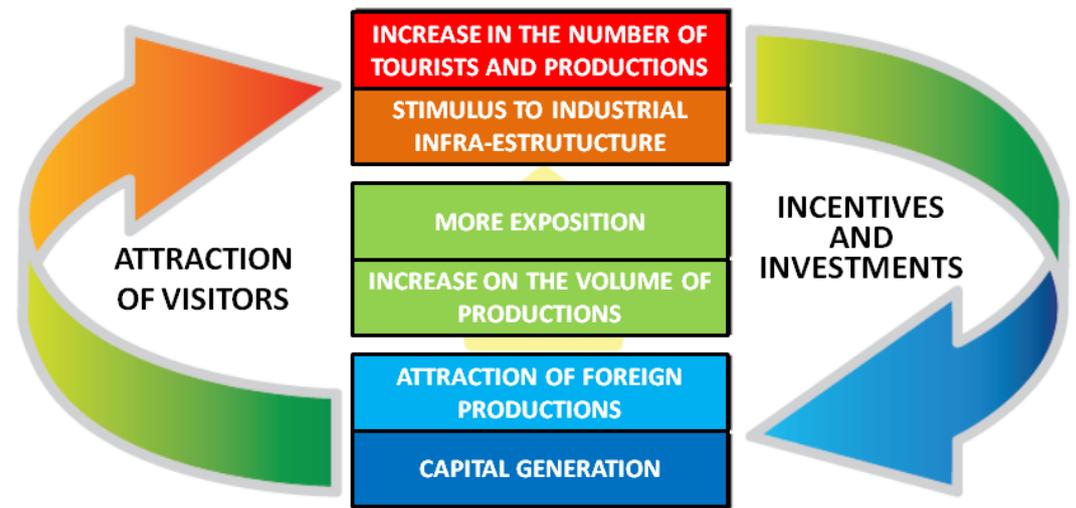
In order to optimize the effects of films on the destination image, some authors propose a close collaboration with the producers (Campo, Brea & Muñiz, 2011; Şahbaz & Kiliçlar, 2009), as well as the active sponsorship of productions, as this is the only way for DMO's to have some control over how the destination is depicted.

Other authors propose more specific attitudes and actions. For the phase before the interest of producers is even manifested, Shani (et. al., 2009) propose a pro active posture, reflected in an effort towards the attraction of film productions by offering tax breaks for studios interested in using the destination as a location.

Once the film is brought to the destination, Hahm & Wang (2011) suggest DMO representatives to be present on the pre-production, so they can ensure the film portrays the destination in a favorable way. For this same phase, the authors propose the maximization of publicity through the joint work with the film producers. For after the film is released, they suggest advertising efforts aiming to generate and reinforce the connection between film and destination, with emphasis on websites.

Figure 5 sensitizes the relationship between a cinematic production and tourism in the places used as location. It also covers the potential benefits and the techniques for attracting productions.

**Figure 5:** Relationship between a film Productions and tourism in the places used as location



Source: Adapted from MTUR, 2007

Despite the evidence of potential positive effects of the films as a complete and powerful tool for tourism marketing (Shani, et al., 2009), Croy (2010) draws attention to the fact that DMO's should not have expectations of sudden increases on tourist reception, observing that a larger awareness of the destination is already a great result.

The literature reviewed for the present work also provided examples of destinations that employed such practices with excellence, and thus the succeeded in managing their image using films as allies. The next topic presents some of these cases.

### 4.3 Success cases

Some positive results of films on tourist destinations are obtained spontaneously, as product of the simple depiction of hallmarks of the destination on the movie. This is the case of the “Devil’s Tower National Monument” to which the visitation increased 74% after its portrayal on the film “Close encounters of the third kind” (Beeton, 2004).

However, in most times, DMO’s have to make efforts aiming to optimize the effect of films on their destinations. This is the case of Australia, which started a new branding campaign for the international market before the movie “Australia” was released. The campaign was produced by Baz Luhrmann, the director of the movie itself (Hudson, Wang & Gil, 2011), and aimed to make the most advantage of it in what concerns to the country’s image as a tourist destination.

Other examples of good practices on film tourism are: the partnership between *Oahu Visit Bureau*, *Columbia Pictures* and an airline in an electronic marketing campaign aiming to increase visitation to the website of the film “50 first dates”, which had many scenes shot in the island. They raffled trips to Oahu (Hahm & Wang, 2011) in order to take advantage of the film image to create interest on visiting the destination.

Other examples are the “filming Miami” campaign, launched by Miami Conventions and Visitor Bureau (CVB) (Hahm & Wang, 2011; Hudson, Wang & Gil, 2011); and Austin Texas CVB’s Film Commissions (Hahm & Wang, 2011), both aiming to attract producers to shoot films in their cities; and the image management process performed by New Zealand’s tourism Ministry since before the beginning of the filming of “The Lord of the Rings” trilogy

(Connell, 2012; Croy, 2010; Hahm & Wang, 2011; Shani, et al., 2009), as well as they did with “The Piano” and “The Whale Rider” (Connell, 2012).

Depending on the marketing efforts that are made, the creation of positive associations to the place where the movie was filmed can occur even if it was only used as filming location, and the story happens in another real or fictitious place (Jewell & McKinnon, 2008). The greatest example of this phenomenon is the already cited case of New Zealand with “The Lord of the Rings” Trilogy, of which story takes place in an imaginary land.

The opposite can also happen. The image of a destination can make benefit also when the film isn't even shot there. Examples of this case are: “The Chronicles of Narnia: the lion, the witch and the wardrobe”, inspired on the homonymous romance that was inspired by the country, which however isn't portrayed in the movie (O'Connor & Bolan, 2008); and “Braveheart”, which even being mostly filmed on Ireland, drags thousands of tourists to Scotland (Kim & Richardson, 2003).

The results of those actions confirm the potential of films on generating benefits to tourist destination images. They demonstrate that, if in a spontaneous way, films can already positively affect those images; with proper planning those effects can be controlled in order to optimize its results.

## **5. Conclusions**

The present article aimed to perform a literature review about the influence of cinema in the image of tourist destinations, in order to gather the necessary body of knowledge to the wide understanding of this process in academic level. Thus, the study is also expected to be

considerably useful to managers interested on making the best benefit of this phenomenon, taking the most advantage of the opportunities it generates.

It is concluded by the contributions of the consulted authors that cinema has a great potential of influence on the image of tourist destinations. Comparing it with traditional tourism advertisement, it is confirmed that, as an organic source of information that can be seen by millions of people in the whole world and causes deep emotional stimuli, films are perceived as more credible, besides having a much bigger range and more lasting effects.

Although some authors claim that this exposition is always advantageous, the idea that the effect of films on the image of destinations occurs in different ways in each case is more accepted. Thus, it can have either positive or negative outcomes, which depend on the way the destination is portrayed and which of its aspects is highlighted.

It is worth to observe that not only negative exposition can cause negative effects. Even a positive exposition that attracts tourists of a profile and in a volume distinct from the desired may cause negative impacts, such as the replacement of the current demand with a less profitable one, the concentration of the activity on the places related to the movie and the impossibility of maintaining the demand over time (Conell, 2012).

Therefore, it is important for managers to consider the role of films in the tourist destination image formation process, since the carelessness concerning to its potential may not only make the destination lose various opportunities, but also let its image subject to the influence of a powerful agent upon which it has no control, what may lead to the cited negative effects.

In this context, the task of the destination marketing managers is to work together with the film producers in order to align their interests, ensuring that the films to be produced will transmit an appropriate image of the destination. Ideally, this work should go beyond this relationship with the ongoing films, including as well the attraction of new productions and the joint work with them since the pre-production phase, in order to ensure that positive associations between the film and the destination will be created.

The present article focused on the influence of the films on the tourist destination image, as well as on the ways by which destination managers can optimize their effects. However, it didn't approach the cognitive and psychological processes involved on the participation of films on the destination image formation. Further research could focus on those aspects, in order to provide managers an even more detailed and deepened comprehension of the role of films in the tourist destination image formation process.

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