**Cinematographic faces of Barcelona and the consumption of the city**

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**Abstract**

Over the past two decades, tourism research has recognized the power of films as generators and disseminators of a destination's tourism image (Croy, 2010), and films are, therefore, considered a relevant information source (Gartner, 1994). Hahm and Wang (2011) contend that cinema, together with other communication tools, plays an important role in influencing travel decision-making.

Other studies analyse patterns of tourism image that are transmitted through cinema (Busby and Haines, 2013; Croy, 2004; Tovar, 2014), and demonstrate that a particular film can increase tourism demand in a destination (Tooke and Baker, 1996; Iwashita, 2008). However, no studies focus on establishing a relationship between the image emitted through films and the consumption patterns of a destination.

Therefore, this paper aims to explore the relationship between the cinematographic image of a place and its tourist consumption. Barcelona is taken as a case study. The city's image is examined in a sample of films, and visitors' consumption patterns are analysed through official statistics.

Data collection was carried out using content analysis of 6 films (*All about my mother*; *L’auberge espagnole*; *Manuale d’amore* 2; *Vicky Cristina Barcelona*; *Biutiful*; and *Snowflake, the White Gorilla*). Two criteria were used to select films for inclusion in the sample: Firstly, films had to be set in Barcelona, where the city is the main scenario; secondly, films had to be projected internationally.

Results were twofold: firstly, images of emblematic nodes and spaces in the city, such as Sagrada Família, Parc Güell, La Rambla and so on, are widespread in the films. The main images of the city transmitted through films are based on the following values: modernist, multicultural, own identity, up to date, busy, clean, sunny, and vacation.

Secondly, after analysing visitors’ data from the official statistics, it can be seen that Barcelona is a multi-nodal and poly-nuclear city, in view of the large diversity of sights distributed in the various districts or quarters of the city.

Finally, it is corroborated that the main nodes that appear in the films coincide with the main sights visited in the city. Although it is difficult to determine a cause-effect, this coincidence confirms that tourists consume places that have been seen previously in various information sources, including films.

Future research should consider a demand study, which would determine the information sources used before travelling to the destination, with the aim of finding out the role that cinema plays in the perceived image of a destination.

**Keywords**: tourism image, cinema, information sources, poly-nuclear city, tourist consumption

**SHORT BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

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