

# ***CINEMA: An extraordinary tool for touristic promotion***

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*Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to talk to you about the relation between cinema and tourism. Although many would mistakenly think that their bonding is not at all strong, what I will try to show, is exactly the opposite. Cinematographic production and tourism are interrelated, that means that they affect one the other and that they are deeply connected.*

*So, to start with,*

the relative advantages of a country are:

- The particularity of its cultural inheritance
- The particularity of its natural landscape and
- The particularity of its modern image.

Therefore, a question arises; how a country, having taken advantage of the above, could develop useful possibilities which would directly benefit it socially and financially in the future?

Cinema nowadays,

- Is considered to be one of the most prominent mediums of promotion
- Consists one of the most famous cultural expressions.
- Represents cultural diversity, the traditions and the history of each country.

So Cinema can:

- Improve the brand name of a country
- Attract tourists.
- Can promote the country throughout the world.
- Can contribute to the promotion and development of tourism of each country.

In fact, it has been claimed that the promotion of a specific place is far more efficient through cinema than it is with advertisements. This is due to the fact that a film's duration is longer than that of a commercial; thus, the viewers are exposed for a longer period of time to a specific image of a country. Furthermore, in the case of films, the viewer has the possibility to re-watch the film in DVDs, television, or even in the Internet. In fact, according to the European Commission, television constitutes the most widely used medium for watching movies.

## **The relationship between tourism and cinema**

Audiovisual mediums has a strong role in marketing. We know very well the potential of films and series to influence the touristic destination choice of the viewers. A great percentage from the audience visits a specific place, having been attracted by its luring portrayal in films. This relation is known as film-induced tourism. This cinema-related kind of tourism is a new phenomenon that has been observed only 3 to 4 decades ago.

Its potential, however, is remarkable. This is also related to the fact that the creation of films is, in many countries, considered to be a useful tool for their promotion as touristic destinations (either with the use of commercials or with the creation of guide books).

In addition to the above, television series and cinema are considered to be the third more influential mediums (after family, friends and internet) for a person to decide his visiting destination. Statistically, more than one person out of ten is interested in visiting a country because of its projection in films or series.

## **The international experience of using Cinema as a tool for a countries Touristic promotion**

### **A. Marketing campaigns based on movies**

- A characteristic example of the idea mentioned above is the film *Lord of the Rings* (2009), which contributed to the promotion of New Zealand as a touristic attraction.
- A more recent example is a *New Zealand Airlines commercial* whose protagonists were based on *Hobbit* film.
- The touristic promotion of Australia worldwide includes areas in which films had been shot in the past.

### **B. Tourist Guides based on movies**

In Catalonia the "Catalan Tourist Board" has created a guide book (called Catalonia Movie Walks) which shows 175 different places where movies were filmed. This book also includes walks based on films that provide visitors with further understanding of the country's history and monuments.

Similar methods were also implemented in other countries. For example, for the touristic projection of Australia internationally, regions that had been projected in films in the past were used.

### **C. Raised touristic movement due to movie productions**

A crucial part of the researchers has attempted to estimate this film-related influence in many different touristic destinations. For instance, the projection of Turkish television series in the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Russia had led to the rise of tourism in Turkey.

Significant increase had also been observed in the United Kingdom (In Alnwick Castle) where Harry Potter was filmed. In general, it has been estimated that approximately 10% (percent) of the incoming tourists in the United Kingdom (an expense of 3,2 billion dollars) are related to the British film production.

In Canada, respectively, the "Yukon Tourism" company had participated in the production of the film *Le Dernier Trappeur* in Italy and France. The movie was originally filmed in English, but it was later on translated to French, German and Italian and exported to those countries since they were attracting a lot of interest to visitors. It is essential that at the beginning of the film a short message would inform the audience that *Le Dernier Trappeur* was filmed in *that* specific region of Canada. Thus, the relation that bonds cinema with the touristic promotion of a country is evident.

A special example of this assumption, is the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy that increased up to 40% the tourists' visits in Wellington. This city has now become an important destination for tourists and has developed its own film industry.

In fact, the film industry in Wellington bloomed because of the encouraging tax motives of the government as well as the subventions provided. In a few words, the films produced had 670 million dollars income in 2012, (more than double the income earned a year before). At the same time, Wellington was promoted as a touristic destination. As a result, Wellington is now usually referred as "Wellywood". Its image is also positively affected by festivals and film related tours. In particular, Weta Studios organize tours into the film studios, something that attracts a lot of tourists from cruises. Only during 2012-13, there was a 50% increase of visitation comparing to the year before.

### **Important motives for attracting Movie directors and producers in 17 countries**

Finally, all European countries that try to attract foreign film producers and directors have developed the following plan. here are some examples:

- In the United Kingdom a sum of 250 million euro is granted to foreign film productions through tax credit. There is also a 25% refund.
- In Germany, there is a sum of 70 million euros granted every year. A tax refund of approximately 20% is done, when 80% of the film is filmed in Germany.
- In Spain there is a 20% tax refund for productions of less than a million euros and 18% refund for productions ranging from 1 to 3 million euros.
- In France, TRIP exists, which is the Tax Rebate for International Production. There are also 40 local cinematographic commissions.
- In Italy, there is a 25% production refund for foreign movies.
- Lastly, In Croatia, there is the possibility to refund 20% of the production expenses only if the expenses done in Croatia equal more than 1 million euros.

All European countries who try to attract movie productions have developed different systems capable of luring foreign movie producers and directors, with the most known example of Woody Allen's movie *Vicky Christina Barcelona*, in which the municipality of Barcelona invited the director to Direct his new film, providing him with all the equipment needed. This tactic was immediately imitated by other European Cities such as Paris (*Midnight in Paris*), London, (*You will meet a Tall Dark Stranger*), Rome (*To Rome with Love*) etc.

### **Greek Tourism and foreign Movie productions in Greece**

As for Greece, during the past, places like Crete, Corfu, Rhodes and Hydra served as the setup for foreign productions that have received amazing reception by the international audience. Well known contributed fundamentally to the promotion and the development of the areas they were filmed in.

- The first international movie filmed in Greece was "Boy on a dolphin" with Sofia Lauren that was filmed in Hydra in 1957 . And that unknown greek rock (Hydra) was all of a sudden, adored by the esthete intellectuals of the world.
- while the charm of Melina Mercouri in "Never on Sunday" in 1961 touched every man's heart.
- Rhodes, an unknown island back then, became a great touristic attraction after the "Guns of Navarone" was filmed there in 1961. 300 foreign journalists visited the island during the shooting. Those journalists described the Greek hospitality, the Greek landscape, and the Greek culture as something unique in their articles. And so, they unconsciously created a touristic product that we have not yet been able to manage sufficiently.
- And everybody wanted to visit the place on which Anthony Quinn danced sirtaki as "Zorba the Greek" in 1964. Crete island becomes in Fashion

And for whoever thinks that this role of the foreign film as a goodwill for the Greek economy was confined during the 60s, in the 80s several films had been produced, that attracted many visitors. The story continued for the last 30 years ...

In 1988 the film "The Big Blue" by Luc Besson, the shooting of which took place in Amorgos, highlighted the Cycladic beauty. Even today, three decades after the film distribution, "The Big Blue" is still a point of reference not only for particular shooting places that were pictured in the movie ( Agia Anna beach, monastery Chozoviotissa) but also for the island of Amorgos itself and the Cycladic region too. Before the shooting of the film Amorgos was one of the least visited places in Greece. Amorgos, due to barren line had limited development opportunities touristic-wise. From an economic and statistical perspective, Amorgos begins essentially to develop tourism outwards after this movie. And a little note: Amorgos had an annual income of 180 million drachmas at that time. The film left a momentary large opening, of about 20,000,000 drachmas extra.

In the early nineties, the foreign production "Captain Corelli's Mandolin" served as excellent advertisement for the island of Kefalonia, where the film was shot. The fact that almost everyone in the cast was extremely famous (Nicholas Cage, Penelope Cruz, John Hurt) had been a huge impact in the promotion of the island.

In 2008 the film "Mamma Mia" , was included among the 20 most popular films of the year, was shot in Skopelos.

The data on tourist traffic in the prefectures of Greece, are showing that attracting foreign production has a positive effect on the Greek Touristic mechanism. In particular, hotel accommodations in places where a foreign film was shot, were positively affected by foreign arrivals in comparison to places that an international film production never took place.

That conclusion was made, having in mind some of the recent films that had been successful in the international box office, namely: Lara Croft: Tomb Raider (Santorini, 2003) Captain Corelli's Mandolin (Kefallonia, 2001), Mamma Mia (Skopelos, 2007).

The results of the analysis show that in the case of Kefalonia, arrivals of foreigners to the hotel accommodations in the area are up to about 14% in the region, compared to the

performance that would be achieved, if the movie "Captain Corelli's Mandolin" had not been made.

Similarly, in the Cyclades prefecture, foreign arrivals in the hotel accommodation in the region are up by about 12.3%, compared to the performance that would have been achieved if there had been no shooting of the film «Lara Croft: Tomb Raider». This development, possibly explained by the commercial success of the film. Also, the existence of the respective computer game, and the advertisement of the film due to the high production costs could also be considered an addition to the island's promotion factors.

### **Greek tourism and the importance of attracting foreign film productions**

Tourism is one of Greece's most important sectors. It is a key element to its economic activity, and it has been one of the most popular destinations in Europe since antiquity, famous for its artifacts and History. Though, we have reached a point where the country needs a new form of promotion, which will depict Greece's beauty in its wholeness, and show it to the world. A lot of years ago, the Greek National Tourism Organisation was able to perceive the importance of foreign productions getting filmed in our country. We all noticed the growth of tourism and the massive publicity Greece had to handle, when films like "Guns of Navarone" and "Captain Corelli's Mandolin" were produced on the Greek islands. If we are looking for ways to boost our country's touristic profile, we must emphasize on how to promote Greece for what its known for, and that is, its Eternal Beauty. One of the most sufficient ways of showing that beauty to the world, is the Power of Film. Unfortunately, the Greek politicians the recent years don't have faith in our country's promotion through Cinema anymore, and that is really dissapointing. We are losing a great chance, we must share our country's beauty, remind people of its secrets and its wonder. I believe there is not a more efficient way of doing so, than have it portrayed on the big screen.

At the same time, an important issue under discussion is how to attract visitors during the period of lower demand, in order to extend the high tourist season and stimulate travel receipts. For this reason it is important to look for different ways to attract visitors from abroad. In this context, a communication strategy is required, not only to promote the country abroad, but to boost the competitiveness of the Greek tourism.

Attracting foreign producers, therefore, could be an important tool of influence in this direction. The positioning of Greek sceneries in international films and TV productions could possibly act as an equally effective way to promote Greek tourism in foreign markets. Moreover, since the funds concerning international publicity have been reduced in recent years, it is an absolute necessity, to seek alternative means of contributing to the promotion of the Greek tourism.

Attracting foreign producers can contribute to the emergence of Greece in areas such as Art and Culture in general. Through this activity, the Greek tourism can benefit significantly, as evidenced by examples of other countries.