

Influence of new cinematographic and television operators on the attractivity of tourist destinations

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Abstract

Purpose – *This paper aims to anticipate the influence of new cinematographic and television operators on the attractiveness of tourist destinations.*

Design/methodology/approach – *The methodology developed is two-fold: first, long-haul observation of the sector, and second, a state of the literature on the topic.*

Findings – *These platforms reshape the distribution of audiovisual content and influence consumer behavior. Through the detailed knowledge of users (user data, recommendation algorithm), the platforms have important information at their disposal to build future tourism trends.*

Originality/value – *In the continuity of research in film tourism, the authors question the impact of platforms that are now emerging as significant operators in the distribution and creation of audiovisual content.*

Keywords *Personalization, Distribution, Algorithm, Platform, Attractivity, Film induced tourism*

Paper type *Research paper*

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Popular culture has a significant impact on many social behaviors. These behaviors range from series aficionados, who gather and disguise themselves to identify with the characters (Comic-Con, Games week), to demonstrators, who wear masks of Joker (Joker, Phillips, 2019), Guy Fawkes (V for Vendetta and McTeigue, 2006) or Dali (La casa de Papel and Pina, 2019), to express their dissent and revolt. Cinema has a real impact on the behavior of spectators who find themselves in the tourism sector through the concept of cine-tourism.

In the continuity of the devices and stories that illustrate travel from the 18th century onwards such as newspapers, postcards, photographs (Lizotte and Grenier, 2011), cine-tourism reinforces the representation of destinations. The real assets of the territories are translated and interpreted through the eyes of an author, artist or producer (Beeton, 2006).

Cinema has a direct impact on the perception of destinations for visitors and implies a real interest in understanding future trends. Visitor's search for novelty and destinations seek for innovation come with a change in the representation of travel. It becomes a source of spiritual, physical change and is the next level of the tourism experience. It is no longer just a question of the traveler remaining an observer of a destination, but of taking possession of it, of taking inspiration from it to build an alternative vision of his daily life. The attributes of a destination presented in the cinema will influence the choice of travel and the overall attractiveness of the territory (Gupta *et al.*, 2018).

We identify as a future trend the influence that new players such as distribution and exhibition platforms for cinematographic and television works such as Netflix, Amazon

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Prime Video, HBO Max, Disney +, and Apple will have. As original creators of cinematographic works and series, they, in turn, contribute to influencing the attractiveness of destinations and enabling tourism to take place in the identified territories.

We aim to analyze first the impact of these new means of production on the attractiveness of destinations, and second, how original content platforms contribute to influencing the choice of tourist destinations. What is new is not the impact of production itself, which has been widely demonstrated and accepted. We identify two significant differences that question the traditional scope of film-induced tourism. First, the distribution of content by platforms allows a vast number of users to follow the release of films or series. Second, the control of content by the platforms allows, through user data and algorithms, to understand consumption habits. These trends pave the way to the personalization of the experience and, ultimately, to identify trends for future productions.

Distribution of renewed content

These content producers have thus renewed the type of the series on television, particularly through the production of HBO. Indeed, by offering series such as *Sex and the city* (Star, 1998), *The Sopranos* (Chase, 1999) or *Six feet under* (Ball, 2001), the platforms wish to differentiate themselves from TV and usually scheduled series (Garcia, 2015; Tryon, 2015). “The industrialization of technical devices for the provision of audiovisual content questions, as we have seen, both a clear trend towards individualization of consumption and the hypothesis of greater autonomy left to users of streaming platforms” (Dessinges and Perticoz, 2019, p. 20).

Far from being simple intermediation platforms, they offer mostly original productions and compete with traditional film producers. Thus, since 2018, no films will be distributed at the Cannes Film Festival following a disagreement between the festival and the streaming platform (Netflix) by imposing an obligation to release them in theaters. As Baldacchino (2019, p. 5) points out, “The facts involving Spielberg and Scorsese summarize the position of the film world *vis-à-vis* Netflix, Amazon Prime, and soon Apple’s streaming services quite well: he looks at them sideways, with suspicion, while being aware that these platforms are a boon in terms of creativity and revenue – perhaps even looking at them with suspicion precisely because he feels attracted by them”. In 2019, two other streaming platforms are entering the race (HBO Max and Disney +). Amazon Prime Video will produce a series on the *Lord of the Rings* universe by announcing a considerable budget. Thus, we can already identify a massive promotion for New Zealand that should ensure the visibility of new tourist territories illustrated in the series.

However, “new media forms do not replace old ones. Instead, the interplay of old and new is an ongoing negotiation between established and emerging practices” (Wayne, 2018, p. 13). These platforms, therefore, represent an additional and complementary means of promoting destinations. Above all, they can enable destinations to enhance development, mainly because they allow the production and distribution of films (Perticoz, 2019).

Knowledge of data user

Big data offers many possibilities to support different industries through research and new phenomena analysis. Tourism is a sector in which this innovation has a considerable impact. The data provide information on tourist demand, behavior and satisfaction and other previously unmeasured tourism issues (Li *et al.*, 2018).

At the same time, these data, through algorithm construction and recommendations, will impact culture and cultural practices (Hallinan and Striphas, 2016). “Netflix is one of the most successful companies in the field of film recommendation. It applies the item-based recommendation algorithm in the collaborative filtering recommendation algorithm”

(Ren *et al.*, 2019, p. 1). To allow precise targeting of content according to the profile, Netflix ensures that it has sufficient information to know what its user wants. We also find this in-depth knowledge with the example of Netflix. Amazon distribution is able to include several options: Amazon prime video (movies and series platform) Kindle (books to read), Audible (audiobooks), Amazon music (music listening platform), and, of course, the classic sales platform. They are, therefore, fully aware of the trends in popular “culture” and have a tremendous amount of information at their disposal to build suitable content. Also, the broadcasting rights of a series are country-specific (Barthes, 2018). Each has its catalog that allows content orientation.

Each original film or series has an impact on the attractiveness of destinations. The difference here is that the platform knows its users’ thanks to a set of profiles and algorithms. This mastery of content leads to many questions: in the same way as algorithms that lock users into personalization, will the construction of series repeat models on unique and spectacular destinations, or, on the contrary, will it surprise by identifying new cinematographic landscape perspectives? Taking into account past experiences, will series producers accompany the identified destinations to apprehend the massive arrival of visitors to the destinations? Will the knowledge of users’ habits and behaviors lock production around desires, trends, and contrary to the promise initiated by platforms, limit the renewal and creativity of content?

Conclusion

The platforms are new operators for the distribution of film and television content. As such, they have a definite influence on the attractiveness of destinations. Based on the impact of enhanced film tourism in Beeton’s publications, we assume that the impact of these production and distribution platforms will allow (new) destinations to emerge. Also, the knowledge of operators about content consumption can have a definite influence on future productions. We identify here an evolution in the field of film-induced tourism that would make it possible to apprehend the success of specific destinations for relative management of their attractiveness, their development in tourism, and avoid phenomena of overtourism linked to a too low loading capacity of spaces in the choice of valued territories. The major challenge lies in the possibility of continuing to transport travelers from the film to reality without impacting the natural and cultural qualities of the real space.

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