

Tourism PhD Research Topic

Film tourism impacts: A multi-stakeholder perspective

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Abstract

This project focuses specifically on film tourism: the phenomenon of people visiting locations or sites where popular films or TV series have been filmed, which can often lead to a huge influx of tourists in the countries or locations where filming took place (Beeton, 2016; Connell, 2012; Kim & Reijnders, 2018). This will be the first research initiative to focus on an in-depth and comparative analysis of film tourism impacts from a multiple stakeholder perspective among tourists, governments, and local communities, which will shed light on the dynamics and complexities of planning and development of film tourism and thus build a stronger foundation for film tourism policies and guide for sustainable film tourism.

Aims and backgrounds

Film tourism is one of the fastest growing global tourism phenomena, and has received an increasing amount of attention from scholars in various academic disciplines over the last decade or so. Existing academic knowledge about film tourism is, however, still highly fragmented and mostly focuses on destination marketing and a consumer behaviour perspective in relation to film tourism experience creation and product development, often leading to narrowly-focused findings that fail to provide a holistic understanding of film tourism impacts. Only a handful of studies, predominantly from the Western contexts, have attempted to understand the impacts of film tourism on local communities (Beeton, 2016; Castro et al., 2023; Connell, 2012) with some exceptions (Kim & Park, 2023; Thelen et al., 2020; Yoon et al., 2015). Also, little scholarly attention has been expended on advancing the conceptual and theoretical understanding of how tourists as an important actor of film tourism perceive and evaluate their impacts on the communities of film tourism destinations. Similarly, little is known about governments' perceptions and evaluations of the impacts of film tourism on host communities, although governments at all levels are widely acknowledged as the most influential stakeholders in tourist destination development. Indeed, governments control most tourism planning tools and take a large amount of responsibility for the issues related to tourism development and impacts. In this regard, it is tourists as users and governments as policy makers or developers that are seen as the source of the 'problem' or 'issue', yet to date they have been rarely regarded as part of the 'solution' or subject of investigation in the context of film tourism.

With the above, the project will highlight the multidisciplinary nature of film tourism phenomenon and thus draw upon the multidisciplinary existing knowledge base. The key research questions are:

- (1) For each of the film tourism stakeholders identified in the project (i.e. communities, tourists, governments), what are the perceived impacts of film tourism? How and to what extent does each individual film tourism stakeholder perceive film tourism impacts?

- (2) Are there variations in these perceived impacts? Can they be explained by the difference in specific roles, characteristics, and interests of each of the stakeholders?
- (3) What professional methods and practices (e.g., policies, regulations, and best practices) have been adopted by each of the identified stakeholders to mitigate adverse effects if any?
- (4) How are the impacts of film tourism different from the impacts of tourism in general? What are the reasons for these differences from each stakeholder perspective?

References

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