

Understanding the influence of a movie production on the destination image. The case of Game of Thrones in Dubrovnik

Bachelor Thesis for Obtaining the Degree

Bachelor of Business Administration in

Tourism and Hospitality Management

Submitted to Yuliya Kolomojets

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Affidavit

I hereby affirm that this Bachelor's Thesis represents my own written work and that I have used no sources and aids other than those indicated. All passages quoted from publications or paraphrased from these sources are properly cited and attributed.

The thesis was not submitted in the same or in a substantially similar version, not even partially, to another examination board and was not published elsewhere.

December 17, 2018

Date

Abstract

This examination covers the issue that movies have the power to influence individuals travel behavior by altering the image of a certain destination. Initiated by the fact that the destination image is a complex construct which depends on various elements and is of significance to various stakeholders, this thesis aims create an understanding of the actual influence movie tourism has on the destination image.

Numerous researches focused on the phenomenon movie tourism per se, but only several individuals highlighted the influence this niche tourism has on a destination image. In particular, the fact that a destination holds diverse stakeholders that all intent a destination image that comes advantageous, has not been researched exhaustive.

In order to understand their interest in movie tourism being an overall destination image influencer, the author investigated how the stakeholders perceive the particular destination. To get an idea of this perception, the author of this thesis conducted an exploratory Instagram content analysis. It not only gave insights into the projected but also in the perceived online destination image from which one can draw an understanding of the general destination image.

The understanding of the influence a movie production can have on the destination image by exploring the online content of the various stakeholders Instagram profiles will add a new perception on a topic that was already researched intensively.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Presentation of Problem

The movie industry and the tourism industry are of great importance worldwide. Both evolve around human experiences and are responsible of converting the excitement and elation of millions into profit. Unsurprisingly, many researchers turned their attention to the potential of the intersection between movie industry and tourism. The phenomena movie induced tourism developed. Attracted by movies images, tourists also get attracted to real world tourism destinations (Steinecke, 2016).

Movie makers are in constant search for suitable film locations. Dependent on the movie type, they are looking for urban areas, idyllic places with beautiful landscapes, but in any case, they have to be adequate. When selected as a film location, destinations have the chance to profit from that. (Vagionis, 2011). Nowadays, marketers understand this potential benefit and learned that they can influence humans travel behavior by motion pictures. Movies, television shows or series that portray certain regions can have a seductive effect on potential tourists. Although they are not initially made to attract travelers to a certain region, they can have an indirect influence on the traveler's choice of destination. Various researcher found out that this is due to the fact that tourists' image of a certain destination can be altered after the consumption of film and television. Often even without viewers noticing. The core parts of touristic image are visual and emotional and therefore, the film industry can be a powerful image shaper. Although the majority of movie makers is aware of this power, they avoid the intentional accentuation of the destination per se, since they usually do not want too many product placements in the production (Juškelytė, 2016).

However, the fact that the movie industry can be a potential image shaper and catalyst for a higher degree of touristic inflow, is not a new phenomenon for Destination Marketing Organizations. In general, DMOs have the power to create a destination image which they see as desirable for the attraction of target groups. A destinations image can also be used for tourism developing and destination planning purposes. Hence, DMOs are not the only party involved in these kinds of processes. Various stakeholders like for example touristic suppliers, but also the tourists

themselves practically choose if they accord with that projected destination image. Concerning movie tourism in combination with destination image, touristic suppliers as well as tourists can have very different notion of the influence a movie production has on a destination. Several researchers have focused on understanding the phenomenon, like for example how DMOs incorporate movie tourism in their strategies and the movie tourist's motivation and experience, but little research has been conducted on movie tourism's influence on a destination's image and long-term impact on touristic stakeholders. The identification of in how far movie productions can influence a destination's image in the eyes of DMO authorities, touristic suppliers and tourists could have major influence on future destination planning processes, subject to the condition that movie makers are open to a certain amount of collaboration (Heitmann, 2010).

1.2 Research Questions & Aim of Bachelor Thesis

This paper aims to explore how a movie production can influence the image of a destination. Specifically, the role of movie in shaping destination's image will be explored from three standpoints. The DMO, touristic suppliers (businesses) and tourists.

Consequently, the author developed the following lead research question:

“What influence does movie tourism have on a destination's image?”

In order to get adequate answers to this research question, the author will compare how differently DMOs, touristic suppliers and tourists approach movie tourism. In order to detect differences in their given significance on movie productions in a certain destination, the author intends to answer three further supporting research questions.

“How does movie tourism influence the image projected by the Destination Marketing Organizations”

“How does movie tourism impact the offers of touristic suppliers”

“In the eyes of tourists, how does the destination image evolve as a result of a movie production”

By this, the thesis seeks to provide better understanding of: (1) the movie tourism phenomenon; (2) the existing gaps between perceived and projected destination images. Destination Marketing Organizations, tourists and touristic suppliers are the key protagonists of this thesis. This is due to the fact that many parties are involved in the destination image formation process. Hence, high importance will be given to the understanding of their opinion on the movie tourism phenomena and in particular its influence on a destination. In order to achieve this, several steps need to be taken. First, the literature review will be conducted to understand the processes of destination image creation in connection with movie induced tourism. Subsequently, primary research will be conducted on Instagram, with the aim to explore the influence of movie productions on a destination image but also the destination image per se. The collected data from the DMO's, tourists' and tourist suppliers' Instagram accounts will be analyzed through content analysis and then compared with the previously introduced literature. The example of the series "Game of Thrones" in the Croatian city Dubrovnik will serve as a case study for the thesis.

1.3 Outlook on subsequent chapters

This following section will briefly introduce the further structure and systematic of this paper. In this way, clarity and comprehensibility for the reader should be ensured.

At first, the most valuable findings of existing literature of various authors dealing with similar or related topics will be presented. The following literature review is separated into two broad sections. The first section discusses several topics in relation with movie-induced tourism. Amongst others, broad terms like the movie tourist, movie tourism's stakeholders, the forms and development of movie induced tourism will be introduced. In the second part of the literature review, a closer look will be given to the destination image per se. In this section, the role of destination image in tourism, factors influencing this image, the online destination image, the projected image of a destination but also perceived image of a destination will be clarified to the reader. In order to combine the phenomenon movie tourism with a destination's image, literature concerned with the influence of movie productions on a destination's image will be introduced.

After the Literature Review, the chosen method of research will be introduced and the rationale behind the authors decision will be presented in the Methodology section. Additionally, the Methodology section will enable detailed insights into the authors chosen methods of data collection and analysis. Furthermore, some of the most important facts of the series Game of Thrones and why it was chosen to serve as an example of demonstrating the influence of a television production on the image of a destination will be given.

The centerpiece of this thesis, the findings of the primary research will conclude the paper. To properly round up the thesis, the results of the conducted Instagram analysis of the posts but also images posted by the three discussed image stakeholders of the city Dubrovnik will be presented, analyzed and of course compared. In the conclusion the author will once again recap the most important details and facts of the thesis as well as give answers to the previously introduced research questions. Moreover, recommendations and perspectives for further research on the topic will be carefully stated.

2 Literature Review

Since this thesis aims to find out the influence movie tourism has on a destinations image is it of significance to gain a deeper understanding of the respective theory. In this literature review, the opinions of previous researcher on the phenomenon movie tourism will be discussed. The clarification of several definitions should make the reader familiar with the topic and demonstrate the influence movie tourism can have on a destination. Consequently, it is essential to understand the concept of movie inspired tourism in general. Additionally, it is also of great importance to gain a broad insight in the role of destination image. Thus, the necessity of a good destination image and its effects on some stakeholders will be examined in this literature review.

2.1 Movie-induced tourism

Nowadays, movie tourism is a very popular topic in the world of tourism. One can find various articles dealing with almost every aspect of movie tourism. Movie tourism is not only of interest to the researchers in the field of tourism, but also researchers in cultural geography, film and media, marketing and psychology (Connell 2012). Numerous researchers have tried to come up with a definition for the phenomenon, however, the author of this thesis prefers the version of Stefan Roesch (2009), who states that movie induced tourism is a form of tourism which arises when a movie, television show or a series is the decisive inducement for one's destination decision. Moreover, the author mentions that it is recognized that there exists a broad variation in terminology used to define the phenomena of movie-induced tourism. Researcher call it "movie tourism", "movie induced tourism", "film tourism" or even generalize it as "on screen tourism". Some researcher may also call it tourism based on the moving picture (Roesch, 2009).

Besides the terminology, it is also of importance to understand the concept of the movie tourism phenomenon and get a basic understanding on how movies can influence people's behavior in general. The author Sue Beeton, one of the most frequently cited researchers in the field of movie tourism, mentions in her latest book dealing with movie inspired tourism that the effect of modern media on a human's behavior has already been debated and researched over a long period of time. Several studies have dealt with negative consequences of intensive media use. For instance,

being less sensitive towards acts of violence, or children behaving more aggressively after being exposed to displayed violence. However, the majority of studies focused on the positive effects films or displayed media in general, can have on people's behavior. A very acute example of the influence displayed media can have, would be the use of film in the reestablishment of confidence in the United States of America after the terroristic attacks of September 2001. The local tourism board, but also the White House started to support "feel-good" movie productions, various advertisements and short films featuring famous television personalities in New York City, to demonstrate that it was safe for inhabitants but of course also for the tourists to return to the targeted places. They succeeded with that campaign and reanimated confidence in the destination. The actions after the 9/11 disaster are a very intensive example of the influence popular media can have on human's behavior, however it is a good example for the phenomenon that movies, television shows and series have the power to serve as a motivator, change the image of a certain destination and increase visitation to featured sites (Beeton, 2016).

At this point it is important to mention, that the emotions a movie consumer goes through, are actually the main reason why movies influence people's travel behavior. Movies or series have the power to arouse the consumers emotions. They can be positive emotions like happiness or familiarity, but also negative emotions like grief or compassion. These emotional ties serve as the key motivator to travel to the pictured destination. In that way, tourists have the possibility to reconnect to the feelings they had during the consumption of the movie or series (Kim, 2012). Since this thesis is discussing the example of a series, the author sees importance in adding that people tend to have bigger emotional ties to television series rather than to movies due to a longer screening and filming period. Therefore, series viewers have longer time to build a desire to visit the destination pictured in the series (Hanafiah, Ismael, Khan & Sumarjan, 2017).

Other factors that motivate movie viewers to travel to the pictured destination could be to connect with like-minded people, to see the visit of a movie location as a symbol of status, or the slight hope to see a celebrity. One can associate this kind of travelers as movie tourists, who are of discussion in a following section (Kim, 2012). Unsurprisingly, the power that a popular movie production can have on an individual's

behavior has been recognized by several businesses, cultural institutions and authorities around the world. To be exact, they have witnessed that popular movie productions attract people and can therefore increase the number of arrivals in displayed regions. Since such an increase of arrivals is accompanied by higher revenues for touristic suppliers, movie productions and movie tourists have become a major topic for some destination marketers (Connell, 2012). Despite links to other forms of tourism like culture tourism, city tourism, adventure tourism, spiritual tourism or nature tourism, marketers see movie tourism as an independent touristic market segment with specific attractions and a distinct target group (Steinecke, 2016).

As already mentioned, movie tourism can have quite a lot of impacts on a destination. Those impacts can be positive but also negative and can be connected to the general advantages and disadvantages of tourism. One can find the impacts in Table 1 below.

Positive impacts of movie tourism	Negative impacts of movie tourism
Increase in touristic arrivals	Loss of authenticity
Rise in revenues	Mass tourism
Increase in employment numbers	Environmental issues
Modification of the tourism infrastructure	Cultural conflict
Improvement of destination image	

Table 1: Impacts of movie tourism (Source: Heitmann, 2010)

Among the positive impacts one can name an increase in touristic arrivals, the rise in revenues, an increase of employment numbers and modification of the tourism infrastructure. Moreover, the diversification of tourism product and cultural exchange can also be counted as an advantage of movie tourism. As a result, movie tourism turns into a strong contributor to the development or improvement of a destination and its' image. For example, Cambodia, a country that has suffered from a bad image due to a long-lasting civil war, used movie production as a mean for regenerating its'

destinations image and economy. Disadvantages that come with movie tourism are loss of authenticity - a possible spillover effect of mass tourism, environmental issues and cultural conflict (Heitmann, 2010).

However, one has to mention that film tourism is still a niche segment which is in its development phase. Until now, only few DMO have taken advantage of movie productions in their marketing strategies and therefore, in these destinations, the impacts are still rather hard to measure. The tourism organization "VisitBritain" came to the conclusion that currently, movie tourism is more an "added bonus" than a general trend. Therefore, it remains to be seen how movie tourism further develops in the rest of the world (Steinecke, 2016).

2.1.1 The development of movie-induced tourism

In order to get a full understanding on a topic, one also has to be aware of the origin and development of the matter. This also goes for movie tourism, which one can link to literary tourism. Literary tourism has a long history which is trackable back to 1800, when published books advanced commercial tourism. Literature has a similar power to stimulate tourist travel and create expectations as movies do. Both, literature tourism and movie tourism, share attributes that influence the readers or viewers emotions. Due to the following introduction of new technologies that created movies and later television, one can call movie inspired tourism as the logical successor of literary tourism. One can trace the development of movie induced tourism back to the invention of cinema in the 1890s. However, it is assumable that the moving picture started to have an influence on people's behavior when the first movie with sound was shown to people in the year of 1926. The cinema world evolved and in the 1940s "going to the cinema" developed to be one of people's favorite activity. A precondition of the development of movie induced tourism. In that decade the number of cinema attendance had its all-time high. One can link the following decline of cinema attendance with an increase in numbers of televisions. In western countries, nowadays almost every household owns multiple televisions or other devices and as a result of that, access to movies or series. These can stimulate the wanderlust of the audience (Connel, 2012).

“The Mutiny on the Bounty” (1935) was one of the first movies that caused major movie tourism to a film location. This movie motivated numerous people to travel to Haiti. However, the actual advent of the movie induced tourism phenomenon, started 1949 with the movie “The Third Man” in Vienna. Although this movie was produced years ago, people still travel to Vienna to explore the original sites of the movie. Another early movie tourism location became Salzburg, which still benefits from approximately 300,000 movie tourists a year, due to the 1965 produced movie “The Sound of Music”. The following emerge of mass tourism in the 1970s and 1980s, and various Hollywood blockbuster productions also had a major influence on the evolution of movie tourists (Roesch, 2009).

Some destinations that profit from movie productions are already mentioned previously, however the author of this thesis sees importance in also mentioning the more current and probably best-known movie tourism example, the “Lord of the Ring” movie series. In 2002, the country’s national tourism board estimated that the first two produced movies had generated about 41 million US dollars in the tourism sector. Various “Lord of the Rings” exhibition’s success even led to exhibition tours around the world (Roesch, 2009). Interestingly, movie tourists’ general interest in New Zealand is non-intermittent, due to the Lord of the Rings prequel “The Hobbit”. As a result of that, numerous tour operators developed specialized tours for “The Lord of the Rings” and “The Hobbit” fans. An example for such a specialized tour would be “The Hobbit” movie set tour, where tourists have the possibility to explore buildings and areas where some movie scenes were filmed (Li et al, 2016).

Hudson and Ritchie (2006) list some further mentionable movie productions which had a huge influence on a destination’s tourism. In Great Britain for example, the “Harry Potter” movies, “Notting Hill” and “Pride and Prejudice” were responsible for a mentionable increase of visitors at various film locations like small villages and old castles. Australia witnessed an 20,5 increase of U.S visitors between 1981 and 1988 as a result of the Australian series “Crocodile Dundee” which had a major success in the U.S (Hudson & Rtichie, 2006).

2.1.2 Forms of movie-induced tourism

There exists an infinitive amount of activities one can do in order to count as a movie tourist. These activities can be categorized in “On-locations” and “Off-location” activities. Generally speaking, the so called “On-locations” are real places like buildings, villages, urban areas or rural places, which were used as setting for a movie or series production. In contrast to that, “Off-locations” are movie induced tourism related attractions on places which have not been used as a setting (Steinecke, 2016).

On Location Activities

- Visits to existing buildings/streets
- Visits to locations where a movie or series is in current production
- Watching the filming taking place
- Visits to places market through film connection
- Attending movie tours
- Staying in movie themed hotels/restaurants

Off Locations Activities

- Visits to movie parks
- Visits to film festivals
- Public and non-public movie museums
- Visits to movie premiers
- Visits to merchandise shops
- Visits to movie studios
- Visits to homes of movie stars

Several Studies: (Connell, 2012; Steinecke, 2016; Polianskaia et al, 2016)

2.1.3 The movie tourist

Tourists can be motivated to travel by various factors. Motivation in tourism is a topic of high interest to destination marketers since it acts as a final trigger to travel or visit a region or certain events. One of these motivators could be a series, movie or television show. People whose travel decision is triggered by such, can be called movie tourists (Heitmann, 2010). Depending on the initial trigger to visit the movie

destination, movie tourists can be divided into three groups: (1) serendipitous movie tourists, (2) general movie tourists and (3) specific movie tourists (Beeton, 2016). These categories are listed and explained based on Figure 1 below.

(1) Serendipitous movie tourists are tourists which visit film locations without purpose. In comparison with other movie tourists, their interest in film is the lowest. In the most cases, accidental movie tourists do not even realize that they are at, or close to a film location. Motivations of a serendipitous movie tourist include social interaction and novelty.

(2) General movie tourists are aware of the touristic supply with regard to a movie/series, may also spend time on these activities but also make use of other touristic attractions. One can attribute the motivations novelty, education and nostalgia to general tourists. Thus, about general movie tourists one can say that a movie or series is not the single reason of a destination's visit.

(3) For a specific movie tourist, this is the case. Specific movie tourist's primarily and often single reason of a destination visit is the relation to a certain movie or series. A specific movie tourist puts little to no interest in the destination's authenticity. They actively choose destinations they have seen in film. Specific movie tourists are motivated by pilgrimage, self-actualization, self-identity, romance, fantasy, nostalgia and status/prestige (Beeton, 2016)

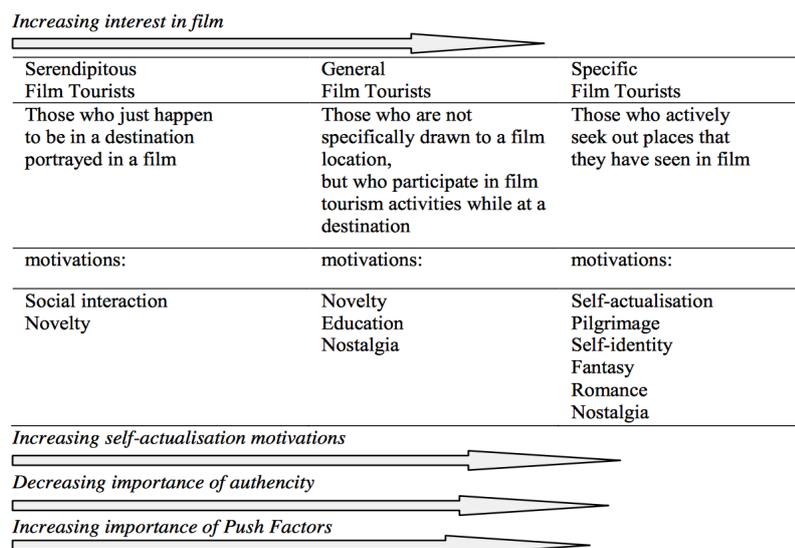


Figure 1: movie tourists (Source: Beeton, 2016)

2.1.4 Movie tourism stakeholders

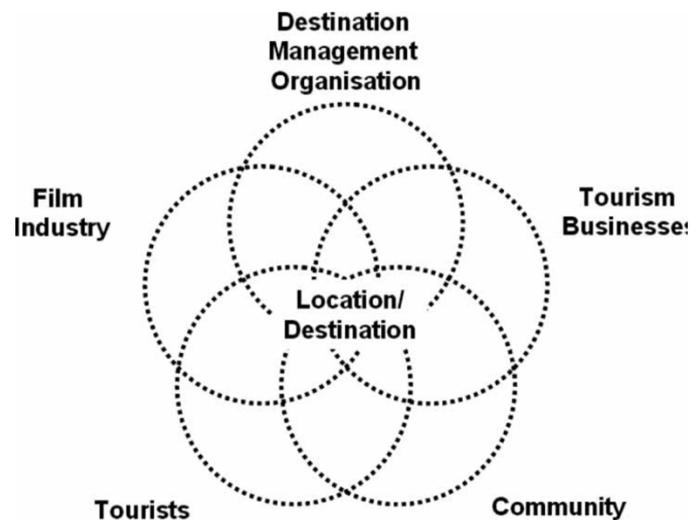


Figure 2: movie tourism stakeholders (Source: Heitmann, 2010)

In general, stakeholders in tourism are individuals but can also be groups of people that are interested in the touristic development of a destination. As shown in Figure 2 above, one can separate stakeholders into five categories. The film industry, DMOs, tourism businesses, the community and finally the tourists. One can distinguish stakeholders with regard to the level of interest but also with regard to the given significance for being a functioning tourism destination, however tourism planners should appreciate the opinions of all stakeholders. In addition to that, tourism planners should consider three key aspects with regard to stakeholder management. The first step would be the stakeholder identification, the second step would be an establishment of a relationship between all stakeholders and finally the management of this relationships is of high necessity (Heitmann, 2010).

Movie tourism stakeholders are basically not distinguishable from other tourism stakeholders. This, one can lead back to the previously introduced fact that movie tourism has similar impact on a destination as other forms of tourism. As a result of that the stakeholders are almost the same. In comparison with to other stakeholders, the community, often referred as the locals, are the weakest group of interest. This is due to the fact that they have clearly no influence on the choice of location of movie makers, but also no influence on the choice of marketing activities of the DMOs. Instead, they have to live with the consequences. In order to ensure a sustainable and

harmonic life at the destination, the different expectations and desires of the interest group have to be discussed and taken into consideration (Steinecke, 2016).

2.1.5 Marketing to the film tourist

As mentioned previously, DMOs are responsible for effective marketing strategies and the adequate promotion of the destination to tourists. They do not only aim a successful representation of the destination, they also hope to bring long-term benefits to the region as a result of their work. Nowadays the necessity of DMOs as well as their positive contribution to the destination is valued by many. This can be recognized by the fact that the number of DMOs is as high as never. Due to the multiplication of destinations, it is efficient to move away from mainstream destination promotion like sightseeing or shopping opportunities and change to the promotion of tourism of special interests. Unsurprisingly, movie tourism can account as one of these interests. However, it is a major challenge for DMOs to utilize movie induced tourism adequately (Vagionis & Loumiotis, 2011).

Croy (2010) lists two very interesting examples for such a challenge. First of all, there exists a very competitive environment with regard to the attraction of film makers to specific regions. Film Commissions from countries all over the world try to bring positive economic impact to the destination and are actively promoting their destination to be featured in movies, television series and advertisements. Secondly, destination managers have to be aware of the fact, that all actions and messages transmit an image in the minds of the potential tourists. Therefore, marketing activities with regard to movie tourism have to be managed adequately in order to be of effective and sustainable use for the destination and the stakeholders (Croy, 2010).

Destinations can use movies as powerful tool to extend their product portfolio and to attract a very specific segment of movie tourists. In order to achieve this and to deal with prospective challenges, the DMO managers may work with a structured movie tourism management plan. This plan should include the suitable marketing activities the DMO should make use of before and after a movie release and further important issues to consider.

Before a movie release

- The organization of on-site press conferences
- Work on movie maps
- Adaption of the social media content
- Adaption of the website
- The creation of a “making of” tourism image movie
- Direct movie sponsoring
- Engage destination testimonials by involving cast and crew

After a movie release

- Offer location tours with invited media
- Cooperate with other stakeholders
- Host a movie premiere
- Support the local community
- Host movie themed festivals

Several Studies: (Roesch, 2009; Beeton, 2016)

A successful destination marketing to movie tourists, could support community planning, even out seasonality issues and support the destinations vision in general. It is also of significance to mention that DMOs should not be reluctant to take advantage of social media, since nowadays a destination should be represented on these platforms at all costs. Moreover, movie tourists themselves are constantly creating content, which a DMOs should not miss out. As a matter of fact, they can use that content for their own purpose. A deeper insight on a destination’s representation on social media will be given in the second chapter dealing with destination image (Beeton, 2016).

2.2 Destination image

The count of international arrivals is increasing year by year. Due to technological advances people can travel faster, easier and more frequent than ever. Also, there is nearly no destination where one cannot travel to. However, there are destinations which are hardly ever visited by tourists and on the other side destinations which almost suffer due to massive inflows by tourists. Since there is so much variety of destinations where people can travel to, it is strategically important for destinations to transmit an adequate brand image to potential tourists. According to Lopes (2011), the World Tourism Organization (UNTWO) states, that *“a destinations image is build out of individual but also shared ideas about a certain destination”* (p.306). These ideas and associations are continuously formed by the information provided by diverse channels like travel guides, tourism website, news, social media and others. This brand image of a destination has a major impact on a tourist travel choice. A positive brand image of a destination can be associated with increasing visitation numbers and a higher average number of nights tourists spend in the particular destination. Unsurprisingly, a negative brand image may cause the opposite. Therefore, one can say that a positive destination image can be a major contribution to the success of a destination (Lopes, 2011).

This thought is supported by Croy (2010), who argues that destination image is the main component of the traveler’s decision-making process and in consequence also very important for the sustainability of the destination (Croy, 2010). Since destination image can have such drastic impact on the destination, the topic has been researched by a great many. First of all, the influence of a destination image in traveler satisfaction is something researched quite frequently. Another respected topic is the role of a destination image in travelers buying behavior like for example the traveler’s destination related decision making. Additionally, the change of destination image, the formation and modification of a destination image through cross-national and cross-cultural contacts, destination image assessment and measures and finally the role of a destination image and tourism development are of high significance to people working in tourism (Key-Sung Chon, 1990).

Besides an increase of over-night stays and acting in favor of the destination’s sustainability, a good destination image management can bring many more

advantages to a region. For example, one can quickly come up with plans of action and development procedures, since the identification of shifts in tourist's destination perceptions comes rather easy with the help of good destination image management. Also, the identification of destinations success factors can be done with successful destination image management. Moreover, marketers have to be aware that it is specifically important to provide a destination image that is realistic. In this way the needs of visitors can be satisfied and will be induced towards a positive evaluation of the destination (Croy, 2010).

A successful destination image management is also of importance since the majority of tourism products are intangible, substitutable, heterogeneous, inseparable but also perishable. In addition to that, a destination image can be described as complex, multiple, relativistic and dynamic. The complexity of a destinations image is due to the fact that there does not exist only one single interpretation of destination image and one can approach it quite differently. A destinations image is multiple, since it has multiple components which often are several small elements. Due to the fact that a destination image is a construct of subjective evaluations, everybody has a different view on the image of a destination and therefore, destination image is relativistic. Finally, a destination image can account as dynamic, since tourism products are constantly changing; therefore, the destination image is changing in accord with that. It is of significance that a destination image manager keeps that in mind. (Pike, 2008), (Kislali et al, 2016).

Although destination image is known as effective promotion tool and has been researched quite often, there is still the need of more destination image research. Especially with regard to the rapid development of the internet, but also the rise of social media during the last years, further research has to be undertaken (Kislali et al, 2016).

2.2.1 Online Destination image

As mentioned in the section above, the internet and social media influence the image of a destination. Due to that technological development, the online image of a destination evolved. The definition of online destination image does not differentiate to the definition of general destination image, since it is basically the same

phenomenon but simply transmitted online. Nowadays, the online presentation of a destination's image is something that destination marketers should not disregard. Web 2.0 technologies enable tourists to communicate their travel experiences, tourism products and offerings but also their opinions to a large amount of people at the same time. This is primarily done on social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook (Mak 2016). This communicated information on social media networks can play an important role on the tourist's image of a destination for potential tourists. They can form their image of the destination via the assessment of a written blog entry and responses, an interaction in private chats but of course with the help of posted images and videos (Lopes, 2011).

Due to that influence, tourists can now have on the destinations image, DMOs should undoubtedly be eager to control these processes and also conduct marketing campaigns through online medias. However, although many DMOs try to influence destinations image through the use of social media, it is known to be a challenge. This is due to the fact, that nowadays travelers rather trust the content by other travelers than content from controlled sources like DMOs. Potential tourists also have the possibility to communicate with touristic suppliers like travel companies, tour operators or local residents for example. The opinions of these stakeholders cannot be directly controlled by DMOs; therefore, the potential traveler may find numerous negative comments or opinions about a destination and in consequence to that, has a negative influence on the perceived image. As a result, one can come up with the argumentation that social media may be a general burden for a DMO, with regard to the maintenance or development of a positive destination image. However, one has to understand that destination marketers are kind of forced to participate in those Web 2.0 destination promotion activities, due to the rich user generated content that nowadays is one of the leading forces in the formation of consumers perceived image of a destination. This uncontrolled online environment can shape the destination image in a negative way, but one should not forget that it can also have immense value with regard to directing tourists' choices and the inclusion of tourist's opinions on needs, reactions and preferences. However, due to the fact that technology advanced that rapid in recent years, it remains to be seen how the interest in online destination image further develops. Several studies: (Kislali et al, 2016; Dinnie, 2011)

2.2.2 Destination image formation

In general, a quite simple definition for destination image would be that it is formed out of individuals perceptions, psychological characteristics, experiences, motivations and socio-economic characteristics but also word of mouth, media, marketing and education (Jenkins, 1999). However, one has to point out that the formation of destination image is a rather complex concept that has been researched by many. Destination image can be categorized in various ways; however, the author of this thesis prefers the differentiation in form of a (1) projected and a (2) perceived destination image (Jani & Hwang, 2011). According to several authors, destination image is composed out of these two parts. Both, are of high interest to researchers from all over the world. If DMOs work on their online destination image via attention-grabbing posts on Instagram, one can speak about the projected image of a destination. On the other side, there exists the perceived image of a destination, which can be explained as the mental representation of a destination. The two parts that form destination image, are outlined in more detail below (Blazquez-Resino et al, 2016), Schwaighofer (2014).

(1) The Projected Destination Image

The projected destination image can be discussed as the “pull” factor in the tourist’s decision-making process, since that part of the destination image is projected by tourism organizations, like for example by DMOs and other travel companies, who aim to attract by means of communication and promotion campaigns. Moreover, the attraction of tourists and altering of the projected image can be supported by the provision of information available in diverse media channels. The projected image of a destination should not be too distinctive from how the life in the certain destination really is in order to be successful (Schwaighofer, 2014). The projected destination image forms the basis for the perceived destination image by the tourist, which is amongst others, altered by means of the individual’s identity, environmental influences and word of mouth by previous visitors. Figure 3 shown at the end of this chapter, illustrates the influence projected image has on the perceived destination image (Govers & Go, 2005).

(2) Perceived Destination Image

The perceived destination image is the “push factor” with regard to tourist’s decision-making process. The perceived destination image is often described as an image constructed in the traveler’s mind, that has to be sustainable in the long-term. The perceived image of destinations has been discussed by a broad number of researchers, since it is of high concern to tourism authorities. This is due to the fact that the tourists perceived destination image has a high influence on tourists travel decision, satisfaction and the overall destination assessment. Therefore, the perceived image of a destination may count as a key indicator of a destination’s performance and is of high importance in the positioning process of a destination. Moreover, one can say that a positive perceived destination image can be of enormous benefit and even excel the competition (Blazquez-Resino et al, 2016).

Since the perceived destination image is one of the key elements of the tourists travel decision, the author of this thesis considers a deeper examination of the perceived destination image as significant. Undoubtedly, a destination’s scenery, landscape, natural and placed attractions, price levels, infrastructure, safety and cleanliness are some attributes that form the perceived image of a destination (Rajesh, 2013). As already mentioned in a section above, destination image is a construct of subjective evaluations. This can be confirmed by an article written by Chahal & Devi (2016), that states, that tourist’s overall perception towards a destination is dependent on the cognitive, affective, conative components and unique image of the region. The cognitive component would be that image, which is related to the perceived beliefs and knowledge about a destination. When speaking about the affective image, one refers to feelings and emotions a tourist experiences during their actual stay at the destination. An example for an affective image would be derived by enjoying the good weather, or while one has an exciting day with friends at the destination. Finally, the unique image refers to the image derived from a satisfaction uniquely associated with the particular region. Consequently, one can say that the conception of the image of a destination is different from person to person. Figure 3 also illustrates the fact that the perceived destination image is dependent on the tourist’s identity. The tourists cultural, social, personal but also psychological background are a shaper of the perceived destination image. In addition to that one can also conclude that people

who have been to the destination have a different destination image than people who are first-time visitors (Chahal & Devi, 2016), (Govers & Go, 2005).

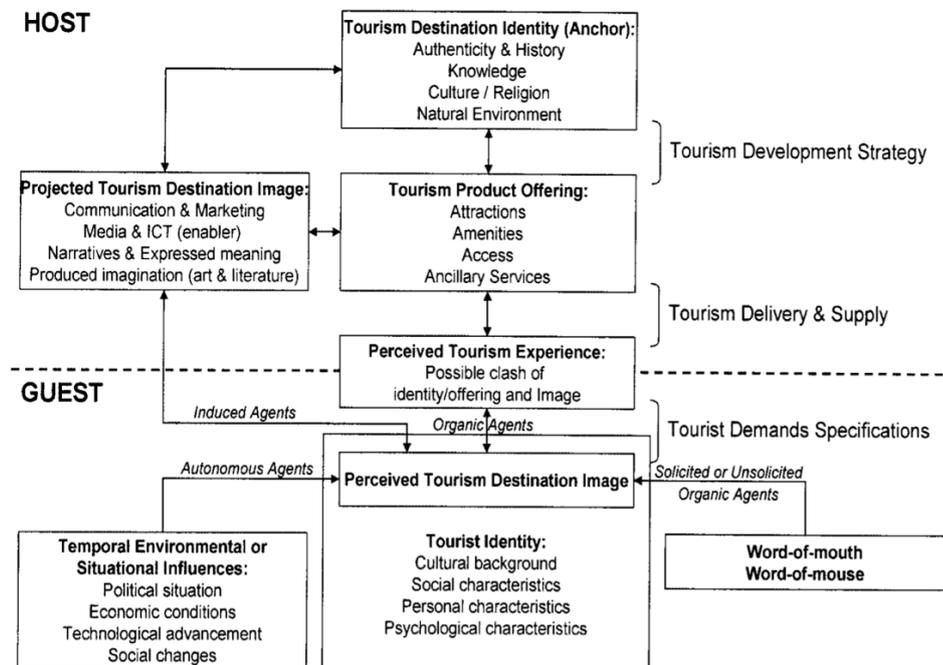


Figure 3: Projected and Perceived Image of Destinations (Source: Govers & Go, 2005)

2.2.3 Change of Destination image through movie productions

Destination image has always been a key point of concern to DMOs, therefore it comes of no surprise that they have a positive attitude towards local produced movies that show the beautiful landscape of the region. Moreover, film enables strategies to support the destinations brand awareness (Horrigan, 2009). The image of a destination after the consumption of a movie, tv show or series can alter in a similar way as a consumer's attitude towards a brand after being exposed to product placements. Presupposed a certain location or destination has an important role in the movie. An adequate and favorable presentation of the destination in the movie is therefore of high importance. One can take the example of "La Dolce Vita" and how it changed the image of Rome to an elegant, glamorous and entertaining city. In order to work as an image changer, it is importance that after the certain movie has been released to a broad audience, all stakeholders have to take that image change into account and build their actions and offers around that (Juskelyte, 2016).

Change of the image in the eyes of tourists

Due to a movie's storyline and the often beautifully portrayed film locations, tourists' expectations towards a destination are always quite high in general. A movie has the power to influence viewers over a long period of time and therefore has the power to act as a sustainable image shaper. The author Connell (2012) mentions, that several authors conducted research on the role of film as a destination image shaper for tourists, however most of the time such studies are quite small in scale and cannot be used as an overall explanation. Nevertheless, some findings are worth to mention. For example, a study with a controlled group of people resulted in the knowledge that people who had seen a movie where Vienna was portrayed, had a different perceived image of the destination and had a higher interest to visit the town, than people who had never seen the particular movie. Similar, the movie "The Beach" altered the viewers perceived image of Thailand, however the movie did not change their intention to visit the country. Another given example would be that British movies like James Bond, Mr. Bean or several movies featuring the actor Hugh Grant transmitted a certain image of British people (being polite, reserved or eccentric) and the country per se, that resulted in a change of people's perceptions and made viewers feel familiar with the country. With regard to that, one has to mention that movie can also lead to stereotypical and inaccurate images. If that is the case, DMOs have the challenge to antagonize these inaccuracies (Connell,2012).

Change of the image in the eyes of DMOs

In how far DMOs include movie productions in their projected destination image varies drastically. However, until now, popular filming locations have quite seldom been used as the promoted main attraction of a destination. In the majority of cases, other tourism products are used as a destinations unique selling proposition. Therefore, film tourism is rather used as a method to attract new target groups or to even out seasonality. New Zealand however, is one destination who successfully incorporated movie tourism, a result of Lord of the Rings, Lord of the rings in their image, and where movie tourism is a key element of their projected destination image. Before the release of that movie series, the country had a rather weak destination image with a main focus on nature, however after the release, the country managed to define itself as a versatile, interesting destination by means of

professional communication campaigns, that redefined the destinations image. In this case, the inducing image changer was a redesign of the national tourist's board website who integrated numerous information related to the movies, besides the traditional destination promotion material. The New Zealand example shows, that movie related destination branding works best for destinations who generally dispose an unclear destination image, do not identified a unique selling proposition or a limited level of familiarity. DMOs of destinations that try to solve issues of mass tourism, would naturally not incorporate movie in their destination image formation process (Steinecke, 2016).

Change of the image in the eyes of touristic suppliers

With regard to touristic suppliers' attitude towards movie tourism as an image changer, one cannot find a meaningful amount of research. However, one can say that touristic suppliers try to take every advantage from a destination image change resulted from a movie production. Especially, if the success of movies leads to the real-life destination being called as the destination is named in the movie, touristic suppliers profit from this image change. They profit, because the destination image after such a movie, is very clear. According to that image, suppliers can perfectly tailor their offerings (O'Conner, 2010).

In contrast to the supplier's attitude towards movie tourism as an image changer, one can find more about suppliers' opinion on destination image change in general. In the majority of destinations, touristic suppliers agree with the image projected by destination marketers, however in some exist quite a lot of discrepancies. Touristic suppliers view it as very important to be involved in the image formation process of a destination. However, in many cases that engagement of tourism businesses is neglected by destination marketers. Notwithstanding that their influence in the image creation would lead to a higher commitment and more effort to transmit the certain image. One could argue that a higher commitment in a successful and sustainable destination image formation would also be of favor to the destination marketers (Yusof & Ismael, 2014).

3 Methodology

This Methodology section informs the reader about the overall strategy the author adapted to conduct the empirical part of the bachelor thesis. At first, the case study example, the series Game of Thrones, is introduced. Followed by the Research Design and an introduction into the content analysis, where the data collection process as well as the manner of analyzing the collected data for this thesis will be given. After reading the Methodology section, the understanding of the research findings should be ensured to the reader.

3.1 Case Study: Game of Thrones

In order to provide the reader with an understanding on how movie productions can influence the destination image, the example of the international acknowledged series “Game of Thrones” was applied. The series “Game of Thrones” has been produced in various European countries like Spain, Iceland and Northern Ireland, however for the aim of this thesis the Croatian city Dubrovnik was chosen due to its popularity to Game of Thrones fans worldwide.

The multi season tv-series Game of Thrones was released in 2011 on HBO. The tv-series is based on novels written by author George R.R. Martin. Around the world, the series has beaten several records and got honored by numerous awards. According to diverse rating platforms, Game of Thrones is the most popular adventure and fantasy series and also is the most downloaded series ever. The film makers started filming in Dubrovnik as of 2012 during the second season. In total, the series is divided in eight seasons. With regard to the release date of the eighth and final season, April the 28th 2019 was chosen. In the series, Dubrovnik’s beautiful scenery and medieval streets are used, in order to depict the Game of Thrones main city “Kings Landing”. A rather big count of characters has links to the depicted capital, since some of the shows most discussed plots are happening there. Besides the intrigues and political plots, the series highlights some of Dubrovnik’s most attractive touristic assets, like for example the massive city walls. Due to its worldwide popularity, numerous souvenir shops are offering Game of Thrones merchandise articles, several tour operators offer guided Game of Thrones boat and city tours, and even Game of Thrones themed concerts take place in the city. According to the national tourism board, one can even detect

an increase in overnight stays as a result of the series popularity, which is worthy of mention (Tkalec, Recher & Zilic, 2017).

Therefore, the city Dubrovnik in combination with the series provided a suspenseful opportunity for the investigation on the influence movie tourism can have on the destinations image and how it can be altered.

3.2 Research Design

In order to understand the influence of movie productions on the image of a destination and specifically to detect in how far destinations stakeholders, the DMO, tourists and some touristic suppliers combine Dubrovnik with the series Game of Thrones, exploratory research design was used.

Exploratory research design is suitable for the situations with the limited understanding of the research problematics. It is often applied by researchers if due to previous little research in an area, there exists no sufficient data to expect a certain outcome. This thesis utilized a qualitative research approach, in particular a content analysis, to explore the essence of posted destination related pictures by the DMO, chosen tourist businesses or tourists. The selected research design and approach supported the researcher to understand certain conditions and relationships (Bengtsson, 2016). Moreover, with qualitative research approaches one can develop new ideas and theories and it allows a higher degree of flexibility, which was of considerable importance for this thesis (Ospina, 2004). However, it is important to state that a qualitative research is rather subjective compared to quantitative research. In contrast to quantitative research, which main objective is to find a confirmation for the hypothesis and to find numerical results, qualitative research is applied when one is aiming to explore some phenomena (Maxwell, 2012).

3.3 The Content Analysis

In general, the empirical part of this thesis is based on the qualitative content analysis. Originally, the content analysis was developed for the understanding of written or spoken texts, like the interpretation of the mass media during the second world war. Nowadays, the content analysis can also be useful for the analyzation of visual images. The author of this thesis chose to use this form of analysis in order to give an understanding on the influence movie tourism can have on a destination image. In addition to that, the online destination image of the city Dubrovnik is being explored in this thesis. The qualitative content analysis is basically the counting of certain elements frequency in a defined sample of images. In that way, one can develop an image understanding. Therefore, one can say that the collected data from the city's DMO, tourists and touristic suppliers was analyzed based on depicted content in order to understand the destination image (Rose, 2001)

Once can divide the qualitative content analysis in four parts:

1. Finding your images
2. Devising your categories for coding
3. Coding the images
4. Analyzing

(Rose, 2001)

In the following two sections, one can find the detailed information on the content analysis and how it was used in this thesis. In particular, an explanation on how the author of this thesis chose to find the images, is given in the Data Collection section. Information on devising categories for coding, the coding of the collected images and finally the analysis of the content per se is given in the data analysis section.

Data Collection

In line with the exploratory research design, in this thesis, qualitative data collection was performed. Since the aim of this thesis is to find gaps between the projected destination image of DMOs, the perceived destination image by tourists and the offers of touristic suppliers, data of the three stakeholders was being collected. The data was

collected by on social media posted images by the discussed parties. To be exact, the author took advantage of the social media platform Instagram. Strictly speaking, by collecting data on Instagram, the author explored the online image of the destination, however since nowadays the online image is such a major part of the general destination image, for reasons of simplicity the online destination image was processed and often referred as the general destination image.

Instagram makes the perfect data source, due to its scope and range of influence. However, when collecting images, one has to make sure that the chosen images are appropriate for the research question. Moreover, the samples should be representative and most importantly, not be biased to show a certain dream outcome (Rose, 2001).

Systematic Sampling:

For finding these images, the author decided on conducting a systematic sampling approach. Systematic sampling means that one has to introduce a system which selects images based on a certain interval. For example, one could choose to select every second, every third or even every tenth image illustrated. The interval has to be adequate. However, one has to be careful, that the interval does not coincide with an intentional pattern in the source of data (Rose, 2001).

In this thesis, every second picture posted by Instagram-profiles of the discussed stakeholders was being collected. The usage of every second post had no specific reason but the guarantee of diverse content. The author chose to collect 200 posts per stakeholder, (1) DMO, (2) tourists and (3) touristic suppliers, in order to get a sufficient amount of data. The author saw high significance in doing the collection process at once in order to avoid possible events that could influence a stakeholder's content on Instagram. The date of collection was December the 7th 2018. The author considered the following Instagram profiles for the data collection process:

- (1) To collect data from the local DMO, the author focused on the DMO's profile "experiencedubrovnik". The content of the collected posts enables an insight in the projected online image of the destination.

(2) With regard to tourists, the author chose to collect images posted by several individuals. Amongst other ways, this can be done by exploring an often-used location tag by tourists. For this thesis, two location tags were being explored in order to ensure current content. First of all, “Dubrovnik City” and secondly, “Dubrovnik-Old Town”. In order to comply with the number of 200 posts in total, the author collected 100 posts per location tag.

(3) Since one simply cannot draw any conclusion from a single touristic supplier, Instagram profiles of five touristic suppliers were taken into consideration, in order to collect the adequate amount of posts. The author focused on the Instagram content of five tour operators situated in Dubrovnik’s oldtown. Per Instagram account, 40 images were collected in order to meet the total of 200 posts per stakeholder.

Tour operator:

1. "dubrovnikguidedtours"
2. "majic.walk.tours.dubrovnik"
3. "touchdubrovnik"
4. "dubrovnik.croatia"
5. "dubrovnikwalkingtours"

Data Analysis

In order to analyze the collected data, one has to devise categories for coding at first. The word “coding” can be explained as an attachment of categories to the selected images. These categories should be objective and give knowledge about what one can find in the image. Undoubtedly, it is beneficial to introduce categories which one can easily relate to the research questions concern. It is of significance to know, that the categories must be exhaustive (every aspect must be covered by one category), exclusive (categories are not allowed to overlap) but also enlightening (give significant information). However most importantly, the codes must be judged as valid and unambiguous (Rose 2001).

For the sake of this thesis, the author developed the following categories:

- a. Landscape
- b. Architecture
- c. People
- d. Sport
- e. Food & Beverages
- f. Flora
- g. Entertainment
- h. Other

These categories for coding were chosen since they seem logical and appear to be the right option to get a basic understanding about Dubrovnik's projected and perceived destination image on Instagram. With these categories, the author manually coded the collected Instagram posts of the three stakeholder groups by making use of excel. Each post was coded with at least one of the previously introduced categories. If the category, or better said the post per se showed a connection to the series Game of Thrones the author decided to mark the categories with an "y", if it was not possible to recognize any relation to the series, the categories were being marked with an "x". By doing that, the posts were being separated into two groups. Specifically, they were divided into posts with content related to Game of Thrones and in posts without content related to Game of Thrones. The separation in content related to Game of Thrones and content not related to Game of Thrones, gave results about what the stakeholders generally pay attention to, if not motivated by the series

After the coding and the separation of all the posts into the two categories, the actual content analysis can start. In order to develop an understanding on how exactly the three stakeholder groups associate the series with the destination, the coded posts with either "x" or "y" were quantified. To be exact, this quantification gave insights in the interest of the stakeholders. The results will be illustrated in absolute but also in relative numbers. In consequence to that, the author further quantified how often the previously introduced categories can be found in the collected images in order to gain a deeper understanding on the projected and perceived online destination image. The results of the three groups will be compared with each other.

4 Findings

In the following section, the results of the conducted Instagram content analysis will be demonstrated, explained and discussed in detail. The author of this thesis decided to divide the data analysis into two sections. The first one will show what the author analyzed with regard to the influence of Game of Thrones in the online destination image of Dubrovnik. In the second part of the analysis, the stakeholder's content will be outlined in more detail concerning the previously introduced categories and is therefore divided into subcategories. Naturally, these subcategories were chosen corresponding to the three introduced stakeholders: (1) DMO, (2) tourists and (3) touristic suppliers.

In the discussion section, the author will address whether or not the research results were expected and give ideas why some findings turned out differently. Furthermore, the findings will be compared with the previously introduced literature. Finally, the conclusion will provide a roundup to the reader, where the most important research results are stressed. Also, the author will once again address the research questions and state if the conducted research made an accurate and adequate answer to the questions possible. Moreover, the author will comment about the papers research general limitations and give some recommendations for further research in this field.

4.1 Data Analysis

As mentioned in the section above, the following Data Analysis is separated into two parts. At first, two figures will focus the stakeholders Instagram content with regard to Game of Thrones. To be exact, the figures will give an overview on which stakeholder associates the destination the most with the series but also information about which stakeholder basically ignores the destinations movie production background on Instagram. In order to do that, the author analyses the whole post. The image but also the corresponding caption. After the analysis for Game of Thrones content, the author will focus on the three subcategories separately. The three subcategories will be analyzed based on the coded images with the in the Methodology section introduced categories. The quantification of the coded images will give knowledge about the primary Instagram content of the three stakeholders and enable content wise comparisons. In that way, the understanding of the projected and perceived online destination image of Dubrovnik should be ensured. Additionally, the reader will be able to recognize the influence movie tourism may have on a destination.

Part 1: Analyzing the collected data for Game of Thrones content

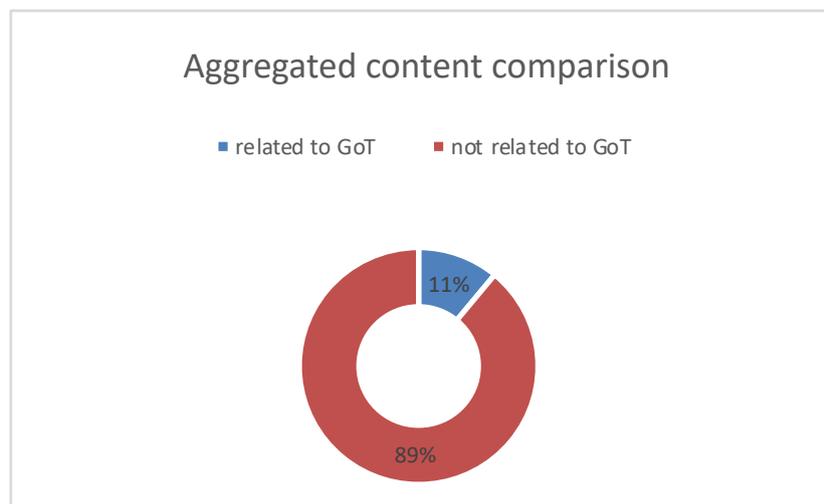


Figure 4: Aggregated Game of Thrones Content (Author's figure)

In order to give an adequate introduction into the conducted content analysis, the author of this thesis chose to provide an aggregated content distribution at first. Figure 4 illustrates the combined number of collected content with regard to Game of

Thrones and content not related to the series, posted by the three stakeholders. The analysis resulted in 11% of posts with content that can be brought in connection to Game of Thrones and 89% of posts without series content. Enunciated in absolute numbers, only 68 of the 600 sampled Instagram posts can be categorized as series related. In contrast, 532 of the collected posts have no obvious relation to the discussed series. One can say that this is already a quite explicit result: The series Game of Thrones does influence the online destination image. However, only to a minor degree.

Figure 5 below, gives a detailed illustration of the quantification with regard to content related to Game of Thrones, and content not related to the series. The figure shows the confrontation of content for the three stakeholder groups separately and in absolute numbers. More precisely, the blue bars depict the collected data on Instagram where the author explored some relation to Game of Thrones, the red bars illustrate the quantification of posts without Game of Thrones content. Overall, one can clearly recognize that the majority of the collected data does not stand in any connection with the series at all, which one can also conclude from the previously introduced figure 4 which illustrates the content of all the discussed stakeholders as a whole.

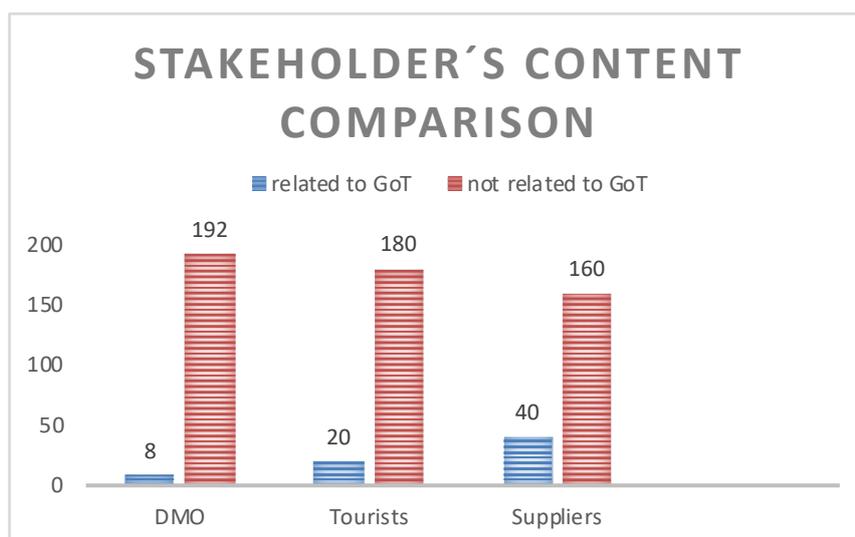


Figure 5: Game of Thrones Content Comparison (Author's figure)

With regard to the destination's local DMO on Instagram, it is obvious to say that it is the stakeholder who has the least number of posts related to the social media account. In figure 5 it is shown that in only 8 out of 200 posts the author could find relevant Game of Thrones related content in the image, the caption or hashtag. However, in the majority of these eight posts the DMO only shared Game of Thrones related Instagram content from tourists. Better said, they did not post any own produced Game of Thrones content. These 8 out of 200 posts can also be introduced as a relative number, which would only be four percent. As a result of these findings, one can assume that the DMO appears to have little to no interest in a destination image that projects an immediate connection to the series and prefers to display other matters in its shared content.

The second pair of bars in figure 5 depicts tourists Instagram content. Compared to the DMO, tourists emphasize Game of Thrones more than twice as much in their Instagram posts. To be exact, 20 out of 200 of Instagram posts turned out to be in connection with the series. Therefore, one can say that 10% of the collected data can be categorized as Game of Thrones content. The majority of these series related posts are pictures of landscapes and architecture which one can also find in the Game of Thrones series. Quite often, tourists take pictures of themselves (selfies) in front of buildings and address a connection to the series in the caption. This is often done by hashtags, quotes or explanations.

When observing figure 5, one can notice that touristic suppliers, in the case of this thesis tour operator businesses, are the stakeholder group that posts the most with regard to the series. The author explored that in total 40 Instagram posts of the in total 200 collected ones appeared to depict something Game of Thrones related. To describe that as a relative number, one can speak about 20%. Moreover, one can say that every fifth analyzed post is referring to the series. Undoubtedly, this demonstrates the highest percentage of Game of Thrones content, when comparing the percentage to the 4% of DMO content or the 10% of tourists Instagram content. The touristic suppliers, five different tour operators, very often use architecture that can be brought in connection to the series, to promote Game of Thrones related tours. An often-used example for that would be the "Walk of Shame" Steps. Landscapes that are depicted similarly in Game of Thrones, are also of common use to them.

Part 2: Analyzing the Stakeholders Instagram content with the categories

In the previous section, the author described the first part of the conducted analysis where the aim was to recognize how much content of the collected posts is based on the series Game of Thrones and what the images usually show. However, in this part of the analysis, the author takes a closer look at the collected data and will illustrate the findings of the analysis of the stakeholder’s images based on the previously introduced coding categories.

	A	B	C	D
163		landscape x; architecture x; flora x	architecture x; person x; landscape x; flora	architecture x; landscape x
164		architecture x	architecture x; person x; other x	landscape x; architecture x
165		architecture x	architecture x; flora x	architecture x
166		entertainment x; person x	architecture x	architecture x
167		architecture x	food x	architecture x
168		entertainment x	architecture x	architecture x; landscape x; flora x
169		architecture x; flora x	architecture x	architecture y; person
170		food x	architecture x; landscape x	architecture x; flora x
171		architecture x; other x	person x; architecture x; landscape x; flora x	architecture y
172		entertainment x; person x	person x; architecture x; landscape x	architecture y; person
173		architecture x	person x; landscape x	architecture y
174		entertainment x; person x	person x; architecture x; landscape x	architecture x; landscape x; flora x
175		entertainment x; architecture x	architecture x; person x	architecture y
176		entertainment x; architecture x; person x	flora x	architecture x
177		entertainment x; architecture x	architecture x; landscape x	architecture y; person
178		entertainment x; person x	landscape x	landscape y; architecture
179		entertainment x; architecture x	architecture x; person x	architecture x
180		entertainment x; person x	architecture x; flora x	architecture y
181		entertainment x; architecture x	architecture x; person x	landscape x; flora x; architecture x
182		architecture x	person x	architecture y; person
183		landscape x; person x; flora x	architecture x	architecture y
184		landscape x; architecture x	architecture x; landscape x; flora x	architecture x
185		architecture x	architecture x; person x; entertainment x	architecture x; flora x
186		landscape x	architecture x	person x
187		architecture x	architecture x	landscape x; person x
188		landscape x; flora x	landscape x; architecture x; person x	architecture x; flora x
189		architecture x; landscape x	architecture x; person x	architecture y
190		architecture x; person x	other x; flora x	landscape x; architecture x

Figure 6: Demonstration of coding on excel (Author’s figure)

Figure 6 gives an insight in the conducted coding process on excel. Column B includes the coded content of the DMO, Column C shows the coded content of tourists and column D illustrates the data of the touristic suppliers. As indicated in the Methodology section, after the coding process all the categories were quantified, which one can see in figure 7 below. The detailed analysis of the Instagram images of the three discussed stakeholders can be seen in the next paragraphs.

	B	C	D
	DMO	Tourists	Touristic Suppliers
category landscape	90	72	85
category architecture	90	114	48
category person	29	89	13
category sport	7	1	5
category food	12	13	13
category flora	26	42	49
category entertainment	24	11	0
category other	6	21	12

Figure 7: Quantified Categories on Excel (Author’s figure)

Instagram content of the DMO

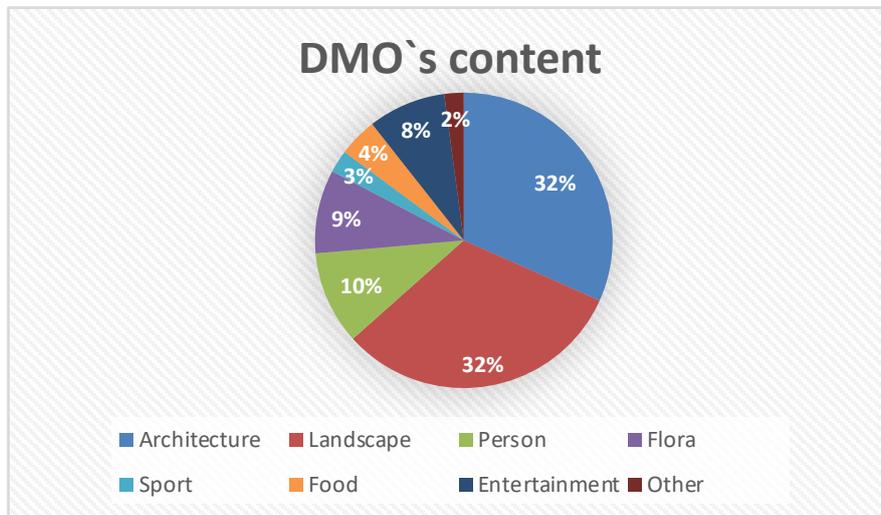


Figure 8: DMO's Content on Instagram (Author's figure)

In figure 8, one can see a pie chart that illustrates the quantified categories with which the author analyzed the collected images of Dubrovnik's local DMO. In the images posted by the DMO, the city's architecture but also the landscape are the dominating categories. Both categories appeared in the same number of cases, to be exact both landscape and architecture appeared 90 times in images. Expressed relatively, about 64% of the devised categories on images posted by the DMO are either showing landscape or architecture. The city's flora, people and entertainment also appear quite often in the DMO's Instagram content. In particular, 29 images show one or more people, in 26 pictures flora is depicted and in 24 posts one can find entertainment related elements. The category sport and food do not seem to be of high importance to destination marketers. Even combined, less than 10 percent of the devised categories are sport or food related. Due to the fact that the city's architecture and landscape have a high occurrence, one can argue that Dubrovnik's DMO tries to transmit an online destination image which mainly highlights the destination's beauty.

Instagram content of Tourists

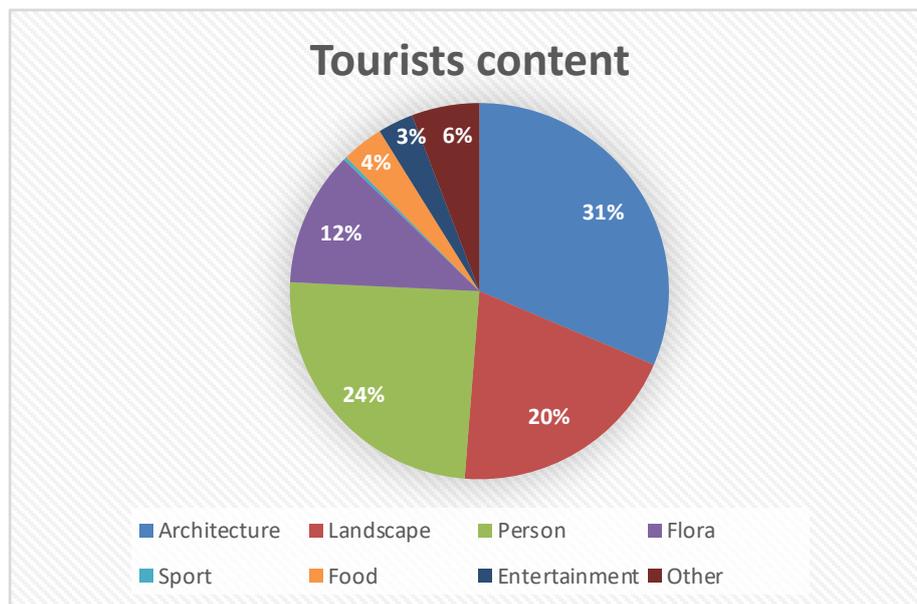


Figure 9: Tourist's Content on Instagram (Author's figure)

With regard to tourists posted images, one can say that the content has a greater variety than the previously introduced Instagram content of Dubrovnik's DMO. This can be seen in figure 9. For Tourists, architecture in Dubrovnik appears to be the most important item to take pictures of. In 114 of the collected images the author could devise the architecture category. Architecture is followed by the category person, which is recognizable in about 89 posted images. As mentioned in the first part of the analysis, it is notable that tourists generally enjoy taking pictures of themselves (selfies). Tourists do that quite often in front of the city's architecture or landscape, therefore the person category was frequently found in combination with those categories. Dubrovnik's landscape is recognizable in 72 images of the collected posts of tourists and can therefore be stated under the stakeholder group's top three favorite destination aspects. Sport, entertainment and food appear to be of almost no significance to tourists when visiting the destination. When referring to the Instagram posts, one can say that for tourists, architecture is the most important part of their journey when visiting Dubrovnik.

Instagram content of the touristic suppliers

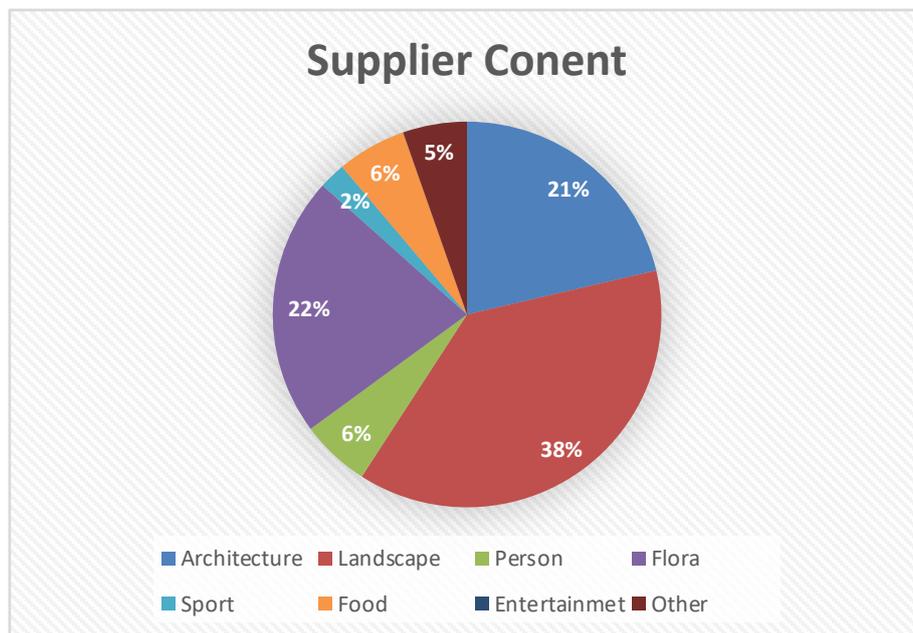


Figure 10: Touristic Supplier's Content on Instagram (Author's figure)

The analyzed content of the images of touristic suppliers is also different compared to the two previously analyzed stakeholders. In the case of touristic suppliers, three categories dominate, whereas the other categories are used quite seldom. In particular, touristic suppliers tend to favor the destinations landscape in their Instagram content. To be exact, in 85 images Dubrovnik's landscape can be seen. The second rank is shared flora and architecture. They can be found at an almost identical frequency in the images. Architecture is featured 48 times and flora can be identified in 49 pictures. Once again, sport and food are quite unpopular, however the category entertainment cannot be identified at all. When observing these findings, one can assume that touristic suppliers also see high importance in posting images that portray the looks of the Adriatic destination.

4.2 Discussion

In the following section, the results of the conducted analysis will be discussed. First of all, the author will state if the analysis outcome was expected and if not. Moreover, the author will mention some factors that could have had an influence on the collected data. In consequence to that, the author will compare some findings of the secondary research given in the literature review with findings of the primary research. Overall one has to say, that due to personal experience as a tourist in Dubrovnik, the author of this thesis expected the outcome of the analysis to be quite differently.

The DMO's projected online image

With regard to the projected online destination image of the DMO, the author did not expect that only 4 percent of explored content can be related to the series. It was assumed, that the Destination Marketing Organization would include much more series related content in order to attract a diverse target group. However, compared to the reviewed literature, the result is actually not too dissent. The secondary research gives information about the fact that movie tourism is still pretty often only considered as a niche segment by DMOs to even out seasonality issues and especially if the destination is suffering from an overflow of tourists, not used at all in the destination image formation. Moreover, the literature review states that it is very seldom the case that a DMO uses movie tourism to actively promote the destination. This probably is also the case for the DMO of Dubrovnik, which puts more importance in showcasing the cities architecture and landscape. The DMO appears to position itself as a beautiful Mediterranean city that is worth to visit. At least that can be assumed by the online destination image the organization transmits.

One has to mention, that there exists the possibility that the results may have shown a higher amount of Game of Thrones content during another time of the year. The data was collected during Christmas season and therefore the DMO possibly put high focus on posting Christmas related content like for example images of lightings fixed on architecture or Christmas themed events. Moreover, at the point of data collection, the last Game of Thrones season was released more than a year ago and also the release of the new season was almost half a year ahead. If the data were

collected around the release of a new season, the DMO might have posted more content with regard to the series.

Dubrovnik in the eyes of tourists

Amongst other outcomes, the analyses resulted in every 10th post on Instagram by tourists having a connection to the series. This result comes of no surprise since during the research, the author came across an Instagram location tag called “Dubrovnik-Kingslanding” which is frequently used by tourists in the city and refers to the capital city of the Game of Thrones universe. Therefore, one can assume that the majority of movie tourists and Game of Thrones enthusiasts would rather make use of that location tag, instead of the tags used for this thesis. When taking a closer look into the “Dubrovnik-Kingslanding” location tag, one can see that tourists use this location tag more often than the location tags used for the data collection process of this thesis. To be exact it seems like the location tag is used numerous times over an hour. However, the use of this hashtag for the purpose of this thesis would have led to a biased result anyway, but it shows that there are many Game of Thrones fans visiting the city.

The comparison with the literature review also brings no surprises, since there it is stated that movie tourists do often engage in similar activities than “normal tourists”, except they can be categorized as specific movie tourists who are primarily focused on the movie related offer of the destination. Expressed in simple terms, movie tourists do not necessarily only post Game of Thrones related content. As a result of that one can argue that this can account as a reason why one could not recognize more Game of Thrones related content in the images of the tourists. Although they may have been attracted by the series, they engage in other touristic activities as well and show interest in other fields, like for example in architecture. Besides architecture the content analysis showed that tourists also take many pictures of the destination’s landscapes and flora. Therefore, one could argue that they value Dubrovnik’s medieval architecture and also have a high interest in the looks of the destination.

One can mention similar limitations as for the DMO content. To be exact one could argue for this stakeholder group that the Christmas season is a nameable influencer

on the posted content and also that the results would potentially be different if the release of a Game of Thrones season was near to the date of data collection.

Touristic supplier's presentation of Dubrovnik

One of the authors aims was to gain an understanding on in how far touristic suppliers include Game of Thrones in their offer and if the suppliers take advantage of the popular series to market their service offerings. The analysis resulted in 20% of the posted content being related to the thesis. That is every fifth post. Since the author solely analyzed data from tour operators the results were expected differently. To be exact it was assumed that 40-50% of the collected data can be accounted as Game of Thrones related content. The expectation was based on personal experiences in Dubrovnik, where it occurred that almost every tour operator primarily offered Game of Thrones related tours and merchandise can be found everywhere. However, one has to mention that the analysis gave the understanding that touristic suppliers are including Game of Thrones the most compared to the other discussed stakeholder groups. This in turn, came of no surprise.

However, in the literature review it was introduced that successful touristic suppliers tend to adapt their offerings and marketing activities to the projected image by the DMO. Since the DMO includes almost nothing series related in their social media posts on Instagram, it is arguable that touristic suppliers adapt to that, decrease their Game of Thrones services and market their services by other means. The analysis gave the impression that the suppliers do so by posting images of landscapes, architecture and flora that illustrate the destination's beauty. This emphasizes on beauty actually suits to the assumption made about DMO's projected destination image.

In the case of touristic suppliers, one cannot assume the similar limitations as for the other stakeholders. It is assumable that tour operators do not change their offerings based on the season, but also in general do not alter those on a frequent basis. At least no to a large extent. Therefore, the content probably remains almost the same during Christmas season, but also during times where no new Game of Thrones series is produced. However, if the author would have explored the Instagram content of different touristic suppliers, like for example hotels, restaurants or transportation companies, the outcome would supposedly be unequal.

The influence of Game of Thrones on Dubrovnik's online destination image

The conducted content analysis gave an insight in the influence the television series has on the city's online destination image. Overall one can say that the analysis resulted in showcasing that Game of Thrones a rather minor influence on the online destination image of the Dubrovnik. In total only a small percentage of analyzed posts can be brought in connection to the series. Hence, one can interpret that Dubrovnik's overall destination image is fundamentally formed by other beliefs, like for example the disposition of ancient architecture, stunning landscapes and a general beautiful town picture.

Although the influence of Game of Thrones on the online destination image was barely recognizable, one can still detect some gaps in the stakeholder's approach to movie tourism. For instance, the DMO and touristic suppliers appear to use the city's connection with the series very differently. Whereas the tour operators have Game of Thrones related content in every fifth Instagram post, the DMO only uses Game of Thrones in every 25th Instagram post. That is quite a difference. The results showed that every 10th post of tourists has a relation to the series, which appears to be almost the midway of the results of the other discussed stakeholders. However, when one considers the mentioned series related location tag, where multiple images are posted every day, one can say that that the touristic suppliers understand the perceived destination image better than the DMO does.

The reason for the DMO's ignorance of Game of Thrones in their projected online image can only be guessed. The oldtown of Dubrovnik is known to have a mass tourism problem. Especially since it is a seaport city, many cruise ships are landing every day, especially during summer. Despite that, it is still of wonder why even in winter time almost no series related content that could attract a niche segment, is posted online. The DMO would probably support the touristic suppliers, especially when speaking of the tour operators, if they would include more Game of Thrones related content in their projected destination image.

5 Conclusion

This thesis aimed to investigate the influence movie tourism can have on the destination image. Furthermore, the goal was to find out if stakeholders do really tend to associate a destination with a popular movie production. The literature review of this thesis gave profound insights in the topics of movie tourism but also destination image. Moreover, the reviewed literature also introduced thoughts by previous researcher concerning the influence movie tourism can have on a destinations image. In order to demonstrate that influence, a case study with regard to the series Game of Thrones in Dubrovnik was conducted. The case study was based on a content analysis on Instagram which should give insights in Dubrovnik's online destination image.

Despite the existence of various books, journal articles or theses in this field, the results of this research can be accounted as a contribution to an existing body of knowledge. Theoretically, the results of the conducted content analysis could be used by DMOs as a basis of understanding of the influence of movie productions, how they can be used for a transformation of the destination image and the recognition of the destination image needs of stakeholders.

According to the introduced literature, movie tourism is a rather new phenomenon that can influence a destination in various ways. Among the positive impacts one can name a rise in revenues, an increase of touristic arrivals but also the change of a destinations image. This change of the destination image is demonstrated in various researches. Examples for such movie productions are: "Lord of the Rings" in New Zealand, "The third man" in Vienna or "The sound of music" in Salzburg. This altered destination image as a result of a movie production also was the key concern of the conducted primary research of this thesis.

With the thesis, the author indented to answer one main research question and three further supporting research questions. The aim of the main research question was to find out what influence movie tourism has on a destination image. Right at the outset, the broad conclusion can be drawn that movie tourism indeed has an influence on a destination's image, however the power of this influence depends on the particular destination but also varies from time to time. The literature review gave the

impression that movies have high impact on the destination image. The content analysis, which was conducted to explore that influence, gave the result that the influence is quite weak. At least that can be stated with regard to the investigated city Dubrovnik.

The three supporting research questions focused on the three discussed suppliers. First of all, on how movie tourism does influence the image projected by the Destination Marketing Organizations. Secondly how the destination image does evolve as a result of a movie production in the eyes of tourists and finally how movie tourism does impact the offers of touristic suppliers

- With regard to the DMOs, the conducted primary research gave the impression that they would not be reluctant to use a popular movie production in the projected destination image, however, the secondary research resulted in an outcome that makes it hard to answer that research question. Since the content analysis resulted in almost no DMO content with regard to the series, the author intends to say, that a movie production has little influence on the projected image of DMOs.
- With respect to the evolvement of tourists perceived destination image as a result of a movie production, one can say that it actually evolves to a mentionable extent. This can be stated based on the secondary research but also the primary research gave the impression that tourists are generally aware of the movie production background of a destination. Especially if the movie production gained high popularity.
- The conducted research resulted in the understanding that movie tourism has the highest impact on touristic suppliers. They take advantage of the popularity of a movie production for the sake of finding a specialization of their offerings but also for promotion purposes.

Further research in this field should take several destinations in consideration in order to enable a deeper understanding on how movie tourism can influence a destinations image. From the comparison of different destinations view on movie tourism, general

assumptions about the phenomenon could be made. Furthermore, it would be enticing to see how diverse the outcome would be if instead of exploring the online content of stakeholders, offline data would be used. Doing similar research with offline data would be particularly interesting, since one can expect that the outcome would show varied results. The results would probably be different if one does on-site questionnaires with tourists, touristic suppliers but also the DMO.

However, if one chooses to conduct a content analysis online, it is recommendable to collect the data several times. Regardless if movie or series, it would be suitable to collect the data half a year before the release of a movie or new season, around the release date, and half a year after the release. Without any doubt, this would be time-consuming, however the result would be more profound. In this way, marketers will have a better understanding of the influence of movie tourism on a destination's image.

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