

MOVIE INDUCED TOURISM IN SICILY

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Abstract: *Movie induced tourism in Sicily.* Sicily is considered to be one of the most important regions for cinema. In this regard, this paper tries to present in short the relation between movie, tourism and territory. On the other hand, the article tries to illustrate the role of the cinema in the development of the local and regional economy. Furthermore, the considerations of the paper are focused on the impact of the cinema both in the cultural landscape as well as on the cultural heritage and the touristic field of the island of Sicily.

Rezumat: *Cinematografia ca factor de dezvoltare a turismului în Sicilia.* Regiunea Siciliei este considerată a fi una dintre cele mai reprezentative entități teritoriale pentru activitatea cinematografică. Din această perspectivă, lucrarea de față încearcă să prezinte pe scurt relația strânsă dintre film, turism și teritoriu. Pe de altă parte, este evidențiat rolul pe care domeniul cinematografiei îl joacă în contextul dezvoltării economiei locale și regionale. Mai mult decât atât, aserțiunile lucrării sunt centrate și pe impactul cinematografiei asupra peisajului cultural sicilian, asupra moștenirii istorice de pe insulă și, nu în ultimul rând, asupra dinamicii activităților turistice.

Key words: *movie, cinema, tourism, cultural heritage, Sicily, Italy.*

Cuvinte cheie: *film, cinema, turism, moștenire culturală, Sicilia, Italia.*



1. INTRODUCTION

Cinema has always been considered as a fantastic world where people get true their dreams, excluding any direct and indirect connection among tourism and territory. During the last twenty years this idea has been changed due to many case studies showing how audiovisual products may have an effect on local economy through a new branch of tourism called "Movie-induced tourism". It's an important resource, creating economic and social benefits, and, more often, many regional governments are looking towards this specific kind of tourism to limit the economic decline they are experiencing. Modern tourist is more self-confident about his travels and his choices, so he can decide where, when and how to go, visit or live a touristic location. Sicily has being represented one of the most important location for cinema. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, Sicily was at the forefront of the film, especially for the first underwater shots of Prince Francesco Alliata. After the collapse of Sicilian film productions and the advent of sound, Sicily was affected by many national but also international filmmakers. Since the thirties, filmmakers as Frank Capra, reproduced the taste and the memory of the positive values of this region, ignoring social and burning issues, but from the seventies, filmmakers as Coppola, Scorsese and Turturro, have presented a negative Sicilian culture, closed-minded people and the vision of a dangerous untouchable "Family", with a strange idea of "executioner" assigned to the protector of the clan, the boss and not to a legal entity. All this has contributed to a distorted and inaccurate knowledge of the Sicilian reality, which, partly because of this stereotypical view, lost, economic and social benefits compared to the other regions of Italy. In the last decade, the interaction among cinema, territory and tourism, has been representing a new challenge for local development.

2. LOCAL ACTORS

Film commission, Product Placement Agencies, Film Fund and Regional Government, have the mission of improving local social and economic issues through the valorization of cultural heritage and landscape. Film commissions have the important role in attracting film productions to set their movies in its territory. In Italy Film Commissions were born recently during 90s and they provide to assist productions, promote their local business, manage crew, administration and other expenses. In addition, they make location scouting, coordination, location guide, advertising, site inspection, family trip and film identity and so on. Initially, Film Commissions worked separately from the other local actors and there were more than one in the same city or Region. Now, after the successful reform of the division of powers in the field of tourism, they can legislate to redesign the internal structure to improve their action on territory.

Each Region has its own Film Commission and each one works to attract more film productions as much as possible to give more visibility at the territory. Another important item is Product Placement Agency (fig. 1). It is a new tool to find financial resources for the film. In Italy, until 2004 it was forbidden to introduce trademarks into film, usually considered subliminal advertising (fig. 2). Fortunately, after 2004 national Government changed the law, knowing the importance of this exclusive tool and reducing the gap with the other countries. We distinguish two different models of product placement, commercial and cultural one. In the first case, the presence of the product does not interfere with the

narrative context and it's considered as a real advertising, while, in the cultural case, it plays an artistic role and it's functional to the plot. Obviously, there are many rules governing the product placement, for example, no reference to specific promotional or invitation to purchase products, no advertising of tobacco, alcohol or arms, etc. etc. In Sicily, due to the lack of big companies, is more difficult to find out brands who want to contribute financially to the film. Film Fund is the best tool of local Government to supply at the big crisis experienced by the sector. Each regional Government allocates a sum to help local productions and the others who want to set the film in own territory. In 2008 and 2009 Sicilian Government allocated almost nine million of euro to increase audiovisual products.

There also are collateral promoters for film tourism like film festival, one of the most important in Sicily is "*Festival Internazionale del cinema di frontiera*" (Border Film Festival) and as pointed out the founder, the director Nello Correale, "*Cinema of the Frontier understood in its symbolic value as well as geographically in its broadest term. Territorial borders, culture, and language but also the soul*". It's the Southeast Film festival of Europe located in a small village where for ten years, many directors, productions and actors of all around the world meet themselves in a dreaming atmosphere.



Figure 1: Assessorato Regionale del Turismo dello Sport e dello Spettacolo
(source: Regione Sicilia)



Figure 2: An advertising of a cinema festival
(source: Regione Sicilia)

3. FILM IN SICILY

Sicily was one of the most popular destinations of film productions. There have been shot more than 150 films and several advertising. Luchino Visconti played “*La terra trema*”, or “*Il Gattopardo*”, near Palermo, with Burt Lancaster and Claudia Cardinale; Roberto Rossellini played “*Stromboli terra di Dio*”, in wich it’s said that he fell in love with the beautiful actress Bergman. Michelangelo Antonioni played “*L’avventura*” and Michael Redford “*Il Postino*” with Massimo Troisi, Maria Grazia Cucinotta and Philippe Noiret. Steven Soderbergh played the last frame of his “*Ocean’s twelve*” with George Clooney, Brad Pitt, Catherine Zeta Jones, Julia Roberts, Vincent Cassel e Matt Damon.

Roberto Benigni played “*Johnny Stecchino*”, a mistaken identity comedy. It could be so long to list all the films set in Sicily, but there are some that gave an important visibility of the territory like the TV series “*Il Commissario Montalbano*” by the novel of Camilleri, a comedy about a positive image of a policeman linked to the Sicilian traditions. Montalbano has determined the awakening of the territory of Ragusa. The province has tripled the number of tourists in three years, increasing from twenty to thirty thousand visitors per year. Local Government, realizing the potential of the film as tool for a new way of development, in collaboration with the film production and regional Film Commission, have created a film path to follow through pictures on poles close to the locations where set the TV series. It’s represent a timid approach to an international movie-induced tourism realized by other countries (fig. 3).

On the contrary, we have to underline how the saga of “*Il Padrino*” “The God Father”, of F. F. Coppola, gave a negative image of Sicily and Sicilian people. For many years, more than twenty years, tourists did not come to Sicily because of their fear to visit a land in which did not exist laws and people killed each other everywhere. It represented one of the worst advertising for Sicily, showing an unreal truth and a stereotypical image of the land. Today many cruise tourists want to visit the locations of “*Il Padrino*” and sometimes, they want to get married in the church of the small village, Savoca, dressing like the film. It represents a different point of view by tourists that realize also the difference between the fiction and reality.



*Figure 3: Advertisings of cinema productions
(source: Regione Sicilia)*

4. CONCLUSIONS

The increasing film tourism in each region, let understand us how important is movie-induced tourism and how could be a valid alternative to the traditional economy. The interaction among Cinema, Tourism and Territory, should be strengthened by the cooperation among local actors to valorize cultural heritages, local traditions and landscape. It could be a new way of “glocalization” following a reverse procedure from a local resource to a global visibility. It’s the task of local actors, Film Commission in primis, to improve the governance of a territory in economic, social and cultural terms. Set a film in a territory means to earn twice, first when film production plays the movie, involving many local skilled workers, shops, craftsmen, and so on, and then, when the film is projected in cinemas through the advertising of the locations. It could seem that there aren’t negative effects with movie-induced tourism, but it’s important to underline that a sudden increase of tourists in a place, worse if a small place, creates different problems on a sustainable tourism of a territory. So it’s very important for local actors organize a sustainable project to receive tourists in a short time, that’s should improve the governance of the territory and respect residents. Enjoy your movie trip.

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