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Film Tourism in Basilicata

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ABSTRACT

Film tourism is the phenomenon that is born from the desire to visit film locations, drawing increasing attention in recent years. This paper presents the results of a field research aiming at analysing the effects of the film *Basilicata coast to coast*, by Rocco Papaleo, on tourism in Basilicata, a small region in the South of Italy, after the film's success at the box office, winning several Italian awards. The film, made with the active involvement of local institutions and stakeholders, pursues the objective of promoting an area that is still largely unknown to national and international tourists. The romantic and naturalistic atmosphere of Papaleo's film seems to have stimulated the curiosity of tourists and promoted a "dream-like" but truthful image of the region.

Keywords: Film Tourism, Basilicata Coast to Coast, Destination Image, Cinema, Responsible Tourism, Local Tourism Development.

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Introduction

Locations, and not just plot and characters, are key elements of film productions. Far from being just the frame of the story, in many cases the location of a film plays an important role in its diegesis. The fascination that natural scenography arouses in the spectator can trigger the desire to visit the area, in order to find the emotion that binds the film to that particular location. In fact, from the Nineties onwards, a series of studies on *destination image* formation (Butler 1990; Gartner 1993) and on the economic impacts of film-induced tourism (Riley, Van Doren, Baker 1998; Schofield 1996; Macionis 2004; Beeton 2005) has highlighted the potential of movie images to promote a given territory and their impact on tourism.

The term *film-induced tourism* or *film tourism* represents that form of tourism which has been triggered by the desire to visit the sites of film locations (Evans 1997). There are different case studies (Hudson, Ritchie 2006) that show how the promotional effect and the appeal of movies can lead to a considerable increase in tourist flows to a destination/location. However, Heitmann (2010) points out that it is difficult to generalise the results of these surveys, and quantifying the overall impact of the phenomenon is therefore rather complex.

In Italy, interest in film tourism has increased in the last few years, when the local governments began to invest in films, which were considered a strategic asset for the territory due to their positive direct and indirect impacts and to their ability to exhibit and promote the beauty of a region. As a consequence, numerous Italian regions set up *film commissions*, organisations aimed at attracting audiovisual productions to the territory. By allocating loans and offering services to production companies, film commissions aim at creating a regional audiovisual supply chain, and also at promoting the natural landscapes and the local products, in synergy with tourism promotion agencies.

This paper presents a survey carried out on the film *Basilicata coast to coast*, directed by Rocco Papaleo in Basilicata in 2010. This film was successful in Italy and represents an interesting case study. The local regional authorities and organisations were involved in the film right from the earliest stages of its production. The objective of their early involvement was to ensure that the image of the region conveyed by the film would be in line with the tourism marketing strategy of APT, the Tourist Office of Basilicata.

1. The cinema as a means to promote a territory

Gartner (1993) classifies tourist destination image formation into three macro-categories: *induced images*, which derive from expressly commercial sources, such as advertisements, brochures, tourist guides; *organic images*, which do not originate from sources specific to tourism and which are gleaned from non-commercial information on the destination (advice from friends/relatives, education, popular culture); *autonomous images*, which are acquired through media. According to Gartner (1993) and Butler (1990), motion pictures fall into the autonomous image category and prove to be more credible than induced images. This is because they do not manifestly display commercial messages, and because the efficiency of film distribution channels

ensures greater penetration in the tourism market compared to organic images. In other words, films are able to promote a destination in a new and original way, by means of a particularly captivating narrative structure and through their distribution channels (cinema theatres, TV, DVD, Internet), attracting spectators to visit it.

Scientific literature regarding the relationship between cinema and tourism (Riley, Van Doren, Baker 1998; Schofield 1996; Macionis 2004; Beeton 2005) has pinpointed three major benefits of films for the territory: the *hallmark event*, *longevity* and *vicarious consumption*. In one of the first researches on film-induced tourism, conducted by Riley and Van Doren (1992), films are considered a 'hallmark event' for the destination (Ritchie 1984), because despite their limited duration, they can have a long-term impact and are capable of stimulating awareness, appeal and profitability of the destination. In fact, movies can create interest and attract attention towards the location featured on the silver screen; the locality becomes more popular, it captivates the viewer with its new cinematic appeal and hence becomes a potential tourist destination. According to Riley and Van Doren, the likelihood of becoming an event that activates tourism flows depends on the film's capacity to create an *icon*. An icon is a single scene, performance or theme in a film that remains impressed in the spectator's memory and which is generally linked to the location where it takes place. In this sense, an icon can be abstract, when referring to feelings such as love or friendship or tangible, when referring to particular events or places.

A concrete example of how an icon can become an important resource to promote a destination is Federico Fellini's film "La Dolce Vita". The film is the emblem of the lifestyle in Rome in the Sixties, becoming a popular synonym for worldliness. The charm of Rome at night, populated by celebrities and paparazzi, is still evocative after fifty years and persists in the collective imagination of many tourists, as confirmed by a recent survey on the influence of Italian films on international tourists (Rocco, Di Maira 2006)¹. But "La Dolce Vita" also created a very effective, tangible icon: the scene of the bath in the Trevi fountain with Anita Ekberg and Marcello Mastroianni is one of the most famous in Italian film history. Riley and Van Doren claim that this icon-producing process is a prerequisite for the film to become a hallmark event for the territory. Although they have been generated by cinematic productions that have a limited time duration, cinema icons revive films and refresh collective memories, so that a motion picture produced in the Sixties can still have an appeal among spectators today. In their study regarding the film "Vicky Cristina Barcelona" (2008)², Rodriguez, Fraiz and Rodriguez-Toubes (2011) analysed the effect that cinema has in the creation of destination images. The film, shot in Barcelona, was a commercial success and was distributed almost all over the world, also owing to the popular actors in the cast. The survey involved spectators before and after viewing the movie; its objective was to evaluate whether the film's images had changed the audience's perception of the city of Barcelona. It is interesting to note that for some spectators the places shown in the film acquired greater importance compared to what they had stated before the viewing.³

However, the never-ending effect of film images even once the film is over - does not depend only on the creation of icons but also on what Beeton calls *longevity*. According

to Beeton (2005), all audiovisual products are characterised by an intrinsic longevity that guarantees the continuous proposal of images. In the case of movies, besides being viewed in cinemas, they can also be seen on television, online streaming, DVDs, film festivals etc. In this sense, the strength of these autonomous images can rely on the long-lasting effect of cinematic products that guarantees the continuous awakening of attention towards both the film and its location. However, even Gartner (1993), reflecting on the characteristics of autonomous images, highlights their recurring aspect and pervasive visibility.

In the literature, the relationship between tourism and cinematic images is connected with the concept of *indirect consumption*, the chance of spectators to virtually consume the tourist destination beforehand through the images of a film. Be it *vicarious consumption* (Schofield 1996, Macionis 2004) or *experience consumption* (Riley, Van Doren 1992), researchers agree that in the decision-making process that leads to the purchase of a destination, the possibility of being able to see the destination images is of vital importance. Pre-experience and indirect consumption of the destination are significant (Riley and Van Doren 1992, Schofield 1996, Fagiani 2008) for two reasons: the first is associated with the seductive component of images, while the second regards the familiarity with the destination acquired through the film. The destination, being part of the setting and the storyline, is no longer a distant, unknown land, but becomes more familiar. Hence, cinematic promotion allows the potential tourist to enter the location right away, eliminating the worries connected to the discovery of an unknown place and simplifying the purchasing process. As we will see in the next paragraph, *icons*, *longevity* and *vicarious consumption* are aspects that can considerably influence a tourist's destination choice process.

2. Film induced-tourism

By *film-induced tourism* we mean that form of tourism to destinations that have been used as locations in cinema products (Evans 1997). But, as we will see, this phenomenon is often very circumscribed and can be seen clearly only in some cases. These effects, in fact, need to be supported by territorial marketing actions, carried out by the Destination Marketing Organizations (Dmo), in order to incisively influence tourist choices. In the past years, the analysis of the film-induced phenomenon has been the subject of a number of studies and in-depth analyses. However, in general, we must point out the difficulty that arises when aggregating the results of these analyses in order to determine the overall impact of the phenomenon (Heitmann 2010, Connell 2012). There are at least two aspects that are worth mentioning, and that are necessary in order to consider the scientific debate on this topic: the difficulty of separating the cinema-component from the other factors that influence the tourist's decision making process, and the difficulty of quantifying the film-induced phenomenon when the destination is already well-known. The process of defining the image of a destination in fact has many facets, it makes reference to a variety of sources, and can be identified as a process that is constantly evolving, therefore it is difficult to identify and quantify the influence of the cinema alone. Similarly, in case the

location of a study is a location that is already well known by tourists, it is not easy to attribute the promotional effect to the cinema alone.

As can be seen in a recent summary by Hudson and Ritchie (2006) of all the more significant case studies on film-induced tourism flows, the quantification of the effects of these flows can depend on a number of factors, ranging from the success of the film, to the capacity of a destination to stimulate the tourists' choice with cinema related initiatives. Moreover, the process that goes from seeing a movie to purchasing a destination is not automatic. A survey carried out in Italy (Di Cesare, Rech 2007) showed how over 50% of the respondents (about 900 people answered an online questionnaire) declared that seeing a movie in some way did influence their tourism desires. The same study, however, highlighted how the influence and desire induced by the film tends to significantly decrease when the holiday destination is chosen: only 4% considers the vision of a movie a decisive factor in his/her destination choice⁴. According to the authors, this shows that the process that goes from seeing a movie to purchasing a holiday is a complex one, that depends on various factors, and that cannot be classified as a simple cause-effect.

As already mentioned before, the potential effect of the image of the movie location - *hallmark event*, *longevity* and *vicarious consumption* – can be analysed starting from some specific cases. In one of the first studies on *film-induced tourism*, Riley and Van Doren (1992), analyse tourist flows in some American destinations which have been the locations of famous films. For example, the case of "Close encounters of the 3rd type"⁵, a movie directed by Steven Spielberg in 1977, is interesting. The most important scenes of the movie were shot at Devils Tower National Monument, which, in 1978, recorded a 74% increase in visits compared to the previous year. This further increased after the movie was shown on television in 1981. In 1989, 11 years after the movie was released, a survey carried out on the tourists visiting Devils Tower showed how one visitor out of five indicated that Spielberg's movie was the principal source of knowledge of the place. Riley and Van Doren's study was revised and upgraded in 1998, when the two authors, examining the tourist flows of twelve locations of famous movies during a time period starting from 10 years before the movies' release to 5 years after it, ascertained how, after the movies were released in the cinema theatres, there was an increase in arrivals ranging from 40% to 50%. With regards to Italy, Rocco and Di Maira (2007) carried out an analysis of the impact on the territory of some successful TV series. An interesting case is the TV series "Elisa di Rivombrosa"⁶, which was mostly shot in the Castle of Agliè in the Piedmont region. Before the castle became the movie location, the annual flow of tourists to the castle varied from 8,000 to 17,000 visitors, but, the year after the TV series, the numbers rose to about 92,000 visitors. This flow, which decreased in the following two years, has however remained far higher than the average of the previous years (Rocco, Di Maira 2007).

A recent international case, which has drawn the attention of a number of scholars is the "The Lord of the Rings"⁷ (2001-2002-2003). This is a trilogy, based on Tolkien's book, which was filmed in New Zealand and which has been a great success. Due to the particular timing of the release (the three instalments arrived in the halls at a distance of one year, one after the other), the locations of the movie were able to draw a

significant advantage from the *longevity*. In case of “The Lord of the Rings” there was an important synergy between the movie-promotion and territorial marketing operations. Four government agencies (Investment Nz, Tourism Nz, Trade Nz, and Film Nz) worked in close contact to promote tourism tied to the movies, also involving Air New Zealand, the national airline. Greater importance was given to the naturalistic aspect of the movie: the trilogy turned out to be an excellent way to strengthen the image of New Zealand and its brand, promoted through the “100% Pure New Zealand” advertising campaign before the movie. According to an inquiry carried out by Tourism New Zealand, 65% of the tourists who arrived on the island in 2003 confirmed they were influenced by the movie. Today, however, only 0.3% of the arrivals can be closely tied to the phenomenon of film-induced tourism (Croy 2010). Also in this case, therefore, what made the difference lies in the promotion and marketing actions that were carried out in order to support the visibility and success of the movie. In particular, in order to make up for the poor recognisability of the sites used as locations in the movie, the entire promotional campaign was carried out around the slogan, “New Zealand is Middle-Earth”. All the efforts were concentrated in the identification process, through the media, of New Zealand, and in particular the movie locations, with Middle-earth, the imaginary land where the story takes place. “The Lord of the Rings” has proved that the key to success of film-induced tourism is determined by the visual power and the commercial success of the movie, and also by the strategy that was used by the organizations in New Zealand (Croy 2010).

The movie “Captain Corelli’s Mandolin”⁸ (2001), that was shot in the Greek island of Cephalonia, shows how the *longevity* of a movie needs to be supported by local initiatives. In 2001, after the movie was released, the island recorded a 22% increase in tourist flows; in 2002 the increase dropped to 10%. Starting from 2003, there was a slight decrease. This was explained by Hudson and Ritchie (2006), the authors of a study on the movie, as a case of *longevity* that was not supported by initiatives of the local operators and perhaps even inhibited by *demarketing* actions, such as removing the movie set, and a sudden increase in prices (Hudson, Ritchie 2006). We can therefore conclude that the movie images have a strong impact on spectators and can induce them to visit the locations of the set. However, the success stories show how cinema visibility is not enough to make a location a *film tourism* destination, and that the effect of the media tends to disappear rapidly. In this sense only the use of effective territorial marketing policies that combine public and private efforts, will guarantee the long-lasting success of a location/destination.

3. The “Basilicata coast to coast” case

3.1. Basilicata region and tourism

Basilicata is a small region in the South of Italy with an important cultural (worthy of mention are the Sassi of Matera, a UNESCO World Heritage Site) and naturalistic heritage, and a significant wine and food sector. However, according to a recent study carried out by Demoskopea, in which *place identity* and *place awareness* of Southern

Italian regions were examined, Basilicata has a “relevance index” (the capacity of the region to be included in “tourist destinations” at the time of decision-making) lower than the average of the other regions in Southern Italy. The scarce perception of the Basilicata “brand”, therefore, limits the possibility of converting awareness of the destination into a real travel experience. (Cassinelli, Chiarullo, 2014). This modest appeal is confirmed by tourism flows: the region still has a limited weight in the tourist system in Italy, as well as in the South of Italy. Basilicata, in fact, today accounts for 0.5% of the total number of visitors recorded in the entire Italian peninsula, and about 2.5% of those recorded in South Italy. An incidence that is substantially the same of ten years ago, when in 2000, Basilicata had a 0.4% share out of the total number of tourists in Italy, and 2.2% of those recorded in South Italy. However, in the last few years, the situation has improved in terms of tourism flows. In fact, if we observe the trend of the past ten years (1999-2011), we can say that tourism demand has increased at a mean annual rate of 4% in terms of arrivals and 3% in terms of presences.

Figure 1: Map of the Basilicata region



Tourism in the Basilicata region (also known as Lucania) is once again characterized by the limited level of internationalization, which is much lower than in the other regions in Southern Italy. In fact, international tourism has an incidence of about 10% (11.3% of the arrivals and 7.9% of the presences). The domestic Italian demand is prevalently from the neighbouring regions: Puglia, which generates 22.4% of the total number of arrivals and 23.6% of the presences, Campania 18.2% and 23.3%, and Basilicata itself

7% and 9.7%. Jointly, these three regions represent 47.6% of the total arrivals and 56.6% of the presences.

Another element that characterizes tourism in Basilicata is the strong seasonality of the demand. The analysis of tourist data shows that the summer months of June, July and August concentrate, together, 48.3% of the arrivals and 66.7% of the presences. The high seasonality is a direct consequence of the prevalence of sea tourism, as is the case of the other Southern Italian regions, where the sea product is an important part of the offer. Besides the attractive capacity of the coastal areas, we must point out the importance of the city of Matera, recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site in 1993, and the principal destination for cultural tourism in Basilicata. The city of Matera is undoubtedly the most dynamic destination, with a 10% annual growth rate in arrivals and 6% in tourist presences. Unlike the other places of the region, Matera can boast a rate of internationalization that is much higher than the regional one: 27% of the total number of visitors are foreigners.

3.2. Basilicata and the cinema

Basilicata has been the natural backdrop for over 40 movies, directed by some of the most important Italian and foreign film directors (eg. Taviani, Rosi, Rossellini, Pasolini, Gibson). The success of the locations in Basilicata is probably determined by the landscapes and the morphology of the area that meets the different style requirements of movie productions. In fact Basilicata has been used as a setting for comedies ("*Gli anni ruggenti*", "*Ogni lasciato è perso*", for dramas ("*Tre Fratelli*", "*Del perduto Amore*"), for historical movies ("*Viva l'Italia*", "*Allonsanfan*") and for horror movies ("*Non si sevizia un paperino*", "*The Omen*"). The movie depicts a region with a rich uncontaminated naturalistic heritage, which at times acts as a backdrop to scenes of underdevelopment, poverty and superstitions that have characterized the region for decades ("*Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*", "*Il Demonio*", "*Del perduto amore*"). However, the land of Basilicata has often been used also to represent other areas, such as the Puglia region ("*Io non ho Paura*"), Sicily ("*L'Uomo delle Stelle*", "*La Lupa*") and Palestine ("*Il Vangelo secondo Matteo*", "*The Nativity Story*", "*King David*"). Therefore, if on one hand the region has appeared in many movies with a high exposure value, on the other the places have been difficult to identify and recognize. In this sense, for a long time there have been no film-induced tourism flows nor promotion of the locations of films shot in this territory.

The first tangible effects of the movie image and of *film-induced tourism* only started with the movie *The Passion of the Christ* (2004)⁹, shot by Mel Gibson in the city of Matera. The movie on the passion of Christ, which relied on an international cast and distribution, had the merit of promoting the city especially in the international tourist market. Gibson's movie uses the setting of Matera to represent the biblical Jerusalem. Therefore *The Passion* does not show Basilicata for what it is; however, following the tragic events of the passion of Christ, the spectator can admire views of the Sassi. Thanks to the iconification process that spread an aura of sacredness over the Sassi, Matera has been given great visibility. Therefore the significant increase in the flow of

tourists in the years after the release of the movie, can in part be considered a consequence of the captivating power of Mel Gibson's movie. De Falco (2006) registered in 2006 an increase of 40% in the total number of arrivals and of 30% in the number of presences, compared to 2003 (the film was first shown in 2004). Furthermore it must be considered that the film was mainly a showcase for international tourism: while domestic Italian arrivals and presences showed a 31% and 24% increase, international tourism showed +83% in the arrivals (the French, German and American arrivals doubled) and +53% in the presences (De Falco 2006).

3.3. The movie Basilicata coast to coast

Basilicata coast to coast (2010)¹⁰, is a 2010 movie by Rocco Papaleo, which has played an important role on the fame and consequently tourist attraction of the Basilicata region, even if on a minor scale. It was a small production compared to *The Passion*, but on a national scale it had important effects, even from the point of view of tourism, for the region. The movie was first shown in the cinema theatres in April 2010, and it had a good success with the public (it was one of the twenty best box-office movies of the Italian cinema for the season 2009-2010 and it was a success with the critics too: 3 David di Donatello awards and 2 Nastri D'argento awards).

The first movie directed by the lucan actor Rocco Papaleo, *Basilicata coast to coast* is the story of the journey that four friends decide to undertake, by foot, crossing the Basilicata region, from the Tyrrhenian to the Ionian coast. The movie offers a wonderful view of the Basilicata countryside, showing its suggestive landscapes and the typical wine and food specialities, and can also be considered an interesting case study of film tourism. In fact, *Basilicata coast to coast* is presented in a light and enjoyable style and is an effective territorial marketing operation.

This film was the first movie product with promotional values knowingly made in Basilicata. In fact, it is the result of a joint-programme that involved some of the local stakeholders - the Basilicata Region and the Local Action Groups (Lag)¹¹ – that defined the values/resources the movie had to highlight and enhance, and defined the locations to be used. In fact, the movie received financial support from the Region and from the European Regional Development Fund¹², in form of territorial marketing, and with the aim of promoting "a Basilicata characterised by an alternative way of life, authentic and slow, an image aimed at a tourism target capable of appreciating the rurality of these inland areas of the Region"¹³. "Promotion of Basilicata through a film is much more effective than a simple promotional advertisement, which can often seem to be self-referential and therefore less credible with the audience"¹⁴. The objectives were two-fold (i) to start positioning Basilicata in the rural tourism market as a destination immersed in the countryside and characterised by values and traditions still rooted in the territory; (ii) to provide place names and precise geographic information about this not easily identifiable region of Italy. In the absence of support from a regional film commission¹⁵, the Lags offered an important contribution not only in logistical terms: "organizing the crew's movements", but also "negotiating the itinerary of the movie with the film production and with the director Papaleo. It was a concerted and shared territorial marketing action"¹⁶.

Besides its aesthetic and narrative merits, the movie is explicitly aimed at promoting a specific image of the Basilicata and at positioning this region in terms of tourism. The Basilicata region that emerges from the movie is radically different from what has been described in the previous filmography of this region. While other movies proposed a scarcely representative image, or in some cases, a very detailed one tied to the real problems of the region, Papaleo proposes a lighter version that is focused on the positive values of the territory.

The title immediately highlights the intention of carrying out a branding operation that attributes a specific philosophy of life to this region. By including the name Basilicata in the title, the movie links the protagonists' stories to the territory. The scenario in which the story unfolds is thus not only a narrative setting, but a strongly characterized background with specific values. Basilicata is represented as a place for fascinating and naturalistic journeys, where travellers meet people, but mainly discover themselves. The choice of a light, easy-going story, together with numerous musical interludes (which almost make it a musical comedy) leads the spectators to a *vicarious consumption* of the territory. The story of the journey provides the spectator with a large amount of information about the territory and its traditions, and therefore a foreknowledge of the locations of the movie, that become almost familiar. Furthermore, the itinerary of the movie offers a wide visibility of the inland area of the Basilicata region, which is historically rarely represented in movies. In this sense it is evident how the strategic aim of the movie is to convey a more youthful and holidaying image of Basilicata, particularly in comparison to the more crude and critical images of movies of the past. At the same time, the movie puts aside the name-coupling of Basilicata-Sassi of Matera, and shows, through a journey on foot that is full of amazing events, colours and typical elements, the less well-known inland areas of the region. It is not by chance that the journey of these characters can be easily traced, starting from the indications given in the movie itself. It is almost an invitation to travel on these roads again to relive the adventures of the movie. Therefore the Basilicata brand praises an authentic life that is far from modern frenzy, human relations that are sincere, and a spiritual involvement, generated by timeless landscapes. The movie has thus efficiently supported the marketing strategy of APT which, starting with the Regional Tourist Plan in 2008, aims to promote a new and original part of Basilicata, i.e. the vast natural heritage and the landscapes of the inland area, putting aside the Sassi of Matera and the seaside resorts. The success of the film has highlighted the cinema's potential to promote a territory, and has also accelerated the birth of the Lucana Film Commission (Film commission of the Basilicata region). The Lucana Film Commission was created in 2012, with the objective of developing cinematography in Basilicata and of promoting movies on the landscapes of Basilicata, on a regular basis.

3.4. The inquiry: method and aims

As previously discussed, Basilicata coast to coast is a movie made with the secondary objective of promoting the territory and it has all the characteristics of a tourism marketing product. In order to better understand its impacts on the Basilicata territory, starting from 2010, some surveys were carried out on both tour operators and tourists.

Having decided it would be impossible to monitor the flows by analysing the number of visitors in each location (as was done for instance for “Close encounters of the third kind”), it was decided to administer a questionnaire to all the tour operators located in the areas shown in the film, and to carry out some semi-structured interviews with the tourists who had arrived in Basilicata to follow the itinerary proposed in Papaleo’s movie.

The sample survey on the Tour Operators involved 60 tourism entrepreneurs¹⁷, 50% of which working in the accommodation sector, 42% in the catering sector and 8% in tourist intermediary agencies (travel agencies and tour operators). A first investigation was carried out in 2010, a few months after the movie was released, with the aim of analysing the first impacts of the movie on tourism. In the first months of 2013 a second survey was carried out, using the same questionnaire and the same sample, in order to verify the status of the effects of the movie over time.

To complete the survey, the promo-sales initiatives in Basilicata related to the movie were monitored. The investigation pointed out that the local operators had not been particularly active. In fact, they had only partially picked up the potential of the phenomenon, and had taken very few individual initiatives. However, the survey highlighted also how the “on foot” road movie promoted a particular form of responsible tourism in the region. In fact, some tourist agencies of north and central Italy, specialized in foot travels¹⁸, organized some tourism packages in which the coast to coast itinerary was re-proposed, showing how the “slow travel” of the protagonists of the film directly stimulated the curiosity and choice of the tourists/walkers.

Some interviews were also addressed to the tourists who crossed Basilicata on foot. About 50 semi-structured interviews were addressed to tourists belonging to various groups of walkers. The tourists were met directly at the end of their trip. The sample was composed of people with an average age of 40-50 years, and a medium-high level of educational attainment: mostly self employed professionals from Central and Northern Italy. The objective of these semi-structured interviews was to collect information about the motivations underlying the choice of an itinerant holiday, about the expectations before setting out on the trip, the image of Basilicata that the movie had conveyed and its correspondence with what had been really experienced along the route. Semi-structured interviews are non-standardized and are frequently used in qualitative analysis. Corbetta (2003) defines it as “a conversation for the purpose of obtaining knowledge, stimulated and guided by the interviewer based on a flexible set of questions”. The interviewer does not do the research to test a specific hypothesis and is free to conduct the conversation as he thinks fit, to ask the questions he deems appropriate in the words he considers best, to prompt the respondent to elucidate further if necessary and leaving the subject interviewed ample autonomy in discussion, also allowed to collect additional information respect what was expressly asked.

3.5. The survey on Tour Operators

As already mentioned, the survey was carried out at two different times: the first monitoring procedure analysed the immediate effects the movie had on the territory,

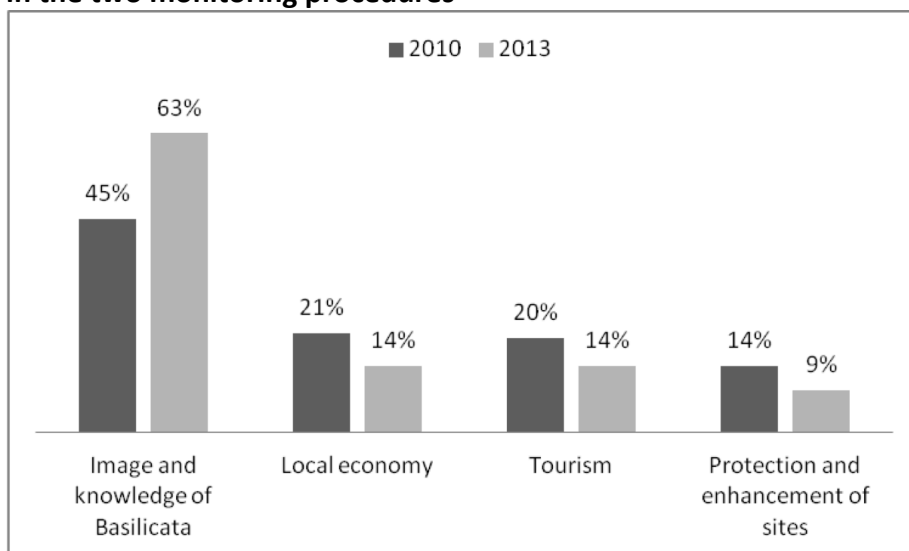
while the second verified the presence of the *longevity* effect of the movie and its impact on the territory two years after the movie was released.

The whole sample, in both inquiries, considered the cinema an important instrument to promote the territory, pointing out its effectiveness in divulging information about the locations and its capacity to stimulate the desire to visit these locations.

The organization of movie theme-tours in the principal locations in Basilicata, the realization of a website dedicated to the sites of the movie and involving movie stars for the promotion of the beauty of Basilicata are considered priority actions to promote tourism in Basilicata.

A specific section of the questionnaire was dedicated to a deeper examination of the impact of the movie *Basilicata coast to coast* on the territory. The operators were asked if, and to what extent, the realization and diffusion of the film had an impact on the territory. In both the inquiries, about 70% of the sample stated that the movie produced effects on the territory. It is interesting to note how the perception of the effectiveness of the movie on the fame of the Basilicata brand increased from 45% in 2010, to 63% in 2013. After 3 years, therefore, there is a greater awareness of the “movie’s” contribution to conveying the image of the region. However, there was an inverse trend with regard to the firm belief that the movie also had a strong economic impact (from 21% in 2010, to 14% in 2013). This was probably due to the fact that the operators on one hand noted the significant visibility of the region in the media given by the movie, but on the other they noted how the effect of the movie on the territory decreased over time.

Figure 2: Impact of the film according to the operators, declared in the two monitoring procedures

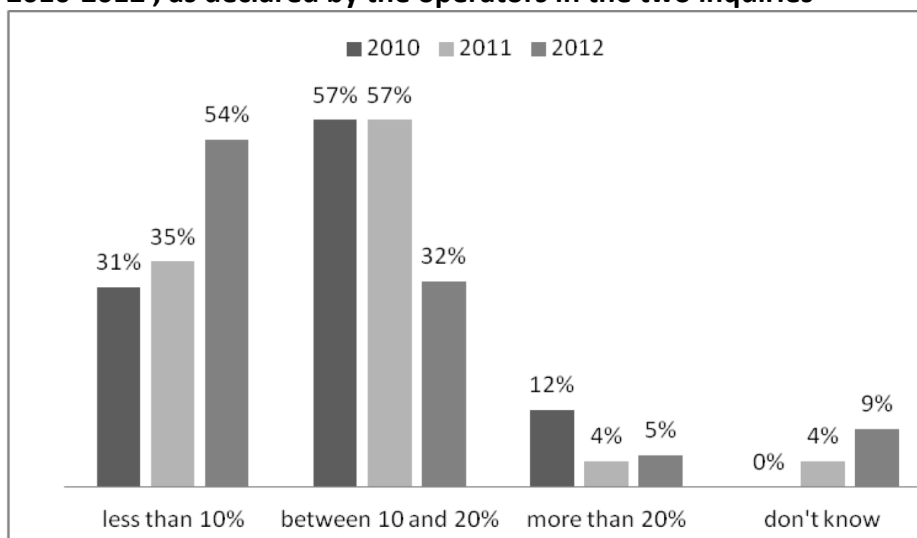


The sample was then asked to indicate the rate of increase in the flow of tourists that could be attributed directly to the movie; this question was asked in the inquiry in 2010 (which showed the impact of the movie soon after its release) and also in the inquiry in

2013 (with regard to the years 2011 and 2012). In this way it was possible to define the impact on tourism of the movie in the three-year period 2010-2012.

For all the three years, almost half of the sample declared that the movie had produced positive effects on the tourism; what changed was the “range” of the increase in the flows. In 2010 and 2011, over 50% of those who reported positive effects confirmed an increase from 10% to 20% in the flows. The datum of 2011 can most probably be associated with the *longevity* effect of the movie that also benefited from its participation in numerous film festivals and exhibitions, TV appearances, from the visibility in the media of the actor and director Rocco Papaleo, and from some important public initiatives connected with the movie. In 2012, instead, the situation changed: only 32% of the operators experienced an increase of the tourist flows from 10 to 20%, while more than half declared an increase of less than 10%. The operators’ perception is thus that the impact on tourism of the movie dropped in 2012.

Figure 3: Impact on tourism of the movie in the three-year period 2010-2012 , as declared by the operators in the two inquiries



3.6. The survey on tourists

As we have seen, Rocco Papaleo’s movie turned out to be a positive operation to promote the beauty of the region, enhancing the naturalistic aspect and exalting the rural characteristics, and life far from modern frenzies. The theatrical choice of proposing a road movie on foot across landscapes and villages, in parallel with the protagonists’ intense interior journey, has proved to be particularly suitable for tourist agencies that are specialized in organizing tours characterized by responsible tourism. Starting from the month of June 2011, in fact, important Italian tourism agencies such as “Walden - viaggi solidali”, “La via dei canti”, “La compagnia dei cammini” and “Camminamare”¹⁹, started to organize journeys on foot in Basilicata, following the itinerary of *Basilicata coast to coast*. Therefore the movie has not only promoted a better general knowledge of the region²⁰ but, in particular, it has proposed, to this type of tourists, a new area to explore for “slow” holidays²¹. The decision to walk across this

region is tied in particular to the belief that by walking one can “experience the territory” and therefore can perceive the places, the environments, the nature and the people that one meets with a greater force and intensity.

The landscape of Basilicata and the way it has been shown in *Basilicata coast to coast* have therefore contributed to creating responsible tourism offers. To understand the motivations of the choice, and to assess how the movie influenced the tourists’ destinations, some tourists/walkers who crossed the region on foot were interviewed.

The inquiry first of all tried to find out what knowledge of Basilicata each of the participants had before seeing the movie (and how Papaleo’s movie might have influenced what they knew), and the motivations and the expectations underlying their choice to take part in an itinerant holiday. The analysis of the interviews showed that tourists do not know the Basilicata region particularly well. Most of the respondents had a very limited knowledge of the region before seeing the movie, and this was often limited exclusively to the city of Matera. Other respondents did not know this territory at all (“I had no idea of what it could offer”, “I didn’t know much about it, I considered it similar to the other regions of the South”). The movie gave everyone the possibility of appreciating in particular the naturalistic resources and the characteristics of some of the villages of the region (“It looked like a savage and interesting land”, “A rich and green land, a land where time stands still”, “A land with striking landscapes”). For many people, Basilicata is idealistically considered a region that is still preserved as it was originally, where it is possible to live in a simple manner, a land that is not so well known and for this reason offers the traveller unexpected possibilities that are still to be explored. The romantic and naturalistic dimension described in Papaleo’s movie, therefore, has stimulated the curiosity of tourists and promoted an image of the region that is confirmed by the experience of the walkers. Basilicata surprises you specially with its idyllic dimension, great peacefulness, distance from modern frenzy, which has been also highlighted by the movie, “It is a region that stimulated my curiosity and was worth seeing, particularly because it still hasn’t been discovered, classified, conformed, made uniform”²². All the respondents agreed that their expectations were more than satisfied (“I found a great hospitality, willingness and cleanliness. Also with regard to safety, we had no problems”, “Perhaps much more than what I thought”, “My expectations were satisfied”), referring mainly to hospitality, vegetation and food as key resources of the Basilicata territory, as highlighted also by the movie *Basilicata coast to coast*.

Conclusions

Movies can play an important role in promoting the image of a territory, and therefore in influencing tourist choice. An extensive theoretical reflection (Butler 1990; Gartner 1993; Riley, Van Doren 1992; Schofield 1996; Beeton 2005; Hudson, Ritchie 2006) has highlighted how the cinema, as an autonomous agent, can provide an original and suggestive representation of the places. The *hallmark event, longevity and vicarious consumption* are potentials that can affect a territory’s tourism flows and economy. If supported by territorial marketing actions, the effects can also be long term. As

highlighted by Di Cesare and Rech (2007), the decision-making process that starts from the silver screen and ends with the purchase of a holiday is complex, and cannot be considered a simple cause and effect relationship. Movies are an extraordinary promotional showcase that can trigger greater demand, but they must be supported with ad hoc strategies and specifically targeted tourism offers.

In the small number of Italian studies on film-induced tourism, the *Basilicata coast to coast* case has the merit of showing the effect of movies on a region that is still not well known from the point of view of tourism. The territory of the Basilicata region has rich and diversified natural landscapes and a historical and cultural heritage, and it is particularly suited for movie settings. The peak of international arrivals soon after the release of *The Passion* had raised awareness of the promotional potential of movies. Rocco Papaleo's film has turned this awareness into action. *Basilicata coast to coast*, as we have seen, can be considered part of a marketing strategy that strengthened the position of the region on the national tourism scene. Thanks to the captivating and easy-going rhythm of the movie, to the intense images of the landscapes, to the thrilling musical moments, the movie has used the principal tools? (*chances*) that the cinema offers to tourism. In this sense, *Basilicata coast to coast* has stimulated curiosity about this region, allowing the spectators to make a preliminary visit to the territory, and encouraging them to visit the places seen in the movie. Furthermore, the movie was put through the full marketing process, from the cinema theatres to uncoded television broadcasting, and was successful throughout. The longevity of the movie was also supported by some public initiatives promoted by APT and by the Region, which on one hand enhanced the success of the film, and on the other used its visibility to promote Basilicata as the land of cinema.

The inquiry on the *Basilicata coast to coast* case, carried out at two different times, showed how tourism in the locations of the movie increased in 2010 and in 2011. Tourism flows dropped but remained positive also in 2012. In fact, in 2010 and 2011, more than 50% of the operators who had reported positive effects confirmed an increase of tourism flows from 10% to 20%; in 2012, instead, only 32% of those who had experienced a positive effect on the tourist flows declared a 10 to 20% increase, while more than half reported a less than 10% increase.

In order to better interpret these results, it must be noted that *Basilicata coast to coast* was a small production, with distribution mainly on a national level, and it could never have had the effect on tourism registered by some important case studies of *film tourism*. Also, the poor promotion of adequate movie-related tourism packages by the local operators limited the duration of the movie's effect. However, the film's role in divulging the culture and image of the Basilicata region is undeniable. Papaleo's movie splendidly exploited the opportunities of *vicarious consumption*. Through the journey of the characters of the movie, the spectators not only have the possibility of pre-experiencing the destination, but also of discovering an itinerary, which is well traced and identifiable, that they can follow. And this route has been traveled starting from 2011, when some agencies in North and Central Italy, specialized in slow and responsible tourism, organized journeys on foot that re-proposed the journey of the movie *Basilicata coast to coast*. These tourism proposals showed a non-contaminated

region, addressed a particular target of tourists that look for an authentic contact with the territory and love exploring, and promoted the development of a tourism niche, which is nonetheless important for a region such as Basilicata. This interesting mix of film tourism and responsible tourism continues to bring groups of walkers on the tracks of *Basilicata coast to coast* even today. Furthermore, the movie raised collective awareness of the potential of film induced tourism, confirmed also by the recent institution of the Lucana Film Commission (film commission of the Basilicata region), which aims at attracting new cinema productions to its territory, and therefore at promoting the region through the cinema.

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¹This survey was carried out on a sample of 300 international tourists spending their holiday in Italy. They were asked which movies filmed in Italy had had an impact on their destination choice decision. "La Dolce Vita" was the most mentioned Italian film after some Hollywood productions shot in Italy (The Godfather Saga, The Talented Mr. Ripley etc.).

² The film, directed by Woody Allen and starring Javier Bardem, Penelope Cruz and Scarlett Johansson, tells the story of a Spanish painter, Juan Antonio, who meets two American tourists, Vicky and Cristina. The former is a quiet girl engaged to be married while the latter is open to adventure. Their relationship infuriates Maria Elena, the ex-girlfriend of the painter.

³ For example, Park Guell, one of the sites of the film, was mentioned by 21% of the respondents after the film while by only 9% before the film; on the other hand, La Rambla which does not appear in the film, was mentioned by 17% of the respondents before the film but after the viewing by just 5%.

4 The influence of the movie in the various phases of the purchasing process: 83% of the sample declared they often or sometimes felt the desire to visit the locations, 66% looked for information about the location/destination, 38% included it in their possible choices, 25% considered the movie one of the factors that influenced their choice, and finally 4% admitted it represented a decisive factor (Di Cesare, Rech 2007).

5 A series of strange luminous phenomena announce the possible arrival on Earth of an alien spaceship. Experts at NASA guided by the French scientist Lacombe, locate the point of contact in Wyoming, but, notwithstanding all the expedients used to keep civilians away, some people, among which the electrician Roy Neary and the housewife Jilian Guiler, are able to find the place and watch the alien spaceship descending to Earth.

6 The television series tells the troubled love story of Elisa, a young girl of humble origins and the arrogant Count Fabrizio Ristori, on the background of a conspiracy against the King in the Estate of Rivombrosa .

7 The trilogy takes place in a fantastic world, the Middle-earth, inhabited by different peoples, the four principal ones being: humans, elves, dwarves and hobbits. At the centre of the action is the Ring of power. If it is worn on a finger it makes the wearer invisible, and he can see the world of spirits. However if it is used by its creator (Sauron) or by an expert in magic, it bestows unlimited powers.

8 The movie is about the Italians who occupied Greece in WWII. The soldiers occupied the peaceful island of Cephalonia. Among them was Captain Antonio Corelli, an officer with a joyful nature, and a passion for the mandolin. After the first disagreements with the Italian soldier the beautiful Pelagia, daughter of the village doctor, finally gives in to his undoubted charm. The War comes near and Antonio and Pelagia must choose between being faithful to their own countries and their love.

9 The movie is about the last twelve hours of the life of Jesus Christ. It begins with the prayer in the garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus goes at the end of the Last Supper, and where he resists Satan's temptations. Betrayed by Judas Iscariot, he is arrested and taken to the leaders of the Pharisees, who condemn him to death. Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Palestine who is asked to decide, listens to the charges and offers the angry crowds the possibility of choosing whether to save the life of Jesus or the life of Barabbas, a well-known criminal. Jesus is scourged by the Roman soldiers and taken before Pontius Pilate. Since the crowds have chosen to save the life of Barabbas, Pontius Pilate after asking if this is still not enough, washes his hands, to indicate that he does not want to be involved in the choice. Jesus is then forced to cross Jerusalem and climb to Golgotha, carrying the cross on his shoulders.

10 Four friends, united by their passion for music, decide to set out on foot from Maratea, on the Tyrrhenian coast to the Theatre-Song festival of Scanzano, on the Ionian coast of the region. At the head of this marching rag tag army, is a maths professor with vain artistic ambitions (Rocco Papaleo), followed by Salvatore Chiarelli (Paolo Briguglia), a former student of medicine, Franco Cardillo (Max Gazzè), a craftsman who has been struck dumb by a broken heart and Rocco Santamaria (Alessandro Gassman) a well-known local figure. Tropea Limongi (Giovanna Mezzogiorno), a journalist of a parish magazine, joins the group, as she has to follow this bizarre trip. The journey is studded with meetings, mishaps, music, local cooking tradition and breath-taking landscapes that make this experience of the group unique, because "the journey of life is too short, if you don't make it a bit longer".

¹¹ The Local Action Groups (LAG) are non-profit-making association legally recognized by the Basilicata Region, whose targets are identified in the promotion of rural land development through the local implementation of Community, national and regional initiatives about rural development. In Basilicata there are 8 Lags: Akiris, Allba, Basento-Camastra, Bradanica, Cosvel, Marno Melandro, Le Macine, Sviluppo Vulture - Alto Bradano.

¹² The European Regional Development Fund finances productive investments which create and maintain employment, infrastructure, local development initiatives and small and medium business activities, technological research and development and environmental protection, and finances activities in the transport, research and innovation, urban recovery and industrial reconversion and tourism sectors.

13 Interview with Giampiero Perri, Basilicata APT, on 10 May 2011 in Bencivenga, Chiarullo, Colangelo, Percoro (2011).

¹⁴ Interview with Raffaele Paciello, Basilicata Region, on 21 March 2011 in Bencivenga, Chiarullo, Colangelo, Percoro (2011).

¹⁵ In the 2010, when Basilicata coast to coast was shot, there wasn't a regional film commission. The movie marks a collective raise in consciousness of the potential of film tourism, as it can be seen in the institution of the Lucana Film Commission in 2012, which has the task of attracting new cinema productions on its territory, and therefore to promote the region through the cinema.

¹⁶ Interview with Domenico Romaniello, Gal Basento Camastra, on 16 December 2010 in Bencivenga, Chiarullo, Colangelo, Percoro (2011).

17 The sample was given a questionnaire consisting of 12 questions, prevalently with closed answers, divided into three sections. The first invited the respondent to give his/her opinion on film-induced tourism as a possible instrument for promoting Basilicata, and to indicate the most effective instruments to favour utilization of the locations in Basilicata for movie purposes. The second part inquired on the effect on tourism produced by Papaleo's film in terms of image and knowledge of the territory, and in terms of flows and therefore also of income for the local economy. The last questions of this section pointed out actions carried out by the local Tour Operators in order to exploit the popularity of the movie "Basilicata coast to coast" to promote their territory and their activity.

18 In the summer of 2011 the travel agencies, "Walden - viaggi solidali", "La via dei canti", "La compagnia dei cammini" and "Camminamare" organized trips to Basilicata, following the itinerary traced in "Basilicata coast to coast".

19 The trip organized by "La via dei canti" took place from the 29th of September to the 9th of October; "Walden" organized a trip from the 2nd to the 12th of June and from the 7th to the 16th of October; "Camminamare" organized a trip from the 12th to the 26th of October; and "La compagnia dei cammini" organized a trip from the 28th May to the 5th June. The trips organized by "Walden" and "La via dei canti" were repeated also in the summer of 2012 and 2013.

20 «For me it was as they also said in the movie, a black hole in the geography of Italy. We read very little about the region, and apart from Maratea and Matera, very little is known of its historical and naturalistic heritage». Interview with Alessandro Vergari, *Walden*, 4 May 2011.

21 «Seeing the movie I thought those towns and those landscapes could not only be cinema settings, but they deserved to become the protagonists of a unique itinerary on foot » Interview with Riccardo Carnovalini, *La via dei canti*, 4 May 2011.

22 Interview with Alessandro Vergari, *Walden*, dated 4 May 2011