



## Video-Induced tourism in Central Portugal: Production and impact of promotional videos

### Turismo videográfico no Centro de Portugal: Produção e impacto de vídeos promocionais

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#### Abstract

The concept of film-induced tourism refers to travel activities to certain destinations motivated by films, TV series, and promotional videos. The exposure to enticing images allures tourists and boosts local economies and entrepreneurship. The strand of film-induced tourism, video-induced tourism (which concerns mainly promotional videos) needs to be further explored. The Portuguese case, concerning both film- and video-induced tourism, also needs to be mapped. Thus, the purpose of this study is twofold: it will discuss and explore the topics of film-induced tourism and video-induced tourism in Portugal; and it will provide insights into promotional videos released by the Turismo do Centro de Portugal Association. We will start by presenting an overview of these two concepts. Subsequently, we will tackle the Portuguese case and explain the strategies adopted to boost film- and video-induced tourism phenomena. Finally, we will carry out an overview of the Turismo do Centro videos and see how they fit into the organisation's broader communication context. Exploring this case study will help us project how the strategy in which these videos are inserted may help the region in the post-pandemic economic recovery.

**Keywords:** Tourism, Portugal, promotional videos, video-induced tourism, film production, entrepreneurship.

#### Resumo

O conceito de turismo cinematográfico refere-se a viagens para determinados destinos motivadas pelo visionamento de filmes, séries de TV e vídeos promocionais. A exposição a imagens cativantes atrai turistas, o que impulsiona as economias locais e o empreendedorismo. O turismo videográfico (que diz respeito principalmente a vídeos promocionais), ramo do turismo cinematográfico, necessita de ser mais explorado. O caso português, no que concerne tanto ao turismo cinematográfico como ao videográfico, também precisa de ser mapeado. O objetivo deste estudo é duplo: discutir e explorar as temáticas do turismo cinematográfico e videográfico em Portugal; e fornecer informações sobre vídeos promocionais divulgados pelo Turismo Centro de Portugal. Começaremos por apresentar uma visão geral sobre esses dois conceitos. Posteriormente, abordaremos o caso português e explicaremos as estratégias adotadas para potenciar os fenómenos de turismo cinematográfico e videográfico. Por fim, faremos um apanhado dos vídeos do Turismo do Centro e veremos como se enquadram no contexto mais amplo de comunicação da organização. A exploração deste caso de estudo irá ajudar-nos a vislumbrar como a estratégia na qual esses vídeos estão inseridos poderá ajudar a região na recuperação económica pós-pandémica.

**Palavras-chave:** Turismo, Portugal, vídeos promocionais, turismo videográfico, produção cinematográfica, empreendedorismo.

#### 1. Introduction

Film (or rather, audio-visual contents, *lato sensu*) and tourism have had a close relationship. Indeed, one of the fascinations of early cinema was the possibility of screening moving images for audiences (sometimes mere seconds of footage) from faraway places captured by film enthusiasts or explorers (Gunning, 2006). Although not all travel activities are related to leisure and not all audio-visual works are inherently entertaining, it can be argued that, to a large extent, they both fulfil emotional needs and are ways to escape routine (Zimmerman and Reeves, 2009; Rewtrakunphaiboon, 2009). This fundamental premise is perfectly established in the literature, as is the acknowledgement that destination image influences tourist destination choice. Furthermore, it should be noted that, in more recent years, promotional videos have come to reinforce destination awareness – and, with them, it can be argued that a new strand of film-induced tourism was born: video-induced tourism.

This enquiry will explore the themes of both film-induced tourism and video-induced tourism, and provide insights into promotional videos commissioned by the Turismo do Centro de Portugal – a regional association of tourism promotion (RATP) and destination marketing organisation (DMO). We will first present an overview regarding film-induced tourism and the relevance of the promotional video, that is, why the notions of film-induced tourism and video-induced tourism need to be explored. For the purpose of this study and future enquiries on this matter, the points of contact and divergence between film and video should be systematised and made clear. In addition, to understand the notion of video-induced tourism we will need first to establish the concept of film-induced tourism. The two concepts have much in common (in theoretical and practical terms), their main difference being the subjects – which, again, share many premises since both are predicated in the moving image, in the establishment of narratives, and in the creation of sensations in spectators.



Subsequently, we shall delve into the Portuguese case by presenting the strategies of both the government and DMOs to boost film- and video-induced tourism phenomena on various fronts. Although this study is mostly a conceptual work, it uses a case study methodology. The Portuguese case (in general) and the case of Turismo do Centro (in particular) are instrumental in illustrating the Portuguese context and elaborating on the relevance of promotional videos. Indeed, one of the main goals is to map out the field of the Portuguese case when it comes to film- and video-induced tourism. We have chosen to focus specifically on central Portugal, due to the fact that it is a very heterogeneous and large area of the country, and also because Turismo do Centro de Portugal has actively invested in creating favourable conditions for both film- and video-induced tourism. Finally, this study will proceed to a film and content analysis of the audio-visual communication carried out by Turismo do Centro. In addition, in order to understand the communication strategy more holistically, we will also pay attention to relevant metadata concerning DMOs' promotional activity. Thus, this study will deal with both intra-cinematic and extra-cinematic elements to assess and project how film- and video-induced tourism may play a part in the post-pandemic economic recovery in Portugal (in general) and in the Centro region (in specific). The theoretical discussion in this article, along with the analysis of the selected case study and several facts concerning film-induced tourism in Portugal, add to the literature of tourism studies and film studies alike.

## 2. Background

The topics of film and nation and the relation between landscape and the moving image are two well-explored areas in film studies, tourism, and other cross-disciplinary fields of research. When looking at the films from the Weimar Republic, Siegfried Kracauer (1947) theorised and proposed one of the most enduring ideas in film criticism and film analysis: the thought that film can convey the *Volksgeist*, i.e., that the camera is able to grasp the spirit of a nation and reveal its idiosyncrasies and specificities. Roland Barthes, in his 1980s book *La Chambre Claire*, brought to the fore the concept of "photographic index", which postulated that the most basic substance of any image is what it shows. That foundation can never be disconnected from any other possible elements, interpretations, or production of meaning. In other words: a picture (moving or still, staged or not) taken at the Place des Vosges, is always a picture of that specific location and carries that reference (the index) within it.

Film-induced tourism (also known by other names such as film tourism, and, in early studies, by terms meaning more or less the same thing, like media pilgrimage), more than a palpable phenomenon, has been formally systematised and studied for at least a couple of decades. Quoting Giannouklidi (2017: 10): "Film-induced tourism is a subject of cross-disciplinary academic study, relatively new, that meets increasing attention in the academic world and its body of knowledge is constantly growing". Film-induced tourism is a branch of cultural tourism

and can be defined as: "a post-modern experience of the tourist in a site, which has been depicted in some form of media representation" (Macionis, 2004: 87) or "visits made to a destination or attraction resulting from its featuring in cinema films, television series or promotional videos" (Cardoso, Estevão, Fernandes and Alves, 2017: 1). The definition, which has remained open to encompass changing times, now comprehends much more than just cinema. Realising that this touristic phenomenon is not just propelled by cinema, researchers have expanded the field to include the other audio-visual products worthy of attention, such as TV series and video-game promotional videos, as well as other images transmitted by other media and platforms – like user-generated contents in social networks (Muslimah and Keumala, 2018; Silva, Martins and Oliveira, 2010).

Film-induced tourism has been studied from a variety of angles. Usually, authors focus on its impacts – i.e., how certain cases are perceived by audiences and correlate to increases in visits and thus to the strengthening of regional entrepreneurial ecosystems – what can be done by political institutions to boost it, and content analysis. Macionis (2004), Beeton (2005), and Hudson and Ritchie (2006) are still the main references and perhaps the core group of authors that helped stabilise the concept of film-induced tourism and allowed it gain visibility and relevance in academia. Cardoso, Estevão and Alves (2017) and Azcue, García, Tapia and González (2021) have conducted recent literature reviews that provide comprehensive overviews on this topic and its academic evolution. Interestingly, film-induced tourism has not garnered much attention from scholars in the film studies area. Rather, the matter at hand has been primarily addressed by researchers from the areas of management, marketing, tourism and geography (among other social sciences) that bring in frameworks from their own specific scientific areas and borrow a variety of methodologies from film studies to carry out their analyses.

With regard to the importance of discussing film-induced tourism and creating favourable conditions to receive film production companies, the following numbers are just a few examples, but speak volumes about the relevance of creating film-friendly environments. According to the UNTWO, in 2017, 80 million travellers chose their destinations based on films and TV series. Film pilgrims brought between £100 million and £140 million (approximately 117 million euros, and 164 million euros, respectively) to the UK economy in 2014, and the most popular locations can attract up to £1.6 million (1.8 million euros) every year from international tourists (OlsbergSPI, 2015). The same consulting firm, in a 2007 report, states that "both film and television contribute to wider 'branding' of UK people, society and culture, which has a very strong influence on creating a desire to travel" (OlsbergSPI, 2007). Indeed, in terms of impact, there have been numerous case studies that attest to the relatively straightforward (yet complex) reality that is the film-induced tourism phenomenon. *The Lord of the Rings* saga (and, to a lesser extent, *The Hobbit*) is perhaps one of the most studied and conspicuous cases, since New Zealand saw a



dramatic increase in the number of visitors after the films were screened and still enjoys a very good perception in the mind of potential travellers to this day. A similar situation happened recently in Dubrovnik due to the famous HBO series *Game of Thrones*. Since 2012, the number of tourists in Dubrovnik and Split has soared – 10 million tourists said that the series was their main reason to visit Croatia (Real and Herrera, 2018).

It should also be mentioned that attracting film productions is not only good business in terms of destination marketing, but also when it comes to the economic benefits that film-related activities bring to regions and people. The impact of film-induced tourism is not only reflected in the number of visitors in places that have been used for filming, but also in product developments of local entrepreneurs and small businesses (Neale, 2019). Film-induced tourism creates many opportunities not just for existing businesses but is also able to create the conditions for new start-up initiatives to appear and thrive. In 2011, filming in the UK directly contributed £1.6 billion to the national GDP and generated around 43,900 full time equivalent (FTE) jobs (Oxford Economics, 2012; Giannouklidi, 2017). Netflix, for example, has strived to create the perception that it is a global company that acts locally. The SVoD giant has been investing millions of dollars in the production of TV series and films shot in various parts of the world, spoken in languages other than English (Roig, Galivan and Navarro, 2021).

As will be seen in further detail, as of yet, Portugal has not benefited a great deal from film-induced tourism (at least when it comes to foreign visitors). Although the government has already created competitive measures to promote the production of audio-visual contents in Portugal by foreign companies, Portugal has never served as stage for a major blockbuster film or serial TV phenomenon. Indeed, it is still seen as a place full of potential, rather than a country with an established reputation among international production companies and mainstream audiences (Carvalho, 2013; Duque, 2013).

### 3. Video-induced tourism

Soon after the foundations of the concept of film-induced tourism, promotional videos started being studied as well (Ribeiro, 2008; Shani, Chen, Wang and Hua, 2009; Hou, Joppe, Choi and Lin, 2011). The reasons why these short videos matter seem clear: “the tourism industry has reached the stage of maturity. Tourists today are more experienced and become selective in their choice of holidays, in terms of destination and activities” (Rewtrakunphaiboon, 2009: 2; Teixeira, 2017), which means that DMOs have to level up their game and strategies in order to create differentiation and raise competitiveness.

Since the advent of the Web 2.0 (in which the internet relies on the participation of its users in a two-way flow), tourist behaviours have changed. People use the internet to plan their trips and as a source of information about places and destinations (Teixeira, 2017). Indeed, recent studies point to the fact that the majority of tourists search for information on the internet before travelling (Reino and Hay, 2014). Thus,

communication and the role of a DMO is crucial in creating visit intent. That is why the promotional video, which is the audio-visual equivalent of a flyer or brochure, may be so important. As will be seen, a good communication strategy, conveying positive feelings to the spectator, with an immersive plot (although short) and correct pace, can make all the difference. As several authors point out (Azcue, García, Tapia and González, 2021), cinema and audio-visual contents, can change the image that individuals have of a certain location. This, of course, can be a double-edged sword. It can contribute to filling the mind of the individual with concrete, positive images and thus elevate their opinion regarding a certain destination. However, “if the destination image projected is negative, it can mean that viewers’ image of it becomes worse or, in cases where the viewer does not have a previous image of it, that a negative destination image is directly created”. For instance, Mexico and Brazil have often been portrayed in the media as dangerous places (Azcue, García, Tapia and González, 2021). Although that has generated niche markets for tourists willing to engage in more radical experiences, countries such as these suffer from this kind of stereotyping and slum tourism and the motivations behind it are difficult to pin down (Araújo, 2019).

Realising the increasing relevance of these videos in persuasion, promotion and publicity, Teixeira (2015) called for the need to start talking about video-induced tourism as a complement to film-induced tourism, therefore proposing that the study of the promotional video should be a research field in its own right. In line with this reasoning, it can be argued that the definition of video-induced tourism is similar to the definition of film-induced tourism (not to go as far as stating that it is included in it). In other words, video-induced tourism is the phenomenon of visiting destinations or attractions because they were featured in promotional videos that have provoked positive feelings in the viewer, and thus sparked the desire to travel.

The videos that we will address later on have circulated through several channels (mainly television and the internet). Human experience is, in many senses, dependant on memory. Spectators build their own memorable impressions through direct experiences or simulations (simulacra, in the case of fiction films) (Baudrillard, 1981) and our feelings play their role in the process. It is up to spectators to produce meaning and significance by decoding the symbols with which they are presented (Aumont, 1983). While the specific film-induced tourist might be willing to replace authenticity with something personal (Gjorgievski and Trpkova, 2012), another potential type of tourist responds positively to an audio-visual blend of truthfulness and emotion – being just as likely to visit places because of promotional videos that they watched as the film pilgrim. That is why it is so important for DMOs to invest in the curation of the images and sounds they present to audiences. In other words, DMOs should stop selling existing places and continue to create “new” destinations to be sold – either by way of attracting fiction film production or by enticing the spectators’ imagination with stimuli through the publicity tools they have at their disposal (Rewtrakunphaiboon, 2009).



It is still common in certain realms of academia to look at promotional videos as a lesser form of communication when compared to feature films. The stakes are indeed different and, as we have asserted, attracting production companies to shoot in a certain country is a goal in itself. Yet, as mentioned and as attested in the references section, authors have been tackling promotional videos as a topic worthy of inquiry more and more over the years. As for formal differences and potential impacts, as Vagionis and Loumioti have argued:

The difference in the sentimental memory of spectators is very important. A spot can be shown many times during a period, however after the campaign it seldom remains in the spectator's memory. In contrast, the cinematographic film has long-lasting effect because it approaches the spectator satisfying his aesthetic preferences and his sentimental or ideological concerns (Vagionis and Loumioti, 201: 360).

However, Fong, Firoz and Sulaiman (2017) raised the point that some people trust in promotional videos as sources of information – which implies that promotional videos might be playing a role that films cannot. While Vagionis and Loumioti (2011) appeared to be somewhat dismissive of the importance of the promotional video, this perspective does not counter their argument; rather, it complements it. As it will be seen, advertising techniques and film aesthetics interconnect and increasingly tend to overlap, and all audio-visual contents have similarities. Yet, although film and promotional videos might be used to boost the visibility of places and visits, they are different objects (both in their nature and in audiences' minds) and serve different purposes. Indeed, promotional videos serve as a sales tool. However, in the context of the present discussion (and the broader discussion around film-induced tourism) cinema and TV series are also seen as potential sales tools as well – otherwise countries, regions, and film commissions would not compete fiercely for the attention of production companies.

As Ribeiro (2008) extensively demonstrated in her dissertation, there are several reasons which should be taken into account when considering promotional videos. The first is that film is the main reference of the audio-visual language – which, in turn, is the language of the contemporary world. For more than a century cinema has created, shaped, and spread an enormous quantity of images and thoughts about those images and the world.

The second reason, closely tied to the first one, is that audio-visual publicity has been in the process of modifying its aesthetics and adopting a more cinematic approach – especially when it comes to the use of narrative forms, diegesis and modes of production. Indeed, the author argues that narrative is extensively used in both fictional and informative promotional videos.

The third reason is that the production structure for a fiction film or for an audio-visual commercial is identical. Not only are the human resources usually the same, but the whole process is also similar (involving an elaborate pre-production, the shooting stage and post-production). According to this author, the main differences are the intent of each product, the duration, and the mandatory packshot (in commercials). Ribeiro also underlines that promotional videos usually take cues from the action film genre (especially when it comes to the editing style and rhythm), and that, unlike some films, commercials always have a happy ending, since the ultimate purpose of that small, compact piece of narrative is to convey a good impression to the spectator. Thus, audio-visual advertising is the art and craft of telling market-oriented, persuasive stories (Ribeiro, 2008). To that end, promotional videos must resort to many cinematic principles and premises. In line with what has been argued so far and the proximity in definition, it seems pertinent to include video-induced tourism in the genealogy of film-induced tourism.

Cinema is as diverse as the number of films. By the same token, there is some amplitude in how promotional videos are made and what they feature. There is an interesting video, made by the International Committee of Tourism Film Festivals (CIFTT), entitled *What is a Tourism Promotional Video Made of?* (available on YouTube), that summarises much of the features and goals that a promotional video should strive to include and convey – and that this study mentions. Both films and promotional videos are products of human creativity. However, Table 1 summarises some of points of convergence and key differences between films (or TV productions) and promotional videos that we were able to identify based on the literature available on the topic and knowledge of film production:

**Table 1 - Differences and similarities between films (or equivalent) and promotional videos**

Features	Film or equivalent	Promotional video
<b>Purpose</b>	Achieve artistic or commercial intentions (i.e. entertainment)	Sales tool that uses artistic/creative processes
<b>Length</b>	At least 20 minutes (usually)	Very short (five minutes or less)
<b>Process</b>	Three stages: pre-production, shooting, post-production	Three stages: pre-production, shooting, post-production
<b>Aesthetic approach</b>	Aesthetics play a major role. Producers (especially executive producers) may or may not exert a determinant influence	Importance given to technical aspects, to make the video look and sound appealing. The client sets the premise that is then processed by a creative team
<b>Story arc</b>	Usually yes	Sometimes yes
<b>Packshot</b>	No	Usually yes
<b>Mode of production</b>	A team of creative people and technicians	A team of creative people and technicians

Source: Authors.



#### 4. The Portuguese case

Tourism is the largest economic export activity in Portugal. In 2019, it was responsible for 52.3% of services exports and 19.7% of total exports (Turismo de Portugal, 2019). According to recent data, tourism was expected to present a weight of 17% of the Portuguese GDP and 20.9% of employment by 2025 (WTTC, 2016). Indeed, tourism reportedly was one of the very few economic activities (if not the only one) to grow during the years of the economic crisis (2010-2014) (Carvalho, 2013). Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism has suffered greatly. All forecasts regarding its growth need to be reassessed. However, tourism has played its part in the economic recovery of the country in the last decade and it is likely to be a crucial factor once more, after the hiatus, in a post-pandemic reality.

Tourism in Portugal is a regulated and represented by a secretary of state, incorporated within the Ministry of Economics and Digital Transition. The institution that puts into practice the ministerial guidelines and serves as link between the government and the business community is Turismo de Portugal (TdP). This entity, which is a public institute and the national authority in all things regarding tourism, operates on two fronts, inwards and outwards (i.e., in matters concerning domestic tourism and activities in the country, as well as in the promotion of Portugal abroad). Its mission rests on four main pillars: promoting Portugal as travel destination; supporting the development of infrastructures and investment in the sector; developing and training human resources; and regulating and overseeing gambling activities. In order to carry out its purpose, TdP is divided in three sections: the planning section, which is in charge of devising strategies and carrying out quality control; the business section, responsible for the development and maintenance of the business activity related to tourism in the country; and the support section, focused on activities such as communication, finance, HR, and legal matters.

As TdP is the national tourism organisation (NTO), it is the institution that oversees and coordinates its action with smaller DMOs and RATP. According to Carvalho (2013):

The central DMOs in Portugal are Turismo de Portugal and seven public-private regional DMOs: the Algarve Promotion Bureau (APB), the Lisbon Visitors & Convention Bureau (LVCB), the Madeira Promotion Bureau (MPB), the Porto Convention & Visitors Bureau (PCVB), the Azores Convention & Visitors Bureau (ACVB), the Turismo do Centro Association (TCA) and the Turismo do Alentejo Association (TAA) (Carvalho, 2013).

The same author adds that “The RATP not only represent the interests of the public but also the specific interests of micro and small regional tourism companies that constitute most of the national tourism industry; hence these institutions are industry driven and connected to all the tourism stakeholders” (Carvalho, 2013).

These seven RATP are the official DMOs in Portugal and are the ones that oversee communication campaigns (and thus audio-

visual contents intended to promote their regions in the domestic market). They are under the administrative aegis of their regional secretaries and are responsible for the regions they represent, but, in terms of policy and course of action, these RATP abide by the principles emanated by TdP. Effectively, TdP regularly updates the formal strategic guidelines and objectives, which can be found enshrined in documents such as the PENT (*Plano Estratégico Nacional para o Turismo*, from 2007) and, more recently, the *Estratégia Turismo 2027* [Tourism Strategy, 2027], from 2017. In addition to this document of reference, each RATP is also responsible for presenting and developing its own strategy to TdP. In the case of the TCA (our case study), the IPAM – Marketing School for Business was in charge of devising a report with an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the Centro region and proposing suggestions to improve touristic impact and dynamism in this territory (Saur-Amaral et al., 2013).

According to the Tourism Strategy 2027, the creation of conditions to project the image of Portugal as a location of excellence to receive international film and audio-visual projects is part of the overarching intent to reinforce the internationalisation of the perception of Portugal as an ideal destination to visit and in which to invest, live, and study. Although there is not a big tradition concerning film-induced tourism in Portugal, it should be highlighted that there have been important advances and developments in legislation, as well as good intentions and initiatives. All of this can be seen in concrete governmental action and in the activity of film commissions – whose primary intent is to serve as liaisons between prospective international production companies and the territories in which they are found.

In 2018, the government created bill 45/2018, which established the *Fundo de Apoio ao Turismo e ao Cinema* [Support Fund for Tourism and Cinema]. This important step, modelled after best practices observed abroad and based on demanding benchmarks, created a very competitive cash rebate system (with up to 30% of expenses being eligible). This fund, which started with 30 million euros but has increased since the beginning, is managed by TdP in tandem with the ICA [the Portuguese Institute of Cinema]. According to the 2018-2020 report from the ICA, the fund received 79 applications. Forty-nine projects were approved, 42 involved shooting in Portugal and 14 were completely international – this means that the executive production belongs to a foreign company that contracts a Portuguese production company to carry out the project in Portugal. In terms of investment, the fund endowed the approved projects with €15.3M. In their turn, those projects invested €58.7M in Portugal. This is an outstanding return on investment.

Acknowledging the importance of film commissions and their role in promoting Portugal as a destination for film and audio-visual productions, the ministerial cabinet issued bill 85/2019. This document created the Portugal Film Commission to help develop the film and audio-visual sectors in Portugal,



coordinate the actions of all pre-existing regional film commissions, and create conditions for the development of works that would spark film-induced tourism in Portugal. These measures are clear signs that film-induced tourism is valued by governmental institutions and that it has indeed become a priority in the overall strategy concerning tourism in Portugal. Now that this text has provided context regarding the Portuguese case in general, it will now focus on the communication carried out by the TCA (Turismo do Centro de Portugal Association). The following text will see not only how the TCA coordinates its audio-visual communication with the general guidelines and goals that have already been mentioned, but also how this communication has evolved and helped raise both destination awareness and visit motivation (Vila, Brea and Carlos, 2021) (domestic and foreign).

### 5. Advertising Central Portugal

The “Centro” region of Portugal is the second largest NUTS II (the first being Alentejo) in the country and the third most populous (after the North and the Lisbon metropolitan area). Its area totals 28,462 km<sup>2</sup> and, in 2011, its population totalled 2,327,026 inhabitants (with a population density of 82 inhabitants per square kilometre). It is subdivided into eight sub-regions, full of contrasts and nuances: Beira Baixa; Beiras e Serra da Estrela; Médio Tejo; Oeste; Aveiro; Coimbra; Leiria; and Viseu Dão Lafões. These eight regions offer plenty of landscapes and choices: sea, mountain, snow, rivers, cliffs, and forest. In terms of man-made infrastructures, the Centro region is filled with heritage: river canals, shale villages, edifications from all historical periods (from pre-historical monuments to contemporary architecture) are but a few examples of the variety of the civilisational legacy. The region also boasts vibrant cities and low-density territories, making it one of the most varied (and asymmetrical) regions of the country.

It is no surprise that leveraging film-induced tourism has been an ambition shared by many decision-makers and local institutions of the Centro region. In a study conducted in 2013, the TCA (which, at the time, was not linked to any film commission since the Centro Portugal Film Commission did not exist then) stated that although, in their view, there was no film-induced tourism market in Portugal, that kind of tourism was an opportunity that could and should be developed (Carvalho, 2013). In October 2020, the TCA and the Centro Portugal Film Commission released a promotional video especially dedicated to the topic of film-induced tourism (which makes perfect sense, given that Portuguese companies can also apply to the Support Fund for Tourism and Cinema). The video highlighted the sun and featured several landmarks and various landscapes. Despite being a detail that can be easily missed (or dismissed) by the average viewer, sunlight hours and weather are not details for film professionals. Light is the raw material of photography. Therefore, quality, intensity and duration of daylight is a technical plus for film professionals that Portugal offers. In the narrative used in the video, the main message was how simple, relaxed, and hassle-free it can be to film in central

Portugal. This video is a signal of the ongoing desire of the region to attract film and audio-visual productions to its territory, and thus take on the opportunity that film-induced tourism poses – which is closely tied to new chances to reinforce the entrepreneurial ecosystem of the region.

It is the mission of the TCA to promote the vast region of central Portugal, domestically. With the obsolescence of postcards and brochures, the TCA must resort to the Web, new media, and TV advertising space to channel the audio-visual contents that convey its communication strategies. As was seen before and shall now be dissected, Portuguese DMOs promote and encourage a kind of tourism that recognises the influence of creative industries (both cinema and promotional videos belong to this category) in regions and in their representation (Duque, 2013). Video-induced tourism however, is quite the endeavour. Rewtrakunphaiboon (2009), who is somewhat sceptical about the return on investment of promotional videos when compared to the effect of film-induced tourism, argues that:

promoting tourist destinations to potential holidaymakers through short advertisement segment of radio, newspaper, television and magazine is a very expensive proposition. For example, Europe, the leading continent in term of number of international tourist arrivals, spent €600 million in 2007 for their advertising campaigns (Rewtrakunphaiboon, 2009: 9).

In 2014, Campos conducted a study in which she assessed the effects of institutional campaigns (i.e., promotional videos) on domestic tourism (which is rather relevant, since most of the Portuguese population that travels does so inside the country – about 37%). Campos traces the history of destination marketing in Portugal since the days of the Estado Novo dictatorship until 2014. The author points out that it was only after joining the EEC that Portugal devised a national plan for tourism. The 1990s were marked by a strong campaign (which aired for more than five consecutive years) with a slogan that still resonates today: “Vá para fora cá dentro” [feel the experience of travelling abroad inside your country]. Many other campaigns ensued throughout the years using the same line of thought – which boils down to the message that Portugal is quite diverse and therefore deserves to be discovered by its own residents.

In her conclusions, after a thorough content analysis, Campos makes the point that promotional videos started to become too bland, predictable, and expositive – and, therefore, not aligned with the demands of more sophisticated tourists (Campos, 2014). In harmony with international best practices, the author suggested that future campaigns should feature improvements, namely: the exploration of different themes (i.e., instead of producing one, general promotional video, DMOs should produce several) through the careful designing of appealing narratives and stronger characters with which the audiences could engage at an emotional level. In addition, the author also pointed out the necessity to reinforce the DMOs’ online presence. In 2014, both international and domestic tourists were gathering information about destinations primarily from



online sources and were extensively using smartphones and tablets to do so.

This paradigm was ditched and DMOs did pivot their communication strategies for the better. Muslimah and Keumala (2018) emphasise the usefulness of metadata for DMOs in evaluating their performance. The authors highlight that films and social media are important sources of information for tourism planning, and add that “in the case of Film-induced tourism, planners [DMOs] can monitor the development of tourism and urban planning through quantitative and qualitative data provided freely on those social media services” (Muslimah and Keumala, 2018). Thus, if one is to take a quantitative approach to the impact of the TCA, the metrics in social media are as follows, as of June 2021: YouTube (21.6 thousand subscribers); Facebook (129.09 thousand followers); Instagram (25.8 thousand followers); Vimeo (100

followers). While Facebook accepts various types of contents, YouTube, Vimeo, and Instagram work primarily on an audio-visual basis.

The numbers of subscriptions/followers, however, are but just a proxy of the real engagement developed by a DMO. For instance, the most popular video on the TCA YouTube channel was viewed almost 750 thousand times. The fact that the Centro region has been the leading destination in recent years when it comes to domestic tourism (Turismo de Portugal, 2020) might be related to both film-induced tourism (especially through its appearance in very popular soap operas that are broadcast in open-signal television) and video-induced tourism.

At this point, metrics ought to be put in perspective. Using YouTube as an example (which is the main channel for audio-visual contents such as promotional videos), the results (as of June 2021) are presented in Table 2:

**Table 2 - Synthesis of the YouTube presence of each Portuguese main DMO**

Name of the DMO	Start date	Number of videos	Number of views (total)
Algarve Promotion Bureau	04/2018	218	3,350,243
Lisbon Visitors & Conventions Bureau	10/2011	128	17,736,690
Madeira Promotion Bureau	04/2009	258	16,323,069
Porto Convention & Visitors Bureau	04/2012	32	231,222
Azores Convention & Visitors Bureau	08/2010	85	3,226,595
Turismo do Alentejo Association	04/2012	103	1,223,141
Turismo do Centro Association	03/2016	178	2,433,769

Source: (YouTube, 2021).

This demonstrates that although the TCA was the last Portuguese DMO to join YouTube, in comparative terms, the figures show promise.

Another aspect worth mentioning is the intensity of the communication. Indeed, the TCA has been particularly active. The commissioning of videos happens on a regular basis and there has been an ongoing stream of creativity and marketing in the TCA's action. In correspondence with the authors of this study, the TCA made clear that the communication strategy is multifocal (i.e., the association targets different audiences and addresses a wide range of topics) and that it is indeed common practice to partner with local production companies (such as: Slideshow, Lobby Productions, and Ideias com Pernas) to represent the eight sub-regions and bring to the fore positive, differentiating aspects in each new promotional video. Regarding the number of views, it should be highlighted that it has been brought to the fore that some YouTube users employ several paid strategies to grow their social media presence and enhance their social credibility – namely through view bots (a practice condemned by YouTube, that would expose official entities such as the ones that we have so far been mentioning to social reprehension). Therefore, the numbers presented are those available and no one can ever be 100 per cent sure if the views are organic or paid (not necessarily through view bots or other unfair methods, but, for instance, the product of ad-generated views). In any case, it would be sensible to admit that a part of the budget for any advertising campaign is channelled to boost the number of views and use tools that YouTube provides (such as tailoring the ads that users see according to their algorithmic profiling). To some extent,

exploring those tools to boost advertising campaigns is a demonstration of financial commitment towards them, their reach, and thus their success.

A cross-sectional analysis of TCA promotional videos (this includes videos with creative content, and thus excludes videos featuring debates or news that can be found in the YouTube channel) from the last couple of years reveals that they can be divided into three main categories. Videos usually revolve around: the displaying of a specific type of tourism (business, military, industrial, seasonal, and culinary); the presentation of specific places; and concepts (namely: relaxation, reconnection with nature, discovery, adventure, and national cohesion). In all videos, various elements appear together and intertwine to tell a small story or convey emotions. Yet, this is more evident in videos that deal with concepts. Unlike in a brochure, in promotional videos, images (along with sounds) do not need to be literal. Since there is a sequence of images that challenge the production of meaning by the spectator, images can be (and often are) metaphorical and atmospheric, i.e., as sensorial as they can be. Promotional videos do their best to encapsulate feelings and emotions that are extra-cinematic, like flavours, feelings of experiencing exciting activities, or the suggestion of interacting with peoples and places.

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, for instance (a period in which tourism economy was highly affected), the TCA designed a dynamic campaign that unfolded according to the restrictions and the general pandemic situation in Portugal. It started with the exploration of the concept of pause with the



video *Haverá Tempo* [There will be time]. Released in March 2020, the whole video acknowledges the pandemic situation and its danger but highlights a message of hope by suggesting possibilities that society may be able to resume once constraints are over. Highly contemplative in its atmosphere, the video features sweeping shots of vast landscapes, people practising sports, families enjoying the good weather, couples holding hands, friends gathering, and children and pets having fun by the sea – in short, the human element to which people from all backgrounds and ages can relate. All of this is shown while calm music sets the pace and the voice-over delivers a message of fortitude, hope, reassurance (along the lines of everything-will-be-here-when-this-is-over), and cohesion.

The second video, released in May 2020, is entitled *Chegou o Tempo* [The time has come]. This video follows the same premise of the previous one and the similarities between the two are plenty. They last exactly 50 seconds, the tone of the colour correction is the same, the music sets a good mood, the footage is similar (swinging from close-ups to long shots) and the voice-over also delivers a hopeful speech. However, the message in this second film focuses on the concept of new beginnings. At the time, due to the uncertainty brought about by COVID-19, it was unclear how the summer (high season) would play out. The message conveyed by this video was cleverly structured so that it would work in any case, i.e., as a continuation of the previous message that there will be a time to live fully again, or to send the message directly that the time to enjoy the pleasures of travelling is about to happen.

After these two videos, the TCA released a larger campaign under the concept of “In the Center of Portugal, Life is Now”. The video that launched the campaign was also released in May 2020; it is entitled *A Vida é Agora* [Life is Now] and lasts for about four minutes. In this video the formula changes a bit. Whereas in the previous two videos the voice-over was predominant, this one is predicated on small stories – some of them with small dialogues or exclamations that “it is now” or “it is happening”. In the middle of the film, a pregnant woman, about to give birth at the maternity hospital, appears. What follows next is a cross-cutting sequence between what is happening with this woman and other clusters of characters doing seemingly unrelated things in different places of the Centro region (surfing, exploring places, delivering a talk at a tech conference, meditating, having lunch, etc...). The characters learn that something is about to happen and leave what they are doing in a hurry. As the video unfolds, the spectator becomes aware that these characters have actually been communicating (the letter symbolically representing the spread of news) and are heading to the maternity hospital. There, the woman is well and has brought a healthy child into the world. They all meet in a final scene and the message “life is now” appears on screen. In this film, storytelling is key and everything that is seen, heard or suggested turns out to be related and at the service of an overriding, emotionally powerful concept.

After this video, four shorter videos related to the concept that “life is now” were made. In keeping with the first video, these videos also feature a small story, dialogues, and characters –

connected via video communication apparatus. Respectively, these shorter films focus on: military tourism (a nod to period films and series); business tourism (highlighting the fact that business and pleasure can go hand in hand); local shopping (a Christmas story with a Portuguese Santa Claus); and the already-mentioned video dedicated to film-induced tourism. The videos are shot in various locations and the fact that the characters are communicating through video-conference means that they are separated, which brings the opportunity to frame them in different places.

This creative output has also paid off in terms of artistic prestige. The TCA’s promotional videos have often been in the spotlight in festivals and competitions dedicated to destination marketing and promotional videos (some of them high-profile events, such as the International Committee of Tourism Film Festivals awards or the US Film and Video Festival). Besides the validation and the prestige that these awards bestow upon the TCA’s promotional videos, this type of exposure is also beneficial in at least two other ways: it attracts the attention of international audiences (which may provoke video-induced tourism) while also sending clear signals to international production companies that Portugal has highly skilled and entrepreneurial human resources working in the creative industries, able to carry out technically demanding films with a high degree of quality.

It is difficult to accurately describe the characteristics of a good promotional video. Given that this audio-visual content is a blend of creative and artistic sensibility with technical capability and persuasive communication, the criteria to assess the quality of a promotional video remains an open discussion (depending on what is valued by the spectator). However, despite the element of subjectivity, it seems safe to state that the criteria used to evaluate a promotional video must also encompass the evolution in this specific field. Moreover, a poorly shot or edited film will be given away as a bad video due to its evident shortcomings.

In terms of film analysis, it can be argued that two things stand out when watching a good portion of the promotional videos: their diversity (in terms of persuasion techniques and duration) and how, in that diversity, many videos share common features that correspond to the formula that is usually expected in this type of communication. In other words, although there is no clear-cut pattern (since the approach is multifocal) most videos (especially those produced more recently) are all tied together by: common undertones (e.g. the fact that the videos always refer to the Centro region), atmosphere (e.g. they are usually overtly upbeat, and if they are not for some reason they still convey messages that appeal to positive emotions), and technical aspects (e.g. there is great attention given to the quality of the image and the overall mise en scène).

When it comes to narratology and storytelling, it is also clear that these promotional videos have evolved. They still use voice-over extensively (which can be more or less descriptive, depending on the occasion) and the packshot is also always there. However, these promotional videos tell short stories (or find a way to wrap several small moments to create a picture bigger than the sum of the parts) and incorporate the human



element whenever they can. When they are very short (less than one minute) they focus on a single idea and concept and explore it through a succession of suggestive images. It can be argued that, to some extent, some of these videos take cues from other audio-visual contents that deal primarily with concepts, such as music videos. Ultimately, the videos promoting the Centro region are not necessarily obsessed with authenticity (which was as trend of the past that sometimes turned into caricature), but rather, they are focused on appealing to the spectators' emotional and sensorial sides.

## 6. Conclusion

This study has explored both film-induced tourism and video-induced tourism, arguing that the latter is as worthy of attention as the former. It has been asserted how the two are interconnected and share common features and goals (despite their differences). They both have their place in creative industries and play their part in destination marketing. Despite the rising numbers in the tourism sector until 2020, Portugal has remained a low-profile destination for international film powerhouses. However, it is likely that the situation may change in the near future. The existing infrastructures and the natural resources – in tandem with public policies created to bring international film production – make Portugal an attractive destination to these firms (at least in theory).

This enquiry explored how these policies work and explained how DMOs direct their efforts to captivate the interest of both domestic and foreign audiences. To do so, the authors used the case of the communication strategy adopted by the TCA to illustrate how promotional videos and audio-visual contents can evolve, become more sophisticated, encompass changing times, and, ultimately, spark video-induced tourism. This study has asserted that the promotional video is the cornerstone of the operational contexts of DMOs and RATP and are used to achieve goals and consubstantiate ideas and overarching communication strategies. Thus, reinventing the wheel is not necessary, or even the goal of destination marketing; rather this study saw how a Portuguese DMO has been able to effectively replicate tried-and-tested practices. Formulae may be global, but the raw materials, the creativity and the inspiration contained in these videos are effectively local. Thus, future studies concerning tourism in Portugal and, specifically, film- and video-induced tourism in the country, may find useful some of the considerations and results presented. Future lines of enquiry that this paper leaves open include (but are not limited to): analyses of other case studies (especially the remaining DMOs and their communication strategy); the impact that some films (such as Wim Wenders' *Lisbon Story*) or television series (e.g. *La Casa de Papel/Money Heist*) have had on film-induced tourism; or the economical/local impact of filmmaking (in which video is included) in remote areas.

Cinema and audio-visual contents can change the perception that individuals have of a certain location. That is why it is important for DMOs to carefully plan every shot of a promotional video. The boundaries between film and audio-visual publicity still exist but tend to blur. Ultimately, emotions and memory are the key factors in this equation. That is why compelling plots, believable characters (stereotypical or not),

carefully planned images and sounds, and the transmission of positive mindsets are so important. As the world begins to enter the post-pandemic era, all efforts to promote film-induced tourism and video-induced tourism are necessary for the economic recovery and the development of entrepreneurial ecosystems in countries and regions.

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