

# Place Attractiveness and Image. A research agenda.

Edited by Christophe Alaux, Laura Carmouze,  
Vincent Mabillard, Martial Pasquier



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ISBN 978-2-940667-18-5

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## Editors

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# Contributors

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**Run Zhao** is a PhD candidate in the Erasmus Initiative collaboration programme, Inclusive & Prosperous Cities, at Erasmus University Rotterdam, Netherlands. With a master's degree in public administration and a bachelor's degree in business administration, she brings experience from the urban planning consulting industry. Her research focuses on the synergy between inclusive urban public policy, urban project governance, and city branding.

# Place branding – A focus on actors, attractiveness, and emerging trends

This book results from a PhD workshop held in Aix-en-Provence in June 2023. The workshop was organized conjointly by Aix-Marseille Université (France), the Université de Lausanne (Switzerland), and the Université libre de Bruxelles (Belgium). It provided PhD students from all over Europe with a great opportunity to present their thesis' projects or their most recent papers. A special session, focusing specifically on place branding and marketing, gathered six contributions. These contributions then received particular attention from supervisors from all three universities, and underwent a revision process. They form the chapters presented in this book.

The book consists in three parts: 1) emerging trends in place branding, especially in cities; 2) a focus on the dynamics that characterize the relationships between actors of a city or region; and 3) attractiveness for residents and tourists (especially when places are used as filming locations). The first part relates to a global phenomenon to which cities cannot escape: the general path towards sustainable transition in many places around the world. Numerous cities are participating in the development of a more sustainable planet. Sustainability is typically seen as a “catch-all” term, that covers many dimensions. Here, the two chapters dedicated to new trends in place branding, that accompany this transition to more sustainable places, focus on two main aspects: being “green” and “inclusive”.

Chapter 1, written by Run Zhao, addresses the issue of inclusiveness in cities, including a case study on Cologne, Germany. She depicts a contrast between what is presented as, in many regards, a model in inclusivity, and a reality where efforts are still to be made. Moreover, she reflects on the potential of this aspect to brand a city and to use such branding to attract targets, and what kind of targets. In Chapter 2, Joël Beney investigates how cities position themselves as green, how they are perceived in this regard, and how they may use this aspect in their branding efforts.

The second part focuses on the main actors behind place-branding and -marketing processes. Since organizations and individuals in charge of promoting a destination are central, it remains essential to better understand how they form, structure, and implement place branding. The increasing call for more participatory approaches, and the coordination challenges faced by most places, necessitate a refined understanding of these bodies tasked with improving place image and attractiveness.

Chapter 3, written by Etienne Doré-Lesachey, investigates the inter-organizational relationships between local and regional authorities on the eve of 2024 Olympic Games held in Paris, France. It discusses the challenges faced, the potential for increased cooperation (also after the event), and the main issues to consider. In Chapter 4, Dario Giuffrè concentrates on a specific aspect of attractiveness strategies designed by places: clustering. Clusters refer to closely related economic actors that have acquired specialized resources and expertise in the same business and geographical area, revealing tensions around the coopeitition logic. This calls for further research on the functioning of clusters, but also on their construction as brands, which can in turn not only increase attractiveness of the cluster, but of the region as a whole.

The third part concerns the design of place-development strategies that target specific groups and activities. While residents' attraction, and retention especially, is not completely new – cities and regions faced with emigration of people and talents have already thought about this issue for decades – residential attractiveness has often been overshadowed by economic and tourism matters. However, due to several factors (teleworking and the increased time spent at home in general), residential attractiveness has become a preoccupation for most places, now promoting life quality and lower rent/buying prices, especially outside of big city centers.

In Chapter 5, Perrine Alberola addresses residential attractiveness through the prism of geographical areas, and the related typologies. To do so, she conducts a systematic literature review that presents what has been done so far in research, and what remains to be explored. Regarding tourism, most academic contributions have focused on destination marketing. In Chapter 6, Manon Châtel prefers a different perspective, and concentrates on places as filming locations. She investigates the role played by films/series in place branding. This approach is grounded in contemporary reality, since we have observed increased flows of tourists visiting places associated with a movie or series (e.g., Iseltwald in Switzerland).

The main objective of the book is to provide the readers with compelling paths for further research in place branding, emphasizing the importance of emerging trends, stakeholder and interorganizational dynamics, and strategies (with a focus on activities and target groups).

The aim of this book is to open up new perspectives: on the one hand, by showing the research carried out by European doctoral students; and on the other, by identifying the problems encountered by public and private players in the field of territorial marketing.

**Christophe Alaux, Laura Carmouze, Vincent Mabillard, Martial Pasquier**

Part 3:  
**Attractiveness for  
residents and tourists**

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# Filming activity as a tool for influencing place image

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MANON CHÂTEL

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## Abstract

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This chapter proposes to investigate filming activity – that is activity of filming audio-visual content on a place – and in particular, the places' intents. Indeed, public authorities through different dedicated organizations (Film Commissions, Film Offices) try to instrumentalize films and series for different purposes, including the one we are interested in: having an impact on the place's image, notably cities. The literature related to place marketing, and especially destination marketing, includes numerous contributions on the potential impact of films and series on place image. However, research on the views and actions of public authorities is almost non-existent; consequently, we raise the question of these authorities' intents regarding filming activity and the projected image. Through a qualitative exploratory study conducted in 21 French places, at different institutional levels, we were able to highlight three major intentions related to place-image management: 1) to create, 2) to modify, and 3) to maintain their current projected image. These strategic intentions are discussed, points of attention are identified, and management recommendations are proposed. .

Keywords: Places Image, Place Marketing, Filming Activity, Film Commission

# 1 – Introduction

With the proliferation of audio-visual content available on screens – in cinemas and on online platforms – filming activity continues to increase in Europe (European Audio-visual Observatory, 2022); France has never welcomed so many films and series as it does today, and has just reached an absolute record since the first studies of the Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image Animée (CNC)/ National Center for Cinema and Moving Image (CNC) were launched in 1994.

Thanks to various stimulus plans, the establishment of a filming guarantee fund, and a clear general public interest in the audio-visual sector, France has experienced an increase in sales of French audio-visual programs abroad, coupled with a rise in the number of approved films and an upsurge in the number of international co-productions (CNC, 2022). Public funding for approved production in 2021 reached €33.85 million for 142 films, the highest ever recorded. Thus, places are facing increasing demand from film industry for filming enquiries, funds, and subsidies. Public managers are gradually becoming aware that filming activity can leverage place attractiveness and place branding.

Furthermore, since the early 2000s and through this intense filming activity, we have observed the gradual emergence of local public and quasi-public organizations in France, aimed at welcoming film and series production. These organizations are heterogeneously structured at the national level, in terms of operations, processes, internal practices, as well as intentions. These intentions are manifold as the effects of film productions on places are suspected by these organizations; these are primarily economic spin-offs generated by the shoots, tourist spin-offs (see *film-induced tourism* following the release of a successful film or series, or spin-offs related to image. Literature about film productions is mainly descriptive, taking a specific case (e.g., Game of Thrones, Lord of the Rings) and describing the benefits or establishing causality with increased tourism. Indeed, very few studies have focused on the place authorities' intentions concerning their projected image. Therefore, we will focus here on exploring the authorities' intentions regarding place image through the filming activity with the following research question: *What are the image-related intentions of a place when hosting film productions?*

## 2 – Literature review

The literature review includes place-branding and marketing contributions, as well as articles focusing on place image and its projection through audio-visual content.

### 2.1 Place marketing and place image

Over the past few decades, as place competitiveness became increasingly central to regional-development policies (Camagni, 2017), place marketing and place branding have emerged as significant priorities for many cities and regions worldwide and have attracted much academic attention. Place marketing (Braun, 2008; Kavartzis & Ashworth, 2008; Eshuis *et al.*, 2013) and place branding (Anholt, 2008; Gertner, 2011; Vuignier, 2017) share recurring themes such as place identity, strategies, stakeholders, and place image (Vuignier, 2017). Indeed, place image is a key factor for attracting visitors, investors, or residents and enhancing a place's identity and reputation. In this context, place marketing aims to create a positive, consistent, and distinctive image of a city, leveraging its assets, values, and unique features (Eshuis, *et al.*, 2013). Researchers often specify the institutional level. Studies on the image of a country (Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009) or of a nation (Anholt, 2009) commonly compare it to the management of a brand or product's image, as it involves developing the place, creating or promoting a positive image using tools from private-sector marketing to meet target demands (Eshuis *et al.*, 2013).

Kotler *et al.* (1993, p.141) defined country image as “*the sum of beliefs and impressions people hold about places. Images represent a simplification of a large number of associations and pieces of information connected with a place.*” These associations stem from geographical location, its history, its broader culture, possible emblematic personalities and more (Kotler & Gertner, 2002), and can be simplifications of reality, even stereotypes (Zenker & Beckmann, 2013). This is a challenge for marketers because a positive image on nation branding and the image of the nation has an impact on its economic development, tourism, or attracting foreign investment (Anholt, 2002; Gilmore, 2002; Dinnie, 2015). However, the image is intangible and, by nature, one of the least controllable elements for marketers (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003), which is explained in particular by the fact that it is composed of a multitude of impressions, beliefs, ideas, expectations, and feelings towards the place (city, region, or country) that have accumulated over time (Kim & Richardson, 2003).

Furthermore, place's image is more commonly studied under the terminology "*destination image*" (Pike, 2002, 2009; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Pike & Page, 2014; Afshardoost & Eshaghi, 2020), "*an interactive system of thoughts, opinions, feelings, visualizations, and intentions toward a destination*" (Tasci & Gartner, 2007, p. 200). Place image includes the cognitive, conative, and affective dimensions (liking, recommending, satisfaction) (Gartner, 1993; San Martín & Rodríguez Del Bosque, 2008; Marques, *et al.*, 2021). It has long been recognized as an essential decision-making and motivational factor in holiday travels and has been extensively studied by authors in tourism management (Crompton, 1979; Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Croy, 2011). Some tourist cities today possess a collective tourist memory based on a specific and maintained «cultural image» (Lenoir Anselme, 2008; instead of, Manfredini 2017). Oriented towards residents, the place image has an evaluative dimension, reflected in the way in which the place is appreciated by its inhabitants (Chamard *et al.*, 2013).

However, for some authors in place branding, research has not sufficiently explored the role of cultural products such as films in the development of the brand image or reputation of a place (Dinnie, 2004).

## 2.2 Place Image in Cinematic Production and cinematographic works

The literature reveals direct and indirect impacts of film productions on places. Thus, films and series have an impact on the image of the destination, especially if a place plays a significant role in the corresponding movie or series (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006), affecting the place (city, region) positively or negatively (Di Cesare & Salandra, 2015), and inferring a relationship between tourism and city image (D'Alessandro *et al.*, 2015; Beeton, 2016). Film productions (i.e., film crews and film production companies) can leverage direct economic benefits generated by shootings (Croy, 2011). Films and series become promotional tools, an element that literature treats independently from the intervention of public authorities (Busby & Klug, 2001; Kim & Richardson, 2003).

Also, cities have a dual interest in negotiating with film crews and production companies: being identified by the general public, or hosting a particular genre of films, such as major films studios (i.e., production and distribution companies that release a significant number of films annually, such as Universal, Paramount Pictures, Warner Bros., Disney, Columbia; see Gjorgievski & Trpkova, 2012) allows a destination to improve its image and reputation (Tooke & Baker, 1996; Hudson, 2011; D'Alessandro *et al.*, 2015). In this case, the film is seen as a cultural value of for the place that hosts the shooting. Since culture and tourism sectors are vectors of place identity (Petr *et al.*, 2022), the challenge is to bring together the city and cinema. When we mention the theme of "the city in cinema"

(Berthier, 2005), images related to fiction come to mind: buildings with spectacular architecture, balanced and contrasted atmospheres, chases through the city, and yet they appeal to a non-filmic reality (Souriau, 1951; Bui, 2018). The impacts of films and productions, in particular the positive externalities, are known to public managers (Dominguez *et al.*, 2021).

### 3 – Method

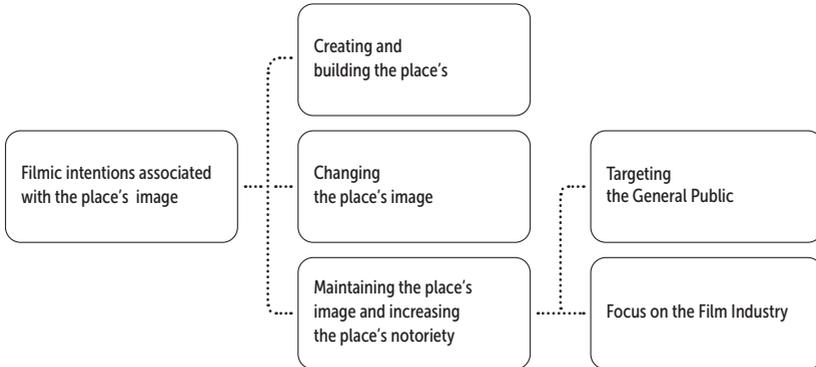
Considering the absence of academic literature on the management of place image related to filming activity, we have opted for an inductive logic. This research is part of a more general inductive approach (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991), in which an emerging phenomenon has been studied (the gradual and consistent emergence of organizations hosting productions on their city or region).

Therefore, we used the GIOIA method. We followed the research design by consulting the existing literature (Gioia *et al.*, 2013), ours mainly came from the literature on film-induced tourism and destination marketing. Based on an exploratory approach (Stebbins, 2001), we conduct a qualitative study at the national level (France) based on unstructured interviews (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Our respondents were managers of organizations responsible for hosting film productions whom we met at a national professional event for filming activity (“Film Paris Production Forum”). These organizations (arbitrarily named: Film Commissions, Film Offices, Cinema Missions, etc.) were either autonomous local authorities (non-profit organization with public subsidy) or local government services (communication department, place marketing department, culture department, etc.). We met with 21 organizations for our research representing different levels of public action in the administrative sense (see Appendix 1). These are organizations from 8 Régions, 6 Départements and 7 cities/metropolis; 9 of these organizations were a department of the local authorities and the others were non-profit organization subsidized in whole or in part by public funds. Regardless of age or gender, 1 to 3 people were interviewed per organizations, all from top management.

It should be noted that this study was conducted to distinguish the intentions behind the hosting and support activity for film productions, nevertheless, this book chapter only focuses on one of the intentions: that related to the image. As required by this method, coding was done a posteriori (inductive approach, inductive coding) (Gioia *et al.*, 2013) and we reached 108 codes, including 23 relating to *image*. We were able to group certain codes to develop the *second-order themes*, then the *aggregate dimensions*, creating a visual structure, the “Data structure” (appendix 2).

## 4 – Main results

Our study has revealed three sub-dimensions concerning intentions related to place's image.



### 4.1. Creating and building the image of a place

The first sub-dimension is the construction of the image of a place through the lens of a film or series. The objective is to establish an image of the city based on the principle (or observation) that the city is not known to the general public, and to show it as it is: “*When we host a film there is this idea of showing our city as it is, we do not hide the reality*” (R1).

“*We find that we have a very developed reputation in our place but not elsewhere, and that we are starting to have an image very oriented towards nature and gastronomy. And this corresponds to the films that have been made here*” (R4). For this place, very few films have been hosted, as it is a rural area whose largest city does not exceed 25,000 inhabitants. However, the films that have been shot there recently have a relationship with gastronomy, which helps to create a -positive- image linked to gastronomy for a place particularly unknown in this sense.

Other places suffer from a lack of image, even an absence of visual associations. According to R11, “*It really ties in with issues of image and perception from the outside... we are not identified as a maritime area for example. If today a director wants to make a film about sailors, well, he will turn to Brittany or Dunkirk. But here? No.*”

<sup>1</sup> All verbatims have been translated from French into English by the author.

*It's a real issue to get known for this potential as well*". Despite its largest Normandy coastlines, this place suffers from a truly clear image deficit, as it is difficult for the general public to place it on a map. Its name could prove evocative, but it is not. «*A series around the maritime that highlight the maritime nature of this area would be very much awaited here*» R11.

In general, the aim is to stick as closely as possible to reality and sometimes implicitly replace institutional communication: "*Hosting a film, we see it as one of the simplest ways to show the city without it being us who show it*" (R18). This could be likened to word of mouth or recommendation; communicators relying on word of mouth (Word of Mouth Marketing - WOMM) invariably take the messages and meanings and then modify them to make the marketing message more credible, more relevant, or more acceptable to their audience (Kozinets *et al.*, 2010).

## 4.2. Changing the place's image

While some places are fortunate enough to have a positive image and a radiance enhanced by audio-visual contents, other places tend to instrumentalize films and series to alter their image: for R1, "*hosting films is also about bringing out an image of the city that has not always been positive*". This metropolis explained that it does not want to be associated with the military base or the arsenal anymore, even if it represents a large part of its economic activities. It can be assimilated however to the disguise of reality in the eyes of the general public.

Behind the notion of image change can also hide the desire to take pride in the residents: "*I know how people look at rural areas [...] The idea is to make people look at these areas in a different way, and for the inhabitants to say, "oh look, there are things happening in my region"*" (R12). Filming activity allows to show the inhabitants the economic dynamism, and, thanks to the broadcasting of the film, to regain pride. Castings, for example, are an opportunity to actively involve residents in the film project, and to cast a positive gaze on their city.

While most places accept movie or series shootings, others allow themselves to refuse a filming that could convey an image to which the city does not want to be associated (or no longer wants to be associated): "*We systematically sign a convention [...] We condition on certain elements, of synopsis or the fact of transmitting a good image of the city... We often refuse, for example, shootings, or to film dilapidated towers*" (R18). For a city that aims to shed its negative image, such as the suburbs and insecurity, refusing to host projects with synopsis that are devaluing for the city is understandable. Moreover, if the city makes efforts elsewhere to improve the quality of life of its inhabitants and beautify its image (i.e., by undertaking urban planning, pedestrianization, etc.), there is no reason to maintain an image that would no longer resemble it.

In the same vein, if some places still host films with less than flattering synopses, they make sure not to communicate excessively about it: “*We also make films here that harm the image of the city. Typically, all the police films, drugs, crimes, all that and well, our Tourism colleagues clearly tell us that it's not that they highlight; because it's an image that doesn't make people want to come here*” (R13). This is the particular case of this large metropolis, well known for – among other things – its scores to settle and drug trafficking; although the intention is not really to change the image through film content (this would be impossible), the solution is to not communicate about the film or promote it as would have been done for a film that would extol the qualities of this city. This solution is also the one we would propose if the city were suffering from over-tourism: in addition of urban planning measures (such as regulating visitor flows through reservation systems), the city should not promote films that could exacerbate the situation. In fact, if there is no significant economic dependence, it might even be advisable to decline film shootings (legally justified in France for reasons of public interest).

#### 4.3. Maintaining the place's image or increasing the place's notoriety

The third intention is the notoriety stimulated by the broadcasting of cinematographic works. Our results highlight two sub-intentions: the instrumentalization of the filmed image for the general public, and for audio-visual professionals.

##### > Targeting the General public.

The first sub-intention is to display the city to influence its notoriety among the general public (i.e., viewers and TV audiences): “*The goal was clearly to increase our notoriety*” (R4); “*We create attractiveness when we show our place. As much as possible we put ourselves forward in the filming activities*” (R17). Without specifying the type of attractiveness, this respondent makes the link between the place's image on the screen and attractiveness.

According to R11, “*Once the film is released, it is a showcase for our region... it highlights places, sites of interest and therefore also has an interest in terms of image [...] There is a deficit in our image and that it harms our attractiveness, but films could help us; the stronger our image, the stronger the attractiveness will be*”. Obviously, if the effect of notoriety is sought, it is essential to present the name of the city (its landscapes or its material heritage), and that it is identifiable and identified as it truly is, without masking or disguising the filming locations.

“*I often say that a city that is no longer filmed is no longer in people's imagination. Have you ever been to New York? When you arrive in New York, you have this impression of knowing the city. You think you know the city, you know the sound of the city, that's all. I haven't seen a film about Rome for over 20 years... I don't know what Rome*

*looks like anymore, I don't see it in films anymore*" (R2). This respondent's example emphasizes the influence of audio-visual media, particularly movies, in crafting our shared perceptions and imaginations of cities. The recurring depiction of a city like New York, frequently represented in films, enhances its mental salience, contributing significantly to place marketing through a cognitive process akin to "mental mapping," which can play a significant role in place marketing. Conversely, the diminished presence of a city, like Rome, in films potentially risks its obsolescence in collective imagination. Therefore, place marketers should appreciate the potential benefits of collaboration with the film industry to keep their city "on the map."

Nonetheless, the film (or series) allows to show the place and get to know it when identification is possible. This sub-dimension is closely linked to the notion of imagination, also for for a very well-known and touristy city: "*A very interesting phenomenon is that of Emily in Paris, this series maintains this imagination of Paris, which sometimes makes you dream to the point of saying to yourself 'well, and if we went to Paris?'*" (R2). However, some places are lucid about the capacity of a movie or series to impact the way we perceive them: "*In terms of notoriety and image, this is what we tell all our elected officials: that films will not all be postcards of our city*" (R13). The challenge is also to make this possibility accepted, especially by elected officials.

Finally, respondents raised concerns regarding sensitive filming locations. For instance, in the case of dramatic events, precautions need to be taken to avoid filming at sites directly related to the events, as the terrorist attacks. To address this sensitivity without resorting to censorship, sensitive scenes can be shot in studios or digitally reconstructed. Another concern relates to the portrayal of reality; as expressed by one respondent: "*There is a film in which we saw people jumping from the Calanques (i.e., creeks in Southern France). But that's forbidden. It send a bad image, distorting the reality*" (R20). Controlling such elements is nearly impossible for public authorities.

### > Focus on the Film Industry

The second sub-objective targets audio-visual professionals, particularly production companies: "*First, we seek to promote our region to image professionals*" (R19). This intent aims to solidify a reputation as a "filming land" ("Terre de tournages," a term frequently used by these organizations). Cities recognize the virtuous cycle that can be established by hosting production projects: "*What we seek is to build loyalty to the projects in the region*" (R20). To do so, some organizations prefer proactive action: "*Our mission is to facilitate the experience, the inbound strategy. Then, the initiative-taking outbound strategy is to sell the place, so we have set up a dedicated metropolitan team: a service manager with 2 other public servants. They participate in trade fairs, interact with local stakeholders, create partnerships [...]*" (R1).

Additionally, unlike the general public-oriented approach, it is not necessary for the city to be shown or mentioned on screen: “*Even if we don't know, you and I, that it's filmed in our city, the other productions will know and they will come like snowballs*” (R15). This is closely related to the importance that the community places on the image it seeks to portray: “*Before, 8-9 years ago, we had to seek out location scouts to show them the city, and with all this work [spatial planning, set management] we have indeed changed their view of the city. Now it is they who come*” (R18).

Some cities emphasized the importance of hospitality quality: “*The motivation is to welcome as well as possible so that people come back. To make us known*” (R13). The film industry is a closed environment where word of mouth is very present. Social media are also favored by these organizations: “*Facebook, Instagram... aimed at professional audiences: we will post training for actors, calls for projects for major festivals, our presence at trade shows, when we are in Cannes [Festival de Cannes], we talk about releases, films we have supported*” (R13). Therefore, the arrival of production companies will depend on the reputation that the city has built within the film industry, especially whether organization have been accommodating (connecting with local stakeholders, access to sets, assistance in obtaining local subsidies).

## 5 — Discussion and conclusion

Cinematographic works, whether films or television series, immortalize a city at a particular moment in time. These images remain associated with the place in the viewers' mind, and the association is even stronger when the viewer had little or no knowledge of the place (Mathisen & Prebensen, 2013). They can impact the image of the place, its reputation, notoriety and can create, or not, a tourist attraction. The place's image given by audio-visual contents has been descriptively studied in literature, and said studies are based on films or series that have made the place famous. This research attempts to explore in detail the different intentions related to the image, implying the capacity (without necessarily involving intervention) of public authorities to act.

Therefore, we could discuss the image related intent. For if the intentions of places concerning their filming activity are real, the strategic dimension is much less so and we note the absence of a real planned strategy: “*For the process, it's simple, there isn't one*” (R1); “*It's a bit of a case-by-case basis*” (R14). Indeed, specific impacts such as tourism or economic activity generated by the filming activity seem well identified; intentions are established and formulated in this sense by

our respondents. However, strategic intents imply that the organization has an action plan, including the implementation of practices, resources, and competencies (Hernandez, 2008; Michaux 2018) and these organizations did not mention it.

Furthermore, we note that no definition of the place's image is given. It is a matter for these places to create, modify, or maintain the image without providing elements related to the image (such as associations that could be linked to the place, its positioning, etc.). A desire to create/modify the image is conceivable, but if governance has not agreed to construct it, to define it, the difficulty will be greater knowing that the image of the place is one of the least controllable elements (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003), and it is even less so when it is conveyed by a third person rather than the place (the city, the country) itself. We also point out that depending on the film genres the audience reached will not be the same, but cities have no control over that aspect.

Moreover, when the intention is to create or modify the place's image, which translates from our respondents into "*bringing a new look to the city*" or "*changing the image of the place, the gaze on it*" it is necessary for the city to appear and be recognizable: "*A city without a recognized and disseminated image remains an anonymous city*" (Raynaud, 2010, p.21). However, we noted that few respondents alluded to being able to identify the city in the films and series that had been shot there, as the visual appearance or audible mention of the city is not made. A city whose on-screen placement would not be formulated, like product placement for a city (Berneman & Meyronin, 2012), would be counterproductive to any potential efforts made.

In addition to the risk of non-identification, we observe that the risk of deception is unfamiliar or ignored by public managers. By deception, we mean that the placement of the city (city placement) in this film is disguised, and a city is filmed to represent another city, or even another country; Montreal, for example, has often been filmed to stand for Paris or New York. We could speak here of the "deterritorialization" of the city (Bigio, 2007). This mystification can sometimes harm the place: which is the case for Alan Parker's film *Midnight Express*, which depicts a very negative image of Turkey and Turkish people, shot in Malta as Ankara refused to host the filming for obvious reasons (the film is banned in Turkey); or the case of Steven Spielberg's film *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* shot in Sri Lanka but supposed to take place in India, as India also refused to host a film that presented so many negative and caricatural stereotypes of its own culture (film banned in India). Some directors enjoy caricaturing countries and cities and make it their trademark, like Larry Charles for example and his caricatural works that greatly disserve the cities they are supposed to represent (i.e., in the movie *Borat*). In other, rarer cases, places filmed to stand for others can turn it to their advantage; for example the Wes Anderson's film *The French Dispatch*, supposed to represent Paris, but shot in Angoulême (France) which has made it a point of pride; or the television series *Dexter* supposed to take place in

Miami, Florida but actually filmed in California (lower filming costs). The topic of the imaginary becomes dominant in these cases since it is a matter of an implicit confrontation between representation of mental space and a vision that would like to be objective of the filmed place. In reality, it is not a perceived space since, it is a construction in the viewer's mind (Francastel, 1983). The process is inherently biased, stemming from both the director's subjective portrayal of the place, which serves narrative cohesion by selecting certain attributes, settings, and character types, and the audience's interpretive perception, often based on the elements shown, particularly when prior knowledge of the place is scarce (Kim & Richardson, 2003). Impressions, prejudices, emotions – which are traversed by the cinematic work – constitute the image of the destination (Jenkins, 1999); creating a perceptual chasm between reality, representation, and interpretation, which inherently constrains the efficacy of public intervention. Consequently, our analysis pivots to the “cinematic memory of places,” signifying the place's evolving image rendered through cinematographic content over time, which can constitute a memory over years and evolution of the city. The broader public's perception of a place is often shaped by films and series, allowing both the place and the viewer the agency to accept or reject these visual depictions.

In practical terms, cities and metropolis are most interested in image management, and this is mainly explained by the fact that in France filming authorization is mandatory and only delivered by the City Hall, which gives more latitude to this level. In this sense, it is often the small and medium-sized places that are likely to suffer the most from an image deficit (Alaux et al. 2015). In France, municipalities and metropolises are the local authorities whose expenditures dedicated to culture increase the most (Observatoire des Politiques Culturelles, 2019); culture allows for reconnecting with a favorable image for the city, the “reactivation image” (Taliano Des Garts, 2007, p. 209). In addition, the city often represents itself more easily in a story in cinema than a region, and this is especially true for foreign viewers: for example, a North American will certainly know the name “Paris” but perhaps not the “Ile-de-France” region, or “Rome” and not “Latium” (Rome's administrative region). Some film directors consciously choose special cities, in this regard, Woody Allen is famous for paying tribute to cities through his films (*Midnight in Paris*, *Manhattan*, *To Rome with Love*, *Vicky Cristina Barcelona*): “*European cities, have a personality that can't be left out of the equation. You want to figure them in the story in some way*” says Woody Allen, “*otherwise it is just a film that it is there*” (Vulture, 2011; cited by Gkritzali et al., 2016). Of course, the limit exists: directors like Woody Allen are rare and production companies are guided above all by the possibility of obtaining public subsidies, or tax credits.

Regarding image-oriented ambitions, depending on the objective, we offer cities some advises with modes of action and types of mechanisms in this sense, in order to move from a passive to a proactive character:

## Recommendations for cities

To facilitate our recommendations, we will focus on the intentions as a local level, i.e., the city, or the metropolis.

### Creating or Building the Place's Image

*Prerequisite:* The place's notoriety must be relatively low.

*Who is it for?* Most often, it is small places, cities, villages, but it can also be cities that do not have features known to the general public (weak associations).

*Key Steps:* Define the vision, and what image the city would like to project. Define a welcoming strategy; Create a unit dedicated to welcoming and supporting film shoots (Film Office), dedicated human resources and financial resources. Preferably, this unit is attached to the Attractiveness- Place Marketing (or Economic) Department, in order to benefit from the strengths and knowledge of this department.

*Tools:* **Create a film locations database/film location guide:** the aim is to identify and list public places that can be made available, on the principle that the infrastructure can reflect the image that the city would like to project (possibility to integrate settings owned by private owners if the demand comes from them and their property matches the desired image), while enhancing existing heritage. **Identify resource persons** (also called «relay persons») in the numerous services of the local authorities; these people are aware of the stakes of hosting a film crew and they are facilitators (example: opening premises outside of public opening hours, closing a street, making equipment available, etc.). **Establish a roadmap** for the stages of welcoming a production. **Define a standard agreement for production companies/film crews:** briefly, this agreement sets the rules around film activity, between the intervention of public authorities and the counterparts of the production. This agreement can, for example, mention the instruction deadlines, a pricing grid for space rentals,... some cities at this point include their **conditions related to the given**

<sup>2</sup> We would like to draw attention to the fact that there is currently no compulsory competence linked to this filming activity, and that the operators of this hosting mission are randomly found in the Culture Department / Communication Department / Place Marketing- Attractiveness Department / Economic Development / Events Departments... Regarding the local level (city, metropolis), we believe that the department in charge of Place Marketing / Attractiveness (or Marketing-Communication) would be the most appropriate department.

**image of the city:** extract 1) "standard agreement of a large agglomeration (350 000 inhabitants): «Obligation of the production company [...] the production company commits to contribute to the city's radiance»; extract 2) standard shooting agreement of a medium-sized city (65 000 inhabitants): «The Municipality authorizes the Production only for the needs of the present convention, to reproduce and represent in the Work [...] all or part of the shots and sound recordings made for the needs of the shooting and including the names and/or the coat of arms, the logos of the Municipality, provided that this does not in any way harm, directly or indirectly, the notoriety and image of the Municipality». However, often, this condition is tacit to avoid any legal frictions.

**Points of vigilance:** Production companies can contact the city/metropolis at any stage of the creation of the film (development, pre-production – i.e., before filming – production, post-production). The service delivery that we qualify as «basic», such as facilitating contact with the various stakeholders and filming enquiry system are free of charge (cannot be subject to a fee conditioned to the filmed images of the place).

## Modifying the Place's Image

**Prerequisite:** The place's image and its notoriety must be sufficiently explored by public managers and elected officials.

**Who is it for?** All types of place whose managers have identified that the city's image and the associations made to it are detrimental (damaging to its economic development, or residential attractiveness).

**Key Steps:** Define the desired image, which associations to keep and which ones to shed. Define a welcoming strategy; Create a unit dedicated to welcoming and supporting film shoots (Film Office) with dedicated human resources and financial resources.

**Tools:** If it hasn't already been done, create a **film locations database/film location guide** (cf. previous paragraph), or modify it to select only appropriate locations (for example: the city's image is associated with squalid suburbs > remove film sets and locations as towers, council estates, renowned for their (poor) frequented areas). As for the construction of a place's image, **identifying resource persons**, setting up an **internal roadmap** and a **standard agreement** for film productions are required. However, the difficulty is higher if the

city is already well known, even if it is for the wrong reasons. Thus, selective film sets and synopsis cannot be the only way to change a place's image through the camera (a film director will find the opportunity to have negative images of a city if he really wishes to); and changing a place's image also involves urban planning, as some of our interviewed organizations have pointed out. Creative industries, of which the film industry is a part, are often seen as agents of urban regeneration (Visser, 2014), a virtuous circle for public authorities that have the opportunity to develop their city for film activity.

*Points of Vigilance:* Regarding the filmed sets (exteriors, interiors), a visibility paradox can sometimes set in (Chalvon-Demersay, 2012). On one hand, the hope and anticipation of image benefits, notoriety or even touristic attraction repercussions inherently linked to the identification of a place; and on the other hand, the risk of too easy identification of a place leading to the loss of its interchangeable character, its malleability, which limits its re-employability (for example, it will be difficult - and currently is - to re-employ the village and especially the Highclere Castle (Hampshire, UK) for a new film set, as the *Downton Abbey* series has made this castle a full-fledged character of the series).

### **Maintaining the Place's Image or Increasing the Place's Notoriety**

*Prerequisite:* The place's image and notoriety must be sufficiently explored and exploited by territorial managers and elected officials. The perceived image is identical to the desired image.

*Who is it for?* All types of places that have an image as desired, and sufficiently notorious (known to the general public and film professionals).

*Key Steps:* The establishment of a unit dedicated to film activity is a prerequisite.

*Tools:* Again, a **film locations database**, **resource persons**, **roadmap**, and **standard agreements** are essential. The main challenge for the city is to become known and recognized, and two mechanisms are possible. First, to increase its notoriety among the general public, the community can demand that its name appears in the credits (to be specified in the shooting agreement). If the **city-placement** in the film/series is not hidden or disguised (the city appears under its «real» name), the city can negotiate with production companies (against free of charge services usually paid for, for example) for its name to be mentioned verbally or to appear in a recognizable manner (i.e.

*Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amélie Poulain* by Jean-Pierre Jeunet or the series *Emily in Paris* in Paris, or *Lost in Translation* by Sofia Coppola for Tokyo) when the synopsis is favourable. Post-broadcast (upon the release of the film), the city can enhance the filming locations through tourist circuits.

Second, to develop its notoriety among film professionals, it is preferable for the city, through the intermediaries in charge of film activity (Film Offices), to integrate their **ecosystem**, particularly by approaching the supra level (Regional Film Commissions) that can redirect filming requests when they cannot be satisfied. Participation in **dedicated professional meetings** (via a stand) such as the Cannes Film Festival (International Film Market), the Berlinale, Venice Film Festival, Toronto Film Festival, etc., offers the opportunity to become known, to promote the global offer, and to attend professional conferences often dedicated to the issues these professionals encounter and how public authorities can meet their expectations.

Notwithstanding the efforts made by cities, it would be fallacious to presume that only their proposal of “locations deemed valuable” would be unequivocally accepted. In the majority of instances, location scouts conduct preliminary investigations, leveraging their extensive field experience and the networks they have developed over time. The search for a filming location is not solely about aesthetic considerations; it also involves technical criteria (what equipment will be needed?), temporal (how long before this place can be accessed?), logistical (what administrative procedures?) and financial (can a subsidy be granted?) which are specific to each film production. Aspects such as volumes (size of filming crews) or distances (how many km from head office? What accessibility?), parking facilities for vehicles (does the local authority offer parking?) and storage of equipment (are there storage places provided by the city?), as well as urban nuisances (conditions with the neighborhood?), are all criteria that come into play in this process.

### Future research

This research initiates a deeper investigation into film productions' effects on place image, and highlights several dynamics (creation, maintain, change) that are essential, yet challenging for public managers to control regarding place development.

Future research must focus on the fact that filming activity goes beyond the visual production to include technical, logistical, and financial aspects of the film industry.

Research can be steered towards assessments of films in terms of place image, through the establishment of indicators and the undertaking of studies both pre- and post-distribution, using a longitudinal study, for instance (Singer & Willett, 2003). The aim would be to conduct market research/opinion polls before and after the release of the film or series likely to feature the city, in order to measure the impact on the place image. These studies could use methods such as content analysis (Harwood & Garry, 2003), or netnography (Kozinets, 2015).

Moreover, Key Performance Indicators (KPI) could be used in this organization as they are in some public sector's organizations (Jørgensen, 2016), and would encompass not only economic measures (e.g. return on investment for costs incurred by the local authorities, direct revenues through monetization of filming activity, indirect tourism revenues), but also socio-cultural measures (public perception or sense of belonging through surveys of residents or tourists).

A typology of films and target audiences could also be carried out. Although complex in its realization, a taxonomic analysis of film genres and their intended audiences could help orient place marketing strategies according to target population segments. Additionally, a study on place image within a broader strategy of attractiveness, linking the types of films produced and the target audiences, could be an avenue of investigation worth exploring.

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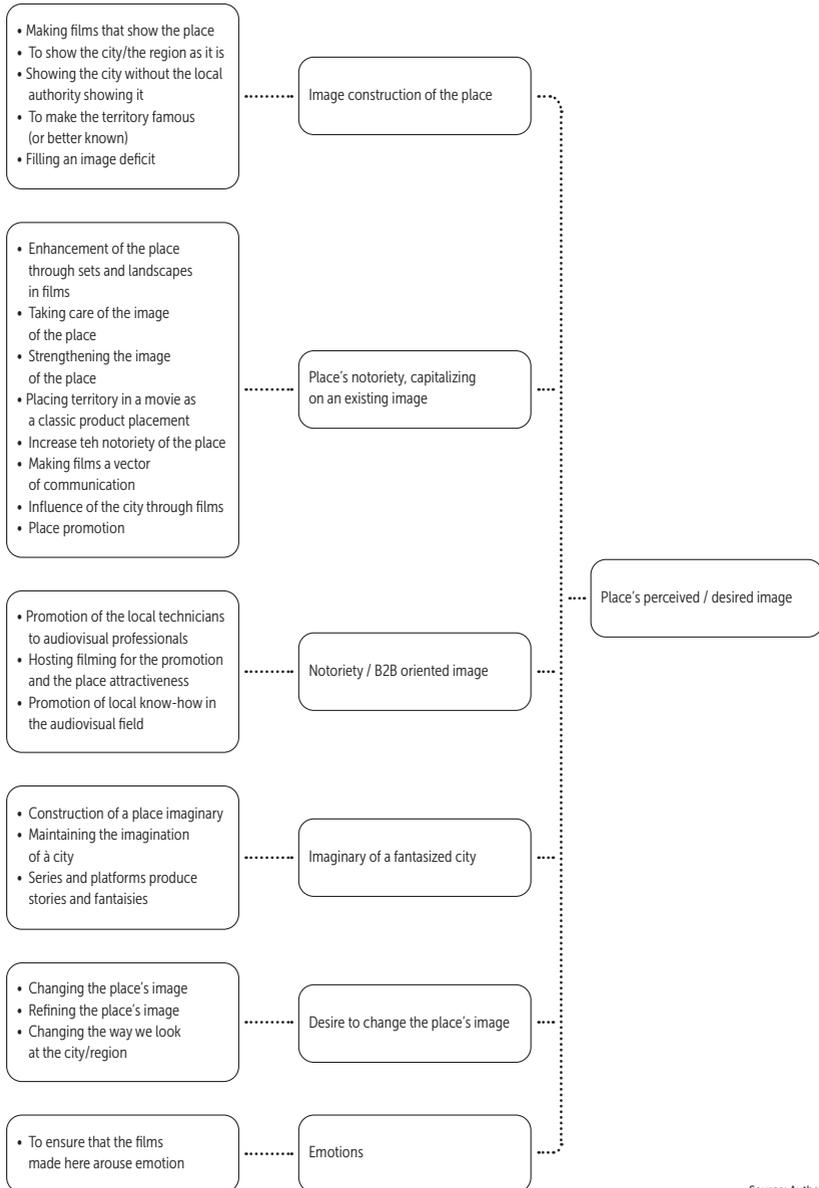
## Appendix 1

### Respondents table

N.	Legal status	Scope of action	Respondents
R1	Department of the metropolis (Economic)	Metropolitan	Head of the Film Commission + Executive Director
R2	Department of the city (Culture)	City	Head of the Film Commission
R3	Not-for-profit organization / Business growth and destination agency	Région	Institutional Relations and Ecosystems Manager of the Film Commission
R4	Department of the Département (Communication)	Département	Communication Executive Director
R5	Department of the Metropolis (Culture)	Metropolitan	Head of the Film Commission + Culture Executive Director
R6	Not-for-profit organization	Région	Coordination Manager of the Film Commission
R7	Not-for-profit organization	Région	Head of the Film Commission
R8	Not-for-profit organization / Business growth and destination agency	Région	Production support manager of the Film Commission
R9	Not-for-profit organization	Région	Head of the Film Commission
R10	Department of the city (Culture)	City	Head of the Film Commission + Culture Executive Director
R11	Not-for-profit organization / Business growth and destination agency	Département	Head of the Business growth and destination agency
R12	Not-for-profit organization	Département	Head of the Film Commission
R13	Department of the Région (Culture)	Région	Promotion and communication Manager of the Film Commission
R14	Not-for-profit organization	Département	Head of the Film Commission
R15	Not-for-profit organization / Business growth and destination agency	Metropolitan	Head of the business growth and destination agency + Head of the Film Commission
R16	Not-for-profit organization	Région	Communication and funds manager of the Film Commission
R17	Not-for-profit organization	Département	Head of the Film Commission
R18	Department of the city (Communication)	City	Communication Manager + Head of the Film Commission + Production support manager of the Film Commission
R19	Department of the Région (Culture)	Département	Production support manager of the Film Commission
R20	Department of the city (Events & Protocol)	City	Events and Protocol Manager + Head of the Film Commission + Production support manager of the Film Commission
R21	Not-for-profit organization	Région	Head of the Film Commission

## Appendix 2

### Intent “IMAGE” from the DATA STRUCTURE



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### Pour le secteur public

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### À la frontière de la connaissance

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### De la science à la pratique

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## QUOI?

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### Formations accréditées

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## COMMENT?

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### Interdisciplinaire

Nous cultivons une approche interdisciplinaire et un travail rigoureux. Nous relevons ce défi grâce à de solides ancrages disciplinaires couplés à une démarche collaborative.



### Centré sur les besoins

Les besoins de nos parties prenantes – administrations, étudiant-e-s en particulier – sont au centre de nos préoccupations. Le pluralisme de nos méthodes leur garantit des résultats probants.



### Local, national et international

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### Indépendant

Nos avis sont indépendants et nos résultats impartiaux, quels que soient nos partenaires, les activités que nous conduisons ou leurs bénéficiaires.

## Formations consécutives & continues spécifiques certifiantes (suite)

- Certificat exécutif en management et action publique (CEMAP)
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The main objective of the book is to provide the readers with compelling paths for further research in place branding, emphasizing the importance of emerging trends, stakeholder and interorganizational dynamics, and strategies (with a focus on activities and target groups).

It is divided into three parts. The first part relates to a global phenomenon to which cities cannot escape: the general path towards sustainable transition in many places around the world. Numerous cities are participating in the development of a more sustainable planet. Sustainability is typically seen as a “catch-all” term, that covers many dimensions. Here, the two chapters dedicated to new trends in place branding, that accompany this transition to more sustainable places, focus on two main aspects: being “green” and “inclusive”.

The second part focuses on the main actors behind place-branding and -marketing processes. Since organizations and individuals in charge of promoting a destination are central, it remains essential to better understand how they form, structure, and implement place branding. The increasing call for more participatory approaches, and the coordination challenges faced by most places, necessitate a refined understanding of these bodies tasked with improving place image and attractiveness.

The third part concerns the design of place-development strategies that target specific groups and activities. While residents’ attraction, and retention especially, is not completely new – cities and regions faced with emigration of people and talents have already thought about this issue for decades – residential attractiveness has often been overshadowed by economic and tourism matters.

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