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INVITED CONTRIBUTION – MIND THE GAP
Interdisciplinary approaches to media and tourism
Anne Marit Waade

Introduction
The fact that both tourism and media have become crucial parts of contemporary consumer culture has given rise to a range of academic studies of the relationship between media and tourism in disciplines such as culture studies, visual studies, tourism studies, media studies, business studies, urban planning, place branding, consumer culture studies, communication technology studies, geography, and anthropology. In particular, John Urry’s groundbreaking work on the tourist gaze has influenced and inspired research in the field since its first edition was published in 1990. A second edition came out in 2001, and a third edition (co-authored with Jonas Larsen) in 2011. Both tourism studies and media studies have undergone significant expansion and changes throughout the last couple of decades, partly because of various technological, transport, and market-driven developments.

In this chapter, I will map the interdisciplinary approaches to media and tourism as cultural phenomena and fields of research. My primary focus will be on media studies and tourism studies, although I am well aware that the field also attracts attention from other disciplines. In general, the relationship between media and tourism has drawn extensive attention in tourism studies, whereas so far, media and communication studies have only rarely addressed this relationship (Jansson & Falkheimer, 2006). Both tourism studies and media studies are interdisciplinary fields that combine theories, methods, and perspectives from the social sciences and humanities. However, generally speaking, tourism studies is more closely related to business, management, and marketing studies, whereas media studies, significantly, embeds its disciplinary approaches in the humanities and combines understandings of narratives, aesthetics, and genres with audience studies, media production, and media industry, based on social sciences methods. Communication studies, which, in most contexts, differs from media studies, is mainly informed by the social sciences and often includes journalism studies. These various disciplinary traditions and foundations will influence the way that the relationship between media and tourism is approached, and whether the tourist, the tourism industry, the screen industry (film, television computer games), or new media technologies (e.g. GPS-based locative media, social media, mobile media, augmented reality/AR, virtual reality/VR technologies, or algorithm-based production and distribution) primarily informs
the main objective and focus of a particular study. This book, *The Routledge Companion to Media and Tourism*, illustrates this interdisciplinary approach, in which the contributors primarily base their work on one discipline or another, but at the same time reach out, bridge, and combine the various disciplinary terms, methods, and perspectives. This book bridges the gaps between the different disciplinary approaches and develops synergies between the fields. To ‘mind the gap’ between media and tourism studies, I hope that in the future, more media studies scholars will contribute to these fields and develop media-specific approaches to understanding the relationships between media and tourism, and how this strong connection influences new modes of media production; travel journalism; marketing; audience and user patterns; digital, online, and social media technologies; and locative media features that target tourists. Tourism has become a significant industry and culture, and thus in various ways drives media production, distribution, and media technology development.

**Framework for mapping disciplinary approaches to media and tourism research**

The relationship between media and tourism is characterised by its interdisciplinary approach, which draws on disciplines such as tourism studies, media studies, geography, and anthropology, in which the different disciplines typically emphasise one of the following agents and aspects.

*Tourists:* How tourists use media to prepare for their trips, navigate and photograph while they are travelling, and curate and share memories when they return home.

*Tourism destinations:* How media drive destinations to promote themselves, and to provide visitors with practical navigation and information tools, as well as to deliver operational management tools and strategic planning tools.

*Media production and journalism:* How tourism influences new modes of cross-sector collaboration, generates new sources of funding (e.g. location placement in screen productions), and influences screen productions and genres (e.g. travel series, tourist drama series) and printed media and journalism formats (e.g. travel journalism and travel magazines).

*Media technologies:* How tourism influences the development of locative media, social and mobile media features, and new user and fandom patterns.

If we take my field of research – screen tourism – as an example, we clearly see that many scholars study screen tourists, their motivations for, and experiences of walking in the footsteps of their favourite characters and television drama series (e.g. Buchmann, Moore & Fisher, 2010; Connell, 2012; Kim, 2012; Lee, 2012; Leotta, 2011; Reijnders, 2011; Roesch, 2009; Sjöholm, 2010), and others focus on the screen tourism destinations, and how film and television influence tourism (e.g. Beeton, 2016; Månsson & Eskilsson, 2013). In contrast, if we take the screen industry as a point of departure and examine studies of how tourism influences journalism and screen productions, including their narratives and aesthetics, the academic contributions are more limited, and the tourism aspect is subordinated (e.g. Hanusch & Fürsich, 2014; Roberts, 2016; Turnbull & McCutcheon, 2017; Waade, 2016; Wheatley, 2016). In connection with this, the study of how tourism influences the development of new location-based technologies, including screen tourism apps and interactive maps, is a new and emerging field of study (Leotta, 2016; Lexhagen, Larson, & Lundberg, 2013; van Es & Reijnders, 2018). It is likely that we will see more of this kind of research related to media and tourism in the years to come.

In my previous work with Kim Toft Hansen, we proposed the location study model as a framework for empirical investigations of the relationship between places and television drama.
series, including screen tourism (Hansen & Waade, 2017). If we apply our off-screen location model to map the primary disciplines that are involved when we look at the relationships between places, media, and tourism, we may differentiate among (a) media-specific, (b) tourism-specific, (c) geography-specific, and (d) policy-specific approaches (Figure 3.1).

The media-specific approaches to studying media and tourism encompass studies informed by media theories (e.g. mediatisation, transmedia) or an understanding of how the various media (print media, film, television, internet, social media, mobile media, and locative media) have specific affordances, features, and conditions when it comes to production, content, and use (cf. the sections in this volume). This approach also includes media industry studies that focus on media policy, how media production and cross-sector collaboration are prompted by tourism (Ibrus, 2019), or the role that screen agencies, media clusters, media intermediaries, travel journalism, media platforms, and online services play when it comes to developing tourism. From a media-specific point of view, screen tourists are considered audiences, users, or fans, and screen tourism a mode of long tail marketing of certain media franchises including films and television series (Grey, 2010; Hills, 2002; Jenkins, 2006). Additionally, the field of smart tourism emphasises how the different technologies (location-based media, social media, mobile media) variously reinforce, influence, and change media and tourism practices (Femenia-Serra & Neuhofer, 2018).

If we turn to the tourism-specific approaches to studying media and tourism, the primary focus is on the tourists, how media influences their motivation and experiences and on developing and marketing the tourism destination. As already stated, DMO (Destination Marketing Organisations) studies and tourism studies more generally have significantly shed light on the relationship between media and tourism (Gyimóthy, 2015, 2018a; Lundberg, Lexhagen, & Mattsson, 2012; Reijnders, 2011). In this context, it is worth mentioning that tourism marketing is a well-established field of research in tourism studies, with its own academic journals, conferences, and networks. Since tourism as a cultural phenomenon and creative economy is related to many other disciplines, the tourism-specific approaches to studying media and tourism could also include elements from other disciplines, such as heritage studies (e.g. McAdam in this volume),

![Figure 3.1 Interdisciplinary framework for studying media and tourism inspired by the off-screen location model in Locating Nordic Noir](Source: Hansen & Waade, 2017.)
musicology, food studies (e.g. Williams and Fusté-Forné in this volume), sports studies (e.g. Graakær in this volume), or folklore studies, to mention just a few. Furthermore, and as a distinct category, **policy approaches** to studying media and tourism are mainly informed by the political sciences, including business and administration studies, and consider the place not only as a site of media production or as a tourist destination but as a political and administrative organisation that encompasses various sectors and political obligations. The two previous categories may overlap, for example, media policy focuses on media production and regulation, and destination management addresses how to brand and develop a destination. Although tourism-specific approaches encompass strategies for, and studies of how to attract tourists, policy approaches have a broader scope concerning how a place (nation, region, city) can capitalise on media and tourism. For example, the tax incentive is a political strategy for attracting screen productions, and through this, to possibly develop screen tourism. Finally, the **geography-specific approach** is related to physical, geographical settings and landscapes, and how media and tourism represent, stage, and influence the actual places (Hansen & Waade, 2017; Joyce, 2019; Saunders, 2019). The relationship between media and tourism is a well-established research focus in geography studies (e.g. Edensor, 2002), in the same way as geography is one of the cornerstones of tourism studies. The geography-specific approach emphasises the character of the places themselves, their physical, historical, social, political, and cultural features, and how these features correspond to, contrast with, or combine ideas and imagery in mediatized tourism (Månsson, 2011; Saunders, 2019).

Even though media studies and tourism studies are distinct disciplines with different academic training, theories, methods, and mindsets embedded in different institutional faculties and departments, it is important to mention that media and tourism has emerged as an interdisciplinary field of research with its own institutional units and communities, for example, the international academic conference that focuses on the relationship between media and tourism, **International Tourism and Media Conference** (ITAM), which occurs every second year, and with which several of the contributors to this volume are affiliated. There also exists an informal research network that focuses on the relationship between popular media and tourism, and from which the **Popculture Tourism Research Manifesto** originates (Gyimóthy, Lundberg, Lindström, Lexhagen & Larson, 2015), whose network recently released **The Routledge Handbook of Popular Culture and Tourism** (Lundberg & Ziakas, 2018). However, both groups consist mainly of tourism scholars, and both groups focus mainly on single case studies that present tourism as influenced by popular music, films, and television series (e.g. vampire tourism, Bollywood tourism etc.). To my knowledge, at this stage, there are no similar networks and conferences based in media and communication studies contexts.

**Concluding remarks: Knowledge gaps and future challenges for media and tourism studies**

Research that addresses the relationship between media and tourism evolves and changes rapidly, following the development of media technologies, consumer culture, and tourism practices. Thus, it may be difficult to identify general knowledge gaps and future challenges. Still, it is worth giving them a thought. Therefore, this edited volume is a welcome contribution to the field. If the overarching ambition is to develop media and tourism as distinct and interdisciplinary fields of research, I think the following gaps and challenges need to be addressed in future works and initiatives:
• We need to strengthen meta-disciplinary studies and develop interdisciplinary, conceptual, and methodological frameworks for understanding and approaching the relationship between media and tourism;

• We need to go beyond single case studies, and initiate comparative and large-scale research studies at the international level with a special focus on ‘blind spots’ in current research;

• We need to strengthen the media-specific approaches to media and tourism research, including (a) how distinct mobile, social, and location-based technologies influence tourism practices; (b) how tourism affects media-industry practices, such as location placement (a certain kind of product placement) as a business model, long tail marketing, the role of fan tourism in transmedia franchises; and (c) how different genres, formats, narratives and aesthetics make a difference when it comes to media-influenced tourism;

• Since media and tourism are characterised as cross-sector collaborations, we need to conduct empirical studies of how these cross-sector collaborations and co-creation work, for example, when it comes to (a) the implications of different professional and disciplinary languages, values and mindsets; (b) new types of partnerships and collaborative practices throughout the media and tourism industries (Ibrus, 2019) and private–public partnerships; (c) spillover effects, including knowledge, economy, and societal spillover (cf. Allen, Grimes, & Kerr, 2013; Fleming, 2015); (d) develop frameworks for cross-sector stakeholder analysis; and (e) link studies of media and tourism (including media-induced tourism) to culture tourism and the entertainment industry as broader fields and concepts;

• To supplement to the foregoing, it is particularly interesting to study industry events and markets that present, celebrate, and manifest media and tourism as emerging and cross-sector fields of practice, for example, screen tourism industry conferences such as Seen on Screen (Film London), Mixed Reality (Ystad municipality and Film Skåne), and screen industry fairs such as the international film commission’s conference Cineposion (AFCI), and the MIPCOM and MIPTV screen fairs in Cannes, which emphasise the distribution of screen content throughout markets and countries;

• We need to develop research on the relationship between media and tourism that goes beyond the usual suspects, such as (a) screen tourism, (b) fiction, and (c) the Western world, and the Anglophone media conglomerates such as HBO, Netflix, and Disney (the EU-funded research project, Worlds of Imagination is a good example hereof);

• We welcome research that takes into account new modes of innovative engagement and practice-based research in the field, for example, how researchers may interact with and innovate in media and tourism collaborations, as in the Danish research project, Innocoast, funded by the Danish Innovation foundation (also see Waade, 2020);

• Finally, and in extension of the foregoing ideas, we welcome new cross-sector and collaborative training of professionals in the field, whereby media professionals and tourism professionals work together and develop a common vocabulary, mindset, and tools.

In the years to come, the relationship between media and tourism will continue to emerge, and it will continue to be combined with other cultural markers such as food, music, festivals, sport, and celebrities, and thus challenge research and studies that encompass and contextualise both the production aspects (media and tourism industries) and consumer and tourism practices. I already look forward to seeing how new interdisciplinary collaborations and initiatives emerge in the research fields of media and tourism, and from this ground-breaking volume.
References


