



Perception of the role of Film commissions and Film offices in territorial revitalization: strategies and challenges for tourism promotion in Spain

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Film commissions and offices are crucial in promoting audiovisual productions and increasing tourist appeal. In recent decades, the relationship between film and tourism has gained relevance, with numerous studies highlighting the economic and cultural impact of film-induced tourism. This research analyzes the role of film commissions and offices in Spain as key agents of territorial development. It identifies their strategies, challenges, and contributions to tourism promotion. **Methodology:** This study takes a qualitative approach, using in-depth, semi-structured interviews with professionals from the audiovisual and tourism sectors, specifically, representatives of film commissions and offices. **Results:** The findings suggest that film commissions and offices significantly contribute to local economic growth by attracting productions that generate employment, investment, and tourist interest. However, their effectiveness depends on factors such as tax incentives, administrative efficiency, and infrastructure availability. **Discussion:** There is a need for greater coordination between public administrations and the audiovisual sector to maximize the benefits of film productions. Essential strategies include tax incentives, simplified administrative processes, and targeted tourism marketing campaigns to strengthen Spain's position as a competitive filming destination. **Conclusions:** Film commissions and offices are vital intermediaries between the audiovisual and tourism industries. However, their success depends on political support, strategic planning, and sustainable tourism practices. Future research should explore the quantitative impact of film tourism and the integration of new technologies in destination promotion.

Keywords: film commissions, film offices, film-induced tourism, tourism promotion, audiovisual production, territorial development, tourism marketing, Spain.

1. INTRODUCTION

Audiovisual media has become a powerful tool for promoting tourism and regional development. Its ability to showcase landscapes, cultures, and lifestyles has significantly increased the tourist appeal of many destinations worldwide after they served as locations for film and television productions. Originally known as film-induced tourism, this phenomenon is now referred to as screen tourism due to the integration of more audiovisual products beyond film. Screen tourism has generated a notable impact on the economies of numerous regions by stimulating investment in infrastructure, employment, and services. However, this successful relationship between film and tourism does not happen spontaneously. Rather, it is the result of well-designed strategies involving various stakeholders, including film commissions and offices.

Film commissions and offices play a pivotal role in revitalizing regions and attracting audiovisual productions to various locations. Consolidating since the late 20th century, these entities act as intermediaries between the film industry and local governments. They facilitate filming logistics, provide information on available tax incentives, promote locations, and manage permits. In Spain, their efforts have been instrumental in establishing the country as an attractive filming destination, directly impacting sectors such as hospitality, commerce, and local employment.

This article aims to analyze the role of film commissions and offices in promoting tourism and developing territories in Spain. It identifies their main strategies, challenges, and opportunities. To this end, an examination of the various functions of these entities is conducted, ranging from the attraction of film productions to their impact on destination image and their influence on the local economy. Additionally, the article explores success stories that demonstrate the relationship between film and tourism development, as well as the challenges these entities face in an increasingly competitive global landscape.

Methodologically, the research employs a qualitative approach, conducting semi-structured, in-depth interviews with professionals in the audiovisual and tourism sectors. Through analyzing these testimonies, the study aims to understand stakeholders' perceptions of the impact of film commissions and offices in their regions.

The article is organized into several sections. First, it presents a theoretical review of the relationship between film and tourism, highlighting previous studies that have addressed this phenomenon. Next, it introduces the concept of film commissions and offices, along with their history and role in the audiovisual sector. The next section examines the strategies these entities use to attract productions and promote film tourism in Spain. After outlining the methodology, the results of the interviews are presented and analyzed for their economic and cultural benefits, as well as the challenges these entities face. Lastly, the study's conclusions are presented, offering recommendations to strengthen these entities' role in regional development and in promoting Spain as a leading audiovisual destination.

This analysis aims to contribute to the understanding of the impact of film on tourism and regional development by providing tools for formulating public policies and business strategies that enhance the synergy between the two industries. The growing importance of film commissions and offices on the global stage underscores the need to further explore their role as catalysts for economic and cultural opportunities in the regions where they operate.

2. FILMS, TOURISM, AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

Films have become essential tools for promoting tourism and territorial development. By visually representing landscapes and cultures, film productions can influence viewers' travel decisions and promote tourism in specific destinations. Known as film-induced tourism, this phenomenon has become a well-established mechanism for territorial development, generating significant economic impacts and promoting destinations (Araújo Vila et al., 2021; Araújo Vila et al., 2024; Ferreira et al., 2022; Nakayama, 2021; Saltik et al., 2011). This phenomenon is based on the ability of audiovisual productions to attract visitors to locations where films and television series have been shot, thereby transforming these locations into tourist attractions. Several authors have investigated the film industry's role in transforming places into tourist destinations, revealing an increase in tourist arrivals after the filming and distribution of audiovisual products (Osácar Marzal et al., 2022). Pioneering studies by Butler (1990), Beeton (2005, 2006), and Macionis and Sparks (2009) have shown that representing a destination on the big screen can influence tourists' perceptions and travel decisions. One notable example is the Marche region in Italy, where promoting film locations has strengthened territorial identity and boosted the local economy. However, today, the success of screen tourism depends on well-designed strategies that integrate territorial marketing policies, incentives for the audiovisual industry, and sustainable planning to avoid saturating the destination (Nicosia, 2015).

Film tourism occurs when locations used in audiovisual productions generate tourist interest and attract visitors who wish to experience the on-screen settings (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006). According to Busby and Klug (2001), this type of tourism can manifest in various ways, including visits to filming locations and the creation of tourist circuits inspired by films and television series. New Zealand is a prime example, as the "Lord of the Rings" saga (Jackson, 2021) generated a significant increase in tourism and had a positive impact on the local economy (Bestari, 2023; Carl et al., 2007; Valeri, 2025).

From an economic perspective, film tourism, or screen tourism, more broadly, can generate considerable income in regions where productions are filmed (Glen Croy, 2011; Zang, 2024). O'Connor et al. (2010) argue that promoting destinations through film increases tourist arrivals and fosters investment in infrastructure, employment, and related services. This has led various local and national governments to implement incentive programs for film production to boost local development.

The impact of film on local development is multifaceted (Huerta-Viso et al., 2024). First, film contributes to the creation of a territorial identity based on the audiovisual representation of a destination. According to Riley and Van Doren (1992), tourists associate particular film scenes with particular places, which can enhance a destination's recognition and prestige. Examples include Scotland with "Braveheart" (Gibson, 1995) and Paris with "Amélie" (Jeunet, 2001). Second, film tourism can contribute to the economic and social development of local communities. Studies such as Connell's (2012) have demonstrated that the arrival of film-related tourists generates direct economic benefits for sectors such as hospitality, restaurants, and retail. Furthermore, film tourism fosters job creation in the audiovisual and tourism industries. However, film tourism presents challenges regarding sustainability and land management. According to Hudson and Ritchie (2006), overexploiting certain destinations can lead to problems with heritage and environmental conservation. Skellig Island in Ireland is an example of this. It experienced an excessive increase in tourists after appearing in "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" (Abrams, 2015), which jeopardized its ecosystem (Rowlett, 2024; Roesch, 2009).

3. FILM COMMISSIONS AND FILM OFFICES: DEFINITION AND ORIGINS

Film commissions and offices are key elements within the audiovisual industry's value chain. Despite receiving little attention from the field of academic audiovisual communication, they play a fundamental role in supporting production (Sarabia Andúgar & Sánchez Martínez, 2022; Schulz et al., 2021).

These entities promote and facilitate audiovisual productions in various regions (Sarabia Andúgar & Sánchez Martínez, 2019). Although the terms are often used interchangeably, there are subtle differences between them. A film commission is typically a public or quasi-public organization that attracts and supports film and television productions in a particular region.

Generally non-profit, film commissions are linked to local administrations and tourism offices. Their fundamental objective is to attract filming (movies, television, advertising, etc.) to the area in which they operate. Film commissions are created to develop the audiovisual industry in their region, support its professionals, and provide producers with information about the available resources and characteristics of the region. They seek to facilitate the selection of their region as a filming location for potential producers and audiovisual companies with this catalog of resources. (Sarabia Andúgar & Sánchez Martínez, 2019).

A film office, on the other hand, can refer to a specific office within a local or regional public administration that performs similar functions, focusing on more defined geographical areas.

These entities originated at the end of the last century. In the 1990s, public support and funding for cinema in Europe significantly increased, due in large part to the growing involvement of local councils (Milla et al., 2016). Previously, local administrations showed minimal interest in the film industry, only funding festivals, supporting film collections, and sponsoring forums and screenings. They considered cinema an area that primarily generated intangible benefits associated with intellectual stimulation but did not provide sufficient reasons to justify substantial public investment. Consequently, local support for cinema remained limited for years, focusing on offering select screenings to regional audiences, while regulation and financial backing mainly fell to the national government (Cucco & Richeri, 2021). However, at the end of this decade, a significant change occurred. Local governments began to view creative industries, particularly those related to cinematography, as strategic levers for generating cultural benefits and promoting economic development. Creative industries are based on the exploitation of knowledge, not material resources. Therefore, in theory, they are more sustainable than other industries and lend themselves better to international marketing. In the late 1990s, the perception of cultural industries shifted from one needing support to one worthy of investment (Drake, 2006).

These entities first emerged outside of Europe in the United States in the 1940s, when they were created to provide filmmakers with an alternative to traditional Hollywood sets. However, they experienced their most notable development in the 1960s and subsequently expanded internationally. As previously mentioned, the first film commissions in Spain emerged in the 1990s, notably in Barcelona, Andalusia, and the Canary Islands. In 2001, the Spain Film Commission was established, uniting many of these offices and promoting the country as a filming destination (Spain Film Commission, n.d.). The Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI), founded in 1975, has grown into an international network of over 360 commissions from more than 40 countries. The AFCI sets standards, offers professional education, and provides marketing and networking opportunities in Hollywood and around the world for film commissions. This expansion reflects the growing importance of film commissions in the global economy by attracting productions that benefit local economies through the hiring of local staff, the renting of equipment, and the use of local services (AFCI, n.d.).

Local public entities utilize film commissions to attract audiovisual productions to their region. According to Cucco and Richeri (2013), the primary functions of a film commission are as follows:

1. Providing information about the filming location. Film commissions provide details about the climate, local taxes and laws, available infrastructure, and more, so productions can take full advantage of what the location has to offer and plan their stay effectively.
2. Location scouting. Film commissions search for the locations a production needs and offer various alternatives. They are best positioned to do this because they have strong local ties and in-depth knowledge of the landscape and its potential. Once ideal locations are found, the commissions initiate negotiations with local stakeholders regarding the use of these locations and the organization of filming, including permits for the use of public or private spaces and temporary closures of businesses, museums, and churches.
3. Signing contracts. Film commissions establish agreements with hotels and providers of various services that productions may need, such as catering and laundry services. This helps production companies save money while encouraging them to use local services and boost the local economy.
4. Obtaining permits. Film commissions handle administrative tasks, permit applications, and coordination with the police to facilitate filming on location. Previously, production companies handled this themselves, which could be costly, especially when filming in a foreign country.
5. Identifying and promoting local professionals. Film commissions identify relevant technical and artistic professionals in their area and recommend them for productions. In this way, film commissions create jobs and increase the economic benefits of productions. These new job opportunities also allow local professionals to improve their skills, making the area more attractive for future productions.
6. Providing spaces. Film commissions often provide access to offices, parking, meeting rooms, casting studios, and more. This streamlines production and makes everything more efficient.

An active film commission can significantly impact a region's economy and tourism. These entities facilitate production logistics and boost film tourism. For instance, Andalusia has solidified its position as an attractive destination for the film industry. In 2023, the region registered 1,381 film shoots, generating an economic impact of €110 million and creating 21,018 jobs (Bulnes, 2025). Furthermore, initiatives like the Great Andalusian Film Route allow visitors to explore famous filming locations, promoting tourism and the region's culture. Another notable example is the Valencia Film Office, established in 2016. It has facilitated numerous film shoots that have promoted the city's tourism and boosted its local economy. From January to July 2024, Valencia hosted 120 productions, including films and television series, reflecting the city's appeal as a filming location (Ajuntament de València, 2024; Sánchez, 2024; Spain Film Commission, 2025).

4. STRATEGIES FOR ATTRACTING AUDIOVISUAL PRODUCTIONS

According to Osácar Marzal (2009), strategies for attracting audiovisual productions to a region are fundamental to boosting economic, cultural, and tourism development. Typically, these strategies focus on implementing tax incentives, production support policies, and partnerships with the tourism industry and public administrations. They also promote successful case studies that can serve as models.

Tax incentives are essential for attracting audiovisual productions. Spain, for example, has implemented an attractive tax regime offering significant deductions for investments in film and audiovisual productions. These deductions are 25% for the first million euros and 20% for the remainder of the investment. This makes Spain a competitive destination for international filming (Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte¹, n.d.). Furthermore, regions such as Navarre and the Canary Islands offer even more advantageous incentives, with deductions exceeding 30% (Ministerio de Industria, Comercio y Turismo², 2021).

The implementation of these incentives has proven to have a positive economic impact. According to data from the Spain Film Commission, for every euro the Spanish government invests in supporting international film productions, nine euros are generated in the national economy (Guimeráns, 2024). This return on investment translates into job creation, promotion of the local industry, and international promotion of the regions where filming occurs.

In addition to tax incentives, production support policies include simplifying administrative procedures, facilitating filming permits, and providing adequate infrastructure. These measures aim to create a favorable environment for production companies by reducing costs and timelines, thereby increasing the region's competitiveness as a filming destination.

Furthermore, collaboration between film commissions, the tourism industry, and public administrations is essential for maximizing the impact of audiovisual productions in a region. These partnerships enable the coordination of efforts and resources, offering production companies comprehensive services ranging from location scouting to promoting filming locations as tourist destinations. One notable example is the strategy implemented in Galicia, where the Santiago Film Commission collaborated with the *Eixo Atlántico do Noroeste Peninsular* (Northwest Peninsular Atlantic Axis) and *Turismo de Galicia* (Galician Tourism Board) to promote the Galicia and Northern Portugal Euroregion as a filming destination. This collaboration has raised the profile of the region's technical and professional audiovisual resources, establishing its presence in the market and attracting diverse audiences (Rodríguez-Martelo et al., 2022).

Spain boasts numerous success stories in attracting audiovisual productions thanks to the efforts of its film commissions. The Spain Film Commission, founded in 2001, has been instrumental in establishing Spain as a top destination for international film shoots. The Commission's efforts have strengthened Spain's presence in international markets, as evidenced by its notable participation in events such as the European Film Market in Berlin (Espinel, 2025).

¹ Ministry of Culture and Sport

² Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism

5. OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this study is to analyze the role of film commissions and offices in Spain as regional development agents, exploring their impact on tourism promotion and economic development through audiovisual production.

Secondary objectives include:

- Examining the strategies and functions of film commissions and offices in attracting audiovisual productions, as well as their relationship with destination tourism promotion.
- Identifying the main economic and cultural benefits that film commissions and offices generate in their operating regions.
- Exploring the perceptions and experiences of directors and technicians who work for film commissions and offices regarding the challenges and opportunities in their management.
- Analyzing success stories in Spain where audiovisual production boosted tourism and stimulated the local economy.
- Proposing strategies to strengthen the role of film commissions and offices in tourism promotion and regional development.

6. METHODOLOGY

This research takes a qualitative approach, collecting and analyzing testimonies from key stakeholders in the audiovisual and tourism sectors. The study aims to understand how professionals from film commissions and offices in Spain perceive and interpret their work in tourism promotion and regional revitalization (Jennings, 2005; Valentine, 2005).

6.1. Participants

This study is based on semi-structured, in-depth interviews with directors and technicians from various film commissions and offices. These individuals are experts with strategic knowledge of audiovisual management and its impact on tourism and the territory. Those who hold key decision-making and implementation roles in promotion and revitalization strategies were selected for interviews because their perspectives are essential for understanding these entities' effectiveness and challenges. Specifically, 25 interviews were conducted between November 2024 and February 2025 using a purposive sampling method to ensure territorial diversity.

According to data from the Spain Film Commission (2024), there are currently 46 film commissions and offices collaborating to promote audiovisual production in Spain. These entities are distributed throughout virtually the entire country. The significant number of participants and their diverse geographical presence give the 25 interviews a representative sample of the sector. This allows for the identification of both similarities and particularities in the management and challenges these entities face in different territorial contexts. The diversity of participants is essential for identifying common patterns and differences in production attraction strategies, particularly among autonomous communities, in their relationship with tourism, and in their economic and cultural impact on each region. It is hoped that the interviews will provide a comprehensive and nuanced perspective on the role of film commissions and offices in territorial development and destination promotion through the audiovisual industry.

6.2. Instrument

The primary data collection instrument is the in-depth, semi-structured interview. This technique is widely used in qualitative research because it can capture the experiences, perceptions, and subjective narratives of the people involved (Crang, 2005; Jennings, 2005). This method combines a structured framework with the

flexibility needed to explore emerging themes during the interview, facilitating a rich, contextualized understanding of the studied reality.

A script was created for the development of the interviews based on a comprehensive literature review and the specific research objectives. The script addresses the following thematic areas:

- Organizational structure and functions (5 questions): This explores the organizational structure of the film commission/office, its functions, and its mission in promoting local development.
- Strategies for attracting and promoting tourism (4 questions): This section examines the tactics used to attract audiovisual productions and emphasizes how these strategies link to tourism promotion and the destination's image.
- Perception of impact (4 questions): This section seeks to understand the interviewees' opinions on the economic, cultural, and social impact of the audiovisual industry on local development. It also covers the indicators or examples that support such an influence.
- Challenges and opportunities (4 questions): This section identifies the main challenges that film commissions/film offices face, as well as the opportunities they perceive to strengthen their role and improve collaboration with other regional stakeholders.
- Future perspectives and conclusion (3 questions): This section explores potential future changes or improvements in the role of film commissions and offices in regional development and gives interviewees the opportunity to add further comments.

Before starting the interview phase, the interview guide was tested with a small group of experts (professors and researchers in tourism and the audiovisual sector) to improve the clarity and relevance of the questions and identify areas for improvement. This pilot stage is essential to ensure the effectiveness of the instrument and consistency of the questions throughout the data collection process.

Depending on the participants' availability and preferences, the interviews were conducted by telephone or via online platforms. To ensure compliance with all ethical standards, informed consent was obtained prior to each interview. Furthermore, with prior consent, the sessions were recorded and fully transcribed to allow for rigorous and detailed data analysis.

To protect the participants' identities and guarantee their anonymity, alphanumeric codes (E1 to E25) were assigned to each interviewee in accordance with the methodological recommendations established by Fairclough (2003). This procedure ensures the confidentiality and ethical handling of the obtained information, which is fundamental in studies involving personal and sensitive testimonies.

Overall, the combination of a well-founded semi-structured script, pilot testing, multiple interview modalities, and rigorous ethical protocol application constitute the pillars of the instrument that will be used to collect data for this study.

6.3. Data analysis

First, the material was transcribed and organized into a textual corpus. Then, the corpus was analyzed through a process of coding and thematic clustering (Crang, 2005). During this process, relevant fragments related to the study objectives were identified, labeled, and given initial codes.

Then, these codes were grouped into categories and subcategories through thematic clustering. This inductive approach allowed for the identification of emerging patterns without imposing predefined categories, fostering the emergence of themes that accurately represent the participants' discourse (Bryman, 2016). This inductive strategy defines conceptual categories based on the collected information itself, ensuring the analysis is faithful to the perceived reality of the participants and minimizing potential theoretical biases.

7. RESULTS

This section presents the results of the analysis of in-depth interviews with directors and technicians from various Spanish film commissions and offices. Through coding and thematic clustering of the testimonies, key patterns, perceptions, and experiences were identified. This allowed for an understanding of these entities' role in tourism promotion and regional revitalization. The findings reflect the strategies implemented to attract audiovisual productions, as well as the challenges and opportunities these entities face in their management. This section also presents the economic and cultural benefits derived from their work, along with specific success stories that demonstrate the impact of the audiovisual industry on local development.

7.1. Organizational Structure and Functions

Film commissions and film offices in Spain play an essential role in promoting and revitalizing their regions through audiovisual production. These entities carry out strategic and operational tasks, such as managing permits, scouting locations, and facilitating connections between production companies and local suppliers. They coordinate assistance during all stages of filming and actively promote the region as an attractive location for audiovisual production. Film commissioners and coordinators develop strategies to attract new audiovisual projects by highlighting the region's landscapes, infrastructure, and resources as ideal locations for film, television, and advertising productions. Furthermore, some offices promote training local professionals, collaborate with associations and festivals, and encourage creating intellectual property through local projects.

As E10 stated (personal communication, November 28, 2024), film commissions "provide advice on location scouting, permit management, and on-set assistance, ensuring smooth interaction between production companies, the community, and local authorities." Additionally, film tourism, also known as "screen tourism," has become a key strategy for leveraging previous filming and attracting visitors interested in locations where high-profile productions have been filmed. E7 (personal communication, November 18, 2024) notes that "filming involves numerous sectors in the region, and our mission is to connect them so that all parties benefit." This type of tourism is booming and helps reduce the sector's seasonality. Consequently, coordinated actions between different film commissions and offices are strengthening to optimize efforts and establish the region as a competitive destination in the audiovisual industry.

From an economic perspective, the interviewees emphasized that the audiovisual industry has a positive impact on various sectors, including municipal taxes, rents, hospitality, and services. They also emphasize job creation in the audiovisual industry and complementary sectors. E14 (personal communication, December 16, 2024) mentions the following:

An audiovisual production brings economic benefits to a city, both direct and indirect. It creates jobs for the local population, promotes the growth and development of the audiovisual industry by facilitating connections between foreign production companies and local businesses, and showcases the destination's image on cinema screens, television, and digital devices.

Film commissions also play a key role in creating projects with regional, national, and international appeal. Noteworthy efforts include the work of some film commissions to "economically diversify the region through creative industries, fostering the creation of local projects and offering added value to the tourist experience by promoting film locations as complementary tourism products" (E4, personal communication, November 11, 2024).

The trend of creating tourist routes based on filming locations has gained momentum as a strategy to strengthen the cultural offerings and attract visitors. E8 (personal communication, November 21, 2024) points out the following:

At the last FITUR edition, we presented the following thematic routes: Orson Welles, Carlos Saura, Series, Western Territory, and El Cid. These routes generated considerable interest and reinforced the promotion of the destination from tourism and cultural perspectives.

One example of this is the creation of a tourist route in Valencia that highlights the City of Arts and Sciences through its film shoots, attracting more tourists and establishing the city as a leader in the cultural and audiovisual industries.

Regarding the role of film commissions in territorial development and tourism promotion, those interviewed agree that these entities must adapt to the particular characteristics of each territory and the needs of the audiovisual industry. For example, a distinctive aspect of the Santiago Film Commission is its strong connection to the cultural heritage of Galicia. As E2 mentions (personal communication, November 7, 2024):

What distinguishes the Santiago Film Commission from others in Spain is our strong connection to Galician history and culture, as well as our ability to offer a wide range of locations, from medieval and rural settings to modern urban infrastructure.

This connection with local heritage allows to project a unique identity in each production.

Conversely, the Region of Murcia is notable for its accessibility and geographical diversity, enabling varied filming without extensive travel. Furthermore, the favorable climate permits year-round filming, providing a competitive advantage. E9 (personal communication, November 25, 2024) highlights that "the great diversity of landscapes within a compact territory allows for a wide variety of filming locations without long journeys," which simplifies production logistics. The local administration also plays a key role by committing to the audiovisual sector, which streamlines procedures and fosters collaboration.

7.2. Strategies to Attract Productions and Tourism Promotion

Film commissions have implemented various strategies to attract audiovisual productions. These strategies include promoting in international markets, offering tax incentives, providing simplified administrative procedures, and presenting an attractive technical and logistical offering. As E8 stated (personal communication, November 21, 2024): "Simplified administrative procedures reduce time and costs for production companies." This strategy is complemented by tax incentives and financial aid that facilitate the decision to film in the region, as several interviewees have highlighted. It should be noted that some modifications to the incentives were made in 2025. Specifically, in the Canary Islands, the deduction can reach 50% of expenses incurred in the territory, up to a maximum of 18 million euros per production. In Navarre, the deduction amounts to 35%, reaching 40% for animation or challenging productions, with no limit on the amount. In the Basque Country, specific tax incentives are regulated by regional legislation updated in 2025. These incentives can contribute to a more positive perception of these destinations as locations for filming series or audiovisual productions.

Promoting locations through digital catalogs of potential settings and participating in industry trade fairs plays a key role. Participation in specialized events, such as the Málaga Film Festival, Shooting Locations Marketplace, and Conecta Fiction, has been highlighted as a relevant tactic. Familiarization trips are organized for national and international producers and location scouts. As E1 (personal communication, November 5, 2024) emphasizes, "Attending fairs and festivals on behalf of the region and educating authorities and individuals to facilitate obtaining filming permits and location usage."

Cooperation with local and regional administrations ensures greater awareness of the importance of the audiovisual sector and simplifies procedures. E13 (personal communication, December 11, 2024) highlights this point: "Ongoing cooperation with the regional government under the Canary Islands Film umbrella brand,"

demonstrating how coordination between institutions and film commissions helps attract productions.

Specialized digital platforms, such as websites with location databases and professional directories, are key tools. E12 (personal communication, December 5, 2024) indicates, "Creating and updating a website that serves as a guide and reference for production companies interested in filming in the city."

Tax incentives, locations, and technical infrastructure are determining factors in a region's competitiveness. Several interviewees agree that tax incentives are crucial. As E15 mentions (personal communication, December 16, 2024): "The implementation of tax incentives has been decisive in attracting major international productions to the country." However, some regions face difficulties due to competition from other areas. E4 (personal communication, November 11, 2024) stated, "We face fierce competition from regions such as Navarre, the Basque Country, and the Canary Islands," highlighting the need to harmonize tax incentives at the national level.

To address this, some film commissions have opted to offer benefits such as reduced filming permit costs. E16 (personal communication, December 19, 2024) mentions: "We promote other types of incentives, such as waiving fees for occupying public spaces, closing streets, and altering street furniture, all of which incur costs in other cities."

Locations remain a key attraction. Regions have enhanced the diversity and accessibility of their natural and urban settings. "Our greatest assets in attracting productions are our locations and the professionalism of the local audiovisual sector," explains E8 (personal communication, November 21, 2024).

Technical and logistical infrastructure also influence the choice of a destination. The availability of recording studios, state-of-the-art equipment, and a local supplier ecosystem are all factors that set destinations apart. As E9 (personal communication, November 25, 2024) points out: "We have advanced technical infrastructure, including recording studios, state-of-the-art equipment, and a local supplier ecosystem that facilitates productions."

While tax incentives can be decisive in some regions, the combination of logistical advantages, technical infrastructure, and attractive locations enables film commissions to market their regions as competitive destinations for the audiovisual industry. The key lies in balancing these factors and developing strategies that compensate for the lack of tax benefits.

Regarding the integration of audiovisual productions into tourism promotion, there is a growing trend of incorporating filming locations into tourism strategies. While there is no precise tool to measure their direct impact, their importance in positioning cities as tourist destinations is undeniable. As E2 (personal communication, November 7, 2024) mentions: "Integrating audiovisual productions into the tourism strategy is essential. We have developed tourist routes based on film and television series locations shot in Santiago, allowing visitors to experience the city from a cinematic perspective."

According to E3 (personal communication, November 11, 2024), film and television series have a significant impact on promoting destinations like Murcia. E3 states, "Film and television series are powerful tools for positioning Murcia as a tourist destination." Including filming locations in tourism marketing campaigns promotes film routes that encourage cultural tourism and diversify the experiences offered to visitors.

Vigo implemented a featured route through the "A Cinematic Vigo" initiative, which is available on the Vigo App and in print. One interviewee explained that the route "allows visitors to explore the city center while discovering the filming locations of various movies and TV shows" (E2, personal communication, November 7, 2024). This demonstrates how filming can connect tourists with cinematic settings, providing a more immersive experience.

In Santiago de Compostela, the audiovisual production information available on the city's tourism website is an example of how film commissions promote cinema within tourism strategies. According to E2 (personal communication, November 7, 2024), "All the information that the Santiago de Compostela Film Commission offers about audiovisual productions in the city can be accessed through the Santiago Tourism website." Although the strategy is still developing, its value as an added benefit is recognized.

Even without a formally established strategy, filming generates considerable tourist interest. As E3 (personal communication, November 11, 2024) comments: "A film shoot sparks a lot of curiosity, and if the film or series is successful, the location becomes well-known." This illustrates how media visibility can enhance a region's tourist appeal.

According to one interviewee, "The series *The Way*, filmed in Santiago, is a successful example because it significantly increased international tourists' interest in walking the Camino de Santiago" (E2, personal communication, November 7, 2024).

Similarly, recent Netflix productions filmed in La Palma, such as "The Witcher" (Daniel et al., 2019-2023) and "The Midnight Sky" (Clooney, 2020), have significantly impacted the island's tourism image. As one interviewee points out, "Productions like 'The Witcher' and 'Midnight Sky' marked a turning point, demonstrating that La Palma could host high-impact international projects" (E17, personal communication, January 9, 2025).

Lastly, Sad Hill in Burgos, renowned for its connection to the film "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly" (Leone, 1966), is considered "the best example of screen tourism," showcasing the ability of film locations to attract tourists. Other places, such as Pedraza in Segovia and Valdelavilla in Soria, have also experienced benefits from appearing in series like "30 Coins" (de la Iglesia & Bang, 2020-2023) and "The Village" (Caballero et al., 2019-2023).

According to the "First Study of the Economic Impact of International Filming in Spain" (Spain Film Commission, 2024), international productions had a significant economic impact between 2019 and 2022. For every euro invested in tax incentives, the local economy is estimated to receive a return of up to nine euros. Regions such as the Canary Islands, Andalusia, and the Valencian Community are notable for their ability to attract film productions and their positive impact on sectors like hospitality, transportation, and technical services. In Andalusia, for instance, 1,381 film shoots were recorded in 2023, generating an economic impact of €110 million and creating more than 21,000 jobs (Andalusia Film Commission, 2024). These figures demonstrate how filming can stimulate local development when combined with effective public policies and territorial promotion strategies.

7.3. Challenges and Opportunities in Regional Development

Film commissions and offices face several challenges in their efforts to revitalize the audiovisual sector at the regional level. According to interviews, the most prominent problems are competition, insufficient infrastructure, bureaucracy, and a lack of regional tax incentives, all of which hinder the growth and consolidation of the industry in many regions.

One of the main challenges is the unfair competition from other autonomous communities, such as the Basque Country, Navarre, and the Canary Islands, which offer more attractive tax incentives. As E15 (personal communication, December 16, 2024) mentioned, "The main challenge is how to overcome the advantages that other autonomous communities have with special tax incentives." This causes production companies to prioritize economic factors over location, putting film commissions at a disadvantage when competing for projects if they do not adjust their incentives.

Bureaucracy and obtaining filming permits also pose significant difficulties. E1 (personal communication, November 5, 2024) highlights that "one of the biggest challenges is the bureaucracy involved in obtaining permits, as well as the need for greater investment in technical infrastructure." Administrative delays and complicated procedures discourage production companies, especially when compared to regions where processes are more streamlined.

Technical infrastructure is also a concern. E2 (personal communication, November 7, 2024) mentions that "we still need to improve the technical infrastructure, as we lack large recording studios," which limits the ability to attract major productions that require specialized facilities. The absence of these technical resources poses a significant obstacle to competing in the global audiovisual market.

Another challenge is balancing the preservation of cultural heritage with the needs of filming. As E2 (personal communication, November 7, 2024) indicated, "Sometimes it is difficult to reconcile the normal activity of a city like Santiago with a large-scale film shoot in public spaces." Cities with rich cultural heritage must ensure that filming does not damage historic sites, creating tension between industry development and heritage conservation.

Brain drain is also mentioned as a significant challenge. Several interviewees highlight the shortage of professionals who must travel to Madrid or Barcelona for work, reflecting a lack of job opportunities and limited appeal of some regions to industry professionals. This lack of local talent hinders the ability of film commissions to independently develop projects.

In some peripheral territories, such as non-capital islands, limited connectivity poses an additional obstacle. E13 (personal communication, December 11, 2024) comments, "It is an outermost region affected by the 'double insularity' effect. It is one of the non-capital islands with the greatest connectivity difficulties." Despite their appeal as filming locations, smaller islands face greater logistical and economic challenges, leading production companies to prefer islands with better connectivity.

The specific barriers faced by film commissions can be divided into three main categories: administrative, financial, and infrastructural.

1. Administrative barriers. Bureaucracy is the main obstacle. One interviewee stated that "simplifying filming permits remains a priority" (E11, personal communication, December 2, 2024). "Excessive municipal bureaucracy and the complexity of the mandatory online application process for filming" (E11, personal communication, December 2, 2024) hinder production companies' work and discourage the selection of certain locations.
2. Financial barriers. The lack of tax incentives is another key barrier. As one interviewee mentioned, "We don't have special tax incentives in Castile and León" (E15, personal communication, December 16, 2024), putting this region at a disadvantage compared to regions that offer tax benefits to production companies. Without tax incentives, it is difficult to attract large-scale productions that seek to reduce costs during filming.
3. Infrastructure barriers. Regarding infrastructure, there are two main areas for improvement: the lack of film studios and connectivity. E2 (personal communication, November 7, 2024) notes that "there are not enough film studios in southern Galicia," which limits the region's ability to attract large productions. Furthermore, connectivity and complementary services are mentioned as areas where some locations need improvement. As one interviewee mentioned, "The island has demonstrated the viability of developing large-scale projects, but many aspects can be improved, such as connectivity and complementary facilities, like film studios and hotels" (E20, personal communication, January 27, 2025).

Several strategies have been identified to strengthen the role of film commissions and enhance the economic and tourism impact. The most relevant strategies include creating audiovisual infrastructure, attracting feature-length productions, promoting film tourism, and supporting the local economy during periods of low tourism activity.

1. Reating audiovisual hubs and forming alliances with the private sector. Several responses underscore the importance of developing specialized infrastructure for the audiovisual sector. E2 (personal communication, November 7, 2024) mentions, "We see a great opportunity in creating an audiovisual hub in Santiago with coworking spaces and state-of-the-art recording studios." These initiatives would attract more productions and contribute to the growth of local talent and job creation. Furthermore, strengthening collaboration with the private sector is key to securing additional resources and improving logistical support for filming. As E7 (personal communication, November 18, 2024) pointed out, "Strengthening partnerships with the private sector could enable greater funding and logistical support."
2. Attracting long-running film shoots. To maximize the economic impact, some interviewees emphasize the importance of attracting long-running productions. One participant states, "We need to continue attracting interesting, long-running film shoots so that the service sector (catering, equipment rental, hotels, vehicles, etc.) benefits from filming" (E17, personal communication, January 9, 2025).
3. Screen Tourism A key aspect is the potential of screen tourism as a sustainable, year-round tourism promotion strategy. As one interviewee mentioned, "Screen tourism is a form of off-season tourism" (E22, personal communication, February 3, 2025), which can attract visitors to large cities and rural, lesser-known areas during off-peak tourist periods.
4. The Canary Islands case. The audiovisual sector in the Canary Islands is often cited as a success story. According to E13 (personal communication, December 11, 2024), "the dynamism of audiovisual activity in the Canary Islands benefits the islands, which have experienced annual growth since the creation of the office." A combination of tax incentives, ideal locations, infrastructure, and weather conditions has made the Canary Islands an attractive destination for international productions.
5. Balancing growth with daily life. The sector's growth must be managed to avoid negative impacts on citizens' daily lives. As one interviewee stated, "It is difficult to justify the inconveniences and restrictions imposed by certain film shoots on the daily lives of citizens based on tourism development in a city saturated with visitors and with a certain amount of discontent among the local population" (E25, personal communication, February 12, 2025).

An emerging aspect of film production management is incorporating environmental sustainability criteria. Some Spanish film commissions and offices have begun implementing measures to reduce the ecological impact of audiovisual productions. These measures include promoting best practice guides, recommending local suppliers with environmental certifications, using renewable energy on set, efficiently managing waste, and reducing travel by concentrating locations. Although these initiatives are still in the early stages in many regions, they reflect a growing awareness of the need to reconcile audiovisual activity with environmental protection. Thus, sustainability is emerging as a strategic criterion that can strengthen the image of destinations and attract productions committed to environmental values.

Finally, improving collaboration with local stakeholders is essential for the sector's success. It is important to forge closer ties with the private sector, encourage the participation of local companies in the audiovisual industry, and foster constant communication and collaboration between public and private actors. As one interviewee mentioned, "Audiovisual is a financial product with tax advantages" (E16, personal communication, December 19, 2024), which underscores the importance of connecting local companies with filmmakers to leverage funding opportunities.

7.4. Perception of the Impact of the Audiovisual Industry on Local Development

Audiovisual activity significantly impacts the economic development and cultural promotion of regions by generating employment in sectors such as hospitality, transportation, and technical services. According to E19 (personal communication, January 27, 2025), "the economic impact, both direct and indirect, is difficult to quantify in economic terms" because productions benefit local businesses and attract visitors interested in the filmed locations. Furthermore, film and television contribute to the international dissemination of local culture by showcasing identity, history, and traditions through documentaries, travel programs, and feature films. As E13 (personal communication, December 11, 2024) pointed out, "any economic diversification is ideal in a territory where tourism and agriculture carry the weight of the economy," and audiovisual production presents itself as a complement that boosts film tourism and reinforces the cultural appeal of destinations.

Although there are no systematic studies or standardized indicators that objectively measure the impact of audiovisual activity, some film commissions have started collecting concrete data reflecting its reach. E17 (personal communication, January 9, 2025) acknowledges that "we lack an economic impact study providing a comprehensive overview, but we possess concrete data on the economic impact of notable film productions hosted by the city in recent years." A prime example of this growth is the increase in direct spending generated by audiovisual activity on the island, which grew from "almost €100,000 in 2015 to over €6.5 million in 2024" (E17, January 9, 2025). This demonstrates the industry's progressive effect on the local economy.

The volume and diversity of projects handled by some film commissions goes beyond the economic impact and reinforces their role in the international projection of the region. In 2024, for example, one of these agencies managed 54 projects from 10 different countries, including feature films, documentaries, television series, and advertising campaigns. Productions such as "Searching for Spain", a CNN documentary series presented by Eva Longoria, and *Diere Galicia Crim*, a German crime miniseries filmed over the course of a month, demonstrate how the audiovisual industry can raise a region's cultural profile and attract foreign investment. This data underscores the importance of continuing to collect structured information to more accurately quantify the benefits of audiovisual activity.

Furthermore, the presence of audiovisual productions positively impacts the perception of the destinations where they are filmed, positioning them as culturally dynamic and attractive tourist destinations. As one interviewee emphasized, "The premieres of series and films shot in the area greatly enhance the destination's image" (E11, personal communication, December 2, 2024), attracting a new type of visitor and fostering local pride. It is also emphasized that the film industry showcases a region's landscape and cultural attributes and fosters trust among industry professionals. As one interviewee noted, "If a producer or location scout is satisfied with the service and management, there is a greater chance that others will come" (E11, personal communication, December 2, 2024). However, it is also stressed that the city serves each production's artistic narrative, which in most cases highlights the destination's natural, historical, and gastronomic attractions.

The film commission/film office plays an essential role in promoting a positive image of the region, attracting productions and highlighting its local and international benefits. One interviewee emphasized, "We play a vital role because we spread that image wherever we go, talking about our city's potential as a filming location" (E6, personal communication, November 18, 2024). Another interviewee stressed the importance of conveying approachability and efficiency since "locations don't sell themselves" (E6, personal communication, November 18, 2024). In addition to organizing press conferences and communication strategies, these offices strive for balanced management, promoting positive economic impacts and conservation of protected areas without oversaturating the market. While they do not interfere with the artistic vision of productions, their work is essential to facilitating filming and establishing the destination's audiovisual identity.

7.5. Future Perspectives and Conclusion

To enhance the role of film commissions and film offices in regional development, the interviewees agreed that tax incentives must be improved and audiovisual infrastructure must be strengthened in the regions. E2 (personal communication, November 7, 2024) emphasized "the need to consolidate a solid audiovisual ecosystem in Santiago by promoting professional training and offering more attractive incentives to production companies." Additionally, digitization and streaming platforms were identified as unique opportunities to attract international productions and transform the regional industry landscape. There was also a call for greater recognition of the role of film commissions, which could be achieved by allocating more financial and human resources to them. This would enable them to carry out more activities and strengthen their influence within the sector. Some suggested creating a regional film commission to coordinate and represent all film offices in the Valencian Community to maximize benefits for the region.

Regarding the future of the audiovisual industry and its relationship with local development and tourism, the interviewees envision a beneficial symbiosis between the two, provided that appropriate strategies are followed to balance tourism with the needs of the local population. As one interviewee mentioned, "With the right strategy, they allow for a proper and sustainable balance between the interests of visitors and the local population" (E15, personal communication, December 16, 2024). Additionally, audiovisual activity is recognized as a powerful tool for revitalizing less populated areas. For example, efforts are underway in Castile and León to attract more film productions and contribute to the development of depopulated areas without compromising the balance of tourism. The audiovisual sector is ultimately seen as a key driver of the region's economic and cultural revitalization, contributing to its national and international projection. However, it is emphasized that the growth of this industry must be aligned with the region's needs through the implementation of measurement policies, ensuring that the benefits are sustainable and do not harm the destination.

Finally, Table 1 summarizes the main results in a more visual way.

Table 1. Summary of Results

Thematic Category	Identified Subtopics	Representative Quotes (Abbreviated)	Key Observations
Functions	Permit management, location scouting, coordination with production companies	"Our mission is to connect all sectors of the territory" (E7, personal communication, November 18, 2024).	Film offices act as key intermediaries between industry and territory.
Economic benefits	Job creation, impact on hospitality and services, attraction of investment	"An audiovisual production brings direct and indirect benefits" (E14, personal communication, December 16, 2024).	The economic impact is significant but difficult to quantify precisely.
Challenges	Bureaucracy, lack of tax incentives, brain drain, limited infrastructure	"The main challenge is competition with other regions that have better incentives" (E15, personal communication, December 16, 2024).	Administrative and fiscal barriers limit territorial competitiveness.
Opportunities	Creation of audiovisual hubs, off-season tourism, public-private partnerships	"Screen tourism is an opportunity to attract visitors year-round" (E8, personal communication, November 21, 2024).	Audiovisual media can diversify the economy and revitalize depopulated areas.
Success stories	Canary Islands, Valencia, Santiago, La Palma, Sad Hill (Burgos)	"Productions like 'The Witcher' marked a before and after in La Palma region" (E22, personal communication, February 3, 2025).	Some regions have managed to position themselves as international filming destinations.
Film tourism/screen tourism	Themed routes, tourism marketing, impact on the destination's image	"Film and series are powerful tools for positioning Murcia" (E3, personal communication, November 11, 2024).	Screen tourism reinforces cultural identity and tourism promotion.

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

8. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Analyzing the role of film commissions and offices in territorial development and tourism promotion in Spain reveals their growing importance in the audiovisual and tourism ecosystems. As intermediaries between the film industry and local governments, they facilitate the attraction of audiovisual productions and contribute to the positioning of destinations in the global tourism market. A theoretical review and qualitative analysis of testimonials from industry professionals identified various strategies these entities implement, as well as the challenges and opportunities they face amid increasing international competition.

One of the study's main conclusions is that film commissions' and film offices' activity has a direct economic impact on the regions where they operate. The arrival of productions generates employment, encourages investment in infrastructure, and stimulates sectors such as hospitality, transportation, and commerce. However, this impact varies depending on factors such as the availability of tax incentives, existing audiovisual infrastructure, and the promotional capacity of each commission or office. Regions with a more favorable regulatory and administrative framework for audiovisual production have established themselves as leading industry destinations.

From a tourism promotion perspective, film and television have proven effective in increasing the visibility of certain destinations and strengthening their cultural identity. However, research indicates that the success of film tourism depends on more than just the presence of a film shoot in a given location. It also depends on the implementation of specific strategies that transform that notoriety into a tangible tourist attraction. Developing tourism products associated with audiovisual productions, such as themed routes, film festivals, and immersive experiences at filming locations, requires collaboration between film commissions/film offices, tourism authorities, and the private sector.

One key distinction that emerges from the analysis is the disparity between film commissions and offices located in major audiovisual production centers, such as Madrid and Barcelona, and those in peripheral regions, such as Extremadura and Castilla-La Mancha. The former boast well-established technical infrastructure, greater professional availability, and a network of specialized services. The latter face connectivity challenges, technical and human resource shortages, and reduced international visibility. However, these peripheral offices possess competitive advantages, including diverse landscapes, lower production costs, and greater institutional commitment to attracting film shoots as a territorial development strategy. This duality underscores the necessity of tailored policies that acknowledge the unique attributes of each region and encourage a more equitable distribution of the advantages of film tourism.

Another relevant aspect identified in the interviews is the distinct impact that film shoots have on local professional profiles. Film commissions and offices act as intermediaries, facilitating the hiring of regional technicians and artists, thereby promoting local employment. However, the benefits are not distributed evenly. In communities with well-established audiovisual industries, such as Madrid and Catalonia, local technical and artistic teams tend to absorb much of the demand. In contrast, peripheral regions prioritize local talent, but many productions, especially international ones, bring their own crew, limiting the direct impact on regional employment. Nevertheless, the professionals who benefit most in these communities are typically production technicians, location scouts, logistics personnel, transportation staff, hospitality workers, and support staff. Although some interviewees emphasize that hiring local personnel is key to fostering a sense of belonging and professionalization in the region, they acknowledge that local artistic teams still face barriers when trying to access large-scale productions.

Despite these advantages, the study reveals significant challenges that hinder the effectiveness of film commissions and offices in Spain. The main obstacles include bureaucratic hurdles in obtaining filming permits, a lack of uniform tax incentives nationwide, and competition from other countries with more aggressive

strategies for attracting international productions. Additionally, some regions face difficulties related to inadequate infrastructure, a shortage of skilled professionals, and balancing promoting filming with preserving heritage and ensuring sustainable tourism.

8.1. Impact on the Sector

The findings of this research have several implications for public administrations, as well as for the audiovisual and tourism industries. First, greater coordination between different levels of government is recommended to reduce bureaucracy and facilitate access to filming permits. This would make Spanish destinations more competitive internationally. Second, developing more uniform and attractive tax incentive policies would be beneficial, following the example of countries like Canada and the United Kingdom, where these measures have proven to be a determining factor in attracting large-scale productions.

From the tourism sector's perspective, promotional agencies must collaborate with film commissions and offices to maximize the impact of film tourism. This involves creating specific tourism products and developing marketing strategies that effectively link the image projected in films with the destination's offerings.

8.2. Limitations of the Study

While this study provides an in-depth analysis of the role of film commissions and offices in Spain, there are some limitations to consider. First, the qualitative approach based on interviews provides an in-depth understanding of the stakeholders' perceptions, but it does not allow for statistical generalization of the results. A complementary quantitative analysis of the economic impact of film tourism in different regions would strengthen the conclusions.

Additionally, the research focuses on the Spanish context; therefore, the results may not be applicable to countries with different film commission models. Comparative studies of other regions could provide valuable information on the best practices and success factors in managing these entities.

8.3. Future Lines of Research

Based on the results obtained, several areas that could be addressed in future research have been identified. One area is the quantitative analysis of the economic impact of film tourism. This analysis would use indicators such as visitor spending motivated by cinema, job creation, and the return on investment of audiovisual productions for tourism promotion.

Another relevant line of research would be studying the role of new technologies in promoting destinations through film. This could include examining the impact of streaming platforms, augmented reality, and virtual experiences on generating tourist interest.

A topic that requires more attention in future research is the impact of filming on the gender gap in the audiovisual sector. Although film commissions and offices promote hiring local professionals, gender-disaggregated data is often unavailable to determine if these opportunities benefit men and women equally. Several studies have highlighted the persistence of inequalities in access to technical and management positions in the audiovisual industry, particularly in peripheral regions. Incorporating a gender perspective into the assessment of filming's impact would allow for the identification of structural barriers and the design of more inclusive policies, beginning with the audiovisual promotion offices themselves.

Additionally, exploring the role of film commissions and offices in the sustainability of film tourism would be beneficial. This could entail analyzing strategies to prevent destination saturation and ensure balanced development that benefits the audiovisual industry and local communities.

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