

The Media Construction of Film Tourism (2010-2024): Longitudinal Analysis of Coverage, Stakeholders and Promotional Frameworks in Spain

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The aim of this research is to analyze the evolution of media representation of film tourism in Spain and its relationship with destination branding strategies and networks of public and private stakeholders. **Methodology:** A quantitative-qualitative analysis of news articles published in the Spanish press was conducted. Content was searched using the Factiva database. A total of 1,908 records were obtained. The analysis was organized into three sub-periods: P1 (2010-2014), P2 (2015-2019), and P3 (2020-2024). Temporal trends and related institutions were examined. Textual analysis of the published content was performed using T-LAB software. **Results:** In P1, a territorialized and regional construction of the phenomenon predominates, associated with destination promotion, culture, and routes. In P2, the institutional ecosystem is expanded, with a greater presence of universities and cultural stakeholders, and frameworks for professionalization and economic impact are strengthened. In P3, the centrality of state stakeholders increases, as does the visibility of professional and trade fair circuits, along with repertoires of governance and multi-level coordination. **Discussion:** The findings demonstrate a shift from decentralized strategies toward greater institutionalization and sectoral articulation post-COVID. **Conclusions:** The press

contributes to legitimizing film tourism as a destination branding strategy and shows in P3 a shift toward coordination, professionalization, and institutionalization of promotional discourse.

Keywords: film-induced tourism; press; media representation; destination promotion; destination branding; tourism governance; longitudinal analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

Audiovisual productions are particularly effective media for showcasing tourist destinations and attractions (Beeton, 2005; Busby & Klug, 2001; Frost, 2008), as locations are integrated into the narrative structure and acquire symbolic prominence, thus enhancing their social recognition. In this way, audiovisual fiction becomes an ideal media product for territorial promotion by transforming real spaces into desirable benchmarks for tourism (Nieto Ferrando, 2020). Along these lines, several studies show that films and series can build strong images of destinations and motivate viewers to visit them (Costa & Carvalho, 2024; Crespo-Almendros et al., 2025; Nieto Ferrando et al., 2022; Osácar-Marzal et al., 2022; Zenelis & Vasileiou, 2024), given their ability to create emotional connections with the audience through repeated exposure (Schmidt et al., 2019). Thus, audiovisual productions enable new ways of showcasing the places featured in these programs, lending them authenticity and visual appeal (Waade, 2017). Tourists want to visit and experience these locations to recreate the emotional connection they previously felt on screen (Frost, 2010).

The arrival of tourists motivated by the popularity of films or series is linked to the ability of these productions to generate awareness and familiarity with destinations. However, the extent of this effect depends not only on the audiovisual medium itself, but also on its integration into a broader communication ecosystem. When the media amplify the visibility of productions and their locations through news reports, features, and interviews, they reinforce recognition of the place and offer narratives that guide its symbolic and experiential appropriation (Maymunah et al., 2024). Therefore, promoting a film or series can be more influential than directly promoting the destination, precisely because of its narrative nature and the emotional engagement it activates in audiences (Araújo-Vila et al., 2020).

The conversion of audiovisual consumption into tourist interest is also explained by the way in which attractions are integrated into the structure of the media product. In particular, a relationship has been observed between audiovisual productions and the development of destination products, which are marketed to attract tourists (Mestre-Pérez, 2021a; Puche-Ruiz et al., 2024). The incorporation of tourist attractions into sequences of audiovisual productions and the increased interest in these locations suggest that repetition and narrative continuity intensify the memory of the place and its incorporation into the viewer's cultural background (Gómez Morales et al., 2022). This logic helps to understand why certain franchises function as paradigmatic cases of territorial promotion: by repeatedly associating settings with specific narrative attributes, they project images of the destination internationally and consolidate symbolic values transferable to the territorial brand. Along these lines, the use of the *James Bond* saga to promote locations through associations with glamour and excitement has been highlighted, operating as a mechanism for projecting the destination in the global market (Araújo-Vila et al., 2024).

In the Spanish context, several studies have analyzed audiovisual productions as emblematic cases of cinematic tourism. For example, *Vicky Cristina Barcelona* exemplifies how fiction contributes to projecting a recognizable and desirable image of a destination through the representation of its main icons and cultural resources (Rodríguez-Campo et al., 2011, 2012). Similarly, Osácar -Marzal et al. (2022) point out that the representation of tourist cities and islands in films and series such as *Ocho apellidos vascos* (*Spanish Affair*) and *La Casa de Papel* (*Money Heist*), among others, closely aligns with their status as points of interest for tourists. This demonstrates the capacity of audiovisual media to shape tourist concepts and perceptions of destinations.

To understand the transition between symbolic interest and tourism practice, it is essential to grasp the role of the press and media discourse in intensifying a destination's visibility. The coverage of *Game of Thrones* filming locations in Spain, for example, illustrates how media attention can increase a destination's appeal and activate routes and consumption patterns associated with recognizing the setting (Huerta-Viso et al., 2023; Roger-Monzó et al., 2022). On a complementary scale, the media can play an instrumental role by providing detailed information about attractions, accommodation, and transportation, facilitating travel planning and reducing practical uncertainties that influence the decision to visit a place (Maymunah et al., 2024). These informational and interpretive mediations are particularly relevant for studies focused on media discourse. Without them, the interest generated by fiction may remain aspirational, failing to materialize into actual travel and tourism consumption.

In this context, the media emerge as central actors in shaping public opinion and influence the social fabric by providing narratives that integrate different versions of reality (McQuail, 2000). In this process, they produce a "refracted reality" that organizes available social knowledge (Lippmann, 2003). Consequently, they play a key role in structuring frames of reference that guide the interpretation of matters of public interest (Scheufele, 1999), including tourism promotion policies and the legitimization of certain territorial strategies. In film tourism, these frames are expressed in the way the destination is presented: as a setting, as an experience, as an economic opportunity, or as a cultural resource.

In terms of strategic intervention, the literature underscores that a particularly effective way to promote film tourism is to disseminate content focused on tourist experiences in the destination through the media and explicitly link it to audiovisual productions developed in that location (Croy, 2011). This strategy shifts the focus from the mere presence of the place on screen to its translation into an experiential narrative: what can be done, what can be visited, how the audiovisual imprint is recognized, and what value is derived from this relationship. Similarly, the role of the media as an advertising tool for presenting and promoting products, resources, or events capable of strategically positioning or repositioning a tourist destination has been highlighted (Ejarque, 2005). Consequently, the press amplifies and actively participates in shaping the destination as a narrative product.

The relevance of this mediation is reinforced if one considers that knowledge of the destination is an essential component for building its brand identity and a necessary antecedent that motivates the decision to visit (Tsaur et al., 2016). Audiovisual productions can decisively contribute to this awareness, while the press can multiply the effect by providing continuity of information and offering interpretive keys for the public. In this sense, the promotion of a film or series can be more influential than the direct promotion of the destination, since it integrates narrative persuasion, familiarity, and emotion, elements that influence the willingness to visit a destination (Araújo-Vila et al., 2020).

Alongside the media, the governance of film tourism incorporates specific institutional stakeholders, among which the film commissions and the film offices stand out. Their role can become more strategic when they establish alliances with Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) and deploy collaborative marketing that allows them to intervene at different stages of a production's life cycle, from securing filming locations to subsequent tourism development (Mestre -Pérez, 2021). In this sense, these entities should maximize the potential of collaborative action with local tourism organizations (Araújo-Vila & Fraiz-Brea, 2025; de Melo et al., 2023). This perspective is based on the idea that a location's capacity to benefit from tourism is conditioned by the cultural trajectory of the audiovisual product, insofar as "the success of film locations depends on the success of the films" (Özdemir & Adan, 2014). Film tourism emerges as an intersectoral phenomenon where promotional effectiveness stems from the articulation between cultural production, territorial branding strategies, and media discourse.

Based on this premise, the present study examines media discourse on film tourism to understand the role of public and private entities in promoting destination brands. To this end, it analyzes the quantitative evolution of media representation of this type of content between 2010 and 2024, focusing on institutions and organizations linked to news stories published in three sub-periods: 2010–2014, 2015–2019, and 2020–2024. Additionally, a qualitative analysis of news discourse is conducted to identify how these organizations promote branded destinations.

The main contribution of this article lies in exploring the evolution of methods developed by different organizations based on their portrayal in the press and identifying the managerial implications for promoting destination brands more effectively. Furthermore, it determines when and how practices designed by the public and private sectors intensified before and after the COVID-19 pandemic to increase the visibility of film-related tourist destinations among the public.

2. OBJECTIVES

From a communicational perspective, this research examines how the Spanish press has discursively constructed film tourism as an informative object and as a territorial promotion strategy throughout the period 2010-2024.

The overall objective is to analyze the evolution of media representation of film tourism in Spain and its articulation with destination branding strategies and with networks of public and private actors, explicitly incorporating the comparison between the pre-pandemic and post-pandemic phases to assess possible reconfigurations associated with COVID-19.

The following specific objectives are derived from this purpose:

- SO1. To describe the temporal evolution of journalistic coverage on film tourism in Spain (2010-2024), identifying phases of intensification and decline of media attention.
- SO2. To delimit and characterize the predominant promotional frameworks and strategies in the informative construction of the phenomenon, based on semantic-discursive analysis in order to reconstruct the narratives through which film tourism is presented as a tourist product, cultural resource and territorial brand asset.
- SO3. To identify and to compare the main stakeholders and institutions (public and private) associated with news coverage in the three established sub-periods (2010-2014; 2015-2019; 2020-2024), taking into account their relative presence and their role in the media configuration of tourism promotion linked to audiovisual media.
- SO4. To examine the post-COVID variations in media strategies linked to film tourism by systematically comparing 2015-2019 and 2020-2024 periods, with the aim of determining whether there is a shift towards frameworks of greater institutionalization and sectoral coordination.

3. METHODOLOGY

A sequential quantitative-qualitative mixed-methods design was adopted to examine the media representation of film tourism in the Spanish press. The unit of analysis was the news item (news published in national Spanish-language media) retrieved from Factiva, to develop a descriptive analysis of trends and institutional stakeholders and a semantic-discursive analysis of the textual corpus using T-LAB.

The study period spans fifteen full years (2010-2024). In order to ensure longitudinal comparability and specifically address the assessment of post-pandemic changes, three sub-periods were established:

- P1 (2010-2014): It is the starting phase used as a baseline, associated with the recovery of the tourism sector in Spain after the years most conditioned by the economic crisis and the boost to domestic tourism (Cuadrado & López, 2011).
- P2 (2015-2019): The start of the second stage coincides with the definitive takeoff of over-the-top (OTT) platforms in Spain, including Netflix and the subscription operator Movistar+, in 2015 (Pérez-Rufí, 2017). They were followed by HBO and Amazon Prime Video in 2016 (Pérez-Rufí et al., 2020). These platforms went from barely existing in 2015 to being present in 38% of households in 2019 (AIMC, 2019).
- P3 (2020-2024): This stage, initiated by the COVID-19 pandemic and prolonged during the recovery years, is conceptualized as a phase of reconfiguration of tourism and destination communication, key to examining and comparing post-pandemic changes.

This periodization is used systematically in the exploitation of the corpus (trend, institutional stakeholders and semantic-discursive analysis), so that the findings can be compared between stages.

3.1. Data Source, Search Strategy, and Selection Criteria

The empirical material was compiled using Factiva (Dow Jones & Company), a database that provides access to 264 national media outlets. The search protocol was performed using the following Boolean combination: *"turismo" AND "cine" OR "cinematográfico" OR "audiovisual" OR "rodaje" OR "pantalla"*.

The retrieval of records was carried out by matching headlines in order to maximize thematic precision, since the headline presents the idea in a concise and engaging way and defines the orientation that the media outlet gives to the information included in the body of the news story (Van Dijk, 1990). In fact, the unit of analysis for the study was the complete exported news story (headline and body text), since semantic-discursive analysis requires the full text.

No selection filters were applied, so the search was carried out in all Spanish media available in Factiva and in Spanish for the time period from January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2024.

To ensure the consistency of the corpus, a cleaning protocol was applied based on the elimination of duplicates, exclusion of entries without text or with insufficient metadata, and the elimination of false positives caused by terminological presence in the headline without substantive reference to the phenomenon. The initial sample consisted of 2,007 records, and after the cleaning procedure, the final database used in this study was formed (n=1,908).

3.2. Variable Extraction and Descriptive Analysis

Based on this data, an analysis of the temporal trend of news stories about film tourism was conducted. Additionally, using Factiva, the presence of actors and institutions associated with the news articles was examined based on available metadata. Specifically, the Companies indexing fields were used, which come from an automated classification system based on entity recognition and tagging, and therefore constitute editorial metadata rather than manual coding. To reinforce the internal consistency of the procedure, a validation was performed using a random subsample equivalent to 10%, comparing the correspondence between the indexed entities and the actual mentions in the full text of the news articles. However, it is

important to emphasize that this metadata should be interpreted as indicators of media presence and visibility within the news coverage, and not as direct evidence of operational prominence or strategic leadership of the entities in the development of film tourism. Therefore, the percentages presented in the institutional analysis describe patterns of representation and hierarchy in media discourse, consistent with the communicational approach of the study.

3.3. Construction of the Textual Corpus and Semantic-Discursive Analysis with T-LAB

For the semantic-discursive analysis, a linguistic corpus was constructed from the retrieved news items and subjected to a preparation process consisting of: conversion to plain text, removal of repeated paratextual elements such as automatic headings, elimination of textual duplicates, and review of special characters. This preprocessing was aimed at preserving the internal coherence of the corpus and avoiding biases in the frequency and association of terms.

The qualitative analysis of the corpus was carried out using T-LAB Plus 2020 software, which integrates statistical and content analysis based on the identification of word patterns. T-LAB operates with elementary contexts (text segments equivalent to one or more sentences) and with lexical units composed of the word as it appears in the corpus and its term, that is, the label assigned to lexical units grouped and classified according to custom dictionaries and semantic categories that include terms with the same meaning (lemmatization). A manual headword creation process was carried out in which morphological and semantic variants were grouped under a single headword (for example, the terms “película” [film] and “largometraje” [feature film] were grouped under the headword “película” [film] and the terms “ayuntamiento” [city council] and “consistorio” [town hall] were grouped under the headword “ayuntamiento” [city council]).

Reliability control was performed on a random subsample of 20% of the processed material (dictionary of terms and segments), in which the researchers reviewed the lemmatized assignment and grouping following a common protocol. Discrepancies were resolved by consensus, and inter-coder agreement was estimated using Cohen's kappa ($\kappa=0.92$), calculated from the agreement matrix generated in T-LAB.

After renaming and reorganizing the available terms, a selection of 105 lexical units (terms or keywords) was established, which, for simplicity, will henceforth be referred to as terms. From this selection, the most frequently occurring terms were determined. This tabulation made it possible to identify the areas of film tourism addressed in the media.

The procedure was structured in three levels:

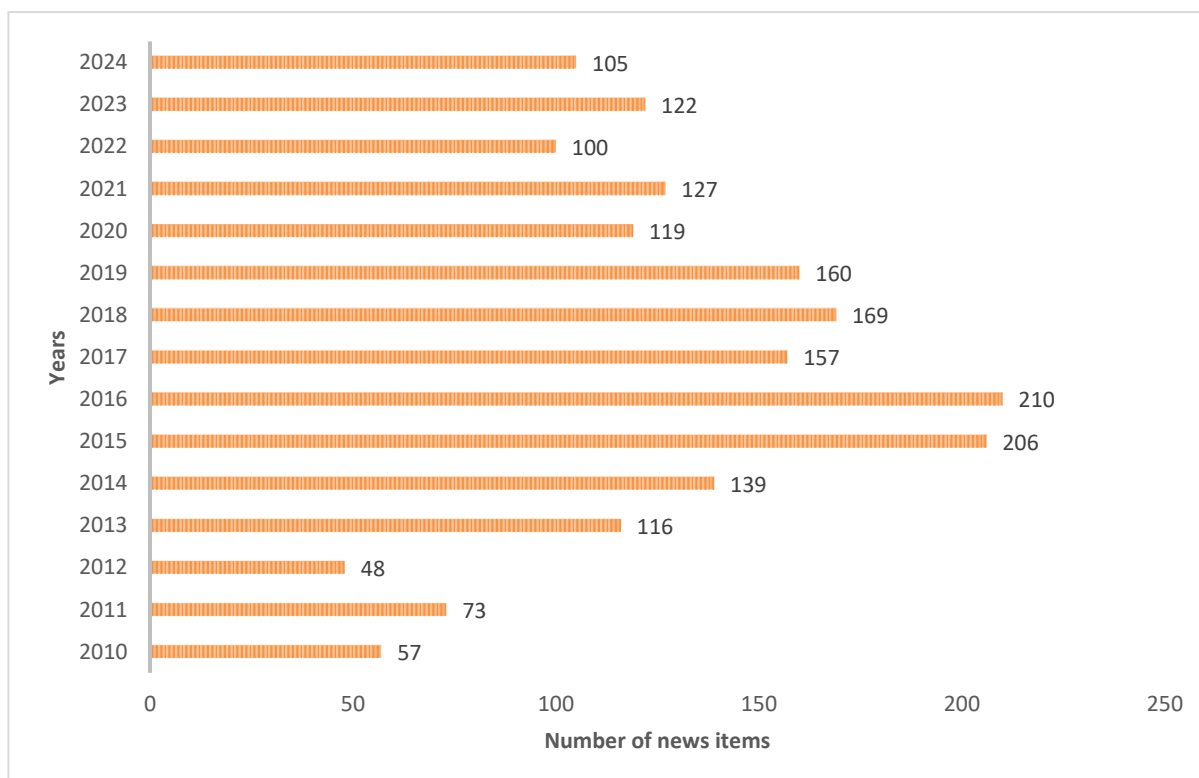
1. Lexical frequencies: Identification of terms with the highest presence in the corpus. For the presentation of results, a minimum threshold of 1,000 occurrences was applied, used as a cut-off point to prioritize highly representative terms and reduce noise.
2. Significant co-occurrences centered on the term “turismo” [tourism] (per sub-period): For P1, P2, and P3, the association between term A (*tourism*) and terms B was calculated, retaining only statistically significant co-occurrences using χ^2 ($p<0.05$). Additionally, the cosine coefficient was reported as an index of association, and the co-occurrence in elementary contexts (CE_AB) was reported, with the purpose of comparing the semantic structure of the phenomenon between stages and, in particular, contrasting the pre-pandemic period with the post-pandemic period.
3. Elementary contexts: Selection of representative fragments to interpret the discursive meaning of the detected associations, ensuring triangulation between statistical evidence and textual evidence.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Descriptive Analysis

Based on data provided by Factiva, the evolution of media representation of the subject of study was examined (Figure 1).

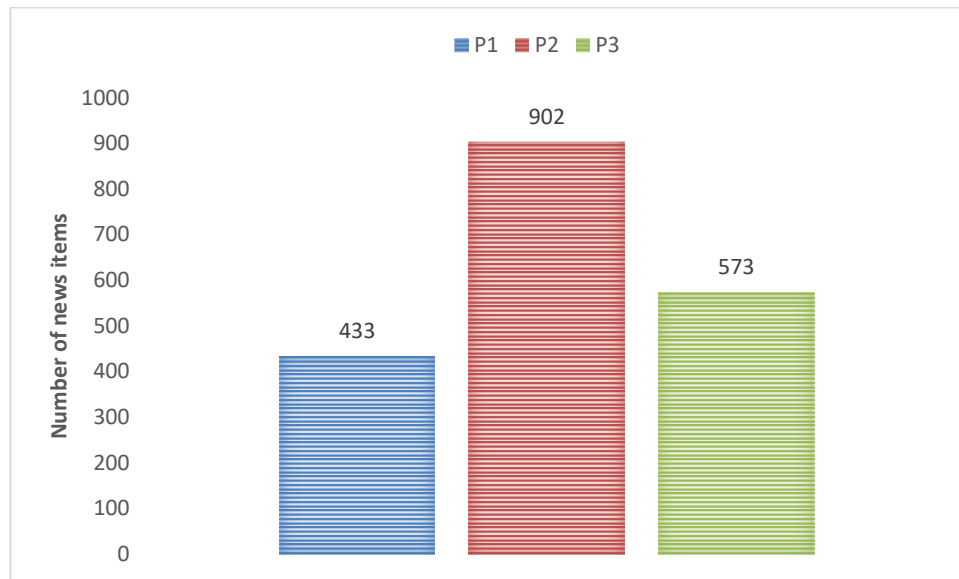
Figure 1. *Number of News Items Published per Year (2010-2024)*



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

The temporal evolution shows that the maximum coverage is reached in 2015-2016. To facilitate comparison, the information is summarized by periods in Figure 2: P1 (2010-2014) includes 433 news items (22.7%), P2 (2015-2019) 902 news items (47.3%) and P3 (2020-2024) 573 news items (30.0%).

Figure 2. *Number of News Items Published per Period*



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

The increase in news coverage in P2, specifically in 2015 and 2016, coincided with the arrival in Spain of OTT platforms, which, in addition to being distributors, produce exclusive content for their platforms. These productions had a significant impact on the media, as seen with the series *Game of Thrones* (2011-2019), since part of its filming took place in various locations throughout the country (Andalucía Film Commission, 2020). Roger-Monzó et al. (2022) point out that this high media visibility can be associated with increased awareness and tourism in specific destinations. In Spain, *Game of Thrones* was available on Movistar+ until HBO entered the market in 2016 (Pérez-Rufí, 2017).

Next, the presence of actors and institutions associated with the news items is examined based on Factiva's automated metadata in P1, P2, and P3. Since a single news item can include multiple indexed entities, the percentage was calculated on the total number of institutional occurrences recorded in each period (not on the number of news items).

Table 1. Institutions Linked to Film Tourism for P1

Institution	Percentage
Regional Government of Andalusia	10.77%
Regional Government of Extremadura	10.77%
Andalusia Department of Tourism, Commerce, and Sports	7.69%
Castile and León Department of Culture and Tourism	6.15%
Balearic Islands Tourism Board	4.62%
Ministry of Culture and Sports	4.62%
Complutense University of Madrid	3.08%
Extremadura Development Council	3.08%
Paramount Pictures Corp	3.08%
Skyscanner Ltd	3.08%
Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield SE	3.08%
Railway Infrastructure Administrator	1.54%
Aena PYME S.A.	1.54%
Andalusian Department of Culture	1.54%
Argentine Ministry of Education	1.54%
Atresmedia Corp. de Medios de Comunicación S.A.	1.54%
Basque Country Department of Culture and Language Policy	1.54%
Government of the Balearic Islands	1.54%
Parques Reunidos S.A.	1.54%
Spanish Ministry of Education and Vocational Training	1.54%
Terra Mítica Theme Park of Benidorm S.A.	1.54%
Valencian Regional Ministry of Education, Research, Culture, and Sports	1.54%
Valencian Tourism Board	1.54%
Others (academic institutions, museums, companies)	21.05%

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Table 1 indicates that media representation of film tourism relies primarily on regional institutions and sectoral tourism and culture bodies, with a secondary role for the national government and a still fragmented private sector presence. The highest percentages correspond to the Regional Governments of Andalusia and Extremadura (10.77% each), followed by specialized regional ministries, such as the Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Sport of Andalusia (7.69%) and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Castile and León (6.15%). The Balearic Islands Tourism Council (4.62%) and the Ministry of Culture and Sport (4.62%) demonstrate that the framing is mainly at the regional level, with a national presence, but without leadership.

Alongside these stakeholders, academic and planning entities appear (for example, the Complutense University of Madrid and the Extremadura Development Council, 3.08%), suggesting an emerging legitimacy based on knowledge and territorial development. The media presence of companies and corporations is diverse but sporadic: international audiovisual industry (Paramount), tourism intermediation (Skyscanner), and leisure/ retail. Transport infrastructure (Aena, ADIF), media (Atresmedia), and theme parks are less prominent. The variety of entities and the weight of the "Other" category point to a stage in which media discourse portrays film tourism as an expanding topic, with isolated initiatives and without a fully consolidated institutional or sectoral framework.

Table 2. Institutions Linked to Film Tourism for P2

Institution	Percentage
University of Almería	9.78%
University of Zaragoza	6.52%
Andalusian Regional Ministry of Tourism, Commerce, and Sports	5.43%
General Society of Authors and Publishers (SGAE)	5.43%
Spain Film Commission	4.35%
Spanish Ministry of Industry, Commerce, and Tourism	4.35%
United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)	4.35%
European Film Academy	3.26%
Regional Government of Andalusia	3.26%
Canal de Isabel II, Community of Madrid	2.17%
Spanish Tourism Institute - Turespaña	2.17%
Kinepolis Group N.V.	2.17%
Spanish Ministry of Culture and Sports	2.17%
Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation	2.17%
University of León	2.17%
University of the Balearic Islands	2.17%
University of Valladolid	2.17%
World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)	2.17%
Others (i.e., EU, hotels, museums, transportation companies)	33.74%

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

The same process was carried out for P2, revealing greater heterogeneity (Table 2). The results suggest a stage of diversification and consolidation of the institutional ecosystem associated with film tourism, characterized by a key difference: the centrality of the university sphere. The high media representation of the University of Almería (9.78%) and the University of Zaragoza (6.52%), along with the presence of other universities (León, Balearic Islands, Valladolid; 2.17% each), suggests that during this sub-period, the phenomenon was legitimized in the media by knowledge agents, in the form of research, conferences, training, and impact measurement. This points to a process of professionalization of the discourse, where the press incorporates "expert" voices and framing more extensively, in addition to promotional content.

Alongside this academic legitimacy, a significant territorial presence is maintained, especially in Andalusia: the Andalusian Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Sport (5.43%) and the Andalusian Regional Government (3.26%) continue to be key players. However, their relative weight suggests a less concentrated coverage than in the initial stages, consistent with greater territorial diversity or a more comprehensive approach to film tourism.

There is also greater visibility of cultural and sectoral actors connecting tourism and the audiovisual industry: SGAE (5.43%) and the European Film Academy (3.26%) reinforce the view of film tourism as part of a cultural economy. At the same time, actors linked to leisure and exhibition appear. This suggests that media discourse reflects public-private partnership strategies.

At the institutional level, the State and international organizations are present —Ministry of Industry (4.35%), Turespaña (2.17%), Ministry of Culture (2.17%), UNESCO (4.35%), and UNWTO (2.17%)—but without hegemony. This circumstance characterizes P2 as a multi-level phase with more pluralistic and international coverage than P1. Meanwhile, the high percentage of "Other" (33.74%) confirms that the press presents a

broad multi-stakeholder network (EU, hotels, museums, transport), creating a discourse that gradually integrates film tourism into multiple sectors.

Table 3. *Institutions Linked to Film Tourism for P3.*

Institution	Percentage
Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism	19.45%
Spanish Tourism Institute - Turespaña	9.47%
Regional Government of Andalusia	9.47%
Valencian Government	7.36%
World Tourism Organization	6.31%
Ministry of Culture and Sport	4.21%
University of Cordoba	4.21%
National Prado Museum	3.15%
Aena SME SA	2.1%
Cinesa Compañía de Iniciativas y Espectáculos SA	2.1%
Spanish Red Cross	2.1%
Government of Spain	2.1%
Iberostar Group SA	2.1%
Paradores de Turismo de España SA	2.1%
Acciona SA	1.05%
Renfe Operator	1.05%
Andalusian Board of Culture and Heritage	1.05%
Andalusian Sports Council	1.05%
Andalusian Tourism Agency	1.05%
Barcelona City Council	1.05%
Tourism in Barcelona	1.05%
CaixaBank S.A.	1.05%
City Council of Córdoba	1.05%
Provincial Council of Córdoba	1.05%
Hosteltur	1.05%
Iberia LAE SA	1.05%
Others (other entities, hospitality companies, museums)	11.17%

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Table 3 shows both institutional centralization and greater diversification of actors in the media representation of film tourism in P3. The Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism holds the leading position (19.45%). Adding Turespaña (9.47%) and the Government of Spain (2.10%) brings the total to 31.02%, suggesting a framework more closely linked to public policies, coordination, and national strategy during the pandemic/ post-pandemic period.

However, a significant regional presence is observed in media coverage, especially from the Andalusian Regional Government (9.47%) and the Valencian Regional Government (7.36%), which together account for 16.83%, indicating that regional promotion continues to be structured at the regional level, albeit within a more institutionalized framework. The presence of the UNWTO (6.31%) adds a component of legitimacy and supranational reference.

The press compiles a list that includes cultural stakeholders (Ministry of Culture, Prado Museum), transportation actors (Aena, Renfe, Iberia), accommodation and tourism stakeholders (Paradores, Iberostar), sector intermediaries (Hosteltur), and social/corporate action players (Red Cross, CaixaBank). Collectively, the

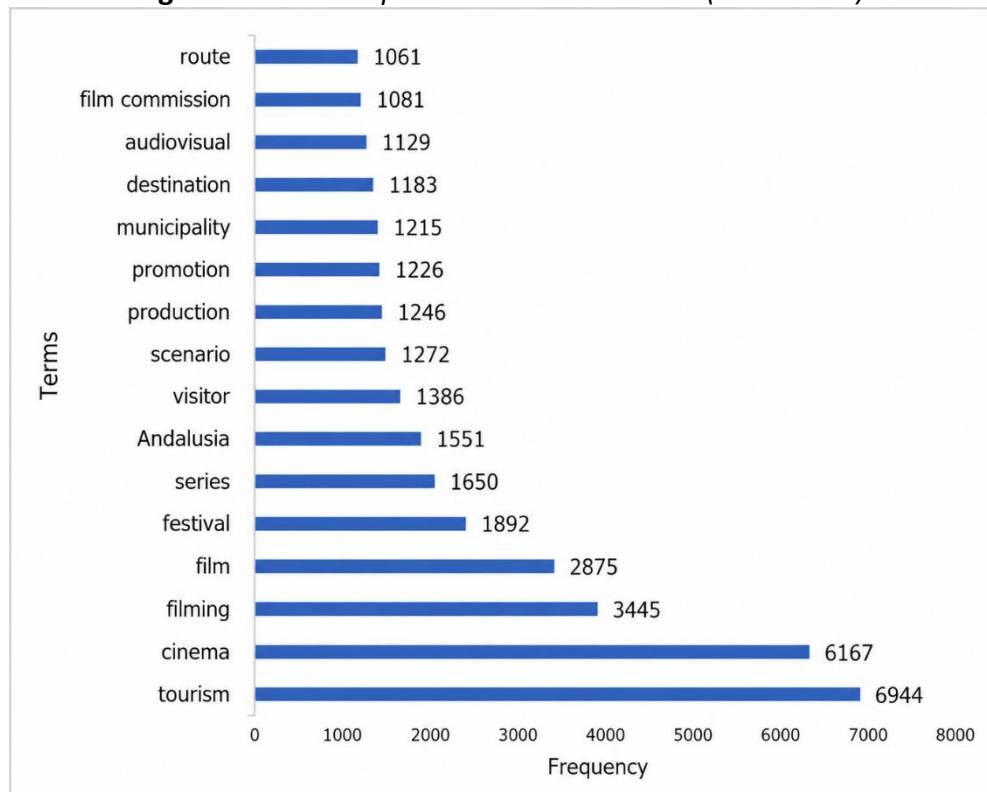
top five account for 52.06% of coverage, indicating a high concentration of attention on a predominantly public institutional core. The results show that in P3, the press shifts from presenting film tourism as a territorial promotional resource to constructing a discourse based on an institutionalized, multi-stakeholder strategy, with a dominant public sector.

4.2. Qualitative Discourse Analysis

4.2.1. Frequent Terms

The discourse analysis conducted by T-LAB on news articles published between 2010 and 2024 yielded the following results. Figure 3 shows the frequency distribution of the most common terms included in the news corpus. A minimum of 1000 occurrences was used as the cutoff point.

Figure 3. *Most Frequent Words in the News (2010-2024).*



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

The most frequent terms are those related to tourism and territories (tourism, route, destination, visitor, Andalusia), terms related to the audiovisual industry (cinema, filming, film, festival, series, stage, production, audiovisual) and terms linked to public and private institutions (city council, Film Commission).

It is also observed that the most frequent terms related to a territory are linked to the community of Andalusia. The Andalusian region has traditionally been the setting for numerous audiovisual productions, both national and international. The 1960s marked the beginning of the widespread use of Andalusia as a filming location for all kinds of movies, especially Westerns (Checa, 2005), although the most prominent example is *Game of Thrones*. In 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2018, some scenes from the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth seasons of the series were filmed in Andalusia, confirming the region's reputation as a prime location for all types of filming, and it has become a national benchmark with the promotion of "Andalucía Film Destination" (Andalucía Film Commission, 2020).

4.2.2. Co-occurrence Analysis: Word Associations

The 105 terms derived from the study allowed for the development of a statistically significant co-occurrence analysis focused on word associations to examine the relationship between terms. In this case, the co-occurrence analysis of the term "tourism" was performed for P1, P2, and P3.

Table 4 shows the relationship between the term "tourism" and other terms or keywords with statistically significant co-occurrences (Chi ², p<0.05) for period P1.

Table 4. Word Association Analysis for term A (Tourism) for P1

TERM B	COEFF.	CE_AB	CHI ²	(p)
cinema	0.505	759	356.456	0.000
promotion	0.298	213	167.339	0.000
destination	0.225	131	76.988	0.000
Andalusia	0.271	234	62.891	0.000
culture	0.222	147	51.637	0.000
route	0.19	103	43.081	0.000
Cáceres	0.139	44	37.787	0.000
impact	0.156	65	33.414	0.000
Fitur	0.133	44	28.398	0.000
film	0.174	188	26.725	0.000
strategy	0.12	34	25.982	0.000
Tenerife	0.135	52	21.206	0.000
Game of Thrones	0.165	88	20.873	0.000
gastronomy	0.137	56	19.245	0.000
Estremadura	0.132	51	18.323	0.000
contest	0.16	86	15.770	0.000
Malaga	0.167	95	15.647	0.000
Film Commission	0.163	93	13.787	0.000
Euroscreen	0.096	24	13.501	0.000
filming	0.299	369	12.792	0.000
government	0.137	62	12.272	0.000
economic	0.158	89	11.208	0.001
deputation	0.128	54	11.145	0.001
festival	0.224	199	9.980	0.002
director	0.111	76	9.223	0.002
day	0.1	31	8.927	0.003
audiovisual	0.148	80	8.270	0.004
guide	0.096	29	7.143	0.008
coast	0.103	36	6.287	0.012
Valencia	0.091	28	5.163	0.023
Grenade	0.113	47	4.630	0.031

COEFF: The cosine coefficient used as the association index value.

AB: The co-occurrence in elementary contexts of those terms (A) that are objects of analysis (tourism) and their main associated terms (B) that are statistically significant (p<0.05).

Chi ²: A statistic that helps to verify the importance of co-occurrences.

p-value: The probability that the calculated Chi² statistic could occur given a true null hypothesis. The required significance level was set at $p < 0.05$.

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

The selection of elementary contexts included in Tables 5, 7 and 9 has been carried out using a combined criterion: (a) correspondence with statistically significant co-occurrences of the term “tourism” ($p < 0.05$), (b) thematic diversity and diversity of stakeholders involved and (c) expository clarity to illustrate the discursive patterns, avoiding a selection based on isolated or anecdotal cases.

Table 5 shows examples of elementary contexts to illustrate the relationship between the term “tourism” and other terms whose co-occurrence is statistically significant in P1.

Table 5. Examples of Co-Occurrences in P1

<i>Tenerife will host this Tuesday the national premiere of the film <i>Clash of the Titans</i>, directed by Louis Leterrier. It will be a huge promotional tool for the island, generating around five million euros in revenue, the Tenerife Island Council reported on Monday. Eldiario.es March 29, 2010</i>
<i>Barceló Málaga hotel is offering from this Friday to April 2 a "movie-like" gastronomic experience, bringing the cinematic experience from the screen to the table with a menu created in celebration of the Málaga Spanish Film Festival. Europa Press March 24, 2011</i>
<i>In recent years, cinema has become a fundamental tool for tourism promotion, as demonstrated by two such disparate cases as the James Bond saga for Great Britain and the two installments of "The Smurfs" for the village of Júzcar in Málaga, with barely two hundred inhabitants. Both examples were among those analyzed in Málaga during the Euroscreen international conference, which addressed the impact of "screen tourism" on cities. Levante-EMV November 18, 2013</i>
<i>The Minister of Tourism and Commerce for the Andalusian Regional Government, Rafael Rodríguez, highlighted the "new film-based products" launched in Almería as "a differentiating element" of the province's tourism offerings. EFE January 09, 2014</i>
<i>The United States ambassador to Spain, James Costos, confirmed this Thursday that the filming from the series "Game of Thrones" in Seville city and the municipality of Osuna will increase the Tourism by 15 % and will continue to do so over time, as it becomes a pilgrimage site for fans of this HBO production worldwide. Europa Press September 16, 2014</i>
<i>The City Council will promote Málaga as a capital of film tourism through Euroscreen, a European project that aims to boost tourism through film production and by studying the influence that filming, television programs, and advertising have on tourists when choosing a destination. La Opinión de Málaga, September 26, 2013</i>

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

This semantic analysis reveals that in P1, the press constructs film tourism as a phenomenon strongly linked to filmmaking, articulated as destination promotion and activated through cultural events and experiential products (routes, guides, gastronomy), with legitimacy based on economic impact and the presence of local institutions. This pattern confirms a phase of territorialized emergence, where the phenomenon is based on specific cases, locations, and promotional tools rather than on centralized state governance.

Table 6 also shows the relationship between the term “tourism” and other terms with statistically significant co-occurrences (Chi², $p < 0.05$) for the P2 period.

Table 6. Word Association Analysis for term A (Tourism) for P2

TERM B	COEFF.	CE_AB	CHI ²	(p)
filmmaking	0.477	1.583	458.685	0.000
Fitur	0.227	244	218.516	0.000
promotion	0.235	294	186.118	0.000
Andalusia	0.243	337	170.799	0.000
destination	0.234	308	163.452	0.000
strategy	0.151	114	87.390	0.000
route	0.205	270	81.365	0.000
Valladolid	0.128	81	64.425	0.000
Navarre	0.142	113	59.228	0.000
culture	0.192	254	55.529	0.000
film	0.175	400	55.192	0.000
coast	0.146	141	37.831	0.000
economic	0.149	152	32.280	0.000
Peñíscola	0.132	117	27.079	0.000
company	0.135	127	25.335	0.000
Extremadura	0.098	57	24.208	0.000
Rioja	0.086	39	24.055	0.000
audiovisual	0.171	228	20.502	0.000
city hall	0.171	231	18.533	0.000
Film Commission	0.136	140	16.204	0.000
Malaga	0.133	136	13.558	0.000
production	0.109	148	12.819	0.000
Carlos-Rosado	0.092	57	12.739	0.000
deputation	0.132	138	11.621	0.001
Aragon	0.087	52	11.610	0.001
scenery	0.122	179	10.463	0.001
Madrid	0.141	163	8.802	0.003
university	0.085	52	8.405	0.004
Almería	0.152	194	8.152	0.004
Seville	0.116	108	7.391	0.007
mayor	0.107	92	6.859	0.009
Benidorm	0.086	56	5.914	0.015
series	0.147	241	5.764	0.016
president	0.106	92	5.754	0.016
impact	0.100	80	5.612	0.018
day	0.101	83	5.574	0.018
hotel	0.090	97	5.417	0.020
Grenade	0.088	62	4.464	0.035
set	0.101	85	4.384	0.036
location	0.105	126	4.143	0.042

COEFF: The cosine coefficient used as the association index value.

AB: The co-occurrence in elementary contexts of those terms (A) that are objects of analysis (tourism) and their main associated

terms (B) that are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

Chi²: A statistic that helps to verify the importance of co-occurrences.

p-value: The probability that the calculated Chi² statistic could occur given a true null hypothesis. The required significance level was set at $p < 0.05$.

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Table 7 shows examples of basic contexts to illustrate the relationship between the term “tourism” and other terms whose co-occurrence is statistically significant in period P2.

Table 7. Examples of Co-Occurrences in P2

A “ Film and Tourism ” series will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Murcia University School of Tourism , addressing topics such as historical tourism, spa tourism, the city as a film set , and tourism as a catalyst for environmental change. EuropaPress, September 22, 2015
The Castellón Provincial Council has approved the use of the Peñíscola Castle facilities for the filming of the sixth season of the series “Game of Thrones.” The president of the provincial council, Javier Moliner, explained that “the Provincial Council, through its Tourism Board, made a commitment to attract film and TV series productions to the province that would promote Castellón’s image internationally.” 20minutos, September 17, 2015
The University of Almería hosted a new session of the Almería Film Roundtable yesterday. The event, organized on this occasion by the Regional Government of Andalusia and the UAL, focused on the national and international promotion of Almería as a film destination to attract productions and investments, thereby fostering the establishment of a stable and sustainable film industry in the province. IDEAL, May 5, 2016
On June 9, the city of Valladolid will host the First Spanish Conference on Film Tourism, organized by the Spain Film Commission (SFC), with the aim of analyzing and capitalizing on the impact on tourism of films and television shows shot in Spain. EFE, June 3, 2016
Renfe and the Seville City Council’s Institute of Culture and the Arts (ICAS) have signed a collaboration agreement to facilitate train travel to Seville during the Seville European Film Festival. EuropaPress, September 31, 2017
The Cáceres City Council will promote the various sites within its historic district that have served as filming locations for movies and television series through 60,000 tourist maps, which were produced in collaboration with Canal de Isabel II. El Periódico de Extremadura, January 22, 2018

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

In P2, the press consolidates film tourism as a destination promotion strategy (promotion, destination, route) and broadens the framework to include the logic of the audiovisual industry (series, production, location, set) and territorial governance (city council, provincial council). The argument of economic impact and the presence of sectoral intermediaries (Film Commission, Carlos-Rosado) suggest a phase of greater professionalization and a value chain that culminates in tourism exploitation, as evidenced by the basic contexts included for P2.

As in previous periods, Table 8 shows the relationship between the term “tourism” and other terms with statistically significant co-occurrences (Chi², $p < 0.05$) for the P3 period.

Table 8. Word Association Analysis for term A (Tourism) for P3.

TERM B	COEFF.	CE_AB	CHI ²	(p)
filmmaking	0.558	822	1550.39	0.000
Fitur	0.334	265	529.88	0.000
audiovisual	0.293	269	303.95	0.000
trade show	0.219	121	209.01	0.000
festival	0.238	202	161.83	0.000
destination	0.224	176	145.87	0.000
Madrid	0.196	141	101.68	0.000
council	0.132	30	98.95	0.000
culture	0.175	106	90.09	0.000
board	0.140	47	89.73	0.000
city government	0.179	115	87.02	0.000
industry	0.155	90	60.47	0.000
tour	0.153	94	52.20	0.000
IFEMA	0.095	20	43.76	0.000
award	0.136	77	37.84	0.000
Film Commission	0.092	21	36.95	0.000
filming	0.160	127	30.43	0.000
Fitur Screen	0.092	26	28.42	0.000
government	0.100	37	26.11	0.000
UNWTO	0.065	9	21.45	0.000
stage	0.129	86	17.38	0.000
heritage	0.094	37	16.75	0.000
screen	0.081	26	14.69	0.000
visitor	0.096	45	11.92	0.000
map	0.076	24	11.55	0.000
ministry	0.047	7	7.27	0.007
series	0.115	81	4.55	0.032
Netflix	0.046	9	4.08	0.043

COEFF: The cosine coefficient used as the association index value.

AB: The co-occurrence in elementary contexts of those terms (A) that are objects of analysis (tourism) and their main associated terms (B) that are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

Chi²: A statistic that helps to verify the importance of co-occurrences.

p-value: The probability that the calculated Chi² statistic could occur given a true null hypothesis. The required significance level was set at $p < 0.05$.

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Table 9 shows examples of elementary contexts to illustrate the relationship between the term “tourism” and other terms whose co-occurrence is statistically significant in P3.

Table 9. Examples of Co-Occurrences in P3

The Madrid City Council is participating in the second edition of Fitur Screen , the thematic section of the International Tourism Fair dedicated to promoting audiovisual tourism , located in Hall 4 of the fairgrounds and open to visitors from January 22 to 26, the City Council announced in a press release. <i>EuropaPress, January 22, 2020</i>
Fitur Screen , a section of Fitur co-organized by the Spain Film Commission in collaboration with Netflix , will hold its fifth edition from January 18 to 22, with the goal of promoting the increasingly close link between the audiovisual industry and tourism and highlighting new leisure opportunities arising from film and TV productions in Spain. <i>EuropaPress, January 12, 2023</i>
The president of the Spain Film Commission , Carlos Rosado, has noted that film tourism is a growing asset that must be promoted, now that the organization has succeeded in closing “the virtuous cycle” that gives it its purpose. <i>La Vanguardia, January 23, 2023</i>
The municipalities of Bornos and San Fernando (Cádiz); Alcalá de Guadaira (Seville); and Marbella (Málaga) have joined the network of film routes and maps for “La Gran Ruta de cine por Andalucía” (The Great Film Route through Andalusia), which is managed by the Andalucía Film Commission and now includes 35 different itineraries. <i>EFE, January 25, 2024</i>
The Secretary of State for Tourism, through Segittur, is leading the “Smart Tourism Destinations ” project—a pioneering initiative on the international stage—whose goal is to implement a new model for improving competitiveness and tourism development based on governance and shared responsibility in the tourism sector. <i>La Provincia, January 25, 2024</i>
The Costa Blanca Provincial Tourism Board has promoted the province of Alicante as a filming location during its participation, for the second consecutive year, in the Málaga Film Festival , where it held meetings with production companies and other firms in the film industry. <i>El Español, March 6, 2024</i>

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

In P3, the press portrays tourism as a phenomenon strongly linked to film and audiovisual media, but reframed by a post- pandemic logic where professional spaces (Fitur, IFEMA, Fitur Screen), multi-level governance (municipalities, boards, foundations, government, ministry), and the articulation with the industry and platforms (industry, screen, series, Netflix) take center stage. The basic contexts (Table 9) confirm this shift in coverage by showcasing specific institutional and sectoral actions (specialized fairs, festival promotion, institutionalized routes, innovation frameworks). Therefore, media coverage reveals film tourism as a phenomenon with a gradually coordinated, professionalized, and institutionalized strategy during the 2020-2024 period. However, this aspect is presented in communicative terms and does not imply a real transformation of the sector.

In order to strengthen longitudinal comparability between sub-periods, two cross-cutting indicators are synthesized: (a) institutional concentration and (b) the semantic structure of co-occurrences centered on the term “tourism.” In terms of concentration, the Top 5 institutions linked to film tourism present a non-linear pattern: in P1 it concentrates 40.00%, in P2 31.51% and in P3 52.06% (Tables 1-3). In parallel, the semantic-discursive analysis shows continuity of the structural link between *tourism* and *cinema* in the three periods, although with variations in associated terms: in P2 terms linked to production and tourist exploitation of filming are reinforced (production, location, set, hotel, company, impact), while in P3 terms associated with sectoral intermediation and professional spaces (Fitur, fair, IFEMA, Fitur Screen) acquire greater presence, along with governance terms (board, government, ministry) and references to platforms (Netflix) (Tables 4, 6 and 8).

5. DISCUSSION

The results allow for an analysis of the evolution of film tourism in Spain in terms of media construction. However, this study does not aim to provide direct evidence of structural transformations in film tourism. In line with the literature on agenda-setting and framing (Lippmann, 2003; McQuail, 2000; Scheufele, 1999), the study shows how the Spanish press discursively organized the phenomenon between 2010 and 2024 using relatively stable frameworks whose hierarchy varied according to the sub-period.

Regarding the temporal evolution of coverage (SO1), the increase in news items in P2 and the concentration in 2015-2016 are part of a reconfiguration of the audiovisual ecosystem and the expansion of on-demand consumption, which increases the social visibility of series and locations and offers new opportunities for media thematization (AIMC, 2019; Pérez-Rufí, 2017). However, beyond the volume, the contribution of the analysis lies in showing that the press does not simply record this surge, but rather articulates it with territorial promotion strategies that transform filming and locations into communicable assets.

Regarding the characterization of promotional strategies (SO2), the P1-P2 comparison reveals the consolidation of a relatively stable media narrative: film tourism is linked to promotion, destination, and experiential products (route, map, guide, heritage), as well as cultural events (festival, competition) that act as triggers for visibility and tourism activation. This pattern is consistent with the literature that highlights how audiovisual productions can promote tourism practices and be translated into destination products (Crespo-Almendros et al., 2025; Osácar-Marzal et al., 2022).

In P2, this logic is expanded to include aspects of profitability and the value chain (location, set, production, along with economic impact). These results suggest that this phase is characterized by greater professionalization and legitimization through return of investment (de Melo et al., 2023; Zenelis & Vasileiou, 2024).

The institutional dimension (SO3) also shows significant evolution. P1 reflects a strongly territorial and decentralized pattern, with a prominent role for regional governments and sectoral bodies. In P2, greater institutional heterogeneity and the role of universities and cultural actors suggest an expansion of the ecosystem and expert legitimation, consistent with an intermediate stage in which the phenomenon is consolidated as the subject of conferences, series, and specialized discourse. This trajectory coincides with approaches that highlight the progressive articulation of film tourism as an intersectoral phenomenon (Rodríguez-Campo et al., 2020) and not merely a spontaneous one.

The post-pandemic comparison (SO4) provides the main interpretive nuance: in P3, an institutional concentration (Top 5=52.06%) and a strengthening of the state bloc are observed, along with the emergence of a semantic cluster of sectoral intermediation and professional spaces (Fitur, IFEMA, Fitur Screen), accompanied by terms of multi-level governance (city council, board, regional government, ministry) and references to audiovisual platforms and distribution (series, Netflix). This pattern suggests that, in the post-pandemic scenario, film tourism is more frequently represented as a strategy for sectoral coordination and articulation, where professional circuits function as an infrastructure for visibility and alignment between the audiovisual industry, tourism institutions, and territorial promotion (Araújo-Vila & Fraiz -Brea, 2025; Mestre Pérez, 2021a). However, in communicational terms, this shift does not eliminate previous products (routes, heritage), but rather integrates them into more explicit frameworks of management, governance, and institutionalization.

Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that sub-period P3 encompasses both the initial impact of the pandemic (2020) and the subsequent recovery phase. Therefore, the identified shifts should be interpreted as post-pandemic trends across a heterogeneous range. In future analyses, this period could be broken down into 2020–2021 and 2022–2024 to clarify the relative contributions of the COVID-19 impact and the consolidation of new institutional dynamics.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This study demonstrates that the Spanish press contributes to shaping the narrative of film tourism as both an informational subject and a resource for territorial promotion, establishing frameworks that connect audiovisual media and destinations through references to promotion, economic impact, experiential routes, cultural events, and institutional coordination. The results describe patterns of media representation but do not allow for direct causal inferences regarding tourist behavior or structural transformations within the sector.

From a longitudinal perspective, the comparison between sub-periods allows identifying three predominant configurations in the coverage: P1 presents a territorialized framework, with a strong autonomous presence and emphasis on specific promotional products; P2 shows greater discursive density and a more explicit orientation towards the professionalization and profitability of filming as a tourist asset; P3 introduces a post-pandemic reconfiguration marked by a greater visibility of professional circuits, specialized fairs and multi-level governance frameworks, along with a reinforcement of the state block in the institutional architecture represented.

This evolution should be interpreted as a shift in the frameworks through which the press presents and categorizes the phenomenon, especially in the wake of the pandemic. In this sense, the article provides evidence of how media coverage accompanies, legitimizes, and symbolically structures film tourism, contributing to its public coherence.

This study contributes a relevant methodology, and its design is replicable and extendable to other social communication phenomena. The combination of press mining, institutional metadata analysis, and semantic-discursive analysis allows for a longitudinal map of the media construction of the object of study.

In practical terms, the results suggest that media representation of film tourism tends to become more coherent when location promotion is integrated into more structured communication strategies. The managerial implications for communication that can be inferred point to the need to move from promotion based solely on showcasing locations to a more integrated strategy, aimed at transforming media narratives into concrete, measurable tourism products. Along these lines, destination management organizations and film commissions could focus their efforts on transforming media narratives into formalized tourism products (routes, maps, themed experiences), accompanied by evaluation tools. Likewise, the increasing visibility in the press of frameworks associated with governance and professional networks suggests the advisability of consolidating multi-level coordination mechanisms and establishing indicators to monitor the communicative reach and its potential translation into tourism dynamics, without presupposing direct causal relationships.

The study's limitations lie in its restricted search to headlines, which could underrepresent secondary mentions. Furthermore, the use of institutional metadata requires interpretive caution. This automatic indexing may prioritize formally recognized entities and underrepresent actors mentioned indirectly or under non-standardized names. Although subsample validation supports the consistency of the procedure, the results should be interpreted as an approximation of the institutional architecture constructed by the media, not as a comprehensive map of the organizational ecosystem of film tourism in Spain.

Future research could compare trends based on the nature of audiovisual production (traditional television versus OTT platforms) and broaden the analysis to include digital environments and social media. It would also be relevant to explore territorial comparisons and examine the relationship between media representations, tourism performance, and the symbolic persistence of the destination after a visit.

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