Day of the Dead

An analysis of the impact of cinema on the touristic promotion (offer) and tourist experience (reception) of the Day of the Dead in Mexico

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ABSTRACT. The representation of the Day of the Dead in popular films as *James Bond Spectre* (2015) and Disney-Pixar’s *Coco* (2017) generated global curiosity and interest for the ancient Mexican tradition. In this context, commercial touristic products derived from these films as a result of certain expectations and desires. The principal aim is to explore the impact that *Spectre* and *Coco* have had on the official, commercial and non-official offer and reception of the Day of the Dead. This study analyzes the discourse of official websites of tourism authorities, commercial travel-related websites and private tour agencies. Secondly, the analysis of a selection of travel blogs was used to reflect on how these films are received and experienced in the discourse of tourists. It was discovered that the references to the movies are mostly if not only made by media and travel bloggers, and the films are absent in the official narrative. These findings can be of help in the marketing strategies of up and coming tourist destinations.

**Key words:** Mexico, Day of the Dead, tourism, film tourism, cultural tourism, James Bond Spectre, Coco
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INTRODUCTION

Research context:
Every fall, thousands of tourists, both domestic and foreign, descend on cities and towns all around Mexico to attend the Day of the Dead celebrations. Thanks to recognition of the tradition by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2003 and the global sharing of information, el Día de los Muertos has become more popular than ever – not only in Mexico but also abroad. Each year the Day of the Dead attracts more than 7.5 million international tourists who would like to experience this tradition which can be considered one of the most deeply rooted traditions in Mexican culture. Recently, the producers of films such as James Bond Spectre (hereafter: Spectre) released in 2015 and Coco, released in 2017, have integrated the festivity into their plots, which might have influenced the global interest in visiting Mexico to celebrate this tradition. The British newspaper The Telegraph (2015) even stated that “in Mexico, they discovered everything they needed, almost as if Dia de Muertos was created just to be captured on film”.

Local images reproduced and transmitted in films “promote a blurring of borders between art and everyday life” (Featherstone, 2007:22), creating a pseudo reality. This pseudo reality is used by various media in advertising to persuade and influence the consumption of products, for instance, a holiday. Therefore, it is of vital importance to understand how images and imaginaries of places created by films are perceived by the film spectator as potential tourists, as the imagery tends to have an impact on the tourist decision making (Aziz and Zainol, 2011).

There is a considerable amount of dedicated studies available that have confirmed that films generate demand for tourism (Beeton, 2005, Tzanelli, 2008, Roesch, 2009, and Hudson, Wang and Gil, 2011) often discussing “The Lord of the Rings” film trilogy (2001-2003), the “Harry Potter” film series (2001-2011) and “Game of Thrones” (2011-2019). While these films and series have a more fictional and historical character, the films subject to this study concern a cultural ritual. This present study tries to provide new insights into the impact films might have on the touristic promotion and the experience of the cultural tradition of the Day of the Dead in Mexico.
The representation of the Day of the Dead in cinema brought forth a curiosity and interest of a worldwide audience for the tradition. Big international and national newspapers picked up on this and published various online articles linking the Day of the Dead with tourism and the films *Spectre* and *Coco*. Striking titles are used such as “Mexico looks to James Bond to end tourism blues” (El País, 2016), “How to enjoy Mexico’s Day of the Dead like James Bond in SPECTRE” (The Telegraph, 2015), “La película que cambió el Día de los Muertos en México” (Milenio, 2016), “’Coco Route’ a Dia de los Muertos tourist trail inspired by the Disney Film” (Aztecreports, 2018), “Esta es la ruta de Coco en Michoacán” (Capital Michoacán, 2018), all with an obvious link to cinema.

As previously mentioned, *Spectre* and *Coco* featured elements of the Day of the Dead in their plots, and for the scope of this present study we will concentrate on two constructed commercial on-location film tourism attractions (Beeton, 2016: discussed in greater detail in the section 1.3) that derived from these two films: The Day of the Dead parade performed in Mexico City since 2016 and the Coco Route (*La Ruta de Coco*), created in 2018. The products created mainly for touristic purposes are introduced in the following paragraphs.

*Spectre* is a British spy film that premiered in 2015. It is the twenty-fourth in the James Bond series. Initially, early Bond movies were adaptations of the novels written by Ian Fleming. This specific film is not based on a novel, but *Spectre*, a fictional global criminal and terrorist organization, has previously been featured in several Bond novels and movies. In the eight-minute opening sequence Bond is chasing a villain through a Day of the Dead parade of people dressed up as skeletons in and around the Zócalo and the historical centre of Mexico City. The shoot took six months to plan, over ten days to shoot, and required 1,500 extras. The planned scenes required a city square to be closed for filming and a sequence involving a flight aboard a helicopter. The sequence features shots of famous landmarks of Mexico City, including the Zócalo (see figure 1), the city’s main square, and the Torre Latinoamericana, a towering 1950s skyscraper.

It is already important to note here that the main focus of the entire film is not on the Mexican tradition of the Day of the Dead but, instead, on the story of Bond. The Day of the Dead parade is not an integral part of the storyline, but merely an event that served as a backdrop and only appears in the first scene. Nevertheless, these eight minutes had raised certain expectations that
a parade like this was taking place in the Mexican capital, and it was decided to actually create certain parade.

Figure 1: James Bond on a roof in Mexico City in front of the Zócalo (YouTube).

*Coco* is an American computer-animated story inspired by the Day of the Dead. It is produced by Pixar Animation Studios and released by Walt Disney Pictures. The story is set during the twenty-four hours of the Day of the Dead and is all about family, connecting loved ones and pursuing your dreams (Pixar, 2019). In the movie, 12-year-old Miguel (see figure 2) dreams of becoming a musician despite his family’s generations-old hatred towards music. But once Miguel realizes his connection to his dead idol, Ernesto de la Cruz, he sets out to convince his family to embrace music once more. During his mission, Miguel finds himself navigating the Land of the Dead with the help of a trickster, Hector. It is his journey in that colourful yet dead world that is the biggest focus of the film. Disney-Pixar were committed to create an authentic film, that stays culturally honest (Pixar, 2019). The director of the film, Lee Unkrich, did not have previous connections to Mexico and its traditions. In an interview with the *New York Times* (2017) he stated that he was worried to be accused of cultural appropriation, afraid to unconsciously “abuse ethnic folklore out of ignorance or prejudice”. For this reason, several research trips to Mexico were organized, and the film makers worked with the local communities in order to better understand what the Day of the Dead is about. This way, Pixar hoped to make the movie feel more native than tourist (*New York Times*, 2017). Early on in the process in 2013, Disney tried to trademark “Día de los Muertos” or “Day of the Dead” as potential names for the film, which led to firm debates in Mexico on whether Disney was trying to exploit their culture. As a consequence of the popularity of the film, the
Mexican Tourism Board created a Coco Route. This route enables tourists to visit several locations across the country that were of inspiration to the animated film.

![Image](image_url)

*Figure 2: Mama Coco explains the importance of the ofrenda to her grandson Miguel (TeenVogue)*

**Research objectives:**
The purpose of this research is to gain insight in the impact(s) of the films *James Bond Spectre* and *Coco* on the way tourism is marketed around a cultural tradition, namely the Day of the Dead. With that in mind, I will analyze to what extent the release of these films has affected the promotion of the Day of the Dead offered by official government institutions and commercial providers, and how that promotion is perceived by demand through (potential) tourists in the form of travel blogs.

**Questions:**
The main research question to be explored in this thesis is: “What has been the impact of the films *James Bond Spectre* (2015) and *Coco* (2017) in the touristic promotion (offer) and the tourist experience (reception) of the Day of the Dead in Mexico?”

Sub-questions:
1. What are the traditional roots of the Day of the Dead in Mexican culture?
2. What is cultural tourism, how is it connected to the Day of the Dead?
3. What is film-induced tourism and how is it connected to the Day of the Dead?
4. What is the relation between offer and reception in relation to the Day of the Dead-related tourism?

**Conceptual model:**
A conceptual model provides a graphical representation of the main variables derived from the central research question and illustrates their mutual relationships. As illustrated in figure 3, the Day of the Dead takes a central place in this work. The relationship of Day of the Dead with both cultural and film-induced tourism is explored. On the other side, the offer and reception will be analysed.

![Conceptual model](image)

*Figure 3: Conceptual model of the build-up of this thesis*

**Outline:**
This master thesis consists of two main parts: a theoretical framework and an empirical research. In the theoretical framework in chapter one, with the use of secondary data as its main source, the Day of the Dead is introduced, elaborating on its origins and main practices. Then we will zoom out and look at the broader concepts of cultural tourism and film-induced tourism in relation to the Day of the Dead. The definitions and typologies of both forms will be briefly discussed. Afterwards, in the second chapter, the methodology used in order to carry out the analysis will be clarified more specifically, and the corpus selection will be further substantiated.
This research adopted two designs in order to investigate the relationship between offer and reception. Firstly, multimodal discourse analysis (Hallet & Kaplan-Weinger, 2010) is applied to a selection of websites in order to analyse the official and commercial promotional offer. Secondly, the method used to provide further understanding of the reception of demand is thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2008) which is applied on a selection of travel blogs. These methods will be explained further in chapter two. Chapter three and four form the empirical research. In chapter three the promotion of the Day of the Dead will be analyzed, and this chapter aims to shed light on the official and commercial narratives, whereas chapter four investigates the reception and experiences of travel bloggers as tourists. These two chapters differ in methodology in such that the travel blogs analyzed in chapter four were selected based on the presence of Day of the Dead in their narrative, while chapter three looks at more general touristic websites, both governmental and commercial. This is reflected in the way these chapters are structured: chapter three follows a website-by-website approach, because in the research process it relatively quickly came to light that there was very little, if any at all, mention of the films nor the derived touristic products on the studied governmental websites. Chapter four is structured thematically, because there were plenty of references towards both Spectre and Coco and the touristic products derived from these films. This eventually all leads up to the final conclusions and discussion, where the main findings are discussed, and conclusions are drawn.
The literature review will provide this research with theoretical connections between the Day of the Dead, cultural tourism and film-induced tourism that have been previously presented in the conceptual model. Before discussing the broader concepts of cultural and film-induced tourism, it is necessary to explore the traditional roots of the Day of the Dead in Mexican culture.

1.1. Day of the Dead

In Mexico, death has always been considered part of the cycle of life and has been celebrated since pre-Hispanic times. In this section the traditional roots of the Day of the Dead in Mexican culture are explored; its origins will be discussed, followed by a brief description of the main practices and rituals in which the tradition has been expressed over time.

1.1.1. Origins

The Day of the Dead is an ancient tradition that has been a result of transculturation. It is a unique combination of elements derived from indigenous pre-Columbian beliefs merged with Catholic teachings brought to Mexico during the colonial era (Orellana, 2011). Originally, thousands of years ago, a month-long celebration took place during the ninth Aztec month and was dedicated to Mictecacihuatl, the Queen of the Underworld. For pre-Hispanic cultures, death was considered a natural phase of life, and as a way to pay homage to the dead, two celebrations were held yearly. The first, Miccaihuitontli, honoured deceased children, and the second, Hueymiccalhuitl, was devoted to adults. After the Spanish colonization in the sixteenth century along with the introduction of the Roman Catholic church, the festival moved from the beginning of August to align with All Saints' Day on November 1 and All Souls' Day on November 2. These two days form the heart of the celebration and are usually referred to as El Día de los Inocentes and El Día de los Muertos which form the core of the celebration. The essence of this celebration is to honour and remember deceased loved ones. It is believed that the border between the spirit world and the real-world dissolves and for a brief period the souls of the dead return to visit the living families. Instead of a mourning about lost loved ones, it is rather a festive reunion with the dead (Haley & Fukuda, 2004: 2).
1.1.2. Main practices and rituals

Initially, the Day of the Dead was celebrated mainly in the more rural, indigenous areas of Mexico, but starting from the 1980s celebrations spread into the cities. According to Orellana (2011), a division between urban-western and rural-indigenous celebration began to arise around the 19th century. At that time, indigenous rituals were considered as backwardness or differently put, as the main obstacle for national modernization. In the cities, the urban festivity abounds in skeletons, Grim Reapers, and sugar skulls. These are not as prominent in the small towns, where, instead, the most important symbol is the food that the dead enjoyed in life (Aguilar, 2016). The set of practices varies from place to place across the country and rituals are performed in very different ways. They are all full of symbolism and meanings from different cultural groups. Despite the vast diversity, there are a few constant elements that will be briefly highlighted in the following paragraphs.

The first constant element is the building of altars. Altars are constructed in people's homes and on the graves in the cemeteries (Aguilar, 2016). The meaning behind the altars is to welcome spirits back to the realm of the living, which is why offerings and food are often placed on them. Oscar Torres-Reyna (2019) in an excerpt written for Princeton University on the Day of the Dead, explained that the home altar represents a syncretism of ancient and Catholic beliefs, where each layer symbolizes a different level of existence: heaven or sky, earth, hell or underworld, and sins or steps to the underworld. Furthermore, every element that is placed on the altar has its own attached meaning: the arch represents a portal into the underworld, marigold flowers guide the spirits to earth, candles illuminate the path, *pan de muerto* (‘dead bread’) represents the soil and bones, incense to purify the soul, salt to shield the dead from mortal temptations, sugar skulls represent the deceased, and food, drinks and mementos serve as remembrances (Princeton University, 2018). Most importantly, a photograph of the departed soul is placed on the altar.

Many families have the tradition to eat dinner at the cemetery at night from November 1 to November 2. Family members bring mariachi music and food and spend a joyous time together while remembering their loved ones that have passed away.

Decorated bread, paper cutouts (*papel picado* in Spanish), and plastic toys, most of them playing humorously on the death theme, are evident everywhere. Sculpted sugar candies in the form of skulls, skeletons, and caskets suggest an almost irreverent, macabre confrontation with
mortality (Brandes, 2006). People present the candy skulls to friends or relatives, just as they do written verses, also known as calaveras, and cast in the form of short, satirical epitaphs (Brandes, 2006).

Another popular practice during the Day of the Dead are parades, which are organized in different cities around Mexico. Two examples are La Calaca and Festival de las Calaveras. La Calaca ("The Skeleton") is an annual festival of participatory arts and culture in and around San Miguel de Allende. Through its diverse community programming of art, performance, music, parades, ceremonies, conferences, and workshops, La Calaca seeks to honour, promote and explore the traditions and themes inherent in this great cultural patrimony (lacalacafestival, 2019). Another example is the Festival de las Calaveras in Aguascalientes, which is a volunteer-organized music and arts festival centred around the traditional and contemporary celebration of the Day of the Dead. The parade in Mexico City is yet another addition to the range of parades that have already been part of the Day of the Dead celebrations.

Most of the activities and artistic displays connected with this holiday - including special food offerings, cemetery vigils, home altars - are a folk elaboration entirely separate from liturgical requirements (Brandes, 2006). Though the particular customs and scale of Day of the Dead celebration continue to evolve, the heart of the holiday has remained the same for over thousands of years. Apart from its undisputed status as a major mortuary ritual, the Day of the Dead has throughout modern history continuously been transformed in creative and original forms, into a display of art, poetry, and creative energy (Brandes, 2006; Aguilar, 2016).

1.2. Cultural tourism

The following paragraphs attempt to shed light on the Day of the Dead as a form of cultural tourism. In what follows the sub-question ‘What is cultural tourism and how is it connected to the Day of the Dead?’ will be addressed. With this question in mind, definitions of cultural tourism will be discussed, and attention is paid to the growing synergy between tourism and culture.

Regarding tourism, Mexico is a country often associated with great culture, unique civilizations, ancient traditions and a wide array of natural attractions. The country’s diversity, rich cultural heritage and historical, culinary and religious associations continue to draw in tourists from all over the world. Mexico is currently ranked among the ten most visited countries in the world, and predictions indicate a 5.8% increase in international tourist arrivals.
in 2019, expecting 45 million foreign tourists to visit the country this year (Visit Mexico, 2019).

In a report of 2016, the Tourism Promotion Council of Mexico (CPTM) set as a main long-term objective the strengthening of the image of Mexico as a tourist destination. This would be done by promoting the quality, authenticity and diversity of its attractions. The undersecretary of tourism has indicated that it is of great importance to spread the popular culture and traditions of Mexico as they have been a great attraction for both national and foreign tourists. Promoting these cultural traditions to tourists could at the same time welcome contrast to the bad news coming out of the country related to crime, drugs and street violence. Instead, it is a way to portray Mexico as a modern country, possessing a great cultural richness and authentic traditions that make it a differentiated, diverse and relevant tourist attraction.

The "Season of the Dead", roughly running from October 29 to November 2, is considered to be one of Mexico's most important tourism seasons. Figures from the Ministry of Tourism indicate that the celebrations of November 1st and 2nd ensure an economic boost in the tourism industry of 3,9 million Mexican pesos. According to Brandes (2006), for Mexicans, foreigners, and peoples of Mexican descent, the holiday has come to symbolize Mexico and Mexicananness. As an emblem of Mexican culture, the Day of the Dead celebrations managed to attract the attention of locals and foreigners alike, unleashing several impacts partly produced by tourism.

According to research carried out by Instituto de Competitividad Turística, approximately 70 million national and international tourists practice cultural tourism in Mexico. The Mexican government has been trying to rediscover and reinvent the "authentic" pre-Hispanic past in an attempt to promote the Day of the Dead as a form of cultural tourism (Morales Cano & Mysyk, 2004). Some of these efforts will be investigated in chapter three. The relationship between tourism and cultural identity is an ongoing process mediated by the state, that performs various roles as a planner, marketer of cultural meanings, and arbiter of cultural practices (Wood, 1984, 1997; Morales & Mysyk, 2004).

The Day of the Dead has become ever more popular within Mexico as tourism and modern communication systems have increased. This development belies a common assumption that societies and cultures become more homogenous as contact among them increases. In the last quarter of the past century, we entered a period of what has come to be known as globalization, which Inda and Rosaldo have summed up as "the intensification of global interconnectedness" (2002: 2). To these authors the term globalization suggests "a world full of movement and mixture, contact and linkages, and persistent cultural interaction porous, allowing more and
more peoples and cultures to be cast into intense and immediate contact with one another" (2002). Concerning the Day of the Dead, up until the twentieth century, it was the contact between Europe and Mexico that had provided the main impetus for ritual change. Now, with the intensification of contact between Mexico and the United States, the rapid growth of tourism, and increasing U.S. reliance on migrant labour, the mutual effect that these two countries began to have on one another eclipsed all other influences (Brandes, 2006: 13). Çoban (in Kirlar Can et al., 2017) argued that due to homogenization, values become more uniform as popular culture spreads certain values through social media to the whole world. This at the same time may lead to a vanishing distance between people and cultures as technological developments create resemblance in shared values. Due to globalization, the films Spectre and Coco are known by an international audience, and therefore these films have helped to raise awareness of the Day of the Dead in general.

Furthermore, cultural tourism has been viewed as a desirable, ‘good' form of tourism for nations and regions to develop, because it generates cultural, social and economic benefits (UNWTO, 2018). The role of culture and arts is becoming increasingly important in the development of the tourism industry in Mexico, and the tourism industry acts as a platform to promote local cultures and international cultural exchange.

1.2.1. Defining cultural tourism

The concept of cultural tourism is very complex, and there are many understandings and interpretations both in the academic circles and among stakeholders. To better understand the concept and its complexity, in this section a few definitions of cultural tourism will be highlighted and discussed.

The International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) attempted to define cultural tourism for the first time in a public document in 1976 (Ohridska-Olson, 2015). This definition reflects a westernized approach to culture and heritage and lacks universality (Ivanovic, 2008: 78). According to Ivanovic (2008), this might also explain why this definition did not prove useful when applied to various types of cultural tourism outside of Europe and America. ICOMOS (1976) defined Cultural Tourism as follows:

Cultural tourism is a form of tourism whose object is, among other purposes, the discovery of monuments and sites. It exerts on these last and very positive effects, as it contributes - to its own ends - to their maintenance and protection. This form of tourism justifies, in fact, the efforts
that have been made to maintain and protect the human community because of the socio-cultural and economic benefits they have for all concerned populations.

Early approaches, such as the definition above, tend to be based on the "sites and monuments" view, where the cultural attractions of a country or region were seen as the physical, cultural sites which were important for tourism. Gradually, a broader view of culture in tourism emerged, which relates not just to sites and monuments, but instead also includes ways of life, creativity and everyday culture (Richards, 2018). The UNWTO (2017) adopted these aspects in a new operational definition of cultural tourism in 2017:

Cultural tourism is a type of tourism activity in which the visitor's essential motivation is to learn, discover, experience, and consume the tangible and intangible cultural adaptations/products in a tourism destination.

These attractions/products relate to a set of distinctive material, intellectual, spiritual and emotional features of a society that encompasses arts and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, culinary heritage, literature, music, creative industries and the living cultures with their lifestyles, value systems, beliefs and traditions.

As a UNWTO (2018) report emphasizes, the field of cultural tourism has moved away from the previous emphasis on classic western tangible heritage towards a much broader and inclusive area of diverse cultural practices in all corners of the world. The Day of the Dead celebrations would not have fallen under the definition of cultural tourism provided by ICOMOS in 1976. However, following the most recent definition of the UNWTO (2017), intangible heritage such as living traditions, which the Day of the Dead celebration is an example of, are included under cultural tourism.

As has become clear from the above definitions, cultural tourism is a broad concept that can be further subdivided according to cultural contents and niches. The 2005 report of European Travel Commission and the UNWTO on City Tourism and Culture distinguishes between an inner and outer circle of cultural tourism:

· "I. The inner circle represents the primary elements of cultural tourism which can be divided into two parts, namely heritage tourism and arts tourism. Cultural heritage related to artefacts of the past and arts tourism related to contemporary cultural production such as performing and visual arts, contemporary architecture, literature, and so on."
"II. The outer circle represents the secondary elements of cultural tourism, which can be divided into two elements, namely, lifestyle and the creative industries. Lifestyle includes elements such as beliefs, cuisine, traditions and folklore, whereas creative industries refer to fashion design, web and graphic design, film, media and entertainment.

The Day of the Dead celebrations could be placed under the first definition of the inner circle of the abovementioned quote from the UNWTO, specifically in the niche of arts tourism. If we look at the Day of the Dead from the perspective of the outer circle of cultural tourism, we can say that initially it is a celebration of traditions and folklore, that is part of lifestyle, but increasingly it has been picked up by the creative industries, specifically by film, media and entertainment. Presumably due to its uniqueness and celebrative character, the Day of the Dead speaks to a lot of people with different backgrounds and a great number of tourists interested in learning about different cultures head over to Mexico, bringing their own ideas and interpretations along with them.

1.2.2. The synergy of culture and tourism

A pointer to the future of cultural tourism according to the UNWTO are the increasing synergies between tourism and culture. Cultural tourism has long been considered beneficial to both fields by providing support for culture and generating attractions for tourism (Richards, 2018); but real questions arise about the extent to which such synergies are being realized, and also whether culture and tourism might be harming each other.

In recent decades, tourism and culture have become inextricably linked. The UNWTO, in a report on tourism and culture synergies, argued this link could be explained partly due to an increasing interest in culture, particularly as a source of local identity in the face of globalization, the growth of tourism and easier accessibility of cultural assets and experience (2018: 1). In Mexico, the Secretary of Tourism decided to diversify tourism development. Instead of focusing mainly on the promotion of sun and beach tourism, it was chosen to support the touristic development of sites with rich cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible. In a report by the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) of 2009, it was stated that the Mexican government designed a strategy to build new cultural products that are competitive and capable of attracting visitors who look for new experiences, of which “participating in traditions, customs and fiestas” serves as an example (129).
1.2.2.1. The role of culture in tourism

Tourism has assumed a vital role in the development of destinations around the world. In most cases, culture is a significant asset for tourism development as well as one of the major beneficiaries of this development. Culture is a major factor in the attractiveness of most destinations, not only in terms of tourism but also in attracting residents and inward investment. The growing articulation between culture and tourism has been stimulated by several factors from both demand and supply (OECD, 2009: 19/20):

- **Demand**
  - Increased interest in culture, particularly as a source of identity and differentiation in the face of globalisation.
  - Growing levels of cultural capital, stimulated by rising education levels.
  - Aging populations in developed regions.
  - Postmodern consumption styles, emphasising personal development rather than materialism.
  - A desire for direct forms of experience (“life seeing” rather than sightseeing).
  - Growing importance of intangible heritage and the role of image and atmosphere.
  - Increased mobility creating easier access to other cultures.

- **Supply**
  - Development of cultural tourism to stimulate jobs and income.
  - Cultural tourism was seen as a growth market and “quality” tourism.
  - An increasing supply of culture as a result of regional development.
  - A growing accessibility of information on culture and tourism through new technologies.
  - The emergence of new nations and regions eager to establish a distinct identity (e.g., the impact of newly-independent states in Central and Eastern Europe).
  - A desire to project the external image of regions and nations.
  - Cultural funding problems related to increasing cultural supply.

As a result, culture has been increasingly employed as an aspect of the tourism product and destination imaging strategies, and tourism has been integrated into cultural development strategies as a means of supporting cultural heritage and cultural production. This synergy
between tourism and culture is seen as one of the most important reasons for encouraging a more direct relationship between those two elements.

1.2.2. The role of tourism in culture

The impact of tourism on culture leading to processes of cultural commodification has become a prominent discussion in international tourism research (Shepherd, 2002; Mbaiwa, 2011). When talking about commodification of culture, it is important to consider that everything can be turned into a commodity, from traits of social life, cultural values or exceptional experiences (López & Marín, 2010) to the people, their culture and history (Marín, 2010). In the end, everything falls within the logic of the market where the only interest is in attracting visitors and rendering economic impacts. Major negative effects listed by scholars are that processes of commodification reduce the authenticity of cultures; destroys local identity and cultural values; leads to a standardization and globalization of culture, and all of these might lead to cultural conflicts (Goulding, 2002; Greenwood, 1978; Halewood & Hannam, 2001; MacCannell, 1992; Watson & Kopachevsky, 1994). Greenwood, in an analysis of a local festival in the Basque region of Spain, describes how tourism affected the intrinsic meaning of the Alarde of Fuenterrabía festival. Instead of being a performance which townspeople put on for themselves, the ritual turned into "a performance for money" (178), an attraction that enabled Fuenterrabía to compete for the influx of tourist wealth (Greenwood 1977). In the case of the Fuenterrabía festival, he cites the Spanish Ministry of Tourism's interference in the festival had transformed an authentic, inward-looking, meaningful practice into a public spectacle for outsiders, which had led to a decline in local interest (178).

On the contrary, several researchers underline that cultural values can also be saved from extinction and traditions can be preserved thanks to an increase in demand, new cultural formations may occur through the interaction between tourists and local people, existing values gain new and different meanings, and local people possess cultural self-consciousness and become proud of their own culture (Cohen, 1988; Cole, 2007; Kroshus Medina, 2003). Luis Díaz Viana has analysed the transformations that tourism has brought to traditional celebrations on the Day of San Juan celebrated on June 24 in San Pedro Manrique, a small village in Castile. In this town, where the famous fire-walking ritual almost disappeared due to the paucity of local participants, tourism apparently revived interest in the event and is largely credited with its continuance – albeit, as the author states, in "degraded" form (Díaz Viana, 1981).
The Day of the Dead celebrations are marketed, administered, legalized and regulated by both individuals and collectives. In a report published by the Coordinación Nacional de Patrimonio Cultural y Turismo (Conaculta) in 2006 on the Day of the Dead festivities, the festival of Todos Santos celebrated on the first days of November is highlighted as an example of the permanent conflict and the duality that tourism brings about. Their argument is based on the immoderate commercial exploitation of tangible and intangible heritage in tourism policies of the state and municipalities, as well as the lack of guidelines, mainly from town halls, to seek rational management of the holiday and the tangible heritage spaces that host the ritual. According to a tour guide that works in the tourism industry in Oaxaca, the festivities in Oaxaca are becoming commercialized with many locals catering to the tourists' hunger for the unusual, the weird and the exotic. This tour guide states that the celebration is shifting from the privacy of the home to the publicity of the cemetery.

From what has been discussed in this section, it can be concluded that the Day of the Dead celebrations are a form of intangible heritage that fall under the term cultural tourism. Tourism undoubtedly had its impacts on the ways the Day of the Dead is celebrated. Brandes argued that "we are all too ready to believe that tourism can destroy cultural authenticity, contaminate the purity of customary behaviour and traditional beliefs, and over time eventually obliterates indigenous culture" (2006). As a major tourist attraction, the Day of the Dead provides an opportunity to examine these suppositions.

1.3. The influence of film on tourism

The next section will elaborate on the relationship between the Day of the Dead and film. Traditionally the Day of the Dead had been celebrated in relatively unelaborated form, but tourism could be held responsible for several changes to the event. The variety of activities associated with the ritual have expanded, and over the past few years, several tourism products have been constructed, derived from popular films. In the chapters three and four, we will look into the Day of the Dead parade featured in the Hollywood film Spectre and the tours catered to tourists after the release of Disney-Pixar's Coco.

Contemporary film, as a sub-type of cultural tourism (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006; Zimmermann, 2003; Beeton, 2005), is one of the mediums through which culture can become commodified as media has shown to have an important influence on cultural tourism flows.
Connections between film and tourism are well recognized academically and commercially. Previously conducted research has made evident that when places or attractions are featured in movies, TV programs or series, this may result in effective impacts on tourism as it encourages tourist visits to these film locations (Butler, 1990; Riley & Van Doren, 1992; Tooke & Baker, 1996; Riley et al., 1998; Beeton, 2001; Busby & Klug, 2001). According to Sellgren (2010), tourists who travel to a destination with as primary motivation the visit of a film location, typically have higher expectations of the destination than tourists who visit film spots as a secondary motivation. From the research undertaken by Macionis & Sparks (2009), film tourism as a secondary tourism motivation is more frequent than as the main reason tourists visit a destination.

Zimmermann (2003) describes film tourism in a broad sense as "all forms of travelling to destinations, which in general enable a connection with the world of film" (76), whereas Beeton (2016) defines film-induced tourism more specifically as "the visitation to sites where movies and television programmes have been filmed as well as to tours to production studios, including film-related theme parks" (13). As many definitions have been used to define film tourism, in this thesis "film tourism" is used as a generic term which refers to the whole concept of film tourism, including both on-location and off-location film tourism. The term "film-induced tourism" on the other hand, refers to on-location film tourism.

Beeton (2016) distinguishes between on-location and off-location film tourism. On-location tourism refers to visits to destinations where any part of a film is shot and shown on the screen as the primary motivator for travelling or including it, for instance, as a part of a holiday. On the other hand, off-location tourism refers to the places that are not filming locations but sites that are associated with the film. This could be any event or artificial destination such as theme parks which are actualized through the involvement in cinema. Beeton further divides on- and off-location tourism into commercial on- and off-tourism. Commercial film tourism refers to the exploitation of the fame and success of a film to create tourism mainly after the filming has been completed. Tours around several filming locations, guided tours around specific sets, as well as attractions constructed post-production solely for tourism purpose, fall under commercial on-location tourism (Beeton, 2016).

Film tourism is an ambiguous phenomenon that can take on many different forms categorized by the type of location that is portrayed in a film and how it has motivated the visitor to act. In
this thesis, the most relevant forms are film tourism as part of a holiday, constructed film attractions and film tours.

As mentioned in the introduction, the James Bond film *Spectre* featured a Day of the Dead parade in Mexico City, and after the filming had been completed, the Mexican Tourism Board used the fame and success of the film in order to (re-)construct this parade and perform it on an annual basis. In line with Beeton’s categorization, this event can be interpreted as a form of commercial on-location film tourism. The parade takes place on exactly the same location of where the film was shot. The touristic route of the locations that inspired *Coco* also created by the Tourism Board can be classified as commercial off-location film tourism, as the locations are sites that are associated with the film. Since it is an animated film, these places are not the exact film locations.

Stuart Hall introduced an interesting perspective on film-induced tourism. According to Hall (1997), culture is produced through shared meanings that can be represented by a variety of modern media, including film. Film, as a visual language, can create a ‘meaning of place’ in terms of the representational system shared by members of the same (or similar) culture. Such representations and meanings can be made to perform specific destination marketing roles by creating a desire in the viewer to experience the place in a less common form, so by visiting the site of the film. Meaning is produced in a variety of different media; especially, these days, in the modern mass media, the meanings of global communication, by complex technologies, which circulate meanings between different cultures on a scale and with speed hitherto unknown in history (Hall, 1997: 3). With this in mind, in the analysis (see chapter three and four) attention will be paid to how the films help circulate a cultural tradition looking at both the online promotional offer and the reception of a specific audience, namely that of travel bloggers.

Concluding from the abovementioned points in this chapter, we may state that the Day of the Dead can be seen as a form of cultural tourism and that the touristic products derived from cinema, i.e. the Day of the Dead parade and Coco-inspired tours, are forms of film-induced tourism. Some friction can be observed between the influences of tourism on culture and vice versa, which is exemplified in the commodification of the Mexican tradition.
CHAPTER 2
Methodology

2.1. Methods

In order to formulate an answer to the main research question: "What has been the impact of the films Spectre (2015) and Coco (2017) in the touristic promotion (offer) and the tourist's experience (reception) of the Day of the Dead in Mexico?", the empirical part of this work adopts a combination of two different methods, which are: multimodal discourse analysis and thematic analysis.

In chapter three, multimodal discourse analysis will be applied to a selection of official tourism websites, social media channels and several travel-related websites of private institutions and tour operators. This analysis will follow the framework provided by Hallet & Kaplan-Weinger (2010) in the book Official Tourism Websites: A Discourse Analysis Perspective. Hallet & Kaplan-Weinger cited Dann, who correctly predicted that the language of tourism would increasingly become a language of cyberspace (1996: 161). According to Dann (1996) "via static and moving pictures, written texts and audio-visual offerings, the language of tourism attempts to persuade, lure, woo and seduce millions of human beings ... to turn them into tourists," and consequently inform the tourist about the factors and attractions of the place of interest. In other words, this language of tourism includes both lexical and visual tourist texts. The discourse of tourism is a discourse of identity construction, promotion, recognition, and acceptance. It is a discourse formed by the creation and manipulation of linguistic and visual texts. Although these texts are specific to their locale and to those responsible for the respective websites on which they appear, they share common goals that become transparent through the work of discourse analysis. Those goals involve both producer and audience, both Self and Other, for no one is exempt from the effect of discourse (Hallet & Kaplan-Weinger 2010).

Multimodal discourse analysis refers to the study of various and different semiotic modes in a discourse. This type of analysis aims to integrate the representational, interactive and textual meanings, achieved by multiple elements. Its task is to analyze how these elements work together to form a complete discourse. ‘Discourse analysis should thus treat any textual or visual data as mediated cultural products which form part of wider systems of knowledge. Utilizing discourse analysis should mean the development of a more nuanced reading of textual
data and thus add a more critical edge to much tourism research' (Hallet & Kaplan-Weinger 2010, 8).

In our current society, instead of promoting destinations only in travel guides and brochures, governmental institutions have shifted their destination marketing strategies increasingly to the online spheres. These institutions have started using official destination websites and social media channels to reach their desired audiences. Lonely Planet, for example, not only publishes guidebooks but also started uploading articles online. The same goes for websites such as Condé Nast Traveler, Atlas Obscura, The Culture Trip. This development has made it easier for individuals to assemble fragments of cultural information in so many different ways and forms, what Rojek and Urry (1977: 62) define as *collage tourism*.

Secondly, in chapter four, in order to analyse the demand and reception of tourists regarding the Day of the Dead products that have derived from the films *Spectre* and *Coco*, the research method called thematic analysis is applied (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The six-step framework of conducting thematic analysis offered by Braun and Clarke (2006) was followed. The written and visual texts of the travel blogs are coded, themes and patterns are identified, and these will be further interpreted and analysed in chapter four (see table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHASE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Familiarizing yourself with the data</td>
<td>Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Generating initial codes</td>
<td>Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Searching for themes</td>
<td>Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Reviewing themes</td>
<td>Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (level 1) and the entire data set (level 2), generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Defining and naming themes

Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.

6. Producing a report

The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Table 1: Phases of thematic analysis (*Braun & Clarke, 2008: 87*)

The steps one to five are not included in the main text. The report that is the final step of the framework is included in chapter four.

2.2. Corpus selection

Due to the intention of investigating from the Netherlands, without the possibility of performing empirical research of the touristic products derived from cinema on location, the decision was made to focus only on online sources. Munar & Gyimóthy (2013) in an article on Critical Digital Tourism Studies referred to the fact that ‘digital technology fundamentally changed one's social world and has the potential to enact new tourism realities' (106). In this contemporary and postmodern world, technology enables the possibility to "gaze" towards tourist sites without the actual need to leave home (Hallet & Kaplan-Weinger, 2010). That is to say; postmodern tourists now have the tools to not only plan their trip from a distance but also to already form ideas and shape their expectations before they arrive at a certain destination. Besides, the sites of tourist interest and the companies behind them use the internet in their marketing strategies due to their cheap character as well as the ease of adjusting the information they give, while at the same time conveniently reaching a worldwide audience (Teodorescu, 2014). It should be pointed out that there was no access to brochures, nor was there any personal contact with the official institutions, the commercial providers nor any of the travel bloggers.
The media has played an important role in increasing the numbers of people who have entered the tourism market. The image of a destination is created by different types of media through film, television and the internet, and tend to advance the popularity of a destination much faster than any other kinds of promotion strategies. In the case of the Day of the Dead, we deal with seasonality of demand, in which the tourism demand is only present for the periods of the event.

As indicated previously, the empirical part of this research will be divided into two chapters, based on a division into three categories. Chapter three will discuss the first two categories of official websites and commercial providers more in-depth, and chapter four concentrates on the third category, that of travel blogs.

For a start, the first category that will be elaborated in chapter three is that of official websites. The first website that had been selected is visitmexico.com. This is the official website for Mexican tourism, and probably the first website people will encounter when planning a trip to Mexico. Since this is a general website, it was also decided to include more local websites. The Day of the Dead parade takes place in Mexico City, so the following websites were chosen to be included in the corpus: cdmxtravel.com, cultura.cdmx.gob.mx, and turismo.cdmx.gob.mx. The Coco Route has partly been prepared by the Sectur of Michoacán; therefore, the website sectur.michoacan.gob.mx is included as well. Interestingly, the Day of the Dead parade and the Coco Route do not have specific websites for the events alone.

Previous research on destination marketing organizations (DMOs) by Xiang & Gretzel (2010) showed that tourist destination websites should not be isolated pages where DMO solely posts information, but it should allow for a degree of interaction with users. They argue that official destination websites (ODWs) need to be windows open to other platforms and tools in the sphere of social media, which the user currently employs on a regular basis for searching information or when planning trips (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). It is for this reason that additional material published on various social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are also of importance for this research. Leung et al. (2013) identify the use of social media as one of the megatrends that had a major impact on the tourism system in recent years. In order to give an indication of how significant these official social media channels are becoming for the promotion of Mexico, I have listed the number of followers per channel below (last checked on 15/7/2019):
The second category is composed of commercial providers. Under the term commercial providers, we consider private agencies that offer tours along with online articles published on travel-related websites, for instance, Lonely Planet, Condé Nast Traveler, Atlas Obscura and The Culture Trip. The majority of articles published on this kind of websites, even on Atlas Obscura, are written in English, presumably as these websites are geared towards an international audience. The tour operators that offer organized tours are also part of this category. Several international travel agencies provide multiple-day Day of the Dead tours that take tourists to different parts of the country. The search query "Day of the Dead spectre tours" on google gave 0 results. There are no specific tours that only take tourists to see the Day of the Dead parade in Mexico City. It can be assumed that tourists find out about the parade online or on social media and would visit it individually without feeling the necessity to participate in an organized tour. On the contrary, the Mexican Tourism Board responded to the growing demand to visit the places that inspired the filmmakers of *Coco* by creating the Coco Route. Various Latin-American travel agencies offer tours to locations that have been an inspiration to the movie. These tours will also be taken into consideration in chapter three.
Chapter four focuses on the third category, which is comprised of a selection of ten travel blogs, both written in English and/or Spanish. Virtual communities and user-generated content are creating great opportunities to obtain data in order to investigate the realm of tourist’ experiences. Apart from illustrating the author’s experiences, many tourists read blogs in preparation of a trip and so in a way these blogs already shape their experience as well. Word of mouth has been one of the most powerful and most trusted parts of a successful tourism marketing strategy for a long time and it is acknowledged by both academics and practitioners that online reviews and recommendations are becoming increasingly popular as a new digital form of word of mouth (Schmallegger & Carson, 2008: 100). Analysing these sources make it possible to ‘view’ the tourist in his or her natural mental environment and to explore their experiences (Volo, 2010).

As tourism becomes more and more digitalized, it must be stressed that consumer-generated content (CGC) such as blogs have gained substantial popularity in online travellers' use of the internet (Gretzel, 2006; Pan, MacLaurin & Crotts, 2007). Many of these blogs are there to assist consumers in posting and sharing their travel-related comments, opinions, and personal experiences, which then serve as sources of information for others. Munar & Gyimóthy (2013) claim that tourists nowadays have become reflexive co-creators of experiences and thereby are empowered agents of interpretation. What is happening right now is that the line between official and non-official tourism discourse is blurred. Destinations empower tourists, in this case, bloggers, to participate in the co-creation of marketing content such as blog posts, photos and stories. These people are invited to actively participate in certain touristic events, to show the beauty of these events and, subsequently, write about their experiences on their blogs. Often, they are encouraged to share affiliate links with their readers. Affiliate marketing is becoming an important source of customer acquisition and a major strategic issue for travel and tourism companies that market their products online. Travel bloggers earn commissions every time their readers click on a certain link. In any case, the bloggers must make clear to the readers that they earn money through these links. Pera Segarra (2015) suggests that the collaboration and creation of stories of experiences taking place at certain destinations ultimately become the main marketing content drawing attention and engaging tourists and other potential stakeholders.

All of the studied blog posts have been published after 2016 and are chosen so as to draw a clearer image of how the films and film-inspired touristic products were picked up by tourists.
and how they have received and reacted to them. The reason why this specific year was chosen as a starting point is that it was the first year the Day of the Dead parade was organized in the Mexican capital. In the initial google search, blogposts already appeared on the first page when searching for Day of the Dead related tourism. This shows the significance of travel blogs in the online search and confirms that (potential) tourists will easily come to encounter these pages in their initial research phase. What needs to be pointed out is that Google search results are catered towards personal interest through cookies. During the process of this thesis, the researcher often searched for these terms, which might have influenced why that many blogs appear on the first page of the Google search. It needs to be clarified that results may differ per person. As indicated earlier, ten travel blogs have been selected based on a Google search and will be introduced briefly.

(1) My Wanderlustly Life, a blog by Ashley Smith that offers recommendations to travel the world on a ‘Time Budget', which she defines as ‘the concept of seeing the most you possibly can in what little time you are giving'. All of the Time Budget Travel Itineraries are always a reflection of Smith’s own actual, personal, real-life experiences. Smith posted "Do This, Not That // Day of the Dead in Mexico for First-Timers" on September 16, 2018, but it has been updated since, on January 23, 2019.

(2) Elisabeth Beyer Villalobos is the face behind the travel blog Sidetracked. This blog features destination-specific articles, photography posts, immersive city guides and practical travel tips and advice. The post selected for analysis is called "Impressions from Día de los Muertos" and was uploaded on May 1, 2017.

(3) Tessa Juliette Torrente is a freelance writer (contributing to Huffington Post and female-driven travel websites) and runs her own blog called travelwheretonext. In January 2019, Torrente published a post on "Everything you need to know: Day of the Dead in Mexico".

(4) Roaming Around the World is run by Heather and John. They started their blog in 2013 as ‘a labor of love to share our travel stories and to offer detailed travel guides and reviews about the interesting far-flung destinations we've been roaming around'. Their site has reached over four million page views, with an audience ranging from all corners of the world. Their articles focus on travel adventures, travel value, uncovering interesting travel experiences, and diving deep into local culture. The article on the Day of the Dead was uploaded in November 2018 and titled "Day of the Dead in Mexico City: 10 Best Things To Do + Where To Go".
(5) The face behind the travel blog **Joy and Journey** is Steph, an expat and travel addict from Michigan. This blogger currently lives in Mexico, and on her blog a main focus is on giving cultural insights and sharing adventures. In August 2018 she wrote an article on "Experiencing Day of the Dead in Mexico City".

(6) **Mexicocassie.com** is owned by Cassie Pearse, a Brit that moved to Mexico in 2016. Peace’s focus is on writing child-friendly specific posts as well as general activity posts. In January 2019 Cassie wrote the article "Día de Muertos in Mexico: How, where and what?" was published.

(7) Tania, the owner of **Tania's Magic Compass**, started her blog in 2015, as a way to share her travel experiences. Not only does she aim to recommend places, she attempts to delve a little deeper into the essence of what each place conveys to her and describes the adventures she lived in them. On November 3, 2016, she uploaded an article on "Día de Muertos. Atracción turística vs. tradición". A day later, she posted a translated version in English.

(8) Laura Bronner started her blog **Eternal Expat** right before moving to Mexico. Before this move, she lived in Switzerland, New Zealand, Australia, South Korea and English, hence the name Eternal Expat. In 2017 she uploaded the post: "Day of the Dead in Mexico City: What you should know", but has since updated it in 2019.

(9) The articles published on **Temporary Provisions** are written and uploaded by multiple bloggers. The article published in October 2017 called "The ultimate guide to Mexico's Day of the Dead: Mexicans talk Día de Muertos" is written by Elizabeth Aldrich.

(10) **Tripaneer** is a blog where travel experiences have been collected. The blog post that is centered around the Day of the Dead is published on October 18, 2018 and is written by Miriam Cihodariu. The title of the article is: "Your Guide to Día de los Muertos: How to best experience this Mexican tradition".
CHAPTER 3
Multi-modal analysis of official channels and commercial providers

In this chapter, first of all, official websites and their corresponding social media channels are analyzed to determine the impact of film on the promotion of the Day of the Dead in the official narrative, focusing on the representation and promotion on the internet. Consequently, the same kind of analysis will be performed on the second category of commercial providers looking at travel-related websites and tour operators. Particular attention shall be given to the Day of the Dead parade and its relation to Spectre and the Coco route as a product based off of Coco.

Coming back to what has been said in section 1.3, film tourism can be considered a useful destination marketing tool. Places and/or attractions that are featured in films frequently give rise to effective impacts on tourism as it encourages tourist visits to these locations (Butler, 1990; Riley & Van Doren, 1992; Tooke & Baker, 1996; Riley et al., 1998; Beeton, 2001a; Busby & Klug, 2001; Hahm & Wang, 2011; Hall, 1997). Bringing Bond to Mexico City was part of a project to promote the capital as a major tourism destination. The Mexico City Tourism Secretary at the time, Miguel Torruco Marqués, considered the movie to be serious an advertising opportunity for tourism to Mexico. He assured that revenue losses [of the filming process] would be more than made up for when Mexico City became a "Bond City". Torruco Marqués in a press conference insisted that "Bond cities start booming as soon as the movie comes out. Not only in tourism, but also in investment. There will be a huge economic boom, and it will make up for the inconveniences". This can be related back to the points listed as stimulations that helped the growing articulation between culture and tourism in the section on the role of culture in tourism (page 15). There, generating jobs and income, regional developments leading to an increasing supply, and it being a way to project an external image of a certain region and/or nation were discussed

In a newspaper article published on October 19, 2018, by Capital Michoacán, it was stated that the Consejo de Promoción Turística de México (CPTM) had been working on the development of a touristic route inspired by the film Coco, referred to as #RutaCoco. The route, which includes the states of Michoacán, Aguascalientes and Guanajuato, is aimed at generating more visits to the places that were taken into account for the production of the film.
In the following sections the official websites and social media channels will be analyzed followed by the analysis of commercial providers consisting of travel-related websites and private agencies/tour operators.

3.1. Official websites and social media channels

Brandes (1998) proclaimed that the Mexican Day of the Dead ritual could be seen as a political enterprise that promotes a national cultural identity. Cultural differentiation and national distinctiveness have been needed to keep a distance from Spain and the United States; hence, they are promoted by the Mexican state. Originality and authenticity were important during the War of Independence that ended the rule of Spain in 1821 and again increased in importance beginning in the 1840s, after the loss of half its territory. Mexican intellectuals, journalists, government officials, and several institutions have promoted the Day of the Dead as an international symbol of Mexico for decades. Authenticity is a notion which the supply-side often attempt to sell to visitors (Grebenar, 2018), as is the case here as well.

Several researchers highlighted official websites as the most important communication tool for destinations (Fernández-Cavia & Huertas Roig, 2009; Lee & Gretzel, 2012). Consequently, destination websites are very important because they can provide a huge amount of information, convey an image of a place, permit useful ways of interacting with users and also operate as a point of sale. Due to this diversity of functionalities, destination websites are complex interactive objects, which make their performance and overall quality difficult to evaluate (Law, Qi & Buhalis, 2010).

In the next section four official providers of information of the Mexican state will be discussed and analyzed, focusing on their online presence. This entails that not only the official websites, but also the social media presence of the four respective agencies will be analyzed.

3.1.1. Visit Mexico

For Mexico, the official destination website (ODW) is visitmexico.com. This national website tries to provide an overview of all that Mexico has to offer to tourists and therefore is an important communication tool for destination branding. With social media accounts combined (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) Visit Mexico can reach nearly eight million people. The amount of traffic to the website remains unknown. At first glance, the website appears very visual; the initial page contains a collage with a substantial number of images; mainly showing
architecture and nature. The website itself is colourful: the main colours used are orange, blue, pink and green. As the website was browsed as a tourist by the researcher, it is worth noting visitors can choose between a wide range of languages: Spanish, English, Russian, Portuguese, German, French, Italian, Japanese, Korean and Chinese. In all likelihood, it can be concluded that these languages represent the main target audiences.

Under the heading ‘Tourist Attractions', a subdivision is made between five forms of tourism: cultural tourism, sports tourism, tourism of health and welfare, nature tourism and gastronomic tourism. The following description of cultural tourism attractions is given here (Visit Mexico, 2018):

The cultural life of Mexico is inexhaustible, [sic] fall in love with its museums, venues and theaters. Know the best cultural routes [sic] attend the most important festivals in the country, such as the Festival del Internacional del Cervantino.

Given that the Day of the Dead is regularly promoted by governmental tourism institutions as a form of cultural tourism, one would expect articles on this topic to pop up under the header bearing this name. After scrolling through all 429 articles listed under ‘cultural tourism’, it was found that only one is dedicated to the Day of the Dead and this article invited tourists to ‘attend the visit of the dead in Zozocolco’. The lack of attention to the Day of the Dead in general as part of cultural tourism, as well as the ‘not mentioning’ of the films is surprising. A potential explanation for this might be that the Day of the Dead celebrations only occur during a restricted period of the year and are not available all year round. Nevertheless, if in the description cultural routes and important festivals are named as cultural tourism, it is to be expected that the Day of the Dead parade and the Coco Route would be at least mentioned, especially on this ODW website.

It can be inferred that there is an absence of the films Spectre and Coco in the Day of the Dead narrative of Visit Mexico. When searching for the terms "spectre", "James Bond" and "parade", 0 results appear. The search query "coco" on the website gives 19 matches, but none of them mentions the movie, Coco. Instead, these articles refer to words such as [coco]a, [coco]oned and [coco]nut. Neither is the Day of the Dead parade represented anywhere on the official website.

When searching for Ruta de Coco, Google gives an interesting result. The first link shows visitmexico.com in the URL but re-directs to a webpage of a tour operator that works closely
together with Visit Mexico, called ‘Viajemos por Mexico’. It shows a six-day tour operated by Marco Polo Operadora but initially developed by Mexitours and Viajemos Todos Por México, that took place between October 30, 2018, and September 2, 2018. The tour is offered in Spanish. The route falls under three categories: destinos culturales, Pueblos Mágicos, and Turismo Cultural (cultural destinations, Magical Villages, and Cultural Tourism).

One of the key challenges that Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) face involves developing ODWs with the intention of providing its users with suitable information to help build a destination brand and persuade potential tourists to visit a certain destination. ODWs tend to be used as a channel to market products and services, as well as serving as a platform for sharing information and experiences with and among others (Choi, Lehto & Oleary, 2007; Míguez-González, 2011; Lee & Gretzel, 2012). Social media channels are increasingly gaining importance and Visit Mexico uses them extensively to promote Mexico. On the bottom of the website, hyperlinks are placed that send readers through to Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

The Day of the Dead is represented considerably more on Visit Mexico's social media channels compared to the official website. This already becomes apparent when opening the Facebook page. Two of the three highlighted videos that appear on top of the page are focused on the Day of the Dead and the Day of the Dead Parade of 2018. Numerous shared posts on Facebook explicitly refer to Coco. Figure 4 presents two examples of Facebook posts uploaded in 2018. Both posts include a link to an article on Lonely Planet about "where to explore the real-life inspiration behind Pixar's Coco". This demonstrates that again there is an overlap of official channels with commercial providers. The left screenshot can be interpreted as an invitation to tourists to come to visit Mexico during the Day of the Dead. The right screenshot in figure 4 refers to the creation of tours and routes that are based on the locations featured in the film. It is mentioned here that the Mexican Tourism Board is working on a tour aimed at tourists for them to explore the locations behind the movie, which turned out to be the Coco Route.
The Facebook post on the bottom left (figure 4) approaches the film from a different perspective. An essential part of the tradition is the importance of family. As Disney-Pixar movies are predominantly geared towards kids, *Coco* is set to introduce more multigenerational travelling families to visit Mexico at this time of year. In a way, *Coco* might be a tool to promote the Day of the Dead as a family holiday destination.

In 2018, the CPTM and the Ministry of Tourism (SECTUR) implemented a promotional campaign called "Heart of Mexico" in an attempt to promote the Day of the Dead to an international audience. The main goals of this campaign are to raise awareness for the festivity and more specifically the parade, to inform potential visitors about the Day of the Dead celebrations and also to create excitement for the parade on a global scale. This campaign implied travelling to a number of cities in North America, Europe and Russia, where several parade characters visited iconic landmarks and monuments (Mexico Tourism Board, 2018). Visit Mexico has been sharing these trips on their social media channels (see figure 5). In the caption above each image, reference is made to the Day of the Dead parade in Mexico City.
The Secretary of Tourism stated that the Day of the Dead festival in Mexico City had become one of the main tourist attractions in the capital of the country. It is estimated that the 2018 edition was attended by nearly two million people and resulted in an economic outlay of nearly 400 million pesos.

Nevertheless, what is interesting here is that there is no mention of the film *Spectre* or James Bond in the promotion. A possible explanation for this may be that in 2018 the third edition of the parade was taking place. Tourism authorities might have used the publicity around the release of *Spectre* in order to promote the very first edition, and now they are trying to disassociate themselves from the Bond connection. Because in the end, this parade might have been created due to certain expectations that were caused by the opening scene of *Spectre*, it has now become an annual tradition. Also, there have been comparable parades in other parts of the country, but not in Mexico City before the release of the movie. Springwood (2008: 179) observes, for example, that visual and film culture has equipped Japanese tourists with preconceptions of 'America', that is, the United States, and with the desire to visit places specifically related to certain film works. Starting from this idea that cinema can form a bridge - be it of realistic origin or not - between distant cultures, one could say that the cinematic works that feature the Day of the Dead (in this case *Spectre* and *Coco*) form part of a construction of an idea and perception of how this tradition is celebrated in Mexico. These works and ideas reach a global audience who start creating images and expectations.
Figure 5: Several Facebook posts of the campaign ‘Heart of Mexico’ carried out by Visit Mexico (2018)

What immediately attracts attention on the official Instagram page of Visit Mexico, @visitmex, are the highlighted stories. Three out of four highlights concentrate on the Day of the Dead: #DiadeMuertos, Altars, DoD Parade. Given that this page is supposed to represent all forms of tourism in Mexico, it is interesting that the initial emphasis seems to be directed towards the Day of the Dead celebrations. The Day of the Dead is a very “instagrammable” celebration, and many pictures and videos of people’s experiences are shared on this platform every year. The considerable attention to the by the official Instagram page of the Mexican Tourism Board demonstrates the importance of the celebration with regard to this specific audience.
One of the highlighted stories, “DoD parade”, is a specific collection of images and videos of the parade in Mexico City. The images and short videos gathered here are all shot and shared by visitors. The tourism board asks people to tag @visitmexico and #dayofthedead in the imagery they share on Instagram, which can then be used by them on the official page. After watching the complete stories, it can be concluded that the pictures and videos shared on the official page have mostly been shot by both international and Mexican travel bloggers and influencers with each over 10,000 followers. This again illustrates the overlap of and difficulty to distinguish between the official narrative of the Mexican Tourism Board and the experience of tourists, in this case expressed by travel bloggers. It can be assumed that a number of these travel bloggers and influencers have been invited by the Mexican Tourism Board to share their experiences of the parade. The imagery mainly shows backstage and behind the scenes footage of the costumes and make-up which usually tourists do not see, but also professional close-up shots of the parade. Again, in these stories the attention is on the parade itself as part of the annual Day of the Dead celebrations, and the connection with Spectre is completely neglected.

Visit Mexico started uploading posts on Instagram on May 7 of the year 2013. Only in the first year the captions have been written in Spanish, after which a switch to English was made. The main focus of the Day of the Dead posts that year was on how it is celebrated across different parts of the country, highlighting the festival de las Calaveras in Aguascalientes and the cities of Michoacán and San Luis Potosí. From 2014 onwards the captions are written in English. Again in 2014 and 2015, the festival de las Calaveras was brought to the attention of visitors, and numerous posts included short explanations and descriptions about traditions around the Day of the Dead, like pan de muerto, altars and ofrendas, that were shown on the photos. Strangely, in 2016, the first year of the Day of the Dead parade in Mexico City, no posts are dedicated to it. Only in 2017 and 2018 material about the parade is posted. In 2017 a video of the parade was uploaded, and the caption states: "Day of the Dead parade always colors Mexico City. In case you missed it, you can check our stories above and get ready for the next one". What is interesting here is the word 'always'. This was only the second time the parade took place in the capital. No posts on Instagram have been devoted to Coco, or the more recently created Coco Route.

The official twitter account of Visit Mexico is called @visitmex and was initiated in 2010. All of the tweets are written in Spanish. It is interesting to see that Visit Mexico chooses different languages for different channels. A plausible explanation for this might be that a language is
chosen based on demographic insights. It can be that most of the Twitter followers are Spanish speaking and therefore it would make more sense to tweet in Spanish instead of English. During the days around Day of the Dead, many images are shared of different places where one could celebrate the wide array of traditions. In many tweets, the Tourism Board refers to Day of the Dead as a tradition that is considered ‘the most representative tradition of Mexican culture’. In 2018 visitmex published 29 tweets on the Day of the Dead. Again, neither Spectre nor James Bond was mentioned at all. Various tweets are devoted to the Day of the Dead parade, but they serve merely as a way to inform the people where and when to be at a certain location in order to see it (see figure 6).

![Figure 6: Tweet by Visit Mexico (2018) reposting the official information provided by SECTUR](image-url)
One tweet referred to *Coco*: "Coco, la gran historia inspirada en México que ha enamorado al mundo, gana como major película animada en los #Oscars". A great deal of Mexicans replied to this tweet, both positively as negatively. Many people have praised the film because it showcases the tradition to the world, and it can generate more tourists that might get inspired to visit the Day of the Dead celebrations. Others are more critical, mainly reflecting on the fact that the movie is produced by Americans and not by Mexicans themselves. This brings us back to the intense contact between the United States and Mexico. In the realm of cultural influences, the American influence is often considered a threat to Mexican culture by both governmental institutions as the local inhabitants.

Beyond serving the official narrative, Twitter can be an outlet for local inhabitants to express their opinions and thoughts on the Day of the Dead parade and its connection with James Bond. While on the one hand, many have claimed that the changes to Day of the Dead are positive because they ensure that younger generations continue to participate in the tradition, on the other hand, other people express that they are not happy with this new twist. Figure 7 shows a couple of examples of tweets that illustrate the current discussion:

*Figure 7: Collection of tweets shared by Mexican inhabitants about the Day of the Dead parade in Mexico City (Twitter)*
Rolando Nava Cancun in the top left tweet accentuates the that the parade has been a copy of James Bond. He is critical towards the politician Miguel Mancera, blaming him for not respecting the tradition. The other three tweets all criticize the fact that the parade as a result of a foreign film was needed to reaffirm this Mexican tradition. Gerado (top right) states: "what a pity that a foreign film motivates us to celebrate our traditions and tells us how to do it #DiaDeMuertosCDMX". This might also have been a plausible reason as to why the governmental institutions chose not to accentuate the films in the promotion of Day of the Dead events on their online channels.

In conclusion it can be said that Visit Mexico heavily promotes tourism geared towards the tradition of the Day of the Dead. Special attention in the social media presence is given to the cultural heritage of the tradition, even though the parade has been created because of the film Spectre. On the contrary, Coco is sparingly used in the Facebook posts branding the celebrations as an attraction for the whole family.

3.1.2. CDMX Travel

Cdmxtravel.com is a website that focuses only on tourism in Mexico City. Keywords for Mexico City according to this website are: ‘Unique. Cosmopolitan. Authentic. Trendy. Unbelievable’. On the initial page, one can discover top experiences, neighbourhoods, visitor information, attractions, stay and packages. When searching for references to Spectre and Coco, no results were encountered. Only one article mentioned Mixquic as ‘one place in Mexico City where they celebrate this event [the traditional Day of the Dead], where pre-Hispanic rituals are preserved'. The website encourages its visitors to check out the social media channels through hyperlinks.

All posts uploaded on Facebook are in Spanish, aimed at domestic and ‘Spanish speaking’ tourists. No posts refer to James Bond or Spectre. One post mentions Coco and links through to an article under the header "experiencias". This article is written to promote two expositions: "México y Walt Disney" and "El arte de Coco". While the title appears in Spanish, the rest of the text is written in English. An image from the movie, showing Miguel [the main character of Coco] together with his dog is placed above the text. The only text refers to the address and mentions various reasons why tourists should visit the exhibitions. The reasons provided are that it is great for taking a piece of Mexico City home, browsing and taking photos.
CDMX Travel started its Twitter account in November 2016. This means that it has been started after the first edition of the parade had taken place. On October 26, 2018, @CDMX_Travel posted a tweet in Spanish trying to get readers to invite their favourite persons and family and to come to watch this traditional parade. The third edition is referred to here as ‘traditional parade’. In this case, the question of when something can be called a tradition often arises. Hobsbawm & Ranger (1983) underline that both the strength and adaptability of genuine traditions do not need to be confused with the term ‘invention of tradition’. Culture appears to be dynamic and flexible, and therefore, commodities such as this parade may over time become incorporated into and perceived as manifestations of local culture (Cohen, 1988). Gow (2001) described the process accurately, stating that "time adds its own flavour of authenticity in cultural transformations, which are in turn, transformations of previous transformations. What was once new becomes representative and traditional". Since the Day of the Dead parade in Mexico City has been organized for consecutive years now, it may be considered a tradition.

The Instagram page that belongs to CDMX Travel is @cdmxtraveloficial. In general, not a lot of attention is paid to the Day of the Dead celebrations in Mexico City. Out of the 711 publications, ten posts have been devoted to the Day of the Dead, which all portray colourful skeletons and skulls. One of these posts, uploaded on October 23, 2018, mentions the Day of the Dead parade. Before that year the parade was not promoted through this channel. This can be explained by the fact that the first upload was on December 15, 2016, a few months after the first edition of the parade. No Instagram post made any reference to Coco.

3.1.3. Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Tourism of Mexico City

The official website of the Ministry of Culture of the City of Mexico is cultura.cdmx.gob.mx, and the website of the Ministry of Tourism of the capital is turismo.cdmx.gob.mx. These websites are only available in Spanish and feature numerous articles that make references to the Day of the Dead parade. In an article published in 2018 on the Facebook page of the Secretary of Culture of Mexico City, it is mentioned that it is the third edition of the parade, but again there are no references to James Bond. What was pointed out much more here was that the parade is largely visited by tourists. The articles on this website do discuss the various themes of the parade of 2018: migración, tránsito y el último viaje, but these themes change every year. Even the articles published in 2016 do mention that it was the first edition of the parade but do not say it was Spectre or James Bond-inspired.
All social media channels (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) are available in Spanish. On Facebook, numerous posts serve as invitations and show imageries of different parades that take place around the Day of the Dead in Mexico City: the ‘Desfile de Alebrijes’, the ‘Desfile de Catrinas y Catrines’, and the ‘Desfile de Día de Muertos’. On the first year of the latter parade, the post did not refer to James Bond but did refer to the fact that it was the ‘magno desfile inaugural’, or the grand opening parade. No tweets mentioned James Bond or Spectre in relation to the parade. This time, searching for the word Coco gave one result. On December 19, 2018, @CulturaCiudadMx tweeted three photos of a projection of the film on a square somewhere in the city. On Instagram, several posts are uploaded that show close-up of parade participants. The captions were intended to explain the different cultural themes of the parade.

3.1.4. Ministry of Tourism of Michoacán

The official website of the Ministry of Tourism of Michoacán can be found on sectur.michoacan.gob.mx. On this web page, nothing is mentioned about Coco nor the creation of a Coco Route. Everything that can be found on this topic has been published in Mexican newspapers (capitalmichoacan, 2018; NER, 2018; mimorelia, 2018). The articles refer to an interview with Claudia Chávez López, head of Sectur in Michoacán, in which she explains the integration of a tourist route inspired by Coco. The route would run from October 31 to November 4 and takes tourists and visitors to the municipalities of Pátzcuaro, Tzintzuntzan, Paracho as well as the island of Janitzio, the Paricutín volcano and Santa Fe de la Laguna. According to Chávez López, there is an interest to explore these places, regardless of the distances. At a national level, the CPTM is organizing a multiple-day route of national scenarios used as locations in the film in the states of Michoacán, Oaxaca and Guanajuato. This route will be administered by a national tour operator in Mexico City. As mentioned above, this is the tour offered by Visit Mexico, Mexitours and Viajemos Por México.

It is striking that almost all governmental sites make little mention of the two films. A possible explanation could be that their focus is more on the cultural aspect, and they prefer to leave out any relationship with these international films, though a true reason remains unknown. With the intention of attracting more international tourists, it would be a great promotional tool. It is noticeable that these governmental sites do not promote the Coco Route anywhere on their channels even though it has been created by the institutions CPTM and Sectur. The touristic route was only finished in 2018, and it might become promoted more extensively for Day of the Dead in 2019.
3.2. Commercial providers

The term commercial providers refers to internationally oriented travel websites as well as private agencies and tour operators. The difference between this category and the one previously discussed in 3.1 is that instead of focusing on Mexican state institutions, the following paragraphs have a more international approach. In this section, we will again explore what the impact of the films has been on the narrative of these companies and institutions.

3.2.1. Travel-related websites

Most of the articles on travel websites such as Lonely Planet, Condé Nast Traveler, Atlas Obscura, National Geographic and The Culture Trip are catered to an international audience and are therefore written in English.

From titles like ‘How to take a ‘Coco'-inspired Tour of Mexico' (CNTraveler, 2018), '11 locations in Coco that you can actually visit in Mexico' (CultureTrip, 2017), ‘Was Mexico City's Day of the Dead Spectre-cle a positive addition to [sic] Mexican tradition?' (CultureTrip, 2017), can be deducted that both Spectre and Coco are more prominent in the commercial narrative to promote the Day of the Dead.

This type of website is more commercially-oriented and frequently uses popular culture, including films, to play in on a travel-loving audience. What is interesting here is that these articles, in the majority of cases, in contrast to the official governmental websites, do make references to the films when telling its readers about the Day of the Dead parade and to experience the Day of the Dead like in Coco. Many of these articles make a note of the intentions of the official tourism authorities to create Coco-inspired tours, ‘seeing how the movie has captured international imaginations' (CultureTrip, 2017). It is also repeatedly mentioned that Mexico City's authorities were the ones that decided to organise ‘a replica due to the overwhelming positive response to, and undeniable magnificence of the fictional parade immortalized forever on film' (CultureTrip, 2017). Atlas Obscura (2017) reports ‘the cultural event first appeared in "Spectre"' and ‘Mexico's famous Day of the Dead traditions might change because of eight minutes of Hollywood film'.

As noted earlier on page 33, Visit Mexico shared an article on their social media channels coming from these internationally travel-related websites such as Lonely Planet that explained ‘where to explore the real-life inspiration behind Pixar's Coco'. This article, published in 2018,
describes six locations that have served as inspiration for the movie. It is mentioned in the article that Disney and the Mexican Tourism board are working on tours and itineraries specifically addressed to people that are interested in visiting these locations. It might be that this article is part of a collaboration between Visit Mexico and Lonely Planet. That cannot be said with certainty. National Geographic does publish partner content with Visit Mexico on nationalgeographic.com, for instance an article named “11 places to visit during Mexico’s ‘Day of the Dead’ celebration’. In this article, Mexico City is placed as number one must visit, illustrated by a colorful image of the parade with the Mexico City’s streets as backdrop, and appears with the following text:

In 2016, Mexico City held its first ever Day of the Dead parade – and it’s grown to be a celebration visitors should not miss. Giant floats, colorfully costumed entertainers, and beautifully painted skeletons, also known as catrinas, dance through the streets. The parade stretches from the Estrela de Luz (Pillar of Light) monument to the city’s main square, and each block of the parade is lined by joyful spectators joining in on the fun.

Even though it mentions 2016 as the start of this parade, this article does not mention Spectre as inspiration behind it, presumably because of the fact that this article is written in collaboration with the Mexican Tourism Board.

Cocking, author of the critical article ‘Was Mexico City’s Day of the Dead Spectre-cle a positive addition to [sic] Mexican Tradition?’ on Culture Trip (2017), zoomed in on resident opinions and perceptions of the parade. She again stresses the ‘Hollywood influence on the traditional celebrations’ and presents the worry of a ‘possibility for a loss of old traditions altogether if U.S. influence continues to have an impact on Mexican celebrations.’ But she also demonstrates that people are aware of the fact that ‘the addition of a new tradition doesn’t necessarily equate to an eradication of the old ones.’

In sum, the articles on this type of travel-oriented websites do particularly stress the connection between the Day of the Dead and popular films as Spectre and Coco, which is a big difference compared to the promotion on official governmental channels. Numerous articles point to the evolving character of the tradition, and underline the fact that, as time passes, there will always be new additions, which can be considered either as a positive addition or as a threat. This does not only apply to the Day of the Dead, but to any cultural heritage.
3.2.2. Private agencies/tour operators

There are a great number of national and international operating private agencies that offer Day of the Dead tours in all parts of Mexico. It is not common that the Day of the Dead parade is incorporated into the itineraries. Viajemos Por Mexico offered a tour in 2018 called ‘Día de Muertos En Ciudad De México, Desfile Reforma Centro’, offering transfers from and to the hotel. A Google search on 'Ruta de Coco tours' gave plenty of results. All tours on the first page are offered to the tourists in Spanish by Mexican and Latin-American agencies. At the bottom of each page is noted: ‘programa únicamente disponible en español'. This could be an indication that many Spanish-speaking tourists are interested in this kind of tours. It is strange, however, that the prices are frequently put in USD (US Dollars) even though the tour operators are not of American origin. The tours share similar itineraries and often take around 7 or 8 days and take place around November 1 and 2.

Overall, an interesting difference can be observed between the absence of references to the films Spectre and Coco in the narrative of the official Mexican tourism institutions on the one hand, and its presence in articles of commercial providers on the other hand. Whereas the Mexican Tourism Board is ignoring the connection between the parade and Spectre, this relationship is stressed more often by the analyzed travel-related websites. With regard to Coco, occasional references have been made (i.e. Visit Mexico’s Facebook page), however, the Coco Route has not been named specifically by its name by the Tourism Board once.
CHAPTER 4
Analysis of travel blogs

In the previous chapter, the touristic promotion (offer) of the Day of the Dead parade and the Coco route have been analyzed, by looking at the official narrative of Mexican tourism institutions, commercial travel-related websites and tour-operators. It was found that the films are not present in the promotion of the Day of the Dead by Mexican tourism institutions, but references are significantly more present in commercial travel articles and tours provided by private tour operators. In order to be able to formulate a complete answer to the main research question that is central to this thesis, this chapter will elaborate on the second angle of the question, namely that of the tourist experience (reception). After carrying out the six-phase framework of thematic analysis provided by Braun & Clarke (see page 23), this final analysis of travel blogs provides a report of the impacts of the films on the tourist experience expressed in these blogs.

First, various themes that have been extracted from the blogs will be examined, starting with the themes that can be connected to Spectre, followed by the ones related to Coco. Additionally, some interesting tidbits that were not directly relevant to the research question but are important in understanding the complexity of matter will be addressed.

Before all else, it is noteworthy to point out some quantitative details. Out of the ten blogposts nine have mentioned “James Bond” and/or “Spectre”, and five out of the ten blogposts mention “Coco”. In the following paragraphs the representation of the two films and their related products in the blogposts will be discussed separately.

4.1. James Bond Spectre

The main themes that can be subtracted from the selected blogposts are that the Day of the Dead parade is tourist-driven, a spectacle, invented; that its authenticity is questionable, and many blogposts are wrapped up with some practical tips. Obviously, there can be some overlap between various themes, especially in the notion of inventiveness in relation to its perceived authenticity.

One out of all ten blogs did not introduce the Day of the Dead parade stating it was inspired by James Bond. The blog Roaming Around the World places the Day of the Dead parade as number one must-visit, but introduce the parade in the following manner: “The parade displays
some of the most beautiful ancestral traditions of Day of the Dead, complete with large skeleton puppets, moving altars, alebrijes (mythical spirit creatures), marigolds, catrinas, skulls, traditional dancers, and more”. This statement is accompanied by a photo taken during the parade. Only in the fourth paragraph it is mentioned that it is a relatively new tradition, said to have been inspired by James Bond, Spectre.

Sidetracked (2017) referred to the tourism-driven side of the holiday and advised its readers to get out of the big cities to experience a more authentic celebration. According to Villalobos, the face behind the blog, “the parades, festivities and face-painting is a lot of fun, this is the highly marketed, tourism-driven side of the holiday”. The Mexican blogger Tania's Magic Compass (2016) noticed the commercialization of the tradition and, according to her, the popularization of the Day of the Dead on an international level over the last couple of years cannot only be seen in a positive way. She writes: "I think it's great that our traditions cause so much interest, but I also think this diffusion and excessive commercialization that's been given to the Day of the Dead's image has distorted the real essence of the tradition." (Tania's Magic Compass, 2016). She refers to the Day of the Dead parade, inspired by Spectre, as the most significant modification. She seems sceptical and is “afraid of the idea of turning such a beautiful and deep tradition into a tourist attraction” but recognizes that “it works well as a show to give the people and tourists what they want”. She concluded: “you have to accept that traditions, as part of a living culture, evolve and change with people”. The commercial side of the celebration is also picked up on by the blog Roaming Around the World, observing the “range from cultural to commercial events.” (2018).

Another recurrent theme in most blogposts was the “spectacle” character of the Day of the Dead parade. Sidetracked (2017) said “after the film was released, tourists who visited the city were expecting to see this spectacle, and the tourism board seized the opportunity to make it a reality. Now, the parade is set to take place each year”. My Wanderlusty Life initially emphasizes that the Day of the Dead in Mexico is “not a spectacle put on for tourists' benefit”. However, later on in the same post, the author talks about the Day of the Dead parade “à la James Bond’s Spectre” and mentions that “OF COURSE [emphasis added by blogger] tourists started flocking to CDMX to see this spectacle”. It can be assumed that what she is trying to say is that the parade itself may be considered a spectacle; this cannot be confused with the tradition itself being seen as a spectacle. Travel Where To Next goes down the same path, stating that “even though it is true that the large parade now put on in Mexico City was
coordinated because of the popularity of a scene in a James Bond movie, Día de Muertos is in no way a spectacle put on for anyone's benefit -- especially tourists. Día de Muertos is an incredibly personal holiday of Mexicans”. (travelwheretonext, 2019).

As referred to earlier (see page 41) the notion of “invention of tradition” is an issue, which manifests itself in blogs in a way that the non-academic use of "invention of tradition" is used to indicate inauthenticity, lack of originality, and lack of continuity with the past. This is in sharp contrast with the academic application of "invention", which is value-free and does not rely on the presupposition of original cultural prototypes (Theodossopoulos, 2013). Eight out of ten implied that the parade had been created or invented after the release of the film. Travel Where to Next (2019) explained that “before this movie, Mexico City actually didn't have its own large-scale Day of the Dead parade. After the movie came out, travellers actually started emailing the tourism board asking when the parade was taking place this year. The rest is history. The city decided to make the parade a reality and use it to share Mexico's traditions with both tourists and the world”. Joy and Journey (2018) clarified that “the Mexico City Day of the Dead parade […] actually only started in 2016, as a response to a flood of tourist demands and disappointment upon arrival in Mexico City and realizing the parade in the James Bond movie isn't really a thing (seriously).”. Also, Eternal-Expat elaborated on this theme saying that “up until that movie came out, no parade for this day actually existed in Mexico City. The city decided that as a way to bring more tourism to the downtown area, they would start having a parade”.

A prominent theme that found its way back in the majority of the blogposts is the notion of authenticity - or the lack of it. Authenticity is a label attached to the visited cultures in terms of stereotyped images and expectations held by the members of tourist-sending society. Authenticity is thus a projection of tourists' own beliefs, expectations, preferences, stereotyped images, and consciousness onto toured objects, particularly onto toured others (Wang, 1999). Products of tourism, for instance, festivals and rituals, are commonly rendered "authentic" or "inauthentic" based on the criterion of whether they are made and/or enacted by local people according to custom or tradition, and in this sense, “authenticity connotes traditional culture and origin, a sense of the genuine, the real or the unique” (Sharpley, 1994: 130).

Eternal-Expat reflects on the questionable authentic experience in the following way:
It’s a cool experience and locals and tourists alike line the sidewalks from the Angel of Independence monument all the way to the Zocalo to catch a glimpse of the brightly colored floats and the beautifully costumed dancers. It's not terribly authentic, but it's still a nice parade. (eternal-expat, 2017)

The questionable authentic character is also demonstrated in the blogpost of My Wanderlusty Life in which it is claimed that "the Day of the Dead in Mexico is really the small town's poster child […]. It's in these small towns you'll be able to stroll the streets, visit local cemeteries, be invited into people's homes (weird at first but you'll get used to it), take part in small parades and festivities, and shop local markets." Tania's Magic Compass visited the city of Querétaro. She wrote that “here the tradition felt much more alive and authentic” and that it was a place where one can really experience an authentic Day of the Dead. The only Mexican blogger out of these ten travel blogs, Tania's Magic Compass, said that she usually tells her international friends that the Day of the Dead “is not how you imagine it to be, it is not like you have seen in the movies.”

Most of the blogposts are wrapped up with practical information. They often refer back to the website of the Ministry of Culture, because they post the official announcement of when and where the parade will take place. It has proven that a lot of last-minute changes can occur, as various bloggers say the date is not set in stone.

4.2. Coco

The main themes that can be taken from the blogs in relation to Coco are that the movie is seen as an introduction to the Day of the Dead, that it has an educational undertone and the fact that it is a movie aimed at children.

My Wanderlusty Life (2018) argued in the section titled “DON’T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT WATCHING THE MOVIE COCO”, that this film is “probably the best introduction to Day of the Dead in Mexico you’ll find anywhere” She recommends that it is an advantage to watch it before a trip. In this section, the blogger decided to include an image of a colourful alebrije, which play a role in the film, but the image does not come from the film itself.

This same blogger also referred to the educational value of the film and thinks that it is a great way to “learn all you need to know in just an hour and forty-five minutes” (mywanderlustlylife, 2018). Travel Where to Next (2019) says that “if you’ve seen Coco (and you really should
watch it ASAP) you probably understand some of the thoughts and traditions behind the holiday”.

Disney-Pixar first and foremost produces films for families and children. This has been observed by the bloggers referring to *Coco* all in an easy to absorb way to learn about the Day of the Dead “because it's a kids movie amigos” (mywanderlustylife), and Travel Where To Next refers to the kid theme in the following manner: "Mexicans believe in having a positive relationship with death and this holiday helps young kids understand what happens after we die." (wheretonext)

The blog of Cassie, the author of MexicoCassie, is particularly aimed at providing travel tips and recommendations to families with children. "Costume contests for children, trick-or-treating, films like "Coco" played for the public. Children ran through the cobblestone streets until late at night, without a worry for sleep or school". (MexicoCassie, 2019).

Apart from these examples, a considerable amount of references has been made to *Coco* that do not fall under any of these themes. First of all, Tripaneer (2018) claimed that considering how popular Coco turned out to be, it's no wonder that travelers are turning their gaze towards Mexico more and more during this time of year. Joy and Journey (2018) believe that within Mexico City “you're not really going to find what you've seen on National Geographic or in Coco', but advices tourists to go to San Andres Mixquic, which according to the blogger “is the kind of celebration you've seen on movies like Coco”. Roaming Around the World (2018) confirms this by referring to the rumour that Mixquic “was the inspiration behind the cemetery in the movie, Coco”. Another example is provided by My Wanderlusty Life, who recommends a visit to the ofrendas at Casa Azul – the former home of Frida Kahlo that has been turned into a museum. The blogger adds: ‘The only thing that could've made it better: more monkeys and everything lit on fire!!!! (see: *Coco*). Roaming Around the World (2018) explain the tale of La Llorona (The Weeper) and “the song […] is featured in the Disney-Pixar film Coco”. From these extracts it seems that the movie has inspired more travelers to consider Mexico during the Day of the Dead celebrations as an appealing holiday destination. Some references are made to places featured in or that have been of inspiration to the film that the readers can actually visit. None of the blogs have mentioned the newly created Coco Route. Compared to the effort the Mexican Tourism Board has put in collaborations to promote the Day of the Dead parade with social media influencers and bloggers, the Coco Route had not received any attention.
4.3. The Day of the Dead and Halloween

In section 1.2 discussing cultural tourism (see page 10), we touched upon the current debate concerning the process of cultural homogenization that is partially caused by tourism. This debate does not necessarily contribute to the main research question, nevertheless, it is an important aspect in understanding how the Day of the Dead is received and perceived by the American tourists, as many of the selected blogposts for this study have been written by American travel bloggers. Brandes (2006) referred to the mutual influences of the United States and Mexico, and in his article on *El Día de Muertos, el Halloween y la búsqueda de una identidad nacional mexicana*, he explains how tourism and international relations can be held responsible for the Day of the Dead turning into a symbol of the Mexican identity and how the recent diffusion of Halloween in Mexico has triggered a symbolic competition. The presence of symbols related to Halloween in Mexico is often interpreted as “a symptom of US imperialist aggression [sic]” (Brandes, 2000: 7). It came as no surprise that a considerable amount of references and connections are made between the Day of the Dead and Halloween in the blog posts. Multiple travel bloggers acknowledge this comparison and approach it by trying to make clear that the Day of the Dead is not the Mexican version of Halloween (see the examples below).

Just because the Day of the Dead in Mexico takes place around the same time as Halloween doesn’t mean that there’s remotely any connection to it. In fact, it’s pretty much the opposite. The anti-Halloween, if you will. (mywanderlustylife, 2018)

Although it falls on the same night as Halloween, don’t confuse this tradition with anything to do with the American custom. Day of the Dead traditions are held to honor and respect the dead, while Halloween is a holiday meant to invoke fear of the dead. (Sidetracked, 2017)

Despite popular misconceptions that equate Día de Los Muertos with Halloween or with a horror fest, this holiday is, and always will be, first and foremost about family. (tripaneer, 2018).

Brandes (2003) indicated that the cultural institutions of the Mexican state promote contests of original altars all around Mexico and discard those influenced by US American items, such as Halloween pumpkins, masks, and sweets. Halloween symbols coming into Mexico are experienced by the government as a cultural threat even when this Mexican national identity reinforces the image of the morbid, death-obsessed Mexicans (Brandes 2003: 141).
population of Mexico is very aware of this cultural threat and makes big efforts to represent an original ritual in their towns. Elizabeth Aldrich, the author of Temporaryprovisions (2017), interviewed various Mexicans as a way to provide insights in local thoughts on how to celebrate Dia de Muertos. One of the interviewed people is Ana from Baja California Sur, and on the comparison with Halloween she commented the following:

Obviously Day of the Dead is important because it is part of our culture, but little by little I see Halloween having more impact than Day of the Dead. The children do not wait for Day of the Dead with eagerness and respect, they now sell pan de muerto [dead bread, a sweet roll that is baked during the week leading up to Day of the Dead] in the supermarkets and even in Starbucks, and I think that now only a small portion of the population really carries out a [traditional] celebration of Day of the Dead.

Tania’s Magic Compass (2016) noticed the same things and expressed it in this way:

In the city, the tradition has suffered numerous modern adaptations, that go from simple things like buying pan de muerto in the supermarkets to modifications much more notorious, like the adaptation of elements of Halloween, like dressing up as Catrinas or go out trick or treat.

Not only has Halloween led to certain modifications to the ways in which the Day of the Dead is celebrated in Mexico, but one can also observe influences the other way around. The recent explosion in popularity worldwide of Day of the Dead, partly due to the success of Spectre and Coco, has also had its impact on Halloween costumes. Many children have been inspired to dress up as characters from Coco during Halloween.

In addition to these bloggers being aware of the Halloween and Day of the Dead connection, in the posts the bloggers are also self-aware and critical on tourist behaviour. Tessa Juliette Torrente (travelwheretonext, 2019), for example, started with a few words discussing whether “in this day and age with accusations of cultural appropriation running rabid” it would even be appropriate to celebrate this festival together with and alongside locals. Later on, she states that even though the Day of the Dead is a “very instgrammable holiday”, when Mexican households invite you [a tourist] in to celebrate with them “don't just stare and take pictures for Instagram likes”. She gives advice and encourages her readers to ask questions and to focus on learning what the holiday is all about, or in her words to “be part of it” (travelwheretonext, 2019). Ashley Smith, the author of My Wanderlusty Life, states: "You should know, there most definitely is a right way to celebrate Day of the Dead in Mexico, and a wrong way. And since
only the nicest, most considerate travelers read my blog, it's a given you don't want to be an offensive a*hole in the process of figuring this out." (mywanderlustlylife, 2018). And finally, Elizabeth Aldrich gives the advice that “perhaps you're curious about what the holiday stands for (you should know this before you go), how you, a tourist, can participate, and or even how to make sure you're not going to do anything that's culturally insensitive.” (Temporaryprovisions, 2017).

What has become clear from the analysis of these ten travel blog posts is the fact that in the reception of the Day of the Dead, the movies play a more evident role than in the official promotion. Many of these bloggers have watched Spectre and/or Coco before they visit Mexico and these films have raised certain expectations in the minds of the tourists of how the Day of the Dead is celebrated.
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this thesis, the impact(s) of cinema on the way tourism is marketed around cultural traditions is explored from two perspectives: the touristic promotion and the tourist experience. Over the centuries, the Day of the Dead has turned into one of the most deeply rooted traditions of Mexican culture. More recently, the films *Spectre* and *Coco* brought about a global curiosity for the tradition and have contributed to a rise in tourism numbers. It can be said that the tradition has become a popular tourist attraction. The final goal of this work was to provide an answer to the main research question, as stated in the introduction: “What has been the impact of the films *James Bond Spectre* (2015) and *Coco* (2017) in the touristic promotion (offer) and the tourist experience (reception) of the Day of the Dead in Mexico?”

The first chapter briefly laid out the origins of the celebration and reflected on the Day of the Dead as an example of both cultural tourism and film tourism, and by doing so covered the first three sub-questions. As Morales Cano & Mysyk (2004) already investigated, the Mexican government has been promoting the Day of the Dead as a form of cultural tourism for a while. In a more recent development, tourism surrounding the Day of the Dead lead to an influx of tourists motivated by films such as *Spectre* and *Coco*, and to the creation of the Day of the Dead parade in Mexico City, and Coco-inspired tours. These new developments show that film tourism has taken up in recent years regarding the Day of the Dead in Mexico.

The chapters three and four aimed to answer the fourth, and last, sub-question that concerned the relation between the offer and the reception of the products that derived from *Spectre* and *Coco* with regard to the Day of the Dead.

From the perspective of the touristic offer, we can conclude that even though the role of the film *Spectre* in the establishment of the annual parade in the Mexican capital is not to be underestimated, the link between the film and the touristic product is almost nowhere to be found in official promotion. Both travel-related websites and travel bloggers, in comparison, do stress the connection between the product and the film. With regard to *Coco*, it is striking that the governmental sites and the corresponding social media channels do not promote the Coco-Route at all, even though it has been created by the CPTM and Sectur. Commercial travel-related websites occasionally name the newly created route but often try to provide all-year ‘Coco-inspired tours’. Travel agencies have been using *Coco* and created tours...
specifically catered to tourists interested in the film. It seems like the travel bloggers that form part of this analysis were not aware of the route’s existence, but the film itself is undoubtedly part of their experience. So, the present findings confirm an interesting difference; on the one hand the absence of references to the films Spectre and Coco in the narrative of the official tourism institutions, compared to its wide presence in articles of commercial travel-related websites and travel blogs on the other hand.

Concerning the promotion of the Day of the Dead, governmental tourism bodies underline national distinctiveness and highlight the uniqueness of the tradition. On the other hand, neither address a relationship with either Spectre or Coco, possibly because the production of both films was in the hands of American companies. Specifically, the Day of the Dead parade in the capital has received considerable amount of criticism, especially by Mexicans (as discussed on page 36), commenting on the ‘Hollywoodization’ and ‘Americanization’ of the Day of the Dead celebrations. The relationship between the United States and Mexico, and influences of Halloween on the Day of the Dead and vice versa, has been a debated topic in academic research (Brandes, 1998; 2000), in reports of cultural institutions in Mexico (Conaculta, 2006) and was often touched upon in the analyzed blogs as well. It might be interesting to further investigate the homogenization of culture, cultural appropriation, and the mutual influences of the Day of the Dead and Halloween.

On the reception side, it can be argued that the routes and parade that have been created after the release of the films subject to this study serve as examples of commercialization of cultural tourism. Already before the release of Spectre and Coco, the National Council for Culture and Arts (2006) reported on the conflict and the duality that tourism itself brings that has its effect on how the Day of the Dead is celebrated. This organization pointed to the commercial approach of the Mexican state and municipalities that have tried to cater to the tourists’ “hunger for the unusual, the weird, the exotic”. The Day of the Dead parade in Mexico City and the Coco-inspired routes and tours are commercially-oriented products created for the purpose of attracting more tourists by the Mexican Tourism Board. From the perspective of the touristic experience it can be deducted from the travel blogs that tourists are often conscious of this commercial approach, but they seem to accept it anyhow. The tourist experience is shaped by expectations, that have been raised after watching Spectre and Coco, and tourists expect the Day of the Dead to be celebrated like they have seen in these films.
A major difficulty in the process of this research has been the struggle to find the right categorization, and by doing so, choosing the right terminology for these categories (i.e. supply/demand; official/non-official narrative; offer/reception). It turned out that supply and demand was not the right terminology because the experiences that travel bloggers share on their pages in a way can also be considered a form of supply. Official and non-official narratives might have worked, but those terms are restricted in the sense that they focus on the narratives only, which is merely a part of the research question. In this thesis it was decided to stick to the dichotomy of offer and reception for reasons of feasibility and the fact that a clear scope was needed for the complex phenomenon that the Day of the Dead is. Holding on to these terms meant that certain areas, such as the perception towards the rituals surrounding Day of the Dead, were not researched extensively in this thesis. It was found that the representation of the Day of the Dead in cinema led to the construction of a novel perception of how the tradition is celebrated, especially in the minds of those previously unaware of the festivities. This could be an interesting angle for further research.

Quite early on in the process it became clear that there exists a certain overlap between the official promotion and the experiences shared by travel bloggers. Official social media pages of the Mexican Tourism Board also share articles published on travel-related websites. Digitalization has also affected the field of tourism promotion in the sense that tourism boards ask travel bloggers to help promote their destinations. This development leads to a merging of official and non-official narratives that cannot be seen as strictly separate anymore. This has also been the case with regard to the promotion of the Day of the Dead parade, where the overlap, for instance, comes to light in the form of sponsored social media content. The Mexican Tourism Board has invited travel bloggers and influencers backstage during the preparations of the parade to share their experiences of the Day of the Dead on social media and it seems logical for general tourism boards to tap into this market, which provides an opportunity to promote a destination to a broad audience through digital influencers. A benefit of these collaborations is that people tend to trust bloggers and Instagram-users more than official advertisements (Rowett, 2017). While people are generally more likely to take action on messages from trusted sources, trustworthiness has not been taken into account in this study. Social media has become an intrinsic part of a destinations marketing strategy and it can be expected that social media will come to play an even more important role in the tourism industry in the coming years. Further research is certainly required to explore the complexities of the rise of digital tourism.
As this research was based on two methodologies, discourse analysis and thematic analysis, it was hard to compare the two with each other. As for the organization of the analysis chapters, it was decided to structure chapter three, which concerned the promotional offer, website-by-website and not in themes, as was done in chapter four. This was done to due to the fact that almost no mention to the effects of the films was made on the websites. Chapter four is structured thematically, because there were plenty of references towards both Spectre and Coco and the touristic products derived from these films. During the process of this study, no personal contact was established between the researcher and the studied authorities and individuals. In order to even better understand the impact these films had on tourism promotion it would be beneficial to perform interviews and surveys distributed to all three categories also in terms of how this information provided by bloggers and influencers is received and if it does feel more authentic and real in comparison to the official channels of certain destinations. Another suggestion would be to carry out surveys and ask tourists about their experiences.

What is important to clarify is that it is unclear how Mexico’s tourism marketing strategy will unfold from 2019 onwards. As part of changes implemented by the government of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, the CPTM, responsible for the promotion of Mexico, was dissolved by the end of 2018. This change explains why the website and its social media channels of VisitMexico have not been updated since January 2019. This decision was made in an attempt to reduce costs. Several newspapers reported that the money will be diverted to improving infrastructure in the form of the funding of a train. It will connect various important touristic destinations and is seen as an effort to create more economic development in these tourism destinations. As a consequence, most international Tourism Board offices were closed and instead, the responsibility of the promotion of Mexico in global markets now lies with Mexico’s consulates and embassies which could possibly create ambiguity in the message spread, due to the lack of a central governing body. Regional tourism boards rapidly sought alliances attempting to spread the marketing message without governmental funding. It is certainly interesting to see how this development unfolds and what its impact will be on the Mexican tourism industry.

Taking everything into account and returning to the main question of this work, it can be concluded that the main impact of the films on Day of the Dead tourism has been, firstly, that it rose certain expectations in the minds of tourists all over the world of how the Day of the
Dead is celebrated (*Spectre*) or what it mainly represents (*Coco*). Secondly, the films have led to the creation of the Day of the Dead parade in Mexico City and the Coco-route, and other Coco-inspired tours. Though, in the official promotion of the parade the connection with the film is completely neglected; in the tourist experience the film definitely plays an important role. Where the Coco-route is not promoted online by the tourism board, the film most certainly had its effect on the tourist experience.

The rise of tourism during the “Season of the Dead”, and the more recent rise of tourists that are motivated by film, can be held responsible for several changes to way the Day of the Dead is celebrated. According to the findings of this research, The Day of the Dead as intangible heritage, and culture in general is always evolving, just as any culture does. Changes in society or popular culture, of which the rise of film tourism and of social media can be seen as examples, cause for adjustments, however small or big, in celebrations of culture such as Day of the Dead.
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Websites used for analysis

- https://twitter.com/TurismoCDMX?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor (Accessed August 2019)

Blogs used for analysis


