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Media effects on image: The Case of Tibet

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Abstract

Using media effects research as a theoretical framework, this paper examines empirically the impact of media representations—such as movies, guidebooks, and magazines—on destination image. Past research has focused on either representations or image, but rarely on both. Based on a systematic comparison of the former with the latter, it is argued that the impact of media representations on image falls between a strong and negotiated influence. The analysis is based on data collected from tourists in Lhasa, Tibet. The paper documents tourism issues in a renowned but little studied destination.

Résumé

Effets médiatiques sur l'image: le cas du Tibet. Employant comme cadre théorique la recherche sur les effets médiatiques, cet article examine empiriquement l'impact des représentations médiatiques (comme les films, magazines et guides touristiques) sur les images de destination. Jusqu'à

maintenant, la recherche a principalement concentré son attention sur les représentations ou l'image, mais rarement sur les deux à la fois. En les comparant systématiquement, il est avancé que l'impact des représentations médiatiques sur l'image se situe entre une influence forte et négative. L'analyse s'appuie sur des données recueillies auprès de touristes à Lhassa au Tibet. L'article décrit des questions de tourisme à une destination renommée mais peu étudiée.



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Keywords

media effects; destination image; movies and other media; Tibet; popular culture

Mots-clés

effets médiatiques; image de destination; films et autres médias; Tibet; culture populaire

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Angeles, CA 90095-1524 USA. Email <mercme@ucla.edu> studies mass media issues, as related to tourism and to US politics. Previously, he worked as a cultural and ecotourism advisor in Tanzania, more specifically with the Masai people. He is now pursuing a dissertation on the US military-industrial complex.

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