Bollywood and slum tours: poverty tourism and the Indian cultural industry

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An article published in *India Outlook* in July 2019 announced to its readers that Dharavi, the biggest slum of Bombay, and one of the largest slums in the world (Monroe and Bishop 2016), has now beaten the Taj Mahal as the most popular tourist destination in India. While acknowledging the long history of slum tourism, the article claimed that both Hollywood and Indian films had played a key role in the growing popularity of Dharavi among tourists (Nagar 2019). Even though Dharavi's popularity might have reached its peak only recently, slum tourism is not new and it is not popular only in India: most of the literature on this topic in fact stresses how this practice started as a leisure activity for the middle and upper classes in Victorian London (Meschkank 2011, 47) and how in the 1990s it became a widespread form of tourism in countries such as South Africa, Brazil and India (Frenzel et al. 2015). In Mumbai, guided tours of Dharavi have been flourishing since the mid-2000s, after the launch of *Reality Tours and Travels*, the first tour operator to offer this type of tours. Contextually, several studies have addressed the role of Bollywood films in the promotion of tourist destinations (Martin-Jones 2006; Nanjangud 2019) and, as many tour operators in Mumbai offer combined tours of Bollywood and slums, they actively imply the existence of a direct connection between the two.

Considering the global popularity of the Indian film industry, Bollywood in particular, it is easy to see its potential to attract tourists from all over the world. Many scholars have discussed the popularity that Indian films (before Bollywood) have entertained for decades in countries and regions such as Nigeria (Larkin 1997), Guyana, Trinidad, the former Soviet Union (Rajagopalan 2008), the Middle East, etc. (Rajadhyaksha 2003, 29). However, the global recognition of Indian cinema did not really take place until the industry acquired a more corporate character in the 1990s, as it then started to elicit the interest of foreign media corporations, which began to invest in it. The globalisation of Indian cinema facilitated the export market, and therefore increased its popularity beyond the diaspora and among non-Hindi speaking viewers. And yet, in post-liberalisation India, what is exported is not only Bollywood films, but Bollywood the cultural industry, which extends well beyond cinema and

which includes a culture of consumption that comprises "advertising, fashion, music, performances and food" (Desai 2011, 74), and, we argue, tourism.

Given the simultaneous, and apparently interrelated, popularity of Bollywood and slum tourism, this paper explores the ways in which Bollywood films in particular, are implicated in the popularisation of slum tourism in India and how Bollywood becomes associated and included in the same slums-oriented tours. The article opens with an introduction to the notion of film-induced tourism, Bollywood as a transnational cultural industry and the relationship between Bollywood films and outbound tourism. The second section discusses the inbound tourism triggered by Bollywood cinema, which paves the way for the analysis of the relationship between films and poverty tourism. Through the analysis of recent studies on Bollywood-induced tourism and on the representation of Indian poverty in films, we then discuss the existing link between Dharavi-led slum tourism and Indian cinema. Our thematic analysis of people's responses to a "Slum and Bollywood tour" in Mumbai, published on Tripadvisors, will further demonstrate how the combination of Bollywood tours with slum tours reveals the parallel trajectories which have led towards the perception of both the slum and Bollywood as the two most prominent symbols of *authentic* India in the global marketplace, and how this promise of authenticity makes slums popular as tourist destinations. Importantly, our analysis does not aim to measure the degree of authenticity of the slum, or of Bollywood, but it rather focuses on the ways in which Bollywood as a cultural industry that includes both cinema and tourism projects an idea of "authentic India" for global consumption.

Film-induced tourism and Indian cinema

Before discussing the relationship between Bollywood and slum tourism, we need to introduce the notion of film-induced tourism. "Film-induced tourism is defined by Sue Beeton as the practice of visiting "sites where movies and television programmes and series have been filmed as well as tours to production studios, including related theme parks" (2005, 11). Notable examples of the power of films in promoting tourist destinations is the impact of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy on the growth of tourism in New Zealand (Carl et al. 2007), the "small screen" induced "big tourism" in South Korea, based on a number of TV dramas and their transnational circulation and reach (Kim, Long and Robinson 2009) and, more recently, the *Game of Thrones* effect in Croatia, where tourism in the city of Dubrovnik increased of 37.5%

after the release of the second series (Tkalec et al. 2017, 707). The relationship between media, films and tourism has been the focus of a growing body of research across a variety of disciplines in the past two decades. Scholars have been exploring the question of representation and the construction of a "tourist gaze" (Urry 1990; Mendes 2010), the motivations behind tourists' willingness to visit locations (Kumar and Dung 2017, 211; Reijnders 2016), the economic impact of film-related tourism on holiday destinations (Tkalec et al. 2017) as well as the impact of film-induced tourism on the environment (Silk et al. 2017).

As the largest producers of films in the world (Josiam et al. 2020, 181), and a country where the tourist sector is "one of India's largest employment generators" (Biswas and Croy 2018, 39), India is certainly well-placed to promote tourism through its cinema(s). And yet, despite the long-standing history of consumption of Indian films abroad (Eleftheriotis and Iordanova 2006), up until the 1990s no formal links existed between cinema and the tourism market, as the export market was "relatively minor, disorganised and chaotic" (Rajadhyaksha 2003, 29). It wasn't until the government launched a new policy of economic liberalisation, and Indian cinema was granted the status of industry (Mehta 2005, 136), that the film industry started to look at exports in a more organised fashion. It is at this moment that the first links were forged between (outbound) tourism and Indian cinema, Bollywood in particular. Bollywood of course is not the same as Indian cinema: the film industry in India is composed of several regional centres, in different languages, the biggest one of them being the (formerly Bombay) Mumbai-based Hindi film production centre, commonly known as Bollywood. The term Bollywood does not indicate all Hindi films made in Mumbai, but it especially identifies those films which have been produced since the liberalisation of the Indian economy, when the industry acquired a more corporate structure following the economic changes which were taking place within the country (Prasad 2008, 43-44). Importantly, a key aspect of Bollywood is its transnational character: as part of the process of economic liberalisation, the government introduced new regulations on foreign investments which allowed for up to "100% FDI [Foreign Direct Investment] under the film production automatic route" (Biswas and Croy, 36). As a consequence, overseas studios – for example Disney, Fox Star and Viacom – began to invest in local production companies and launched co-productions and joint ventures with Indian producers (Biswas and Croy, 36). As a new consumer culture emerged around this cinema, the term Bollywood came to identify a larger cultural industry, which is related to but expands beyond film production, and which includes "the packaging of big-

budget Hindi films across an array of international promotional sites from shopping malls and multiplexes, TV games shows, fashion runways and dance extravaganzas, to soft-drink fast food advertising, sports marketing, music videos and cell phone ringtones" (Govil 2007, 78). The cultural industry associated with the brand Bollywood has a very significant economic value, if we consider that its financial turnover, according to Rajadhyaksha, is "many times larger than what the cinema itself can claim" (2003, 30), and it is connected with outbound and inbound tourism.

It is at this time of profound structural changes that Bombay films started to target more actively the South Asian diaspora, a significantly lucrative market for Indian cinema, as film narratives were introduced which increasingly revolved around the lives of Indians living abroad (Mehta 2005, 143). The foreign locations featured in Bollywood films soon became desirable tourist destinations for Indian viewers, especially for the emerging new middle class, which displayed a distinct transnational taste. However, Hindi films had of course been shot on foreign locations before, the first outburst of such films appearing in the 1960s. Mohammad observes how Raj Kapoor's *Sangam* (1964), for example, "presented the overseas as a tourist site" (2007, 1023), while Yash Chopra's films played a pivotal role in introducing Indian audiences to the scenic landscape of Switzerland, , and which have become a favourite holiday destination for Indian tourists (Josiam et al. 2020, 184-185). And yet, the film tourism which emerges in the newly liberalised India differs from previous forms of tourism because of its more organised character: the move to overseas film locations was in fact facilitated by economic agreements with foreign countries, which recognised the potential of Bollywood films to increase tourism flows from India.

Since the new millennium several European countries have been offering incentives to films productions in the hope of alluring Indian tourists: the UK government for example in 2005 signed a co-production treaty with India to facilitate filming in the country, and the British Tourist Authority produced a map of Bollywood films location (in Britain), which it circulated in India in a bid to promote tourism to the UK (Mohammad 2007, 1036; Olsberg SPI 2007, 40). In Switzerland, capitalising on the informal flux of Indian tourists visiting the country on the trail of Raj Yash's films, Swiss Tourism launched, in 2010, a packaged tour of Yash Raj Films locations titled "Enchanted Journeys" (Mittal and Swamy 43). Attracting Bollywood productions is a key drive for tourism because film locations will be spotted not only by viewers based in India, but by the Indian diaspora around the world, not to mention

non-Indian viewers in Europe, Asia and Africa (Martin Jones, 2006, 52). Other countries such as Ireland, as illustrated by Rampazzo (2018), have looked at Bollywood not only to boost Indian tourism in the island, but also as a way to attract potential students, as they opened the doors of Trinity College to a big production such as Kabir Khan's 2012 film *Ek Tha Tiger* (172).

If Bollywood films, as seen in this section, play a strong role in the promotion of outbound tourism, they also play an important role in attracting tourists to India, and, as we will see in the following sections, in the promotion of slum tours in the country.

Bollywood and tourism

While the outbound tourism inspired by Bollywood films is well documented, there is far less data on the impact of Indian films on tourism to and within the country, as research in this field is still very limited (Kim and Rijenders 2018, 7). In her comparative analysis of film-induced tourism in India and Papua Nuova Guinea, Devi Mishra suggests that Bollywood films have contributed to the popularisation of certain tourist destinations – such as Manali, featuring in Rajkumar Hirani's *3 Idiots* – (2019, 48) but she does not offer any data to support this claim. Similarly, Mittal and Swamy have commented on the influence of Bollywood films on Indian viewers' holiday choices, as they write that "people from all over the country used to throng to Queen's Necklace at Marine Drive or Juhu Chowpatty, which symbolized Mumbai in films" (2013, 42) but again they do not provide any evidence to support their observation. This might be because film-induced tourism in the country is mostly still an informal affair: in this respect, Biswas and Croy note that, "anecdotally, it is reported that domestic tourists visit *some* prominent locations after films' release. However, there are no tourist activities present at these sites" (2018, 42).

More recent studies have investigated further the role of films in attracting visitors in India. A survey conducted by Kumar and Dung's amongst tourists in India and China, for example, revealed that the large majority of their sample of tourists, in India, engaged in film-induced tourism, although they do not clarify whether the desire to visit India was triggered by Indian or foreign films, and whether these tourists were domestic or international travellers (2013, 213 – 215). Other studies have found that Bollywood films have a strong influence on the desire to visit India amongst the diaspora. Nanjangud and Reijnders's research amongst the Dutch Hindustani, for example, shows how these films represent a very

important cultural reference in the diaspora, and, while contributing to the creation of an "imaginary homeland"[1] and nurturing a sense of cultural affiliation with India, they also trigger a desire to visit the country, which is otherwise largely unknown to them (2020). However, rather than following the itinerary of a single film, these tourists prefer to travel across what Nanjangud and Rejinders call *cinematic itineraries*: "a collection of Bollywood movies and celebrity hotspots to develop a multi-sided tour through India, travelling from one movie to another and experiencing India through the lenses of Bollywood as a cohesive whole" (14). These research findings resonate with a previous study conducted by Bandyopadhyay amongst first- and second-generation British Indians and British Indians-Trinidadians in London (2008), as he too found a correlation between his respondents' engagement with Bollywood as a cultural signifier and their desire to visit India.

The popularity of Bollywood-inspired diasporic tourism has led to the emergence of Bollywood-themed packaged tours specifically aimed at second and third generation British Indians and American Indians:

> The tour operators are taking these tourists to Mumbai, India (where the Bollywood movie industry is located). For this, a specially created studio called *BollywooDrome* has been designed for the tour – with sets created to recreate memorable Bollywood movie scenes. It is an interactive and participative session with performers, directors and technicians from Bollywood who will enact scenes from movies for the visitors, along with a question and answer session. An intimate exposure to the behind-the-scenes activities of a movie gives an inside look at the sets and what goes into the making of movies (Bandyopadhyay 2008, 92).

Bollywood-themed tours have indeed become very popular in the last ten years. If Bandyopadhyay mentions only one tour operator offering such tours in 2008, a simple online search would now provide a vast number of webpages of tour operators offering Bollywood tours.

The rise of Bollywood-themed tours has prompted significant changes in the relationship between Bollywood and the tourism industry. In their 2018 analysis of film-induced tourism in India, Biswas and Croy criticised a heavily bureaucratic system regulating

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[1] Writing about the position of Indian exiled or migrant writers, Salman Rushdie writes that the sense of loss they feel might urge them to look back, to reclaim their homeland which, however, has inevitably changed due to the spatial and temporal distance between them. He argues therefore that what writers can reclaim are "fictions […] imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind" (1992, 10). Similarly, Nanjangud and Reijenders argue that for the Dutch Hindustanis, who are generations away from life in India, Bollywood feeds their imagination producing "idealized cinematic imaginaries of the Indian 'homeland' (10).

filming in India and the lack of a National Film Commission that could facilitate film productions. However, they welcome the establishment of a Film Facilitation Office for the promotion of film productions in India (39). According to the Information & Broadcasting Ministry Secretary Apurva Chandra, since its creation in 2015 the Film Facilitation Office has facilitated 120 international film productions, and 70 domestic films (Divya 2021). Significantly, Chandra cited these figures at a symposium on Film Tourism organised by the Tourism Ministry and the Information and Broadcasting Ministry in November 2021, which took place in Mumbai. The organisation of the symposium itself signals the willingness of the two ministries to join forces to promote a more structured Bollywood-inspired tourism and to promote filming in domestic locations, even for Indian productions (PIB, 2021). Growing awareness on the relevance of film-induced tourism for the economy is evidenced by its promotion on the Maharashtra Tourism's website, which describes Bollywood Tourism as a "hands-on cinema experience where one will visit the studio to see the live shooting, understand the technicalities of filmmaking […] even sometimes get to learn some signature dance moves". The webpage also explains the economic benefit of Bollywood tourism in terms of job opportunities for local workers, from travel agents to dancers hired to teach dance moves to tourists. Even though a clear strategy for Bollywood-inspired tourism is still in the making, Bandyopadhyay and Nanjangud and Rejinders's studies show that this kind of tourism has been flourishing for some time, and "there are now various dedicated domestic and international companies — such as www.bollywoodtours.in, www.filmyholidays.com and www.bollywoodtourism.com, to name but a few — which offer a plethora of Bollywood-themed tours, including slum tours and studio tours" (Nanjangud 2019, 3). Nanjangud's remark is significant not only because it confirms the growing popularity of Bollywood-inspired tourism, but especially because it highlights the rise of slum tourism – and its association with cinema. Incidentally, Maharashtra Tourism's website too lists both activities under the "things to do" section of the Mumbai-dedicated page. It is to Dharavi and its relation to (Bollywood) cinema that we now turn to.

Films, the slum and tourism

Having established the connections between the film industry and tourism, we are now going to focus on the links between films, tourism and the slum. Slums have long featured in Indian films, therefore it should not be surprising that they have become the

ultimate destination of film tourism in India. Slums in various forms and contexts have always been associated with the representation of a modern city and, therefore, have been a part of how Mumbai (former Bombay) was constructed on screen. The inclusion of slums in the modern metropolitan representations is connected to the persistent relationship, "both complementary and conflictual" (Prasad 2014, 72), between the country and the city. As Ranjani Mazumdar has argued, "the city itself is marked, even scarred, by the fuzziness of lines between the "urban" and the "rural." In imaginative terms, the "village" is never absent from everyday life in the city" (Mazumdar 2007, 4). The first representation of this kind could be found in films such as Bimal Roy's *Do Bigha Zameen* (1953) or Raj Kapoor's *Shree 420* (1955), both concerned with urbanisation and rural to urban migration. In *Shree 420*, a kind-hearted villager Raju arrives in Bombay with a hope of leading a decent life just to be drawn into a web of criminal activities and treachery by the capitalist-driven, westernized gang of gamblers. Raju realises his mistakes only through the encounter with the urban poor – a village-like community inside the big city. This connection between the urban poor and the village-like communities inside the city has many resonances to the inclusion of slums in the film narratives of the later decades for, as Ashis Nandy argues, the slum in India "recreates the remembered village in a new guise and resurrects the old community ties in new forms" (1998, 6). In this respect, Raj and Sreekumar point out that for years many Bombay-based films "addressing social issues tended to use Dharavi as its backdrop" (2017, 141), starting from *Deewar* (Yash Chopra, 1975), which was one of the first films to launch the career of Amitabh Bachchan as an angry young man, and explored the socio-political tensions and state instabilities in India, especially aiming its critique to the state apparatuses – "the law is seen as turning against the poor after establishing itself through a primitive accumulation at the expense of the poor" (Prasad 2014, 78).

The trend continues with other films having Dharavi as a setting, e.g. *Dharavi* (Sudhir Mishra, 1992), *Black Friday* (Anurag Kashyap 2004) and, more recently, Zoya Akhtar's *Gully Boy* (2019). The representation of slums in Indian cinema is therefore nothing new. What is new, however, is a certain fascination with and, even, celebration of, a slum-way of life. This new angle, arguably, could be traced back to the release of Danny Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008) – the film which not only boosted a renewed interest in India, but also propelled slum-tourism in Mumbai. Most of the literature on Dharavi-based tourism tends to identify *Slumdog Millionaire* as the film that has contributed the most to putting Dharavi on the map

of slum tourism (Diekmann and Hannam 2012; Dyson 2012; Niesbett 2017; Raj and Sreekumar 2017). Made by British filmmaker Danny Boyle, but with a predominantly Indian cast - and an Indian co-director, Loveleen Tandan, the film tells the story of Jamal Malik, a boy from Mumbai's Dharavi slum, his brother Salim and their childhood sweetheart Latika. Jamal takes part in a popular TV quiz show *Kaun Banega Crorepati* (*Who Wants to be a Millionaire?*) and answers all the questions correctly, becoming therefore the *millionaire* of the title. The film has won many awards at the film festivals (including several Oscars) and has been under media and scholarly attention ever since its release.

Even though *Slumdog Millionaire* has been analysed from a number of different perspectives, such as being seen as a certain reboot of romance in postmodern and transcultural perspective (Duncan 2011), and its reflection on post-national globalization (Mukherjee 2013), it is especially the film's representations of poverty and slums which has been at the centre of much scholarly discussion (Sengupta 2013, Mendes 2010, Chandra 2013). One of the most curious aspects of *Slumdog Millionaire's* success was the perception that the film, because of its focus on Indian poverty, was offering a representation of a "real India" which is not often seen on screen, as evident from numerous reviews and viewers' responses. For example, Jenna Roberts in her review of the film claims that *Slumdog Millionaire* has "more reality to it than most documentaries" and that the film reveals "brutal facts" of life of people in India (2009). These claims could be explained by a certain visual style of the film, which employs many digital hand-held cameras which are always in motion, and together with the abundance of canted angles and POV shots, creating an illusionary authentic tourist participatory experience. This film style is not a coincidence, as the film's director of photography is Anthony Dod Mantle, who actively took part in the Dogme '95 cinema movement, which reacted against Hollywood-style illusion of cinema and promoted cinema as a medium of truth. Therefore, the cinematographic style of the film and the widely pronounced fact of real slum children acting in the film created an illusion of realism associated to *Slumdog Millionaire* and, especially, the curiosity and fascination with the slum and slum-lives (Valančiūnas 2017).

The visibility that *Slumdog* has given to Dharavi has provided slum tours with a new push, as ever since the release of the film a myriad of tour operators have started to offer slum tours in the city (Biswas and Croy 2018, 42). Mendes reports how a guide for the aforementioned Reality Tours and Travel company stated "that 'everybody is talking about

Slumdog' and that these film tourists 'want to see *the real thing*'", i.e. Dharavi (2010, 478). Her reference is critical to understand our argument on the perception of slum as the symbol of authentic India, because on the one hand it explicitly names a (fiction) film as the reason for the growing popularity of tourism in Dharavi, and on the other hand it suggests that, for tourists, the slum that they had seen on screen represents the *real* and authentic India. The tourist experience is often marked with a "quest for authenticity" (MacCannell 1999, 105). Most commonly authenticity in tourism is understood as something created or enacted by local people according to their customs or traditions – "a sense of the genuine, real or unique" (Heitmann 2011, 45). However, the question arises of who defines (or assess) authenticity. As argued by Erik Cohen, authenticity is socially constructed and "its social connotation is, therefore, not given but 'negotiable'" (Cohen 1988, 374). In this way "tourists are semioticians" (Rojek and Urry 2003, 4), reading particular sites as signs, investing them with certain meanings and connotations. And here it may be argued that these meanings are produced and generated through means of various media, films included. However, what strengthens the attachment of these meanings to particular tourist sites, are not the tourists alone, but also tour operators, who "frequently use authenticity or similar promotional slogans such as 'unique', 'true' or 'the real thing' to sell their products and services" (Heitmann 2011, 48).

Therefore, the association between the slum and the idea of an authentic India suggests that, for tourists visiting Dharavi, the slum seen on films has become the metonym for India, as in fact *real* India comes to be associated with poor India (Clini 2021, 30; Meschkank 2011, 53). This is certainly ironic if we consider that the Dharavi seen on the film is actually a combination of various slums of Mumbai, including Juhu and Versova (Roy 2011, 225; Mendes 2010, 478) and that, as Diekmann and Hannam's study reveals, the structure of these tours is very similar to the ways in which slums are portrayed in films (2012).

In order to capitalise on the success of Boyle's film, the descriptions of the various "Slumdog Millionaire" tours of Dharavi explicitly draw a connection between the tours and the film. The "Slumdog Millionaire Tour of Dharavi Slum" advertised at Getyourguide.com specifically acknowledges that Dharavi slum was popularised by the *Slumdog Millionaire*. Other tours have presented even more explicit linkage between the tour and the film. For example, the Ghum India Ghum tour operator offers "Essence of India with Slumdog Millionaire Tour" 8 days-tour, which includes not only visit to the Dharavi slum in Mumbai,

but also trips to Delhi, Agra, and Jaipur (the golden triangle of North India). Even though most of the places in the tour have no connection to the film and are obviously included under the "Slumdog Millionaire" banner only to validate the package deal, the places in Mumbai and Agra are described through direct references to the film. For instance, the tour invites to visit several locations from the movie (like the Chhatrapati Shivaji railway station where the closing film song Jai Ho was filmed) or Taj Mahal, where Jamal and Salim acted as tour guides, but it also invites to see "street children and slum dwellers and interact with them and try to understand how they manage their lives", adding also in the description that the main leading child actors in the film were also homeless kids. By referring to the scenes, characters and actors of the film and by drawing parallels between the film and actual locations these tours support the idea about the certain "realism" in the film and, in turn, link it to the 'real' encounter of the Dharavi slums offered by their tours.

In addition to the visit to the slums, these same tour operators often offer the "Bollywood experience" as a part of a package. At a first sight this may appear a somewhat paradoxical choice: Bollywood is India's cultural industry *par excellence*, and rather than being associated with poverty, it is the epitome of modern, cosmopolitan and transnational India. And yet, many slum tours are often offered together with Bollywood tours: the company Bollywood Tours offer a "Bollywood with Slum Tour package", Tourradar offers a "Mumbai tour with Dharavi Slum and Bollywood Tour", Magical Mumbai Tours offer a "Bollywood Tour + Dharavi Slum Tour", and so do many more others. In an even more specific film reference, Shore Excursion Groups offer a tour titled "The Real Slumdog Millionaires, Dharavi". The connection being forged between Bollywood, Dharavi and its "Slumdog Millionaires" requires some reflection, as it might be also forged and facilitated by the same film under discussion. It is on this latter point, the relationship between Bollywood and *Slumdog Millionaire*, that we will focus in the next section.

The slum, Bollywood and authentic India

Even though scholars have commented especially on the representation of poverty and the increased interest in slum-tourism generated by *Slumdog Millionaire* (Mendes 2010, 478; Meschkank 2011, 52; Nisbett 2017, 39), many have also commented on the film's contested relationship to Bollywood cinema (Gehlawat 2013; Mukherjee 2013; Sunya 2013). *Slumdog Millionaire* does indeed reference popular Bollywood films, for example the famous

police chase scene in Dharavi at the beginning of the film was in fact inspired by a similar scene in Anurag Kashyap's *Black Friday*, pointing once again at the relationship between slums and Bollywood cinema. While not being an Indian film, *Slumdog* is a film that plays with Bollywood, with its star-crossed lovers and its family melodrama motifs, not to mention its direct reference to megastar actor Amitabh Bachchan. Furthermore, apart from having Loveleen Tandan as co-director, and music by A. R. Rahman, "the film contains homages to numerous Hindi films including *Satya*, *Company*, *Black Friday* and *Deewaar*" (Desai 2011, 87), not to mention the closing song and dance sequence, performed at the Chattrapati Shivaji train station. Perhaps because of it borrowing from Hindi films, at the time of its release the film was widely publicised in the west as a Bollywood film:
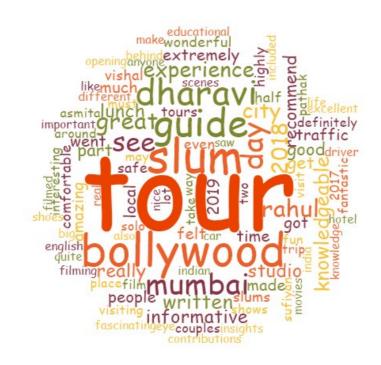
> On February 23, 2009, it would appear that "Bollywood" came of age in the United States through the vehicle of a "going nowhere" rags-to-riches movie shot in Mumbai that was feted at the world's most prominent film awards ceremony. The only discrepancy for that was that, for several Indian commentators, *Slumdog Millionaire* was not, in fact, a Bollywood film (Schaefer 2013, 63).

Even though the description of *Slumdog Millionaire* as a Bollywood film is certainly inaccurate, it is true that the film had decisively increased western awareness of Bollywood. In this respect, Bhattacharya Mehta observes that "the cameo appearance of Bollywood" in the award-winning film has made "Bollywood reach out to more viewers than Bollywood films themselves could ever venture" (2011, 14). The transnational reach of this cultural industry, seen in music performances, film festivals, arts exhibitions (including film posters, think of the 2002 Indian Summer Festival in the UK), has introduced Bollywood into the "popular imagination" of Western audiences (Athique 2008, 300, see also Barat 2018, 19) and, as such, Bollywood has acquired (aside from its economic value) a significant intangible character, a sort of structure of feeling that western audiences associate with India. Indeed, as Desai remarked, Bollywood "often functions metonymically for India nationally and internationally" (Desai 2011, 75). Drawing upon Rajadhyaksha's famous observation that Bollywood as a cultural industry is concerned with the production and export of Indian nationalism on the global stage (2003, 30), it is therefore not surprising that it has come to represent India itself. Bollywood thus becomes a signifier of Indianness, and, as such, is seen as the "alternative to the Americanness of Hollywood in its Third World or postcolonial sensibilities and structures of feeling" (Mukherjee 2013, 26).

It is then in their parallel promise to offer a glimpse of real India, besides Slumdog's references to Bollywood, that we could see the rationale behind the association of slum tours with Bollywood tours. In the analysis of the intertwined relationship between Bollywood tours and slum tours, what matters is not whether *Slumdog Millionaire* is or is not a Bollywood film, but rather how it is re-packaged for a global body of tourists who, even when not identifying the film as Indian proper, associate it with Bollywood cinema, and therefore come to associate Bollywood with the slum as the two most prominent symbols of India. Moreover, the link that tour operators forge between the two reveals a marketing strategy that seeks to capitalise on both and which is grounded in what we could call strategic "re-Orientalism" (Lau and Mendes 2011).

Research on film tourism shows that a location is successfully turned into a tourist destination if the film which is set there provides the audience with an "emotional experience" (Josiam et al. 2020, 186). In the case of Dharavi tours, the 2008 Oscar winning film seems to provide a strong enough emotional experience to instigate tourism in the area, not to mention the appeal to see "real" India and its intertwined relationship to Bollywood. The combination of slum tours with Bollywood tours thus seems only natural for, in line with the idea of Bollywood as a structure of feeling and signifier of India, tourists are invited to follow *cinematic itineraries* (Nanjangud and Reijnders 2020), that could take them in and out of the slum, and to undertake the "Bollywood experience", including trying out some dance moves (Maharashtra Tourism website). In this respect, Bollywood Tours offer a tour package titled "Full-Day Private Slum and Bollywood Tour with Dance", which, at the starting price of £103.56, offers tourists an overview of "the two sides of Mumbai […] the vast Dharavi slum followed by a tour of glittering Bollywood" (Tripadvisors). At the time of writing this article, this specific tour had received 19 reviews on the website Tripadvisors, for a total score of 4.5/5. A thematic analysis of the reviews posted on the website confirms that the appeal of this tour lies in the promise to discover "real" India, and to "learn" more about it. While one reviewer for example praised the tour for providing "authentic experiences", not only in the slum but also in the Bollywood studios, where she had the chance to see a "real Bollywood performance", the other reviewer was invited to have a ginger tea with her tour guide's

mother while visiting the slum, an experience she described as "sensational".[2] As the word-cloud chart generated using the reviews posted on Tripadvisors shows, tourists emphasise the educational aspect of the tour, as in fact words such as "knowledge", "information", "education" and their derivative dominate the chart.

This analysis, while being too small to be representative of the whole slum and Bollywood tourism business, resonates nevertheless with previous research findings, and confirms Nanjangud observation according to which:

> Bollywood tourism is not limited to the journey that an individual takes from being a passive member of a film's audience to an active tourist. It also encompasses the tourism and Bollywood film industries, the representation of locations in the films, the narratives, pre-travel imaginaries as developed under the influence of films, and the kind of policies and politics involved in these processes. (2019, 3)

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[2] This latter example too points at the overlaps between film narratives and tours, as another famous film, as another famous film set in Dharavi slum, *Gully Boy*, has a scene where American tourists while visiting the slum are given some tea.

The popularisation of the slum as a symbol of authentic India, and its entanglement with Bollywood cinema, then inevitably makes it a key destination of film-induced tourism in India.

The slum in the cultural industry

Taking into examination the case of tourism in Dharavi, in this article we have discussed the nature of the relationship between slum and Bollywood-induced tourism in India. The aim of our analysis was to understand to what extent the popularisation of slum tourism is indebted to Bollywood cinema and the ways in which Bollywood itself comes to be entangled in slum-oriented tours. As we have seen, Indian films have long played a key role in the popularisation of holiday destinations for Indian tourists (Josiam et al. 2020), and since the liberalisation of the Indian economy and the emergence of Bollywood as a cultural industry, the connection between tourism and Indian films has become even stronger, as many countries have begun to offer economic incentives to Indian production companies in the hope to attract Indian tourists. While there is comparatively less research on Bollywood and inbound tourism, studies conducted in this field suggest that Bollywood films play an important role in the attraction of tourists to India, especially amongst the Indian diaspora (Bandyopadhyay 2008, Nanjgud and Rejinders 2020).

If Bollywood promotes tourism in India, and Indian popular cinema has often given visibility to slums, it is plausible then to imagine that Bollywood films might have played a role in the popularisation of slum tours. And yet, the real push to slum tourism in India, and Dharavi in particular, has come after the release of *Slumdog Millionaire* (Mendes 2010). Through the analysis of the representation of the slum in films and the popularisation of Bollywood on the global arena, we argue that the increasing popularity of slum tourism, and its association with Bollywood, goes beyond the visibility slums have received from films, but it is especially connected to the symbolic value that both Bollywood and the slum are attributed with in the global marketplace: that of representing, albeit in two contrasting ways, two "authentic" sides of India. It is in fact this allure of "authenticity" that makes them both appealing for tourists, hence the push to promote the two together. For example, the "Bollywood Tour With Slum Tour" advertised on getyourguide.com promises for the Mumbai visitor to show "the largest slum in Asia" and "the largest film industry in the world" - the "two parts of India that are so different from anything we have ever seen before", as one of the

tourists writes in her review of the tour in the same webpage. Indeed, Dyson observes that, if we consider that the appeal of these tours reside precisely in their ability to "facilitate access to spaces perceived to be inaccessible to outsiders, whilst also aiming to unveil the inner working of these spaces, then authenticity and realism of the experience for the tour-goer is fundamental" (2012, 257). It comes as no surprise that the forged connection (or rather a stark juxtaposition) of slums and Bollywood is carried out and exploited by the tour operators then, precisely because it plays well with a stark juxtaposition between the "modern" and the "traditional", which has also been played out in a number of films (the transition between the village and the city). For instance, *Slumdog Millionaire* draws and sustains the juxtaposition of the modern and the backward, most clearly visible in the film through the anachronistic architecture of Mumbai, where timeless slums are juxtaposed to growing skyscrapers. In fact, the "Slumdog Millionaire: tour at Jaya Travels actually refers to the film in order to emphasise and establish this modern/underdeveloped paradigm: "One of the most striking things about Mumbai is the contrast of modernity with those residents, like Jamal, who live in poverty, as depicted in the film."

The association of slum tours with Bollywood tours thus plays on this juxtaposition between the traditional and the modern, both "real" aspects of life in Mumbai. In this sense, if we consider that "the slum is often the first visible marker of modernization in Third World society" (Nandy 1998, 3), we see how the link that the tourism sector forges with the most prominent cultural industry of India resonates with Hesmondalgh's reflection according to which "the way in which the cultural industries organise and circulate symbolic creativity reflects the extreme inequalities and injustices […] apparent in capitalist societies" (Hesmondalgh 2007, 5), as these tours lay bare the extreme disparities existing within Indian society, which in turn tourists expect to see. And yet, the "true" India that is seen in these tours remains a fictional construct that, as previously observed, is modelled on the portrayal of slums offered by films (Diekmann and Hannam 2012). The slum is therefore incorporated in the cultural industry which re-packages it for the consumption of tourists, following a marketing strategy that capitalises on the demand for "authentic experiences" (Dyson 2012) in a form of strategic "re-Orientalism" (Lau and Mendes 2011). Indeed the combination of slum and Bollywood tours respond to Lau and Mendes' propositions according to which re-Orientalists "keep with the tradition of Orientalism in maintaining the 'world-as-exhibition'"

and "utilise positionality to prove eligibility of representative and validity of testimony and authority" (2011, 5).

The organisations of slum tours of Dharavi as truthful representations of Indian life, even if in a Bollywoodized fashion, represents a significant market of tourism in Mumbai. As with film-induced tourism, these tours offer opportunities for economic growth, as they create jobs and generate income, hence the recent efforts of the Tourism Ministry and the Information and Broadcasting Ministry to create a common strategy for the promotion of film-induced tourism[3]. It should be also noted that many tour operators offering tours of Dharavi often claim to give some of the proceeds back to the community, for example Magical Mumbai Tours claims to share 30% of their profits with their NGO, "Magical Mumbai Homes", although no details are given on the activities of this NGO (Magical Mumbai Tours website), while Reality Tours and Travel, whose stated aim is to challenge "negative stereotypes associated with slums", explains on their website that "80% of the profits from every tour are invested back into the community through the programs of our NGO, *Reality Gives*, and most of our guides are from the community" (Reality Tours). And yet, research into experiences of tour-goers shows that, even though they praise these tours as a very informative experience, tourists tend to leave with a new positive attitude towards slums which, while welcomed as it counters negative attitudes towards slum-dwellers, overlooks poverty and "normalises" it. As a consequence, even though the inequalities that plagues Indian society are made visible to tourists, they remain unchallenged by tourists themselves (Nisbett 2017).

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[3] See Malik (2016) for a more discussion of the value of creative and cultural industries on South Asian economies.

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