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Development of a logo assessment matrix in response to challenges in designing graphic identity for country tourism branding campaigns

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Development of a logo assessment matrix in response to challenges in designing graphic identity for country tourism branding campaigns

by

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ABSTRACT

With increasing competition throughout the worldwide tourism market, countries have started implementing corporate branding techniques to assist their tourism promotion. As a result, committees and organizations that are responsible for the tourism marketing of countries have embraced branding initiatives in order to attract more visitors. This approach is referred to as destination branding. Design of the graphic identity, which often centers around the logo, has become an essential element for these tourism campaigns.

This study investigates the visual characteristics of tourism logos of 96 countries from all over the world. An assessment matrix was developed to organize them in taxonomic and conceptual categories. The goal of this assessment tool is to provide information about what the most commonly used attributes are in tourism logos, and what types of visual motifs these attributes are used to communicate. The assessment matrix will help clarify how various graphic design methods are used to convey certain conceptual attributes, and how these attributes and different motifs may be used to enhance uniqueness, memorability, and authenticity of a country’s logo. Uniqueness is one of the most important features for country tourism logos given that they are all in competition with each other for tourists.

As demonstrated in the discussion chapter, the assessment matrix is useful in revealing several overused, ineffective, and unclear messages; it also makes it easy to notice which approaches are more effective than others. This analysis method can be applied to other destination logos as well as to corporate logos, and can have practical implications for brand management.
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

With increasing competition throughout the worldwide tourism market, countries have started implementing corporate branding techniques to assist their tourism promotion. Terms such as *brand image* and *brand identity* already in wide use in the corporate world are now used more and more to describe the perceptions that are held of countries among their various stakeholders.

For many years the topic of branding has been of great interest to marketing researchers. A big part of such interest is the belief that a strong brand can have long-term benefits, including customer loyalty and increased profitability (Plummer, 1985).

Country branding has been accepted as an integral and influential part of a traveler’s decision process. Country branding involves the perceptions about a place as reflected by the associations held in the mind of a tourist (Cai, 2002). Before actually visiting a location, its brand facilitates destination marketing by providing potential tourists with information that allows them to identify the country, differentiate it from competitors, and build expectations about the likely travel experience provided by the destination (Murphy, Benckendorff, & Moscardo, 2007). “Smart states are building their brands around reputations and attitudes in the same way smart companies do” (van Ham, 2001).

As a result, committees and organizations that are responsible for the tourism marketing and promotion of various countries have embraced branding initiatives in order to attract more visitors (Blain, Levy, & Ritchie, 2005). Design of the graphic identity, which often centers around the logo, has become an essential element for these tourism campaigns.
A successful logo design should meet the goals set in the design brief and be relevant to the positioning statement of the company or country. From the design viewpoint, simplicity, relevance, distinctiveness, memorability, and adaptability are inseparable requirements of a successful logo (Airey, 2010).

In corporate branding, all the companies within an industry have many overlapping attributes or distinctive qualities that they would like to reflect. For example, all wireless telecommunication providers are offering the same essential services, so they share many of the same attributes; however, each of them strives to build its message conveying one or two distinctive attributes that would differentiate it from the crowd and provide uniqueness to the company’s brand. For example, AT&T (Figure 1) focuses on attributes such as global coverage (a globe surrounded by stripes), whereas Verizon focuses on affordability and speed (use of gradient and straight lines indicates speed).

![Figure 1. AT&T logo (http://www.att.com/)](image1)

![Figure 2. Verizon Wireless logo (http://verizon.com/)](image2)

Countries are complex entities that can be described by numerous attributes; sometimes these might even contradict each other. This is why designing a logo for a country is perhaps more difficult than designing for a corporation. In corporate logos, it is believed that the simplest message is often the most effective one; however, this might not be true for
country logos, as countries are so multidimensional. In designing their visual identity, many countries may find that the attributes they would like to communicate are not unique: Most countries have beautiful beaches, diverse experiences, cultural opportunities, or historic heritage. While certain attributes may be authentic and inviting, they may lack uniqueness and therefore lack memorability. The ability to represent a country’s history, culture, traditions, and people in the most compelling and authentic way “provides the country’s image with that all-important quality of dignity, which, arguably, commercial brands can do without, but countries cannot” (Anholt, 2003, p.141). For example, the awareness that Germany is a home of great classical music (Bach, Beethoven), literature (Goethe, Heine), and philosophy (Hegel, Kant) gives a human dimension to the sterile perception of this country as a home of highly functional, expensive, and over-engineered consumer products (BMW, Bosch, Porsche).

It is not always easy to measure whether or not the visual attributes within the logo communicate the intended messages. The visual perceptions of people from different countries, cultures, and even genders might be different; their perceptions may also be affected by prior knowledge, associations, expectations, etc.

This study investigates the visual characteristics and conceptual attributes of tourism logos of countries from all over the world and organizes them in taxonomic and conceptual categories. The goal of this organization is to provide information about what the most commonly used attributes are in tourism logos and through what types of visual motifs these attributes are depicted. Using the existing criteria that define successful logos, this study also examines whether or not the collected logos meet the necessary functional criteria. This taxonomy will help us understand how various graphic design methods are used to convey
certain conceptual attributes, and how these attributes and different motifs may be used to enhance uniqueness. This analysis can help countries that are considering a new tourism logo find a balance between the most distinctive and most clear attributes and visuals, to ensure that the resulting brand identity is understandable, memorable, authentic, and unique.

“Once you start looking at features and benefits, in classic marketing style, you are inevitably driven into common and non-unique territory, and one country starts to resemble another. … [S]elling the feature of blue sea and sky with sandy beaches and the user benefit of relaxation and a golden tan, makes all seaside destinations indistinguishable from each other” (Anholt, 2003, p. 141).
CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter introduces background information related to purpose and design of logos and brand identity systems. It also discusses the design of brand identity within the scope of countries.

The literature related to identity design has contributed to the conceptual framework of the present study. While brand identity is a widely discussed and investigated concept, there is not much research conducted on the application of brand identity to country tourism campaigns.

2.1 Theoretical Definitions

Brand: a mixture of tangible and intangible attributes that are visualized in a trademark, which, if managed properly, creates value and influence for a company or entity. ‘Value’ can be interpreted differently: “…from a marketing or consumer perspective it is the promise and delivery of an experience; from a business perspective it is the security of future earnings; from a legal perspective it is a separable piece of intellectual property. A brand is intended to ensure relationships that create and secure future earnings by growing customer preference and loyalty. Brands simplify decision making, represent an assurance of quality, and offer a relevant, different, and credible choice among competing offerings” (Interbrand, 2006, p. 14).

Branding: “the strategic and creative practice of creating brands and managing them as valuable assets” (Interbrand, 2006, p. 20).
Destination brand: the sum of distinguishing characteristics of a destination that differentiates it from its competitors. In most destination branding studies, the destination brand is represented by the geographical name of the destination (Keller, 1993).

Destination branding: the marketing technique to enhance the brand equity of the destination’s brand, and to influence potential tourists’ behaviors (Keller, 1993).

Logo: “the graphic element used to identify a company, service, or product. It is a distinctive mark, sign, symbol, or graphic (usually of the company or brand name) that is in continual use and typically trademarked to protect it from other companies. Logos are immediately recognizable and act as ‘brand ambassadors’ because they become unmistakably identified with a particular organization or brand” (Interbrand, 2006, p.75).

Logotype: “a company or brand name written in a distinctive typeface or using special lettering that is arranged in a particular way. In addition, the color and shape of the font are distinctly different from others in the same market” (Interbrand, 2006, p. 75).

Mark: “the portion of a brand that consists of a symbol, design, or distinctive lettering or coloring” (Interbrand, 2006, p. 78).

Perception: the way people interpret the stimuli around them. It’s an impression of reality based on knowledge, beliefs, needs, attitudes, events, etc., that influences actions and behaviors. In a branding context, perceptions can and do affect certain decisions (Interbrand, 2006, p. 94).

Personality: “attributing human characteristics (particularly emotional or attitudinal) to a brand. For example, Coke is fun, McDonald’s is happy, Volvos are safe, and so on. Investing brands with personality is achieved through advertising, promotion, packaging, and/or corporate graphics, but also increasingly through the qualities of the people who work
for the brand. Furthermore, personality should be created to reflect or complement the brand’s target customers, and understanding their characteristics aids this. Personality is a critical component of brand building because product parity exists in most markets, so differentiation and choice may largely be the result of what a customer ‘likes’ emotionally” (Interbrand, 2006, p. 95).

Positioning: the differentiating position that a brand implements within its competitive environment to guarantee that its target audience can distinguish their brand from others. Positioning engages the “careful manipulation” of each and every element of the marketing. It identifies the audience brand is trying to appeal to, the basis of that appeal, and “why key targets should believe the message” (Interbrand, 2006, 96).

Target Audience: “A specified audience or demographic group to which a product or service is marketed. It is often defined by age, gender, and/or socio-economics but target audiences can be internal or external, geographic, or loyal/ non-loyal, and so on” (Interbrand, 2006, p. 117).

Trademark: “a formally registered and distinctive symbol; it is any name, word, phrase, logo, design, image (or a combination of two or more) used by businesses to distinguish their products or services from the competition. A trademark is proprietary and is usually registered with global and regional trademark offices. It provides legal protection for exclusive use by its owner” (Interbrand, 2006, p. 119).

Visual Identity: “extending a company’s brand in every possible way with every element contributing to a distinctive visual style. This includes where and how a logo is used, colors, type fonts and sizes, and imagery. The purpose of a company’s visual identity is to set
it apart from its competition and, in order to be effective and memorable, it has to be consistent across all media” (Interbrand, 2006, p. 123).

Wordmark: “the way the name is written that is unique and ownable. It also refers to a logotype. It typically incorporates one or more unique characteristics such as a custom designed font, symbol, or graphic device” (Interbrand, 2006, p. 126).

### 2.2 Branding

Harsh consumer competition today creates numerous choices, and it is important for companies to find ways that help them connect with their customers on an emotional level, become unique, and create lifelong relationships (Wheeler, 2009).

Branding is a complex discipline used to build awareness and extend customer loyalty (Wheeler, 2009). It is also a promise of relationship and a guarantee of quality (Perry & Winsom, 2003). As brands have become more and more aware of their growing susceptibility to public opinion, and consequently of the fact that their behavior is increasingly becoming more visible, they have started seizing every opportunity to express why people should choose one brand over another (Fioroni & Titterton, 2009). A strong brand stands out in a densely crowded marketplace. Companies have come to understand that by leveraging branding they can outpace the competition and give employees the best tools to reach customers (Wheeler, 2009).

In their book, Perry and Winsom (2003) state that a strong brand is actually an emblem and global symbol, capable of increasing credibility and attracting instant attention
in a new country, category, or industry. It’s a powerful way to stand out by being relevant to target audiences and different from the competition.

For many years, branding simply meant identity (Perry et al., 2003); however, according to many contemporary brand scholars, there truly is a difference between brand identity and brand building (Lindstrom, 2005; Fioroni et al., 2009; Ford, 2005).

As seen in Figure 3 below, brand identity is significant but not the only aspect of a company’s, industry’s, or country’s identity. Whether the business is a bank or a grocery store, the brand itself can dictate whether it succeeds or fails. In other words, the success of the brand equals the success of the business. This statement might seem a simple equation, but it is not always easy to identify what exactly makes a brand work, as no two brands are the same (Haig, 2004). The relationship between brand identity and brand building is illustrated in Figure 3.

![Figure 3. The relationship of brand identity and brand building (Perry et al., 2003, p.4)]
2.3 Country Branding

Concepts of branding are being increasingly applied to promote places. “Each inhabited place on earth has reputation, just as products and companies have images. The brand images of products and companies may be deliberately created through advertising and marketing, while the reputation of places tends to come about in a more complex and more random way” (Anholt, 2007, p. 7). This comparison is, however, a useful one, as in both cases the image has a significant impact on how the brand is perceived, and in some cases this perception may have a stronger effect than the reality.

Nations have always been striving to promote their economic, diplomatic, and military interests; however, the practice of using corporate branding techniques to promote countries and destinations has only been developing within the last several decades (van Ham, 2001).

The reputation of a place can be rich and complex or simple; it could be mostly negative or positive; however, for the vast majority of places, it is a constantly shifting mixture of those two. “If the place means mostly the same things to most people who are aware of it, this means that it has a strong reputation. If the place means very little to most people who are aware of it, or widely different things depending on who you ask, it has a weak reputation. If it is known by a lot of people, it is a famous place” (Anholt, 2007, p. 8); however, it is important to note that strong and famous do not necessarily mean positive: North Korea, Afghanistan, and Iraq are examples of places that have a strong and famous reputation that is currently not positive.
A country’s reputation is a complex entity which strongly influences the way people inside and outside that place think about it, the way they behave towards it, and the way they respond to everything that is made or is happening there (Anholt, 2007).

There are six natural channels which, deliberately or accidentally, create countries’ reputation: tourism and promotion, export brands, policy, investments, culture, and people; and of these six, tourism is the major stakeholder in promoting the brand of the country (Anholt, 2003, p. 167).

Within the area of tourism, there is currently no consensus regarding the definition of ‘destination brand’. As a general description of attributes that support a destination’s brand, Kotler, Bowen, and Maken (2003) mention easy identification, perception of good value for price, and easy maintenance of quality and standards. Another resource defines destination brand as a “unique combination of product characteristics and added value, both functional and non-functional, which have taken on a relevant meaning that is inextricably linked to the brand, awareness of which might be conscious or intuitive” (Morgan, Pritchard, & Piggott, 2002, p. 335), while another definition by Blain, Levy, and Ritchie (2005) notes that “a name, symbol, logo, wordmark or other graphic that both identifies and differentiates the destination; furthermore, it conveys the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; it also serves to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of the destination experience” (p. 329).

The last definition has a connection to the structured approach of destination image measurement developed by Echtner and Ritchie (1993), which involves various image attributes (psychological, functional, common, and unique characteristics) specified and incorporated into a standardized instrument.
2.4 Dimensions of Brand Personality

The theory of brand personality started gaining much attention with Aaker’s seminal paper published in 1997. Taking the psychological personality scales as a basis, Aaker proposed a perception of brands as if they had human personalities. Thus, brand personality is a “set of human characteristics associated with a brand” and consists of five dimensions: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness (Figure 4) (Aaker, J. 1997, p. 347).

![Brand Personality Framework](image)

**Figure 4. Brand personality framework, which includes the five dimensions and 15 facets** (Aaker, 1997)

Further studies were conducted to examine the symbolic and self-expressive attributes associated with brands and how they can vary across the cultures of the United States, Japan, and Spain (Aaker, Benet-Martinez, & Garolera, 2001). Brand personality is one of the integral dimensions of brand identity. The researchers believe that attaching personalities to brands may contribute to establishing emotional attachment between brands and their users and help to create a differentiating brand identity. This can make brands more desirable to the consumer (Aaker, 1996). At the same time it can serve a symbolic function to the meaning of the brand, which can help consumers express, satisfy, and enhance their own self-consistency.
and self-esteem (Aaker, 1997). Accordingly, Ekinci and Hosany (2006, p. 129) argue that “similar to consumer goods/brands, tourism destinations are rich in terms of symbolic values and personality traits, given that they consist of a bundle of tangible and intangible components (e.g., visitor attractions, hotels, and people) associated with particular values, histories, events, and feelings.”

2.5 Brand Identity

Brand identity is a mixture of tangible and intangible attributes symbolized in a trademark and other elements of a visual system which, with proper management creates value and influence (Interbrand, 2006, p. 14). The name and logo are examples of the tangible attributes that represent or symbolize a company or organization. Alina Wheeler (2009, p. 6) defines brand identity as “the visual and verbal expression of a brand.”

It is the strategy behind the company’s name, visual identity, and positioning that creates a strong and successful identity and helps manage the customer’s perception of the brand. Brand identity is more than just the name and the logo: It is the company’s ability to differentiate itself and its product or service from the competition. Building an identity that is relevant to the company, its positioning statement, and what it stands for, is one of the key elements of authenticity (Perry et al., 2003). This concept has been described with a simple equation of building blocks. As shown in Figure 5, the sum of the blocks is called brand relativity.
Figure 5. The brand relativity equation (Perry et al., 2003, p. 9)

“Brand relevance is how well the brand speaks to individual audiences. Brand personification is the multifaceted personality and character of the brand that helps customers identify with it. Brand assets include core strengths and weaknesses, what a brand can promise and, taken a step further, what a brand can guarantee. Brand differentiation is what makes the brand unique, the tangible and intangible traits that set your brand apart. Brand relativity as both philosophy and process includes the different components that create the sum of the identity” (Perry, 2003, p. 9).

Brand identity is a complex entity that consists of four core areas: verbal, positioning, visual, and experiential(Figure 6).

Figure 6. Composition of a brand identity (Perry et al., 2003, p.10)
Within the scope of this paper, the logos and considerations of *Positioning* will be covered in depth.

### 2.6 The Purpose of Logos

During the past several decades, people have become more aware of the significance of visual symbols, especially the ones that are used as logos and trademarks. Logos are no longer just devices that “mark” the maker or the owner. They have become “a decorative functionary in a social context” (Skaggs, 1994, p. 7). Creation of a good logo is not an easy task. It is the visual symbol that has the goal of creating familiarity and in turn fostering high-level brand recognition. Everything from the logomark to associated typefaces, imagery, and color palette help to communicate the brand. In order to create an authentic and compelling promise with every element of the visual identity system, it is important to capture the essence of the brand (Chua & Ilicic, 2007).

The prominent graphic designer Milton Glaser once said: “The logo is the gateway to the brand” (Wheeler, 2009, p. 35). The best brands send out a defined set of values and a statement that distinguishes them from the crowd. A correctly designed mark distills the values of the company into a unique visual form and expression in a way that can be understood, communicated, and approved. Through frequent use and the audience’s understanding of what it stands for, a logo becomes more powerful. The meaning it carries is hardly ever immediate and continues to evolve over time (Wheeler, 2009).
2.7 Signs and Semiotic Theory

The existing theories of visual communication describe the interpretation of the signs and symbols that surround us. Semiotics is the study of how people interpret the meaning of signs. In semiotics a sign is considered any type of mark that stands for another thing (Smith, Moriarty, Barbatsis, & Kenney, 2005; Meggs, 1989). By this definition, a logo would be considered a sign because the logo stands for the product, service, or activity of a company.

Charles Sanders Peirce, an American philosopher and logician, defined ‘sign’ in the following way: “A sign or representamen, is something that stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. The sign that it creates I call the interpretant of the first sign. The sign stands for something, its object” (Mollerup, 1999, p. 78).

Figure 7 shows Peirce's definition of the triadic sign relation that formed the core of his definition of logic.

![Figure 7. Peirce's triadic sign concept (Mollerup, 1999, p.78)](image)
So, if this definition of sign was applied to a logo, the logo would be the representamen; “...the effect that the logo creates in the mind of the user is the interpretant; and the company that the logo stands for is the object” (Mollerup, 1999, p. 78).

Meggs (1989) also discusses the three-way relationship among the signified, the signifier, and the interpreter, which is related to the concept developed by Peirce. In this case signified would be the object (Figure 7), the signifier is the sign that represents it and thus would be the representamen, and the interpreter is the user who perceives and interprets the sign and within Peirce’s concept would be the interpretant.

It is important to mention that the interpretant caused by a particular representamen (sign) is not absolute. The context in which it is used, the culture, and the knowledge of the user have a huge influence on the way the interpretant is developed. Depending on the situation, it is possible for any user to create several interpretants. These interpretants may emerge in logical chains in which the interpretant itself is a new sign. Figure 8 shows a fragment of a chain, in which one sign (a) which represents one object (b) may cause many different and even concurrent interpretants (c, d, e).

![Figure 8. Peirce’s logical chain of interpretants (Mollerup, 1999, p. 78)](image-url)
To make this concept clearer and see how it is related to logos, let us take a look at an example. Montblanc is a German manufacturer of writing instruments, watches, and accessories (Figure 9). The company is often identified by its "White Star" logo (Figure 10).

![Montblanc logo](http://www.montblanc.com/)

![Montblanc logo on writing instruments](http://www.montblanc.com/)

This is how the chains in Figure 8 can be related to the Montblanc logo: The white star on the top of the pen cap (Figure 10) is the representamen (a). To one user the white star may trigger the manufacturer of the pen as the object (b) (Figure 8); to another user, or to the same person at a different time or simultaneously, the same white star may remind the user of the name of the mountain Mont Blanc (c); to another user the sign may remind of the high quality of the products that Montblanc manufactures (d); and so on.

### 2.8 Motivated and Arbitrary Signs

There is a certain level of convention present in all signs. Conventions help to determine the meaning of the sign; however, the strength of the conventions present in various signs is different from sign to sign, and these conventions can also be more or less
explicit or implicit. Explicit conventions are the ones that are established by an agreement. Implicit conventions are formed by habit (Mollerup, 1999, p. 82).

The idea of convention is also strongly related to whether a sign is motivated (natural) or arbitrary. In semiotics, a motivated mark can be understood without a strong convention. For example, a photograph is more highly motivated than a road sign. There is not much learning required to understand that a fish sign outside a restaurant means that it serves primarily seafood. On the other hand, human language is the best example of the arbitrary nature of signs: There is no necessary relationship between the representamen and the object, or the signifier and signified. This relationship is determined by convention, in other words through an agreement among the users (Fiske, 2010, p. 50). For example, we have to learn that the sign in Figure 11 stands for heart, but in reality it does not look anything like a real heart.

![Symbol of heart](image)

**Figure 11. Symbol of heart (illustrated by the author)**

When it comes to understanding signs, the more arbitrary signs require stronger convention, an agreement that will help to reveal its meaning, or a habit that will help form the meaning.
2.9 Icons, Indices, and Symbols

Within his research, Peirce divided signs into three categories: icons, indices, and symbols. Icons and indices are motivated signs; symbols are arbitrary signs (Mollerup, 1999, p. 84; Fiske, 2010, p. 50). Icons and indices may also be divided into subclasses:

1. Icons resemble the thing they represent. A photograph and an architect’s model of a building are examples of icons as they imitate or copy characteristic aspects of their subject (Meggs, 1989, p. 8). Icons can be divided into images, diagrams, and metaphor:

   1.1 Images are highly representational signs that look very much like their object. For example, Figure 12 shows the logo of a company that rents and sells bicycles.

   ![Figure 12. City-bike logo (http://logopond.com/)](http://logopond.com/)

   1.2 Diagrams are schematic signs that show the structure of the object. The common sign that can be seen on Danish electricians’ shops (Figure 13) shows a straight line and a double curved line which denote two types of electric current: direct and alternate.

   ![Figure 13. The Generic Sign on Danish Electrician’s Shops (Mollerup, 1999, p. 84)](http://logopond.com/)
1.3 Metaphorical signs share conceptual qualities with the object (Mollerup, 1999, p.84). They also show resemblance through substitution (Meggs, 1989, p. 31). When a lock is used by a company that specializes in online data backup and insurance as its trademark (Figure 14), the connection works by a metaphor. The conceptual quality that the trademark and the business share is protection.

![DataInsure logo](http://logopond.com/)

**Figure 14. DataInsure logo**

2. *Indices* have a physical or causal connection to their object. Wet streets indicate that it has recently rained (Meggs, 1989, p. 8). Indices may be further divided into designations and reagents:

2.1 A designation acquires its meaning through its location. For example, if a picture of a glass is placed on the outside of a box, it is a designation that says ‘handle with care’. If a similar glass is seen in an airport, it is a designation that says ‘bar’ (Figure 15).

![Figure 15. Different meanings of the glass sign: on the box (left) and in the airport (right)](image-url)
2.2 A reagent is the effect of a causal relationship (Mollerup, 1999, p.84). For example, if somebody’s footprints can be seen on the sand, he is a reagent. The person is the cause; the footprints are the effect. So, the logo in Figure 16 uses an illustration of the paw, as a reference to the dogs. In fact some authors consider this causal relationship to be the entire definition of ‘index’ (Meggs, 1989).

![City of Bloomington Animal Shelter logo](http://bloomington.in.gov)

Figure 16. City of Bloomington Animal Shelter logo (http://bloomington.in.gov)

3. Symbols are linked to their object arbitrarily. The image of an egg on a red background, the MTS logo, is a symbol (Figure 17). Its only connection with Mobile TeleSystems – apart from its function as designation – is that the wireless company’s management has decided that this is their logo.

![Mobile TeleSystems (MTS) logo](http://www.mtsgsm.com/)

Figure 17. Mobile TeleSystems (MTS) logo (http://www.mtsgsm.com/)

These definitions show that the terms *icon*, *index*, and *symbol* refer to the relationship between a sign and the object it stands for. Accordingly, logos can be icons, indices, or symbols or all of them at the same time (Mollerup, 1999).
2.10 The taxonomic structure of marks

Logos and trademarks fall into several classifications, which can be seen in the taxonomic tree in Figure 18.

![Taxonomic Tree of Trademarks](image)

Figure 18. Mollerup’s taxonomic tree of trademarks. Final classes are italicized (Mollerup, 1999, p. 99)

The division of the taxonomy begins with graphic marks and non-graphic marks. The majority of logos are graphic marks, so this class is explored in detail, and the non-graphic marks are not divided but considered as one class.

*Graphic marks* are divided into two classes: picture marks (Figure 19) and letter marks (Figure 20). It seems obvious that picture marks consist of pictures and letter marks consist of letters, but this is not the end of the story. Letter marks may often be “iconicized,” thus include a pictorial element. On some occasions, picture marks refer to linguistic phenomena (Mollerup, 1999, p. 102).
Picture marks are divided into figurative and non-figurative marks. Figurative marks show a recognizable object (e.g., Figure 19) and are divided into descriptive marks, metaphoric marks, and found marks.

Descriptive marks are either images or diagrams; they directly refer to their object. An example is when a mask is used as a logo for a theatre (Figure 21).

Metaphoric marks use a shared quality or a common concept to connect to the object through certain characteristics. In Figure 22, the protective nature of an umbrella represents the protective nature of the insurance company.
Found marks present something recognizable that basically does not have anything to do with the product or activity of the company they represent. These marks usually are what Peirce classifies as *symbols*. The relationship between the representamen and object is arbitrary. The MTS “egg” logo in Figure 17 is a good example of a found mark.

Many logos today considered found marks once had an explanation, which made them motivated marks. For example, the current Apple logo (Figure 19) at first viewing has nothing to do with the activity or the products of the company it represents; however, the original Apple logo (Figure 23) was designed by Ronald Wayne in 1976 depicts Isaac Newton sitting under an apple tree, with an apple hanging above his head. In this context the apple becomes a metaphor for knowledge and education.

![Original Apple logo](http://www.edibleapple.com/)

*Figure 23. Original Apple logo designed in 1976 ([http://www.edibleapple.com/](http://www.edibleapple.com/))*

Non-figurative marks are symbols that refer directly to their object. These marks usually become a symbol of a company or organization; on their own they do not have any specific meaning. An example of a well-known non-figurative mark is the Chase Manhattan logo (Figure 24).
In Mollerup’s taxonomic tree, letter marks are divided into name marks and abbreviations. In some cases a company would use its full name next to various abbreviations, while in other cases only the full name or only an abbreviation is used; however, the vast majority of the letter marks have a definite visual form (Figure 25).

Making a connection to Peirce’s definitions, proper names are classified as symbols. They have two levels of signification, and on both levels they are arbitrary signs.

Other taxonomies have been developed to categorize marks, sharing many aspects of Mollerup’s and Peirce’s divisions. In this wide variety of shapes and personalities of logos, they can be assigned to a number of general categories. For example, Wheeler (2009) and Skaggs (1994) categorize marks using their visual characteristics.
*Pictorial marks or pictographs* use literal and recognizable images that have been simplified to essentials. Both Figure 26 and 27 are examples of pictographs. The advantage of pictographs as logos is their simplicity and the ability to show the fundamental traits of the object or idea. Pictographs usually do not need a very strong convention and usually do not depend on language or literacy to transfer their meaning, which makes them effective (Skaggs, 1994; Wheeler, 2009). Within Peirce’s taxonomy, pictographs relate to icons.

![Figure 26. Ancient cave paintings](http://dimmeria.com/)

![Figure 27. NBC logo](http://www.nbc.com/)

*Abstract marks or ideographs* use visual form to express an idea or a brand attribute. They do not depict real objects (Figures 28 and 29). One of the greatest advantages of ideographs is that they can only be related to their host. While an umbrella may evoke many associations in addition to Traveler’s Insurance Co. (Figure 22), an ideograph such as the logo of Chase Manhattan (Figure 24) relates directly to the bank. Like pictographs, ideographs can also be free of language restrictions and work well in multilingual and multicultural environments. Because of their abstract nature, ideographs can provide strategic vagueness and work effectively for large companies with many unrelated divisions (Skaggs, 1994; Wheeler, 2009).
In Peirce’s taxonomy, ideographs relate to symbols. As they are so abstract, they do not have a clear relationship with the host. This means that a strong convention is needed to connect the two of them: “[T]he public must learn the mark, requiring the public to be educated by repeated and frequent displays” (Skaggs, 1994, p. 81). Thus, ideographs may be well suited to hosts that use much print and media exposure.

Logotypes or wordmarks are freestanding words or a combination of words. The logotype may be an acronym or a company or brand name set in distinctive font characteristics, or using special lettering arranged in a particular way. There should also be a distinction of color and shape of the font from others in the same market (Wheeler, 2009, p.54; Interbrand, 2006, p. 75).

Logotypes are essentially the only kind of marks that spell the name of the company or organization (Figure 30). Thus, this is the most straightforward form of mark as it combines both visual and verbal information. In cases in which the legal name is long, it might be more appropriate to use the informal name in the logotype. This name is usually the one that is known to the public (Wheeler, 2009, p. 54).
Along with linguistic difficulties, there are also practical problems in designing a logotype. In case of rather long words, the mark may become illegible and/or the proportion of length to height may increase, in this way limiting its applications (Skaggs, 1994) (Figure 31).

**3D Farms & Machine LLC**

Figure 31. 3D Farms & Machine LLC logo (http://www.3dfarms.com/)

*Monograms* are the marks that are made by combining one or more initial letters of a company’s or organization’s name. Monograms stand very close to logotypes. They allow having simpler visual forms than those of some logotypes. There is also a reduction of issues connected with foreign languages and literacy.

This type of logo will work for companies like IBM (International Business Machines) or CBS (Columbia Broadcasting Service) (Figures 32 and 33); however, it is not likely that this approach will work for Citizen’s Interstate Alliance, as CIA stands for Central Intelligence Agency and is well-known not only in the US but all over the world. Monograms do not say anything about the nature of their host’s activities.

**IBM**

Figure 32. IBM logo (http://www.ibm.com/)

**CBS**

Figure 33. CBS logo (http://www.cbs.com/)

Usually it is not advised to create monograms unless the host it stands for is already well-known by its initials (Skaggs, 1994).
Many logos combine two or more of the above-mentioned types; for this reason they will be called *hybrid forms* (Figures 34 and 35). This combination in some cases gives opportunity to use the positive aspects of each of the types, but the combination can make the logos more complex.

![AT&T logo](http://www.att.com) ![Old Kodak logo](http://www.underconsideration.com/speakup/archives/002512.html)

In a hybrid there might be three main challenges: The logo should be simplistic enough so that it can be effectively used in various sizes; various design elements should work together and maintain the unity of the logo; and the logo should communicate one central idea, not two or three. Unless the logo offers a clear face to the public, it won’t be effectively remembered and recalled (Skaggs, 1994).

### 2.11 Functional Criteria

Alongside the aesthetic qualities of logos, there are essential functional characteristics that differentiate good logos from bad ones. With slight variations, designers and visual identity experts agree on the following list of functional criteria (Wheeler, 2009, p. 30):

- Bold, memorable, and appropriate
• Immediately recognizable
• Provides a consistent image of the company
• Clearly communicates the company’s persona
• Legally protectable
• Has enduring value
• Works well across media and scale
• Works both in black and white and in color

The first two criteria go hand-in-hand, as memorable logos are easier to recognize and vice versa. Any logo should be appropriate for the company it identifies. Attributes that convey a logo for a law firm should be different from the ones a cancer organization logo has. Not only should the logo be relevant to the industry but also to the audience to which it is supposed to communicate (Airey, 2010, p. 25).

2.12 Motifs

Along with the already mentioned categories and taxonomy, Mollerup (1999) suggested another way of grouping logos: according to the motifs used in their design. For example, the use of various animals in logos may be based on the fact that certain animals are attributed with certain qualities, and they are chosen because of these associations. For a car manufacturing company, the jaguar provides the connotation of speed (Figure 36). On the other hand, the image of dolphins in the Sonofon logo (Figure 37) associates with boundless communication. Additionally, the use of two dolphins strengthens the association of communication (Mollerup, 1999, p. 133).
Referring to taxonomic divisions, in Mollerup’s taxonomic tree most animal logos are figurative marks. Within the categories suggested by Wheeler (2009) and Skaggs (1994), these logos will fall into the category of pictorial marks or pictographs; and within categories suggested by Peirce, these will be considered icons.

The list of motifs is infinite, and it is important to consider that the use of any motif may mean different things to different users. For example, users from different cultures and with different knowledge may understand or classify motifs differently from one another. Looking at the Swan Brewing Company logo (Figure 38), one person may come up with associations like natural qualities, relaxation, and uniqueness (because of the black color of the swan), while for another person, along with all the mentioned associations, the color of the swan may reveal the origin of the beer, as the black swan is found only in Australia, specifically in Perth, which is the brewery’s home city (Miller & Brown, 2000, p. 180).

Figure 36. Jaguar car manufacturer logo (http://www.jaguarplatinum.com)

Figure 37. Sonofon GSM wireless network logo (Mollerup, 1999, p. 133)

Figure 38. Swan Brewing Company logo (Miller & Brown, 2000, p. 180)
2.13 Visual Identity as an Emotional Attribute for a Country

It is not an easy or quick task to change the world’s perception of a country. After all, this perception may have been developed over many decades or centuries, influenced by “wars, religion, diplomacy or lack of it, international sporting triumphs or disasters, famous and infamous sons and daughters, and latterly, of course by the brands it exports, as long as the brands are prepared to be explicit about their country of origin” (Anholt, 2003, p.111).

One of the first functions in branding a country is to shape a certain public perception of the place (McCleary & Whitney, 1994). As mentioned earlier, a personality perspective may be an important aspect of destination perception. Destinations can be easily described using human personality traits such as, for example, Paris is romantic or Australia is outdoorsy (Ekinci et al., 2007).

Several tourism studies have examined the relationship among travel motivation, tourist self-image, and destination brand personality. One study examined the links among four key constructs proposed for the destination branding and choice process: (1) tourist needs, (2) destination brand personality, (3) self-congruity, and (4) behavioral intentions as well as satisfaction with visit. The researchers proposed a model in which tourists’ motivations and destination brand personality perceptions influence self-congruity and in turn their intentions to visit or satisfaction with the destination. Based on this proposed model, they stated that destination brand personality linked to tourist needs significantly influences behavioral intentions and satisfaction (Murphy, Benckendorff, & Moscardo, 2007).

The visual identity of a country involves relationship building and emotional appeal, so an emotional connection could be effective in making the tourism ‘product’ tangible
Thus, creating visual identity that reveals the country’s personality may help the country achieve desired results. Objectivity is one of the most valuable of all the qualities needed by those who are responsible for nurturing a country’s image, and at the same time it is the hardest to achieve (Anholt, 2003).

2.14 Positioning

Positioning is an essential branding concept that was first suggested by Al Ries and Jack Trout in 1981. They defined positioning as the core on which companies (in this case also countries) build their strategy, brand, and the relationship with consumers. “Ries and Trout were convinced that each company must determine its position in the customer’s mind, considering the needs of the customer, the strengths and weaknesses of the company, and the competitive landscape. This concept continues to be fundamental in all marketing communications, branding, and advertising” (Wheeler, 2009, p.12).

It is important to determine the core essence of the brand, which is defined as “the intrinsic and indispensable properties that characterize the brand,” before starting any design work (Perry et al., 2003, p. 49). In other words, the core essence defines what the brand stands for in a couple of words. It is what makes the brand relevant and differentiated. For example, car companies are all about transportation. In that regard, they are commodities offering the same basic service; however, some are positioned as the cheapest, some as the most fuel-efficient; some offer luxury and others long-lasting quality. Each of these positions is an attempt to differentiate via a real or perceived strength.
“The more clear and simple the core essence, the more clear and simple the communication, the more quickly the prospective customer will understand what is intended” (Perry et al., 2003, p. 49).

The same concept can be applicable for countries. Brand identity is built on a vision and is aligned with business strategy; it emerges from a country’s values and culture and reflects an in-depth understanding of the consumer’s needs and perceptions (Wheeler, 2009).

2.15 Country Logos

Whether it is a country or organization, creating a visual identity means translating the positioning and verbal identity into a tangible visual representation. The purpose of creating a visual identity is to aid with memorability, to help people remember who you are. Visual identity can also tie all of the disparate brand elements together with the same look and feel (Wheeler, 2009).

Simplification has a tendency to reduce appeal, as so much of the ultimate appeal of a country is its richness and complexity. “The true art of branding is distillation: the art of extracting the concentrated essence of something complex, so that its complexity can always be extracted back out of the distillate, but it remains portable and easily memorable” (Anholt 2003, p.141). This is why creating an authentic and compelling logo for a country is such a hard task.

National identity is essentially connected to various symbols, flags, and other markers. For example, if one want to represent the United State of America by signs and symbols, one comes up with such things as the American flag, the Empire State Building, the
Grand Canyon, or even Uncle Sam’s figure. All of these signs have been used to represent America; some are natural phenomena, others are distinctive buildings, and others are symbols (like Uncle Sam) that have come to mean the U.S. “All of these signs have acquired their power to represent American nationality by continual use in media, or (in the case of the flag) by historical circumstance” (Berger, 1984, p. 99).

A nation’s flag begins as a design. Distinctive colors and shapes are chosen for their symbolic meaning. Each flag is unique and dramatically different from that of other nations. Seeing the flag arouses feelings of pride, passion, or disdain. Logos can do the same (Wheeler, 2009, p. 34).

When it comes to designing a logo for a country, it is important to spend sufficient time deciding on the communication attributes. These attributes are a list of adjectives or nouns that suggest descriptively, figuratively, or evocatively what needs to be communicated. They are associational and provide definition of the brand’s personality (Perry et al., 2003).

### 2.16 Attributes

“Attributes are characteristics of a company, product, or service. They can be either positive or negative and can be functional (what a product does) or emotional (how it makes a person feel). Attributes are measurable and can be benchmarked versus important competitors. If attributes are what a brand has, then benefits (what the brand does for a customer) are why certain attributes are important” (Interbrand, 2006, p. 9). Many brand experts focus their research on understanding the most important and powerful attributes of a product, service, or brand.
The cultural aspect of national image is impossible to copy, and it is also irrereplaceable because it is uniquely connected to the country itself. “It is reassuring because it links the country’s past with its present; it is enriching because it deals with non-commercial activities; and it is dignifying because it shows the spiritual and intellectual qualities of the country’s people and institutions” (Anholt, 2003, p. 142). This is why using cultural attributes in the visual identity of a country may enrich and help make an authentic brand.

Geography can also be a distinctive feature of each country. Many geographical attributes have been chosen to represent countries in existing tourism campaigns; however, “once you start looking at features and benefits, in classic marketing style, you are inevitably driven into common and non-unique territory, and one country starts to resemble another. … [S]elling the feature of blue sea and sky with sandy beaches and the user benefit of relaxation and a golden tan, makes all seaside destinations indistinguishable from each other” (Anholt, 2003, p. 141).

The challenge to all countries is to find ways of continually presenting and re-presenting the unique side of their geography, culture, and traditions in ways that are fresh, relevant, and appealing to today’s audiences.

2.17 The Meaning of a Logo

Country logos are designed for broad global markets; this makes their design challenging when it comes to thinking of ways to incorporate tradition, culture, historical symbols, and colors into the design that needs to communicate with so many various audiences (Miller et al., 2000).
As mentioned earlier, a sign can carry meanings on more than one level, and logos usually have a double meaning. On the one hand they say, “This company is the XYZ company,” on the other hand, they say, “The XYZ company is such and such.” The first meaning individualizes the company; it is about presence and distinction. The second meaning is more about its competence and qualities; it is the result of description. This way distinction and description shape the double function of logos (Mollerup, 1999, p. 88).

Earlier studies in communication mostly concentrated on the transport of messages. In the mid 20th Century, Claude E. Shannon and Warren Weaver (1949) developed a communication model that defined three levels of communication problems: (1) How accurately can the symbols of communication be transmitted? (2) How precisely do the transmitted symbols convey the desired meaning? (3) How effectively does the received meaning affect conduct in the desired way? (Mollerup, 1999, p.69).

This model concentrated primarily on how channels (such as telephone cables and radio waves) could be used most efficiently; however, it has since extensively been used to explain how any message moves from sender to receiver (Figure 39).

![Figure 39. Shannon-Weaver model of communication (Shannon et al., 1949)](image-url)
The three-level division of problems suggested by Shannon and Weaver may be used more specifically for the study of logos to explore the following three questions: (1) Is the trademark visible enough? (2) Is the trademark understandable? (3) Will the trademark create the desired effect? (Mollerup, 1999, p. 68-69).

Based on the linear model of Shannon and Weaver (Figure 39), in 1960 linguist R. Jakobson created a communication model and applied it to linguistics (Figure 40).

```
context
message

adderesser.----------------------------------addersee

contact
code

referential
poetic

emotive.----------------------------------conative

phatic
metalingual
```

Figure 40. Jakobson's communication model. Top: six factors of communication; bottom: six linguistic functions (Mollerup, 1999, p.75)

The six linguistic functions suggested by Jakobson can be usefully applied to communication via logos. If a trademark shows a book (Figure 41) and therefore indicates that the organization behind it is a library, it means that the referential function is at work. If,
on the other hand, the book is designed in a contemporary, simplified, computerized style, then an *emotive* function takes over.

![Library of Congress logo](http://www.cgstudionyc.com/)

Figure 41. Library of Congress logo (http://www.cgstudionyc.com/)

Thus, the description of a trademark can be divided into referential categorization and emotional attribution. In this example, the category is library, while the attribute is modern (Mollerup, 1999, p. 88).

All trademarks are created to influence an audience. Designers and consumers usually say that beautiful trademarks have greater conative impact than ugly trademarks (the cognitive part of the brain measures intelligence, the affective deals with emotions, and the conative drives how one acts on those thoughts and feelings), but this depends on the situation. In some situations, an annoying, cruel, or even ugly trademark that one cannot avoid noticing may be more effective than a pleasing mark.

The aesthetic value of the trademark is connected to its *poetic* function. The purpose of the *phatic* function is to establish and continue communication. The purpose of *metalingual* function is to make sure that the communication is understood in the right way. For example, if a word is in inverted commas, it indicates that it should be understood figuratively (Mollerup, 1999, p. 75).
2.18 Research Questions

This study wishes to examine the following research questions:

1. What are the most commonly used attributes within country tourism logos?

2. What are the various graphic design methods that are used to convey certain conceptual attributes?

3. How effective are the collected tourism logos in achieving success according to established criteria for logo design?
CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

There were several key points in the literature that helped me develop a methodology for the following study. Most literature considers logos as the graphical representation of the company’s identity. In corporate graphic design, it is widely believed that a logo does not need to depict what the company does or what kinds of products it produces. Literally depicting something relevant to the company does not necessarily identify the company in the most authentic, unique, and identifiable way (Airey, 2010). A prominent example of this is the well-known Sonofon logo (Figure 37), which, according to Mollerup’s (1999) taxonomic tree, can be considered a found mark. This mark does not depict the company’s products. Another example is the Travelers Insurance Company’s logo (Figure 22), which depicts an umbrella. This is a metaphoric mark that is meant to carry the feeling of protection, but it does not carry any literal depiction of the activity of the company.

This research adopts a qualitative evaluation method to study 96 country logos collected from official tourism websites intending to promote each country as a compelling tourism destination. The study analyzes these logos using an assessment matrix which classifies them using four criteria: category of logo, motifs, conceptual attributes, and image style. It is important to mention that the attributes identified are those intended by the designer, but it is not known if each is universally understood by the audience as logos do not necessarily have the same meaning to all users. At the same time, as logomarks are usually one of the most important methods that deliver messages through certain attributes, the accompanying signatures become less important to this analysis.
3.1 Development of the Assessment Matrix

The aforementioned assessment criteria (category of logo, motifs, conceptual attributes, image style) were operationalized in the following way:

**Category of the logo:** The initial evaluation of the collected country logos using Mollerup’s taxonomic tree of marks (Figure 18) showed that all are graphic marks. This means that each of them has to further belong to one of the four categories of Picture Marks (*descriptive, metaphoric, found, non-figurative*), or one category of Letter Marks (*proper*, as country names are considered proper names). These subcategories are further defined here:

- **Descriptive marks:** A logo is considered a descriptive mark if the image it depicts is something specific that directly refers to the country it is representing. These include the whole country flag; a fragment of the flag (still recognizable as the flag); an animal, plant, or any other kind of representational element; a piece of architecture; a landscape scene; an artwork style. Descriptive marks have a unique historic or cultural connection to that particular country.

- **Metaphoric marks:** A logo can be considered a metaphoric mark if the image it depicts is something that does not directly refer to the country but instead uses a substitution of something that shares qualities of that country. An example is the logo of Israel. It depicts a six-petal flower, which in the context of any other country would be considered a found mark, whereas in the case of Israel it is a referential connection to the Star of David that is specifically associated with this country.
• *Found marks:* A logo can be considered a found mark if the image it shows is something recognizable, but that image does not have anything literally to do with the country that it represents. The relationship between the logo and the country is arbitrary. For example, the logo might depict a generic flower.

• *Non-figurative marks:* A logo can be considered a non-figurative mark if it depicts any abstract image shape that does not have any specific reference outside of the logo.

• *Letter marks:* If the logo consists only of type, or the image element it contains is so minor that it loses its influence in the logo, then the logo can be considered a letter mark.

**Motifs:** In this category the logos are classified by the recognizable images, objects, and elements used in their design. There might be more than one definite motif within any logo design or none at all. For example, most letter marks do not contain any motifs.

**Conceptual Attributes:** As mentioned before, attributes are essential characteristics about the company and country that can be communicated through logos (Interbrand, 2006; Perry, 2003). The attributes identified on the matrix are those that are intended by the logo designer. This study did not include a quantitative user test to determine how successfully each of these attributes has been interpreted by the audience. The determination of which attributes were intended in each logo was based on the author’s experience with symbol design (both from the study of existing symbols and from extensive symbol design practice in the graduate workshop).
**Image style:** In this category, logos were classified using three possible options: 
*hand-drawn, mechanical, and mixed.*

- A logo is considered *hand-drawn* if its major visual elements (including both text and image) are depicted in calligraphic, freehand, brush stroke, or hand-drawn style.

- A logo is considered *mechanical* if its major visual elements (including both text and image) are depicted in computerized, crisp-edged, or mechanical-looking style.

- A logo is considered to have a *mixed* image style if its major visual elements (including both text and image) equally share both hand-drawn and mechanical style images.

Table 1 (pages 46-65) shows the assessment matrix developed by the author.
### Table 1: Assessment matrix created by the author (continues on pages 46-48; individual sources of the logos are listed in the bibliography)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>MOTIF</th>
<th>CONCEPTUAL ATTRIBUTE</th>
<th>IMAGE STYLE</th>
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<td>found</td>
<td>plants</td>
<td>diversity</td>
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Image of Cambodia, Canada, Cayman Islands, Chile
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Image examples:
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- Costa Rica: "No Artificial Ingredients"
- Croatia: "Love"
- Cyprus: "Love"
- Czech Republic: "Czech Republic"
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*Images of flags and symbols are shown as examples.*
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![Logo Images]

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- **Holland**
- **Hungary**
- **India**
- **Ireland**
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### Examples of Logos

- **Scotland**: Hand-drawn, descriptive, letter
- **Seychelles Islands**: Hand-drawn, descriptive, mixed
- **Singapore**: Mechanical, undefined, non-figurative
- **Slovakia**: Mechanical, undefined, found
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![Image of flag examples](image-url)
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<td>letter</td>
<td>plants</td>
<td>contrast, diversity, happiness, nature, unity, warmth</td>
<td>hand-drawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>descriptive</td>
<td>plants, people, sun</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Images:**
- Switzerland: get natural
- Taiwan: The Heart of Asia
- Tanzania: Land of Kilimanjaro & Zanzibar
- Thailand: Amazing Thailand
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>MOTIF</th>
<th>CONCEPTUAL ATTRIBUTE</th>
<th>IMAGE STYLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>letter</td>
<td>undefined</td>
<td>diversity playfulness</td>
<td>hand-drawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>found</td>
<td>plants</td>
<td>informality nature welcoming</td>
<td>hand-drawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>found</td>
<td>people sun</td>
<td>culture happiness welcoming</td>
<td>mechanical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>descriptive</td>
<td>existing symbol</td>
<td>history</td>
<td>mechanical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>descriptive</td>
<td>flag sun</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>descriptive</td>
<td>art landscape</td>
<td>culture uniqueness welcoming</td>
<td>hand-drawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sun</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CATEGORY</td>
<td>MOTIF</td>
<td>IMAGE STYLE</td>
<td>CONCEPTUAL ATTRIBUTE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>found</td>
<td>existing</td>
<td>mixed</td>
<td>diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>symbol</td>
<td></td>
<td>happiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>playfulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mixed</td>
<td>culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>uniqueness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>art</td>
<td>hand-drawn</td>
<td>culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>architecture</td>
<td></td>
<td>nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>writing</td>
<td></td>
<td>uniqueness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>warmth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>art</td>
<td></td>
<td>sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>descriptive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION

Analysis of the assessment matrix in Table 1 shows that the majority of analyzed logos are descriptive marks (Table 2). As mentioned previously, descriptive marks depict something specific that directly refers to the country represented. In some cases this may help enhance the connection of the logo and country and increase recognizability and memorability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Logo Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive marks</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Found marks</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-figurative marks</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter marks</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. List and frequency of logo categories indicated in the assessment matrix (created by the author)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image Style</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hand-drawn</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. List and frequency of image styles determined in the assessment matrix (created by the author)

It is not surprising that the majority of analyzed logos are hand-drawn marks (Table 3). This style contributes to the playful, informal, and welcoming look of the logo; these attributes seem appropriate for tourism.

Below is a list of motifs that were used in the logos; the numbers indicate how many times each motif has been noticed within the matrix:
Table 4. List and frequency of motifs indicated in the assessment matrix (created by the author)

The following list indicates how many times each of the attributes was found in the analyzed logos:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plants</th>
<th>23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landscape</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing symbol</td>
<td>20 (heart, cross, exclamation sign, star, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undefined</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flag</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animals (including birds, fishes, and insects)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art (ornaments)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waves</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture (buildings, monuments)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nature 38
Playfulness 35
Uniqueness 33
Diversity 29
Welcoming 27
Culture 23
Informality 22
Unity 22
Even though a wide variety of motifs, attributes, and styles have been utilized in these country logos, very few meet all of the functional criteria described in the literature review. In order to function well, a logo must be easily recognizable, memorable, appropriate, work well at a small scale, etc. Of the logos that achieve a level of success as defined by these criteria, it is interesting to examine how the choice of attributes, motifs, or image style contributed to their success. For example, the Cyprus logo (Figure 42) took on a challenge trying to convey many motifs (art, existing symbol, landscapes, sun, and waves) and attributes (culture, history, informality, geography, love, relaxation, religion, warmth, and welcoming), and at the same time meet the aforementioned criteria of a good logo. The unusual use of an existing symbol (heart) and the silhouette of an ancient statue conveys both unique and authentic messages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relaxation</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warmth</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precision</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophistication</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undefined</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formality</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. List and frequency of attributes indicated in the assessment matrix (created by the author)
This example also shows that a combination of many attributes can be effectively integrated in a simple form, at the same time maintaining a complexity of concept. Only through user testing could we know for certain how many of these attributes are truly communicated to the audience; however, the intended concepts are fairly evident.

Selecting a long list of attractive attributes, however, is not enough to ensure success. The logo of Taiwan (Figure 43) utilizes an outline of a heart to enclose many images (Figure 44) that are intended to convey various conceptual attributes (culture, love, nature, playfulness, unity, uniqueness, warmth, welcoming); however, this logo does not achieve the criteria of a good logo (Airey, 2010, Wheeler, 2009): the combination of so many visuals makes it too complicated, decreasing memorability; the forms also become unrecognizable in a smaller scale (Figure 43).
Logos of Australia, Bahamas, and Peru (Figures 45, 46, and 47) are examples of how logos may successfully achieve the criteria of a good logo and at the same time be unique, authentic, and relevant to the target audience it is supposed to communicate to.

![Logos of Australia, Bahamas, and Peru](http://www.tourism.australia.com)

![Logos of the Bahamas](http://www.bahamas.com/)

![Logo of Peru](http://peru.travel/)

Figure 45. Logo of Australia  
Figure 46. Logo of the Bahamas  
Figure 47. Logo of Peru

It is worth mentioning that only three out of 96 country logos have *efficiency* identified among the conceptual attributes (Figure 48). All three of these logos use the principles of repetition and gradation, commonly used to signify precision. Tourism logos do not usually aim to promote business, investment, and exports of the country. This is why efficiency is not one of the important attributes to include.

![Logos with efficiency as an attribute](http://www.tourism.australia.com)

Figure 48. Logos with *efficiency* as an attribute
Even though all three of the logos in Figure 48 meet the functional criteria of successful logos, the overall mechanical image style and lack of uniqueness decrease their memorability and authenticity.

In fact, tourism and business areas have rather different audiences, and it is unlikely that any one logo could serve both groups. For example, in 2003 the Australian government committed around $350 million to promote Brand Australia around the world. The main goal of the campaign was to build a strong brand which would be supported by the Australian government and would also help promote and sell Australian products and services and boost international tourism. The new identity system was developed by the well-known design firm FutureBrand (Figure 49). The core idea behind the visual identity system was ‘life in a different light’.

![Australia tourism logo](http://www.tourism.australia.com/)

Figure 49. Australia tourism logo (http://www.tourism.australia.com/)

Through the logo, the designers intend to convey conceptual attributes such as light, “spirit of optimistic vitality, an irrepressible desire to have a go.” Australia’s famous kangaroo carries messages of dynamism, energy, and vitality. The combination of these attributes gives the logo a highly distinctive look and feel (http://www.futurebrand.com/).

This identity helped Australia increase its influence in the tourism sector; however, the Reputation Institute’s country survey showed that attributes related to business
environment, technology, quality products, services, and inventiveness were less well perceived for Australia (http://www.reputationinstitute.com/). So, in order to express Australia’s business potential, a new marketing concept called *Australia Unlimited* was created.

The stakeholders participating in the research mentioned that the new business-oriented brand should have a technology, innovation, industry, business, professionalism, and future focus to help Australia be perceived in a more contemporary and multi-dimensional light. Apparently, the kangaroo logo (Figure 49) was not effective in communicating these messages. The new logo (Figure 50) was developed for the new brand to convey attributes such as modern, technological, innovative, etc.

![Australia Unlimited Logo](http://www.brandaustralia.gov.au/)

**Figure 50. Australia business logo (http://www.brandaustralia.gov.au/)**

Currently, the Australian government continues using the kangaroo logo created by for promoting tourism; however the new *Australia Unlimited* logo was chosen to represent the country in the business environment.

If we compare the two logos, differences can be seen in motifs, image styles, and conceptual attributes.

The example of Australia shows that making a single logo to promote a country in both business and tourism arenas does not seem realistic.
An example of a logo that targets two different audiences and tries to make it function for both tourism and business promotion purposes is the one for Azerbaijan (Figure 51).

![Azerbaijan logo](http://azerbaijan.tourism.az/)

**Figure 51. Azerbaijan logo (http://azerbaijan.tourism.az/)**

The hand-drawn and relaxed style of the logo, the use of blue waves, and the yellow-colored eight-point star are reminiscent of a beach landscape. But at the same time, the existence of an oil rig takes the image in an industrial direction. The logo is not successful in targeting any of its intended audiences. The image of an oil rig on a beach does not convey appropriate conceptual attributes for tourist attraction. At the same time, if it were to be targeted to the promotion of the business image of the country, the hand-drawn and relaxed style of the logo takes away important conceptual attributes such as precision and reliability. By trying to communicate two very different messages, neither one is successful.

Thus, the analysis of the assessment matrix shows that logos that intend to promote the country both in tourism and business usually do not succeed in displaying authentic conceptual attributes for either target audiences. It would be very difficult to improve the existing logo of Azerbaijan (Figure 48) as it is trying to incorporate too many opposing messages. This is why it might be more effective for Azerbaijan to create two different logos that would target business/investment and tourism separately.

While looking at the many logos that feature tropical settings (e.g., Figures 52, 53, and 54) one might recall Anholt’s concern about uniqueness: “… [S]elling the feature of blue
sea and sky with sandy beaches and the user benefit of relaxation and a golden tan, makes all seaside destinations indistinguishable from each other” (Anholt, 2003, p. 141). Each one believes that since the image is accurate, it is enough to make it stand out, yet these seem interchangeable and would not be effective in the competitive world of tropical tourism.

The common attributes of these three logos are geography and relaxation. Maldives and Mozambique also share attributes of diversity, informality, nature, and playfulness; however, none of these logos has uniqueness as a conceptual attribute.

The dominating hand-drawn image style imparts the feeling of fun, playfulness, and relaxation; but in fact the style makes it harder to distinguish the logos, reducing memorability and recognizability.

Some of the logos also depict generic images of landscape and nature. Even though some of the conceptual attributes within these logos vary, none of these images address any unique attributes of their countries. In fact, as seen in Figure 55, it becomes impossible to guess which logo belongs to which country.
Achieving uniqueness and memorability may be a challenge for logos that include rather generic visuals. Deeper research could reveal some unique geographic features of these countries and help come up with visuals to distinguish them from others.

Many logos include national symbols such as national flowers, plants, animals, existing symbols, etc., within their logomark. The intention of incorporating these national symbols is to increase the uniqueness and authenticity of the logos; however, many of the current national symbols would be unknown to the vast majority of the target audience. The logo of Belarus (Figure 56) is a good example of this problem. The logo incorporates the cornflower – symbolic flower of Belarus; however most tourists are unlikely to recognize this. This is a particular challenge for lesser known countries.
The analysis of the assessment matrix also shows that letter marks make it challenging to convey rich conceptual attributes (Figure 57).

![Figure 57. Examples of letter marks](http://www.caymanislands.ky/)

There is a variety of shapes, colors, and image styles within the logo examples shown in Figure 57; however, compared to picture marks, the list of conceptual attributes they communicate is rather limited or in some cases cannot even be defined.

The logos of Italy and Israel (Figure 57) incorporate graphic elements; however, the size of their signatures overpowers the message these graphics may intend. For example, the use of a 6-petal flower in Israel’s logo makes a strong metaphoric reference to the Star of David which is a generally recognized symbol of Jewish identity; however, the small size of this graphic leaves it almost unnoticed within the logo.

Another example of a logo with dominating signature is the logo of Cayman Islands (Figure 58).
The graphic element within this logo (Figure 58) depicts a turtle that is half man and half pirate. Through its playful, unique, and informal characteristics, this graphic has a strong power of increasing the memorability and uniqueness of the logo; however, the size of the generic signature makes it rather hard to notice all the characteristics of the graphic.

The aforementioned examples of letter marks (Figure 57) fail to communicate strong conceptual attributes that would help make these logos more memorable, unique, and authentic. The example of Peru (Figure 59), however, shows a successful use of a lettermark that incorporates strong graphic elements to achieve not only the functional criteria of a successful logo but also to maintain uniqueness and enhance memorability and authenticity.

![Peru logo](http://peru.travel/)

**Figure 59. Peru logo (http://peru.travel/)**

Using Jamaica’s logo as an example, one would have a hard time understanding what it is that the logo intends to express.
Jamaica has rich culture, traditions, tropical climate, beautiful nature, etc. (Figure 60), yet the logo alludes to none of these unique aspects.

Logos that convey many positive attributes but do not meet the functional criteria usually do not succeed in communicating a clear message. For example, if we compare the logo of Cyprus with the logo of Taiwan, we will see similarities in their intended attributes; yet Cyprus achieves one coherent visual while in the logo of Taiwan there is no unified image. Taiwan’s logo uses too many visual elements to convey its many attributes, thus making the logo complex in shape and indistinguishable at smaller sizes. Because of this, it is not memorable or unique.

The examples discussed here show some of the many difficulties encountered when designing logos for country tourism. Some of the logos show problems with uniqueness, some with appropriateness, and many fall short on the functional aspect.
Overall, it is a big challenge to represent any country in a unique and authentic manner through the design of a memorable, recognizable, and coherent logo that incorporates the relevant attributes of that country.

5.1 Limitations of the Methodology

This study reveals interesting findings about designing country logos for tourism campaigns; however, there are a few limitations of the methodology that should be considered when interpreting the results and conducting future research.

1. The list of conceptual attributes identified for each logo on the matrix are those that were likely intended by the logo designer. The determination of which attributes were intended in each logo was based on the author’s experience with symbol design (both from the study of existing symbols and from extensive symbol design practice in the graduate workshop).

2. The study did not include quantitative user testing to determine whether the listed attributes were correctly interpreted by the audience.

3. Various scholars (Skaggs, 1994; Mollerup, 1999; Wheeler, 2009) have determined slightly different taxonomies for classifying marks. Considering these differences, the results of the assessment matrix might differ depending on future researchers’ classification preferences.

The aforementioned limitations do not, however, diminish the contributions of this study. There has been no exact approach to evaluating visual motifs and conceptual attributes within logos; this research has proposed an effective method to assess those components in
any logo which could assist designers hired to design new brand identities for country tourism. The study further demonstrates that the assessment tool can be useful in evaluating existing design approaches to country tourism logos. This kind of evaluation can help designers determine which attributes are over-used and which might have potential for conveying uniqueness and authenticity.

5.2 Conclusion

Within the context of country tourism marketing, countries throughout the world have been concentrating their focus toward branding and are continuously implementing product and corporate branding concepts and techniques into their own field.

In corporate branding, a well-conceived strategy grants a powerful framework for conceptualizing and creating the many different activities that define a company’s positioning and statement of what they stand for (Schultz and Chernatony, 2002). Today, this approach is also applicable to country branding.

The creation of a logo and visual identity is one of the most common focuses of country branding campaigns. The logo has a possibility of becoming an essential visual element in providing instant recognition to the country. Thus, it is important for the logo to communicate memorable, unique, and authentic attributes that are relevant to the country.

This study examined the logos of 96 countries from all over the world and developed an assessment matrix for use in analyzing their design intentions. Utilizing Mollerup’s (1999) taxonomic tree of marks, the study focused on the assessment and analysis of motifs and conceptual attributes of collected country logos. As demonstrated in the discussion chapter,
the assessment matrix was useful in revealing several overused, ineffective, and unclear messages; it also made it easy to notice which approaches are more effective than others. This analysis method can be applied to other destination branding logos has practical implications for brand management.
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Azerbaijan - http://azerbaijan.tourism.az/
Bahamas - http://www.bahamas.com/
Barbados - http://www.visitbarbados.org/
Belarus - http://eng.belarustourism.by/
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Bermuda - http://www.gotobermuda.com/
Botswana - http://www.botswanatourism.co.bw/
Brasil - http://www.embratur.gov.br/
Britain - http://www.visitbritain.com/
Brunei - http://www.bruneitourism.travel/
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Cyprus - http://www.visitcyprus.com/wps/portal
Czech Republic - http://www.czechtourism.com/
Denmark - http://www.visitdenmark.com/
Dominican Republic - http://www.godominicanrepublic.com/
Egypt - http://www.egypt.travel/
Finland - http://www.visitfinland.com/
France - http://www.francetourism.com/
Georgia - http://georgia.travel
Greece – http://www.visitgreece.gr/portal/site/eot/
Grenada - http://www.grenadagrenadines.com/
Holland - http://us.holland.com/
Hungary - http://www.hungary.com/
India - http://www.incredibleindia.org/index.html
Ireland http://www.discoverireland.com
Israel - http://www.goisrael.com/tourism_eng
Italy - http://www.italia.it
Jamaica - http://www.jtbonline.org
Japan - http://www.jnto.go.jp/eng/
Jordan - http://www.visitjordan.com/
Kenya - http://www.magicalkenya.com/
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Mongolia - http://www.mongoliatourism.gov.mn/
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Oman - http://www.omantourism.gov.om/
Pakistan - http://www.tourism.gov.pk/
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Poland - http://www.poland.travel/en-us
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South Africa - http://www.southafrica.net/
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Tunisia - http://www.cometotunisia.co.uk/
Turkey - http://www.tourismturkey.org/
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