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### **Do postmodern slogans exist?**

**Abstract:** Paper aims to discuss the postmodern character of NTOs' (National Tourist Organization) slogans. The research problem is placed in the context of branding tourist destinations. Author began the research with the assumption that national tourist slogans could be interpreted in the context of postmodern marketing characteristics. Considering the importance of branding process in the postmodern marketing and the importance of slogans in the branding process, the research aimed to analyze if national tourism slogans reflect postmodern marketing features. The author intended to connect the theoretical postulates of postmodern marketing and their practical application in the field of branding tourism destinations. The results of the study could be used as guidelines for practioners in the process of branding tourist destinations by choosing the effective country slogans.

**Key words:** postmodern marketing, branding destinations, slogans, National Tourist Organization

### Introduction

It is already well-known that the epithet *postmodern* has become almost inevitable in social science discourse. Connections between Lyotard's narratives, Baudrillard's simulations, Foucault's discourses or Derrida's opposites nowadays are endless. The famous postmodern concept has entered not only architecture, art and literature, but also children care, media and even cooking. Besides social sciences, the humanities and physical sciences, the concept of postmodern culture and its debates have influenced organizational studies, marketing, and consumer research as well (Firat and Dholakia, 2006).

In marketing context the postmodern phenomenon has been widely discussed in the last twenty years (i.e. Firat and Venkatesh 1995; Firat *at al.* 1995; Firat and Dholakia 2006). Firat and Venkatesh elaborated on various key ideas about consumption and consumer from a theoretical position of "liberatory postmodernism". They have highlighted the differences in the modern and postmodern philosophical approach to the consumption concept. They also proposed the use of the concept of postmodern consumption, which sees the consumer "as

a participant in an ongoing, never-ending process of construction that includes a multiplicity of moments where things (most importantly as symbols) are consumed, produced, signified, represented, allocated, distributed, and circulated" (Firat and Venkatesh 1995 259). The famous *postmodern* epithet has also arrived in tourism studies. The end of metanarratives, the hyperreality concept and "respecting the others" were transferred in the context of tourism. Researches regarding postmodern tourism have emphasized the multiplicity and flexibility of tourist experiences (as an opposite form to the modernist theories that see societies as totalities), the rise of small and specialized travel agencies, growing attraction of nostalgia and "heritage tourism", flourishing of nature oriented tourism and the increase of simulated tourism-related environments. Special attention has been dedicated to the concept of multiplicity and flexibility of postmodern tourist's experiences (Uriely, 1997).

This paper is focused to the specific tourism context: the branding of tourist destinations. One of the initial contacts with the branding destination strategy is a destination's slogan. Past studies have shown the connection of slogans and the brand awareness, branding process and consumer reactions to slogans (Supphellen and Nygaardsvik 2002; Leea *et al.* 2006; Hansmanna *et al.* 2009). Still, in the context of branding destination few to date papers discussed tourism destination slogans (Pike 2004a, 2004b, 2009; Supphellen and Nygaardsvik 2002; Leea *et al.* 2006; Klenosky and Gitelson 1997; Richardson and Cohen 1993). Finally, there is no research that relates the concept of postmodern conditions to tourism destination slogans.

This fact has fuelled the author's curiosity about the slogans' role in branding tourist destinations in postmodern context. A question has appeared: Do national tourist organizations (NTOs) incorporate postmodern elements in their slogans and which ones could be recognized? Following the theoretical postulates of postmodern marketing, the paper analyzes if the slogans of tourist destinations reflect postmodern marketing tendencies. The results of the study could be used as guidelines for practioners in the process of branding tourist destination.

## Destination branding

Within a place destination, branding is the most developed concept in theory and most used concept in practice (Kavaratzis 2005). Place branding reflects the practice of applying appropriate marketing strategies in order to differentiate cities, regions and countries from the competition, with regard to economic, social, political and cultural aspects (Kaplan *et al.* 2010). In the literature there are few trends in place branding which should be mentioned: place of origin branding, nation branding, culture/entertainment branding, and destination branding (Kavaratzis 2005). Although, there are a lot of similariti-

es between branding goods, services and destinations (Balakrishnan 2009), differences between branding destinations and branding goods and services are also evident (Pike 2005). Fan (2006) suggests that "attributes of places are difficult to define, their image is more complicated, and the associations they evoke are more numerous and diverse as opposed to goods and services. In addition, the ownership of the place brand is unclear due to the existence of multiple stakeholders, which leads to a diverse audience". In the postmodern context it does not surprise that "destinations are visited because of their prior images, and they are consumed based on a first-hand comparison of those images with the reality faced in the destination itself" (Kavaratzis 2005).

Destination brand is "a name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic that both identifies and differentiates the destination" (Ritchie and Ritchie 1998). Destination's name conveys the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination (García *et al.* 2012). Blain *et al.* (2005) show that effective destination branding gives visitors an assurance of quality experiences, reduces visitor search costs and offers a way for destinations to establish a unique selling proposition. Malpas (1999) indicates that people need to find a physical place for their imaginings, because their imagination is inextricably connected to their real-world experiences. Approaching the potential destination, a tourist is exposed to the promotion tools usually developed by the local tourist board or by the national tourist office. One of the first contacts with its promotion strategy is a destination's slogan.

### The role of slogans in destination branding

The brand is represented through distinct types of communication, namely *primary* and *secondary* communication. In *primary* communication, communication is not the main goal of these actions. It is just an effect of broad areas of interventions (landscape strategies, infrastructure projects, organizational and administrative structure and city behavior) (Kavaratzis 2005). On the other hand, *secondary* communication is "the formal, intentional communication, that most commonly takes place through well-known marketing practices like all forms of advertising, public relations, graphic design, the use of a logo, etc." The image of a destination is created through pictorial components of promotional material (e.g., brochures, websites, and pamphlets) and verbal expressions such as slogans and messages (Leea *et al.* 2006). Together with a brand name and logo, the slogan represents one of the three key elements of brand identity (Kohli *et al.* 2002). Slogans communicate what the brand is about and provide a unique and significant contribution to brand's identity (Supphellen and Nygaardsvik 2002). Some authors perceive them as "hooks" or "handles" in capturing the meaning of a brand and in relaying on what makes the brand special

(Dahlén and Rosengren 2005). Therefore, slogans have the ability to create brand image (Kohli *et al.* 2002). Recent researches on slogans have been concentrated on the slogans' effectiveness and their connection to the brand awareness (Supphellen and Nygaardsvik 2002), branding process (Leea *et al.* 2006) and consumer reactions to slogans (Hansmanna *et al.* 2009). Only few studies have been focused on slogans' ability to create brand image. In the field of tourism research, Supphellen and Nygaardsvik (2002) proposed a three-stage model for testing "country" slogans (i.e., slogans used to promote tourism). Although they have developed this three-stage model with an idea to test slogan's associations, slogan recall and recognition and the slogan in a commercial context, they reported results only at the first stage.

Projecting the image of a destination brand through a careful selection and tactical utilization of an effective slogan is essential for a destination marketer (Leea *et al.* 2006). The state's choice of slogan is considered a critical decision, since it is used to represent the often diverse, geographic and cultural regions within a state while at the same time serving as a centerpiece for state advertising efforts and economic development initiatives (Klenosky & Gitelson 1997). According to Pike (2004a) "brand slogans represent the public articulation of a destination's positioning strategy, and can be an effective means of gaining 'cut through' in markets crowded with the noise of competing and substitute products". Tourism slogans are one of the best ways to communicate and deliver the theme and the state tourism image to the traveling public (Leea *et al.* 2006). There is a general gap in research regarding slogans in tourism. Some researchers have been comparing tourism slogans with goods and service slogans through content analysis (Richardson and Cohen 1993), while the other ones (Klenosky and Gitelson, 1997) examined managers' perception about state tourism slogans. Leea *et al.* (2006) made a contribution to web-based destination marketing in conjunction with destination branding strategy by developing five slogan categories (*Buy us because we are good, Common attribute-based, Unique attribute-focused, Exclusive appeal, Average Joe*). Pike (2004a) highlighted that there have been no examinations of the history of destination slogans which could be an indicator for the further research. In one of his later papers, by discussing the effectiveness of brand slogans and logos, he pointed out "that slogans are likely to be short lived, and not effectively differentiate the destination from competing places offering similar benefits" (Pike 2009, 860). As for the criticisms of destination slogans Pike (2005) indicates "Gold and Ward's (1994) suggestion that they fail to achieve anything other than ephemeral indifference" (258). In the very same context, he pointed to the market situation imposed to DMO's (*Destination management organizations*) that have to target "a multiplicity of geographic markets to attract a wide range of segments for their range of products, most of which are rigid in what they can be used for" (259).

In brief, an effective destination's slogan should comprise postmodern conditions underlying the differences between potential visitors, attracting the "right ones" and avoiding those segments whose presence could jeopardize the image they want to convey. Therefore, considering the most discussed postmodern conditions which reflect the nature of postconsumer society and which could be particularly important for developing destination brands, in this paper state tourist slogans were analyzed from the postmodern point of view. Thus, all these phenomena have influenced author to analyze to what extent national tourism slogans (of NTOs) are postmodern and how they differ in the context of modern and postmodern conditions.

### Do postmodern slogans exist?

A lack of consensus regarding "definitions, origins and applications" of postmodernism and postmodern society has become an inseparable element of studies regarding postmodern features of any kind (Brown 1993; Cova 1996; Goulding 2003). In this paper a list of postmodern conditions, suggested by Firat and Dholakia (2006), was applied because it was found pertinent to the research problem. The authors cite (1) *hyper-reality* (2) *fragmentation* (3) *decentering* (4) *juxtapositions* and (5) *difference* (Firat and Dholakia, 2006) as the most important postmodern conditions. Besides, this is the last version of widely explained and classified postmodern conditions in the field of marketing.<sup>1</sup> For these reasons, a brief insight into chosen postmodern conditions is given in the following text:

**Table 1:** Brief insight into postmodern conditions

<b>Hyperreality</b>	<b>Fragmentation</b>	<b>Decentering</b>	<b>Juxtapositions</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Simulation	Bricolage	Otherness	Paradox	Openness
Construction	Complexity	Disorder	Opposition	Tolerance
Signification	Speed	Objectification	Complementarity	Deference
Phantasmagoria	Navigation	Multiplicity	Non-commitment	Plurality
Simulacra	Disjointedness			Diversity
	Enclavization			

*Source:* adapted from Firat and Dholakia (2006)

<sup>1</sup> It is worth mentioning that consensus problem on postmodernism exists among different authors, but there are also different explanations and/or classifications of postmodern condition given by the same authors in different papers. For example, one of the postmodern conditions which were analyzed separately by Firat and Venkatesh (1995) in one of their researches is loss of commitment. The same author cites loss of commitment as a part of juxtaposition conditions in the paper of 2006 (Firat and Dholakia 2006).

Regarding tourism slogans that could be appropriate for this study, it was decided to analyze those of NTOs (National Tourist Organizations). As a starting point, a list from the U.S. Department of State (<http://www.state.gov/misc/list/index.htm>) web site, presenting the list of independent countries in the world, was used. As tourism slogans change during time, it is necessary to emphasize that the slogans' analysis was done in the period from 24<sup>th</sup> January to 5<sup>th</sup> February 2012. Author is conscious that there are many internet sites with the false or out-of-date information. According to this, it is important to note that only official internet sites of National Tourist Organizations, Institutes for Tourism, Ministry of Tourism or other kind of Ministry in charge for tourism development and promotion (where NTO does not exist) and electronic version of national tourism strategies for the relevant period of time or brochures are taken to be pertinent to the research. In some cases the specialized tourism blogs as well as site YouTube was considered to be a useful source. According to the last one, and in the context of the paper problem, it should be mentioned that the internet site YouTube was used to find and also to verify written slogans in the latest national promotional videos without considering visual or audio elements.

There were 192 countries included in the study of the national tourism slogans. Among these countries there were 65 countries which national tourism slogans were not found mostly due to the lack of their appearance at the NTO web pages. In few cases there were no NTO web pages. For 127 countries in almost all cases national tourism slogans are found at their official NTO web pages.

The research was based on the twofold content analysis of tourist slogans. Considering tendencies in postmodern research methods that underline the interior position of researcher who is not "a third person, nameless, ahistorical, one-dimensional subject or acultural being researching from a position of nowhere" (Maguire 2007, 9), a content analysis was applied. It was a directed content analysis which used codes defined before and during data analysis on the relevant theory (Hsieh, Shanon 2005). Firstly, the slogans were analyzed. Secondly, the results of the analysis were classified into created groups. In the first phase, author did not take into account the country of slogan provenience in order to make the conclusion based just on the verbal slogan's components. Afterwards, the slogans were revised by considering the country of provenience which was found important in order to classify some aspects of postmodern conditions (e.g. "objectification"). As it was previously mentioned, the classification of postmodern conditions made by Firat and Dholakia (Firat and Dholakia 2006) is taken as a research basis (Table 1). They gave a deep insight into postmodern characteristics applied to marketing. The purpose of the study was to identify the elements which could be explained as postmodern conditions suggested by Firat and Dholakia (2006). These conditions were perceived

in the NTO slogans during their promotional campaigns. In the process of analyzing the postmodern conditions two groups of tourism slogans have emerged: (1) *slogans with postmodern elements* and (2) *slogans without postmodern elements*.

### Slogans with postmodern elements

It was argued that destinations could be a "target" of "imaginative geographies" which are represented in books, Web pages, emails and personal photo albums. Tourists visit these fictional "phantasmal destinations" motivated by the myth attached to the destination. This unique form of tourism, which in this case is an expression of the multidimensional characteristics of human culture, fits naturally within the postmodern landscape and imaginative geography (Gao *et al.* 2012). Therefore, it does not surprise that the dominant postmodern condition in analyzed corpus was the hyperreality. Author intended to uncover the hyperreal meaning of message in order to construct tourism destination image. The predominant feature of hyperreality was phantasmagoria ("a fantastic sequence of haphazardly associative and dreamlike imagery" (Firat and Dholakia 2006, 129)). Slogans such as *A world of wonders*<sup>2</sup>, *A land of magic colors*<sup>3</sup>, *Endless discovery*<sup>4</sup>, *Kingdom of wonder*<sup>5</sup>, *A Kingdom of unexpected treasures*<sup>6</sup> inspire tourists to develop their imagination before they arrive on the destinations with unreal features. These "slogans replace reality with image, illusion and simulation and they become more real than the reality they supposedly represent" (Cova 1996b, 496). They try to provide the consumer with the un-encountered experiences and facilitate spending money more creatively (Proctor and Kitchen 2002) or stimulate tourists to revive the existing myths regarding connected to the destinations (unexplored lands, tropical paradises, colonies, *One Thousand and One Nights*, etc.). With the same purpose, some of them use Biblical motives (*Favorite destination since the Noah's time*<sup>7</sup>) or non-English languages (*L'Algerie-carrefour des civilisations*<sup>8</sup>, *Rendez-vous in France*<sup>9</sup> and *Corazon del Mundo Maya*<sup>10</sup>) si-

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.zimbabwetourism.net/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-8CwijE7DTQ>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.jnto.go.jp/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.tourismcambodia.org/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.bruneitourism.travel/welcome.html>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.armeniainfo.am/>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.ont.dz/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=74&Itemid=111&lang=en](http://www.ont.dz/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=74&Itemid=111&lang=en)

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.rendezvousenfrance.com/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.mundomaya.travel/es/paises/guatemala/item/guatemala.html>



mulating an unreal experience and authentic atmosphere. Phantasmagoria and construction, "the process of combining ideas and symbols to achieve congruous meaning" (129), proved to be the most frequent aspects of hyperreality (Table 2).

No matter how imaginative, unreal or unexpected promises are hidden in the destinations' slogans, in the context of the reality that is now "the chaos, the disjointedness, the disconnectedness of the elements and moments of life" (Firat and Dholakia 2006, 131), the lack of commitment is omnipresent. People in postmodern era accept "fragmented moments and the thrill of the spectacle without committing to any one moment" (Firat and Venkatesh 1995, 253). For that reasons, it does not surprise that a majority of NTOs used an enclavization, "creation and promotion of spaces (physical or virtual) to intensify experiences and sensations" (129), as a way to promote spaces and intensify sensations regarding specific states. Some of them used the very "experience" words (*An enriching experience*<sup>11</sup>, *An unforgettable experience*<sup>12</sup>, *A Royal experience*<sup>13</sup>, *Fiji me - the Fiji experience*<sup>14</sup>) underlining exactly the experiential aspects of visiting those states as an important factor in postmodern tourism, while the other ones stressed perceptual aspects of potential experience (*Seeing is believing. Mystical Myanmar*<sup>15</sup> or *I feel Slovenia*<sup>16</sup>) and some of them in combination with objectification tried to present the places which intensify the experiences and sensations (*Where wines are born- where the sun always shines*<sup>17</sup>, *An oasis in Europe*<sup>18</sup>, *Guyana - the Amazon Adventure*<sup>19</sup>, *The fun starts here*<sup>20</sup>, *Truly Asia*<sup>21</sup>, *Where the world meets*<sup>22</sup>, *Paradise on Earth*<sup>23</sup>). All these slogans underline the fragmented, instantaneous, experience. According to Firat and Dholakia's framework, very few slogans, such as *Come discover your soul treasures*<sup>24</sup> or *Come find the Israel in you*<sup>25</sup>, featured navigation as a fragmentation's element regarding "travelling across

<sup>11</sup> <http://lmd.unwto.org/ca/poster-competitor/saudi-tourism-enriching-experience>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.suriname-tourism.org/>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.thekingdomofswaziland.com/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.fiji.travel/>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.tourismmyanmar.org/>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.slovenia.info/>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.infobadmc.com/mendoza.php>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.visitdenmark.com/denmark/tourist-frontpage>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.guyana-tourism.com/photos/index.php/>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aHINm2h-bII>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.tourism.gov.my/en/intl>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=43vozI1tRSc>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.saotome.st/>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.atlastours.net/iraq/info.html>

<sup>25</sup> [http://www.goisrael.com/Tourism\\_Eng/Pages/home.aspx](http://www.goisrael.com/Tourism_Eng/Pages/home.aspx)



disparate domains". The similar situation was with technique of a bricolage. It appeared in slogans *Ghana: Culture, Warmth and Much More*<sup>26</sup> and *China: Travel, joy, health*<sup>27</sup> which highlighted different forms of fragmented experiences.

Thanks to fragmented moments the post-modern consumer, also called the post-consumer, is able to present different self-images. He appreciates and enjoys the paradox and the playfulness, the difference and the satire that such juxtapositions provide and enable (Firat *et al.* 1995, 43). These could be seen as a preconditions for creating a concept of juxtapositions of opposite, another postmodern phenomenon which is "the key to adopt an open, untargeted, ill-defined, imprecise approach which leaves scope for imaginative consumer participation [...] and sometimes the product and service too" (Proctor and Kitchen 2002, 149). In contemporary consumption "anything can be juxtaposed to anything else; everything takes place in the present, 'here,' that is, nowhere in particular" (Gitlin 1989, 350). These were fundamentals for creating slogans such as *Different holidays, a single destination*<sup>28</sup>, *Colombia - the only risk is wanting to stay longer*<sup>29</sup> or *13 months of sunshine*<sup>30</sup>. This can be found quite useful in the process of differentiating the destination in a paradoxical way - "exhibiting inexplicable or self/contradictory aspects" (Firat and Dholakia 2006, 130). Furthermore, some of those paradoxical slogans are interwoven with the elements of fragmentation (enclavization) and decentering (otherness) as well as difference (by underlining plurality). These characteristics highlight the promotion of places by intensifying something that is "odd" at the first glance. On the other hand, applying the non-commitment condition in destination slogans (the condition "lacking fixity of purpose, inability to bind one course of action" (Firat and Dholakia 2006, 130)), such as in slogans *Has it all*<sup>31</sup>, *It's all here*<sup>32</sup> or *Amazing Thailand always amaze you*<sup>33</sup> could result in a mistargeted promotional campaign. It could be said that the measure of differentiation is one of the key factors in creating the right slogan. Dann (2000) pointed to the relevance of the dichotomous nature of contemporary tourism, comprising mass tourists and postmodern travellers, to destination brand messages. For example, when a destination targets a mass

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.natcomreport.com/ghana/livre/tourism.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.tourismchina.org/top01/top01.html>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.kauberdi.net/english/>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ZPzNVwgjVI>

<sup>30</sup> [http://www.aethiopien-botschaft.de/tourism\\_main.html](http://www.aethiopien-botschaft.de/tourism_main.html)

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.godominicanrepublic.com/rd/?lang=en&idioma=1>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.honduras.com>

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.tatnews.org/media-release/18-media-releases-2011/252-amazing-thailand-always-amazes-you-pata>

market, too much emphasis on difference may deter potential travellers, while too little differentiation may equate to the surrender of identity to intermediaries. Alternatively, if a destination targets the unique needs of postmodern travellers seeking alternative tourism, with a differentiated offering, only a relatively small number of visitors will result, who by virtue of their desire for new experiences will be less likely to repeat visitation (Pike 2004, 6).

The postmodern condition of difference in this study was presented by slogans featuring mostly openness (*Welcome to Kenya. Discover the magic of Africa*<sup>34</sup>, *It's possible*<sup>35</sup>, *You're welcome*<sup>36</sup> or *Hospitality beyond borders*<sup>37</sup>) or diversity (*A million different journeys*<sup>38</sup>) without excluding the qualities of others. This is a common example of differentiation in tourism promotion campaigns respecting the Derridian concept of "others". In these slogans there are no words like "best", "ultimate", "unique" or "only" which could be interpreted as a modern tendency to uniqueness. In these examples the characteristics of hospitality and friendliness are dominant, followed by plurality of possibilities for the experiences of destinations. "Fordist tourist products have been replaced by new segmented tourist groups which are difficult for putting into frameworks of typologies given their strong emphasis on (postmodern) de-construction and diversity" (Amegger *et al.* 2002). Considering those postmodern circumstances, it does not surprise that the choice of holiday destination could help define the identity of the traveler and, in an increasingly homogeneous world, set him apart from the hordes of other tourists (Caldwell and Freire 2004). Some slogans, such as *For travellers, not tourists*<sup>39</sup> send exactly this kind of message. Therefore, branding a destination through a slogan conceived on difference concept could be a solution for a successful promotion.

Since marketing has a "growing influence and role in human life, in terms of an increasing, almost complete, domination of life by the products purchased in the market, a consumer's life became a series of fragmented self-definitions determined by consumption" (Firat and Schultz 1997, 192). In another words, fragmented moments are defined by different objects which decentered the subject and assumed superiority of the subject (Firat and Dholakia 2006, 131). The reality is presented by objects. The process of objectification, usage of objects in presenting concepts, is the most frequent decentering condition applied in the analyzed corpus. As a result, some slogans re-

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nphe6O8TXy8>

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.southafrica.net/za/en/landing/visitor-home>

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.visituganda.com/>

<sup>37</sup> [http://belarustourism.by/i/2009/poznaj\\_engl\\_internet.pdf](http://belarustourism.by/i/2009/poznaj_engl_internet.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.papuanewguinea.travel/welcome>

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mn9vePxVhb0>

ferred "objects" featuring position of the state or the geographical characteristics (*L'Algerie-carrefour des civilisations*, *The hart shaped land*<sup>40</sup>, *The land of upright people*<sup>41</sup>, *Heart of Africa*<sup>42</sup>, *Land of grandeur & beauty*<sup>43</sup>, *At the crossroads of the worlds. In the center of Eurasia*<sup>44</sup>, *Europe's west coast*<sup>45</sup>), some featured abstract concepts (*Happiness is a place*<sup>46</sup>, *The Mediterranean's best-kept secret*<sup>47</sup>, *Beauty has an address*<sup>48</sup>) or material objects (*A food lover's dream, a beer lover's Heaven*<sup>49</sup>, *No artificial ingredients*<sup>50</sup>, *Welcome to the spice of the Caribbean*<sup>51</sup>, *Corazon del Mundo Maya*<sup>52</sup>). According to these examples, it can be noted that tourism destination slogans are to some extent characterized by special determinants, either geographical terms or objects, in combination with different experiences and emotions.

In summation, in the group of slogans with postmodern elements the majority of slogans used uppermost hyperreality and fragmentation followed by de-centering, difference and juxtapositions as postmodern conditions respectively. Considering the presence of sub-categories separately, fragmentation was predominantly featured by enclavization, while paradox and non-commitment emerged within slogans with juxtaposition elements. According to this study, diversity is the most frequent feature of difference condition. It should be mentioned that some slogans have several postmodern elements. Examples of tourism slogans with postmodern elements are given in the Table 2.

**Table 2:** Slogans with postmodern elements

Hyperreality	
<b>Simulation</b>	Rendez-vous in France. Corazon del Mundo Maya.
<b>Construction</b>	Hospitality beyond borders. No artificial ingredients. The spice of the Caribbean.

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.bhtourism.ba/eng/theheartshapedland.wbsp>

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.burkina.com/>

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.burunditourisme.com/index.php/en/>

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.tourismiran.ir/home.aspx?lang=3>

<sup>44</sup> [http://www.kazakhstan.orexca.com/img/logo\\_tourism.jpg](http://www.kazakhstan.orexca.com/img/logo_tourism.jpg)

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rITuyxzJ2C8>

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.tourism.gov.bt/>

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKlTc2qrVr0>

<sup>48</sup> <http://www.omantourism.gov.om/wps/portal/mot/tourism/oman/home>

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.visitbelgium.com/>

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWedIclSdEY>

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.grenadagrenadines.com/>

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.visitguatemala.com/es>

<b>Signification</b>	The Land of Smiles
<b>Phantasmagoria</b>	Kingdom of wonder. Favorite destination since the Noah's time. A Kingdom of unexpected treasures. Endless discovery.
<b>Simulacra</b>	The Mediterrean as it was once.
<b>Fragmentation</b>	
<b>Bricolage</b>	China: Travel, joy, health Ghana: Culture, Warmth, and Much More.
<b>Navigation</b>	Come discover your soul preferences. Travel, joy, health.
<b>Enclavization</b>	Where wines was born- where the sun always shine. An unforgettable experience Paradise on Earth An enriching experience A food lover's dream, a beer lover's Heaven.
<b>Decentering</b>	
<b>Otherness</b>	Authenticity Still Exists 13 months of sunshine.
<b>Disorder</b>	Happiness is a place. An oasis in Europe.
<b>Objectification</b>	The heart shaped land. Heart of Africa The Land of Smiles
<b>Reversal</b>	Fiji me- the Fiji experience. I feel sLOVEnia.
<b>Juxtapositions</b>	
<b>Paradox</b>	Seeing is believing. Mystical Myanmar. Takes you beyond. Little Big Country.
<b>Opposition</b>	For travellers, not tourist. Little Big Country.
<b>Complementarity</b>	Virtu is stronger when is united. Wild Beauty
<b>Non-commitment</b>	Has it all. Amazing Thailand always amaze you.
<b>Difference</b>	
<b>Openness</b>	Albania- a new Mediterrean to love. It's possible. Hospitality beyond borders
<b>Plurality</b>	A million different journeys! Much more.
<b>Diversity</b>	A million different journeys! Ghana: Culture, Warmth and Much More.

Source: Author's research

### Slogans without postmodern elements

In the analyzed corpus a group of slogans, according to author's observations, did not feature postmodern conditions. The group of slogans without postmodern elements was based on two aspects. The first one was underlying an active role of potential receiver of the message (*Let's explore*<sup>53</sup>, *Feel the friendship*<sup>54</sup> or *Follow your heart*<sup>55</sup>) and the other group was trying to underline the attributes of a certain state (*Positively surprising*<sup>56</sup>, *Pure. Natural, Unspoiled*<sup>57</sup>). Even if these slogans invite for experience, underline openness, use the "objects", etc., they lack simulations, "phantasmal" experiences and paradoxical characteristics of discovering destinations. It becomes obvious that destination branding strategies are faced with the paradoxical challenge of postmodern tourism. On the one hand, in the core of place branding is an application of appropriate marketing strategies used in order to differentiate cities, regions and countries from the competition, with regard to economic, social, political and cultural aspects (Kaplan *et al.* 2010). On the other hand, branding strategies should avoid introducing the destination as a superior one, more precisely as superior element of superior-inferior pair so typical for modernism, but as a distinct and a specific product in tourism market with the right measure for "the others".

Finally, regardless of the given classification of tourism destination slogans, in postmodern context, some of them are found to be in one of these groups but enriched with (1) intensifiers in order to differ themselves but in a rather intense and "odd" way or with (2) element of nostalgia.

Some of slogans were identified as slogans with the blur distinction between modern and postmodern influences. Considering the postmodern tolerance to differences and the avoidance of the superior narratives of any kind, the slogans such as *Indonesia. Ultimate in Diversity*<sup>58</sup>, *Nicaragua: Unique, Original*<sup>59</sup> and *Best enjoyed slowly*<sup>60</sup> are found to be oriented more to modernism. These slogans send a final message to visitors with almost no possibilities for different interpretation. Other slogans such as: *Endless discovery*<sup>61</sup>, *Timeless*<sup>62</sup>, *Endless*

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<sup>53</sup> <http://www.zambiatourism.com/zambia-tourism-board>

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.visittajikistan.tj/en/>

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.stkittstourism.kn/>

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.visitestonia.com/en/>

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.visiticeland.com/>

<sup>58</sup> <http://www.visit-indonesia.com.au/pages/about/index.php>

<sup>59</sup> <http://visitnicaragua.us/>

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.latvia.travel/en>

<sup>61</sup> <http://www.jnto.go.jp/>

<sup>62</sup> <http://www.macedonia-timeless.com/>

*Horizons*<sup>63</sup> and *Timeless Charm*<sup>64</sup> could have twofold explanation and were found to be more difficult to analyze. Firstly, the term "timeless" could represent enduring process which is then in the collision with the postmodern consumer who is oriented to fragmentation and decenteredness (Firat and Venkatesh 1995). On the other hand, this term could be accepted as intensifying element of the destination's uniqueness. To this subgroup could be added slogans with predictors or intensifiers that uncovered modern tendencies ("awesome", "unique", "unforgettable", "best", "incredible" etc.).

At the end, in the analyzed corpus the element of nostalgia was identified. Here nostalgia was not represented only by the simple lament on the history or heritage (*The Mediterranean as it was once*<sup>65</sup>, *L'Algerie-carrefour des civilizations*), but it can be expanded to the notion of the time of healthier food and a slower life that does not exist anymore (*No artificial ingredients, Best enjoyed slowly*). In the context of world full of simulations, "hypes", chaos etc., the authenticity is something that people want to experience and DMOs should try to present it to the visitors (as in Bolivian slogan *Authenticity Still Exists*). In the context of tourism destinations, nostalgia is not seen as it refers to preferences to activities of people (consumers) taken in a period that passed or something that provokes the memories of their youth etc. (Holbrook 1993). Thus, the nostalgia concept in tourism context could be understood as a general lament on some experiences, qualities, states of nature, culture and life in general that destination could offer. The elements of experience, emotions related to food, soul, heritage or people are then deeply interwoven within the nostalgia context. In this context of nostalgia and authenticity seeking, can be unveiled the intention of generating destination to represent the "otherness". This characteristic is not regarded as being in collision with hyperreality or fragmentation, but as a paradoxical one that appears together with simulations, phantasmagorias and objectifications.

## Conclusions

The era of postmodernity has influenced many aspects of contemporary society, including the field of marketing. In the postmodern marketing, the contribution to the concept of postmodernity involves three major categories: 1) the new, complex society, 2) (post)-customer research, and 3) marketing practice (Brown, 1993). Consequently, the research problem is embedded in this complexity of postmodernism. However, this paper discussed only the

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<sup>63</sup> <http://www.namibiatourism.com.na/>

<sup>64</sup> <http://www.vietnamtourism.com/>

<sup>65</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VTgGs56SKu0>

postmodern elements applied to national tourism slogans in destination branding context from theoretical and critical point of view, indicating possible further activities to be done in slogans creation within destination branding context. Major conclusions were made regarding the following contexts: (1) postmodern context relating to tourism and (2) branding destination context.

The research uncovers some specifics of postmodern conditions that can be found in tourism slogans. There is a need for an adaptation of postmodern conditions to tourism context. Thus, the presented postmodern conditions should be explained more specifically to tourism destinations. Regarding the hyper-real character of tourism slogans, or better to say, their messages, the research underlines the importance of elements of destinations (heritage or nature) to be incorporated in the slogans in a rather subtle and indirect way by encouraging the imagination of consumers. This is to be provoked by "phantasms", constructions of meaning of "the name" of destinations or even by simulations. Fragmentation is shown as the most dominant postmodern condition in tourism slogans with an important role of enclavization. It is not surprising because these slogans represent destination or to say "place" or "enclave" characterized by its heritage and possibilities to indulge in experiences and sensations. In addition to this, it has to be underlined that the accent is put on the emotions that can be developed while discovering the destination. Considering *decenteredness*, it can be argued that terms in connection with objects or geography are of importance for destination slogans (e.g. land, heart, smiles, crossroads, center, jewel, heaven, paradise, etc.). Thus, many of these "objects" are more abstract aiming to intensify the differences of these destinations. According to this, in terms of quantity, a difference is not the dominant postmodern condition. A few destination slogans have tended to transmit the literal message of difference. Here the importance of creation of differences through hyperreal (phantasmal), fragmented (enclavization) and decentered (objectification) approaches can be seen. All these facts underline the very characteristics of postmodern society that mark tourism as well as destination branding.

There is a need for further research of tourism slogans and their postmodern characteristics in destination branding context. It could comprise the study of consumers' perceptions of tourism destinations slogans regarding these analyzed postmodern conditions. This aspect is of special importance considering the underlined empowerment of consumers in postmodern marketing. Furthermore, the postmodern nature of analyzed slogans should be research from the consumers' point of view.

Finally, considering the fact that in the process of branding destinations "too much emphasis on difference may deter potential travelers, while too little differentiation may equate to the surrender of identity to intermediaries" (Pike 2004a, 6), it could be concluded that this very characteristic represents



the strengths and the weaknesses of the tourism destination branding process. Besides, it was discussed that contemporary tourism comprises mass and postmodern tourism (Pike 2004b). This phenomenon explains the existence of tourism slogans which were characterized as those without postmodern elements and which leads more to the pre-postmodern character of tourism (experiences) or better the modern one. Therefore, it can be argued that no matter how postmodern phenomenon is present in post-modern society, tourism is still characterized by elements of mass tourism. The real challenge that is to be posed to destination branding is relating postmodern phenomenon of tourism experiences and consumer behavior.

### Limitations and opportunities for further research

One of the major limitations of this research is the fact that all slogans were not covered by the research due to their shortage on the internet. This study was focused merely to the present NTO and government tourism slogans.

Another limitation of the current study relates to the method of analysis. Content analysis is one of the most widely adopted methods in the analyses (Morrison *et al.* 2004). Still, it usually serves as a starting point for more comprehensive empirical research. In this case, this paper could be considered as a preliminary research concerning postmodern conditions in tourism slogans and the effects that they can have on the tourist behavior. It should be considered as an initial attempt for more comprehensive multi method studies, which may include focus groups, consumer surveys and interviews with potential travelers. Consequently, it assumed the need for further research of consumers' perceptions of these slogans in postmodern context.

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*Da li postoje postmoderni slogani?*

Polazeći od značaja brendiranja u postmodernističkom marketingu i izbora slogana u procesu brendiranja, u radu je analizirano da li slogani nacionalnih turističkih organizacija reflektuju svojstva postmodernističkog marketinga. Autor je pošao od pretpostavke da slogani nacionalnih turističkih organizacija

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moгу da budu interpretirani u kontekstu postmodernističkog marketinga. Teorijski postulati postmodernističkog marketinga povezani su sa njihovom praktičnom primenom u oblasti brendiranja destinacija. Rezultati istraživanja mogu se iskoristiti kao smernice pri izboru efektivnih slogana u procesu brendiranja destinacija.

*Ključne reči:* postmoderni marketing, brendiranje destinacija, slogani

*Les slogans postmodernes existent-ils?*

L'objectif de cette étude est de discuter le caractère postmoderne des slogans conçus et utilisés par la NTO (Organisation touristique nationale). Le problème de la recherche est situé dans le contexte de la promotion des destinations touristiques. La recherche part de l'hypothèse que les slogans touristiques nationaux pourraient être interprétés dans le contexte des caractéristiques commerciales postmodernes. En considérant l'importance du processus de promotion dans le marketing postmoderne et l'importance des slogans dans le processus de promotion, l'analyse s'est concentrée sur la question si les slogans du tourisme national reflètent les caractéristiques du marketing postmoderne. L'intention des auteurs a été de relier les postulats théoriques du marketing postmoderne avec leur application pratique dans le champ de la promotion des destinations touristiques. Les résultats de l'étude pourraient être utilisés par les praticiens comme une piste à suivre dans le processus de promotion des destinations touristiques par le choix des slogans appropriés pour différents pays.

*Mots clés:* marketing postmoderne, promotion des destinations, slogans

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