

ELI AVRAHAM
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Tourism Marketing for Developing Countries

Battling Stereotypes and Crises in Asia,
Africa and the Middle East



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Asia, Africa and the Middle East**

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To David & Avishai Avraham
E.A.

To Ruthi & Micha Ketter
E.K.

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Introduction: Tourism Marketing for Developing Countries

This book focuses on tourism marketing for countries in the developing world. According to the World Bank, the term “developing world” is used to describe low- and middle-income economies, in which the gross national income (GNI) per capita in 2014 was under \$12,746 (World Bank, 2014b). However, the term “developing country” is not only a financial indicator; it points to a complex system of ties between historical, economic, political and social factors (Todaro, 1992). In many developing countries, this system results in a long list of challenges, including poverty, limited effectiveness of public services, safety and security issues, public health issues, inadequate access to technology, poor public education services and low level of environmental sustainability (Blowfield and Frynas, 2005; Mansfeld and Pizam, 2006; Avgerou, 2008; Olken and Pande, 2012). Even in the context of tourism, although developing countries aim to generate revenues and promote development through tourism, it is considerably different from tourism planning, developing and marketing in developed countries (Reid, 2003).

Overview: the challenges in attracting tourism for developing countries

Countries in the developing world are facing many difficulties. Suffering from a challenging reality, many of these countries tend to experience crisis events related to crime, terrorism, political unrest, natural disasters, epidemics and accidents, and in some places such occurrences are almost a part of everyday life. Having a long-lasting series of crises poses a significant threat to the destination’s public image and to its ability to attract tourists and visitors in particular (Beirman, 2003). The threat to the destination’s public image is reinforced because developing countries

have insufficient resources available for crisis percussion, prevention and management (Glaesser, 2006). When a destination image is threatened by repeated crises, developing countries must constantly communicate with crisis-related messages in order to protect their image and maintain their position in the global tourism arena. Consequently, the use of crisis communication strategies and techniques must be an integral part of tourism marketing in developing countries; it is an important channel for these countries in presenting their place, communicating their values, managing their images and battling negative stereotypes.

The growing international interest in place and destination branding since the early 1990s has been researched and published in many academic and professional publications. While providing much-needed knowledge on tourism marketing and promotion, these publications have been less relevant for destinations with continuous negative images. For places suffering from prolonged negative stereotypes, generalizations, prejudices and perceptions of being “underdeveloped”, “unsafe”, “boring” or “backward”, there is a considerable need for a different tourism marketing approach, one that would refer to the place’s negative stereotypes, battle them and alter the image. We believe that destinations that suffer from negative images in general, and developing countries in particular, must adopt a special set of tourism marketing tools, different from those available in the existing literature. Furthermore, decision-makers in these destinations are often helpless against the prolonged negative stereotypes, generalizations and prejudices associated with these places; such negative perceptions have been constructed over many years, and cultivated among the public by superficial and reckless media coverage.

During the last two decades many developing countries have joined the global tourism market as part of globalization processes and the fall of the Iron Curtain. These countries had suffered from negative public and media image which made it challenging for them to compete over tourists with countries with strong and familiar brands. In this global era, a problematic image is a major obstacle in attracting tourists, high-quality residents and investors. However, in the case of destinations suffering from prolonged image crises, it seems almost unrealistic to expect any target audience to visit a destination and “put aside” these long-lasting negative images and stereotypes, just because of an advertising campaign or other promotional effort. Tackling prolonged negative place images is crucial for developing tourism in Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, East Europe and Asia. Although these destinations differ greatly, in the eyes of many potential tourists they all suffer from weak place images, negative stereotypes and problematic perceptions.

In an economic reality where international tourism provides approximately 10 percent of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 8 percent of employment (UNWTO, 2015), there is a widespread demand for a book that will deal with the tourism challenges of developing nations and destinations. The number of visitors to developing countries in recent years is increasing and this growing trend suggests a change in how potential audiences recognize the developed world as a preferred destination and also in the attractiveness of these areas (UNWTO, 2014c). On the other hand, tourist destinations in the developing world are far from fulfilling their tourism potential and there is still a long way to go; we believe that one of the main obstacles against realizing this tourism potential is the problematic image of the developing world.

Scholars in the field of image repair distinguish between two types of negative destination image. First, there is a negative image caused by a short-term, unexpected crisis, such as terror attacks, sudden epidemics or natural disasters (Mansfeld, 1994; Ritchie, 2009; Walters and Mair, 2012). Second, there is a prolonged negative image generated by long-lasting issues, such as high crime rates, poverty, continuous war or political instability (Avraham and Ketter, 2013; Avraham, 2014b). When analyzing image crises in the developing world, these two types of images are less distinct than in areas of the developed world. This is because destinations in the developing world are relatively unfamiliar to the Western audience; and their prolonged negative image, which is deeply rooted in the past, plays a significant role even in sudden crises. Thus, when a short-term or unexpected crisis is reported in the media, the audience experiences a feeling of *déjà vu* as negative stereotypes and generalizations that have been stored for years, possibly sub-consciously, come to the surface. As a result, the use of well-known crisis communications strategies that may be highly effective in restoring an image crisis in the developed world may not bear fruit when experienced by developing destinations.

The current book: goal, layout, uniqueness, target audience

Despite the definite differences that exist among developing countries, the goal of this book is to examine whether there is a common toolbox used by marketers of destinations in developing countries that suffer from prolonged negative images. Based on the existing literature, we know that marketers of “regular” places (those that do not suffer from a negative image) use similar marketing strategies (Kotler et al., 1993, 1999), but the aim here is to study the solutions found by marketers of

developing countries in order to deal with their problematic public and media image. “Tourism Marketing for Developing Countries” is aimed at providing tools and strategies for altering the image of developing destinations and attracting international tourists and visitors, despite the challenges that stem from negative images. The book is based on a wide-scale analysis of the different marketing and communication strategies used by developing countries, in relation to the theoretical and practical knowledge that has accumulated in the field.

The book pays special attention to E-Tourism and E-Marketing. The internet is a prime tool for promoting tourism and in recent years has become a leading instrument for delivering campaign messages (Neuhofer et al., 2012). For developing countries, the use of official tourism websites, social media and other online platforms is becoming a highly effective persuasion tool and an inexpensive platform for delivering a variety of messages to international audiences (Ketter and Avraham, 2012). Many of the case studies in the book, therefore, relate to the destinations’ official tourism websites, Facebook pages, YouTube channels, Twitter accounts, Instagram accounts and other means of online activity.

“Tourism Marketing for Developing Countries” is an academic yet practical book that provides a professional toolbox and knowledge for the marketing and branding of emerging destinations. The book outlines academic tools, models and techniques for destination marketing in a simple and easy-to-use manner, illustrated with dozens of real-life case studies taken from developing countries and other worldwide destinations. It meets the growing interest in the field of tourism destination marketing, offering an international perspective, in-depth research and valid conclusions both for scholars and professionals. The target audiences of this book include destination marketers, tourism boards, national tourism offices, destination management organizations (DMOs), spokespersons, public relations officers, tourism policy-makers at local, regional and national levels, crisis communications experts and other tourism stakeholders. On the academic side, this book serves researchers and scholars in related fields such as tourism, geography, marketing, public relations, media and communication, image repair and advertising.

How does this book differ from other books? A careful survey of the market will find many books in the fields of destination branding, place promotion, tourism marketing, image repair and crisis communication, but only a small number of them combine these fields while focusing primarily on marketing strategies for places which face the challenge of prolonged negative images. This book’s emphasis on handling an immediate image crisis, the problem of negative images and how to repair

them makes it unique and much-needed. It is important to say that this book, like our earlier one (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a), is also based on the strategic approach to advertising, branding and public relations, stating that a change of image is an ongoing, holistic, interactive and wide-scale process, requiring much more than a quick change of logo or slogan.

Research design: research questions, methodology, data analysis

The leading research question underlying this book is, “How do developing countries market themselves, combat stereotypes and negative images, and attract tourists during crises?” This question is based on two fundamental assumptions: firstly, global tourism is a highly competitive arena and if destinations wish to attract tourists and visitors, they must be involved in destination marketing practices (Kozak and Baloglu, 2011). Secondly, destinations in developing countries suffer from stereotypes and image constraints that impact their marketing for tourism (Ketter and Avraham, 2010; Avraham, 2013). The book’s main research question can be elaborated into three sub-questions:

- RQ1: How are developing countries using media strategies to overcome long-term and accumulated image problems?
- RQ2: How are developing countries using crisis communication techniques in order to manage their image and overcome crisis events?
- RQ3: How are developing countries battling stereotypes, generalizations and negative perceptions that are associated with the developing world?

Together, these questions provide us with a comprehensive perspective on how developing countries market themselves in order to attract tourists and visitors, and how they overcome the unique challenges of tourism marketing in the developing world, with a specific focus on long-term issues, short-term crises and stereotypes of developing countries. In order to answer these questions we use qualitative content analysis of a variety of tools and resources.

Qualitative content analysis

Qualitative content analysis has been advocated as an effective method of analyzing the content of promotional information and used extensively in the research of advertising and other promotional content.

The qualitative approach is especially useful for studies attempting to explain social interaction in general, as it makes use of inductive reasoning, generalizing from the social reality to a more comprehensive theory (Tuchman, 1991). The method, based on a thorough understanding of the units analyzed, examines the “common signifying process.” Researchers using it believe that texts reveal general discourse patterns (Pauly, 1991) through motifs, labels, definitions, logos, symbols, visuals, slogans and generalizations in the advertisements, and that these patterns exclusively characterize a specific social group, social status or destination (Van Dijk, 1988). Similarly, Barthes (1977) notes that advertisements can be analyzed both through language and visual means.

The current study is based on a qualitative content analysis of four types of data: (1) *advertising components* (slogans, visuals and text); (2) *media interviews* with developing countries’ officials and marketers; (3) *official media policy* adopted by governmental decision-makers; and (4) *marketing initiatives* employed by developing countries. These tools were located in four sources: (1) *official internet websites* of destinations and online social networks’ content published on YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram; (2) *news reports* from international media outlets such as BBC News, the New York Times and other newspapers, these are media outlets that focus on foreign news and tend to criticize institutions; (3) *official marketing materials* such as brochures and catalogs, collected from travel agents and at tourism fairs; and (4) *global tourism news websites* such as eTurbonews (<http://eturbonews.com/>), which was established in October 2007 and is now considered one of the main websites covering global tourism; these items contain information on the marketing strategies of developing countries, interviews, campaigns and marketing initiatives taken over the years. In addition we used many case studies analyzed in academic publications. The central model adopted in this book is the “multi-step model for altering place image” (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a, p. 188) – a comprehensive model describing the process of restoring destination images (see more details in Chapter 4). Several studies have used this model, or parts of it, to analyze the marketing efforts of destinations around the world (Stock, 2009; Walters and Mair, 2012; Avraham, 2013, 2015).

The book’s layout

The book is divided into two parts. The first part has four chapters that summarize the existing knowledge accumulated in the fields of destination management, public and media images, place marketing/branding,

crisis communication management and image repair. Chapter 1 deals with public image, perceptions and stereotypes of the developing world; Chapter 2 discusses the factors affecting the media image of developing countries in the international media; Chapter 3 focuses on the existing knowledge in place marketing and destination branding; and Chapter 4 deals with tourism marketing for destinations with negative images.

The second part of the book also has four chapters: Chapter 5 analyzes marketing recovery strategies used by Middle Eastern marketers; Chapter 6 concentrates on media strategies used by African marketers; Chapter 7 deals with media strategies used by Asian countries; and Chapter 8 presents final insights and conclusions. The book's recommendations are summarized in a concluding model: the strategic model for marketing tourism for developing countries.

1

Perceptions, Stereotypes and Media Image of the Developing World

The image of a country can affect the decisions made by a wide range of audiences, such as foreign investors, tourists, consumers, students, entrepreneurs, trading partners, officials of other countries, potential donors and multilateral agencies (Anholt, 2009; Martínez and Alvarez, 2010; White and Radic, 2014). In the field of tourism, we know that the public image and the media image of a country are crucial for many decisions and behaviors made by tourists, including whether and where to visit or travel in that country, what will be the aim and content of the visit, and what will be the length of the stay. This is why analyzing, understanding and measuring the projected image is a necessary step for every marketer and is crucial for every marketing initiative (Khan, 2013).

Advertising has many aims (Morrison, 2002); one of them is to convince members of the target audience about the positive experience they will have if they use a product, and the dreams and needs (real or socially constructed) that they hope to fulfill. In achieving these dreams and needs, a product image has a central role (Matize and Oni, 2014). Before analyzing strategies chosen by developing countries to market themselves and to restore a positive image, there is a need to deal with the coverage patterns of these countries in the international media and their image among Western audiences. Such audiences have been the focus of the developing countries' marketers for many years, although the search for other target audiences beyond the Western countries has been quite extensive over the last decade. This chapter will focus on the public and media image of destinations in the developing world, the factors shaping the public image of developing countries and the reasons for the problematic perception of these countries, mainly in the West.

The public and media images of a destination

What is the essence of an image? The answer to this has been investigated by researchers from various countries and disciplines and it is natural to assume a variety of focuses in the definitions offered. In the fields of communications and media, Daniel Boorstin (1961) in his classic book *The Image* defines it as: “An image . . . is not simply a trademark, a design, a slogan or an easily remembered picture. It is a studiously crafted personality profile of an individual, institution, corporation, product or service” (Campbell et al., 2006, p. 425). In the field of branding, it is important to monitor and evaluate the perception of a country’s current image and manage it effectively (Anholt, 2009). Dinnie (2010) emphasizes the practical side of image management. In the field of reputation and crisis communication, the need to use strategic management stands in the center of the image’s definition; as Aula and Mantere (2009) state, their reputation is a key resource for companies, so they have to strive to manage this resource strategically.

Place image has always been a central concept, even back in the days when European superpowers were trying to convince their citizens to emigrate to the new colonies they had conquered. This was also the case when the American government was trying to attract inhabitants to the new areas in the West during the 19th century. Shani and Wang (2011) claimed that in the mid-1970s the idea of a destination’s image became one of the most important concepts in tourism destination marketing (Stepchenkova and Li, 2014). The discussion over a place’s image is essential, as almost every new public relations and advertising campaign depends on the attempts to take an existing image and reinforce, stretch, spin, expand or improve it in order to attract more tourists to the destination, to visit a variety of attractions there or to convince them to extend the length of their stay (Morgan and Pritchard, 2001; Baker, 2007).

When discussing a destination’s image, it is important to distinguish between the image among a specific target audience (the “public image”) and the destination’s image in the mass media (the “media image”). Local and national leaders, decision-makers, marketers and PR professionals tend to think that these two types are closely linked; therefore they spend resources, time and effort in creating a positive media image in the hope that it will result in a positive image among the target audience (Fahmy, 2010; Martínez and Alvarez, 2010; Khan, 2013; Matize and Oni, 2014; Stepchenkova and Li, 2014; White and Radic, 2014). The converse also applies: a negative media image will result in a

negative image of the destination among the target audience as well as perceptions that it is not worth visiting the place because it is dangerous, unsafe or boring (White and Radic, 2014). Galician and Vestra (1987) found that bad news has a strong effect on the image of the place; there is, therefore, a correlation between the coverage patterns of that particular place and the way in which it is perceived among the target audience (Stepchenkova and Eales, 2011; Khan, 2013).

Destination's public image

Academics and scholars from various disciplines have attempted to define the image of a place. According to Stepchenkova and Li (2014), a destination image includes the attributes of a destination and the perceptions that characterize it. This definition is similar to that of Kotler et al. (1993) who defined the image of a place as "the sum of beliefs, ideals, and impressions that people have of a place" (p. 141). These researchers argued that an image is the simplification of numerous associations and pieces of information related to a place, and the cognitive product of the attempt to process large amounts of information. In a more updated definition, Kotler and Gertner (2002) add: "Images are a product of the mind trying to process and pick out essential information from huge amounts of data about a place" (p. 251). Boulding (1956, cited in Elizur, 1987) takes a similar view, defining an image as the sum of the cognitive, affective and evaluative characteristics of the place, or an inherent perspective of itself. Boulding distinguishes the image of the place's residents from that of outsiders. He implies that the image is composed of four components: (a) Cognitive (what one believes and knows about a place with focus on its physical attributes); (b) Affective (how one feels about what he/she knows about a certain place); (c) Evaluative (how one evaluates the place and/or its residents); and (d) Behavioral (whether one considers immigrating to/working in/visiting/investing in a certain place).

It's important to mention that isolating Boulding's components is possible only through academic analysis, as they are all interrelated and affect one another. If, for example, a certain person feels affection for a place, he/she will also presumably find it attractive, its residents friendly, as well as interesting and a fun place for visitors. Shani and Wang (2011) also claimed that the effective image component has been found to have a crucial impact on tourists' assessments and selection of destination. While Boulding chose to divide the image into several components, Elizur (1987) offered a more comprehensive definition, stating that an image of a place is the sum of all the facts and characteristics that come to mind when one thinks of the place.

Since the beginning of the 2000s there has been a tendency to expand the concept of a “public image” and to distinguish between the overall image of a country and its tourist destination image (Echtner, 2002; Martínez and Alvarez, 2010; Khan, 2013). Echtner (2002), for example, states that this is the case regarding countries in the developing world where many of them are perceived as an exotic paradise from the tourist’s point of view but, on the other hand, such places are also perceived as poor, dangerous and barbaric. Martínez and Alvarez (2010) found that, in the case of **Turkey**, there is a gap between the country’s image and its destination image. According to these authors, a country’s image is influenced by various types of information and sources over the years, and the destination’s image is constructed from the promotional industry, campaigns, brochures and photographs. However, it is quite possible that with regard to developing countries, Western individuals might hold a negative image, in general, together with a positive attractive image of the country as a tourist destination.

In the last few years, with the growing popularity of branding in destination marketing, researchers have been largely discussing the concept of “reputation”. According to Aula and Mantere (2009), the concept of a corporate reputation has been used simply as a substitute for the earlier term, “public image”. Passow et al. (2005) developed the Country Reputation Index (CRI), which is a 20-item scale based on 6 dimensions: the appeal of the emotional, physical, financial, leadership, cultural and social aspects of the country.

Types of destination’s public image

From the theoretical-academic point of view as well as through its emotional appeal, a destination image is a complex concept. Gallarza et al. (2002) mentioned four main characteristics of a destination image that we need to take into account when we deal with images: (1) Complex (controversial concept); (2) Multiple (consists of manifold features that represent its identity); (3) Relativistic (subjective and tends to change from person to person); and (4) Dynamic (not static and likely to change over time). The “complexity” of a destination image has created a discussion over the types of image that exist.

Kotler et al. (1993) argue that a destination’s image can be positive and attractive, negative, weak (as in the case of peripheral locations that are not well known), mixed (when the image includes both positive and negative elements), or contradictory (when the place has a favorable image according to one population and a negative one with another). Destination images can also be classified as “rich” or “poor”.

“Rich” means that we have a great deal of knowledge and information about the destination, usually from a variety of sources as well as from personal visits; “poor” means that we know very little about the place, and what we do know usually comes from only one source of information (Elizur, 1987), which, in many cases, is the media (Khan, 2013).

Scott (cited in Elizur, 1987) refers to rich/poor images and offers a graphic star-shaped model, aggregating different attributions. According to the star model, each cognitive trait forms a straight line, intersecting with all the other traits of the same place. The sum of all different traits creates the shape of a star; the more lines a star has, the richer the image it represents. But not all traits have the same effect: some lines in the graphic model are salient while others are almost invisible (Elizur, 1987; Avraham and Ketter, 2008a). Nevertheless, the model emphasizes that a place image is a dynamic thing. The star model clearly illustrates that by marketing different perspectives of a place, a poor image can be turned into a rich one. The star model also suggests a way to handle stereotypes and negative perceptions: the more dimensions a place has, the less the audience will focus on its problematic aspects. Intensive marketing of an attractive facet can become the dominant part in the place’s image and thus overcome the previous perception where the attractive aspect was not particularly salient. According to Dinnie (2010), a country’s image can sometimes be strongly positive but only in one dimension and this is a problematic situation that may limit that nation’s potential scope of activity.

A third way to classify a destination image is along the continuum between “open” and “closed”. “Open images” allow the addition of more characteristics whereas “closed images” are unlikely to have new characteristics added, at least not those that differ from the core image. Such closed images are also known as “stereotypes”, that is, simplified attitudes or beliefs that are not questioned and are difficult to change (Gold, 1980; Elizur, 1987; Khan, 2013). Once a stereotype is formed it is very difficult to change it as much effort is required to make the target population amenable to a new and different image (Kunczik, 1997). According to Anholt (2005), people tend to be attached to their prejudices regarding places. Gertner and Kotler (2004) claimed that stereotypes may be dated, based upon exceptions rather than patterns, and could develop from impressions rather than facts. In the context of developing nations, Fair (1993) notes that African leaders still have to combat stereotypes persisting from the colonial period concerning their way of life. Similarly, Quist-Adade (2000) claimed that contemporary Western news media images have not shifted far away from the colonial

representation of Africa as a place where drought, disease, pestilence and a host of other tragedies occur.

Factors influencing a destination's public image

Many different factors influence a destination's image held by potential tourists and visitors. People construct images of destinations over the years and use a variety of sources in this process (Fair, 1993). The construction of a country's image is a lengthy socialization process with diverse socialization agents, such as the home environment, school textbooks, theater, music, films, religion, literature and the media.

Researchers (see, Fair, 1993; Kunczik, 1997; Echtner, 2002; Dinnie, 2010; Martínez and Alvarez, 2010) have listed numerous factors involved in the construction of a destination image among the target audience. These include: location (in the world's core or its periphery, near or far); resources (natural resources, a rich or poor country); size (a large country or a small one); world status; political power; form of government (democracy or dictatorship) and political maturity; the economic system (free or centralized), strength of the economic system, level of development or industrialization; technology (hi-tech superpower or low-tech); military strength; number and character of international/regional institutions located in the country (e.g., prestigious universities, headquarters of international organizations); historical background (colonialism and post-colonial relations); promotional activities, advertisements and brochures about the country, movies and television series filmed in the country; type of media coverage the country has received and news stories published about that country (war, internal conflicts, epidemics or mainly positive news such as cultural events, entertainment options and diversity of various tourist sites); crises in its history (prolonged terror attacks, natural distress, wars); social-political-cultural proximity between the target audience and the country; and many other factors (see lists of factors in Kunczik, 1997; Avraham and Ketter, 2008a; Golan, 2010; Martínez and Alvarez, 2010; Dinnie, 2011). The large number of these factors prevents discussion of all of them but there is no doubt that destination marketers should be interested in gaining a profound understanding of the specific factors that affect their destination's image. This analysis will be very valuable for marketers who try to understand the destination's negative image, choose strategies to improve it and engage in marketing initiatives to restore the positive image (Khan, 2013).

Evaluating a destination's public image

There are several methods for evaluating a destination's image among specific target audiences but the most popular are attitude surveys, focus

groups and in-depth interviews (Kotler et al., 1993, 1999; Avraham and Ketter, 2008a). In their efforts to analyze a destination's image, researchers and marketers use qualitative and quantitative methods. Reviewing 142 articles dealing with destination images in academic journals, Pike (2002) found that most did not use any qualitative methods. Nevertheless, many researchers believe that the integration of qualitative and quantitative methods provides a comprehensive image and could be useful for marketers who need to assess these images. There are three common methods to evaluate destination images:

1. **Attitude surveys** – A survey that enables us to understand popular attitudes toward a destination at a certain time. Surveys can be conducted in diverse ways, such as online networks, regular mail, electronic mail, telephone questionnaires and face-to-face interviews. The two major kinds of surveys are the unstructured and the structured:
 - (a) **Unstructured Surveys** (open-ended) ask open-ended questions that elicit free and unbiased answers (“free elicitation”), without forcing the respondent to choose a ready-made answer, for example, “What goes through your mind when you hear the word ‘Egypt’?” (see e.g., Khan, 2013);
 - (b) **Structured Surveys** (closed-ended) are those where respondents are asked to choose from a pool of ready-made answers. A closed-ended survey can include questions evaluating the level of awareness of a destination, its characteristics, satisfaction with its functioning, and its expectations. For example, a questionnaire conducted by a tourist destination among a specific target audience can be distributed to people who intend to visit the destination, and to past and current visitors. The target audience can be asked whether they agree or disagree (with different levels of agreement or disagreement on a Likert Scale) with various statements, such as “Do you think that Cairo is safe?” or “Morocco is a romantic destination.” This survey can also include questions about the functioning of tourism services, the level of cultural attractions or entertainment, and whether the cost of the visit was worth the experience. Through such questions, the destination's marketers try to assess the perceptual/cognitive and affective components of the place and the overall perceptions (positive or negative). One can find many authors who used surveys to research destination images in the academic literature (Stepchenkova and Morrison, 2006; Martínez and Alvarez, 2010; Morakabati et al., 2014).

2. **Focus groups** – This is a popular method in the advertising industry for assessing a product's image in general and specifically for assessing a destination's image among various target audiences. A focus group is a group of 8–15 people from the target audience who are asked to discuss in depth a certain subject, with the guidance of a discussion leader. The discussion is usually recorded and filmed and used to gain an in-depth understanding of the content and components of a destination's image, the factors constructing its image, the way in which the tourism services function, the motives which should be emphasized during the marketing campaign, the main messages of a planned campaign and whether they are clear, and so on (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993). The technique of focus groups can best be supported by in-depth interviews with selected representatives of the target audience.
3. **In-depth interviews** – In parallel to surveys and focus groups, one can interview various experts, key stakeholders, current and previous spokespersons, investors, the journalists covering the destination, industrialists, tour operators, tour agents, hoteliers, marketing and public relations professionals, urban designers and other decision-makers. These interviews can serve as a major source of data regarding the ways in which the destination is perceived, their disadvantages and how they can be removed. Informants can enrich the interviewer with their experience in marketing the destination, in the difficulties they had faced with different audiences, the solutions they tried, and different partners with whom they had cooperated in order to promote the destination. Examples of place marketers who interviewed experts as part of their marketing process can be found in Byrom (2006) and in Gould and Skinner (2007), who interviewed experts with the aim of marketing **Northern Ireland**. Face-to-face interviews can also be used to analyze values that a target audience associates with a certain tourism brand (Stepchenkova and Li, 2014).

The above methods can be used separately or together, not only to measure a destination image directly but also to assess the functioning of the whole tourism industry. For example, **Oman's** Ministry of Tourism had launched an email survey that included 400 questions collected from 150 tourism-related organizations in order to understand how to handle the main challenges (such as a lack of interest among nationals in working in the tourism industry, unprofessional taxi drivers and difficulties encountered at immigration checkpoints) facing the growth of tourism in the Sultanate (*eTN*, 9 August 2014).

Developing countries' public image

Dealing with images of developing countries is quite a challenge for marketers. Wang and Lamb (1983) claimed that consumers treat and evaluate products from developing countries differently from those in the developed world; global consumers have less positive attitudes toward products from developing countries. Martínez and Alvarez (2010) wondered whether this negative perception toward the developing countries affects their image as tourist destinations. With regard to the developing countries there are generalizations, condescending descriptions, stereotypes and negative perceptions that are generally similar and might be barriers in attracting tourism; the composition and content of the negative perceptions might differ from continent to continent or from country to country, but they are similar. In the following we would like to present the negative image components of developing countries:

1. **Stereotypes** – Negative stereotypes regarding the developing world portray it as a place that is dangerous, primitive, not hygienic and suffers from pollution, traffic, crime and epidemics; such places are also regarded as being over-crowded, dirty, violent, populated by uneducated inhabitants, among many other negative aspects. These stereotypes turn into generalizations and many Westerners believe that these negative traits and perceptions are true for most of the developing countries and their inhabitants (Hachten, 1981; Khan, 2013; Matize and Oni, 2014).
2. **Generalizations** – There is a tendency to generalize regarding the characteristics of continents and areas. Such generalizations can be the result of either biased media presentations or geographical ignorance (Taylor, 2006). Thus each reported monsoon, war, epidemic or earthquake reminds Westerners of the existing “low quality of life” and “danger” in these continents. When an event involving violence occurs in one of the countries, there is a tendency to perceive the entire continent or region as dangerous (Mansfeld, 1996; Sonmez, 1998; Taylor, 2006; Avraham, 2015).
3. **Negative Occurrences as Part of “Nature”** – The international media tend to cover the negative events in the developing world superficially, without describing the causes underlying the crises that are reported. As a result, many Westerners do not understand the reasons for the negative events occurring in the developing world and tend to lay the blame on the governments and residents of that place “who do not know how to run their place successfully”. The negative

occurrences in the developing countries are thus perceived as part of the “nature” of developing nations (Hachten, 1981).

4. **“Us” vs. “Them”** – Because of the negative stereotypes and generalizations of the developing world, the residents of these countries are perceived as being fundamentally different from the residents of the developed world; while the residents of the developed world are seen as educated, rational and advanced, the residents of the developing world are totally the opposite: barbarians, irrational, uneducated and so on (Dahlgren and Chakrapani, 1982; Fair, 1993). Strauss (1961) and Gould and White (1986) argue that a place’s image can be examined only through comparison with other places. Comparisons of different places are based on (more or less) quantitative measures. When the media use the metaphor of “development,” the places described are in the context of the point they have reached in the life cycle. “They” are less (or more) modern or less (or more) advanced than “we” are.

Destination’s image in the mass media

As mentioned, there is a need to distinguish between destination, public and media images. A thorough understanding of the role of the mass media in shaping and constructing the images of a destination is essential to grasp the strategies applied by destination marketers to improve and restore the image of the place. Tourists construct images and cognitive maps according to the information they receive from various sources; many marketers believe that accurate information results in more precise perceptions (Kariel and Rosenvall, 1978; Gold, 1980) and, eventually, more tourists. The role of the mass media in this process is crucial (Anholt, 2005; Khan, 2013). While people usually become aware of occurrences in their immediate environment from direct contact with the events, they learn about events that occur in remote places primarily from the media. Information about a faraway place is not considered crucial to most people so they do not attempt to locate firsthand sources to verify what “really” happens there (Kunczik, 1997). Hence the “reality” that the media “describes” from distant places is conceptualized as the “objective” or “true” reality by those who do not live there (Gold, 1980; Burgess and Gold, 1985). Fair (1993) claimed that the mass media as modern day storytellers are central to the framing of events that potential visitors may not personally experience.

A close analysis of how places are presented in the media reveals four types of images (Manheim and Albritton, 1984): (1) Places that receive much negative coverage; (2) Those ignored by the media except in a

negative context, such as war, terror, natural disasters; (3) Places that get much positive coverage such as festivals, cultural events, tourists' activities and investments; and (4) Those largely ignored by the media but, when noticed, they receive primarily positive coverage. Naturally, decision-makers would prefer the third kind of media coverage for their country, winning a good amount of positive media attention. As a result, many national and local leaders of developing destinations are indeed willing to spend much time, resources and effort on achieving positive media coverage (Anholt, 2005; Matize and Oni, 2014).

Dealing with destination images in the media, Elizur (1987) suggested distinguishing between a "multi-dimensional image" and a "one-dimensional image" of a destination. Similar to our discussion of different kinds of public images, destinations with a multi-dimensional image in the news media are those that receive coverage for a wide variety of topics such as tourism, politics, economics, social events and cultural developments. Places with a one-dimensional media image are those that receive coverage only when events of a certain nature take place, such as violence, crime or disasters. When a place is labeled by the media as one in which only a certain type of activity or event occurs, it becomes a symbol of such events and other activities and events do not get covered (Strauss, 1961; Shields, 1992). For example, stories from developing countries in the international media are presented with a very narrow focus and it seems that news stories must include three elements: events, crisis and conflict (Hachten, 1981; Fair, 1993).

In addition to the mass media, the popular media can also exert a similar effect on a place's image. One very common form of popular media that shapes the image of places is films. A prime example is the movie *Midnight Express* (1978), in which a young American, caught trying to smuggle drugs out of **Turkey**, is thrown into a frightening, barbaric prison. The film caused grave, long-term damage to Turkey's image, portraying the country as violent, terrifying, poor and dirty, with no respect for basic human rights (Kotler et al., 1993). On the other hand, films can result in a very favorable image. For example, the **New Zealand** Tourism Board estimates the worldwide effect of the first *The Lord of the Rings* film as the equivalent of a \$41 million promotional campaign. In addition to promoting the country's image, the trilogy's great commercial success has resulted in an increase of ten percent in tourism every year since 1998 (Hudson and Ritchie, 2006); all the other films in this series likewise affected New Zealand tourism tremendously. Among the many places that gained or increased their international reputation as a result of films are the Montmartre Quarter in **Paris**, due to *Amelie*; **Alnwick**

Castle in northeast England following the *Harry Potter* films; **Australia** because of *Crocodile Dundee* (1986); the islands of **Phi-Phi** and **Phuket** in Thailand due to *The Beach* (2000); **Lake Como** in Italy because of *Ocean's Twelve* (2004); and the city of **Boston** due to *Good Will Hunting* (1997). This is also the case regarding television series such as "Jersey Shore" (**New Jersey**), "Providence" (**Providence**, Rhode Island) and "The Drew Carey Show" (**Cleveland**, Ohio).

Measuring images of destinations in the news media

How can marketers assess or judge the image of a destination in the news media? Researchers dealing with this issue look at the subject in two dimensions: nature and quantity (Manheim and Albriton, 1984; Avraham, 2003b; Lahav and Avraham, 2008; Lahav et al., 2013):

1. The **Quantity Dimension** refers to the amount and visibility of coverage received in the news media. Factors examined include details such as the number of reports or photographs of the destination, on which page or in which section the articles appear, the size of the article (in the press) or the length of the report (on television) and so forth. It is only natural that spokespersons and public relations experts want the place they are promoting to be the first item in the newscast, or the newspaper headline, together with flattering pictures to catch the reader's eye. This dimension can be used to also record the number of social media appearances such as exposure to Facebook posts published by the place (Khan, 2013). But as we know, not only is the amount of media coverage important but so is its content: this aspect is illustrated by the nature of the media coverage (Tuchman, 1991).
2. The **Nature Dimension** refers to the quality of the news coverage in addition to the data that can be measured, and to several other factors. These include the subjects which are most frequently covered from the place (such as war, acts of terror, violence or tourism and community events, culture and sports); the ways in which the place is described in the reports; who is represented as responsible for the events covered; who is quoted and who is the source of the information reported; and the frame or the tone of the stories or the photographs and their captions (Dominick, 1977; Graber, 1989). In this dimension there are studies that treat the nature of coverage "beyond the numbers". This body of research focuses on more subtle levels in which the spirit behind each news item or article is monitored. Such studies look for stereotypes, generalizations, descriptions and myths that appear in the

coverage of certain places and embrace a more general theme regarding the place's identity (Van Dijk, 1988; Shields, 1992; Avraham, 2003b). Examples of such statements are: "This is the country with the biggest culinary variety in Africa" and "This country is the destination for those looking for a romantic weekend in Asia". Because of the potentially powerful effect of statements such as these, many researchers try to focus on and exploit such themes. Another case is the use of generalizations, where a notion about one country is projected to other countries, or even the entire continent; for instance: "In Sierra Leone, as in most countries in Africa, traveling might be dangerous for women on their own". In examples such as this, many countries get tagged with a negative stereotype extrapolated from one single case. In a quantity study, information on the nature of the media coverage may get lost, information that in some cases is much more meaningful than the number of news items published in a given time period. In addition, it is advisable to analyze the place's image over a long time period and try to monitor the changes in the place's media representation, especially the negative ones.

Constructing the developing world as "other" in the international media

The discussion about the developing world's coverage usually deals primarily with the nature and quantity of coverage patterns in the international news media. First we would like to concentrate on the lack of balance in the news exchange between developed and developing nations that began after World War II (Kim and Barnett, 1996). This imbalance is reflected in the low coverage of developing countries in the international media and the coverage content. When these countries are mentioned in the media, the coverage tends to focus on negative issues and on crisis events such as wars, outbreaks of diseases, earthquakes and floods (Fair, 1993). This tendency can be named "The natural disasters and revolutions syndrome" and, according to Goren (1986), characterizes the coverage of the developing world. African countries, for example, get international news coverage mainly when they suffer from natural disasters or experience revolutions.

The coverage patterns of developing countries are quite different from those of the developed countries. The latter usually receive positive coverage in the international media that focuses on aspects such as culture, tourism, the economy and political news. The international media, as has been shown many times, cover world events from a Western perspective, and therefore are less interested in positive daily happenings in

the developing world and are more interested in crises, revolutions and natural disasters, as mentioned (Hachten, 1981; Fair, 1993; Hachten and Scotton, 2002; Golan, 2008). In order to emphasize the Western point of view, there is a need to mention that events in the developing countries are reported in the international media mainly if they have an effect on the developed world.

With regard to a country's image in the media, "symbol," "stereotype," "label" and "reputation" are some of the terms frequently used by researchers. When a country is labeled as a place where certain types of events and activities occur, it becomes a symbol of these activities. As a result, other events in this location are less likely to be covered (Shields, 1992). Strauss (1961) argues that the tendency to speak stereotypically about places persists so that even if changes in the real-life situation of these countries do take place, the changes are not always reflected in their media coverage patterns (Elizur, 1987; Graber, 1989). Thus, when the economic indicators of a certain developing country change for the better, or there are definite improvements in a visitor's personal security, or significant changes have taken place in the infrastructure and tourism services offered to tourists, these changes are rarely reflected in the coverage patterns reported in the international media.

Chapter summary

The first chapter discusses the media and public images of the developing world, along with essence of their stereotypes, generalizations and negative perception toward them, especially among the Western audience. Several studies have suggested that international coverage has a direct effect on public opinion (see list in Fahmy, 2010). Wanta et al. (cited in Fahmy, 2010), for example, found that the more negative coverage that a country receives in the international media, the more likely people will think negatively about this country.

The purpose of this chapter was to analyze the challenges for developing world marketers before we discuss the tools available for them, and before we analyze their efforts and campaigns run by them in order to change the image of their countries and to repair their image after a crisis. Such an analysis is fundamental because entirely different campaigns are required to alter different kinds of images (Matize and Oni, 2014). For example, destinations with a negative public image, such as lack of safety, must focus their efforts on changing this perception, while unknown destinations that suffer from a weak image must concentrate on gaining awareness among the target audience and then creating a

positive public image (Manheim and Albritton, 1984). In any event, many decisions such as choosing a slogan, visuals, format of advertisement, channels for delivering the message and communication strategies are based on the destination's current image as well as the desired image. This is why it is crucial to deal with the destination's current image before making any decision regarding marketing or branding a country. The next chapter deals with the seven factors that characterize the media image of developing countries in the international media.

2

Factors Influencing the Media Image of Developing Countries

The purpose of this chapter is to develop the discussion about the problematic image of the developing countries in the international media and to try to understand why the coverage patterns of these countries are characterized by low visibility, stereotypes and generalization, as we saw in the previous chapter. After a brief discussion regarding relations between global communications and the global system, this chapter will examine the seven factors that influence construction of the image of developing countries in the international media: the geographical distance of the developing world from the international media headquarters; problematic news definitions of the developing world; the small number of reporters allocated to cover the developing world; the developing world covered by Western journalists; residents of the developing world not being perceived as the target audience of the international media; the low social-political-economic status of the developing world; and developing countries' weak public relations efforts.

The international media and the world system

The tendency of the international media to cover the developing world in a distorted way did not start today. The world system evolving after World War II was divided among the West, socialist nations and the Third World, and there were many clashes and disputes among them over the content and the work routines of the international media. Well-known phrases such as "the imbalance of the flow between North and South", "free flow of information", "media imperialism" and "new world information order" indicate differences in ideology, perceptions and interests over the ways in which the international media should report, operate and control the news (Hachten, 1981; Goren, 1986).

The international media were established in order to meet the desire of the Western countries to be informed about events and occurrences around the world. Over the years several news agencies such as the Associated Press (AP), United Press International (UPI), Reuters and Agence France-Presse (AFP) were established and, in most of them, English was the main language. Since the headquarters of these news agencies were located in the West and they were established by people from the West, the domination of the Western democratic nations was inevitable in the international news gathering and routines (Hachten, 1981). In other words, a small number of Western news agencies dominated the world news flow; since the developing countries were newly established and suffered from a lack of resources and technology, there was no alternative to the news agencies established by the West.

The news agencies' rapport with the West, according to the "MacBride report", affected the coverage of the developing world in the international media in several ways such as overemphasizing events of little importance, fitting together disparate facts to construct an artificial whole, suggesting conclusions and failing to report significant developments and problems (Hafez, 2007). As television became universally popular, a small number of satellite global broadcasting networks such as CNN, BBC, Star TV and SKY joined the news agencies in constructing the imbalance in the flow of information and entertainment around the world. These networks were very influential in the selling and promoting of Western music, films, TV series and programs globally (Hafez, 2007). The products of these entertainment industries were also filled with distorted images of the developing countries. The flow was one-way, that is, from the developed world to the developing world, and since it included imposing alien values on the developing world this phenomenon was called "media imperialism" (Hachten, 1981).

In the early 1980s, a new situation arose; it involved a demand by the developing countries for a "new world information and communication order" (NWICO) and a "free and balanced flow of information" with the hope of rejecting the dominance of Western news agencies and mass media within the international flow of information and communication (Hafez, 2007). The "one-way" flow of news and information was damaged slightly by the establishment of the Arab satellite television network Al-Jazeera, a Doha-based broadcasting station that was launched in 1996 (Samuel-Azran, 2010). Nevertheless, the vast majority of world audiences still receive news and information from Western agencies (Hachten and Scotton, 2002).

Factors influencing developing countries' media image

When marketing countries in the developing world, it is essential not only to understand their media image but also to explore the factors that construct it. Such an understanding will provide a powerful tool for the marketers in the process of promoting their destination and restoring its positive image (Khan, 2013). As mentioned, marketers of countries in the developing world face many challenges when trying to improve their destination's image in the media. The questions we should ask are why do the developing countries barely receive coverage in the international media and frequently suffer from a negative image? These questions might be answered by referring to the research conducted by scholars on "news values", concentrating on the factors that turn an event into news. Over the past few decades there have been studies into whether event-oriented variables (normative deviance), or contextual (geographical variables, cultural affinity variables and location in the world system/hierarchy of nations) affect international news coverage (Golan, 2010). In the following discussion we hope to use the knowledge acquired in the field of news values and media routines to better understand the developing world's international media image.

There are several factors and media routines that affect the image of developing countries in the international media.

The geographical distance of the developing world from the international media headquarters

The attempt to check whether a country's geographical location affects its patterns of coverage appeared in the classical study of Galtung and Ruge (1965), who found that negative events are covered mainly from a country located far away from the media centers. Since then, several research studies have shown that places close to a city or country where the editorial boards of the media organizations are located receive much more coverage than distant ones. In other words, the geographical location of a newspaper's editorial board or TV station affects their level of attention and interest in and to other places (Womack, 1981). Nearby places usually receive much more coverage than faraway places (Pocock and Hudson, 1978). The media decision-makers believe that their audiences are interested in events that occur close to home and might affect their life (Hoare, 1991). Many other studies also support the hypothesis that geographic location or proximity has an effect on coverage patterns of places at the international level (see list: Johnson, 1997; Golan, 2010).

Adams (1986) examined the coverage of earthquakes that occurred around the world in the American media. He found that the distance of the events from New York was one of the factors that explained the amount of coverage they received. In sum, the closer a place is to the location of the media organizations, the better its chances of being covered. Thus, if the cities and countries that are located in the developing world are far away from the developed world where the international media headquarters are located, they have a smaller chance of receiving coverage in the international media. According to Wang (2010), the physical distance negatively affects the amount of coverage a state gets in the media for two reasons: the lack of interest in the local audience and questions of logistics.

Problematic news definitions of the developing world

In addition to the remote location of most of the developing countries relative to Europe and North America, there is a need to examine the policy of international media organizations and their news definition regarding “what is news”, from the developing world. By “policy” we mean the decisions made by the editorial boards of international media organizations regarding the coverage of certain continents or areas. Examples include the decision whether or not to allocate foreign reporters to cover a certain country; whether that country’s residents are considered a target audience of the media organizations, and how to define news from that country. Many studies have shown that decisions such as these, along with the personal background of the designated reporters, exert a powerful effect on the image of places in the news media.

How do journalists learn which type of news stories to file, and from which countries? The training of reporters is a prolonged socialization process in which they learn what sort of events the news organization prefers to turn into news (Waitt, 1995). When journalists see what types of items make news from a particular country or continent, they learn what their editors are looking for. Since these journalists are usually interested in advancing within the organization’s hierarchy, they tend not to “rock the boat,” and continue to cover stories that fit the accepted pattern of reporting (Avraham, 2003b). This creates a situation in which for every continent and area, there are subjects and topics that the international media prefer to cover. For the Middle East, this means war, terrorism, executions, honor killings and religious extremism (*Ha’aretz*, 7 November, 2014); for Africa, a lack of modernity, human rights violations, poverty, military coups and political imbroglios, and ethnic violence (Hachten, 1981; Fair, 1993; Hafez, 2007; Matize and Oni, 2014); and for Asia, natural and environmental disasters, disease and conflict.

The events that get attention are usually negative, simple and short, which increase their chances of becoming news in the international media (Galtung and Ruge, 1965). Needless to say, this news definition leads to the construction and reinforcement of the image of the developing world as dangerous, violent and primitive. Because of the news gathering routines of the international media, global audiences know very little about the daily life of the developing world and about its popular culture, liberal trends, art, architecture, poetry, literature and technology. The result is that the international media has created two kinds of groups: elite countries that are frequently covered with varied and positive stories, and countries with low status that are ignored by the international media and mainly get negative and stereotypical coverage.

Since the developing world is defined by the international media as a site of wars, violence and disorder, news people tend to use international humanitarian aid organizations, such as the Red Cross, United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and international security forces (such as NATO) or the UN as key information sources about the events (Wolfsfeld et al., 2000). Because news of crises and human suffering stand in the center of a “developing world story” in the international media, it is necessary to better understand the relationship between the humanitarian agencies and the media. Philip Gourevitch, a journalist and author, wrote in 2010 that he was struck by the ethical gray zone of ties between journalists and the international humanitarian aid organizations: “Too often the press represents humanitarians with unquestioning admiration. . . . Why not seek to keep them honest? Why should our coverage of them look so much like their own self-representation in fund-raising appeals? Why should we work for humanitarian agencies between journalism jobs, helping them with their official reports and institutional appeals, in a way that we would never consider doing for corporations, political parties, or government agencies?” (cited in Friedman, 2014). Gourevitch’s comment exposes and can explain some of the hidden reasons why human stories are so dominant in the images that the news media present of the developing world.

As opposed to the negative image of developing countries, the developed world is depicted differently; when a country is defined as a site of cultural events, tourism, innovations, new technology or finance news, the media organizations use variety of sources to learn about events there. As mentioned, a country of the latter type is considered to have a rich image in the media, while the former has a one-dimensional image. In this way the types of sources utilized by journalists determine the country’s coverage patterns. As a result, a conservative approach is taken

by the international media organizations with a replay of the familiar, proven formulas of reporting about the same countries and subjects (Van Dijk, 1988; Shoemaker and Reese, 1996).

The small number of reporters allocated to cover the developing world

The decision to allocate reporters to cover a foreign continent, area or country is a major factor in how much coverage that place will receive in the international news media; as we know, wherever there are reporters there is news. After the editorial board's decision to designate a reporter to a specific place, there is often an attempt to justify this decision by publishing a large share of the stories filed by that reporter (Kariel and Rosenvall, 1978). The location of the editorial board also affects the coverage of those places. Dominick (1977) and Graber (1989) found that the cities most covered in the American media, primarily New York City and Washington, DC, were those that contain many national media organizations (Epstein, 1973). This was also found to be the case in other countries (Kariel and Rosenvall, 1978; Hoare, 1991; Avraham, 2003b). The largest number of reporters is located in these places, a fact partly responsible for these central places being dominant in the national news. In addition, journalists who live and work in these places tend to cover them in much more positive ways than other places (Kaniss, 1991; Avraham, 2003b), which might explain the positive coverage of the developed world, compared to that of the developing world.

Maintaining foreign newspaper news bureaux can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars per year, and the cost for television bureaux is even higher. According to Hachten (1981), the news agencies have fewer reporters in the developing world not only because of the cost of assigning reporters there but also due to the lack of freedom and independence of the local media. In addition, some of the developing countries do not allow foreign journalists and news agencies to operate freely. Wu and Hamilton (cited in Martin-Kratzer and Thorson, 2010) claimed that investment in allocating foreign reporters is crucial for quality international news, but the editors' perception that the Western audience is not interested in foreign news has led to dwindling numbers of correspondents over the years.

The number of journalists stationed overseas is declining steadily over the years (Hachten, 1981). The result is an overuse of "parachute journalism" where news organizations send reporters to leap from crisis to crisis, from war to war, and from one natural disaster to another, mainly in the developing world. These journalists, claims Hachten (1981),

do not always provide sufficiently informed coverage because many of them have no previous knowledge about the developing countries they are sent to cover. They are usually not familiar with the complex reality so they tend to concentrate on stereotypes, clichés and news that contain violence, conflict and crisis (Fair, 1993). However, today the news agencies and Western media organizations are using more and more local reporters as outsourced correspondents who gather news in the developing world, in response to a specific demand (Hachten and Scotton, 2002). It is important to mention that, overall, the declining number of reporters is less acute in the developed world where the central cities – such as New York City, Washington DC, London, Paris, Brussels, Berlin and Rome – continue to host high numbers of foreign reporters.

The developing world covered by Western journalists

After discussing the policy of media organizations, the next step is to examine the effect of the news peoples' background on the developing world's media image. Many researchers have explained coverage patterns of places according to the social-ideological-cultural proximity between the residents of a particular place and the journalists and editors covering it (Galtung and Ruge, 1965; Jakubowicz et al., 1994). Decisions on defining the target audience, the news definition of a place and the allocation of reporters are mostly determined by social-ideological-cultural proximity. Inhabitants of a place who are socially and ideologically similar to the news people will be considered part of the target audience: the news definition of their place will not be only negative, and one reporter or more will be allocated to cover them on a regular basis (Avraham, 2003a).

Social-ideological-cultural proximity can be based on ethnic, racial or religious identity. For example, in a study on the Israeli media, Avraham (2003b) found that places considered to be in close social-ideological-cultural proximity to the media's decision-makers received wide and positive coverage. The opposite was also found to be true: places far from the media decision-makers received scant or negative coverage. In other words, as Galtung and Ruge (1965) claimed, whatever events that the editors and journalists choose to define as "news" from different places depends on culture. This way, as Hafez (2007) mentioned, the content of international news is often molded by national viewpoints and stereotypes (Hachten, 1981).

One of the most important elements to examine when looking at issues of social-ideological-cultural proximity is the ethnic origin of the news people and its role in understanding international news coverage

(Adams, 1986; Golan, 2010). Van Dijk (1988) notes that in Western countries, Caucasian journalists work within the dominant ethnic consensus and this is reflected in the media content/journalist discourse when they cover places where the population is composed mostly of non-whites. This discourse results in the creation of “us” and “them”, involving labels, stereotypes and prejudice (Dahlgren and Chakrapani, 1982; Fair, 1993). It can be anticipated that non-white journalists would cover non-whites differently because of their familiarity with the culture and the reality encountered, resulting in less stereotyping and prejudice. Golan (2010) called this phenomenon a “cultural affinity”, which was found to be a strong determinant of international news coverage. He mentions that events taking place in countries that are culturally similar and familiar to the US are more likely to be considered as newsworthy in the North American media.

In their classic research, Galtung and Ruge (1965) claimed that journalists pay attention to things that are familiar to them and to those who are similar from a cultural aspect; as a result they tend to ignore subjects, groups and places that are culturally distant. Hachten (1981) thinks that it is more than cultural proximity, and claimed that ethnicity or racism directly affects news values in the international media. This racism results in ignoring events occurring in the developing world or presenting the inhabitants there using stereotypes and generalizations.

Residents of the developing world are not perceived as the target audience of the international media

Another decision made by the international media editors is this: Who should be the target audience to consume their news? Editors must carefully select and focus on their target audience and its values, perceptions and preferences because a mass medium will survive only if it succeeds in satisfying the needs of its audience (Shoemaker, 1991). As mentioned, editors have long believed that readers are more interested in what occurs where they live or in close by locations than in distant places (Kariel and Rosenvall, 1978; Womack, 1981; Hoare, 1991). Accordingly, the editors will concentrate on covering a greater number and variety of events in countries where the perceived target audience is located. As the international media view their main audience as a Western audience, it should be expected that this will affect the patterns of coverage both of the developing and the developed world. It is expected that the international media will focus mainly on what is happening in Europe and the USA, and less in Africa, Asia and the Middle East (unless there is a crisis there).

According to Galtung and Ruge (1965), an event can take place in a remote location and will become news if it is relevant to the target

audience (Golan, 2010). However, because of the structure of the global system, events that occur in the developing world which are considered relevant to the target audience in the West are mostly negative; it is either war or conflict that involves Western countries (Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia) or diseases – such as SARS, swine flu and Ebola – that threaten Western audiences. For example, in July–September 2014, West Africa received intense international media coverage due to the Ebola epidemic that broke out there. The world media had shown almost no interest in the disease until Westerners who visited the affected countries and became infected returned home. When there was a fear that the disease would spread to the West, the international media attention was extensive. Suddenly there were extensive reports on *Sierra Leone*, *Liberia* and *Senegal*, which had barely received any international news coverage earlier. As the fear of Ebola as a global epidemic decreased, the media virtually stopped taking interest in the affected countries. In fact, we see again that the countries in the developing world are judged in the international media mainly in relation to “us” in the West, or whether they are beneficial or harmful to “us” (Hachten, 1981; Fair, 1993). Moreover, the Western audience is the major target audience of the news agencies and is considered to be less interested in foreign news (Hachten, 1981; Hachten and Scotton, 2002). According to Anholt (2005), the news people who decide what goes into the media understand extremely well what kind of information people like to consume, and they know that most consumers have a limited appetite for quantities of true, balanced, informative data.

The low social-political-economic status of the developing world

As we know, news people and the mass media do not operate in a vacuum and they tend to follow the powerful actors. Usually, the media tend to focus and cover positively the high social-political-economic status of individuals, elite nations as well as groups and places in the national or international arena (Gans, 1979). In other words, the media are influenced by what is happening in the social-political-economic environment. Journalists and editors always operate within a certain context that affects the ways they gather and report events in a certain country or around the globe. This context encompasses the central values of their own society, the political culture, perceptions regarding who is “running” the world and their perception regarding the “right” global values (van Dijk, 1996; Johnson, 1997). Golan (2010) mentioned that a nation’s location in the hierarchy of nations affects its international media coverage. The result is that nations with economic, political and military strength are more likely to receive more coverage than those that are not as powerful. This

claim is connected to the prolonged discussion regarding the world division into center/periphery, core/margin, rich/poor and so on, over the last decades (Avraham, 2003b). The result, according to Chang et al. (cited in Golan, 2010), is that since World War II, the rich nations have been dominating the coverage of events in the international media.

The social-political-economic global environment affects all the factors involved in the construction of a country's media image. Thus, the influence of a specific factor on a place's media image depends on where and in which society or global environment the media operate. For example, in the West, where human rights are a very important issue, it can be expected that a country's treatment of human rights will be central in its coverage patterns. As a result, that country's portrayal in the media – positive or negative – is basically determined by human rights issues. Because of the dominance of human rights, all other events and developments are marginalized by the international media's news people (Tilson and Stacks, 1997). To summarize, it can be claimed that the low social-political-economic status of the developing countries can explain the low visibility and the stereotypical coverage of the developing world in the international news media.

Developing countries insufficient public relations efforts

At the beginning of the chapter we noted that various factors can negatively affect the image of the developing world in the international news media. So far we have seen that the image of these countries is determined by decisions, perceptions, assumptions and factors over which, for the most part, these countries have no control (Shani and Wang, 2011). Countries cannot control their social-cultural-geographical proximity to the West, the editorial decisions or their world status. This does not mean that a country cannot influence its own media coverage in the international media. National decision-makers can shape their image by employing public relations and other promotional tools. These may assist the country's policy-makers to overcome the factors that may cause the media to ignore it or primarily cover it negatively.

In the next chapter we will discuss the use of public relations as a tool in place marketing and branding, but here we would like to discuss several components that will help us analyze the effectiveness of the public relation efforts made by developing countries and understand how these efforts to enhance their international media image can be improved. According to Kunczik (2003), the main objective of international public relations is to “establish a positive image of one's own nation or to appear trustworthy to other actors in the world system”

(p. 413). Since then, this definition has been expanded and it now also includes image repair during peaceful and crisis periods by places, and by countries that belong to the developing world. Public relations, according to Morrison (2002), include “all the activities that hospitality and travel organizations use to maintain or improve their relationship with other organizations and individuals” (p. 487) and they have three main roles: “1. Maintaining a positive public presence. 2. Handling negative publicity. 3. Enhancing the effectiveness of other promotional mix elements” (Morrison, 2002, p. 488).

There are three different components that must be part of successful public relations efforts of countries: awareness, resource allocation and professionalism. The only public relations efforts that have the potential to be successful are those in which all three exist (Avraham, 2003b):

1. **Awareness** – The first component is awareness among the central government decision-makers of the importance of promoting the country, creating marketing initiatives and managing the country’s media image; in addition, these marketers must understand that their actions, statements, speeches and behavior affect the image of their country in general (Walker, 1997). This awareness includes developing an official website, using public diplomacy, creating events, launching campaigns and building marketing strategy and public relations policy that focus on a give-and-take relationship between the marketers, public relations people, leaders, other government officials and the reporters. It seems as though many officials in the developing world need to improve their relations with the media. Many countries in the developing world impose censorship and show hostility toward Western reporting, reducing their access to sources of news and applying indirect restraints, lack of access and harassment. In many cases Western correspondents have faced physical danger, violence, threats and denial of visas (Hachten, 1981; Avraham and Ketter, 2008a).
2. **Allocating resources** – This awareness, however, is not enough; to succeed, national decision-makers need to allocate sufficient resources to achieve and maintain their desired image and to exert their public relations efforts. Such activities include allocating resources to hire skilled people, conducting media monitoring and measuring the destination image and organizing press tours (Shani and Wang, 2011; Khan, 2013). South Africa, for example, announced in the autumn of 2014 that its government would invest \$10 million in marketing and promoting the country’s tourism industry. In making the Ministry of Tourism’s announcement, the government believed that

such an investment would result in revenue of some 2–3 billion US dollars (*eTN*, 8 September, 2014). Unlike in the past, today the governments of many developing countries understand that there is a need to allocate budgets not only for public relations but also for advertising, branding, marketing initiatives and social media (see Chapter 3). Nevertheless, we need to remember that in many cases such an investment is not always possible due to the lack of resources in many developing countries.

3. **Professionalism** – The third component is professionalism. Even if a country’s decision-makers are aware of the need for public relations and are willing to allocate resources, their public relations efforts will fail if those responsible for implementing them are not professional (Burgess, 1982). Avraham (2003b) found that many places appoint spokespeople for promotional purpose but due to their incompetence they are unable to create a positive place image in the news media. Since there are only few studies that analyzed public relations in the developing world, it is hard to evaluate these efforts. Nevertheless, it looks as though many countries in the developing world could improve their professionalism in public relations (Avraham and Ketter, 2013). In a study that analyzed the online tourism marketing of African nations, it was found that many African countries have outdated Internet websites, use limited marketing or branding plans and do not monitor their media image (Ketter and Avraham, 2010).

Chapter summary

The second chapter discusses the international media and the reasons for the problematic coverage patterns of developing countries. As mentioned, the problematic coverage patterns of the developing world and the “imbalance of the flow between North and South” have historical roots, and there is a relationship between the low status of the developing world in the global system and its marginality in the international media. We noted that such an imbalance exists not only regarding news coverage but also in the flow of movies, TV shows, music and other popular culture products.

In this chapter we dealt mainly with factors that affect the media image of developing countries as well as the role of seven factors that construct the image: the geographical distance of the developing world from the international media headquarters; problematic news definitions; the small number of reporters allocated to cover the developing world; the fact that the developing world is covered by Western journalists;

residents of the developing world are not perceived as the target audience of the international media; the low social-political-economic status of the developing world; and the ineffective efforts at public relations made by developing countries. This conclusion is consistent with findings of other studies dealing with the coverage patterns of places located on the periphery (Dominick, 1977; Gans, 1979; Hachten, 1981; van Dijk, 1988; Graber, 1989; Shields, 1992; Avraham, 2003b). Again we can see that the media follow the power and the high status of the actors that gain media coverage. It appears that this tendency affects the news definition, willingness to assign correspondents to a certain place, the reporters' characteristics and the definition of the target audience.

3

Marketing and Destination Branding

Chapters 1 and 2 dealt with the image of developing countries, factors that construct their media and public images, and with the consequences of the problematic image. The challenging question is how can these countries correct and restore their image in the international media and among world audiences. Since the beginning of the 1990s, we have witnessed the development of a new academic and professional field called “place/destination branding” which relies on the knowledge we had, even before the 1990s, on “place marketing”. Our analysis of the images of developing countries that we present in this book shows that several such countries have used the knowledge accumulated around the world in order to restore their media and public images. Nevertheless, most of these countries would do even better if they used that knowledge and took it into account in their future marketing and branding plans. This chapter will walk the reader from the broad concept of “place marketing” to the specific concepts of “destination branding” and “nation branding” and their practical aspects. Among other topics, this journey will include the issues of analysis, planning, development and implementation of the branding process and tourism marketing strategies, which can serve destinations in their efforts to achieve a more attractive image.

Place marketing

Place marketing is a vast subject, and this introduction can highlight only some of its central concepts and approaches. Decision-makers, policy-makers and leaders have long understood the importance of the image of cities and countries and have been active in place marketing and promotion throughout human history, but only during the 1980s

did they begin to use professional tools in order to attract people and resources to their place (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990; Kotler et al., 1993). Place marketing has become very popular since the early 1990s, and its popularity has grown over the years not only in the West but also in the developing world (Codato and Franco, 2006; Uysal et al., 2011). Since then, globalization has gained strength with a concomitant increase in the transfers of investments, capital, human resources, knowledge and goods; the number of countries taking part in the global economy and global tourism has grown, accompanied by a parallel process whereby worldwide transportation and communication have grown speedier, easier and cheaper. The barriers between East and West, North and South, have been dissolving and the demand for international tourism has been rising. These developments have created a climate of competition among different places around the globe for national and international status, and for high-class residents, tourists, conventions, sporting events, entrepreneurs, investors, industries, businesses and global capital. For example, today Tokyo competes not only with other Japanese cities such as Osaka or Yokohama but with other cities worldwide, trying to win international tourism, investments and the hosting of events.

Global competition for tourism and investment has always existed, but today visiting foreign destinations or investing abroad is much simpler, cheaper and safer than in the past. Knowing this, more and more local and national leaders have become proactive in enhancing the attractiveness of their country and improving its competitive edge. In many cities and countries, certain steps and changes have been implemented in order to attract investors, entrepreneurs and immigrants. In addition to changes in the regulation of the economic and financial systems, efforts have been made to improve the images of cities and countries because of their fundamental importance and contribution to its competitiveness. Confirmation of this process can be found in the work of Ashworth and Voogd (1990), who noted that “[t]he perception of cities, and the mental image held of them, became active components of economic success or failure” (p. 3).

Over the last decades, leaders of countries, regions and cities have realized that a positive image of their place, combined with its successful marketing, is a powerful tool in competing for resources and other finance-related activities in the global village. Decision-makers now realize that a weak, unattractive or negative image is more harmful than ever, so they need to invest a great deal of effort in order to change it. As many authors have already pointed out, changing a place image is not a single, short-term, cosmetic act but rather a long-term, holistic,

comprehensive, deep-rooted and strategic series of actions (Kotler et al., 1993; Baker, 2007; Avraham and Ketter, 2008a). A successful change in destination image is contingent upon a lengthy process and the investment of time and other resources, cooperation with marketing professionals and local residents, and the constant checking of achievements, goals and objectives targeted. On the other hand, the countries that have decided “not to play” in the global game and not to change the local laws that make it easier for foreign investment actually sentence their places to isolation, financial problems and a generally poor image.

The conceptual foundation of place marketing lies in marketing theories, primarily the marketing-mix approach (Olsson and Bergland, 2006). Place marketing has existed since colonial times, when colonial governments tried to persuade people to move to their newly conquered territories (Gold, 1994). The modern concept of “place marketing” (which some label “place promotion”, “destination marketing” or “city management”) became popular in European urban literature only during the 1980s, and a little earlier in the United States (Paddison, 1993). “Place marketing” has many different definitions in literature; for example, according to Gold and Ward (1994), “Place promotion [is] defined as the conscious use of publicity and marketing to communicate selective images of specific geographical localities or areas to a target audience” (p. 2). This definition singles out the use of choice and desirable images in the marketing process, and the active role of the target audience in accepting the marketing plan. Existing traits or components are selected and highlighted to make the place more attractive for this specific audience. But this selectiveness means ignoring or even concealing some of the place’s negative characteristics.

Destination marketing

One of the earliest definitions of destination marketing was made by Wahab et al. (1976), who defined it as “the management process through which the National Tourist Organizations and/or tourist enterprises identify their selected tourists, actual and potential, communicate with them to ascertain and influence their wishes, needs, motivations, likes and dislikes, on local, regional, national and international levels and to formulate and adapt their tourist products accordingly in view of achieving optimal tourist’s satisfaction thereby fulfilling their objectives” (p. 24). Since then many authors have published many other definitions of destination marketing. Uysal et al. (2011) claimed that the focus of destination marketing has shifted away from concerning primarily on a destination to a focus that includes “both the

setting and how visitor experiences are created and formed with the setting” (p. 103).

Morrison (2002) combined several marketing fundamentals in order to develop a definition of destination marketing: “Marketing is a continuous, sequential process through which management in the hospitality and travel industry plans, researches, implements, controls, and evaluates activities designed to satisfy both customers’ needs and wants and their own organization’s objective. To be most effective, marketing requires the efforts of everyone in an organization and can be made more or less effective by the actions of complementary organizations” (p. 4). In this definition, Morrison (2002) includes five important, central elements of destination marketing: planning, research, implementation, control and evaluation. Without these elements it would be hard for the marketer to achieve the goal of any marketing campaign.

Wang (2011a) states that “destination marketing and management can be defined as a proactive, visitor-centered approach to the economic and cultural development of a destination that balances and integrates the interests of visitors, service providers and the community”(DMAI in Wang, 2011a, p. 3). This definition shows that destination marketing and management is a complex issue which requires a holistic and systematic approach that must include research. According to Uysal et al. (2011), “the major goal of destination marketing research is to understand the nature of the interaction between visitors and tourism providers at the destination. This interaction naturally represents both the demand and supply sides of tourism” (p. 102). In order to succeed in today’s highly competitive tourism and hospitality market, destination marketers must rely on research that can supply accurate data and information regarding the potential consumers’ needs, preferences and behaviors and those of their competitors (Morrison, 2002). This is especially true for developing countries, which suffer from limited resources for marketing and promotion.

Marketing destinations which have a negative image

Marketers believe that a positive image of a destination is a key for success in attracting tourism but they also know that it is not easy to maintain and sustain a positive image for a long time among potential costumers (Uysal et al., 2011). Many of the definitions for place and destination marketing/promotion – which may also contain much advice regarding the right way to achieve a successful marketing and positive image – are suitable for “regular” places in the developed world that do not suffer from a negative image. While “regular” destinations can enjoy

the knowledge accumulated in place marketing, such knowledge and advice will not necessarily work for places that suffer from a prolonged negative image. Such destinations cannot promote their tourism using slogans such as “Explore X”, “Enjoy X” or “Visit X” because tourists from the developed world are usually afraid or hesitant to visit unfamiliar places that are frequently mentioned in a negative context in the mass media. As a result, scholars are starting to pay attention to the special needs of destinations that suffer from unfamiliarity or a prolonged negative image (Baker, 2007; Avraham and Ketter, 2013).

One of the first definitions that took into account the needs of marginal places that suffer from a prolonged negative image can be found in an article by Short et al. (2000): “Place promotion involves the re-evaluation and re-presentation of place to create and market a new image for localities to enhance their competitive position in attracting or retaining resources” (p. 318). This definition describes the process of marketing a new place image as a means to preserve and draw on various resources. Such a definition is well-suited to this book that deals with changing and improving the image of developing countries. In the center of their definition, Short et al. (2000) place the need to change and remove negative stereotypes and generalizations sometimes associated with destinations in order to succeed in the competition over various resources (Avraham and Ketter, 2013).

Nielsen (2001) refers to “destination promotion”, stressing the difficulty of the task especially in conditions of an image-related crisis: “Promoting a destination in normal circumstances is a difficult task, but promoting a destination that faces tourism challenges – whether from a negative press, or from infrastructure damage caused by natural disasters or man-made disasters – is an altogether more arduous task” (pp. 207–208). In such circumstances, destinations have to tackle both the physical crisis in services and infrastructure as well as the intangible damage suffered by the destination’s image, a process that might take several years.

Destination positioning and branding

Destination positioning assists potential consumers to differentiate destinations in the fields of tourism and “establishing and maintaining a favorably distinctive place in the minds of target market segments that sets the destination apart from others” (Tasci, 2011, p. 118). According to Fenster et al. (1994), place positioning answers the question, “What kind of place is this compared with other places?”, in the consumer’s mind. Positioning, claimed Baker (2007), “helps to refine the components of the brand platform and shape the destination

promise". Every strategic plan for managing a place's image must determine what kind of image marketers and policy makers hope to create. Place marketers try to influence the first association that pops into the mind of the target audience on hearing the place's name. It may be one of crime, lack of safety, war, violence, danger, threat or homicide; or it may be one of fun, sun, white sand and blue-green lagoons. The common concept used to describe place positioning is the Unique Selling Proposition (USP), and this is employed to create a distinct and positive image of the place in the mind of the target audience. This short discussion on place positioning can be summarized in a definition by Short and Kim (1993), describing place positioning as the active shaping of the place image in relation to competing places.

In the tourism industry the concept of "competition" is central. This competition is less relevant for destinations that provide niches that others cannot provide. Nevertheless such competition is relevant for tourist destinations that provide similar needs such as sea and sun tourism – needs that could be provided by numerous destinations. In order to compete properly, destinations managers understood a long time ago that they must position their destination and promote what is so special about their place and what unique needs it meets (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a).

In recent years the discussion on place and destination positioning has merged with the discussion on place branding. In marketing, the distinction between a product and a brand is quite clear: a wristwatch is a product, Rolex is a brand. Both the product and the brand satisfy the same basic needs (knowing what time it is), but the brand satisfies other needs too, such as attesting to economic capacity and lifestyle, and also affecting one's self-image. The difference between a brand and a product is the "added value" that a brand has over a product. A brand is a symbol (logo, shape, color, package and design), an object, a concept or a combination of them, aimed at identifying goods or services, and distinguishing them from their competitors (Herstein, 2000). Tasci (2011) cites the American Marketing Association definition which describes brand as "a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers" (p. 113). Brown et al. (2011) claim that a brand is much more than a name or symbol and it refers to the overall impression that the name or symbol creates in the minds of potential consumers. Designers try to make "their" brand distinctive, in order to make it easier for consumers to identify and choose from among the different ones available. The persuasion process in marketing a brand is aimed not only at logical

consideration but also at the consumer's emotions. According to Morgan and Pritchard (2001), "The battle for consumers in tomorrow's destination marketplace will be fought not over price but over hearts and minds – and this is where we move into the realm of branding" (p. 12).

Definitions of destination branding

Place branding has become one of the most popular concepts in the field of tourist destinations management, in general, and in marketing places, in particular. According to Laws (2002 in Tasci, 2011, p. 114), the marketing of tourism destinations is relatively easier than both nation and city branding because it is more focused on the purpose of increasing tourism figures, as it deals with more controllable factors through the management and marketing of a destination. The contemporary discourse on destination marketing uses concepts such as brand design, brand values and identity, planning image strategy and managing the brand value. Many tourist destinations are constantly seeking ways to present themselves as the leading brand in a specific segment of tourism. Examples are brands such as a "leisure capital", "shopping capital", "culture capital", "sports capital", "a city for kids/families" and "a romantic city". Aside from the destinations that have already undergone the branding process, many destinations are still in search of the unique character that they want to emphasize. Branding professionals suggest that whatever the chosen brand is, every project, activity, site and attraction that the place has to offer should support the preferred brand; the place's decision-makers will give support to building attractions and creating activities that promote the brand in budgets, infrastructure and marketing. As a result, the chosen brand will exert a comprehensive effect on the place and on the decision-making process in developing new tourist attractions, choosing new areas for development, building hotels or residency projects and renewing infrastructures. Every activity that supports the brand spirit or values will get priority whereas activities that do not will be rejected or will not be promoted (Anholt, 2005; Avraham and Ketter, 2008a).

Place branding is not an easy process to execute, but those who succeed in it can usually expect a brighter future (Kulendran and Dwyer, 2009). Many places in the world offer similar products/services/attractions, and many marketers believe that their chance to succeed in the competitive international market is related to developing a unique identity (Baker, 2007; Govers and Go, 2009). Like product branding, place branding is a combination of place characteristics and of added value, functional and non-functional elements. In the post-modern world of

images, representation and brands, the product's image and positioning may be much more important than the destination's actual characteristics. Destination managers should emphasize the uniqueness of their place, and how this place alone can satisfy a certain need for the target audience. The brand should include a name, slogan, logo and visual material and colors that vaunt the brand's spirit and promote its marketing (Baker, 2007; Tasci, 2011).

Govers and Go (2009) believe that "place branding" refers to "building brand equity in relation to nations, regional and/or local (or city) identity" (p. 16). The academic literature contains analyses of many case studies of cities, countries and tourist destinations that have sought to brand themselves by creating cultural events, exhibitions, sport competitions, tourism attractions and a specific graphical language (e.g., Morgan et al., 2002; Gilboa, 2006; Baker, 2007; Dinnie, 2010; Avraham and Daugherty, 2012). Suyama and Senoh (2006) offer an interesting specification for place branding named "brand-creating city", suggesting that the branding of a place can be divided into three elements: its brand spirit, its brand resources and its brand personality. Kulendran and Dwyer (2009) showed that investment in destination promotion and marketing has a direct, positive effect on incoming tourism. Nevertheless, the use of these various marketing tools and means has a limited effect when a destination is associated with risk because of war, terror or violence (Taylor, 2006). In such a case, these negative characteristics dominate the perception of the destination and hurt attempts to promote it and thus to attract more tourists.

The brand's components

In this stage of our discussion there is a need to find out what the components of a brand and the branding process are. According to Anholt (2005), the concept of "brand" is used in three different ways: brand image – perceptions in the mind of the target audience; brand identity – the core concept of the product, expressed by a logo, slogans and communication campaigns; and brand purpose – a common strategic vision that unites groups of people in order to produce change and thereby build a reputation. Now, as more and more publications start to appear regarding branding, researchers are starting to develop the field of "nation branding". A nation brand is defined "as the unique, multi-dimensional blend of elements that provide the nation with culturally grounded differentiation and relevance for all of its target audience" (Dinnie, 2010). In order to measure nation branding, Anholt (2005) developed the Nation Brands Index (NBI) which originates from six

factors that define a country's competitive identity: export, governance, investment, culture, people and tourism. Passow et al. (2005) identified six dimensions of a nation's reputation: emotional (likeability, respectfulness and trustworthiness of a country), physical (the attractiveness of the place and its infrastructure), financial (denotes a favorable environment for investors: industrial growth, taxation, safety), leadership (charismatic leadership), culture (socio-cultural diversity, rich history, entertainment activities) and social appeal (membership in the global community and support for good causes). Therefore, according to Lee et al. (2012), any nation branding strategy for tourism should start with a selection of key factors or dimensions of national identity that a country wishes to emphasize for the target audience. In the second part of the chapter we will deal with some specific principles of place branding and its components.

From theory to practice in destination marketing

What steps should marketers take to brand or improve their destination's image and to market a more positive one? Many scholars present a detailed description of all the stages of decision-making and implementation of marketing campaigns (for such elaborations see Kotler et al., 1993; Short et al., 1993; Morgan and Pritchard, 2001; Baker, 2007). Based on the experience of many places, a change in image must be implemented in stages: first, diagnosis of the destination's characteristics (such as an inspection of the local services, attractions and infrastructures in order to determine how well they meet the needs of visitors), defining the target audience, followed by building a strategic vision, making a decision regarding the values associated with the brand, campaign objective and components, and the promotion mix. Each step must be treated seriously by the marketers and there must be a connection between the stages. For example, if the level of the basic services offered by the place is extremely low, a marketing campaign can hardly succeed and, in most cases, it is a waste of effort and resources. Over the years we have seen cities around the world that market themselves as an "international tourism city" but which lack basic infrastructure; parking was problematic, there were not enough attractions or reasonable hotels, tourism sites were neglected and public transport was ineffective (Avraham, 2003a).

Several case studies in marketing destinations have shown that prior to embarking on a campaign, local decision-makers must understand that to succeed, money has to be invested in developing new facilities, attractions, parks and recreation areas. The nature of the attractions to

be developed depends on the type of audience which the destination is interested in drawing (Kotler et al., 1993, 1999; Short et al., 1993; Dunn et al., 1995; Baker, 2007). For example, a destination that wants to attract religious tourism should invest in building or improving its religious sites, offer religious services, special food and hotels; if it wishes to attract historical-cultural tourism, it is advised to invest in historical museums, develop archeological sites, renovate old buildings, theaters and so on. In other words, different kinds of tourism (e.g., sea and sun, historical-cultural, extreme or ecological) demand different kind of attractions, infrastructure, construction and development, and investment must be made accordingly (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a).

Actors and stakeholders in managing a destination's image

Destination marketing and branding involve multiple stakeholders in order to succeed in achieving the marketing goals (Skinner, 2005; Tasci, 2011). In many cases, the cooperation between multiple stakeholders is much easier while dealing with strong tourism brands because most of them understand the need for a positive image and, in most of the cases, they enjoy such an image. In the case of an unfamiliar destination or one with a negative image, it is much harder to start the branding process and gain support from the stakeholders because of limited resources and lack of awareness among them of the importance of having an attractive destination image (Avraham and Ketter, 2013).

Kotler et al. (1999) list four groups that are the most active in destination marketing: (1) Local actors (public and private sectors) such as the mayor, city manager, tourist bureau, individual citizens, travel agencies and hospitality industries; (2) Regional actors such as regional economic development agencies, other close destinations' DMO, county and state government, and regional tourist boards; (3) National actors such as political leaders, investment agencies and national tourist boards; and (4) International actors such as embassies and global investment agencies. It is true that coordinating different organizations, firms and individuals, both from the public and the private sectors is not easy, mainly due to different interests, viewpoints and agendas. On the other hand, the greater the degree of coordination, the more likely is the marketing plan to succeed and contribute to the destination's sustainability (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a).

Stakeholders involved in initiatives to market destinations with negative images often include private entrepreneurs in business, hospitality and tourism, marketers, in addition to local and national decision-makers, including DMOs/Convention and Visitor Bureau (CVB) representatives

and residents. Their main motive is the sense that the destination's negative image is not justified and that with proper marketing strategies (and the allocation of resources in most of the cases), an external public will learn to appreciate the destination. Residents and local decision-makers in a destination with a negative image are usually well aware of this. They encounter the negative perceptions among friends, relatives and colleagues who live elsewhere. To change this problematic situation, in many destinations, residents join forces with local decision-makers from the private and public sectors to undertake a wide-scale image makeover; such cooperation can raise large sums of money required to hire marketing professionals and to launch social media, public relations and advertising campaigns (Wang, 2011c, 2011b).

In recent years many countries, cities and tourist destinations have established a DMO or CVB, responsible for all marketing initiatives. The DMO/CVB collates and coordinates all messages, events, campaigns and other promotion efforts. According to Wang (2011b), the DMO/CVB has several key roles: information provider, community brand builder, facilitator and liaison of community tourism activities, catalyst of collaborative initiative, advocate of tourism industry, organizer of destination marketing campaigns, funding agent for collective marketing activities, partner and team builder and network management organization. In this book we would like to concentrate on the role of the organizer of destination marketing campaigns. This role includes activities such as collecting data about the behavior and needs of the target audience, understanding which marketing and promotion activities are available for the destination, which media strategies are suitable for the destination, who are possible partners that can join the marketing plan and which media to use in order to promote the place. In addition, some destinations establish a Town Centre Management (TCM) "which involves development, management and promotion of both public and private areas within town centers, for the benefit of all concerned" (Wells, cited in Coca-Stefaniak et al., 2006). One example of an organization that set up a similarly entitled marketing organization is the city of **Osaka** in Japan, which formed the "Osaka Brand Committee" (Suyama and Senoh, 2006).

DMO and strategic image management/brand management

Over the last two decades there has been a growing realization among decision-makers and marketers that an image of a product, service and destination needs to be managed and not left to chance, to the media or other players. Hence a positive image of a product, service or destination

is the result of proper management of the image by decision-makers, using research tools and professionalism. According to Tasci (2011), management of destination brands should involve comprehensive research (regarding the target audience, the marketing strategies and the destination's infrastructure), event management, integrated marketing communication (IMC) and continuous monitoring.

Destinations can be marketed in different ways. One of the most recommended means of running a successful sustainable campaign is Strategic Image Management (SIM) which, according to Wang (2011b), should be a result of collaborative destination marketing. SIM is a continuous process of researching a destination's image among target populations, clarifying its advantages, examining the factors influencing its image and making changes over the years, handling image-related crises and delivering relevant messages to different audiences (Kotler et al., 1993, 1999). In recent publications there has been a shift to broader concepts and recognition that a brand needs to be managed. As a result the SIM is often now called "brand management team". According to the UNWTO handbook on Tourism Destination Branding (2009), there are several key points that the DMO should promote: a brand steering group, an internal marketing campaign (to enable the DMO staff and others to understand the importance of the brand's content), a brand manager or guardian (who should be appointed and work with the DMO chief executive), brand champions and advocates (they should also be appointed and will be recruited to encourage other stakeholders to understand and adopt the brand), training (for DMO staff and all the others involved in the branding process), a brand toolkit (which should form the basis for training), as well as constant nurturing and communication on behalf of the brand. The main advantage of establishing the SIM is that it provides the necessary coordination between the planning, implementation and follow-up roles among the many different bodies, partners and stakeholders involved in the marketing campaign. Marketing, promoting and advertising are geared to several goals. Dealing with potential investors, tourists or entrepreneurs is an ongoing process that does not end with securing a one-time investment or establishing a single tourist attraction (Felsenstein, 1995).

Successfully changing or improving a destination's image begins with examining its existing image among the target audience, since this constitutes the foundation on which the marketing campaign should be built. A destination with a positive image needs campaigns to reinforce it, while negative images need campaigns to improve them; a destination with weak images need campaigns that focus first on

heightening an awareness of the destination, and only then on constructing the desired image (Manheim and Albritton, 1984; Avraham, 2003a). One should remember that creating an image is not an easy process, and several different studies have suggested various strategies; the destination's uniqueness needs to be identified, positioned and marketed in a way that reflects what is unique about it and how it differs from other competing destinations. Special attention must be given to ensuring that all campaign messages are geared to underlining the unique image chosen by all the participating bodies. The campaign should not try to cover too many target audiences; rather, it should have a one succinct, consistent message. Every step that has been agreed upon should be followed, and the various components such as advertising, public relations, promotion and direct marketing should be well coordinated (Kotler et al., 1993, 1999; Short et al., 1993; Dunn et al., 1995; Young and Lever, 1997; Morgan and Pritchard, 2001; Avraham, 2003a, Avraham and Ketter, 2008b, 2013).

The vision of the destination and associated values

One of the most interesting advances in destination marketing in recent years is the use of destination vision as a framework for the marketing process. Local decision-makers, primarily in the developed world, work together with residents, entrepreneurs and executives of hotels and companies to formulate a vision for the future of their place, where they live and work. The participants envisage how they would like the place to be in 5, 10, or even 20 years, and what actions should be taken for this vision to come to life (Avraham, 2003a; Baker, 2007). In the tourism industry, for example, cities and countries that have been visited so far mainly by domestic tourists can formulate a vision that will focus primarily on making the place an attractive destination for international tourism within a pre-defined number of years. In order to turn such a vision into reality the destination's decision-makers need to allocate resources to develop its attractions, accommodation and public transportation infrastructure. They should produce street signs, brochures and information in foreign languages, reach out to international travel agencies, as well as promote cooperation with different stakeholders in order to attract entrepreneurs and investors, and invest in marketing, advertising and public relations.

Destination brand values are principles, concepts or themes that a destination wants to be associated with, such as fun, authenticity, concern for the environment, green spaces, history and tradition, safety and so on (Baker, 2007). Marketers hope and work hard in order to ensure that

when tourists hear the name of the destination they immediately think about its “projected” values. The aim behind many advertisements, press releases or events is to make sure that tourists will “assimilate” that the destination values are part of the place and when they look for one of its values – fun, for example – they will be convinced that they can find it (only) in this destination. **Northern Ireland’s** marketing plan, for example, focused on its core brand values, using the elements of welcome, friendliness and humor to restore its positive image (UNWTO, 2009).

Principles for running a tourism campaign

The days when marketers thought that a catchy slogan or sophisticated logo was an adequate basis on which to run a tourism campaign have gone. Marketers now understand that this is not enough to attract tourists in today’s highly competitive tourism market, and in order to enjoy success in the marketing process there is a need to use research in order to make any decisions related to the campaign. Three preliminary steps are necessary before a marketing campaign can be launched: (a) defining the campaign’s objectives; (b) defining its target audience; and (c) recognizing the destination’s characteristics and the market dynamics. These preliminary steps must involve collecting data and generating information. According to Uysal et al. (2011), the main goal of destination marketing research is twofold: to increase demand for the destination and to facilitate effective destination management. Moreover, the scope of tourism marketing research includes visitors’ demographic information (such as age and gender), behavior information (expectation, motivation), product development, marketing and management information, consequences of travel behavior information as well as policy and investment-related information. Morrison (2002) suggested that research must be undertaken in all of the following five steps in tourism marketing: (1) Where we are now (research for planning and analysis); (2) Where we would like to be (research for strategy selection); (3) How we get there (research to guide marketing mix decisions); (4) How we can make sure we get there (research for monitoring the marketing plan); and (5) How we know whether we have arrived there (research for evaluation).

Identifying the destination’s characteristics

Many authors recommend that the first step is to undertake a destination audit and to prioritize its assets (UNWTO, 2009). Uysal et al. (2011) claim that “the most important parts of a destination’s appeal are those

elements which create a deep emotional or psychological response in visitors" (p. 103). Such elements can be heritage and cultural sites or natural attractions. But in order to decide on which sites to focus during the marketing process there is a need to conduct in-depth research. Many marketing professionals argue that to launch a successful campaign one must have a thorough understanding of the product that needs to be marketed. Similarly, Tasci (2011) emphasizes that a marketing and branding campaign must start with research regarding the destination's history, sociocultural, physical, political, legal and economic situation. Getting to know the product is often the best way to find the key element that later will serve as the campaign's anchor. In other words, destination marketers must be familiar with the destination's characteristics, attractions and climate as well as the kind of tourists who have visited the place so far, together with details of their socio-demographic profile, psycho-graphic profile and other relevant factors.

In a UNWTO handbook from 2014, there is a list of helpful items that marketers need to know about their destination before the marketing process starts: the kind of tourism they wish to attract (weekend/short breaks, family holidays, spa), key attractions in the destination (outdoor, events, shopping), characteristics of existing accommodation (hotels, hostels, guesthouses), information about the destination (its history, icons and celebrities, the climate), special features (facilities for families with young children, young adults, groups), local transportation infrastructure (air, rail, bus, taxis) and contact information. Once these data and characteristics are assembled, campaign managers will be able to select those that should be highlighted in the campaign (and those that should be kept out of sight) and those that should be improved; they will also have a better idea of how these improvements might affect the destination's image. Knowledge of the characteristics of other destinations competing for the same tourists is also essential. In any event, destination marketers should be familiar with the decision-making process of the target audience, their criteria for preferring a certain destination instead of others, and which of the destination's characteristics are most relevant for their decision-making (Avraham, 2003a).

The elementary starting point for place evaluation is strength, weakness, opportunity and threat (SWOT) analysis, namely the process whereby destination marketers learn to identify these four fundamental aspects. Strengths are destination characteristics that improve the destination's competitive edge; its weaknesses are characteristics that harm it or its image; opportunities, if used wisely, can improve the place's competitive advantage; and threats are characteristics potentially dangerous for the

destination or its image in the future. Each cluster of characteristics identified can be major or minor, changeable or fixed, human-made or nature-made (Kotler et al., 1993). SWOT analysis may vary on account of its target audience. For example, young adult tourists tend to perceive urban environments, such as crowded and hectic cities, as positive characteristics while families with children tend to perceive these attributes as negative and a less convenient way to travel with small children. Accordingly, each SWOT analysis is carried out with regard to a clear-cut target audience and in relation to the destination key markets within a competitive context (Seaton and Bennett, 1996; UNWTO, 2009).

Defining the target audience and the campaign objectives

Defining the target audience and carefully identifying the key market segments are crucial before launching a campaign as different audiences require different campaigns and emphasis. Even with the same campaign objective, such as marketing a sea-and-sun destination, campaigns will differ widely if addressed to tourists in their early twenties, families with young children or organized groups of senior citizens. Destination marketers have to segment the market and analyze the destination's image, values and fields of interest for every individual market segment. A thorough analysis of all possible segments is usually very costly so it is advisable to focus the research on just a few of them, and to gain a thorough understanding of those audiences. The choices of target audience and campaign objectives are fundamental decisions, and will affect the timing of the campaign launch, its language, its marketing mix and the choice of media strategy (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a, 2013).

The destination marketing literature contains some interesting examples of the ways in which cities and countries choose a specific target audience and the preferred image that they want to promote. Several authors describe the work done to discover the particular image held by a specific audience (Morgan and Pritchard, 2001; Suyama and Senoh, 2006) and how marketers were trying to reach the target audience and convince them to choose a certain destination. So far we saw that marketing professionals use diverse techniques such as distributing brochures, creating advertisements for different media, hiring a spokesperson and a public relations office, building a website, creating a Facebook page and publishing a newsletter. In summary, to market a destination successfully, marketing experts try to single the place out from its competitors and market its unique attractions. As mentioned, it is important to note that the campaign messages are a direct result of target audience research: What is the image of the destination? What are its sources

of information regarding the destination? Which characteristics of the place are they familiar with? What are their intentions regarding the destination?

In preparing a campaign, marketers also need to set their objectives for the segment on which they choose to concentrate. For example, the target audience may be senior citizens, youth, religious people or adventurers without previous or any knowledge of the destination. The destination marketers should define the objectives they set themselves in the campaign accordingly. Objectives may include increasing awareness of the destination, conveying information, reminding the target audience about a certain destination or persuading and convincing them to visit it, to stay longer or to revisit (Kotler and Armstrong, 1989).

Setting up the campaign's components

Which components should a tourism campaign include in order to be effective? A destination brand is defined as a place perceived with certain identifiers such as a name, logo, visual symbol, color and slogan (Anholt, 2009; Tasci and Gartner, 2009). The goals of these components are to differentiate the destination in the mind of the potential consumers, to create awareness, a positive image, sense of recognition and to deliver the promise hidden within the brand. Each of these components contributes to the campaign's success or failure and, accordingly, should be handled with the utmost care. In the following pages we will discuss some of the campaign's central components.

The destination's name

A destination's name is one of the most fundamental components of its image. Usually it is the first element that comes to mind, followed by a number of associations to create the destination's image. Tasci (2011) claimed that a name of a place evokes certain images in people's minds and so can be expected to contribute to the destination brand. Aware of this, some destination marketers believe that in order to create a profound change in a destination's image, a name change is required. Such a step, however, is very extreme and used only rarely.

The first reason to do so is the existence of an extremely potent negative image; for such a destination, changing the name represents the hope of eliminating the negative image along with the deletion of the old associated name, and the onset of a new era for the destination. Another reason concerns destinations with a weak image, one hardly known to potential tourists. Such places try to associate themselves with familiar and strong destination brands by changing their name

accordingly. Some destinations change their name because of the image it carries, while some have names so singular that their sound alone can attract or repel visitors. Avraham and Ketter (2008a) present examples of such destinations which include the towns of *Chicken* in Alaska; *Why* in Arizona; *Hooker* in California; *Chicken Head* and *Two Eggs* in Florida; *Hot Coffee* in Mississippi; *Toast* in North Carolina; *Boring* in Oregon; *Intercourse* in the Pennsylvania Amish country and more. As we can imagine, their names might be a barrier against attracting tourism. The United Kingdom also has a number of highly unique place names. They include: *Pett Bottom*, *Cock Ash* and *Crapham Hill* (in the south-east of England); *The Bastard* and *Bottoms* (in Scotland) and *Cockshoot* and *Shyfe Brooke* in Wales.

One of the earliest known cases of changing a place's name to improve its image concerns **Greenland** in 982 CE. According to a local tradition, Erik the Red was exiled from Iceland and, along with his family and slaves, he settled in Greenland. He named the island Greenland to create a positive image for the place and attract more people to settle. Another historical milestone in the use of the name-changing strategy is the case of the city of **Lexington**, Nebraska, which had been established in 1872 as Plum Creek. In 1888 the community leaders were concerned about the similarity of the name, Plum Creek to Elm Creek, just 19 miles east of the town. The city fathers also believed that "Plum Creek is not the proper name for a progressive city with plans to grow and prosper". In 1889, the new name "Lexington" was chosen, probably to capitalize on the renown of Lexington, Massachusetts, the famous site of one of the earliest battles in the American Revolution. It has served as the city's name ever since, and as a pioneer step in the field of place marketing (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a).

The destination's logo

The importance of the destination's logo grew over the years as branding became more and more common and popular in the tourism industry. Pimentel (1997) defined a logo as a visual shorthand that carries a desirable meaning and association for products, services and organizations. The goal of a logo is usually to create instant differentiation, easy identification and also to promote awareness and promise delivery regarding the destination, but marketers do not always follow this. For example, in his study of logos and symbols of cities in Israel, Avraham (2003a) found that most logos are very much alike, using similar motifs such as flowers, trees, stars, cog-wheels and buildings. Similarly, towns on the coast commonly display motifs of boats, waves, sun, water, stars and sand dunes.

Many places use geometrical shapes such as triangles, arcs and circles – shapes and motifs that, in most cases, have no symbolic meaning and do not promote the place's image. Some of the logos studied are indeed proven to be highly creative, but they are not of much help in distinguishing those places from their competitors.

To fulfill the logo's potential as a meaningful marketing tool, it should be unique, cohere with the new image that the destination is trying to project – in the case of an effort for image repairs – and exploit the destination's distinctive characteristics (Gabor, 2006). Tasci (2011) claims in her research that countries use a variety of elements in their logos such as the colors of their flags, culturally significant symbols, attractive assets, historical events, the present ethos of its citizens and even abstract symbols (Lee et al., 2012). While some logos can reflect the image of the destination and assist in its marketing, some logos may actually harm the image, as shown in the following examples from the research of Avraham (2003a). In one case, a town near **Jerusalem** that wanted to present itself as distinct from the famous ancient city, actually used the symbols of Jerusalem in its logo. Similarly, a small town that wanted to brand itself as a hi-tech center used traditional images of fields, trees and an agricultural landscape (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a). Lee et al. (2012) also claimed that many national logos fail to convey any meaning because of design elements that are irrelevant and do not appeal to their potential target audience.

The destination's slogan

As with other commercial commodities, many marketers use slogans in order to promote the position and uniqueness of a destination and to increase its salience among the target audience. The slogan generally carries the essence of the destination's spirit, trying to condense the marketing campaign into a pithy phrase. Gold (1994) claimed that a slogan is “a standard way to give identity to a promotional campaign, conveying key ideas in a terse and simplified manner, they have long been recognized as *de rigueur* in the rhetoric of industrial place promotional advertising” (p. 30). Examples of some slogans that have received attention include: **New York** – “I Love NY”, **Amsterdam** – “I Amsterdam”, **Las Vegas** – “What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas” and **New Zealand** – “100% Pure New Zealand”. **India** chose a short alliterative slogan in order to summarize the experiences that tourists will have during their visit there: “Incredible India”.

From their accumulated marketing knowledge, many campaign managers now understand that a successful slogan is a powerful marketing

tool that can reflect the destination's vision, essence and spirit, create enthusiasm, and be identified with the destination for many years. Again, like a campaign, a slogan's wording is influenced by the target audience's characteristics and the campaign goals, and has to be based on reality rather than fantasy. If a certain slogan spuriously promises golden beaches, turquoise lagoons and a unique experience, the tourists who visit the destination will feel cheated and its image may be gravely damaged as a result. Tourists who feel that they were misled will probably not rush to return to that destination nor recommend it to friends and relatives.

The destination's visual symbols or icons

Planners of shopping centers have long understood that the success of a mall depends upon having at least one anchor store (and in many cases more than one) that will attract different segments of the population. The idea behind it is that when consumers come to buy from the anchor store they will become aware of and attracted to the other stores in the mall. Due to the popularity and demand of the anchor store – which can be a supermarket, department store or well-known electronics store brand – marketers place it at the center of the mall's marketing and campaigns. Local decision-makers and destination marketers, according to the same reasoning, also try to use at least one central attraction or site, located in their tourist destination, for the promotion of the destination as a whole. If there is no such attraction in a destination, decision-makers work to build or create one because of its potential ability to attract tourists to the place and become the business card of the destination. The result is that many tourism campaigns use – in addition to logos and slogans – unique visual symbols or icons such as monuments, historical buildings, gates, sculptures, towers, bridges or forts, which have become identifying symbols or icons of the destination. Some examples of world-famous visual symbols or icons are the Eiffel Tower in **Paris**, Big Ben in **London**, **San Francisco's** Golden Gate Bridge, the Red Square in **Moscow**, the Great Wall of **China** and the Guggenheim Museum in **Bilbao**. The main advantage of visual symbols or icons lies in their ability to convey messages instantly and efficiently to the target audience. It is enough, for example, to show a picture of the Eiffel Tower for the target audience to know that we are dealing with Paris or France.

Promotion and tools for delivering campaign messages

While the previous stages focused on the campaign components, it is time to discuss the tools that marketers can use in order to promote

the chosen message, strategies or branding. Tasci (2011) claimed that “promotion is significant in establishing, maintaining, reinforcing and changing a destination brand and its position(s) because promotional efforts represent the destination until the actual visitation takes place” (Tasci, 2011, p. 119). Campaign managers have several options for delivering the campaign’s central messages. The choice depends on the campaign’s goals and timing, the destination’s economic condition, its target audience and that of its rivals, available funds, and many other factors. The most common techniques are advertising, direct mailing/marketing, sales promotions and public relations.

Advertising

Advertising in the media is one of the most popular tools for destination marketing. It is based on purchasing space in the media and using it to deliver messages to target populations. Though very costly, this tool allows the campaign managers maximum control over the delivered message, the audience that will be targeted and the timing of the publicity. Yet advertising has several disadvantages, such as the consumers’ tendency not to trust advertisements and ignore them. Every day the average consumer is exposed to thousands of advertisements, so the effectiveness of each of them is questionable (Ries and Ries, 2004). In addition to “regular” advertisements, some newspapers carry special supplements in which destinations that want to advertise themselves can buy several pages or even the entire issue. Examples may be found in newspapers such as the *Economist* and the *London Times*, in which many countries buy special supplements to attract tourists, investors and entrepreneurs (more examples may be found in Kunczik, 1997; Avraham and Ketter, 2008a). In the last few years we have seen several campaigns, such as “100% Pure **New Zealand**”, “There’s nothing like **Australia**”, “**Norway** – Powered by Nature” or “**Austria** – Arrive and Revive” (Pike, 2004), which were very visible in international tourism journals and TV channels. The advertisements in these campaigns usually include visuals and messages that are aimed at distinguishing one specific destination from others and branding it.

Direct mailing/marketing

This method involves directly addressing a target audience through Facebook, email, personal meetings and telephone. Target audiences also receive brochures, maps, photographs and information pamphlets in the hope that they will become interested in investing in or visiting the destination. Additionally, this technique includes creating a direct

contact with tourism operators and agents in order to create a joint business and promote a fruitful collaboration.

Sales promotion

In addition, a destination can make use of a sales promotion that considers a set of short-term changes in the place's price in order to enhance demand. This may include special sales, discounts, coupons and other price-related incentives on hotels, flights and local attractions.

Public relations and public diplomacy

According to Kotler et al. (1993, p. 169), "Public relations is the effort to build good relations with the organization's public by obtaining favorable publicity; building up a good public image; and handling or heading off unfavorable rumors, stories and events". According to Morrison (2002), public relations "includes all the activities that hospitality and travel organizations engage in to maintain or improve its relationship with other organizations and individuals" (p. 382). Public relations is a key ingredient in destination promotion and its major tools are press relations, event publicity and lobbying activity. It is generally accepted that when a public relations expert succeeds in getting a positive story in the news media it has a positive effect on the destination's image. In general, public relations people work on both the good and the bad sides of their destination's media image.

The main efforts of public relations professionals are focused on promoting the destination's positive side and preventing or mitigating the fallout from negative news published about it. This negative news may be about violence, crime or lack of safety, which might cause the destination to be perceived by tourists as dangerous. In addition to working with the media, public relations experts also consult the destination's leaders and managers about their media appearance, research and collect data about the destination's image, produce events and festivals, and lobby. Public relations on behalf of a destination is crucial, particularly in times of sudden crisis such as waves of crime/violence, acts of terror or natural disasters.

In addition to public relations, another important tool that needs to be mentioned here is public diplomacy. White and Radic (2014) claimed the two concepts, public relations and public diplomacy, are related: "Public diplomacy as a strategic dialogic communication and relations building process is closely related to global public relations" (p. 459). Melissen (2005) states that they both facilitate information exchange, help build positive perceptions and foster goodwill. As part of international public

relations, countries try to shape their image in the global media and among the international audiences. The term “public diplomacy” has many different definitions. Malon (1985, cited in Gilboa, 2006, p. 717) claims that policymakers typically define public diplomacy as “a direct communication with foreign people, with the aim of affecting their thinking and, ultimately, that of their government.” In most cases, the goal is to create a favorable image of a nation’s policies, actions, political and economic systems (Gilboa, 2006). According to Hassman (2008), achieving this goal entails developing dialogue among the nation’s citizens, establishing relationships among different communities, and understanding their varied cultures and needs. According to White and Radic (2014), the field of public diplomacy has moved from government-to-government propaganda to nation-to-nation communication, dialogue and relations building.

E-Tourism: marketing tourism on the World Wide Web

Technological changes have been an inherent part of the development of the tourism industry over the years. Since the 1980s, information communication technologies (ICTs) have been transforming globally, creating applications and solutions for the tourism industry which have received the term “eTourism”. Since 2000, the effect of the ICTs has grown and reached its peak with the spread of the Internet (Buhalis et al., 2011). In the last decade we have seen a growing use of e-marketing in tourism. E-marketing – short for electronic marketing – is used to cover all types of marketing and promotional activity using the Internet; it encompasses the World Wide Web, social media, email and mobile forms of communication (UNWTO, 2014a). In recent years, a growing number of destinations have decided to focus solely on e-marketing and give up the other tools. According to Govers and Go (2009), an “essential part of the place branding strategy is therefore to formulate a plan for projecting the right image in this dynamic and versatile online environment” (p. 62). Indeed, the versatility of the online environment fundamentally changes the tourism marketing industry. DMOs started using the ICTs in order to facilitate the tourist experience as well as to coordinate their attractions, promote their tourism policies, and coordinate their operational functions (Buhalis et al., 2011; O’Connor et al., 2011).

In today’s society, Internet websites have become a major platform for delivering marketing messages; the use of websites for promotion, advertising and communicating has been found effective in various fields (Beirman, 2003; Nothnagel, 2006; Opoku and Hinson, 2006). Official websites of countries, cities and tourism destinations are a substantial,

effective tool for self-presentation, reputation management and creating a desired image. One major advantage of having an official website is the stakeholders' full control of its contents and the ability to communicate proactively on a variety of selected issues. Local and national decision-makers can post articles, messages, stories and updates immediately, with high accessibility and relatively low cost compared to other mass media platforms (Shaheed, 2004). In addition to their role as a marketing platform, tourism websites can deliver information, offering diverse, up-to-date and personalized data regarding tourist attractions, tourism services and other useful information. By having these content available on the Internet, tourism websites can create a direct, unmediated and highly accessible interaction with their target audience (Wynee et al., 2002).

Although the use of websites for marketing seems an uncomplicated task, this is not true for all countries. While developed countries enjoy a clear advantage in attracting web traffic, developing destinations encounter many challenges in launching websites and drawing online visitors (Shaheed, 2004). Among others, Opoku and Hinson (2006) note that most Sub-Sahara African countries are on the dark side of the technological gap, with relatively low rates of Internet accessibility and low numbers of personal computers. At the same time, web marketing still carries many advantages for developing countries, serving as an unlimited platform for delivering messages. The independence and wide accessibility of having a website can empower developing nations, providing a unique opportunity for making their messages available globally and for presenting issues that are absent from other channels of mass media. To summarize, websites serve as a virtual gate for cities, countries and tourist destinations, promoting positive images as well as attracting tourists and visitors.

Guidelines for success in destination marketing

What is success in marketing and branding a tourist destination? Which criteria must be met in order to succeed in marketing and branding? What determines successful marketing or branding of a tourist destination? Is it the amount of resources allocated to a campaign, the strategies chosen, the DMO's professionalism or the level of cooperation with various partners and stakeholders? These issues have been addressed by various researchers. According to Braun et al. (2014) and Braun (2012), the most straightforward form of place branding is the improvement of the place brand image. Uysal et al. (2011), citing the recommendations of Destination Marketing Association International, offered several steps for success: identify the elements of the destination's appeal; create an

inventory of current destination offerings; assess the product's quality and overall visitor experience; develop or encourage desired attractions and support services; use the most effective image, identity or brand; communicate the most favored target markets; integrate traditional and electronic promotional techniques; and implement relationships and database marketing for destinations.

Avraham and Ketter (2008a) suggest several milestones for success in place marketing and branding:

1. The importance of leadership – local leadership as a key factor in leading improvement of destination image
2. Use of resources – branding and re-branding a destination's image is a resource-consuming process
3. Getting ready for future crises – being prepared to withstand a crisis can significantly reduce its negative and long-term effects on the place's image, and help it maintain its existing positive image
4. Employ a strategic approach – using research, indicators for success and holistic processes
5. Back up the campaign with a real significant change in the physical aspect of the destination
6. Enhancing local pride and working with the residents
7. Understanding that a marketing campaign is not enough, local leaders should contact investors and firms, expose the destination in tourism fairs and cooperate with other organizations
8. Take a deep breath and acknowledge that the process takes time; a long time must elapse before the image change is felt
9. Accept the need to heed the advice of professionals and destination branding experts

Avraham (2014b) mentioned a “recipe for success in destination promotion” and suggested the following characteristics for a successful marketing process: the creation of a destination marketing organization and the use of research, strategy, indicators for success/failure and the use of professional tools (surveys, focus groups, interviews). Accept that the cosmetic approach to destination marketing does not work; do not merely promote a change in the destination's logo or slogan but employ a real strategic process. Always tell the truth about the destination and avoid lying, especially to the media. Create clear branding/marketing priorities for the decision-makers, and a clear destination vision and marketing goals. Understand the role and the importance of leadership that believes in marketing and branding. Promote cooperation between

stakeholders and citizens during the campaign and use resident-inclusion processes. Understand the need for budget allocation and that an effective branding process takes time.

Kotler et al. (1993) claimed that since a destination is a number of attractions, events, services and products which, together, create a total experience and value propositions for the tourists, successful marketing results when each one of these elements contributes something to the total brand image (Brown et al., 2011). Other publications address the issue of success in destination branding and marketing. The UNWTO's destination branding handbook (2009), for example, sets defined critical success factors such as an understanding of the destination's core market segments and competitive position, conducting qualitative consumer research, leadership, establishing brand manager/guardian, long-term commitment, constant monitoring of the brand's impact and ongoing communication with stakeholders. According to Baker (2007), "successful place brands are those that are able to clarify and differentiate themselves, hit the customer's hot buttons, and simplify customer choices" (p. 96). Examples of countries, cities and tourist destinations that have undergone a successful branding process can be found in several studies (see Morgan et al., 2002; Anholt, 2005; Codato and Franco, 2006; Henderson and Turnbull, 2006; Suyama and Senoh, 2006). A short list would include countries such as **Singapore and Malaysia**, and cities such as **Tel Aviv, Osaka, Dubai and Amsterdam**.

Evaluating campaigns, branding processes and media results

Measuring and evaluating a destination branding process or specific campaign is a complex matter, and only a small number of authors and experts have dealt with this issue. Many destinations have employed various marketing initiatives but only scant evidence of the campaigns' efficiency can be found. Young and Lever (1997) claim that the degree of complexity in assessing a campaign's efficiency depends first of all on the goal-setting stage. Since most destinations do not start their campaigns with clear quantifiable or "measurable" goals, it is extremely difficult to assess campaign efficiency at later stages. In other words, marketers must agree on quantitative indicators that will help them to decide whether they have succeeded or failed. Over the years, the growing popularity of destination branding and marketing leads inevitably to the issue of assessment of a campaign's efficiency and its ability to attain the expected goals. Due to a number of reasons, measuring a branding process and campaign results is an elaborate matter. Kotler et al. (1993) state that first, different experts employ different evaluation methods;

second, even when experts agree on the method it is still hard to isolate the specific effect of the advertising, public relations campaign or other promotion tools. Nevertheless, several methods are used to assess the efficiency of a given destination's branding campaign.

The simplest way to assess the efficiency of a specific campaign is to run a pre- and post-campaign/branding process survey. The literature suggests two main methods: evaluating the campaign's effect on the tourists' perception, image or approach to the destination, and evaluating the change in the actual destination consumption; in other words, to analyze tourism figures and the number of tourists who visit the destination. Both these methods also assess the tourists' response to the campaign itself. As an example of the first method, an advertising firm can take a sample of consumers from the target audience and ask them to evaluate the campaign on criteria such as the amount of attention it draws, creativity, persuasion, creation of awareness, the way it is recalled and whether the campaign has changed the consumers' opinion of the destination. With these data the campaign creators can estimate how efficient the campaign is and how it should be amended (for further reading on the assessment of campaign efficiency see: Kotler and Armstrong, 1989; Kotler et al., 1993). As an example of the second method, campaign creators should assess quantitative changes in the numbers of hotel vacancies and entries to local attractions, and to services such as car rentals and restaurant occupation (Kotler and Armstrong, 1989; Fenster, et al., 1994).

Another key to an efficient evaluation of a campaign lies in the preliminary stage of setting goals for the level of awareness of a destination, its desired image, branding, associate values or its consumption. For example, if a pilot study finds that the current awareness of a certain destination among the target audience is 30 percent, the goal may be set to raise it to 60 percent within one year. At the end of that year any increase in awareness level can be gauged, and it can then be decided whether the campaign has achieved its goal. Also, in such a case, marketers can ask what percentage of the tourist market associated the destination with its "projected" branding or how many tourists associated the destination with its "projected" values, before and after the branding process or the campaign.

In addition to advertising campaigns, place marketing can be enhanced by other techniques such as public relations. As noted earlier, one of the main goals of public relations is to improve the destination's image, and a common strategy for this is to "encourage" journalists to write favorable news and columns about it. Launching a public relations campaign

aimed at improving a destination's image is complex, as are the ways to measure its results. The most usual means of assessment is to count the number of media articles covering the public relations before and after the campaign (Kotler and Armstrong, 1989). In addition marketers can count the increase (or decrease) in the number of people visiting the destination website or joining the destination's Facebook page, count how many people wrote positive Facebook comments or search the name of the destination in Google, and follow the destination's Twitter account or the change in the number of followers during a specific period.

Chapter summary

This chapter described the way to market and brand tourist destinations. The marketing process is lengthy, complicated and expensive; hence it requires the coordination of many factors and resources, and the assistance of professionals. To advance from the stage of drawing up a strategic plan for changing a destination's image, it is advisable to start by defining the campaign's objectives and the target audience, and analyzing the destination's characteristics. The components of the campaign include the destination's name, logo, slogan and visual symbols; the proper management of each component can enhance the destination's image. In the last part of the chapter we noted several techniques used for delivering campaign messages whose use depends on the campaign's objectives and resources, and the characteristics of the target audience. We also address the question of success in destination marketing and branding.

As we approach the end of this discussion, it is important to note that while many experts praise and recommend a branding process, some of today's researchers oppose it. According to the latter, branding is not a suitable solution for every city, country or tourist destination seeking an efficient and speedy solution to their image problems. From their perspective, a branding process should generally be adopted by places intending to embark on a long-term process, involving deep strategic planning and comprehensive changes in the place's characteristics (Ashworth, 2006). Braun et al. (2014) claim that despite the growing interest in the field, the application of place branding is not without criticism (see list of critics: Braun et al., 2014, p. 64).

4

Tourism Marketing for Destinations with Negative Images

While some destinations enjoy a positive image and a constant influx of tourists, this is not always the case. Other places, particularly in developing countries, may suffer from repeated crises and are associated with negative stereotypes that keep tourists away. In the previous chapters we learned that tourist destinations in developing countries tend to suffer from negative stereotypes, generalizations and perceptions; that there are various factors that shape these negative images in the mass media; and that destination marketing practices can alter these images. The current chapter will explore four key issues: (a) the use of image restoration discourse to improve a destination's image; (b) the role of crisis communication in responding to sudden crises; (c) the multi-step model for altering the place's image, and its implication for destination marketing; and (d) the marketing tool of media strategies and the relevant strategies for marketing destinations that suffer from negative stereotypes and other undesirable images.

Image restoration

An image is a critical factor for tourism destinations as it affects a place's ability to attract tourists, visitors, investors and other resources (Anholt, 2005). In order to alter and improve a negative image, places can follow the theoretical constructs of image repair, image restoration and recovery marketing. According to the image repair discourse, an image is a critical variable for people, places and organizations (Coombs, 1995). When encountering image problems, organizations will take preventive and restorative measures to protect this vital asset. Such measures take the form of five major image repair strategies: denial, evasion of responsibility,

reducing offensiveness of events, corrective action and mortification (Benoit, 1997).

While the image repair theory might be highly effective for people and organizations, its applicability to destinations is far less effective (Insch and Avraham, 2014). When facing image problems, people and organizations can deny any link to the offensive act; can refuse to accept their responsibility for the problem, portraying the situation in a less-offensive light; can take a corrective action; or can simply apologize (Benoit and Henson, 2009). When a developing country suffers from a sudden crisis or an accumulated negative image, these repair strategies are not very practical. For example, one may consider a developing country that suffers from the common stereotypes of underdevelopment, lack of tourism infrastructure and low personal safety. Using the image repair discourse, the country cannot deny its problematic reality, shift the responsibility to other countries or apologize for its problems. Perhaps the country can do it, but this will not prove very effective in attracting tourists and visitors.

Another perspective offered by the image restoration discourse can take the form of communication response strategies. The basic communication response model includes three or four steps: expressing regret, acting to resolve the situation, ensuring that the situation will not recur and, if necessary, offering restitution to the injured parties (Stocker, 1997). Another approach to image restoration is offered by Coombs (1999), who suggests response strategies such as attacking the accuser, providing excuses or justifications, ingratiation and offering a full apology. As mentioned earlier, such strategies are more useful to people and organizations and less practical for places and destinations suffering from issues of long-term negative images. In the case of a tourist destination suffering from an epidemic, it is less likely for national stakeholders to accuse the virus or to provide excuses.

The image restoration discourse is of critical importance for people, governments, companies and non-profit organizations, offering them a practical tool to protect and cultivate their image (Benoit, 2014). However, in the case of tourism marketing for developing nations, the image restoration discourse can be applied with very limited success (Avraham, 2013). There are several reasons for this: firstly, some of the challenges faced by developing countries result from external factors that are beyond the reach of the place leaders, and they cannot take responsibility for the negative occurrences. Secondly, many of the problems faced by developing countries date back decades or even centuries, to the times when these countries were established or, in some cases, to

the days of colonialism (Sabar, 2010). As a result, it would be extremely complicated to mend the problematic situation and to act quickly and effectively. Thirdly, countries are neither people nor private entities; a mayor, a national tourism office manager or the Minister of Tourism cannot take the same course of action and implement response strategies such as ingratiation. Summing up these points, it is necessary to go beyond the discourse of image restoration and take a broader perspective that will allow cities, countries and tourist destinations to manage their image and protect it from crises. Two particular approaches to handle the image of destinations and overcome such difficult times are crisis communication management and the multi-step model for altering a place's image.

Crisis communication management

The 21st century is a period of rapid changes: global communication networks, global business ties and global tourism. In this era, having a crisis is not a question of "if" but "when?" and "how prepared will we be?". In recent years leading tourist destinations around the world have suffered from a variety of image crises; these include the 9/11 terror attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the 7 July bombing in London in 2005; the series of sexual assaults against female tourists in India; the sinking of the Italian cruise ship, *Costa Concordia*, in 2012 and the disappearance of Malaysia Airlines flight 370 in 2014; and the long months of demonstrations in Bangkok, Thailand's capital. Also, there was the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and Hurricane Katrina in 2005 in New Orleans; not to forget the outbreaks of the SARS epidemic in Hong Kong in 2002 and the outbreak of the Ebola epidemic in West Africa in 2014.

Crises are unpredictable events that have the potential to create negative or undesired outcomes (Coombs, 1999). In the context of tourist destinations, Glaesser (2006) suggests a more comprehensive definition for a crisis:

A crisis is an undesired, extraordinary, often unexpected and timely limited process with ambivalent development possibilities. It demands immediate decisions and countermeasures in order to influence the further development again positively for the organization/destination and to limit the negative consequences as much as possible. A crisis situation is determined by evaluating the seriousness of the occurring negative events, which threaten, weaken or destroy competitive advantages or important goals of the organization/destination. (p 14)

According to these definitions, crises are unpredicted and unexpected situations that, if not managed properly, could lead to undesired outcomes that may harm the destination's competitive advantages. In the tourism industry, according to Mansfeld and Pizam (2006), crises may result from five major types of negative events:

1. Terrorist attacks such as the bombing of public places or plane hijackings.
2. Crimes such as robbery, rape, murder or kidnapping.
3. Accident-related crises such as airplane crashes or the sinking of cruise ships.
4. Political unrest events such as violent demonstrations, uprisings or riots.
5. Natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, hurricanes or tsunamis.
6. Epidemics such as the outbreak of SARS, HIV or Ebola.

Although unpredictable by nature, crises can be modeled into fixed stages that form the crisis life cycle. According to Herrero and Pratt (1996), crises develop along four key stages: birth, growth, maturity and decline (as cited in Beirman and van Walbeek, 2011). This division corresponds with a biological model, describing the crisis life cycle as parallel to that of the living organism, which slowly develops and then fades away. The notion that crisis development can be expected and even controlled represents a proactive approach toward such events, known as crisis management. The term "crisis management" is composed of two words that at first glance contradict each other – how can something as unpredictable as a crisis be managed? However, modern scholars claim that crises can be prevented, limited, controlled, managed and affected (Lerbinger, 2012). According to Glaesser (2006), crisis management is composed of the strategies, processes and measures that are planned and put into force to prevent and cope with crisis. The crisis management process comprises four main stages:

1. *Precaution* – In this preliminary stage, destinations take preventive measures in order to reduce the probability of a crisis occurring. Sample actions may include taking general safety measures, properly maintaining infrastructure and tourism superstructure, and creating a positive and supportive work environment.
2. *Planning prevention* – The successful management of crises is carried out long before the first signs of the crisis. In the planning prevention stage, destinations conduct risk management analysis for possible

- crises, create an emergency response and action plan for every possible scenario, and establish a crisis management team that includes various professionals and stakeholders.
3. *Crisis coping* – Not every crisis can be prevented and the third stage is focused on managing, limiting, containing and controlling it. The main aim of this stage is to bring the crisis to an end with the least possible damage to tourists, residents, employees and infrastructure.
 4. *Post-crisis* – Once the smoke has cleared, it is time to recover the destination's infrastructure, revive tourism, learn lessons from the recent crisis and prepare to manage the next one.

In recent years organizations have put a growing emphasis on preparing for crises, and crisis management planning is becoming an integral part of the organization's regular strategic planning process (Crandall et al., 2013).

Communication management is a highly effective method that allows tourist destinations to act in times of sudden crisis and manage their image in the event of negative occurrences. Yet there are two major limitations for practicing crisis communication in developing countries. Firstly, communication practices apply only to sudden crises. For places suffering from long-standing image problems, the communication techniques do not work as the places are trapped in a long and continuous state of crisis-coping, without reaching the post-crisis stage. Secondly, the level of development and geo-political characteristics of many developing countries makes them more vulnerable to sudden crises. When such events are repeated over and over again, the effectiveness of crisis communication decreases, as the separate events join together to be perceived as one never-ending crisis. Because of these two limitations, developing countries cannot count only on crisis communication practices but should also employ media strategies for marketing places in times of crisis.

The multi-step model for altering place image

One model that offers a response to the lacunae of image restoration theories and to the limitations of crisis communication practices is the multi-step model for altering place images (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a). This is a destination marketing model aimed at accompanying tourism stakeholders in the process of planning, conducting and evaluating campaigns for altering place images and overcoming image crises. The model describes a five-stage process: preliminary analysis; setting goals

and timing; choosing media strategies for marketing places in crisis; implementing the strategies with marketing techniques and channels; and following up with evaluation and feedback. The model is presented in Figure 4.1.

In the first stage of the multi-step model for altering place images, destinations conduct a preliminary analysis in order to assess their current state. In the field of strategic marketing, a formative analysis is a common procedure aimed at assessing the characteristics of the organization, the target audience and the competitors (Smith, 2013). In the multi-step model for altering place image, the preliminary analysis should focus on three core dimensions: firstly, the characteristics of the place, which include its location, resources, power and status, regime and leadership as well as its position along the tourism area life cycle. Secondly, the characteristics of the target audience, which include the type and the size of the audience, knowledge and image of the place, the audience's sources of information, geographic and cultural proximity and the socio-cultural characteristics of the audience. Thirdly, the characteristics of the crisis, which can focus on both an image crisis and a physical crisis. These include the type of the crisis, its stage and

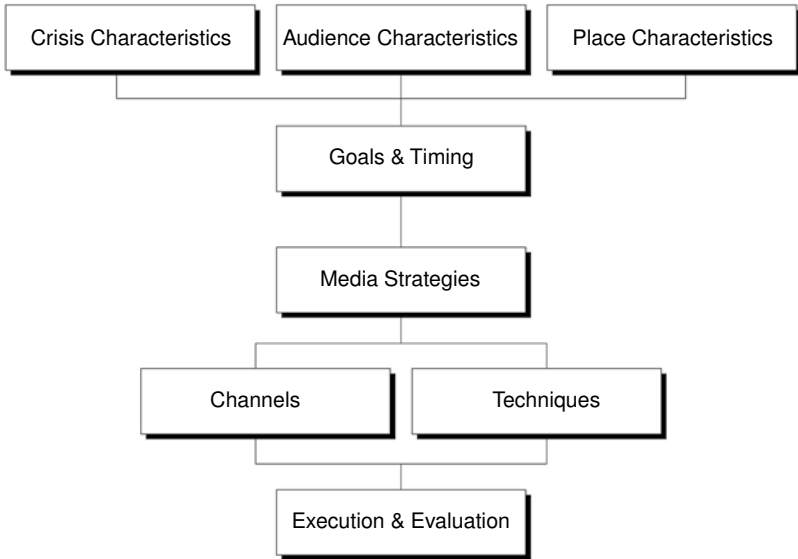


Figure 4.1 The multi-step model for altering place image (adapted from Avraham and Ketter, 2008a)

duration, geographical scale, number of casualties and their origin as well as damage caused to the infrastructure and tourism superstructure.

The second stage of the model is goal setting. Destination marketing goals might include altering a long-lasting negative image and initiating consumption; continuation of consumption during an ongoing crisis; continuation of consumption after the crisis is over; changing consumption characteristics; and maintaining and enhancing consumption. This variety of marketing goals allows different destinations with different needs to use the model, based on the place's specific requirements. The third stage of the multi-step model for altering place image is the choice of a media strategy. This is a marketing plan of action for creating a desired impact among a selected target audience. Media strategies for marketing places in crisis can be divided into three groups: media strategies to focus on the source of the message; strategies that focus on the message itself; and those that focus on the target audience. Within each group, there are different media strategies appropriate for different destinations with different characteristics, totaling over 30 strategies. The range of marketing goals and the three groups of media strategies are described in greater detail in the continuation of this chapter.

The fourth stage of the multi-step model for altering place image is choosing techniques and channels for implementation. In order to deliver the campaign messages to the target audience, there are five key marketing techniques that can be used: advertising, public relations, direct sales, sales promotion and online marketing (Boone and Kurtz, 2013). From the available techniques, a destination can choose to focus on one main technique or develop a promotion mix that integrates several of them. As for channels, each technique has a variety of channels to choose from. For example, in advertising one has to choose between the print media and the electronic media, and within the electronic media choose the specific website, radio station or television channel in which to advertise. Among other factors, the choice of techniques and channels is highly dependent on the availability of financial resources; a generous marketing budget might result in a diverse promotion mix, with advertising taking a significant portion of it. On the other hand, a limited marketing budget might result in a narrow promotion mix, focusing mainly on public relations and social media marketing.

The fifth and final stage of the model focuses on execution, evaluation and feedback. A famous quote by Winston Churchill suggests that: "However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results". Following this line of thought, the fifth stage focuses on evaluating the results of the destination marketing campaign. Evaluation

is carried out at three complementary levels: cognitive, emotional and behavioral (Smith, 2013). On the cognitive level, destinations examine whether their image has been altered and whether people from the target audience now hold an improved image of the destination. On the emotional level, destinations evaluate whether feelings, emotions and attitudes toward the destination have been affected by the campaign. On the behavioral level, destinations examine whether the target audience responded with a desired action, such as coming to visit the place. The most common tools for the evaluation process include surveys, focus groups, media coverage analysis and inbound tourism statistics (for more details see Chapter 3). Following this last stage, tourism decision-makers can return to the first stage, re-analyze the current state, choose a new goal and launch a new campaign to successfully realize it.

Destination marketing goals

Choosing the most appropriate marketing goal is a key step in the multi-step model for altering place images. The goals define the direction in which the organization wishes to develop, and guide decision-makers in setting objectives and formulating strategy (Kotler et al., 2014). A more specific view is offered by Smith (2013), who states that a goal is a simple statement, acknowledging the current state of the organization, outlines how to develop from it and what the organization would like to accomplish. In the field of tourism marketing, the choice of clear goals is important for strategic planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation (Cooper and Hall, 2008). Common tourism marketing goals may include cultivating the destination's image among key markets, enhancing the place's competitive advantage and boosting tourism numbers. However, these goals are more relevant to destinations that do not suffer from stereotypes, negative images or crises.

For destinations in developing countries that operate in a more challenging environment, there are other marketing goals to be considered. These goals take into account two key factors: one is that many destinations in developing countries suffer from prolonged negative images that can date back to decades or even centuries. And the other is that many destinations in developing countries are currently facing a turbulent reality that includes low rates of physical development, lack of adequate infrastructure, high crime rates, low levels of tourism development and other local problems (Avraham and Ketter, 2013). In this context, tourism marketing goals should relate to issues such as destinations with negative place images, some of which have recently recovered from

a crisis and others which are still facing an ongoing crisis. For the places that are facing these issues, marketing goals should be different and achieving the goals becomes much more complicated when compared to places that come from a “better neighborhood” (Anholt, 2009). To market destinations with a negative place image, there are five main goals to be kept in mind:

1. Altering a prolonged negative image, and initiating consumption.
 2. Continuation of consumption during an ongoing crisis.
 3. Continuation of consumption after the crisis is over.
 4. Changing consumption characteristics.
 5. Maintaining and enhancing consumption.
-
1. *Altering a prolonged negative image and initiating consumption* – The first destination marketing goal for developing destinations is to alter a prolonged negative image and initiate consumption. This goal is intended for destinations that suffer from a prolonged negative stereotype and are in the early tourism development stages of discovery and exploration (Butler, 1980). In this goal, the destination aims to take its first steps in the global tourism industry as it starts to cater to international visitors and tourists. To achieve this goal, the destination will have to overcome its prolonged problematic image and create some positive news to promote consumption. It should be noted that this goal is different from “regular places” that are just merely off the tourist map, as they have the opportunity to create a fresh image, without the burden of prolonged stereotypes.
 2. *Continuation of consumption during an ongoing crisis* – The second marketing goal for developing destinations is the continuation of consumption during an ongoing crisis. This goal is aimed at places that are already consumed as tourist destinations but, in the background, there are issues that constantly maintain the place’s problematic image. This goal might be appropriate for tourist destinations that suffer from long-standing issues of political instability, terror attacks, crime against tourists or other negative occurrences. For such destinations, it is important to sustain the current flow of tourists, maintain their market position and minimize the damage to their image. In the context of the current goal, it should be pointed out that continuation of consumption during an ongoing crisis is not always advised and, in some cases, should be strongly discouraged. If the issues causing the problematic image are acute and tourists might get hurt, maintaining tourism could be an irresponsible act that will risk the

- safety of tourists and visitors. If tourists get hurt, this will also result in a very negative media coverage that will exacerbate the image crisis and erode the destination's image for years to come (Beirman, 2006).
3. *Continuation of consumption after the crisis is over* – The third marketing goal for developing destinations is the continuation of consumption after the crisis is over. In this case, the smoke has cleared, the sun is shining again and it is now time to bring tourists back and boost inbound tourism numbers. Such destinations may be places that used to have some tourism in the past, but this has stopped as a result of political instability, a natural disaster, an epidemic or a violent conflict. As these tragic events ended, destinations following this goal now aspire to convince their audience that the place's reality is now different and better than it used to be. In other words, it is time to put the past behind and focus on the present. Media messages following this goal tend to correct misperceptions, show that businesses are operational, downplay the scale of a disaster or distance the destination from the affected area (Mair et al., 2014). The challenge in such cases is that the image crisis tends to last much longer than the physical crisis, and it could last many months before the new reality is recognized by the international media and key audiences (Glaesser, 2006). As a result, a major objective in this stage is to find media strategies that will communicate the change quickly and effectively, and will return the destination to the global tourism map.
 4. *Changing consumption characteristics* – The fourth destination marketing goal for developing destinations is changing consumption characteristics. In this case, destinations are either consumed by one specific audience segment or consumed for one specific tourism product. For example, this could relate to a former French colony that is frequently visited by French tourists, or a country that is mainly consumed for sea and sun tourism. In both cases, these destinations would like to expand the way in which they are consumed, opening up to new source markets and offering a variety of tourism products. Following these goals, such destinations would have to expand their image, communicate their diversity and identify new market segments. Among other reasons, this marketing goal is common among developing destinations because places in the developing world are more likely to project a flat and one-sided image (Kunczik, 1997). As a result, such places need to act proactively in order to create a rich and positive image that will attract a variety of audiences for a variety of purposes.
 5. *Maintaining and enhancing consumption* – The fifth and final destination marketing goal for developing destinations is maintaining and

enhancing consumption. This goal represents a positive state in which the place is already being consumed, and the influx of tourists and visitors that should be cultivated. While this particular goal is adopted only by some developing destinations, it is more common among developed destinations – places that are less likely to suffer from stereotypes and image crises. This goal is also referred to as “regular marketing” – the conventional marketing process that is not aimed at overcoming image challenges but is focused on sales growth, enhanced profitability, a better reputation and an increased share of the market (Kotler et al., 2014). As can be seen from the above goals, tourism marketing is not a “one-size-fits-all” process but rather a multi-faceted process in which different places take different goals and choose different routes to implement them.

Media strategies for marketing places in crisis

Following the stage of goal setting, the multi-step model for altering place’s image focuses on choosing a media strategy for marketing places in crisis. Delivering a media strategy is a communication process that can be divided into three basic components: the source of the message, the message itself and the target audience. Similarly, media strategies for marketing places in crisis can be divided into three groups: the strategies to focus on the source of the message; the strategies to focus on the message itself; and the strategies to focus on the target audience. The following section will introduce these three groups, and the main strategies that compose each group.

Media strategies to focus on the source of the message

As noted in earlier chapters, the mass media in general and the news media in particular are leading factors in shaping a destination’s image. Trying to alter their image, destinations can concentrate their efforts on the source of the message – mainly the media. This can be done in two ways: trying to influence the source of the unflattering message, focusing on journalists and editors in the news media, or trying to replace the global news media with an alternative source. Following the first manner – trying to affect the source of the message – there are a few media strategies available:

Media cooperation and media relations – One fundamental way to affect media coverage is by working together with the media, creating rapport and mutual understanding (Lahav et al., 2013). Taking this

path, destinations allocate resources for familiarization trips, press tours, press club meetings and other initiatives aimed to generate and foster media relations. In return, journalists, editors and bloggers are expected to provide better media coverage and enhanced media access for the destinations and their stakeholders.

Blocking media access – This media strategy follows the simple notion that what journalists don't see they cannot cover. In this approach, journalists are kept away from crisis areas and from seeing negative occurrences that might damage the destination's image. As this strategy limits the freedom of the press and the freedom of movement, it is more likely to be used by countries with a non-democratic regime and may evoke criticism.

Applying physical/economic threats – While the media strategy of media cooperation is based on a positive attitude, the strategy of physical/economic threats is based on a completely opposite approach. In this view, the media is considered to be an enemy and is treated with force so that journalists and editors are threatened with physical or economic consequences if they cover the place in a negative manner.

Following the second type of source strategies – trying to replace the source of the message – destinations can use the Internet as a substitute to the news media:

Using the Internet as an alternative source – One highly available source when trying to replace mass media messages is the Internet. The online world offers countless platforms that allow destinations to present themselves the way they want and communicate directly with the target audience, without the mediation of the traditional media (Wynee et al., 2002; Ketter and Avraham, 2012). Using online platforms such as a website, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and blogs, destinations can now create and deliver their own messages and cultivate their image in a relatively independent manner.

Media strategies to focus on the message itself

The second group of media strategies is composed of those that focus on the message itself. Strategies in this group try to alter the place's image by disregarding the image problems, acknowledging the negative image or taking measures to handle the destination's image. This is the biggest group of media strategies, and those in this group move along a continuum from moderate to extreme coping measures.

Ignoring the crisis – The easiest solution when facing a negative image is to ignore it, pretending as though nothing bad has happened. In this view, destinations choose to ignore the damage to their image after negative events as if there never was a crisis, in the hope that new events and the passing of time will erase the crisis from the memory of tourists, visitors or potential investors.

Acknowledging the negative image – At certain times, admitting the negative image directly is the most effective – even though not the most convenient – course of action. This strategy may prove useful during a crisis, or immediately after it has passed, to maintain or regain a trustworthy image. In this case, a marketing campaign will be delivered together with the message that the place is now different and better than it had been.

Limiting the crisis – An additional way to limit the crisis can be found in the strategy of acknowledging the negative image. Following this strategy, destinations acknowledge the existence of a crisis, yet limit it to a certain geographical region, trying to downplay the role of the negative events. This strategy is often taken by destinations that suffer from an image crisis they cannot ignore, and therefore try to limit it.

Reducing the scale of the crisis – Taking a similar approach to the “limiting the crisis” strategy, places can downplay the crisis by reducing its scale. In this media strategy, destinations acknowledge the existence of a problem but try to portray it as a minor issue, one of relatively little importance.

Tackling the crisis – Very often, the best way to restore a positive image is to change the reality that caused the problematic image. This is a direct approach taking the notion that images are based on reality and, by improving reality, destinations will improve their image. If, for example, a specific place is perceived as violent and unsafe, the strategy of “tackling the crisis” advises the place to combat its crime and violence in order to create an improved reality that will result in a more attractive public image.

Hosting spotlight events – The strategy of hosting spotlight events is simple and straightforward: destinations host major events to attract visitors, gain positive attention from the media and improve their image. Such events may include sports events, cultural “happenings” and festivals, economic or political summit meetings, and any other occurrence that will attract the media and the public.

Using films, TV series and books – In the past few decades, destination marketers have found that films, television series and books can

serve as powerful tourism marketing tools (Hudson and Ritchie, 2006). Hence, popular culture products can raise awareness of the destination, enhance its image, associate it with positive emotions and inspire potential tourists to book a visit. Taking this strategy, destinations will try to promote the production of popular culture products that take place at the destination and showcase its many virtues to the world.

Association to well-known brands and celebrities – Using celebrities and well-known brands is a familiar marketing strategy; it is based on the brands and the celebrities' ability to attract the audience's attention, engage customers and use their role as opinion leaders (Friedman, 2002). An additional reason to use celebrities is that people seek to imitate their favorite stars, and visiting the destination that the famous people visit is a great way to get one step closer to their role model. Destinations that follow the "engaging celebrities" strategy will present themselves through relevant famous personalities and will promote cooperation with them in order to raise their profile.

Delivering a counter-message – Many destinations that suffer from a negative image naturally prefer an image quite different from their current one. In this manner, destinations perceived as dangerous would like to be seen as safe, places perceived as boring would like to be considered interesting, and so on. With this straightforward reasoning, the strategy of delivering counter-messages aims to battle places' negative perceptions by simply contradicting them.

Spinning liabilities into assets – A common phrase suggests, "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade". Adopting a similar view, the strategy of spinning liabilities into assets takes the key point of a previous strategy – acknowledging the negative image – one step farther, by recognizing a negative factor responsible for the image and spinning it into a positive trait. This strategy is based on the positive perception that in every bad thing there is also something good that can be used to promote tourism.

Ridicule the stereotype – At times, stereotypes of a destination can be exaggerated, prejudiced or simply out of proportion. To combat such perceptions, the media strategy of "ridiculing the stereotype" suggests that destinations acknowledge their negative stereotype by taking it to the extreme and then dispel it by showing how absurd it actually is.

Branding contrary to the stereotype – The strategy of "branding contrary to the stereotype" takes the previous strategy of "delivering a counter-message" one step farther by adopting an all-embracing

approach. Following this attitude, destinations choose and develop a brand that is the opposite of their problematic stereotype, trying to get far from it as possible. This strategy is also related to the strategy of “tackling the crisis” as destinations that follow this strategy are required to create an in-depth change in the place’s reality and completely abandon their problematic past.

Geographical association/disassociation – Geographical location is one of the destination’s most important characteristics. In addition to physical features such as climate, landscape and proximity to other places, geographic location is linked to a range of characteristics such as culture, language, history and heritage. For some places, their problematic image is caused not by the place’s characteristics but by their association with certain geographic areas that carry a negative image (Beirman, 2002; Mansfeld and Pizam, 2006). In that case, a good strategy might be to disassociate the place from the problematic region or to associate it with nearby regions that enjoy a more positive image.

Multi-facets and softening the “hard” image – When a destination is involved in prolonged violent conflict, for example, it acquires an undesirable, hard image that has to be softened. According to this strategy, the destination has to be given a human touch by associating itself with events, activities and visuals perceived as opposite to soldiers, terror victims, tanks and guns (Gilboa, 2006). In many cases, countries do acknowledge their negative facets and try to “soften” the effect by adding positive elements to their image.

Media strategies to focus on the target audience

The third and last group of media strategies presented in this book are those that focus on the target audience. For these strategies, the focus includes the characteristics, emotions and views of their selected audience, and the way in which these elements can be implemented to promote tourism. This last group includes three main strategies: feelings of similarity to the target audience, employing emotions of patriotism and personal heritage among the audience, and changing the target audience.

Similarity to the target audience – This strategy is based on the destination’s attempts to show the proximity and similarity that exists between it and specific target audience. When a campaign message tries to persuade us that, “We are similar, we have the same values, perceptions and beliefs”, it is actually saying: “There is no reason for you not to identify with us, love us and change your negative image of us, because we are alike”. Marketers who use this

strategy believe that once the audience recognizes this similarity, feelings of affection, sympathy and understanding will develop and stimulate the desire to visit that destination.

Patriotism and personal/national heritage – One particular link between the destination and the target audience includes feelings of patriotism and personal heritage. In the case of patriotic feelings, the tourism product becomes an abstract symbol of common beliefs, perceptions and social values and, by traveling to the destination, the tourists express their support for those values (Vatikay, 2000). In the case of personal heritage, the destination promotes personal history, legacy and traditions; and tourists who visit the destination can use their visit to identify with their heritage. In both cases, specific values of the target audience are emphasized in order to create an emotional link between the place and the tourist, and such links may stimulate travel behavior.

Changing the target audience – The image of a destination is not an objective entity but evolves subjectively through the eyes of different target audiences. As a result, while a destination might have a problematic image among some people, other audiences will view it in a more favorable light. Exploiting these differences of opinion, some places have learned that they can easily promote tourists' motivations by changing the target audience and, instead, focus on audiences that are more willing to visit the destination.

Chapter summary

The chapter covered a few key issues in regard to tourism marketing for destinations with negative images. It started with the theories of image restoration, aiming to repair a damaged image. As the image restoration discourse is less practical for destinations, the chapter continued by examining the notions of crisis management and communication management. The practice of crisis communication is highly appropriate for developing destinations, yet it is mainly suitable for a crisis event. To provide an image recovery solution for destinations with prolonged negative images, the chapter then focused on the multi-step model for altering a place image. The model offers a comprehensive process that accompanies destinations as they alter their image. The last part of the chapter concentrated on the three groups of media strategies for altering a place's image: media strategies to focus on the source of the message; strategies to focus on the message itself; and strategies to focus on the target audience. Using these techniques, places can effectively battle negative stereotypes, improve their image and successfully attract tourists and visitors.

5

Marketing Middle East Destinations

The Middle East occupies a place of honor in the world because of its long history, and the fact that various superpowers have long shown a range of political, geopolitical and cultural interests in the region over the years (Al Mahadin and Burns, 2006). The Middle East is home to three major religions, has always been relevant in world affairs and offers unique landscapes and sites that are different from those existing in the global tourism supply system (Freire, 2012). Developing tourism in the Middle East can make a great contribution to the region's economy, help build a bridge to peace mediation, and create cooperation between countries that have been engaged in prolonged political conflict (Al-Hamarneh and Steiner, 2004; Zamani-Farahani and Henderson, 2010).

Crises such as terror attacks, wars, internal political conflicts and riots that attract the international media's attention are nothing new for Middle Eastern countries, and the constant media coverage of such crises has dramatically affected the image of the countries in the region not only during the "Arab Spring" but also during peaceful times. Tourism to Middle Eastern countries is especially sensitive to crisis. Owing to a previous image of the Arab countries as "dangerous," "violent," "primitive," and harboring "cowardly terrorists or fundamentalists" (Al Mahadin and Burns, 2006), each terrorist incident reminded Westerners of the existing "danger" in the region, a fact that compounded the damage to the local tourism industries. In addition, Mansfeld (1994) claimed that there was a correlation between the numbers of tourists to Middle Eastern countries and their level of involvement in security situations (Wahab, 1996). In other words, when there is political tension, riots, terror attacks or violent conflict the tourists do not come.

It is for this reason that many Middle Eastern destinations' representatives have devoted considerable efforts over the years to countering the

negative stereotype of being an unsafe place (Beirman, 2000); they ran campaigns, tried to find new audiences and developed media relations with the international media. Nevertheless, many decision-makers and marketers in the area still stand by helplessly, frustrated by the knowledge that their country's negative image and reputation are, in most cases, not based on well-grounded facts. Given that stereotypes are not easily changed or dismissed, the challenge facing these decision-makers is great (Avraham and Ketter, 2008b).

There are four main concepts of tourism development in the Arab world and the Middle East:

1. European/North American-oriented leisure tourism.
2. Arab-oriented leisure tourism, which expanded after 9/11 as a spontaneous reaction to anti-Muslim attitudes in the global media and the growing negative images and stereotypes of Islam and Muslims in non-Muslim societies.
3. Multi-ethnic-oriented mixed-character tourism.
4. Multi-ethnic-oriented cultural and pilgrim tourism (Al-Hamarneh and Steiner, 2004).

The various Middle Eastern countries relate differently to tourism. There are countries that do not prioritize the development of tourism, countries that regard tourism as a tool for economic development, and countries that believe in the power of tourism to expand their image (beyond oil, e.g., as in the case of **Saudi Arabia**; *eTN*, 6 April 2010). On the other hand, several Muslim governments have shown little enthusiasm for hosting non-Muslim foreign tourists. The result of this attitude is that investment in tourism and its marketing have been restricted in their countries, frustrating development and destination awareness (Zamani-Farahani and Henderson, 2010). Tourism statistics, nevertheless, show that the number of tourists to the Middle East is quite high. In 2010, the number of visitors to the Middle East increased by 14 percent, more than any other area in the world. For example, 7 million tourists visited **Tunisia**, and 12 million traveled to **Egypt** (*eTN*, 28 March 2011; *eTN*, 1 August 2011). However, after the "Arab Spring" of 2011, the number of arrivals dropped dramatically (*eTN*, 29 September 2011; UNWTO, 2014b).

The Middle East is identified with Islam, a religion that has been associated in the international media with oppression, terrorism and anti-Western sentiment (Henderson, 2003). Terrorism and political instability

added to the fear, particularly among Western tourists regarding visiting Muslim countries (Hashim et al., 2007). The situation was complicated further by the fact that in several Middle Eastern countries, terrorist organizations deliberately attacked Western tourists in order to reduce the arrival of “infidels” and also to destabilize the local government and economy (Mansfeld, 1996; Wahab, 1996; Al-Hamarneh and Steiner, 2004).

One of the recent key events in the Middle East that has had a tremendous effect on the area’s image was the Arab Spring. The uprisings had a significant impact on economic activity in the area and one of the most immediate effects was a sharp decline in tourism to most of the countries in the Middle East (Masetti et al., 2013). The Arab Spring uprisings began in **Tunisia** in December 2010, and sparked a wave of political upheaval throughout North Africa and the Middle East. In many of the countries the protesters’ demands were for greater inclusion in economic and political life, better governance and strengthened civil rights and liberties. In **Tunisia, Libya** and **Yemen** leaders were ousted; in **Syria** a civil war started; in **Morocco, Algeria, Lebanon** and **Jordan** the government adopted reforms and a variety of measures as a result of the protests; and in the Persian Gulf region major protests occurred in **Kuwait** and **Bahrain** (Al-Hamarneh, 2013; Masetti et al., 2013).

The Arab tourism sector recorded a \$15 billion loss as a result of the Arab Spring and the loss of some 10 million tourists, according to the Arab Tourism Organization (*eTN*, 30 May 2013). In 2013 the number of tourists slowly began to increase again, at least for some of the countries – primarily those in the Gulf and in the southern Mediterranean (UNWTO, 2014b) – but full recovery is still a challenge. The effect on the countries in the area was diverse. In Syria, Yemen, Iraq and Libya tourism effectively ceased to exist, while some of these countries stopped functioning as a state; in some countries, such as Egypt and Tunisia, the number of tourists fell, while in others, such as Dubai, the number actually increased (Al-Hamarneh, 2013). Since the effect of the events on the local tourism industry varied from country to country, different steps were taken by the marketers to recover the economy. Some countries changed their target audience, ran recovery campaigns, reduced taxes and promoted new types of tourism (Al-Hamarneh, 2013). The Arab Spring uprisings are still ongoing in some countries, and marketers face new challenges to keep the tourism flowing. Nevertheless, the Middle East has been emerging for a number of years as one of the fastest growing regions in the world for tourism, mainly due to a new political commitment toward tourism adopted by a number of key countries, and the

understanding of the notion that tourism is a key to the development of the area (Cities and Countries Branding, 20 May 2013).

The countries in the Middle East are quite different from each other. At first glance there is a need to ask what Egypt, Morocco and Yemen have in common. And yet, there is a tendency to relate to them in a uniform way because of common stereotypes and generalizations. This perception can be the result of either biased media presentation or geographical ignorance (Al Mahadin and Burns, 2006; Taylor, 2006; Steiner, 2007). Several studies that analyzed how Middle Eastern countries try to promote themselves found that they focus on four categories: arts and architecture, festivals, conduct and dress code (see list at: Scott and Jafari, 2010).

Toward the end of 2014, while some of the Middle Eastern countries were struggling with their image restoration following the Arab Spring, whose consequences are still evident on the tourists' figures, the international media began to broadcast reports on atrocities performed by the ISIS organization in northern Iraq and Syria. Reports and videos appeared repeatedly in the global media and social media showing the abuse and murder of minorities living in the area, including executions of Westerners and locals. These sights did not help increase the perception of security and safety in the Middle East for potential tourists.

Using the "multi-step model for altering place image," the analysis reveals that Middle Eastern marketers and officials used three kinds of strategies in order to restore their respective countries' positive image: source, audience and message.

Source strategies

Aware of the importance of the implications of media coverage, Middle Eastern decisions-makers and marketers attempted to influence journalists or prevent negative coverage, and sought alternatives to bypass the traditional foreign media – that perceived by many officials, in many cases, as biased – in order to reach various target audiences abroad.

Media cooperation and media relations

Most Middle Eastern countries are not democratic; they lack a free press and freedom of expression. Nevertheless, after we analyzed the news reports and the national tourism websites, it appears that most of the countries in the area have cooperated with the free foreign media by conducting press conferences, sending out press releases, responding to journalists during a crisis and informing them about upcoming events;

in addition, officials have been readily available for interviews and statements, since they understand that this attitude and cooperation with the media (despite their criticism of its routines and patterns of coverage) have the potential to improve the image of their country. The cooperation with the media also includes trips for journalists organized by a country's tourism board during peaceful times (Avraham, 2009) and also after a crisis. **Egypt**, for example, organized press trips to its main cultural-historical tourism attractions after the Jasmine Revolution crisis in 2011 (*eTN*, 9 June 2011) and ran an international public relations campaign "designed to convey what is really happening on the ground as opposed to overblown accounts provided by some media outlets" (*eTN*, 11 February 2014). **Jordan** also invited selected travel writers and journalists from the US and Canada to participate in a press trip during the Arab Spring events in the Middle East (*eTN*, 7 April 2011).

The same strategy was also adopted by the **Pakistan** Tourism Development Corporation, which arranges media familiarization trips to various cities in the country (*eTN*, 13 September 2012) with the hope of reviving positive coverage and removing the "lack of safety" perception. In addition, since 2001, **Lebanon's** official tourism office in Paris has hosted trips to the country for top French publications in order "to broaden and enrich the media's perspective on the country". According to the head of the tourism office, these trips usually "generate positive publicity, and when leading magazines publish interesting articles about Lebanon, smaller publications normally follow suit with the same theme and tone" (*eTN*, 16 November 2008).

Blocking media access

Taking an alternative route to the one of positive cooperation, some Middle Eastern countries have also chosen at times to block all media access to events that might have a negative effect on their place's image. Recent years have seen several examples of **Palestinian** officials trying to prevent or disrupt media coverage in various ways. For example, on 11 September 2001, Palestinian security officers threatened the life of an AP television cameraman in Nablus after he shot a video of locals celebrating the attacks against the US. Aware of the threat and wishing to minimize the danger to their local crew, AP chose not to broadcast the video. A few days later, the Palestinian police detained several foreign journalists covering a series of pro-Bin Laden demonstrations in Gaza. The police confiscated videotapes, films and camera equipment to prevent media coverage of the events (McNally, 2002). This strategy has been used throughout the years not only toward the media but also

toward any source that spreads negative messages regarding a country, including human rights organizations, peace activists, UN or the International Court. For example, **Egypt** forbade senior officials from the organization “Human Rights Watch” from entering the country, after claims made by this organization were filed against the Egyptian president Assisi for committing crimes against humanity when he was the head of the army (*Ha'aretz*, 13 August 2014).

Applying physical/economical threat

In addition to blocking media access, some Middle Eastern countries have exerted pressure on certain media outlets and journalists to adjust what they perceive to be negative coverage of their country, usually in the international media. **Israel** has used this method by means of complaints issued by the Foreign Ministry or the Israeli army, mainly to American media owners against purportedly biased coverage and distortion of the events covered (Avraham, 2009). Other countries' officials complain regularly about the distorted coverage of their country in the Western media. For example, the **Egyptian** tourism minister at a meeting with Italian tour operators pointed out the negative image of his country portrayed by the Italian media during the events in Tahrir Square (*eTN*, 8 February 2013); the **Tunisian** finance minister voiced similar complaints regarding the French media, for sometimes covering his country “as if it's Afghanistan” (*eTN*, 18 September 2013).

Other countries employed a more extreme version of this strategy; for example, an Al-Jazeera TV network reporter was arrested by the **Egyptian** police in January 2007 for writing and filming a TV news item on human rights violation in the country (*BBC News*, 14 January 2007). The Egyptian government has also tried to prevent damage to their state's image by preventing media coverage. In one case, the Egyptian government sued CNN for \$500 million, claiming that the release of a news item on female circumcision damaged the country's image (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a). Another tactic, more forceful than a complaint, is to threaten journalists with economic sanctions or physical harm. After the Times called the Prime Minister of **Turkey**, Erdoğan, a “dictator”, he promised to sue the paper (Leon, 2013). Also, during the conflict in the summer of 2014 between Hamas, which controls **Gaza**, and **Israel**, the international Foreign Press Association published a statement accusing Hamas of harassing and threatening foreign reporters. According to the report, Hamas had employed “blatant, incessant, forceful and unorthodox methods” against the journalists in order to prevent them from covering the launching of Hamas missiles from populated

areas or showing the use of the local population as a human shield (*The Algemeiner*, 11 August 2014).

Beyond the threat of economic sanctions, there were attempts to physically harm journalists. The Al-Jazeera network was accused of inciting events in nearly all the countries in which political tensions rose. For example, responding to charges by the Palestinian Authority chairman that the channel was trying to harm his position, his supporters attacked the channel's offices in **Ramallah** (*NYT*, 30 January 2011). Use of violence and threats against this channel's journalists also occurred in **Lebanon** and **Egypt**, where its offices were closed at the start of the protests against Mubarak (*Ha'aretz*, 17 and 27 February 2011). A year and half later the Egyptian military government adopted the same tactic by closing "unsympathetic" media outlets such as Al-Jazeera, Mubashir Misr and Islamist channels (*eTN*, 3 September 2013) claiming that they "damage national security" and "promote propaganda against Egypt in foreign countries" (*Ha'aretz*, 4 September 2013).

Using the Internet as an alternative source

The main idea of the fourth type of source strategies is the quest for an online alternative to the traditional media (Avraham, 2009, 2013). Using this strategy, decision-makers aim to bypass the foreign news media in order to reach their target audience directly. Frustration with the traditional media's coverage patterns led many Middle Eastern destination marketers to find online distribution channels to communicate directly with their selected audience. The Internet is known to offer many ways to do this, providing countries with the opportunity to present themselves as they wish and to distribute news about the country's culture, arts, fashion, music and cuisine (Gilboa, 2006). The **Iraqi** government, for example, opened a channel on YouTube in order to "fight the media's lies" (*Ha'aretz*, 29 November 2009). The **Egyptian** tourism minister appeared in a YouTube video, asking foreign travel agencies to push their governments to lift their negative travel advisories for his country (*eTN*, 1 September 2013). In addition, several **Jordanian** government entities signed a \$10 million agreement with Google Services to advertise and promote Jordan as a destination (*eTN*, 14 December 2010); in December 2011, Jordan sponsored a social media campaign that was run by travel bloggers who have visited Jordan (*eTN*, 11 December 2011). **Tunisia's** national tourism board launched official Facebook and Twitter pages to showcase its various tourism sites and to allow visitors to share their videos and pictures of the North African country (*eTN*, 11 November 2011). **Egypt** also used YouTube

to disseminate information necessary for recovery from the tourism crisis (*eTN*, 1 September 2013).

This strategy was also used by Bashar Al-Assad, the **Syrian** president, who established a YouTube channel and opened Twitter and Instagram accounts to show the “other faces” of Syria. By these means Assad seeks to project the image of a loved and admired leader, while no mention is made to the civil war or his acts against his own people (*Ha'aretz*, 3 September 2013). Another tool used in this strategy operates on the principle of presenting reality without the mediation of the traditional media, including the use of webcams. These cameras were set up at familiar tourist sites and broadcast over the Internet to anyone interested. **Egypt** and **Jordan** have placed these cameras at their main tourism spots in order to demonstrate to Western tourists that these sites are still safe and full of activity (*eTN*, 6 and 11 February 2013).

Message strategies

The second group of media strategies, rather than looking at the source (usually the international media, as mentioned), focuses on the message itself. While message strategies vary in emphasis, they share a common denominator in their direct handling of a destination's negative image.

Ignoring the crisis and conveying the message of “business as usual”

The “ignoring the crisis” strategy is an easy solution, whereby place marketers pretend that no crisis had occurred nor was any damage caused. For example, **Egypt** and **Turkey** displayed total disregard for the spate of terrorist attacks in several of their cities during the 2000s (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a). In tourism advertisements launched after those crises and on the tourism ministry's website, these countries made no mention of the terror attacks in any way. It is interesting to see that Egypt also used the “total disregard” strategy as policy at the beginning of the Jasmine Revolution (*eTN*, 7 February 2011).

There were also attempts to ignore the crisis by marketers of specific areas, not just on the national level. In Egypt and Tunisia, for example, marketers continued to promote resort areas, during the Arab Spring, like **Sharm el-Sheikh** and **Djerba** even though the violence was continuing in other places (Al-Hamarneh, 2013). The advertisements for these destinations in tourism magazines and on these countries' websites naturally did not make any mention of the problematic events happening elsewhere. The ads pictured golden beaches, sun and water sports and in

the case of Egypt, the Egyptian Tourism Minister repeatedly said that the coastal area in Sinai was safe for tourists and there was no reason not to visit (*eTN*, 1 September 2013). This was evident in a campaign that ran in the international tourism magazines (such as *Traveler* and *Travel and Leisure*) – under the texts “We’re real, We’re magical, We’re Egypt” and “We’re moments, We’re timeless, We’re Egypt”.

Another possible response to a situation in which a crisis cannot be ignored, but marketers seek to downplay, is the “business as usual” technique; acting as if nothing untoward has happened, countries hope that the crisis will soon be forgotten and the flow of tourists will continue unimpeded. For example, after the Arab Spring events began in **Egypt**, the tourism minister declared at a press conference: “For the return to normality, it requires effort for the world to know that everything is back to normal in the country and rest assured of the maximum security” (*eTN*, 12 June 2011). Also, after an attack on the Egyptian-Gaza border by unknown assailants that left 16 Egyptian border guards dead, Egypt’s Minister of Tourism denied any negative impact on tourism following this event, and indeed emphasized that it was “business as usual” (*eTN*, 7 August 2012). Similarly, the minister of tourism from **Algeria** claimed that a terrorist attack in an Algerian gas field had “very limited impact on tourism” to his country (*eTN*, 28 September 2013).

Limiting or reducing the scale of the crisis

Another strategy that Middle Eastern officials used during crises is “limiting the crisis.” According to this strategy, the marketers do not ignore the crisis but try to convey the feeling that it is limited to certain areas and therefore presents no problem to visiting other areas of the country. For example, the ministerial adviser to **Iraq’s** ministry of tourism and antiquities, in trying to encourage religious tourism to his country, said: “these cities [Najaf, Kirbala, Baghdad and Samara] are safe, and we can say that the security situation is in very good shape” (*eTN*, 30 December 2009). Using this terminology, the adviser hinted that only several cities were unsafe for visitors and that the crisis was geographically limited.

Another example also came from **Egypt’s** local official, the governor of Luxor (670 km south of Cairo) who claimed during the Arab Spring that his city “is stable and secure but suffers . . . problems due to the recurrent turmoil in Cairo and the Suez Canal cities” (*eTN*, 3 March 2013). Using this terminology, the governor hinted that only a few cities were unsafe for visitors and the crisis was far removed from his city. The “limiting the crisis” strategy was used also by the Egyptian tourism minister

when he told CNN that the unrest was only in “one square kilometer in downtown Cairo,” and this should not put people off the entire country (*eTN*, 6 February 2013). On a different occasion, the Egyptian tourism minister said similar things: “We wanted to let you see for yourself that outside the boundaries of **Cairo City**, all is peaceful in Egypt . . . The increasingly rare episodes of demonstrations in the capital are due to problems that do not involve foreign and domestic tourism in the rest of the country” (*eTN*, 12 September 2013). Another example from Egypt came when the tourism minister claimed that: “In spite of the fact that at the moment there is a curfew in Egypt in many places, it does not include the Red Sea area, Sharm el-Sheikh or the southern Sinai area” (*eTN*, 1 September 2013).

Places that cannot ignore nor limit the crisis try to portray it as insignificant, irrelevant or marginal. This strategy of limiting the crisis is often implemented when the media demand explanations or reactions from decision-makers to a crisis event. For example, after a terror attack on **Djerbe** in Tunisia in April 2002, an official chided journalists: “There is no terrorism in Tunisia! Why do you always focus on that?” He added that only one synagogue had been attacked and that “it is not the end of the world” (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a, p. 137). A similar case occurred after a suicide bomb attack in **Cairo** in 2005. Egyptian high officials tried to convince reporters that it had been just “a small bomb,” that most of those injured had been “lightly wounded,” and that the bomb had been thrown from a motor scooter, not by a suicide bomber (*NYT*, 8 April 2005). Another example for the use of this strategy also comes from **Egypt**. After an event where hundreds of Muslims torched and looted Coptic businesses and homes in the town of Dahshur, Giza, Egypt’s president Morsi claimed that “the incidents are not sectarian, but they are normal quarrels,” adding that Muslims and Christians were brothers in one nation (*eTN*, 5 August 2013). In another event, the killing of a French tourist in the Red Sea resort city of **Sharm El-Sheikh** was described by Egypt’s Minister of Tourism as a “random act” and not directed against foreigners (*eTN*, 29 January 2012).

This strategy was also adopted by the **Syrian** regime. After an event where the government used tanks to stop peaceful demonstrations, a government spokesperson claimed: “These are not demonstrations and these were not even protesters. They were armed gang members, who rioted and terrorized residents” (*Ha’aretz*, 17 June 2011). The initiative to downgrade the negative events and to prevent the potential damage for the country’s image was also used by **Saudi Arabia**; when three French tourists were killed after parking on the roadside, the Interior Ministry

spokesperson said that this is a criminal act and that it's too early to determine what the shooters' motives were (*Ha'aretz*, 27 February 2007). Another way to reduce the scale of the crisis is to claim that it can happen anywhere. **Yemen's** tourism minister took this approach when he said after a terror attack in 2008: "What happened in Yemen can happen anywhere in the world" (*eTN*, 25 February 2008).

Acknowledging the negative image and "the new era" technique

Sometimes acknowledging the negative image directly is the most effective – even if not the most convenient – course of action. This strategy may prove useful during a crisis, or immediately after it has passed, in order to maintain or regain a trustworthy image. One aspect of this media strategy is to directly admit the existence of a crisis and confront the destination's negative image. This was the case with **Oman**, when the director general of tourism promotion suggested "the delivery to intra-financial markets and media of an accurate, clear and effective message about Oman remaining as safe and welcoming to tourists as ever" (*eTN*, 9 July 2011). This spokesman understood the tendency of Western audiences to perceive countries in the Middle East as "dangerous" after any small risk-related event and suggested to combat it. A similar approach was adopted by the director of the **Jordanian** tourism board who said during a period of uncertainty: "Jordan has a long standing reputation as a very safe, secure and hospitable destination" (*eTN*, 27 March 2011); and the minister of tourism from **Algeria** claimed: "Algeria is among the few stable countries in the region and safe for tourism" (*eTN*, 28 September 2013). Here again the marketers knew how their destinations were perceived by Westerners so they sent an opposite message: "We are safe"; this strategy was used by many other countries' spokespersons during the Arab Spring including **Egypt** (*eTN*, 5 August 2012) and **Lebanon** (*eTN*, 13 April 2012).

The Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** was trying to contradict its image as an unsafe country for leisure and business tourists. Following a series of terror incidents that included a deadly attack on the Sri Lankan cricket team in the Pakistan city of Lahore and a suicide bombing at a police station in Islamabad, the Pakistan's Federal Minister of Commerce arrived on an official visit to London. During the visit, the Minister held a press conference and referred to the issue of terror in regard to inbound tourism to Pakistan: "Don't believe lurid newspaper headlines, Pakistan is a safe country for foreign investors. Yes, such [terror] attacks are a matter of concern, but we are confident we will handle terrorism in Pakistan"

(*eTN*, 26 March 2009). In this quote, the spokesperson used several strategies; he directly relates to the negative image of Pakistan and tries to shatter it by delivering a counter message – Pakistan is safe, although there is negative media coverage.

The strategy of “acknowledging the negative image” can be applied by means of several primary techniques. One used by many places is that of “new era” slogans, suggesting that the country has now changed from its problematic past to a promising present or future. For example, the chairman of the **Iraqi** tourism board said: “We invite all tourists . . . to come and see Iraq – the new Iraq. Not the Iraq that is shown in the media” (*eTN*, 16 November 2010). Another country that used this strategy is **Algeria**, when its tourism minister told the reporter: “I think this is an image [the conflict between government forces and Islamic militants] which is out of touch, because the black years are behind us . . . all that is left in the mind is a certain number of traces, which must absolutely be rubbed out” (*eTN*, 2 December 2009).

Another technique that marketers can use in order to apply the strategy of “acknowledging the negative image” includes the transformation of a country from a problematic past to a promising future. For example, **Egypt’s** Minister of Tourism said after a series of problematic events: “Egypt is in a transition period, you can expect these things. It happened to other countries . . . It seems like we’re a divided society but we’re going to get together” (*eTN*, 6 March 2013) and later promoted similar messages to the media: “The violence that you may have seen in your television screens, I assure you that level of violence is dwindling down very fast. The security and safety is now currently even better by the day, by the hour” (*eTN*, 1 September 2013) and “We are moving full steam ahead towards democracy. Riots in Cairo are in decline; we are a people who love peace” (*eTN*, 12 September 2013). The goal of these declarations was to soften the crisis events by emphasizing that such events were liable to occur during a transition period, there is an improvement in the security, the future will be much better and the uncertainty was not unique to Egypt. At the same time Egypt ran the campaign “the new Egypt” in New York’s Times Square.

Multiple facets and softening the “hard” image

The image perception of many Middle Eastern countries has been dominated by just one of the range of image-formation factors, namely politics (Dinnie, 2011). In many cases, Middle Eastern countries do acknowledge their negative facets but try to “soften” the effect by adding positive

elements to their image. **Turkey**, for example, employed this technique when it launched a tourist campaign aimed at the Israeli market in the early 2000s. The marketers stressed Turkey's many scenic landscapes, resorts and tourist attractions with the intention of countering the perception of Turkey as a Muslim country and to decrease the salience of this component in Turkey's image among the Jewish-Israeli target audience (Zimet, 2006).

One means of public diplomacy to influence the image of countries is to initiate exhibitions and cultural events, such as film festivals, music concerts, dance programs and local food fairs, carried out abroad. For Middle Eastern countries, which frequently suffer from security crises that lead to their perception as unsafe, this is a useful technique to instill a positive image in the consciousness of the potential target audience in the West. For example, the deputy director of the **Yemenite** tourism promotion council (TPC) said after several terror attacks against Western tourists: "the TPC is trying to do its best to change the wrong image of Yemen in the Western media eyes through holding tourist exhibitions abroad and attending various international events in Europe and Asia" (*eTN*, 4 May 2008). And indeed the TPC organized an event in London, entitled "Evening of Discovery," which featured entertainment along with a Q&A session for potential visitors, a photography exhibition, prizes for various contests and gifts offered to travelers passing by. Later the same month, Yemen's national dance academy performed in London's Paddington Station, where tourism information about Yemen was distributed (*eTN*, 14 October 2009).

During the Arab Spring the **Abu Dhabi** tourism authority initiated a multi-faceted campaign that included the takeover of New York City's Times Square, branding initiatives involved the Big Apple's iconic yellow taxis, and a verity of new attractive travel offers to the Arabian emirate. The aim was "to take the taste, sound, sight, touch and scents of Abu Dhabi to one of the centers of New York's action." Aptly themed "Travelers Welcome – A Taste of Abu Dhabi's Hospitality," the Abu Dhabi interactive pop-up took over Father Duffy Square at the north end of Times Square. It gave visitors a taste of various Abu Dhabi offerings, with a traditional *majlis* offering dates and coffee, henna artists, perfume mixologists and more. Captivating video footage depicting the emirate's future progress was screened, while those with a sense of adventure were given an opportunity to interact with a falcon and trainer. Also on site were Ayala dancers, performing traditional dances (*eTN*, 17 May 2012). Another country that used this strategy was Jordan, whose tourism board launched a **Jordanian** week in Italy, "Giordania Sveleta"

(Unveiled Jordan), that included photo exhibits, a street exhibition in Milan and Jordanian food tasting (*eTN*, 19 October 2009).

Saudi Arabia used the same strategy when marketers presented an archeological exhibition in the US, intended to introduce the ancient civilizations that played a part in the kingdom through the ages and to highlight its cultural dimension (*eTN*, 5 February 2012). Another example of a country trying to soften its image was **Pakistan**: its tourism authority participated in the UNWTO Conference, the ITB Berlin Tourism Exhibition, the World Islamic Tourism Mart in Malaysia, the SAARC Tour Operators Conclave in India and the SAARC Travel & Tourism Mart in Bangladesh (*eTN*, 13 September 2012).

Another technique under this strategy is to expand and diversify the tourism product offered. For example, the **Tunisian** National Tourism Board ran a campaign to highlight the richness of the Tunisian tourist product, especially its cultural inventory, and also to draw attention to the importance of health tourism and treatment with sea water. The notion was that Tunisia was not only a sea and sun destination but much more (*eTN*, 3 April 2013). **Lebanon** also started to promote medical tourism and sustainable tourism (*eTN*, 13 April 2012) and Jordan has begun to promote family tourism (*eTN*, 14 April 2011). Sometimes, however, the result of the willingness to show a multifaceted destination might cause a diminution of the place's local identity. Govers and Go (2009) discovered that **Dubai's** tourism websites failed to project that country's cultural identity and overemphasized experiential aspects, such as shopping and dining.

Hosting spotlight events

The importance of spotlight events for destination image is discussed by many authors (see list in Avraham, 2014b). Avraham and Ketter (2008a) claimed that "Spotlight events focus the media's attention on a particular location for a short, concentrated period, allowing the host place to promote certain chosen images that can be used to improve an unsafe image, create positive news, and shift international media attention from a negative to a positive portrayal of the place" (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a, p. 145). **Egypt**, for example, tried to shift international attention away from a series of terror attacks by hosting several special international events and promoting visits to its ancient archaeological sites (Wahab, 1996).

This strategy can also be implemented by organizing events that project the image of a safe place or of "business as usual." For example, every year **Bahrain** hosts a Formula One Grand Prix race. Internal

ethnic tensions – as part of the Arab Spring – led to demonstrations and riots in early 2011, which resulted in the cancellation of the race that year. In the following years, the Bahraini government insisted on the resumption of the event so as to convey the message that normality had returned to the small country and to catalyze the resurgence of the country's tourism sector. Bahrain also held a number of successful events, including an international air show and concerts featuring Julio Iglesias and Andrea Bocelli, that “allowed the marketers to showcase the security and stability in the kingdom” (*eTN*, 29 March 2012).

This strategy can be implemented, as well, by organizing events that project safety. For example, the head of the **Jordanian** Olympic Committee, which has been the driving force behind the country's hosting five world sporting events, said: “It is critical for the promotion of Jordan. . . . It gives us an opportunity to showcase Jordan as a safe and secure leisure destination. . . . We want to show that it's a very safe and secure environment for athletes and hopefully not what you see on the television about the Middle East. . . . It's not just a question of hosting events here but bringing world-class athletes here and world interest in Jordan . . . to show how rich it is in culture and history” (*eTN*, 29 March 2009). As can be seen in this case, it can be argued that some events are specially organized in order to fight a problematic image.

Another example is **Yemen**, which in 2010 hosted an international soccer tournament featuring teams from eight Gulf states. The tournament was an effort by Yemen's government to change the country's image as an insurgent battleground and a wellspring of global terrorism (*NYT*, 5 December 2010). Similarly, in order to bring back tourists, especially from Arab countries, the **Egyptian** ministry of tourism launched the “Fawanees Ramadan 2011” festival in August that year, under the slogan: “Egypt's spirit of Ramadan” (*eTN*, 31 July 2011). **Morocco**, for its part, initiated the “Gnawa Music Festival” in order to attract a Western audience (Gnawa Music Festival, 2012).

Beyond organizing single events, there are countries that decide to concentrate on their cultural aspect as their main marketing strategy. Such is the case in **Lebanon**, whose tourism office believes that culture highlights their positive and productive side, which is not dependent on the political situation and enables the office “to stay on the scene and stay at the forefront of positive news” (*eTN*, 16 November 2008).

Spinning liabilities into assets

This strategy suggests the spinning of a negative event or characteristic into a positive one (Ketter and Avraham, 2010; Avraham, 2014a).

This is not a new strategy for Middle East destinations (Avraham, 2013). “**Bahrain**: Small is Beautiful” is an example of Bahrain’s spin on being small in size into an asset (*eTN*, 11 November 2009), while **Yemen** launched the slogan “Land of Mystery and Adventure” to spin the insecurity and fear often associated with the country into an asset of adventure (*eTN*, 25 September 2009; 14 October 2009). In May 2011, during the Arab Spring in **Egypt**, the country transformed Tahrir Square into a tourism site, selling items with symbols of the revolution and plans to build a memorial obelisk, decorated with a list of martyrs and photos of protest (*eTN*, 16 February 2011). The campaign they launched used the theme: “Tahrir: The Square that Rocked the World” (*eTN*, 25 May 2011) and the idea was to turn a place that had been associated with mass demonstrations, violence and street fights into a symbol of freedom and change.

Tunisia likewise planned to run a campaign under the slogan “Live in Tunisia Freely,” intimating that the scene that dominated the country’s image in the global media led to positive results. Eventually, the slogan chosen was “Free to Live It All” (Tunisia Tourism Board, 2013). The campaign invited foreign tourists to visit post-revolution Tunisia. It also reassured them about the security situation in the country (*eTN*, 3 April 2013). Al-Hamarnah (2013) claimed that **Egypt** and **Tunisia** also developed two kinds of tourism campaigns that can similarly be considered “turning negative to positive,” such as solidarity and adventure tourism. Furthermore, **Amman**, **Cairo** and **Doha** hosted many conferences and meetings dealing with the Arab Spring events and their implications.

Another attempt to turn negative into positive was that made by Hezbollah to attract “Jihad tourism” (*eTN*, 23 May 2010) to areas it controlled in south **Lebanon**; as part of the initiative, the “Museum for Resistance Tourism” was established in May 2010 on the hilltop where Hezbollah once launched its attacks against Israel. The museum is an interesting example of the use of a marketing technique to reverse the perception of an area from that of bloody battles, terror, refugees and human suffering to its association, at least for certain audiences, with “resistance” (*eTN*, 19 July 2010). Another example of the use of the strategy of spinning a negative event or characteristic into a positive one came from **Algeria**. During the tourism crisis caused by the Arab Spring, the minister of tourism claimed that his country is safe for tourism; he then went on to admit that they suffer from a lack of tourism infrastructure and it is still a challenge for his country to host large numbers of tourists: “Due to the lack of tourist facilities and also due to

low-quality service at hotels in Algeria, this country remains a niche market, but has the advantage of being untouched and original for visitors” (*eTN*, 28 September 2013). Here the minister attempted to turn the negatives of under-development, a lack of facilities and lack of tourists into a plus when trying to attract a specific audience that prefers less crowded and less developed destinations (Avraham, 2014a).

Ridicule the stereotypes

The idea behind the strategy of ridiculing the stereotype is to nullify the negative stereotype toward a place by showing how nonsensical it is. In this case, the marketers themselves present the stereotype and then knock it down. Concerned about **Israel’s** negative image as an unsafe place, an Israeli NGO handed out condoms to American students who were considering coming to Israel for a visit. The condom wrappers, imprinted with the blue and white colors of the Israeli flag, carried the catchphrase, “Israel – It’s still safe to come.” Similarly, in a campaign created by a private Israeli consultancy partnership, the same strategy was adopted as a visual in a commercial to parody Israel’s stereotype as unsafe. In the commercial, a young female tourist is walking along the seashore when she suddenly spots a handsome man sitting on the sand. As she continues walking, she also keeps looking back at him and then bumps into a pole. At that point, the voice over announces: “Indeed, Israel can be a dangerous place.” The message is clear: the stereotype is undeserved; potential hazards in Israel are no worse than colliding with a wooden post on one of the country’s sunny beaches (Avraham, 2009).

In June 2011, **Tunisia** started an interesting campaign to attract tourists, who had deserted the country after the January revolution. The campaign includes billboards in London’s famous red double-decker buses and Paris metro stations of women receiving a massage, along with the slogan: “They say that in Tunisia some people receive heavy-handed treatment” (*CNN News*, 16 June 2011). Other ads show a visual of ancient Roman ruins next to the slogan: “They say Tunisia is nothing but ruins” (*eTN*, 15 June 2011).

Lebanon’s ministry of tourism ran a campaign called “Lebanon – Safest place on earth” after the country’s conflict with Israel in 2006. At first, this slogan looks surprising because Lebanon was not exactly associated with safety at that time. The ad shows many locals hugging returning family members at the airport and the text reads: “There is no safer place than in the arms of your loved ones” (Lebanese Ministry of Tourism, 2007). Here, again, we see how Middle Eastern countries that

have suffered from an image crisis can ridicule the stereotype by taking it to extremes and in doing so, try to break it.

Geographic isolation from the Middle East

When an event involving violence occurs in one of the countries, there is a tendency to perceive the entire Middle East region as dangerous (Mansfeld, 1996; Sonmez, 1998). For example, the various Gulf wars and the Israeli–Arab wars affected all countries in the region, even those located away from the battle areas. Researchers call it the “generalization effect” or the “halo effect” (Taylor, 2006, p. 177). Several authors also refer to the “spillover effect” that characterizes Middle East tourism (Mansfeld, 1996; Beirman, 2000). This generalization can be the result of either biased media presentation or geographical ignorance (Taylor, 2006).

The violent conflicts in the Middle East are perceived, as mentioned, as “a general state of war,” thus hindering the ability to distinguish among the different places. As a result, several destinations in the Middle East employ the Geographic Isolation Strategy to differentiate themselves from this conflict zone. For example, to disconnect itself from the problematic image of Israel, marketers of Israel’s southernmost resort city of **Eilat** “re-located” it, not mentioning its location in Israel and presenting it as an independent city with the slogan: “Eilat on the Red Sea” (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a). The same strategy was used by **Taba**, a resort place on Egypt’s Red Sea and almost contiguous with Eilat. **Taba** was marketed as an independent entity located on the “Red Sea Riviera.” Similarly, following another outbreak of violent conflict between Israel and the Palestinians in October 2000, **Jordan** launched a campaign intended “to differentiate destination Jordan from destination Israel” (Beirman, 2002, p. 174).

In this last example, the Jordanian tourism board issued a statement to the media that denied any link between **Jordan** and the events in the Middle East by stressing the kingdom’s long and credible history of being “an oasis of stability” despite a “turbulent” region (*eTN*, 3 February 2011). This statement in effect denied any link between Middle East events regarding the Arab Spring and Jordan. Several weeks later, the head of the Jordanian Olympic Committee promised to attract more sporting events in order to better “showcase Jordan” and portray the country in a positive light “not associated with the Middle East” (*eTN*, 29 March 2009). Still another technique used by countries in the region was to define themselves as being located in the “Eastern Mediterranean” rather than in the Middle East. Beirman (2000) mentioned that this

technique was used by both **Israel** and **Egypt** and argued: “This has been part of a deliberate strategy to promote a more positive image . . . and to avoid the largely negative stigma attached to being defined as part of the Middle East” (Beirman, 2000, p. 149). This technique was also used by **Tunisia** while running a tourism campaign under the slogan: “The Jewel of the Mediterranean” in 2010. In this campaign we can see an effort of Tunisia to disassociate itself from the Middle East and to associate the country with the “Mediterranean”, which is considered to be less problematic and more stigma-free.

Turkey also adopted this strategy when the president, outraged by the Western media’s coverage of the demonstrations in Taksim Square in Istanbul, said: “You have to put what’s happening there (in Middle East), and what is happening in Turkey in separate ranks . . . Especially foreign media outlets should be very careful about this” (*eTN*, June 12, 2013). Here we see an attempt to separate the events in a particular area from the Arab Spring events.

Association to well-known brands and celebrities

Many destinations in the Middle East, as mentioned, suffer from an image problem based on stereotypes and generalizations built up over many years. Overcoming such an image can be difficult as people are not quick to put aside their preconceptions, however erroneous they may be. When this becomes the case, instead of working to change the negative image directly, destinations can try to associate themselves with familiar brands, celebrities or cultural symbols that are familiar to the target audiences (Avraham and Daugherty, 2012). Several countries in the Middle East have used this strategy. **Israel** employed it when the British *Conde Nast Traveller* carried a 40-page supplement dedicated solely to Israeli tourism in its April 2008 issue. In a media interview, one of the campaign stakeholders stated: “It also provides Israel with sense of credibility through brand association. Being linked with Conde Nast automatically gives Israel a sense of fashionability and exclusivity” (Kaufman, 2008, p. 21). Thus, a problematic brand becomes associated with a strong, familiar brand appreciated by the target audience. Marketers hope, thereby, that the problematic brand will win some of the halo and credibility surrounding the strong brand. The same was attempted when Israel used American celebrities like Madonna, Warren Buffet and Bill Gates to promote Israel’s tourism, economy and technology (Avraham, 2009).

The **Jordan** Tourism Board (JTB) also used this strategy while trying to “benefit” from the Pope’s visit during the spring of 2009, as claimed

by the information minister: “Jordan is pinning high hopes that the Pope’s visit will attract more tourists and boost religious tourism as he will visit the baptism site and Mount Nebo” (*eTN*, 6 May 2009). On another occasion Jordan used the strategy while trying to associate itself with DHL, which supplies global shipment services. Under an agreement signed between DHL Express and JTB, DHL placed a sticker of Petra – printed, paid for, and provided by JTB – on all outbound shipments and packages from Jordan for an entire year to help promote Jordan as a tourism destination. Also under the agreement, which began on April 15, 2009, the JTB placed a logo of DHL on its calendar of events website (<http://www.calendar.jo>) during the same period (*eTN*, 23 April 2009). As **Israel** used the *Conde Nast Traveller* to associate itself to a well-known brand, so did Jordan with DHL.

Audience strategies

The common denominator of the audience-focused strategies to improve a place’s image is the effort to reach a variety of target audiences directly. Thus, marketers of Middle Eastern countries suggest that audiences should ignore the negative messages of wars, terror and backwardness conveyed about the Middle East by the Western media and, instead, feel warmly toward the people of the region for various reasons: common values, history, religion, destiny or world outlook.

Similarities (and relevance) to the target audience

In this strategy, marketers connect a certain place and its values to a specific, appreciative target audience. Manheim and Albritton (1984), for example, found that American public relations firms that promoted developing countries in the US tried to associate these countries with human rights and democracy – values, the PR experts knew, that are highly esteemed by Americans. An association of these values with a developing country would garner much fondness for it. In a way, this strategy may be called the “like me strategy” (Katz, 2008), in that the marketer wishes to demonstrate to a certain audience that the place is similar to its own. Many countries involved in ongoing conflict situations attempt to generate sympathy among Americans in the belief that this audience can affect American decision-makers and, consequently, US international policy (Manheim and Albritton, 1984).

Several Middle Eastern countries have used this strategy. During the mid-2000s, Blue Star, an American public relations firm, initiated a campaign

that took into account many of the values that are considered important for San Francisco residents, such as women's and gay's rights, technology, freedom of speech, the environment and multi-culturalism. A series of ads connected **Israel** to these values through visuals and such slogans as "Freedom of the press in the Middle East? Only in Israel"; "Where in the Middle East can gay officers serve their country? Only in Israel". Some of such ads can be categorized as a "What have you done for me lately?" strategy, whereby marketers show the target audience how the brand contributes and is relevant to their lives. The Blue Star agency also ran several ads with the slogan, "Born in Israel. Used in the U.S.", that showed how Israel's innovations "added value" and contributed to improving the life of Americans (Blue Star Public Relations, 2006).

Other countries in the area also tried to show their special relationship with the United States. For example, after terror attacks in its country, **Tunisia's** official website contained newspaper articles describing the country's contribution to the "Preservation of world peace" and its "Unique relationship of mutual respect" with the United States (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a). Another example comes from **Saudi Arabia**. This country's name had been linked to the September 11 terrorist attacks in the US, and therefore an ad campaign was started to restore their image while emphasizing Saudi Arabia's ties to America: "We are separated by three oceans, one language, but we share the same desires, the same dreams, same joy, same pain and same hope that we can make our world a safer place together" (The People of Saudi Arabia/Alliance against Terror, 2002).

During the Arab Spring there were also attempts to persuade tourists to return and travel to those Arab countries that suffer from a tourism crisis. For example, the **Egyptian** Tourism Minister tried to convince tourists from the Gulf states to come back and visit his country by using the similarity between Egypt and the target audience – such as physical proximity, cultural tradition and Arabic: "We have missed you. Egypt warmly opens its arms to you, as our country is safe for Arab and international tourists, particularly since it is close to you in terms of traditions, geography, language and history. [This is] in case you would like to help the future of Egypt, as it seeks to achieve stability and implement a map for the future." The governor of South Sinai said similar things to the same audience: "**Sharm el-Sheikh** is calling you; it is a safe city free of any violent acts since 2005. We need your support in tourism after your country supported us politically and financially. You are our people and our brethren" (*eTN*, 10 January 2014). Both officials connected their destination and its values to a specific, appreciative target audience.

Where previously we saw the use of audience strategies by Arab countries to reach out to American or European audiences in the past, as mentioned (Avraham, 2013), these strategies were also used more recently. In the beginning of the Arab Spring, **Egypt** released a campaign entitled “Egypt – Where it all begins”. In this campaign the marketers attempt to connect with potential Western tourists by including Western-looking models in their ads, complete with light skin and hair, with famous Egyptian monuments in the background. Later, ads in this campaign include more Middle-Eastern looking models, dressed in modern styles. After the removal of Mubarak (the former Egyptian president), the Egyptians briefly tried to promote “solidarity tourism” among Western visitors who might be thrilled by the advent of freedom into the Middle East. But as the matters started to become more complicated, this initiative ceased. **Tunisia** also attempted to reach Western audiences by means of the “Freedom for All”, “Tunisia – The place to be . . . now” and “Tunisia – Free to live it all” campaigns. The emphasis placed on culture by **Lebanon’s** tourism office in Paris, discussed earlier, can also be considered an audience strategy, since the head of the office claimed that they “settled on culture as a key differentiating factor for Lebanon done especially for the French audience” (*eTN*, 16 November 2008).

Changing the target audience

A place’s image is not an objective entity, but rather is formed subjectively through the eyes of different target audiences; thus, a nation may need to communicate different messages to different audiences, depending on the selected targets (Hansen, 2010). As a result, a feature of a place that might be negative for one target audience could be considered positive by a different audience. In addition, there are potential audiences that know less about a crisis, are less afraid of it or less concerned by the events reported (Taylor, 2006). Moreover, an audience’s reaction to a crisis and its risk perception are also related to cultural and national factors (Mansfeld and Pizam, 2006). This means that the destination should dictate its marketing focus, perhaps aiming at markets previously treated as secondary or tertiary (Taylor, 2006). For example, the focus might shift to business or conference tourism instead of the sea and sun tourism that had been “pitched” before a crisis or the marketing focus might be placed on the domestic audience rather than on international tourists. The **Syrian** ministry of tourism, for example, adopted a campaign and package of measures to encourage domestic tourism after an internal crisis in 2011 (*eTN*, 14 August 2011). Later, Syria shifted its

marketing to the East to attract friendly countries, such as Russia and China (*eTN*, 31 October 2011).

Over the years, some destinations learned that by changing the target audience, features perceived as major disadvantages could suddenly go unnoticed or even be considered attractive by different publics. One country that suffered greatly from the global tourism crisis following the terrorist events of 11 September 2011 was **Syria**. The crisis impelled it to begin a campaign based on the slogan, "Syria, Land of Civilizations," in order to attract tourists across the Arab world who no longer felt comfortable traveling to the West (Subleman, 2002). **Jordan** took a similar approach and began concentrating on regional tourism, attracting visitors from the Gulf states and neighboring countries (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a). Al-Hamarneh and Steiner (2004) claimed that this strategy saved many national tourism industries from collapse.

Similarly, several Middle Eastern countries have tried to show their relevance to the spiritual side of diverse audiences. Usually during wars and after a series of terror attacks, when the flow of general tourism largely ceases, the tendency is to attract more religious tourism, which is considered less sensitive to the question of safety (Mansfeld and Pizam, 2006). The tendency of religious tourism to be resilient to crises makes this strategy popular among Middle Eastern countries. For example, religious tourism was developed by **Lebanon** (*eTN*, 15 September 2009), **Pakistan** (*eTN*, 14 June 2014), **Iraq** (*eTN*, 16 November 2010), **Israel** (Beirman, 2003) and the **Palestinian Authority**, which used the slogan: "Land of Miracles" (*eTN*, 11 February 2010). The **Egyptian** tourist authority ran a campaign to attract Arab tourists from Middle Eastern countries that included a Ramadan festival in August 2011 (*eTN*, 23 May 2011). **Turkey** also started to develop tourism for Muslims while noting the availability of *halal* hotels that offered special food, prayer rooms and other hospitality requirements for Muslim audiences (Al-Hamarneh, 2013; Cities and Countries Branding, April 11, 2013). During the Arab Spring crisis, **Egypt** started to focus on religious Christian tourism. According to the New Testament, the Virgin Mary and Jesus stayed in Egypt for 42 months, visiting 20 different places. As a result, the Egyptian ministry developed a program to allow pilgrims to follow the Holy Family's journey (*eTN*, 10 August 2014).

As mentioned, during the Arab Spring uprisings, several Middle Eastern countries started to develop local or regional tourism and managed to re-direct their marketing to Arab countries to compensate for the absence of Western tourists (Al-Hamarneh, 2013). A few of the many

examples are **Jordan** and **Egypt** (mainly in 2011–2012), **Pakistan** (*eTN*, 13 September 2012), **Oman** (*eTN*, 30 December 2012) and **Bahrain** (*eTN*, 14 April 2013). To promote local and regional tourism from Arab countries, the marketers have also created marketing initiatives; **Abu Dhabi's** tourism industry, for example, ran a week-long promotion of the destination and its expanding offerings in Saudi Arabia (*eTN*, 29 March 2012).

During the Arab Spring events many examples could be found of the attempt by Middle Eastern marketers to address new target audiences outside the region. **Syria**, for example, shifted its marketing eastward to attract citizens of friendly countries, such as Russia, Iran and China (*eTN*, 31 October 2011). **Egypt** also sought new tourists from Japan and the BRIC countries – Brazil, Russia, India and China (*eTN*, 21 May 2012). As part of the effort to develop “diaspora tourism”, **Lebanon** targeted the Brazilian market to persuade the five million Lebanese who live there to come and visit the “old country” (*eTN*, 13 April 2012); **Jordan** aimed at the Indian market (*eTN*, 14 July 2011), and **Morocco** at the British, German and the Gulf markets (Cities and Countries Branding, 11 April 2013). In addition, marketers started to develop and improve the promotion of other kind of tourism such as green/ecotourism, and diving tourism in **Egypt**, for example (*eTN*, 11 February 2014). To summarize, changing the target audience was done on a national-regional basis, in order to expand the tourism product for various audiences (Steiner, 2007).

Chapter summary

By using the conceptual frame of the “multi-step model for altering place image” we saw that marketers of Middle Eastern countries used three types of strategies: source, message and audience, in order to deal with tourism crises, negative images, and stereotypes of terrorism, violence and wars. Analysis shows that marketers created a variety of marketing initiatives, advertising campaigns, press reports and public relations crisis techniques.

Most of all we can learn about the change among the Middle East marketers from two case studies – that of **Erbil's** (Kurdistan region, Iraq) city marketing and **Dubai** (Gulf state). Toward the end of 2013, the city of Erbil began a marketing campaign aimed at electing the city as “the Arab cultural capital” in 2014. The marketers recruited Samira Said, a famous singer in the Arab world and produced a clip featuring the city's tourist sites, old buildings and charm (*Ha'aretz*, 5 December 2013). At the same time, **Dubai** city's officials published a plan during 2013

aimed at turning it into the number one tourist destination in the world, with a focus on family tourism (Cities and Countries Branding, 20 May 2013). Even if Dubai will fail to achieve this ambitious program, it definitely indicates the changes that are happening in the Middle East in terms of image and the use of marketing and branding tools. It is worth remembering that just a few years ago Middle East destinations were not a significant factor in the global competition over tourists, and now Erbil is trying to be elected as “the Arab cultural capital” and Dubai is seeking to be the number one tourist attraction in the world.

Dealing with image problems will continue to be a challenge for Middle Eastern country officials and marketers until the region stabilizes and its regional conflicts are resolved. The intense media coverage of reoccurring terror attacks and brutal acts of violence performed by Muslim extremists reinforce the insecurity component of the Middle East’s image, further increases the challenges for marketers in the region and their ability to cope with stereotypes and generalizations toward the countries of the region. But it seems like these marketers have no choice, because of the centrality of the tourism industry in the economy of many countries in the region. For example in **Egypt**, four million people work directly in tourism (*eTN*, 10 January 2014). Even in **Tunisia** before the events of the Arab Spring, tourism accounted for 7 percent of Tunisia’s GDP, more than \$3 billion (*eTN*, 18 September 2013). Tourism also provides jobs and foreign exchange; it encourages intercultural dialogue and combats stereotypes, prejudice and blockages between cultures, making it very worthwhile for marketers to continue trying to restore the image of the area (Al-Hamarneh and Steiner, 2004; Zamani-Farahani and Henderson, 2010).

6

Marketing African Destinations

Africa is the world's second largest and second most populous continent. It is rich in history, cultural resources, natural resources and fauna and flora. Sub-Saharan Africa is changing and developing rapidly and some African cities are now characterized by multicultural communities, a vibrant business environment and modern skylines. According to a 2014 report by the World Bank, there is continuous economic growth in Sub-Saharan Africa, increasing investments in natural resources and infrastructure, a rise in foreign capital flow into the continent and steady growth in inbound tourism. Sub-Saharan Africa is now home to some of the world's fastest growing economies and the continent is offering exciting opportunities for trade, business, investment and tourism development (World Bank, 2014a).

However, Sub-Saharan Africa is also known as the “dark continent” and is the home of many dreadful stories of violence, famine, abuse and genocide. In the last few decades, many Sub-Saharan African countries have faced issues of political instability, violent conflicts, severe droughts, extreme poverty, epidemics, malaria and HIV/AIDS (World Bank, 2001; Lepp and Gibson, 2003; WHO, 2003; Boniface et al., 2012). Other challenges faced by these countries in the context of tourism development include limited financial resources, high crime rates, heavy taxes on tourism investment and too much bureaucracy (Matize and Oni, 2014). One particularly tough challenge is corruption, causing much of the money gained from tourism or invested in tourism to get lost on its way to its official destination. According to some estimates, corruption costs African countries up to 25 percent of their gross national income – some \$148 billion a year (*BBC News*, 17 February 2006).

According to a report by the United Nations Development Programme (2014), Sub-Saharan Africa has the lowest global ranking on the Human

Development Index, and 18 out of 20 countries that compose the bottom of the global list are from Sub-Saharan Africa. In a report published by the United Nations Children's Fund, Sub-Saharan Africa was still ranked as the global leader regarding infant mortality rate (*BBC News*, 16 September 2014). According to a report by the UNAIDS (2012), Sub-Saharan Africa is the most heavily infected region in the global HIV epidemic, and it is estimated that 70 percent of those infected with HIV/AIDS live in Africa. As a result of these issues and other historical factors, most African countries suffer from a negative place image (Lepp and Gibson, 2003; Glaesser, 2006; Sabar, 2010; Versi, 2010). Among other problems, countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are forced to face stereotypes of high risk, hostility and underdevelopment (Ketter and Avraham, 2010; Lepp, Gibson and Lane, 2011). In the editorial column of the journal *African Business*, the editor noted that whenever he meets business people outside of Africa, "the only image most of them had of Africa was of starving children and war" (Versi, 2010, p. 11).

Another challenge that Sub-Saharan African countries face is the "spillover effect". Based on this phenomenon, the negative stereotypes associated with Sub-Saharan Africa are not limited to a specific country or location, but common to most countries of the continent. These stereotypes are usually created in a specific crisis-focused location and then "spill" into neighboring countries. Thus, countries that do not generate crisis factors may still suffer from image problems, based on their geographical proximity to those that do (Glaesser, 2006; Avraham and Ketter, 2008a). Among other factors, the spillover effect is driven by the lack of geographical knowledge and the inability of people and media to distinguish between countries undergoing a crisis and neighboring countries that are unrelated to this crisis (Ketter and Avraham, 2010). As a result, the world still tends to think of Sub-Saharan Africa as a homogeneous whole with a generally negative image (Versi, 2010).

Operating in this highly challenging environment, how can African destinations attract tourists and visitors? Which media strategies can be used to overcome these negative stereotypes? And what can African marketers do in order to portray a safe and welcoming image? In this chapter we will explore the marketing strategies and tactics that African destinations use in order to battle stereotypes and boost international tourism.

Source strategies

As noted earlier, media strategies for marketing places can be divided into three groups: strategies focusing on the source of the message, strategies focusing on the message itself, and strategies focusing on the

target audience. In the first part of this chapter, we will explore how countries in Sub-Saharan Africa try to improve their place image by using source-focused strategies.

Media cooperation and media relations

The mass media is one of the most dominant factors in shaping the image of a city, country or a tourist destination, as mentioned previously (Avraham, 2000). The making of an image in the media is mediated by the news people – mainly journalists and editors. In order to enhance the media coverage of a place and its image, tourist destinations might try to affect journalists and editors and use a variety of techniques in order to influence the source of the message. One tactic to influence news coverage and gain better access to the media is by establishing rapport with the news people. This tactic was used by **Tanzania** when the Tanzania Tourist Board was trying to promote tourism from the North African country of Egypt. In order to gain better media coverage in the Egyptian media, Tanzania invited journalists from leading media houses in Egypt for a familiarization trip to the country. On their visit, the journalists got a first-hand experience of Tanzania tourism products and services and visited top attractions such as the Ngorongoro Crater, the Serengeti National Park and the island of Zanzibar. According to the Managing Director of the Tanzania Tourist Board, the trip was aimed to “sensitize Egyptian citizens through television programs, newspaper and magazine articles to be published in Egypt’s local channels as well as DVD documentaries, all to be released in the Arabic, English and French languages for Middle East residents” (*eTN*, 13 November 2012). In other words, the familiarization trip was arranged in order to influence journalists and editors in the Egyptian media and to promote intense and positive news coverage of Tanzania as a tourist destination. Aware of the phrase that “seeing is believing”, Tanzanian decision-makers are hoping that by hosting members of the media from Egypt, their country can improve its public image among members of this source market and increase the number of Egyptian tourists visiting Tanzania.

East of the coast of Tanzania are the islands of **Seychelles**, home to some of the most beautiful beaches in Sub-Saharan Africa. In order to build a long-term and close relationship with journalists and editors, Seychelles founded the “Friends of Seychelles Press Club”. The press club is a relations management program for journalists and editors, keeping their hearts and pens close to Seychelles. All the members of the club have been on a familiarization trip to the islands and are now part of a communication network that regularly distributes newsletters and updates on recent happenings in Seychelles. This news includes

information on international media coverage of Seychelles tourism industry, updates on celebrities who have visited the country, spots on new tourism facilities, news on recent cultural events and any other information that might serve as the basis for a story. According to the chief executive of Seychelles Tourism Board, ensuring visibility in the press is a prime tool for promoting tourism among Seychelles' target markets (*eTN*, 16 September 2011).

Using the Internet as an alternative source

In the African context, the global news media tend to have a negative media frame for covering stories from Sub-Saharan Africa (Hachten, 1981). As a result, Sub-Saharan African countries might want to bypass the journalists and editors with alternative sources that would do a better job in communicating the virtues of the African tourism industry. For example, in the years 2011–2015 Kenya suffered from a series of deadly terror attacks. These attacks included bombs in the streets of Nairobi, Kenya's capital, grenade attacks in Mombasa and an attack in a shopping mall in Nairobi that resulted in at least 67 deaths (*BBC News*, 18 October 2013; *eTN*, 6 July 2014). In order to restore its positive image and re-attract tourists, Kenya Tourism Board (KTB) began an image recovery campaign in June 2014. The campaign was launched against the background of a significant decline in the number of incoming tourists and of travel advisories issued by some of Kenya's top tourist source markets. Following the theme, “#WhyILoveKenya”, the country invited tourists, residents, tour operators and friends of the tourism sector to “tell the world about the uniqueness of the country and how tourism business activities are on-going despite the travel advisories” (Kenya Tourism Board, 2014). In the campaign, people are encouraged to use the hashtag “#WhyILoveKenya” to upload stories, pictures and videos of their peaceful visit to Kenya. In response to the campaign, social media users used the hashtag to post tweets, Facebook posts and Instagram photos supporting the new marketing initiative. Among others, these supportive tweets were generated by local safari companies, tour operators, travel agents, hoteliers and members of the KTB.

Kenya's social media campaign is based on the media strategy of using the Internet as an alternative source to reach the target audience. Following this strategy, the KTB tries to create alternative sources of information that will deliver positive messages about the country. The need for alternative sources results from the tendency of the international media to focus on negative news and crisis events (Avraham, 2003b). Working in this hostile media environment, it is almost impossible for Kenyan spokespeople to use the international media to communicate

that the country is safe and stable and that the terror attacks are merely incidents that have no effect over Kenya's nature reserves and other tourist attractions. As an alternative, Twitter, Facebook and other social media sites provide a very good platform to bypass the international news media and generate a direct communication channel between Kenya marketers and the target audience. Using this channel, Kenya is free to deliver every possible message and to show the reality of what is currently happening in the country.

Using social media for campaigns may backfire, as place marketers have limited control in an open arena that is dominated by millions of web users. Kenya discovered the fitful nature of the social media while trying to promote the country on Twitter. In one case, Kenya marketers were surprised to discover on their page a Tweet that promoted tourism to Zimbabwe: "Don't risk your life in Kenya – come to Zimbabwe for a safe holiday". Kenyan governmental officials suspect that this surprising Tweet is an unethical promotion produced by the Zimbabwean Tourism Board in order to take advantage of the negative events in Kenya and steal potential tourists (*eTN*, 22 June 2014). These unexpected tweets should remind place marketers that the social media are open to all kinds of engagement, and web marketers should follow closely and monitor user-generated content in order to ensure that it supports the tourism brand. Another case of surprising tweets appeared following Kenya's "#WhyILoveKenya" campaign; this time, workers in Kenya's sex industry used the hashtag to invite potential customers to meet "Some of the amazing women that you could get in Kenya" and to "Come to Kenya, do safari, watch the beautiful nature, and f*** a local sexy girl" (<https://twitter.com/whyilovekenya>).

Another Sub-Saharan African country that uses social networks as an alternative source is **South Africa**. In a campaign launched on September 2012, the city of Johannesburg encouraged young residents to become online ambassadors of good will. The campaign incorporated the slogan: "Jozi, Discover Your Own Backyard", using the informal nickname for Johannesburg residents. In a statement by the Johannesburg Tourism Office it was noted: "This is a tourism awareness campaign to educate Joburg locals about the fabulous vibrancy and diversity of their city, encouraging them to explore and immerse themselves in the sights and sounds of Joburg, becoming knowledgeable ambassadors in so doing" (*eTN*, 12 March 2013). The campaign promoted the city's iconic locations and hidden gems using a local radio station and social networks such as Facebook. By knowing their city better and enhancing their local pride, Johannesburg residents could serve as an alternative source to the mass media and spread the virtues of the city. The use of social networks

in this case is based on the ability of modern web users not only to consume online information but also to create user-generated content and distribute it rapidly and effectively (Ritzer and Jurgenson, 2010).

Another initiative taken in order to promote **South Africa** online is by hosting the E-Tourism Africa Summit. Started in 2008, the summit is an annual event sponsored by South Africa Tourism and Cape Town Tourism, which attracts several hundred participants. During the two-day event, the participants attended several lectures, panels and workshops on tourism marketing in social media. Hosting tech-savvy participants, hundreds of stories were uploaded onto Facebook and over 20 pages of tweets were created during the summit. In a media interview, the CEO of Cape Town Tourism explained why the summit was taking place in the city: “As a destination, Cape Town is increasing its marketing profile and presence online; we have regular blogs, Flickr competitions and web itineraries that all form part of our communication solution” (*eTN*, 19 September 2011). By hosting the summit, Cape Town Tourism not only gets fresh marketing ideas but also promotes its online profile, generates social media content and enhances the digital representations of the destination.

Message strategies

The second group of media strategies for improving place image focuses on the message itself. The message of these strategies relates to the image problem in a direct manner, trying to change the conventional stereotype and alter the common image of the place. Like other marketing messages, these messages can be promoted using public relations tools, advertising campaigns, social media or any other tactical means of communication.

Ignoring the crisis

The most fundamental approach to tourism crises is to ignore them, hoping that tourists will not notice the crisis or will soon forget it, as mentioned. One country that used this strategy is **Sierra Leone**, located in West Africa. In the second half of 2014, the country had a deadly outbreak of the Ebola epidemic, and by the end of September 2014 the epidemic had taken a toll of 622 lives (*BBC News*, 2 October 2014). In spite of the intense media attention, the official website of the National Tourist Board of Sierra Leone chose to stay silent regarding the epidemic, and a visit to their website in October 2014 revealed that no changes had been made on the website in spite of the deadly epidemic (<http://www.ntb.sl/>). In its

opening paragraph, the website of the National Tourist Board of Sierra Leone called upon travelers to “Relax at a beach-front bar” and to explore “the bustling and colorful streets of Freetown”. This took place while news reports warned that in Sierra Leone five people were becoming infected every hour (*BBC News*, 2 October 2014).

A similar case of a country in west Sub-Saharan Africa that uses the strategy of ignoring the crisis is **Nigeria**. In recent years, Nigeria has suffered from numerous crises that could affect its touristic image. One of Nigeria’s fiercest enemies is the militant Islamist group, Boko Haram; it attacked schools in northern Nigeria and abducted school girls, attacked police and the UN headquarters in Nigeria’s capital – Abuja – as well as carried out many terror attacks that killed thousands of Nigerians (*BBC News*, 20 May 2014). During October 2014, Boko Haram carried out several terror attacks in Nigeria, including the abduction of dozens of women and girls from two villages in Nigeria’s north-eastern Adamawa State (*BBC News*, 23 October 2014) and blowing up a large bus station in Gombe State in north-eastern Nigeria (*BBC News*, 31 October 2014). Despite these violent incidents, the official website of Nigeria’s Tourism Development Corporation provided no reference or update regarding these events. In contrast, however, the website carried the following message: “Welcome to Nigeria: enjoy life, relax, admire beauty, explore nature and have fun” (<http://tourism.gov.ng/>). By ignoring the crisis, Nigeria’s marketers might hope that the diverse culture of the country, its natural landscapes and its friendly people would help to improve the image of the country and that it might be better not to remind potential tourists of the highly complex Nigerian reality.

Acknowledging the negative image

In the strategy of acknowledging the negative image, places recognize a negative trait and publicly refer to it in order to establish rapport with the target audience. One place that employed this strategy is the country of **Liberia**, suffering from a harsh crisis following the outbreak of Ebola in the country in late 2014. As the Ebola epidemic had received intense coverage in the international media, the decision-makers of Liberia chose to communicate this negative issue openly. Using the official Facebook page of the Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs & Tourism, the government of Liberia provided frequent updates on the current state of the epidemic, information on health issues and advice on how to recognize an Ebola infection. This news was also promoted on other communication channels, including Twitter, YouTube, Google Plus and the official website of the Ministry (Liberia Ministry

of Information, Cultural Affairs & Tourism, 2014). By providing loud and clear information on the Ebola epidemic, Liberia hoped to reduce the number of people, both local and tourists, infected by the deadly epidemic, reduce the number of lives being lost and bring the epidemic to an end. In the long term, this should minimize the image crisis and assist Liberia for the time when the country is ready to re-activate its tourism industry and attract tourists and visitors again.

A different use of the strategy of acknowledging the negative image can be found in the East African country of **Rwanda**. Although many years have passed, the image of Rwanda is still stained by the horrors of the Rwanda Genocide. In 1994, some 800,000 people were slaughtered in Rwanda by ethnic Hutu extremists, shocking the world with one hundred days of brutal violence (*BBC News*, April 7 2014). Following a long road to recovery, Rwanda Development Board launched a tourism campaign in the mid-2000s under the slogan "Discover a New African Dawn" (Tasci, 2011). Dawn is the first light, the beginning of sunrise and the symbol of a new day. By employing this slogan, Rwanda marketers acknowledged the long period of darkness that the country had undergone and its problematic past. Now, however, the new African dawn symbolizes that a new day is coming, bringing with it new opportunities and promising prosperity and peace.

In November 2011, the **Zambia** Tourism Board launched a new tourism campaign with a new brand for the country. This marketing initiative was aimed at increasing the number of tourists to three million international arrivals by the end of 2013 as well as promoting international investments in developing the country's tourism facilities. In 2010, the contribution of tourism to Zambia's GDP was estimated at 2.8 percent and the new brand was expected to increase the income generated by tourism in the country's GDP to over five percent by the end of 2012. In addition to attracting more tourists, the growth in income is expected to come from increasing the length of overnight stays, extending the tourist season and targeting high-yield markets (*eTN*, 31 December 2010). The new campaign with these very high expectations was conducted under the slogan "Let's explore Zambia". The unveiling of the campaign included a set of television commercials presenting Zambia's major national parks as well as Victoria Falls, calling on potential tourists to discover and explore the country (*eTN*, 28 November 2011). By choosing this brand and creating an informative campaign, Zambia acknowledged its weak place image and the lack of knowledge regarding the country's characteristics. The new tagline invites tourists to explore, implying that while people may not know the country, they should get to know it and the abundance of sights and attractions it has to offer.

Reducing the scale of the crisis

An additional media strategy to fight image crises is to minimize the scale of the crisis and keep playing as if it were “business as usual”. Following this strategy, the Tourism Minister of **Kenya** published an open letter addressed to travel industry stakeholders, journalists and the general public. In his letter, the Minister took the media strategy of playing down the crisis – “We wish to point out to all our international visitors and our friends in the travel trade that the recent despicable acts of Somali pirates have affected only a small part of our territory. A glance at the map will show that these events have occurred hundreds of kilometers away from the coastal and inland destinations which are so popular with the majority of our visitors. With the small exception of the northern coast, none of our visitor destinations is in any way affected by the changes in some of the country’s travel advisories which were announced overnight” (*eTN*, 5 October 2011). In the content of the message, the minister emphasized that the terror incidents took place in remote areas of Kenya, far away from main tourist attractions, and that tourists were safe to come as long they stayed away from this one limited zone. The message by the Kenyan Tourism Minister was aimed at reducing the scale of the crisis, limiting its geographical boundaries and ensuring that business was (almost) as usual. Recognizing the problem openly is used here to build a rapport with the target audience, saying that we know there have been some issues but, all in all, Kenya is still safe and welcoming.

Delivering a counter-message

Sub-Saharan Africa suffers from several stereotypes that should be shattered in order to promote tourism. One negative perception regarding Sub-Saharan Africa is about its remote location. According to Echtner and Prasad (2003), destinations in developing countries are often perceived as remote, disconnected and inaccessible. Aiming to deliver a counter-message, African destinations may create campaigns that emphasize that they are closer to Western countries than one might think. One example of such a promotion is **Seychelles’** campaign that uses the slogan: “The Seychelles Experience – more accessible than ever before” (Seychelles Tourism Board, 2012). In this tagline, the marketers deliver a counter-message against the stereotype of the Seychelles being remote and inaccessible by simply stating how accessible they are. Another African country that tries to portray a closer-than-you-thought image is **Sierra Leone**, located in West Africa. In a promotional tourism video, the opening narrating sentence points out that Sierra Leone is “only five hours’ flying time from Europe” (National Tourism Board of

Sierra Leone, 2014). In this statement, the country is trying to emphasize its proximity to the dominant source market of Western Europe.

A similar strategy was adopted by **The Gambia**, a neighboring country that is also located in the west of the African continent. In the mid-2000s, The Gambia was running a campaign using the tagline: "Only six hours from Europe" (Ketter and Avraham, 2010). Like the claim made by Seychelles, this slogan counters the stereotype of African destinations as being remote and inaccessible. In a later campaign launched in the late 2000s, The Gambia adopted the slogan "The Smiling Coast of Africa" (*eTN*, 17 September 2009). This slogan might be used to deliver a counter-message and battle the negative perception of Sub-Saharan African destinations as being hostile, violent and unsafe (Carter, 1998; Lepp and Gibson, 2003; Glaesser, 2006).

Following the strategy of delivering a counter-message, **Kenya** chose to deliver such a message shortly following the Westgate Mall terror attack in September 2013. In the attack, terrorists from the Somali Islamist group al-Shabab took over a shopping mall in Nairobi, Kenya's capital, held it for four days and killed at least 67 people (*BBC News*, 21 September 2014). In a press release issued immediately after the event, Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for East African Affairs, Commerce and Tourism, Phyllis Kandie, stated that: "We are here therefore to affirm that life is going on normally in all parts of the country despite this grave and enormous challenge". Kandie also urged foreign embassies to be understanding, not to issue travel advisories to their citizens and to consider this an isolated incident that had been brought under control (*eTN*, 22 September 2013). In this message, Kenya's authorities delivered a counter-message to the notion that Kenya was unsafe by clearly stating that the tourism industry was operating normally and that the country was ready to continue welcoming tourists and visitors.

One country in Sub-Saharan Africa that has suffered from several incidents regarding its image is the Federal Republic of **Nigeria**. Among other problems, Nigeria suffers from political unrest between Christians and Muslims that has resulted in several violent incidents. According to some, Nigeria should be divided into two countries: a Muslim country in the north and a Christian country in the south (*BBC News*, 29 March 2010). While there are voices calling on Nigeria to split, the Nigerian tourism stakeholders try to communicate that the country is strong and united, in order to maintain tourism. Such a message was also delivered during the 2013 Abuja Carnival – an annual four-day cultural event that takes place in the capital of Nigeria. At that event, the Minister of Culture, Tourism and National Orientation declared: "Tonight we have shown

eloquently to Nigerians and the entire world that we are one indivisible country, a great country, and will continue to grow from strength to strength" (*eTN*, 23 November 2013). With these words, the Nigerian Minister responded to the call for division with a counter-message, trying to sustain the tourism industry despite the political turbulence.

Tackling the crisis

One highly effective strategy to solve an image crisis is to solve the problematic reality behind it. In the strategy of tackling the crisis, some places acknowledge the crisis and take serious measures in order to overcome it. One example of this strategy can be seen in the East African country of **Kenya**. Like several other developing nations, Kenya suffers from some violent crimes that unfortunately involve tourists from time to time. In one of these incidents, two Russian tourists were shot dead while trying to visit the Fort Jesus World Heritage Site in Mombasa (*eTN*, 7 July 2014). Responding to this tragic event, the Commerce and Tourism Principal Secretary stated: "In order to enhance the visitors' safety, patrols by the Tourist Police Unit will be stepped up within the environs of tourism facilities with additional personnel. We also urge stakeholders in the industry to maintain security arrangements currently in place" (*eTN*, 8 July 2014). With these words, the Principal Secretary acknowledged the crisis and listed the coping measures that would be taken in order to tackle the problem and to ensure the safety of travelers in the country.

Another incident that happened in **Kenya** and involved the strategy of tackling the crisis was the abduction of a foreign French tourist by Somali militants. In the middle of the night, Somali gunmen stormed into a private residence in Manda Island, off Kenya's northern shore, took a hostage to a waiting speedboat and fled into international waters (*eTN*, 1 October 2011). This tragic event was another link in a series of terror attacks initiated by Somali radicals who had crossed the border to Kenya and carried out attacks on Kenya's beach resorts. In response to this severe threat to Kenya's coastal tourism industry, the Kenyan Police Commissioner promised to improve security by using 24 patrol boats and additional air patrol by a helicopter. Furthermore, promises were made to increase surveillance, improve coordination between the army and the police, and increase overall security measures. While this line of action follows the strategy of "tackling the crisis" by trying to solve the problems that threaten the destination's image, there were local tourism stakeholders who were doubtful about the police actions. They claimed that Kenya's police had a very limited efficiency. According to one local source: "We are watching to see how long the helicopter they promised

will fly and when the boats will run out of petrol. Let us not lament about embassies warning their citizens from coming to within 150 kilometers of the Somali border; let us fix our security first before mouthing off about such precautions" (*eTN*, 3 October 2011). This criticism carries a very valid point: words without actions are meaningless. If the Kenyan police cannot stand up behind its statements and improve security, more terror incidents will occur, Kenya's image will deteriorate and no one will believe the Kenyan stakeholders when they next make such declarations. By tackling the crisis, places should not only promise to remedy the situation, but should also make sure that their promises are being fully kept.

In September 2011, Somali militants attacked a safari village in Kenya's northern beach, resulting in the death of a British citizen and the abduction of his wife. In response to this violent act of terror, Kenya maintained its policy of "tackling the crisis". According to a Kenyan spokesperson – "Our security forces are treating this regrettable incident with the highest priority, and the attackers are already being pursued, on land and from the air, as far as I understand. Security along all beach resorts, especially such remotely located beach camps, is already being stepped up and will undergo further review in coming days, to prevent such an attack from happening again" (*eTN*, 11 September 2011). Unfortunately, as such incidents take place again and again and the governmental promises for restoring security are also repeated again and again, these words lose their power, and so does the brand equity. The repetition of these incidents is creating long-term accumulated damage to Kenya's image, damage that could take much more than words and statements to repair.

The image-improvement strategy of tackling the crisis was also employed by **Tanzania**, one of Kenya's neighboring countries. In 2012, Tanzania experienced a series of negative events that threatened the country's tourism industry: on the mainland of Tanzania, there were two reports of incidents in which tourists got mugged on the streets of Dar-es-Salaam, the country's capital. Off the main land, on the island of Zanzibar, there were several incidents involving political instability, including violent demonstrations and the burning down of two churches by Muslim extremists. As a result, the British government issued an advisory statement, calling tourists to act with caution and to refrain from visiting the spice island of Zanzibar. This situation posed a serious threat to Zanzibar as tourism is the leading source of revenue for the local economy, responsible for over one quarter of the island's GDP and generating 72 percent of the island's foreign currency.

In addition, British tourists are the main source market for tourism to the island, accounting for over one third of all visitors. In response to this challenging situation, the government of Tanzania decided to take in-depth action in order to tackle the cause of the crisis. Tanzania's Deputy Tourism Minister instructed that security be increased in key tourist spots, including tourist attractions, hotels and streets in tourist areas, both on the mainland and on the island of Zanzibar. In a media interview the Deputy Tourism Minister stated: "We assure visitors in Dar-es-Salaam of a safe passage and a very comfortable stay. The government of Tanzania reiterates its commitment in assuring tourists visiting Tanzania of their security, while legal measures have been taken against those found taking part in causing recent chaos in Zanzibar" (*eTN*, 30 May 2012). In this announcement Tanzania's Deputy Tourism Minister acknowledged the problem, took responsibility for it and set out a path for restoring security and safety.

One year after these incidents, the Tanzanian government decided to take its actions one step further. In June 2013, the Tanzanian Police Force established a special unit charged with taking care of the safety of foreign visitors. According to Tanzania's Assistant Commissioner of Police: "(We) had decided to form a special unit to ensure that tourists who come to visit this African safari country would enjoy maximum security throughout their visit." This statement was supported by an announcement by the Tanzania Tourist Board's Managing Director: "The police force's new move would make a significant impact on the development of the tourism industry in Tanzania, because peace and security are critical factors in attracting more tourists to a destination. One may be endowed with unique tourist attractions but if there is no peace and security, tourists will never come" (*eTN*, 23 June 2013). In this statement the official identified the role of peace and security in the tourism industry and acknowledged that tackling the problem is the best solution to maintain tourism and restore Tanzania's image.

The country of **South Africa** has made numerous attempts to tackle the many problems that resulted from the collapse of the apartheid regime in 1991. In particular, the city of Johannesburg has gone a long way in transforming itself into a global business center and a world-class city. In order to improve its image, Johannesburg is constantly allocating considerable resources to improve safety and security, public transport, tourism infrastructure and tourism attractions. Some of the leading development projects include the building of international standard stadia for the 2010 World Cup soccer games, large conference and meeting facilities, an integrated public transport network, as well

as new hospitality and tourism products. According to the CEO of the Johannesburg Tourism Company: “The phenomenal range of development projects, initiatives, and public realm management – not to forget the continuous tourism product development – is awe-inspiring and changing the geo-political face of our city in a positive way” (*eTN*, 16 June 2011). With these words, the CEO marks the role of physical development and ongoing investment in the tourism product as a key tool to alter the image of the city and to boost tourism.

Association to well-known brands and celebrities

One leading strategy to improve the image of a public place is by hosting opinion leaders. These people include tour operators, politicians, religious leaders, community leaders and celebrities. The opinion leaders are often invited for a familiarization trip (known briefly as a “fam trip”) that includes visits to top attractions and meetings with local stakeholders. As they return to their home countries, the opinion leaders are now expected to serve as ambassadors of good will, spreading the good news and sharing their enthusiasm for the place. The strategy of hosting opinion leaders is frequently used by many destinations, both in developed and in developing countries, and is considered to be a fundamental instrument in the public relations toolkit (Lahav et al., 2013).

In August 2014, a group of 25 former Real Madrid players made a five-day visit to **Tanzania**. This included a wildlife safari tour of the Ngorongoro Crater, a visit to Mount Kilimanjaro – Africa’s highest peak – and a friendly soccer game with a local team in Tanzania’s capital city of Dar-es-Salaam. During their visit, the soccer players enjoyed the beautiful landscapes of Tanzania and the warm hospitality of the people. According to Tanzania’s Tourist Board, the Real Madrid legends will be good ambassadors to sell Tanzania’s attractions to Spain and other European nations (*eTN*, 30 August 2014). By issuing this invitation, Tanzania marketers communicated several messages to the local tourism industry. Firstly, the Real Madrid visit delivered the message that the country is safe and welcoming, and that there is no risk or hazard in visiting the country. That message was very important considering the background of the several terror attacks that occurred in neighboring Kenya in 2013–2014 (*The Economist*, 21 June 2014) as well as the political and religious tensions on the island of Zanzibar, which is under Tanzanian rule (*eTN*, 19 February 2013; 30 July 2014). Secondly, having a visit of such celebrities creates the impression that Tanzania is a desirable and highly appealing destination that can attract affluent people who have many traveling options. Thirdly, by hosting the former Real Madrid soccer players, Tanzania signaled to European sports fans that the country

shares the same sports culture as they do, that the people of Tanzania also look up to these athletes and that there is more similarity between Tanzania and their own country than they had originally thought.

One strategy to attract opinion leaders is by hosting global conferences and events. Following this line of thought, **Kenya** hosted the Seventh Annual Ecotourism and Sustainable Tourism Conference in September 2013. The event attracted an audience of 500 participants from 120 countries, many of whom were key decision-makers in the global tourism industry (*eTN*, 21 March 2013). The event served as a prime opportunity for Kenya's tourism industry to showcase the country's safety and to protect its competitive position in the global tourism arena. In addition, the event was used to promote the image of Kenya as a leading ecotourism destination, shifting the attention of the travel media from negative issues of security to the positive issues of caring for the natural, cultural and economic environments.

Following this strategy of hosting opinion leaders, in 2013 **Kenya** also hosted the World Travel Awards and The Magical Kenya Travel Expo. The events attracted many opinion leaders in the tourism world, including tour operators, travel agents and tourism journalists. These events attracted visitors from the US, Canada, Brazil, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Russia, France, Poland, India, China and other countries. The hosted buyers who visited the events also participated in regional tours and familiarization excursions, sampling Kenya's key tourist attractions (*eTN*, 13 October 2013). Coming to Kenya, touring the country and participating in the events, these opinion leaders experienced Kenya's tourism industry and the actual security situation in the country firsthand. It was hoped that back in their own countries, the international opinion leaders would share their experiences, delivering the message that Kenya is safe and welcoming.

Spinning liabilities into assets

One special strategy that can be employed by Sub-Saharan African countries in order to attract tourism is spinning liabilities into assets. In this strategy, places take a characteristic that might be considered negative and portray it in a positive light. For example, the trait of being "wild" can take different meanings based on the context. A country that is "wild" might be considered risky, unexpected and underdeveloped. On the other hand, "wild" might mean a place that is authentic, lively and positively surprising. In the Sub-Saharan African context, the harsh stereotypes of Africa can also be portrayed in a positive light. In the year 1997 **Tanzania** launched a tourism marketing campaign under the slogan "Tanzania, unsurpassed Africa". In the view of the "spinning

liabilities into assets” strategy, the term, “unsurpassed Africa”, might be interpreted in different ways: as a liability, this place might provide a hard-core African experience with many traditional features but with very few modern amenities. As an asset, “unsurpassed Africa” might mean a place that is authentic, unique and has an unspoiled charm. Using this slogan, Tanzania marketers chose to take the conventional images of the country – wild beasts, tribal people and African bush – and portray them in a positive light: Africa at its best. Following the same strategy, in 2003 Tanzania launched another campaign under the tagline “Tanzania, authentic Africa” (Tanzania Tourist Board, 2012). The 2003 campaign also took the stereotypes of Africa as a wild and underdeveloped place and used them as assets. In this view, the under-developed stereotype of the country is an advantage as it allows tourists to experience Africa as it once was.

An additional concept that could have a dual meaning is “the heart of Africa”. The term “heart of Africa” cannot be separated from Joseph Conrad’s famous novel *Heart of Darkness* published in 1899. The novel describes a wild and risky quest up the Congo River that involved mystery, great danger and horror (the book was later adopted into the famous motion picture “Apocalypse Now”, connecting the plot to the Vietnam War era). In contrast to the book title, the word *heart* can also suggest warmth, caring and welcome. Trying to capture the positive aspects of these contradictions, **Malawi** is using the slogan: “Malawi – the Warm Heart of Africa” (Malawi Tourism Marketing Corporation, 2010). Unlike the narrator in Conrad’s famous novel, Malawi marketers deliver the message that, this time, those traveling to the heart of Africa will encounter happy smiles, friendliness and genuine warmth. In a similar manner to Malawi, the **Republic of Burundi** is also using the tourism slogan “Heart of Africa” (Burundi National Tourism Office, 2014). In the case of Burundi, choosing this slogan could be based on their geographical location in Central Africa; and being “in the heart” could mean that the country has a good location, one that enjoys the many virtues of the African continent.

Another Sub-Saharan African country to follow the strategy of “spinning liabilities into assets” is **Zambia**, located in the southern part of the continent. During the early 2000s Zambia used the slogan: “Experience the Real Africa” (Tasci, 2011). The adjective “real” can be understood as somewhere that is wild, undeveloped and even dangerous. On the other hand, visiting the “real Africa” might imply a place that is genuine and preserves unspoiled landscapes and ancient ways of living. In addition to spinning liabilities into assets, Zambia is also claiming ownership of the characteristics of “Africa”. This follows the place marketing strategy

of claiming by Avraham and Daugherty (2012), suggesting that tourist destinations might try to enhance their image by associating themselves with larger places or narratives, claiming that they are their most true representation. In this manner, a positive outcome of this campaign will guide people who wish to see “the real Africa” to travel to Zambia as their natural choice.

An additional way to implement the media strategy of spinning liabilities into assets is to take a physical object with a negative context and to turn it into a positive one. Between the years 1977 and 1992 the country of **Mozambique** suffered a long and painful civil war, which caused severe damage to its infrastructure and the loss of many lives (*BBC News*, 11 October 2014). As part of the national recovery process, a group of artists collected machine guns, landmines and hand weapons from decades of war. All in all, a total of some 800,000 weapons were collected and transformed into art displays, and used the slogan “Arms to Art”. According to one of the artists: “We want to show the world the good way for these bad materials and make them into something beautiful” (*eTN*, 3 November 2011). In this inspiring art project, the country of Mozambique had transformed objects of war that once scared people away into objects of beauty that will now hopefully attract tourists and visitors to the country.

Lastly, since the 1970s the country of **Ethiopia** has been using the tourism marketing slogan “Thirteen Months of Sunshine” (Ethiosports, 2014). The slogan is based on the traditional Ethiopian calendar that follows the lunar calendar, which is shorter than the modern year of 365 days. In order to maintain the traditional Ethiopian calendar, there is now an additional month of a few days only, a thirteenth month that is added so that the Ethiopian calendar will match the Gregorian calendar. As a marketing slogan, this tagline is based on the common images of the Ethiopian landscape as arid and desert like. By employing the strategy of spinning liabilities into assets, this slogan transforms the scorching desert sun into a pleasant experience that enables visitors to come all year round. In addition, the official tourism website of Ethiopia presents the country’s low level of development as an advantage: “Ethiopia is truly a land of contrasts and extremes. In no other country is it possible to find yourself so dramatically transported back in time or to participate with such freedom in the sacred rituals of an archaic faith.” (Ethiopian Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2014). This text implies that a low level of development and lack of modern infrastructure are not problems but rather an opportunity to enjoy a way of living that is rarely found in the modern world.

Branding contrary to the stereotype

The strategy of branding contrary to the stereotype takes a former strategy – delivering a counter-message – and develops it thoroughly. In this strategy, places take a common stereotype and create a brand counter to the stereotype, shattering the original, negative image. One place that took a long journey with this strategy is the country of **South Africa**. As the apartheid regime collapsed in 1991, there were many concerns that the country would descend into chaos and bloodshed. During the last years of the apartheid regime and for several years afterward, South Africa was considered to be unsafe and unstable, and a place where doing business was almost impossible (Waldmeir, 1997). In the mid-2000s South Africa launched a marketing campaign under the slogan “South Africa – It’s Impossible”. The campaign was carried using TV spots on international news channels and advertisements in international journals such as the *Condé Nast Traveler* and the *InStyle* fashion magazine (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a). The slogan aimed at shattering the stereotype that South Africa was an impossible place to visit by simply striking through the negative prefix, “*im*,” thus changing the word from “impossible” to “possible”. In a later campaign, the country used the slogan: “South Africa – It is Possible” (Tasci, 2011). This slogan reflects the brand development along the destination life cycle – as tourism slowly grows people gain more confidence in the brand, and the pessimistic notion of “impossible” turns into a positive notion: now it is possible to visit the country and enjoy its unique beauty and rich history.

Although South Africa is trying to convey images of positive transformation, there are still several challenges regarding the reality of the place. For example, in 2008 there were 18,148 reported cases of murder in South Africa, compared to only 662 cases in the UK. The former number is even more threatening when one takes into account that the South African population is smaller by approximately 20 percent in comparison with the UK population. (*BBC News*, 17 May 2010). In light of this problematic background, South Africa launched a marketing campaign in 2005 aimed at promoting business and investment. Among other things, the campaign included a television commercial telling the story of global investors who had done well in business in South Africa, and illustrating the advantages of the country as a gateway to the rest of Africa. The new slogan chosen for the campaign was “South Africa – Alive with Possibility” (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a). The word “alive” in this new slogan projects the idea that the country is vibrant, dynamic and safe for doing business. It is hoped that this slogan counters the common stereotypes resulting from the high crime rate and low level of personal safety in some parts of the country.

In spite of these challenges, there is much evidence indicating that South Africa is enjoying the fruits of its labor. Among others, the city of Cape Town was declared World Design Capital for 2014, recognizing the city's use of design as a tool for social, cultural and economic development (*BBC News*, 8 February 2014). The city of Johannesburg was chosen as the most popular destination in Africa for 2013, based on a growth of over 50 percent in international visits in 2009–2012 (*eTN*, 6 June 2013). Finally, tourism numbers in South Africa keep setting new records; in 2012 the numbers set a record of 9.2 million international arrivals. Much of this growth is attributed to the Chinese outbound market: the number of Chinese tourists to the country has tripled since 2009 (*BBC News*, 26 April 2013). In 2013, tourism to South Africa enjoyed an additional increase, reaching over 9.5 million arrivals, marking a 3.5 percent rise from 2012 (UNWTO, 2014c). To mark this positive transformation, South Africa adopted the slogan “Inspiring New Ways” (*The Guardian*, 21 November 2013), celebrating the country's success in abandoning the path of apartheid and driving a better way.

Geographical association

One way to battle the spillover effect is to associate the country with well-known places that enjoy a strong and favorable image. Employing this strategy, **Tanzania** has launched several campaigns that focus on the country's world-renowned tourist attractions. In 1993 Tanzania used the slogan “Tanzania, the land of Kilimanjaro and Zanzibar” (Tanzania Tourist Board, 2012). Mount Kilimanjaro is Africa's highest peak and was designated as a World Heritage Site in 1987. The island of Zanzibar is known as the “spice island” and its city of Stone Town was designated as a World Heritage Site based on its historical role in the Swahili coastal trading culture (UNESCO, 2014). In the year 2008 Tanzania's tourism slogan was updated to include the Serengeti Natural Park: “Tanzania, the Land of Kilimanjaro, Zanzibar and the Serengeti” (Tanzania Tourist Board, 2012). The Serengeti National Park was designated as a World Heritage Site in 1981, famous for its annual migration of vast herds of wildebeest, gazelles and zebras (UNESCO, 2014). By using these two slogans, Tanzania is trying to set itself apart from the crowd and stand out as a land of high mountains (Kilimanjaro), white beaches (Zanzibar) and rich wildlife (Serengeti).

Following the same media strategy of geographic association, **Zambia** employed the slogan “Zambia, Home of the Victoria Falls” during the mid-2000s (Ketter and Avraham, 2010). The unique beauty of the Victoria Falls Nature Reserve earned many accolades, and the site was listed as one of the “Seven Natural Wonders of the World” (CNN, 11 November 1997). By emphasizing the Victoria Falls, Zambia can

enjoy this prestige and hope that, in the absence of knowledge of the state, potential visitors will use the world-renowned waterfalls as a reference point with a positive halo effect. The Victoria Falls Nature Reserve is shared between two countries – Zambia and Zimbabwe. **Zimbabwe** is also using the international reputation of the waterfalls in order to promote the country's image. Employing the slogan “Zimbabwe – A World of Wonders” the country's marketers link Zimbabwe's image with the natural wonder of the waterfalls (Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, 2014). Using the word “wonders” in its plural form implies that Zimbabwe is a land of many wonders, and that they all measure up to the impressive quality of the great Victoria Falls.

Audience strategies

Following the sections of strategies focusing on the source of the message and strategies focusing on the message itself, the following section is dedicated to media strategies focusing on the target audience. In audience-focused strategies, destinations try to attract tourists and visitors based on the unique characteristics of a specific target audience (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a). This can be done by using patriotic feelings, personal/national heritage among the audience or by simply changing the target audience.

Patriotism and personal/national heritage

In this audience-focused strategy, destinations employ feelings of identification, belonging and national/ethnic pride in order to promote tourism (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a). One prime example of using patriotic feelings in the case of African tourism is related to the heritage of African descendants. In the US alone there are over 40 million people from the African diaspora (The World Factbook, 2014) and there are many more millions in the Caribbean, South America and other parts of the world. Using the patriotic approach, African descendants are being called to come back to Africa, discover their roots and learn about their history. One promotional use of African history is done via the African Diaspora Heritage Trail. The trail is an international cultural tourism initiative that promotes socially conscious travelers to visit sites of people and culture of African descent. Among others, the trail directs travelers to visit **Nigeria, Namibia, South Africa** and **Tanzania** in search of the roots of African diaspora (African Diaspora Heritage Trail, 2014).

Every year, the people of US and Canada mark Black History Month, dedicated to the people and events in the history of the African diaspora.

In 2008, the Federation of Tourism Associations of **Nigeria** joined with Africa Travel Association to form the Black Heritage Month Convention and Expo. The event was aimed at attracting international tour operators and at raising awareness for the Nigerian black heritage product, aimed at the Afro-American market (Africa Travel Association, 2014). In 2014, Nigeria hosted the Black History Month Festival, aimed at enhancing the understanding of diverse history and heritage of global tragedies. In addition to its historical significance, the festival was also designed as a tourism promotional act. The festival was organized as a tourism package that included visits to and events at tourism sites that are linked to the slave-trade history (*The Nation*, November 7, 2013). Choosing the path of black heritage, Nigeria targets a selective target audience and uses their feelings and emotions as a means to promote tourism to the country.

A similar initiative of promoting African heritage has been taken by **The Gambia**. The country is home to the biennial Roots Festival, celebrating West African culture and heritage. The name of the festival is inspired by the title of the book written by Alex Haley, an African-American historian who discovered his roots in the tiny village of Juffureh in The Gambia. One of the festival sites is Kunta Kinteh Island, formerly James Island, an island in the River Gambia and now a World Heritage Site that bears the remains of a slave fort where Africans were held captive before they were forcibly put onto slave ships to embark on a journey to Europe and the Americas (*eTN*, 29 April 2014). By choosing this theme and sites for the festival, The Gambia marketers aim at the heart of African descendants, trying to promote patriotic feelings and encourage visits to their country.

One audience that is particularly sensitive to patriotic feelings are the residents of that place. During times of crisis, many nations shift their focus from an international audience to one promoting domestic tourism. The local audience knows the place beyond the stereotypes, has greater resilience for crisis events and has a strong motivation to support the national economy. Aware of these facts, the government of **Kenya** decided to promote domestic tourism as a way of supporting the tourism industry in turbulent times. For example, following the post-election riots in 2007, Kenyans were encouraged to visit local sites and sustain businesses that are dependent on tourism. According to one of Kenya's Members of Parliament, "Kenyans are now more aware of their patriotic obligation. They have realized the need for unity and have to tour their own country". As a result, one of Kenya's MPs claimed that tourism to the Malindi coastal area has been booming and that the destination's hotels were packed with Kenyans on holiday (*eTN*, 3 January 2010).

One of the initiatives to promote domestic tourism is via a local tourism fair. **Kenya's** annual domestic travel exhibition gives Kenyan residents the opportunity to see the range of resorts, safari lodges and safari camps now available for them at special rates. A local tourism stakeholder stated: "Kenyans and East Africans have in the past been a backbone for our business. They pay less, that is true, but have helped to keep occupancies within a viable range. Without Kenyans travelling to the parks and the coast, our sector would be much worse off when the foreigners are staying away" (*eTN*, 21 March 2013). In this view, shifting marketing attention from international tourists to domestic tourists is vital in crises events, and may serve as a lifeline to sustain the tourism industry until international visitors return.

In a later initiative, **Kenya** tourism stakeholders concentrated much effort in promoting domestic tourism in order to compensate for the drop in international tourist arrivals following the terror incidents in the country. In 2013, international tourist arrivals to Kenya dropped by seven percent, causing a heavy loss of potential earnings and of foreign currency. At the same time, however, the domestic market increased from 2.65 million bed nights to 3.12 million bed nights (*eTN*, 2 April 2014). As can be induced from these figures, the domestic audience has a significantly stronger resilience to a national crisis. In many cases, local audiences are the first to be back and sometimes are also willing to come touring before the crisis has fully ended. In Kenya, as shown, local tourism numbers were up although terror attacks continued and the country had not completely recovered.

Following a similar route, the Ministry of Tourism of **Ghana** chose to focus on domestic tourism in order to create a steady flow of incoming tourists that will be able to support the development of a high-quality tourism infrastructure. In order to sensitize and increase awareness among the local population, the Ministry of Tourism initiated a project through Ghana's school system. Using the slogan: "Every Child – a Tourism Enthusiast", the project launched an excursion program for school children in the different regions of Ghana. In the excursions, the children were exposed to the country's natural parks, coastline, history, art, cultural traditions and other tourism resources (*eTN*, 22 July 2012). Taking the route of domestic tourism, the country of Ghana bypasses the challenges of marketing for Western audiences and replaces these problematic source markets with the home court advantage.

Changing the target audience

When a destination suffers from a negative image among a certain audience, one possible activity is to change the target audience, aiming for

markets with better resilience. In December 2013, the KTB chose to follow this strategy and launched a marketing campaign aimed at the West African market. According to KTB's marketing officer: "West Africa is a potential market to us and this is the beginning of our efforts to tap into the market that has high spenders with a willingness to spend". To realize this vision and promote tourism from Nigeria and Ghana, KTB trained 200 travel agents from these countries and equipped them with information about Kenya's tourism products. In addition, Kenya Airways launched direct flights from Abuja, Nigeria's capital, to Nairobi, the capital of Kenya (*eTN*, 17 December 2013). Initiating this campaign, which followed a series of terror attacks in Kenya, raises the hypothesis that the West African market was chosen for other purposes, besides its profitability. Living in Sub-Saharan Africa, Western African consumers are more familiar with terror incidents and are perhaps less sensitive to such events in their chosen destination. Following the strategy of "changing the target audience", Kenya is switching between its audiences in search of tourists willing to visit the country despite the terror incidents.

An additional aspect of the "changing the target audience" strategy is to extend the marketing efforts to other audiences, who might be less affected by the negative traits of the place. **Tanzania** is thus trying to extend its tourism product beyond the traditional safari tours. Following international trends, the country is developing sports tourism products to include deep sea fishing, golfing and a marathon run on the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro. In a press release issued by the Tanzania Tourist Board public relations office, it was claimed that "sports tourism is a way forward to attract more foreign tourists in the country" (*eTN*, 4 November 2008). In this view, sports tourists are a new segment that are high spenders and their travel choices are more resilient than those of tourists who come to view the natural splendors of the country.

Another country that eyes an alternative market is **Zimbabwe**. In recent years, Zimbabwe received some negative media coverage, much of it resulting from acts performed by President Robert Mugabe, who has ruled the country since independence in 1980. Among other things, President Mugabe led a policy of confiscating land and giving it to members of his political party (*BBC News*, 1 April 2005); he imposed severe restrictions on the freedom of the press (*The Guardian*, 29 July 2009); used the Zimbabwean military to force employees in government-controlled diamond mines to work in conditions that violate their human rights (*BBC News*, 2 November 2011); and used violence and murder as electoral strategies (*BBC News*, 6 December 2011). For these reasons and others, Zimbabwe has a strong motivation to find an alternative audience that is less sensitive to issues of democracy and human rights. Following

this line of thought, a marketing campaign from 2013 has been looking at the Chinese source market with an aggressive promotion strategy. The promotion plan includes relaxing visa restrictions, improving air connectivity and other marketing activities (*eTN*, 28 June 2013). Following this strategy, Zimbabwe is taking advantage not only of the immense growth in the Chinese outbound market, but also of the Chinese tourists' mentality and their political-cultural background.

Chapter summary

According to UNWTO data, over one billion tourists traveled the world in 2013. However, Sub-Saharan Africa received only 5 percent of international tourist arrivals and 3 percent of international tourist earnings (UNWTO, 2014c). This chapter described just some of the efforts that Sub-Saharan African countries are making in order to improve their destination image and increase their share in the global tourism industry. Following the multi-step model for altering a place image, this chapter focused on three groups of media strategies: strategies focusing on the source of the message, those focusing on the message itself and the strategies focusing on the target audience. In every chapter, different media strategies were discussed using case studies of tourism promotions from East, South, West and Central Africa.

While these marketing initiatives represent the point of view of Sub-Saharan African countries, it is perhaps time to also consider the Western point of view. The stereotypes that African marketers face are in the minds of Western audiences, and many of them are based on misconceptions, ignorance and superstitions. In the complex relations between the tourism supply and demand systems, both sides have their responsibility. Sub-Saharan African countries have the responsibility to improve living conditions, their level of development and infrastructure, safety and security and other aspects of the tourism supply system. On the other hand, tourism audiences have the responsibility to educate themselves about African history, geography and politics, to better understand reality in the African continent and to see their visits as a tool to promote economic, social and environmental development.

7

Marketing Asian Destinations

Asia is the world's largest continent. It accounts for almost 30 percent of the world's land area and is home to over 4 billion people – approximately 60 percent of the world's population. Asian civilizations are rich in history, culture and heritage, and these cradles of mankind are still growing and developing every day. Asia is home to some of the world's most vibrant economies and to success stories such as those of China, India, Japan, Singapore and South Korea. And yet, in contrast to Asia's economic growth in recent decades, over 900 million people still live in poverty, and issues of child mortality, inadequate food supply and illiteracy are more relevant than ever before (Hudman and Jackson, 2003; Lew et al., 2008; Boniface et al., 2012).

With its immense dimensions, Asia can be divided into several geographical regions. First is North-East Asia, which includes China, Japan, North and South Korea, Mongolia and Taiwan. Second is South-East Asia, a major tourism hub that includes Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Vietnam. Third is South Asia, which includes Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Fourth and last are Central and Western Asia, including the countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Following the UNWTO approach, Central and Western Asia are considered as part of Europe (UNWTO, 2014c). Naturally, each of these areas has its own characteristics, its unique tourism supply system and its distinctive challenges with regard to tourism marketing and development (Boniface et al., 2012).

Taking a tourism statistics perspective, Asian destinations have the highest growth rate for tourism arrivals. As a sub-region, South-East Asia is the fastest growing tourism region in the world, with a growth rate of

11 percent in 2012–2013. In the global list of the top ten international tourism destinations estimated by tourism receipts, there was an impressive representation by the Asian destinations of Thailand (+23 percent), Hong Kong (+18 percent) and Macao (+18 percent). Looking at international tourism arrivals, in 2013, 236 million tourists visited Asia; 127 million visited North-East Asia, 93 million visited South-East Asia and 16 million visited South Asia. These numbers represent a market share of 22 percent of global tourism in the year 2013 (UNWTO, 2014c).

Just like the large number of countries in Asia, so is the number of images and stereotypes. To mention just a few notable negative images, China is handling a long series of issues in regard to human rights abuse (Chang and Halliday, 2005; *BBC News*, 2 October 2014). Cambodia's image is heavily stained by the Khmer Rouge Genocide of 1975–1979, which claimed the lives of up to 2.5 million people (*BBC News*, 19 September 2007). The islands composing the country of Indonesia are associated with acts of terror including the Bali attack of 2002, which killed 202 people from 21 countries (*BBC News*, 11 October 2012). Vietnam is associated with its long conflicting past, with three decades of bitter wars between its north and south (*BBC News*, 15 May 2014). In this chapter we will ask how Asian countries promote tourism; which media strategies can be used to change these stereotypes and restore a positive image; and how can marketing strategies support countries in the developing world to step forward and take their place as global centers for business and tourism.

Source strategies

Based on the multi-step model for altering place images (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a), the discussion on media strategies can be divided into three sections: media strategies focusing on the source of the message; media strategies focusing on the message itself; and media strategies focusing on the target audience. Starting with those focusing on the source of the message – this is a group of strategies that tries to influence media coverage patterns, or to bypass and replace the news media messages. That is, in order to change media coverage patterns, it is necessary to modify or minimize the negative news and increase positive media attention.

Media cooperation and media relations

The media can be handled in a positive manner, in contrast to the tough approach of China and North Korea. Adopting this constructive

approach, **India's** Ministry of Tourism signed a deal with the BBC, in which the BBC was paid to produce and air a mini-series called "Travel India". The series of six, half-hour episodes was hosted by a well-known cricket commentator, Harsha Bhogle. They included journeys to spiritual sites, places of scenic beauty, urban business centers as well as underdeveloped rural centers. The series was telecast on BBC World News across Europe, Asia Pacific, South Asia, the Middle East, and was also made available on the BBC's partner, UK TV. The footage of the TV series was also used in in-flight advertisements which lasted 30 seconds for carriers such as United Airlines and US Airways, as well as five-minute corporate films on Ayurveda and wellness (*eTN*, 9 October 2008). By working together with the BBC, the Indian Ministry of Tourism could influence this important message source and increase the amount of positive media coverage for the country.

Another country seeking to cultivate its relations with the media is **Thailand**. As part of its effort to restore the country's image following many incidents of political instability, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) launched "Thailand's Best Friends Forever Mega Fam Trip" in July 2014. The event hosted more than 900 opinion leaders – celebrities and travel industry executives in addition to many bloggers and travel journalists. The event aimed to convey the message that the Thai tourism industry was back to normal, to restore visitors' confidence in returning to Thailand and to dispel any lingering doubts about visiting the country. According to the governor of TAT: "The event aims to effectively communicate a feeling that everything is back to normal and that the national atmosphere is back to its usual vibrant, fun-loving self. This will help restore visitors' confidence and bring them back to the 'Land of Smiles'". Regarding the media, the governor noted that: "All possible media have been chosen, both conventional print and TV plus bloggers. Local celebrities have also been invited from a number of source markets to enhance the star power and viewership appeal" (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2014). Following the strategy of cooperation with the media, Thailand is working hard to establish rapport with news people, shape the source of the message and generate positive media coverage.

Applying physical/economic threats

While the image of a place can be cultivated by publishing positive news, it can also be negatively affected by negative media coverage. Trying to avoid or minimize negative media coverage, the authorities of the People's Republic of **China** are constantly dealing with journalists

and news people, trying to discourage them from reporting negatively about the country. For example, in 2006 China imposed new restrictions on foreign journalists, banning them from publishing news that might result in a negative effect on the country's reputation. In order to implement the restrictions, local and international journalists were arrested and thousands of government officials were recruited in order to monitor online forums and news websites (*NYT*, 9 September 2006). In March 2008, the Chinese government acted against the media in response to a series of demonstrations in Tibet against the Chinese regime, trying to prevent users from uploading videos and images that would damage China's public image (*NYT*, 17 March 2008; 25 March 2008). The measures included blocking the access of journalists, and blocking access to YouTube and other social media sites. In a different action aimed at preventing negative media coverage, foreign reporters were arrested and taken for police investigation. Other reporters stated that they were followed by the Chinese police and that their email accounts were hacked (*NYT*, 8 March 2011). In an additional report, the Foreign Correspondents' Club of China claimed that the Chinese authorities had sought to influence coverage by intimidating reporters, withholding visa permits and banning journalists from visiting much of the country (*NYT*, 12 September 2014). In all of these cases, the Chinese government was trying to shape the country's media image by putting pressure on the source of the message, hoping that by restrictions, blockage and arrests they could minimize negative news reports and prevent the media from reporting on negative issues that would damage the country's image among international audiences.

Another country which has chosen to take a heavy hand against the media is the Democratic People's Republic of **Korea**. In December 2014, Sony Pictures was about to release *The Interview*, a film about a fictional plot to kill the North Korean leader, Kim Jong-un. Among other items, the film portrays a negative image of North Korea and its leader, linking the country with a brutal dictatorship and a totalitarian regime. In an attempt to prevent the movie's release, computer hackers linked to North Korea carried out a cyber-attack on Sony. In addition, they issued threats, mentioning possible terror attacks against cinemas that would screen the film and warned that "the world will be full of fear". Two weeks before the film was due to be released, the hackers wrote a message: "Remember the 11th of September 2001. We recommend you to keep yourself distant from the places [of screening] at that time". In response, Sony Pictures cancelled the planned US release and considered shelving the film (*BBC News*, 18 December 2014). Eventually, as

major cinemas did not want to take the risk, the movie was released in independent theatres and on online platforms. Ironically, the threats by North Korea only raised the film's profile, generated increased press coverage and resulted in much public attention. This resulted in earnings of \$15 million in the movie's first three days of online sale (*BBC News*, 29 December 2014).

Using the Internet as an alternative source

An additional way to influence a destination's image is by bypassing the news media and using alternative sources. Following this line of thought, in 2011 **India** launched the "Eventful India" campaign, which is an online photography contest aimed at promoting tourism to India by spotlighting festivals and cultural events. In the campaign, Internet users were encouraged to take a photograph of ethnic, religious or cultural events and submit them to the contest's website. According to the organizers, India hosts celebrations and festivals almost every day of the year. These events are lively and unique, creating an exceptional experience and fulfilling the promise of the "Incredible India" brand. The photography contest promotes India as a cultural destination both for domestic and international travelers, emphasizing the rich and vibrant culture of the subcontinent (www.eventfulindia.in). By conducting the campaign on the Internet, the marketers tried to bypass the negative images of poverty, underdevelopment and chaos that appear frequently on mass media channels (*The Times of India*, 17 July 2014).

Another Asian country that has used the Internet as an alternative source is **China**. While promoting tourism in China via the traditional media might encounter some challenges, the social media arena is free and accessible to everyone. This opportunity was taken by the city of Hangzhou in China, launching a social media campaign in order to promote the city's image and boost tourism. In the 13th century, the legendary Italian traveler, Marco Polo, visited the city of Hangzhou in southeast China and described it in his journals as "The City of Heaven; the most beautiful and magnificent in the world". In recent times, the Hangzhou Tourism Commission searched for a "modern-day Marco Polo" who will come to Hangzhou and praise its beauty. The city offered a salary of some \$55,000 for the new ambassador to come to Hangzhou, discover its hidden gems, and share them via Twitter, Facebook and YouTube (*Forbes*, 18 May 2014). On his Twitter page, the modern Marco Polo tweeted pictures and anecdotes from his new life in Hangzhou, sharing information about local architecture, cuisine, traditions, nature and night-life (https://twitter.com/MMP_LiamBates). Hangzhou's campaign was

inspired by other social media campaigns in which tourist destinations recruit web users to serve as ambassadors on the social media. The most known example of this kind was for “The best job in the world” campaign (2009) produced by **Queensland**, Australia, looking for a caretaker to “Explore the islands of the Great Barrier Reef, swim, snorkel, make friends with the locals and generally enjoy the tropical Queensland climate and lifestyle” (Ketter and Avraham, 2012).

Another Asian tourism campaign inspired by the Australian example of “The best job in the world” was “The Ultimate Thailand Explorers”. In September 2009, TAT launched a social media campaign, aimed at drawing attention to the country’s leading attractions: Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Pattaya and the islands of Phuket and Koh Samui. At first, it invited users from around the world to submit an application video to be rated by other users. Those who managed to get the highest number of online votes were grouped into five teams, who were each awarded six days to travel around Thailand to explore the many attractions, sights, activities and other features found there. To promote the destinations, the contestants were required to share their daily experiences with the global audience by posting photos, videos, blogs and travel stories using social media tools. The purpose was to inspire other global travelers to learn more about Thailand and visit the country’s top attractions. The winning participants were awarded a cash prize and a dream holiday package in Thailand. According to Thailand’s Tourism Deputy Governor for Policy and Planning, 250,000 people visited the campaign’s website and there were over 600,000 viewers of the participants’ videos (*eTN*, 1 November 2009; Ketter and Avraham, 2012).

In addition to “The Ultimate Thailand Explorers” campaign, Thailand was engaged in several other online initiatives to promote international tourism. In 2008, its tourism numbers had dropped resulting from the country’s ongoing political unrest (*eTN*, 3 September 2008; 16 September 2008). As a response, TAT launched two social media campaigns aimed at improving the country’s image. The first was “Amazing Thailand – An amazing experience photo contest”; an online initiative in which tourists were encouraged to post video clips from their visit to Thailand. In return, TAT awarded prizes including digital cameras, smartphones and hotel packages. According to TAT, the video contest was aimed at creating “an inspiration for the online tourists around the world to visit Thailand”.

The second online marketing initiative was the Thailand Portfolio Project; in this, tourists were encouraged to upload photos and travel articles to the Thailand tourism website. According to the Deputy

Governor for Marketing Communications, TAT, "It is now very popular for tourists to share their holiday experiences by uploading their travel pictures and videos on the Internet and on social media networking sites, such as YouTube.com and Flickr.com. Many of these photos and video clips are really amazing and they help to inspire other people to visit those destinations" (*eTN*, 6 May 2008). Taking these two marketing initiatives together, TAT is trying to bypass the news media and form direct relations with global audiences. While the images in the news media mainly relate to the issues of political unrest, images generated through the Thailand Portfolio project and the "Amazing Experience" video contest will probably present favorable images of lush jungles, white sandy beaches and turquoise lagoons.

In addition to the Internet, tourism destinations can use other sources, as was the case with **Sri Lanka**. In December 2004, a deadly tsunami swept the beaches of Sri Lanka, Indonesia, India, Thailand, Maldives, Myanmar, Somalia and other neighboring countries. The tsunami killed more than 220,000 people, displaced millions and caused heavy damage both to general infrastructure and the tourism superstructure (*BBC News*, 18 December 2005). In the island country of Sri Lanka, 30,000 people lost their lives and half a million lost their homes. While the east coasts of Sri Lanka suffered severe damage, the west coasts remained unharmed. Several weeks after the tsunami, the search for missing people was over, temporary shelters were built for the homeless, all ruins were carried away and new beginnings were made. This was also the time to restore tourism, and battle the harsh media images of death, destruction and human suffering. In February 2005, Sri Lanka took several measures in order to restore tourism: launching a print media campaign under the slogan "Fall in Love Again (in Sri Lanka)"; employing celebrities such as Arjuna Ranatunga – the former captain of the Sri Lankan cricket team; and building cooperation with the media in key source markets. One marketing initiative that used the media strategy of bypassing the source of the message was to send postcards to tourists who had visited Sri Lanka in the past. In this initiative, members of the Sri Lanka Tourist Board gave blank postcards to employees in Sri Lanka's tourism industry and asked them to write to their past guests, inviting them to come back to Sri Lanka. A few days later, the postcards were picked up by the Sri Lanka Tourist Board and sent across the world (Flambert, 2010). In this marketing initiative, the Sri Lanka Tourist Board used the tourism industry workers as an alternative source to the mass media. While the mass media were focused on tragedy and destruction, this alternative source enabled Sri Lanka to open a new communication

channel, one that was credible, positive and personal, and assisted the country in bringing back the tourists.

Message strategies

The second group of media strategies described in this chapter are those that focus on the message itself. The strategies in this group make a direct attempt to modify the destination's image by delivering positive messages or by acting to minimize negative impressions. They are arranged in a gradual manner, from those that ignore the crisis or take moderate measures to those that take extreme actions to cope with the situation.

Limiting the crisis

The first media strategy under the group of message strategies is to limit the crisis. Here, places acknowledge the crisis but try to minimize its effect on tourism and everyday life in the destination. One country that employed this strategy is **Thailand** – one of the leading tourism destinations in Asia, which has been on the map of global tourism since the 1970s (Boniface et al., 2012). In 2013, over 26 million tourists visited the country, ranking it as the tenth most visited country in the world (UNWTO, 2014c). While Thailand manages to attract high numbers of international tourists, the country suffers from long-standing issues of political instability. For example, a military coup in September 2006 ousted Thailand's Prime Minister (*BBC News*, 20 September 2006); in September 2008, opposition protesters occupied Bangkok's main government complex and conducted mass anti-government protests (*BBC News*, 13 July 2012); and in March to May 2010, tens of thousands of protesters paralyzed parts of Bangkok with demonstrations lasting several months that were violently ended by the army (*BBC News*, 28 November 2014).

In order to maintain tourism in this volatile political climate, Thailand employed a variety of media strategies including that of "limiting the crisis". For example, in September 2008 the countries of South Korea, the UK, Canada, Japan and Australia issued travel advisories regarding the situation in Thailand. In response, a member of the Thailand Hotels Association announced to the press that "99 percent of Thailand remains largely unaffected" (*eTN*, 3 September 2008). In a press release later that month, a member of TAT claimed that "[t]he protesters have been mostly limited to the Prime Minister's compound and nearby areas in the capital" (*eTN*, 16 September 2008). In May 2010, the governor of TAT issued a press release entitled "Thailand: welcoming you". In this

message, the governor stated that “[t]he events of the past few weeks took place only in a few areas of the country. Major tourist destinations outside of Bangkok, and most of the city itself, were not affected . . . The things that make Thailand so appealing to visitors – our unique culture, natural attractions such as mountains and beaches, incomparable value, and the welcoming hospitality of Thai people – have not changed. The country’s transportation infrastructure is fully operational. Tourism operators throughout Thailand are ready and waiting to offer visitors exceptional holiday experiences” (*eTN*, 3 June 2010). In this message, the governor explained that the crisis was limited to a small area and announced clearly that, in most of the country, the tourist infrastructure and services are operating as usual.

In the same spirit, TAT issued a similar statement in 2013: “The demonstrations in Bangkok have been peaceful and are mainly taking place at the Democracy Monument, Phan Fa Bridge and Makkawan Bridge on Ratchadamnoen Avenue . . . Life in Bangkok and all other areas of Thailand is continuing as per normal. Tourist attractions and activities as well as businesses in Bangkok and other provinces are not affected, and continue as usual as you can see in these Thai live cam streaming cameras that present a number of stunning preset views of Thailand’s most famous and popular destinations including Chiang Mai, Ko Samui and Nong Khai” (*eTN*, 23 November 2013). With this statement, Thai officials took several steps: firstly, they acknowledged the crisis and recognized the problem in order to demonstrate openness and gain a trustworthy image (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a). Secondly, the statement “fenced off” the crisis, limiting it to very specific areas and delivering the message that in 99 percent of Thailand businesses were operating as usual and tourism was continuing as normal. Thirdly, the use of live cameras in popular spots around the country provides extra credibility for the message that in most of the country tourism continues as usual, allowing potential tourists to see it with their own eyes.

In late 2002 and early 2003, global leaders of travel and tourism were deeply concerned about the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) epidemic. The epidemic spread quickly, infecting over 8,000 people in 37 countries and causing 774 deaths (World Health Organization, 2003; *The Guardian*, 31 October 2013). As most SARS cases were in China and Hong Kong, the epidemic had a devastating effect on tourism in Asia. For example, tourist arrivals to Laos were down by 30 percent, although there was only one suspected case in the country, which turned out to be a false alarm. Trying to restore tourism, tourism stakeholders from East Asia met in the **Philippines** capital, Manila, on June 2003. At the

meeting, the stakeholders worked on a marketing project to promote tourism to all areas except for China (*Taipei Times*, 23 June 2003). This initiative followed the strategy of limiting the crisis; instead of denying any risk of SARS and brushing aside any negative reactions, the message now acknowledged the crisis but limited it to one specific area. In this way, SARS fears might continue but now the epidemic was fenced off to one restricted area, and tourism to other areas could be restored.

One major natural disaster that led several places to employ the media strategy of limiting the crisis was the 2004 tsunami in South-East Asia. In the **Maldives**, for example, soon after the wave swept the islands' beaches, the republic's Tourist Bureau announced that only 19 resorts had been damaged, and that tourists were welcome at the other 55 resorts, which were operating normally (*Ha'aretz*, 7 January 2005). Similarly, employing the same strategy for the entire South-East Asia region, Francesco Frangialli, secretary-general of the World Tourism Organization, urged the media to undertake responsible coverage of the tsunami disaster. In the UNWTO newsletter he wrote that "[s]aturation coverage of the tragedy in the most damaged areas can lead to a certain level of misunderstanding among consumers, especially when around 80 percent of hotels and resorts in these destinations remain fully operational". As an example, Frangialli gave the case of **Indonesia**, where top tourist destinations such as Bali and Lombok were not affected at all, but still had to face an image crisis resulting from the tsunami (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a).

Delivering a counter message

One way to handle a negative image is to send a counter message aimed at shattering it. This media strategy was employed by the Republic of **Maldives** in February 2012, as the country experienced a phase of political instability in which widespread demonstrations led the president to resign in what was later described as a coup (*BBC News*, 5 December 2014). In response, the newly appointed president held a press conference relating to the issue of tourist safety in the country. It was stated that: "All nationals coming to the Maldives are safe, all government offices including police stations and schools are open and all island resorts are safer here. Despite the crisis everything continues to function and no foreign nationals have been affected" (*eTN*, 12 February 2012). In these words, the newly appointed president thus tried to deliver a counter message aimed at contradicting the perception that following the coup the country was unstable and unsafe, and that tourists should keep away from it. This message was extremely important in the case of Maldives,

as tourism accounts for more than 30 percent of its GDP and more than 60 percent of its foreign exchange earnings (Shareef and McAleer, 2007).

One possible cause of image crises is plagues and epidemics, which could have a rapid and deadly effect on tourism and foreign investments (Glaesser, 2006). In 2006, shortly after **Hong Kong** was officially declared “SARS-free”, a new campaign was launched to deliver this information. Using the slogan “Live it. Love it”, the city was anxious to create the impression that it was alive again. The new slogan was designed to contradict two negative perceptions: that Hong Kong was not alive, because of the deadly SARS epidemic; the other was that tourists were no longer visiting Hong Kong, and the city was not “alive” in the sense of being vibrant, dynamic and vital. Printed brochures that were also part of the campaign referred directly to the SARS epidemic, asserting that it had actually brought about a positive change in Hong Kong, creating an atmosphere of friendliness and hospitality among the local citizenry. A similar marketing initiative was taken by **Singapore**, which had also suffered from the SARS crisis during 2003. Singapore informed the travel industry and potential consumers in key markets that the country was safe again and free of SARS (Beirman, 2006).

The media strategy of delivering a counter message was also employed by **Japan**, trying to restore tourism following the radiation leak at the Fukushima nuclear plant in March 2011. In response to the crisis, international visitor numbers in April 2011 were down by 63 percent and in August 2011 tourist numbers had fallen by 32 percent (*The Guardian*, 12 October 2011). According to data issued by Japan Airlines, the volume of passengers in April 2011 had dropped by at least 25 percent (*eTN*, 4 May 2011). One year after the Fukushima disaster, the ambassador of Japan in Israel published a newspaper advertisement to mark the event. In the advertisement, the ambassador stated that tourism and business in the country were back to normal, that the radiation leak was over and that Japan was open and safe again. In addition, the ambassador invited the readers to come and visit Japan and to see for themselves the new and restored country (*Ha'aretz*, 11 March 2012). In this advertisement, Japan was directly delivering a counter message, aimed at contradicting the notion that the country was unsafe and that the tourism business had closed down.

Another instance of delivering a counter message was conducted by the island country of the **Philippines**. For some time now, the Philippines has been trying to battle the country's image as a sex tourism destination, with an estimate that 40 percent of the tourists who come to the country are attracted by the local sex industry. In response

to these negative perceptions, a statement was issued by the Tourism Assistant Secretary. It claimed that most tourists come to the Philippines to go “shopping, sightseeing and visiting friends”. In addition, it stated clearly that “cases of sex tourism in the country are isolated” (*eTN*, 23 September 2011). In a similar statement, the mayor of Baguio City in the Philippines issued a press release to counter the image of his city as a sex capital. He said that “while the social night life in the city may be considered fun compared to other nearby cities and provinces in the north, there is no such thing as sex tourism in the city” (*eTN*, 7 December 2014). In both cases, the Philippines was trying to deliver a message aimed at contradicting the sex tourism image and protecting the public image of the country from such negative associations.

Tackling the crisis

According to the strategic approach, probably the best way to solve an image crisis is to solve the problem that caused the crisis (Avraham and Ketter, 2008b). This line of thought was employed by Myanmar’s police force in August 2008. Earlier that year, there had been several clashes between Muslims and Buddhists in the country, initiated by the Kachin Independence Organization, fighting for autonomy in the north of the country (*BBC News*, 10 October 2013). Trying to improve security and prevent a potential crisis, the Myanmar police force worked hard to provide high security measures for tourists. According to the police colonel of Myanmar Tourist Police Department, “Our force still doesn’t cover the whole country, but effective security measures have been taken in areas where most tourists visit. The Tourist Police Department is now working together with local police forces in implementing these measures . . . Many tourists visit our area so our police force patrols the area every day. We have also taken necessary preventive measures in the area” (*eTN*, 28 August 2013). In his words, the police colonel acknowledged that the best way to manage a crisis was to prevent it, and seek to actively improve security so that tourists would not be affected by the ethnic clashes in Myanmar.

In 2013, **India** tourism suffered greatly following a series of sexual assaults and violent crimes against tourists. These tragic cases included the gang-rape of a female student on a bus in India’s capital, New Delhi (*BBC News*, 29 December 2012); the gang-rape of a Swiss tourist in the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh (*BBC News*, 17 March 2013); and of a 30-year-old American tourist in the northern state of Himachal Pradesh (*BBC News*, 4 June 2013). As a result, several countries, including the UK, issued travel advisories about India, and it was reported that the number

of international tourist arrivals to the country fell by 25 percent in the first quarter of 2013 (*eTN*, 31 March 2013). Trying to tackle this dreadful reality, the Department of Tourism in the Government of Goa decided to take strict measures to ensure the safety of tourists and visitors. As part of the new security policy, a new tourist police force was established. The tourist police included a large number of female police officers who patrol at night in order to increase the sense of security among women visiting the state. The patrolling teams cover the main tourist areas and operate seven days a week, from sunset to midnight (*eTN*, 10 April 2013). By taking these steps, Goa's state Tourism Minister hopes that the issues of personal security will be solved, the cause of the crisis will be brought to an end and the destination's image will improve.

In a manner similar to that of Myanmar and India, the Philippines and Malaysia have also worked to tackle issues regarding personal security of tourists. In the **Philippines**, the number of policemen allocated for tourist destinations was increased, and the police officers in tourist areas were trained in a special program by the Philippines Department of Tourism (*eTN*, 13 December 2010). In **Malaysia**, the government organized an international workshop on tourism safety and security. At this event, members of governmental offices, the private tourism sector and security organizations worked together to promote safety and security and to encourage tourism to the Philippines (*eTN*, 27 April 2010).

Another type of reality that might lead to a problematic image was found on the Xong River in Vang Vieng, a popular tourist city in **Laos**. A common activity for backpackers who come to Vang Vieng is to ride on top of an inner tube in the river, and to stop on the way to drink at tubing bars, serving alcoholic drinks laced with opium and hallucinogenic mushrooms. The dangerous combination of water sports on a wild river, alcohol consumption and drugs has resulted in very tragic outcomes. According to local sources, the death toll among tourists for 2011 was more than 20 and, in the first eight months of 2012, at least six foreign tourists died in the river: three Australians, one French, one Irish and one American (*eTN*, 23 August 2012). Following these tragic events, the *Lonely Planet* travel guide published a warning that advises taking extra care and wearing a life-jacket when tubing (*Lonely Planet*, 2015). In order to prevent long-term damage to Laos' image, the country's authorities decided to take several actions on this matter. Firstly, several bars that were selling drugs were closed by the police. Secondly, some restaurant staff were trained in first aid, to deal with accidents on the river. Thirdly, backpackers in the Vang Vieng area were addressed with a

safety campaign, informing them of what they should and should not do (*eTN*, 23 August 2012). In this manner, the government of Laos is acting proactively to tackle this problematic reality and to prevent further incidents of danger and death.

Another aspect of the media strategy of tackling the crisis is to improve the actual situation of the destination in order to make it more welcoming for tourists and visitors. Trying to make **Singapore** more inviting and friendly, its government has invested much effort in promoting courtesy and kindness among the local population. Since the late 1970s, the government has been involved in a series of campaigns employing the slogans: “Courtesy is our way of life” (1979); “It’s so nice to be courteous” (1981); “Let’s go the courtesy way” (1983); “Bring on a smile” (1985); “Courtesy begins with me; go on, be the first” (1990); “Try a little kindness” (1996); and “Let’s use hand phones with courtesy” (2000). A campaign in 2009 tried to promote ideal behaviors such as smiling, speaking good English and performing acts of kindness, and to eliminate behaviors that are considered negative such as spitting, chewing gum or throwing garbage off balconies (*NYT*, 15 November 2009). By improving the overall behavior of the Singaporean people, national decision-makers hoped to create an improved reality that would result in an enhanced image – Singapore as a friendly, smiling and welcoming destination.

Hosting spotlight events

The media strategy of hosting mega media events is simple and straightforward: destinations host major events to attract visitors, generate media coverage and improve their image. Events that attract much global attention include sports events, that is, marathon runs, golf tournaments, motor races and other types of games and competitions (Avraham and Ketter, 2006). The holy grail of all sports events is the Olympic Games – an international multi-sport event held every four years. The original Olympic Games were held in Greece from 776 BCE until 393 CE. They were revived in 1896 and took place in Athens, ushering in the modern era of the Olympic Games (www.olympic.org). One prime example of a place that utilized the Olympiad to overcome an image crisis was **China**. Following the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, Beijing hosted the 1990 Asian Games and made use of the media attention resulting from the games to improve its image and present a more favorable portrait of the country (Hall & O’Sullivan, 1996).

In 2008, China used the Olympic Games hosted in Beijing to battle the issues of human rights and freedom of speech. In the eyes of local decision makers, “The games will provide a window to the world for

China. That window will get bigger and bigger as the games get closer” (Barnet, 2001). To exploit this opportunity to the fullest, the equivalent of over \$40 billion was invested in the city of Beijing in preparation for the Olympic Games (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a). Following the media strategy of hosting spotlight events, Chinese decision-makers hoped that hosting such a mega event would help to expand the country’s image, create favorable reactions and shift media attention away from negative issues. Indeed, the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games managed to break a record in the amount of attention the games received. An estimated number of 4.7 billion viewers – or 70 percent of the world’s population – tuned in to watch the Games (*BBC News*, 26 July 2012). Much of this attention was focused on Chinese sportsmen, leading the list of gold medal winners with 51 medals, 40 percent more than the US (*BBC News*, 13 August 2012). However, the media attention during the Olympics was not only positive; an in-depth analysis of US news coverage patterns revealed that much media attention was given to negative issues such as lack of human rights, freedom of speech and environmental concerns. The analysis found that the American media coverage of the games was framed within the context of the political and economic relations between the US and China and with regard to the values of the American culture (Qing and Richeri, 2013).

Another mega sports event that attracts global attention is the Formula One Grand Prix. This high-class auto racing tournament is based on the Formula One cars – the fastest racing cars in the world. Grand Prix began in 1906 and every year many countries compete to host a round of the race, seeking to boost their image, economy and tourism industry. **Singapore** has hosted rounds of Formula One Grand Prix since 2008; in 2011, the country invested 150 million Singapore dollars in staging the event, with the government taking care of 60 percent of the costs. According to the Singapore Tourism Board, tourists coming for the 2011 three-day race spent around 100 million Singapore dollars. In total, the 2011 Singapore Grand Prix generated about 200 million Singapore dollars, offering a sizable return on investment. In addition to the economic benefits, the race promotes the general image of Singapore as a leisure destination and as a place in which one can live, work and play (Henderson et al., 2010).

Another destination that has used the media strategy of hosting events to promote tourism and battle negative images is the island of Sumatra, the largest island in **Indonesia**. Trying to promote itself in the international market, the island hosted two major events. First was the 2011 South-East Asian Games, attracting 6,000 athletes from 10 countries

in the region. Second was launching the Musi Triboatlon – an annual international boat race along the Musi River, one of the largest rivers on Sumatra Island (*eTN*, 3 May 2011). The accumulated media effect of these events was expected to put Sumatra on the tourism map and alter some of the problematic images with which Indonesia is associated.

Using films, TV series and books

Popular culture has a great impact in shaping our image of places, and many destinations in the world can attribute much of their tourism success to their appearance in films, television series and books (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a). In order to promote a destination's image using popular culture, places can proactively promote the production of such content. Taking this path, following a series of violent incidents against tourists, the island country of **Philippines** tried to promote film production in the country as a means to enhance tourism and improve the island's image. Following this media strategy, the Philippines Tourism Secretary took a business trip to California with the aim of banishing the negative image: "I went up to Hollywood and I spoke with some producers there and they were very enthusiastic about coming down to the Philippines". A senior official at the Department of Tourism said in an interview with Reuters: "If Hollywood actors are able to live here and shoot (movies) peacefully, it will bolster our efforts to promote the Philippines internationally" (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a).

India is universally known for its highly developed film industry, nicknamed "Bollywood". Bollywood is the largest film industry in the world and in 2014 it made more than a thousand films – twice the number made in Hollywood (*BBC News*, 24 April 2014). In recent years, it has made its way into global popular culture (Kavoori et al., 2008). As Bollywood films cross the boundaries of Asia and make their way to Western audiences, they showcase the Indian culture, traditions, cuisine, people and landscape, sparking interest in traveling to the Indian sub-continent.

A prime example of a movie that was filmed in Asia and had a phenomenal impact on tourism was *The Beach* (2000), starring the American actor, Leonardo DiCaprio. The movie was filmed in 1999 on Phi-Phi Island, in the Krabi Province in southern **Thailand**. The film depicts the adventures of a young American backpacker in his search to find a legendary beach paradise. Although the movie includes some fearful moments, it also includes beautiful scenes of white, sandy beaches, turquoise lagoons and lush jungles. These iconic images made a significant contribution to the public image of Thailand and to its attractiveness

as a tourist destination; in the year following the release of the film, domestic tourism to Krabi Province increased by 5 percent and international tourism grew by 25 percent. Overall, the number of international tourists visiting the Krabi Province jumped from 420,000 in 1999 to 638,000 in 2001 (Warnick et al., 2005).

Association to well-known brands and celebrities

In the strategy of employing celebrities, places are associated with leading movie actors, television hosts, musical performers, key business people and other VIPs in order to bask in their reflected glory. The use of this media strategy may include taking advantage of a celebrity who lives there, inviting famous people to visit the place or covering the visit of celebrities who arrive at the site for their own purposes. In the world of advertising, using celebrities in a campaign is aimed at catching the customers' attention, enhancing the campaign messages and increasing the campaign's long-term effect (Friedman, 2002).

One prime example of a place that uses a local celebrity in order to improve its image is **South Korea**, following the global success of the pop singer nicknamed "Psy". In July 2012 Psy released a music video clip entitled "Gangnam Style". The video refers to the luxurious and lavish lifestyle associated with the Gangnam District of Seoul. Although the video clip was released by an artist who was previously unknown outside of South Korea, the video was received with great enthusiasm by global audiences and reached one billion viewers in just six months, making it the most watched YouTube video at that time (*BBC News*, 21 December 2012). In May 2014 YouTube announced that the video had reached two billion viewers, making it a success on a scale never seen before (*BBC News*, 31 May 2014).

In response to the global success of "Gangnam Style", tourism decision-makers both in Seoul and South Korea have taken several steps to convert Psy's popularity into a tourism promotion tool. In June 2013 South Korea launched a TV campaign entitled "Wiki Korea", starring Psy. The series of advertisements presented six different experiences to be enjoyed by foreigners, including shopping, eating, outdoor scene and nightlife. In each advertisement, Psy explains a word in the Korean language that symbolizes a certain activity, promoting South Korea's language, culture and lifestyle. For example, one advertisement is dedicated to the word "Bulgeum" which literally means "Friday fire". The 15-second video shows Psy on his way to party on Friday night, inviting potential tourists to join him, calling out "Let's party at Bulgeum!" (Visit Korea, 2013a). The commercials have been airing on major TV stations

in about 70 countries around the world, including Australia and the UK (Visit Korea, 2013b).

In another initiative launched in October 2013, the city of Seoul launched its new tourist police force, all dressed in a uniform inspired by the “Gangnam Style” video clip and designed by the Korean fashion designer who had made costumes for Psy. Naturally, the “Gangnam Style” was played at the official inauguration ceremony, and some police officers performed Psy’s famous horse-riding dance (CNN, 17 October 2013). In a marketing perspective, this new police force has a double meaning: firstly, having such a stylish launch attracts media attention and assists South Korea in raising its media profile. Secondly, having police officers walking the streets of Seoul in a “Gangnam Style”-inspired uniform keeps the story alive, and is a marketing talking point that enriches visitors’ experiences and encourages them to have a photograph taken with the police officers and share it on social networks.

Another country that has taken the media strategy of engaging celebrities is **China**. In order to promote tourism from the US, the city of Beijing hired the services of the NBA superstar, Kobe Bryant, and the Los Angeles Lakers. According to a senior spokesperson in the Beijing Bureau of Tourism: “We have become a Lakers’ partner for the new (NBA) season . . . There will be many advertisements for Beijing in Lakers’ home court throughout the season. As part of our contract, Kobe will attend at least one promotion event for the Beijing tourism bureau, and we will offer a free trip for two to Beijing for the Lakers fans” (*China Daily*, 19 December 2009). Promoting Beijing through Lakers’ games, the legendary Kobe Bryant was expected to enhance Beijing’s popularity among the US market and to increase the number of American tourists coming to China’s capital.

In the case of China, the chosen celebrities had no previous link to the destination; **Indonesia**, on the other hand, managed to cooperate with a celebrity that is closely connected to the place. Being a global center for the Buddhist religion, Indonesia attracted the Buddhist Hollywood star, Richard Gere, to visit the country in 2011. On his visit, Gere meditated in Borobudur, Indonesia’s imposing 9th century Buddhist monument in Central Java, engaged in a morning peace walk together with Buddhist monks, participated in a traditional tree-planting ceremony and went on an elephant ride (*USA Today*, 27 June 2011). The visit was strongly supported by public relations efforts in order to maximize the value of the visit and to use Richard Gere’s fame in order to enhance Indonesia’s public image and promote international tourism to the country (*eTN*, 20 June 2011).

Spinning liabilities into assets

In the strategy of spinning liabilities into assets, places make use of an attribute that might be considered as negative, and portray it in a positive light. This strategy was used by the South-East Asian country of **Vietnam**, as part of the country's tourism marketing strategy. During the 2000s, Vietnam used the slogan "Vietnam – The Hidden Charm". In this slogan, Vietnam acknowledges that the country has a weak touristic image and is not a popular tourist destination. By using the "spinning liabilities into assets" strategy, Vietnam is spinning its weak place image into an asset – as a hidden charm can be unspoiled and unique. This slogan went hand in hand with the position of Vietnam in the early stages of its tourism life cycle (Butler, 1980). In the year 2000, for example, Vietnam received approximately 2.1 million international tourists. In 2012, however, Vietnam had approximately 6.8 million international tourists – an increase of over 300 percent (Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, 2014). Resulting from the mass growth in tourism, in 2012 Vietnam's Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism decided to change its old slogan for a new one: "Vietnam – Timeless Charm" (Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, 2012). This new slogan represents the move that Vietnam had made along the tourism life cycle and the way in which tourism marketing strategies are modified as places develop from early into mature stages.

One notion that can be interpreted as both positive and negative is the word "Asia" itself. On the one hand, Asia is home to an endless variety of cultures, unique landscapes and great beauty. On the other hand, the word "Asia" is also associated with stereotypes of underdevelopment and poverty. Trying to make use of the positive aspects of these images, there are two countries that claim ownership over Asia. One is **Malaysia**, using the slogan "Truly Asia" and the other is **Taiwan**, which uses the slogan, "The Heart of Asia." Both countries aspire to use their geographical location in Asia as a positive asset. According to these slogans, being truly Asia or in the heart of Asia means being authentic, unique and special, encouraging one to enjoy the positive images of the area.

One factor that tourists consider when planning their holiday is the climate, and many of them have a strong preference for warm and sunny weather. The climate in the city of Harbin in northern **China**, however, is quite the opposite: in the winter, the temperature drops to 40 degrees below zero (both in Fahrenheit and Centigrade), and remains below freezing for almost half the year. Given the extreme climate, one of the very few options was to spin a liability into an asset: celebrating winter instead of suffering in the freezing cold. Although ice sculpturing

in Harbin dates back many years, the first annual Snow and Ice Festival started in 1985, and has grown into a massive event since. At present, every winter, the festival brings hundreds of thousands of tourists to the city from all over the world. Most of the sculptures at the Snow Festival are the work of competing teams; they come from Russia, Japan, Canada, France and even South Africa. The Ice Festival, a few miles away from the Snow Festival, is anything but dull and colorless. Bright neon lights shine everywhere, deep within huge blocks of ice which form structures as many as one hundred feet high. The ice structures in recent years have included a replica of the Great Wall of China, an entire ship with passengers and a Thai temple complete with hallways and rooms. All the ice used in the festival comes from a nearby river, which provides a limitless supply for the builders (Avraham, 2014a).

Another destination in Asia that has employed the media strategy of spinning liabilities into assets is **Indonesia**. This country, composed of many islands, has a highly diverse population with 360 ethnic groups, and 719 languages are spoken there (*The Economist*, 21 June 2014). For some people, ethnic diversity is associated with ethnic clashes and conflict between indigenous groups; for others it is a wonderful asset, displaying a variety of cultures, tastes and colors. Focusing on the positive side of its ethnic variety, the marketers of Indonesia decided to turn its multicultural diversity into an asset. Several campaigns from the mid-2000s highlighted the positive aspects of the country's ethnic diversity, using the slogans "Indonesia – Endless Beauty of Diversity" and "Indonesia – The Ultimate in Diversity" (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a; Richardson and Sumaco, 2012).

Branding contrary to the stereotype

The last media strategy under the section of promoting Asian destinations using media-focused strategies is branding contrary to the stereotype. Here, destinations develop a new identity that is opposed to or contradicts their former image. This takes the media strategy of "delivering a counter message" one step forward, as the new message now becomes the brand of the place. Several years ago, the strategy of branding contrary to the stereotype was put into practice in the region of **Kashmir**, located in the northern part of India. Kashmir lies along the border between India and Pakistan and has been a center of dispute and political instability for many years. In 2001 the violence in Kashmir took a toll of over 4,500 lives; 2008 was considered to be a relatively peaceful year with fewer than 800 fatalities, including 164 civilians. Yet, the Kashmir area is still populated by more than half a million Indian soldiers, many of them walking around the streets with

bullet-resistant vests and automatic weapons. In a bold marketing initiative, Kashmir's tourism office tried to take advantage of the relative decline in violence and brand this Himalayan region as a global golfing destination. This strategy is backed by governmental funding, as \$6.2 million was allocated to build a golf course in the winter capital, Jammu, and other funds were invested in turning the local airport into an international one. According to Kashmir's director of tourism: "People are going to Sri Lanka. People are going to Israel and Lebanon. But why not Kashmir? It's safer here than New York. Terrorism is a world phenomenon now" (*NYT*, 8 April 2008). Just as, at the moment, Kashmir is identified with terror and conflict, golf is associated with peace and relaxation. The choice of a golfing destination brand is a creative attempt by Kashmir to brand itself in counter to the stereotype, getting rid of its old violent image and replacing it with scenes of wide lawns where people have turned their swords into golf clubs.

A more convincing case of using the media strategy of branding contrary to the stereotype was carried out by the city of **Kitakyushu** in Japan. In the 1960s, Kitakyushu was an important industrial center for the Japanese economy, and the city was characterized by heavy industry and countless factories. As a result, it was stigmatized as a "deadly" city due to the high levels of air- and sea-pollution caused by its petrochemical and other heavy industries. In response, citizens, businesses and the government united in a comprehensive program against pollution. After a series of long and well-planned efforts, in 1975 Kitakyushu claimed to have overcome its pollution problems. To impart its image to the same makeover that the city had experienced, Kitakyushu transformed its image from a "dark city" to a "green city" (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a). In 2011, The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) selected the city of Kitakyushu as the first model city in Asia for urban green growth, marking the city's environmental efforts (*The Guardian*, 21 August 2013). In this way Kitakyushu transformed its polluted past into an environment-friendly present, promising itself and other cities around the world a brighter future.

Audience strategies

The last group of media strategies in this chapter deals with audience-focused strategies. In this case, tourist destinations design their marketing strategy based on their target audience. This may include promoting an affinity with its potential audience in order to get closer to it. Or, alternatively, changing the target audience in order to connect to a new segment of the audience, a segment that is more likely to visit the destination.

Similarity to the target audience

In the media strategy of audience similarity, places demonstrate their closeness to their target audience in order to form an emotional link and boost tourist arrivals. This strategy has been employed by **Indonesia**, aiming to attract tourists from China. In order to catch the attention of the Chinese audience, Indonesia is presenting itself with the assistance of the Hong Kong-born actor and martial artist, Jackie Chan. According to Indonesia tourist stakeholders, Chan is the most popular movie star in Asia and his popularity would attract one million tourists from China in 2014 (*eTN*, 16 August 2014). While the case of Jackie Chan might also be suitable for the media strategy of involving celebrities, the use of a Hong Kong-born celebrity to attract Chinese tourists is more appropriate to the media strategy of audience similarity. Here, the people of China can identify with Jackie Chan based on the similarity of many of his features with their own – his ethnic origin and place of birth, as well as his language and the use of Chinese martial arts. This feeling of closeness and a link with the celebrity can thus be transformed into positive feelings toward Indonesia, especially the feeling that the country is inviting and welcomes Chinese tourists.

Another country that appointed a tourism ambassador based on its popularity among the Chinese audience is **Japan**. While many places chose a flesh and blood representative, Japan has made a unique choice by picking the world-renowned Japanese cartoon character, Hello Kitty. As part of its job as a tourism ambassador to Japan, Hello Kitty operated a travel blog in the Chinese language, introducing tourist attractions in Japan, focusing both on historic and popular-culture sites. At a later stage, Japan released a Hello Kitty tourism app for smartphones, guiding travelers to local Hello Kitty attractions around the country. According to Japan's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Hello Kitty is highly popular among Chinese people and can serve as a tourism ambassador based on its wide acceptance among this audience (*eTN*, 19 May 2008; 3 September 2012). In this choice, Japan tourism stakeholders hope that the Chinese people's feelings of identification toward the cartoon character will result in a greater affinity for Japan and a higher number of Chinese tourists coming to the country.

Changing the target audience

The media strategy of changing a target audience claims that in cases of image crisis, it is sometimes preferable to focus on audience segments that are more resilient to crisis and are more likely to come visit. This strategy was put into action by the Kingdom of **Thailand**,

mentioned earlier in this chapter as a country that manages to maintain high numbers of tourist arrivals despite ongoing political instability issues. Under the strategy of “changing a target audience”, TAT launched its 2009 marketing strategy by looking at the audience’s response to the issues in the country and its readiness to travel. In the strategy formation, four market segments were identified:

- “Ready to Travel” markets include countries such as India, Russia and Indonesia as well as the Gulf area and Scandinavia. These markets are not sensitive to the Kingdom’s political situation, still have considerable purchasing power and are inclined to travel.
- “Potentially Returning Visitor” markets – these cover most of Europe and the US. People in these markets are inclined to visit Thailand but are more concerned about the political situation. They are also more affected by the global economic downturn and are becoming more value-conscious.
- “Concerned Traveler” markets include China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Vietnam and Australia. Despite their close proximity, these markets are far more worried about Thailand’s political situation and are currently affected by the economic slowdown. People in these markets still consider Thailand a convenient tourist destination but have some reservations about returning.
- “Highly Sensitive Traveler” markets include three of the top Thailand sources of incoming visitors: Japan, Korea and Taiwan. These are the most difficult to target as the people in these countries are extremely sensitive to Thailand’s political instability (*eTN*, 19 June 2009).

Following this market segmentation, TAT prioritizes marketing budgets according to the segments’ readiness to travel. For each segment, different campaigns are launched, highlighting different messages. With the more sensitive markets, TAT will focus on public relations activities, cooperation with the media and targeting niche markets such as young backpackers.

An additional aspect of the changing target audience strategy is to develop new market segments. Trying to extend its appeal, **Thailand** is now aiming at LGBT tourists. Using the slogan “Go Thai – Be Free”, the land of smiles is inviting all tourists – regardless of their sexual orientation – to enjoy Thailand’s warm hospitality. According to TAT, it is the only Asian country that has a government-sponsored campaign aimed at LGBT travelers. While Thailand welcomes LGBT tourism, its neighboring countries such as Brunei, Malaysia and Myanmar have laws against sexual contact between men. As one of the most popular tourist destinations in the

world, Thailand knows that tolerance is good for business; gays are considered to be frequent travelers with high levels of disposable income, and marketing for the LGBT market can assist Thailand in increasing its share in the market and maintaining tourism revenue (*NYT*, 3 August 2013).

Another country that has decided to target a new audience segment is **South Korea**. Resulting from a tense situation between South and North Korea, inbound tourism numbers were down and some cancellations were made. Aiming for an audience with better resilience, South Korea responded with a tourism campaign aimed at the Malaysian market. For this audience, the main attractions promoted were shopping and medical tourism. On the shopping side, shopping malls and markets in Seoul were kept open 24 hours a day, offering an abundance of fashion designs, high-quality products and shopping deals. According to the president of Korea's Tourism Organization, this all-night experience is well-suited for Malaysians who have a late-night culture. The shopping proposition was supported by Korea's Grand Sale – an annual nationwide shopping festival, offering special discounts at fashion stores, restaurants and shopping malls (*eTN*, 31 December 2010).

Chapter summary

This chapter analyzed the way in which Asian countries use media strategies in order to prevent negative images, cultivate positive images and boost tourism. Following the multi-step model for altering place images, three groups of media strategies were discussed: media strategies focusing on the source of the message, those focusing on the message itself and strategies focusing on the target audience. The chapter started with a highly challenging starting point – Asia is the largest continent in the world and includes dozens of countries with dozens of different characteristics. However, the case study analysis reveals that there are some dimensions where Asian countries are more alike than different, and use similar media strategies to battle similar image challenges. These findings support the claim that when developing countries try to market tourism in the international market, they share some similar contexts of an initial problematic image, and the tool of media strategies could be useful in order to battle these stereotypes and help the local tourism industry grow and blossom.

8

Final Observations and Insights

Using the conceptual frame of the “multi-step model for altering place image” and integrating theory and practice, we analyzed media strategies used by destinations in the developing world to deal with unexpected crises, stereotypes and prolonged negative images. Such images had developed over many years, and were reinforced in the public mind by superficial and sensational media coverage. In the case of a destination suffering from a prolonged image problem, it seems almost unrealistic to expect tourists to visit such a destination and put aside negative or threatening perceptions and stereotypes, just because of an advertising campaign, a public relations event or other promotional tool, often used by marketers of “regular destinations” that do not suffer from negative images (Anholt, 2005).

Dealing with images of the developing world is important because successful marketing and branding processes have implications on inbound tourism numbers and enhancing the tourism flow. Intercultural dialogue, accomplished through foreign tourism, breaks down stereotypes, prejudices and blocks between cultures, as well as providing jobs and income for the tourism industries (Al-Hamarneh and Steiner, 2004). However, it appears that dealing with image problems will continue to be a challenge for officials and marketers of developing countries until many of them stabilize, improve their infrastructure and solve internal conflicts.

The tourism literature distinguishes between two kinds of image crisis; the first is an unexpected crisis that results from a particular incident, and the second is a cumulative image crisis that developed gradually as the result of a long series of issues and repeated crises over the years (Avraham and Ketter, 2013). When dealing with tourism marketing for developing countries, one cannot ignore the physical reality, which

includes a constant occurrence of problematic happenings and of immediate crises such as crimes, acts of terrorism, political unrest, natural disasters, epidemics and accidents. For that reason, decision-makers in the developing world must better prepare for upcoming crises. The field of crisis management offers organizations and destinations many ways to prepare for crises, practice proper crisis management and create communication contingency plans. Over the years, many publications have shown that organizations and places taking those steps successfully have managed to prevent crises and reduce the damage caused to the organization and destination images during and after crisis (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a; Ritchie, 2009; Coombs and Holladay, 2010).

The second kind of image crisis is a cumulative image crisis which is a result of historical, economic, political and social factors, and of dozens of years of problematic reality, small scale crises and superficial media coverage. Tourism marketing, which is aimed at creating a positive destination image, and image repair after a crisis is not an easy task for the marketers of developing countries because they need to overcome a problematic physical reality that creates constant crises and prolonged negative images. These two factors feed each other and result in substantial challenges in attracting tourism.

In order to bring changes to the image of developing countries, decision-makers must first manage their reality, prevent crises, create an adequate tourism infrastructure and ensure a safe and secure environment for tourists. Developing countries should better manage their image, battle negative perceptions among Western audiences and address problematic coverage patterns in the international media. It seems that until the problematic physical reality – which creates constant, repeated crises – and the resulting prolonged negative image are handled there is no point in using “regular” marketing to promote a developing country. In other words, the way to “regular” place marketing must first pass through the successful management of the physical reality and the prolonged negative image.

From time to time, all places suffer from crises; however, the context of the crisis may influence the level of damage inflicted on the destination image. For places with a strong and positive image and with few crises in their near past, a new crisis will result in a short-lived impact on their image, which will soon be forgotten. In contrast, places in the developing world that suffer from stereotypes and problematic images – due to a history of previous crises – might respond very differently. For such places, the new sudden crisis will trigger the cumulative prolonged negative image, and “reinforce” the negative

perceptions that Western people have toward this place. Consequently, when developing countries attempt to handle a single crisis event, the context of the developing world may affect their efforts at image restoration and include actions to counter the prolonged negative image also. As a result, in tourism marketing of developing countries, it is a highly complex process to distinguish between a sudden crisis and cumulative image crisis, between the past and the present, and between crisis communication management and image management.

Media strategies used by destination marketers

This book focuses on three groups of media strategies – those that focus on the source of the message, those that focus on the message itself and those that focus on the audience. Following the multi-step model for altering a place's image, this book examined tourism marketing in three geographical regions in the developing world. During the analysis, the book discovered a variety of marketing initiatives, advertising campaigns, media relations and crisis communication techniques used by marketers. The following section overviews some of the key media strategies used by destination marketers in Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and the Middle East to promote tourism.

Source strategies

Source strategies concentrate mainly on the destination marketers' efforts to influence or to replace the source that they believe spread negative information about the destination, usually the international media. Source strategies, as used by developing world marketers, can be divided into two main categories: those that seek to replace the source of the message and those that try to influence the source of the unflattering message. The source is usually news people of the international news media, but could also be international organizations (in fields such as human rights, refugees, tourism, environment and ecology), the UN, international courts, travel advisors, non-governmental organizations and other countries. Each of these sources can deliver a negative message, claiming that the country violates its residents' human rights, suffers from high levels of crime, or is unsafe and unattractive to visit. Each of these messages can harm the country's image and lead to negative perceptions that keep tourists away.

Strategies focusing on the source of the message can be arrayed on a continuum from moderate to extreme. Replacing the source of the message is a measure involving more moderate media strategies, while

interfering in the work of the source is a category that tends to be less moderate. Moderate strategies are those that follow the norms of journalism and communication, “play the game” of advertising and PR, and try to affect media image and public opinion in the usual ways. On the other hand, extreme strategies involve attempts by the decision-makers of a destination to force their point of view on the media, doing whatever it takes – from ingratiation to physical force (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a).

Message strategies

Message strategies focus on contradicting the negative messages, stereotypes, perceptions and generalizations spread or reported upon about the destination. Message-focused strategies form the largest group of media strategies used by destination marketers. This is expected because marketers usually perceive the negative image components (e.g., “dangerous”, “boring”, “under-developed”) as the main problem that they need to handle. Message strategies can be classified into two categories. At one end are strategies that deny or only partly acknowledge the crisis, such as recognizing the existence of the destination’s negative image and putting efforts to reduce the scale of the crisis. At the other end are those that reflect full acknowledgement of the image crisis and use strategies such as hosting events, tackling the crisis, spinning liabilities into assets, ridiculing the stereotype and creation of counter-stereotypes.

Audience strategies

Audience strategies are concerned with the audience’s characteristics, perceptions and values. Employing audience strategies, marketers try to show the resemblance and highlight common values (or enemies) between their country and the foreign audience they are addressing. The major elements of the strategies in this category include the awareness and intensive use of the feelings and values of the target audience as a means to improve the destination’s negative image. The main perspective here is not that of the destination but of the target audience itself. The use of messages that focus on the audience can be divided into three major strategies: (1) similarity to the target audience, (2) patriotism and personal/national heritage, and (3) changing the target audience. While in the past, many developing countries’ marketers barely used the changing the target audience strategy, during the last years the marketers have started appealing to local and regional audiences, diversifying the target audience and focusing on domestic tourism, regional tourism and tourism from other developing countries. While in some of the developing countries local tourism was already developed, in

other countries – mainly in the Middle East – this phenomenon is relatively new.

The three audience-focused strategies presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 take the importance of the target audience one step farther and place it at the forefront. In the first, destination marketers attempt to utilize the target audience's feelings and deliver the message "I can gain sympathy by convincing you that we are similar". In the second strategy, tourism stakeholders try to find points of personal or national connection, and highlight them in the marketing process. In the third strategy, the marketers understand that persuading other audiences to visit their destination can be more beneficial than courting the existing one.

The book's purpose

The purpose of the current book is to examine how developing countries try to cope with their prolonged negative image, stereotypes and generalizations as well as the efforts of marketers to bring back tourists after a crisis. In fact, we tried to determine whether marketers from developing countries – which are very different from each other in terms of location, history or population – use the same toolbox to improve the image of their country during normal and turbulent times. The conclusions suggest that despite the differences among these countries and in the components of their negative image, as well as the stereotypes associated with them and the differences in the types of crises they experience, many developing destinations use the same tool set consisting of source, message and audience strategies to overcome crises stemming from immediate and prolonged negative images.

The developing world marketers' use of the same toolbox for similar (but different) image problems is analogous to the treatment of different symptoms caused by the same disease using the same medicine. The disease is analogous to the existing stereotypes toward the developing world and its coverage patterns in the international media, while the composition and dose of the "medicine" is the marketers' uses of SAM strategies. Yet it is important to note that the composition and dose of "medicine" depend on the diagnosis that must be made by the marketers and is actually the preliminary analysis of the "multi-step model for altering a place image". The preliminary analysis (CAP) suggests that image repair efforts need to consider the nature of the crisis (C), the target audience (A) and the characteristics of the place (P). To conclude, developing countries that suffer immediate and prolonged image crises have chosen to use the same SAM strategies to rehabilitate their image

in spite of the different challenges. We, of course, recommend using the analysis of the CAP preliminary analysis, which will help greatly in determining the appropriate strategy to deal with the crisis.

What are the implications of the fact that marketers of developing countries use the same strategies to deal with different negative perceptions and immediate crises? The obvious conclusion is that the marketers must cooperate regarding the knowledge and experience accumulated in handling immediate crises, battling against generalizations and fighting stereotypes. It seems that these marketers believe that they are dealing alone with the challenges associated with prolonged negative images and immediate crises. However, cooperation between developing destinations can greatly assist a number of issues such as learning from experiences of success (and failure) to fight negative perceptions, better understanding of effective strategies in bringing back tourists after crises and strategies that are less effective, successful collaborations with various actors, and success in obtaining positive coverage in the international media. An additional conclusion is that developing destinations have much in common, although each country has its unique geographical, historical, cultural, political and social characteristics. While every place is unique, the media stereotypes distort a destination's complex image and make it into a flat representation. These representations tend to be generalized and similar, and as a result different countries with different characteristics suffer from similar stereotypes that were created by the global media. In this situation, it is only natural for destinations to use the same toolbox of media strategies aimed at shattering these stereotypes.

The hierarchic model of tourism marketing for developing countries

Tourism marketing for developing countries is based on three layers: first, there is the physical reality, which includes the recurrence of immediate crises events. Second, there is a symbolic layer composed of the accumulated result of historical, economic, political and social factors, as well as decades and even centuries of problematic reality, which lead to negative public image, generalizations, stereotypes and challenging media image. Third, there is the tourism image repair layer, which is aimed at the repair of prolonged negative images together with the use of crisis communication tactics during and after immediate crises. These three layers are presented in Figure 8.1: the hierarchic model of tourism marketing for developing countries. On the top of the hierarchic model we can find "regular" destination marketing, as presented in Chapter 3.

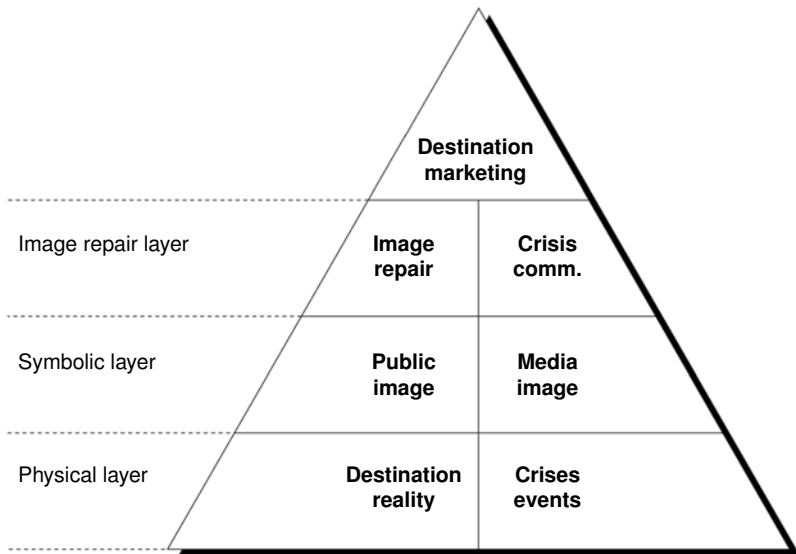


Figure 8.1 The hierarchic model of tourism marketing for developing countries (authors' own)

In the hierarchic model of tourism marketing for developing countries, the layers are organized in a hierarchy of effects. In order to promote destinations in the developing world, the marketers need to first handle three fundamental layers. In the bottom layer, the physical one, developing countries must first manage their reality, manage and prevent crisis events, create an adequate tourism infrastructure and ensure a safe and secure environment for tourists. In the second layer, the symbolic one, the developing world marketers need to take into account their destination's negative public and media image. In the third layer, that of the image repair, developing countries' marketers should manage their destination's public and media images, battle negative perceptions and shatter the stereotypes that keep tourists away. At the top of the hierarchic model, developing countries are no longer required to focus on immediate crises or stereotypes but can now concentrate their efforts on boosting the numbers of tourists, maximizing their length of stay and attracting high yield market segments, as do other countries who do not suffer from any image problem. In this hierarchy, the marketers cannot skip a layer but must make their way, step by step, in order to reach the top of the triangle; the way to "regular" place marketing must first pass through the successful management of the physical, symbolic and image repair layers.

The international media and the global marketing industry

The international media cover global events from a Western perspective, and are therefore mainly interested in crises, revolutions and natural disasters (Hachten, 1981; Hafez, 2007; Golan, 2008). As a matter of fact, the image of many developing countries has already been determined over the years by whether their leaders served the interests of the West or not (Hachten, 1981). In Chapters 2 and 3, we discussed the coverage patterns of the developing world and explained the reasons for their distorted image in the international media. It seems as though the international media must perform serious changes in their work routines and in the way they cover the developing world. There is a need to present more news from that world, to extend the variety of subjects covered and not to focus only on certain subjects, to include more background on the events reported, to use fewer negative stereotypes and generalizations, to stop covering world events from a Western perspective, and to report also good news and positive changes occurring there (Hachten, 1981; Fair, 1993; Hachten and Scotton, 2002; Golan, 2008).

We discussed the role of the international media as the mediator between the developing world and Western audiences, but the problem is not always due to the Western journalists and editors but also lies with the marketers' characteristics. In this book we mainly dealt with strategies adopted by the marketers of developing countries, but there is a need to mention that on many occasions the marketing is done by Western marketers. Among researchers and social activists there has been growing concern over the last decades surrounding the portrayal of the developing world and its people in promotional material (Mohamed, 1988; Morgan and Pritchard, 2001; Echtner, 2002). As the developing world's image in the Western media is shaped by Western news people, the same thing happens in many cases of these countries' tourism promotions; that is, developing world destinations in the developing world are promoted by Western marketers to audiences in the developed world. The result: uses of "image and stereotypes of the Third World that are being created from a primarily First World perspective" (Echtner, 2002, p. 414). Mohamed (1988), for example, illustrates this by analyzing how Morocco is represented in brochures produced in France. He found that the components of Morocco's image selected by the marketers were from a Western point of view and not from the reality of Morocco.

The effect of a prolonged negative image on sudden crisis coverage

Images of people, subjects and places evolve over time (Kunczik, 1997). The mind processes new information and adds it to the existing images.

If, for example, the media report the murder of a tourist in a place that was considered safe, it is more likely that some of the audience will preserve the place's former positive image, on the grounds that: "That kind of incident can happen anywhere". But another part of the audience that perceives the place differently will now consider it a "dangerous place" for tourists. In other words, the perception that the place is "dangerous" is just reinforced and "proved". Hence the place's former image affects the way in which new information about it is accepted and processed. When a place has a history of involvement in conflicts, violence and negative events, an additional report on problems will be received differently from such a report about a place that was never associated with violence and conflict. The result is that when a violent incident occurs in a place known to be risky, it will have a greater influence on that place's image than if it happened at a place free of any existing problematic image. Likewise, a terror attack that occurs in a place that was associated with similar violence in the past is much more likely to lead the place into crisis.

This notion whereby the destination's image sets the context in which image crises are being perceived and interpreted is presented clearly by Elizur's (1987) focus-periphery model. According to this model, the destination's image is organized in several circles, with the most dominant component located in the most central circle while less salient components are located in the outer circles. As components can move and switch circles, the model shows that a destination's image is a dynamic construct and responds to changes in the destination. In the case of developing countries, many places are conducting in-depth efforts to improve their reality, which results in an improved destination image. Nevertheless, the focus-periphery model suggests that the problematic components and stereotypes do not completely disappear from the image but rather move to the outer circle. As a result they tend to return to the center easily after each unexpected crisis.

An interesting example of the effect of a place's past image on its current one is presented by Krauze (1994, cited in Kunczik, 1997). In his article, Krauze argued that old stereotypes of **Mexico** affect the current coverage of this country in the international media. He asserted that the coverage of negative events such as murder, violence and revolts awake the old negative images of Mexico as a "barbarous, violent and unstable country" (p. 7). Another implication resulting from the place's former image is that the perceptions of places that are well-established brands, such as **New York**, **London** and **Paris**, have a greater durability in times of crisis. Since the audience has so

many good images associated with those places, their images are much more resilient.

The strategic model for marketing tourism to developing countries

The current study is based on vast academic knowledge and on the analysis of dozens of real-life case studies from Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and the Middle East. In this concluding chapter, scholars and practitioners from developing countries may ask several questions: How can the new knowledge generated here promote tourism development in the developing world? Which steps should be taken by national and regional tourism boards in order to battle stereotypes, handle crises and enhance their destination’s image? How can this book contribute to future studies in the fields of tourism marketing, place branding, public relations, image repair, crisis communication management and tourism planning? In response to these questions, the key insights and recommendations of this book are summarized in one concluding framework: the strategic model for marketing tourism to developing countries, presented in Figure 8.2.

The strategic model consists of three layers: analysis and planning, a physical layer and a marketing layer. In order to market destinations suffering from an image crisis or stereotypes, destinations have to implement these three layers. The following section will elaborate on the model’s components, serving as the main conclusions of this study.

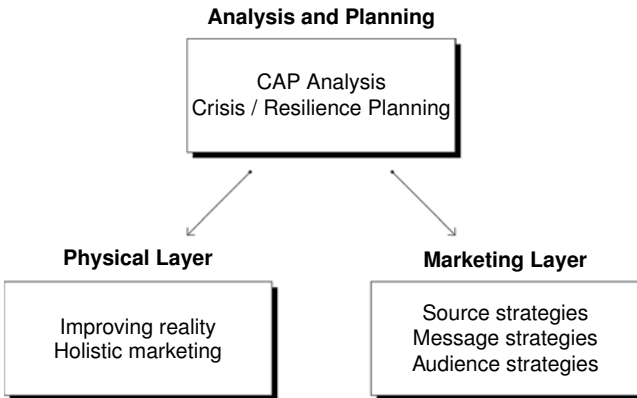


Figure 8.2 The strategic model for marketing tourism to developing countries (authors’ own)

Analysis and planning

Starting from the very beginning, when destinations in developing countries aim to promote tourism, the first stage is analysis and planning. This follows the notion that in-depth analysis is the initial stage of a strategic marketing process (Smith, 2013; Kotler et al., 2014). In the analysis and planning layer, it is recommended for tourism marketers to understand what the current state of their destination is, what type of crisis they are facing, which factors initiated the crisis and how they can overcome it and avoid future ones. The analysis and planning should be carried out by implementing two components: CAP analysis and crisis/resilience planning.

CAP analysis

As noted earlier, the CAP analysis aimed at mapping three fundamental environments: the Crisis, the Audience and the Place (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a). Employing the CAP analysis, destinations can identify their key characteristics and use them for improving decision-making related to the identification and solution of problems and opportunities in marketing (Malhotra and Birks, 2000). One specific contribution of the CAP analysis is to support the decision-making process of choosing the most appropriate media strategy. The choice, obviously, is a matter of the particular circumstance as every challenge to alter a destination's image after a crisis or to assist destinations suffering from prolonged negative image is unique. In other words, every image repair needs to consider the nature of the image crisis, the target audience's characteristics and the destination's characteristics. For example, destinations that receive constant coverage in the international media concerning violent events cannot escape this by choosing the "ignoring the crisis" strategy: they must combat it because the target audience could perceive it as "unsafe" or "violent".

The choice of marketing goals is also linked to the CAP analysis. Some destinations may serve one major target audience or several audiences that share a common image regarding the destination. In contrast, other destinations might serve several audiences with different perceptions of the destination and different patterns of consumption. For example, **Mexico** is the leading destination among North American tourists; it enjoys a geographical proximity to its main source market, and tourism between the US and Mexico has a long and well-established history. On the other hand, Mexico does not enjoy these benefits among Western European audiences; for these target markets, Mexico must use different marketing goals that focus on initiating consumption rather than enhancing consumption.

Crisis/resilience planning

The best way to handle a negative image caused by a crisis is to prevent it. As crises tend to occur more often in developing countries, in addition to analyzing a current crisis, destinations should proactively act to minimize and prevent future ones. Crisis management planning is a body of knowledge focusing on the strategies, processes and measures that are planned and put into force to prevent and cope with crises (Glaesser, 2006). A related concept is resilience planning; this focuses on returning to a stable situation that existed prior to a disturbance or change through readiness, response and recovery planning (Lew, 2014). In both views, crises are an integral part of the global era, and crisis planning is an essential part of managing a tourist destination. While crisis planning can help mitigate some of the damage caused by a crisis, a lack of crisis management and resilience planning can be very harmful when the next crisis occurs. Using risk management and issue management, tourism decision-makers should try to foresee the kinds of crisis they might have to face, and to properly carry out the preparations that should be made to handle them.

The national and international media exert a major effect on a destination's image in a time of crisis, and being familiar with crisis communication techniques is a major advantage. Being prepared to withstand a crisis can significantly reduce its negative and long-term effects on the place's image, and help it maintain its current image assets. Many studies have proved the link between crisis communication management and protecting the destination's image during the different cycles of tourism crises (Beirman, 2003; Mansfeld and Pizam, 2006; Avraham and Ketter, 2008a; Mair et al., 2014).

Physical layer

The second layer of the strategic model for marketing tourism to developing countries focuses on two components: improving the destination's reality and employing holistic marketing processes. The destination's image is based on the destination's reality and therefore the journey to battle stereotypes and alter the place's image passes through the improvement of the physical reality. In this sense, a major part of the tourism marketing process is to mend the problematic reality that underlies some of the negative perceptions, and create the marketing infrastructure required for employing marketing communication strategies and techniques. Resulting from its crucial importance, this layer is numbered as second; however, in the field it is performed together with

the third layer, and therefore the second and third layer are placed next to each other on the graphic model.

Improve the destination's reality

Battling a negative image can be achieved with the help of the media or by employing marketing strategies; yet in order to create a long-lasting and substantial change in the destination's image the place itself should be improved. If, for example, a destination is perceived as "under-developed", the best way to alter this image is by significantly developing tourism infrastructure, superstructure and improving the tourism supply system. In most cases, places that suffer from fundamental problems would be better off starting with improving the reality that caused the image problems in the first place. If such destinations were to run a campaign without changing the destination's reality first, tourists would be even more disappointed, creating more harm than good to their images (Avraham and Ketter, 2013). In recent years many destinations have used a variety of slogans aimed at altering their image; yet, paradoxically, these slogans seem only to have lengthened the odds against serious discussion about the link between the campaign and the actual place (Avraham, 2003a). It is clear by now that "cosmetic" changes such as slogans and logos are insufficient, and in-depth changes in the place are required for a new image to "catch on". Once they see that the campaign is accompanied by a real significant change (strategic approach), visitors and residents will confirm and support the campaign messages, serving as ambassadors of the place.

Avraham and Ketter (2013) suggested a typology of media strategies used to repair place images, based on a continuum between two groups. On one hand there are strategies that follow the "cosmetic approach", focusing mainly on the negative image, without altering the reality that caused the image problem. On the other hand there are those that follow the "strategic approach", making a significant change in the destination's reality in order to solve the issues behind the problematic image (Gertner and Kotler, 2004). In other words, developing countries should first address the barriers facing tourism development, in particular increasing personal security, integrating and involving the local community, and addressing a basic lack of infrastructure. In short, these countries may need to solve many basic problems before they can start thinking about national branding and are able to generate tourism income and obtain the image they want (Go et al., 1992; Kotler and Gertner, 2002).

One interesting example of the tension between the strategic vs. the cosmetic approach is the Nigerian re-branding experience. **Nigeria** is well known as one of the most resource-blessed countries in Africa, yet it is often associated in the international media with government corruption, violence, kidnappings and political tension. In 2009 the country attempted to improve their national image using the slogan: “Good people, great nation”. This was without changing the government decision-making process, dealing with inner tensions or reducing the rate of violent crime. This attempt to use the cosmetic approach to improve Nigeria’s problematic image was poorly received by marketing experts worldwide, who argued that “re-branding Nigeria should go beyond sloganeering,” and the attempt was mocked by the international media (*Nigeria World*, 17 August 2009). Such lessons have also been implemented lately in **Cleveland**, Ohio. Over the last 50 years, Cleveland had 6 failed attempts to brand the city, none of which successfully addressed their problems. Only recently have local decision-makers realized that a successful branding would have to involve an in-depth change in the city’s reality, providing a better solution than just a creative advertising campaign (*New York Times*, 30 July 2010).

An example of the strategic approach can be found in the city of **Kolkata** (formerly Calcutta), India, when the tourism minister asked the mayor to clean the city before promoting it as a tourism destination (*eTN*, 3 August 2010). In a similar case, the tourism minister of **Honduras** asked tourists to cease from coming following a military overthrow. In his announcement, the minister elaborated on the problems of using the cosmetic approach: “I’d like to tell everyone to come to Honduras, and it’s a tranquil destination and everything is beautiful, but do you think I’d be successful with that message? Of course not” (*Time*, 24 October 2009). These words placed a strong emphasis on the relationship between destination marketing and the destination’s reality (Avraham and Ketter, 2013).

Employ a holistic marketing approach

We strongly recommend taking the holistic marketing approach when battling negative images caused by a short-term crisis, or prolonged negative images generated by long-lasting issues. In the eyes of the holistic marketing approach, handling an image crisis is a multi-dimensional task, involving variety of actors, covering the different layers of a place. In the case of destination marketing, this includes cooperation with the government and international stakeholders, airlines and cruise lines, tourist agents and tour operators, the hospitality industry and

the host community. Working together, these actors should create the infrastructure for marketing the destination, including national tourism boards, DMOs, effective distribution channels, pricing strategy and tactics, information tools and services, marketing materials and allocating resources from marketing (Ford and Peeper, 2008).

Successful cooperation of the various stakeholders is expected to result in a recovery process that is faster, better meaning and more efficient. One example of such cooperation can be found during the recovery phase following the outbreak of the SARS epidemic in South-East Asia. Trying to restore tourism, some of the affected countries took the holistic approach and conducted recovery efforts that combined improved health measures, enhanced experiences in existing tourism products, special cultural events, free travel insurance packages, discounts in hotels and air fares, and marketing efforts that included advertising, public relations, sales promotion and online marketing (Beirman, 2006).

Marketing analysis and planning

The third and final part of the strategic model for marketing tourism for developing countries focuses on the marketing layer. Following the preliminary stage of analysis and planning and after mending the physical reality, it is now time to communicate with the target audience. The use of media strategies for marketing places in crisis is divided into three categories: media strategies to focus on the source of the message, media strategies to focus on the message itself and media strategies to focus on the target audience. Under the marketing layer, it is strongly recommended for destination marketers to work simultaneously with several media strategies from all three groups, creating a joint positive impact on the destination's image.

Employing source strategies

Source strategies, as mentioned, are divided into two major categories: affecting the source of the message and replacing the source of the message. In the first category, destinations' marketers should pay special attention to developing media relations with journalists and editors. The international media play a key role in constructing the overall image of countries in the developing world, and have a particularly important role in times of crisis. Marketers constantly have to monitor and analyze the image of the tourist destination which they promote. During a crisis, media monitoring is crucial in order to trace the crisis framing in the media and to decide on the response strategies. In order to affect media frames and improve media coverage, destination marketers must

allocate resources to develop rapport and strong media relations with news people (Walters and Mair, 2012).

There are many ways to build these relations with the media. Destinations that suffer from prolonged negative images must be very creative in order to convince the international media that there have been tremendous positive changes in the destination. Places suffering from an unexpected crisis can use familiarization trips to convince the news people that the destination is operating normally after the crisis is over. With the changes now taking place in several developing countries, these places have an opportunity to show the world a fresh image that reflects their history, culture and national narratives (Dinnie, 2011).

In the second category of strategies to focus on the source of the message, destinations should pay special attention to social media platforms as an alternative message source. New media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and mobile tourism apps offer destination marketers a bypass of the international media when trying to reach the audience directly. Social media marketing has reduced the cost of tourism marketing and given marketers new channels to present their destinations, interact with their audience, learn about the visitors' motivations and priorities, and create two-way communication (Uysal et al., 2011).

Employing message strategies

In addition to source strategies, destination marketers should also employ message-focused strategies. Message strategies are the biggest and most common group of media strategies used by tourism marketers (Avraham and Ketter, 2008a). They offer tourism stakeholders several options for altering a place's image; destinations can try to downplay the crisis using the media strategies of ignoring the crisis, limiting the crisis or reducing the scale of the crisis. They can create positive media coverage opportunities by using the strategies of hosting opinion leaders, hosting spotlight events, engaging celebrities or using film, TV series and books. Places can act against their stereotype by employing the media strategies of delivering a counter-message, spinning liabilities into assets, ridiculing the stereotype or creating a new brand contrary to the stereotype. Lastly, they can try to disconnect from their problematic location with the media strategy of geographical association/disassociation. With message-focused strategies, destinations can directly relate to their perceived image, alter it and communicate marketing messages to support their enhanced image.

Employing audience strategies

The third and last group of media strategies is the one that focuses on the target audience. This group includes three main strategies: similarity and identification with the target audience, patriotism and personal/national heritage and changing the target audience. The media strategy of changing the target audience is based on the notion that some segments of the audience are more likely than others to visit the destination (Baron et al., 2014). Choosing the right target audience is a critical decision for any tourist destination marketer. During a crisis, the question of audience becomes even more critical in preventing the collapse of the local tourism industry, as tourists from different countries have different responses to crises (Mansfeld and Pizam, 2006). Additional factors in choosing a target audience include its affinity, loyalty and emotions toward the destination. For example, audience segments with a high level of loyalty will be less influenced during crises and will return sooner to the destination once the crisis is over (Walters and Mair, 2012). These consumers' different patterns of behavior might also affect the decision on the chosen strategy to repair a destination image; segments with high loyalty rates should be contacted via relationship marketing which, according to Mair et al. (2014), is vital to encourage loyal visitors to return after a crisis.

Future research

This book analyzed the marketing of destinations in the Middle East, Africa and Asia. There is a need for future research to investigate other areas and continents that also suffer from prolonged negative images, such as Latin America, the Caribbean and Eastern Europe. Moreover, future research should concentrate on which marketing initiatives, public relations strategies and advertising campaigns actually work to restore a developing country's positive image following a crisis and to combat the stereotypes and generalizations associated with many of them and with other turbulent areas. In addition, "production research" will be helpful. This kind of research should focus on various layers of the decision-making process regarding the selection of marketing initiatives and media campaigns, such as who is involved in this process, how officials understand whether a certain strategy is effective, who allocates the budgets to run recovery campaigns and other production issues.

In 2014, international tourist arrivals reached over 1.1 billion, an increase of 4.7% over the previous year (UNWTO, 2015). International

tourism is a fundamental and crucial key to: economic growth; employment opportunities with a strong focus on the employment of people without formal education; development of infrastructure such as roads, electricity lines, communication lines, educational institutions and hospitals; poverty reduction and providing income sources for rural communities; and helping to preserve local cultural, tradition, heritage and natural resources (Blakely and Leigh, 2010). Together with future research, we sincerely hope that this book and others to follow will equip academics and practitioners with helpful tools to bridge the gaps between the developed and the developing world, to share the benefits of tourism among all countries and to provide our brothers and sisters in the developing world with new opportunities for growth and prosperity.

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