

**VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF PUERTO RICO
IN DESTINATION MARKETING MATERIALS**

A Thesis

by

MARY ANN DAVILA RODRIGUEZ

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

August 2011

Major Subject: Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences

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Approved by:

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ABSTRACT

Visual Representations of Puerto Rico in Destination Marketing Materials.

(August 2011)

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Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Ulrike Gretzel

In the last thirty years, a large number of studies have researched the destination image that visitors, travel industry representatives, students, and general consumers have of tourist destinations. However, few studies have analyzed the perceptions that local residents have of their own countries as tourist destinations. Local residents can provide valuable information about their countries as tourism destinations and can help tourism marketers determine how to represent local culture in more authentic and sustainable ways. Local residents can also provide valuable information about how to improve tourism development based on their experiences living in the area. Residents can further provide information and services to visitors and are themselves an integral part of tourism at a destination.

This study focused on understanding how destination marketing portrays the people and places of a destination and how residents perceive the visuals used in destination marketing and promotion. Using a visual qualitative approach, the study analyzed the images of recent promotional campaigns employed by the Puerto Rico Tourism Company. The study then interviewed Puerto Rican residents regarding their

attitudes toward tourism development in general and toward the specific imagery used in the campaigns. Overall, residents had rather positive opinions of tourism in Puerto Rico. They also had largely positive attitudes toward the visual imagery used to market the destination. However, they felt the portrayal was incomplete and did not reflect the modern way of Puerto Rican daily life.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mother who has instilled in me the passion for tourism.

You are my role model and my number one cheerleader. Thank you for your unconditional love and support. You have always supported my dreams no matter what they were. I love you, Mom.

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I would like to thank my father for his unconditional love and support, wise advice, and for always making me smile. I would like to thank my family, extended family, and friends for their support, love, encouragement, help, and fun moments throughout the years. I want to give special thanks to my boyfriend, Jayson, for his love, support, infinite amount of patience, and for always supporting my dreams and encouraging me to achieve them no matter how far they take me.

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NOMENCLATURE

DMO	Destination Marketing Organization
PRTC	Puerto Rico Tourism Company
PIP	Puerto Rican Independent Party
PNP	New Progressive Party
PPD	Popular Democratic Party
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	iii
DEDICATION.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
NOMENCLATURE	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	x
LIST OF TABLES.....	xi
 CHAPTER	
I INTRODUCTION.....	1
II LITERATURE REVIEW	6
Destination Marketing.....	7
Visual Communication in Tourism.....	11
Residents' Attitudes toward Tourism	15
Sustainable Tourism Marketing.....	19
III STUDY CONTEXT	24
Overview of Tourism in Puerto Rico	28
Puerto Rico Tourism Company	31
Destination Marketing and Promotion	33
Research Questions	37
IV METHODOLOGY	39
Phase I: Critical Visual Analysis of Destination Marketing Materials	40
Phase II: Photo Interviews	43
Participants	46
Ethical Concerns	53

CHAPTER		Page
V	RESULTS	59
	People	59
	Puerto Rican Culture	61
	Beach Destinations.....	64
	Luxury Destinations	66
	Residents' Voices.....	70
	Destination Attributes	70
	Attitudes towards Tourism in Puerto Rico	73
	Visual Representations	80
	Local Residents' Recommendations	95
	Comparison of Results	96
VI	DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS	97
	Limitations of the Study	101
	Conclusions and Implications.....	103
	REFERENCES	108
	APPENDIX A	130
	APPENDIX B.....	133
	VITA	135

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE		Page
1	Stereotypical picture of a tourism employee	60
2	Puerto Rican gourmet cuisine	62
3	Dish of rice and beans	62
4	Old San Juan	64
5	A “perfect” waterfall	65
6	An example of a luxury resort hotel.....	66

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		Page
1	Demographics for the Puerto Rico Sample	47
2	Demographics for the Texas Sample.....	48

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has provided economic prosperity as well as social and cultural benefits to host communities around the world. However, tourism can create problems that affect the sustainable development of a country and “can change host communities’ social, economic, and environmental well-being for the worse” (Sheldon and Abenoja 2001, p. 435). Therefore, the perceptions and opinions of stakeholders are essential to help resolve issues in support of achieving sustainability in tourism (Byrd 2007; Gunn 1994; Jamal and Jamrozy 2006). Collaboration of several stakeholders is essential because of the interdependencies among multiple stakeholders for coordinating tourism development (Jamal and Getz 1995). In addition, it is important to acknowledge the importance of effective marketing and promotion strategies in successful and sustainable tourism development (Pritchard 1982).

In the last thirty years of tourism research, a large number of studies have researched the destination image that diverse stakeholders (visitors, travel industry representatives, students, and consumers) have of tourist destinations (Schroeder 1996; Pike 2002). Research studies have mostly studied destination image from the visitors’ perspective; however, understanding resident’s image is also important to gain their

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support of tourism development. Schroeder (1996) stated that understanding residents' image is important to tourism development and therefore it may increase residents' support for international and domestic tourism and tourism promotional funding.

A few studies conducted in-depth analyses of local residents' perceptions of their own countries as tourist destinations (Schroeder 1996; Pike 2002). The image that the host communities have of their home country is important because of its relationship to aspects of tourism development (Schroeder 1996). According to Moilanen and Rainisto (2009), determining how the country is seen internally among its own citizens is essential for the development and operation plan of a country's brand. Local residents provide valuable information about their countries as tourism destinations and can help tourism marketers determine how to represent local culture in more sustainable ways. Local residents also provide valuable information about how to improve tourism development based on their lived experiences in the area (Jutla 2000; Schroeder 1996). Residents provide information and services to visitors as well and are themselves an integral part of tourism at a destination.

The purpose of this study is to understand how destination marketing portrays people, culture, and places of a destination. In particular, it seeks to understand how tourism media can communicate a representation of people and places at a destination. In addition, this study analyzes how residents interpret the visual rhetoric employed by destination marketers and how it compares to their own opinions of how the destination should be marketed. Therefore, using a visual and qualitative approach, the study investigates marketing efforts of a destination marketing organization, evaluates the

mediated images of a destination, and gathers residents' perceptions and opinions about their country as a tourist destination and its representation in promotional materials.

Puerto Rico, a mature destination and consistent leader in Caribbean tourism, was selected as the destination context for this study. Puerto Rico is an archipelago located in the eastern region of the Caribbean, between the Greater Antilles and Minor Antilles. The tourism industry in Puerto Rico emerged in the 1940s. Because of its strategic location, the country plays a crucial role as the major airline hub and cruise ship port for the rest of the Caribbean. Puerto Rico is also known as a hub between Latin America, the Caribbean, and the United States. It is a popular tourist destination because visitors have the opportunity to experience a mix of Latin American and American cultures, explore the rain forests and beaches, participate in adventure-related tours and water sports, play golf, and learn about Hispanic heritage by visiting historic sites and districts (Compañía de Turismo de Puerto Rico 2010). Over five million visitors come to Puerto Rico every year (Puerto Rico Planning Board 2008). Additionally, residents also experience Puerto Rico as a tourism destination during vacations from school and work. A study conducted by the Puerto Rico Tourism Company in 2009 reported that Puerto Ricans take short trips around the island. Forty percent of Puerto Ricans took a leisure trip in the last three months (Compañía de Turismo de Puerto Rico 2009b). The main purpose of the trip was domestic or internal tourism. Puerto Rico is a valuable case study for examining the tourism representations and residents' attitudes about tourism because of its diverse offerings of tourism products and services as well as residents' involvement in domestic tourism (Compañía de Turismo de Puerto Rico 2009b).

This study seeks to contribute to the visual communication literature in tourism as well as destination marketing literature. It also aims at providing tourism marketers with valuable insights about residents' attitudes and opinions regarding the representation of Puerto Rican culture in promotional efforts. When tourism marketers portray Puerto Rico, they present a statement about the attributes of Puerto Ricans, Puerto Rican culture, and Puerto Rico. When they create promotional materials, they create an image that may or may not be a representation of what Puerto Rico is about from the residents' perspective. Residents' opinions can help to improve the representation of Puerto Rican culture in the marketing of Puerto Rico as a destination. Consequently, this study will also contribute to discussions of destination identity, residents' attitudes, and sustainability in tourism marketing.

The thesis is comprised of six chapters, beginning with the introduction. Chapter II is a literature review that provides a brief overview of destination marketing, destination image, visual communication, residents' attitudes toward tourism, and sustainable tourism marketing. Chapter III is the study context, which provides an overview of tourism in Puerto Rico and information about the Puerto Rico Tourism Company (destination marketing organization), as well a description of the three destination marketing campaigns examined in this study. Chapter IV presents a description of the methods used in the study, including data collection and analysis, and addresses ethical concerns that applied to this study. Chapter V introduces the results as they emerged from a visual analysis of the promotional materials and photo interviews with local residents. Finally, Chapter VI provides a short summary of the research,

discusses the results and limitations, and presents the conclusions. It also offers theoretical and practical implications as well as suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to discuss destination marketing, it is important to understand what a destination is. From the perspective of the consumer, a destination is a “geographical area in which a cluster of tourism resources exist, rather than a political boundary” (Rubies 2001, p. 39). Rubies also defined destination as “an accumulation of tourist resources and attractions, infrastructures, equipment, service providers, other support sectors, and administrative organisms whose integrated and coordinated activities provide customers with the experiences they expected from the destination they chose to visit” (p. 39). Destination can be a specific country, state, province, or city (Gartrell 1994). Travelers make decisions for their travel plans to visit destinations based on a variety of factors. Factors influencing travel decisions are varied and include perceptions, awareness, preferences and attitudes toward a destination, destination attributes, socio-psychological variables, socio-demographic variables, situational factors, and influencers such as relatives and friends (Gartrell 1994). Generally, travelers seek information about destinations while they are searching for a place to go (Ford and Pepper 2008). They seek information about attractions, hotels, and other activities to do while enjoying the destination. Therefore, travelers’ decision-making processes, and consequently their destination choices, can be influenced by the information and promotional messages executed by a destination marketing organization.

Destination Marketing

Destination marketing is an integral part of developing and retaining a specific location's reputation and attractiveness (Kotler, Bowen, and Makens 2003). Destination marketing activities are usually coordinated by an organization specifically established for this purpose. According to Pike (2004), a destination marketing organization (DMO) is defined as "any organization, at any level, which is responsible for the marketing of an identifiable destination" (p. 14). Blain, Levy, and Ritchie (2005) stated that the core purpose of a DMO is "to market their destination to potential visitors, both individuals and groups, to provide economic benefit to the community and its members" (p. 328). DMOs enhance destination competitiveness (Pike 2004). To achieve destination competitiveness, DMOs must make certain that the destination's overall appeal and the tourist experience offered is superior to that of the alternative destinations available to potential visitors (Dwyer and Kim 2003). Other primary responsibilities include industry coordination, monitoring services and quality standards; and fostering community relations; however, DMOs usually have no direct control over the products they represent, or the packaged offerings of travel intermediaries such as airlines, tour wholesalers, and travel agencies (Pike 2004).

DMOs facilitate the achievement of tourism policy coordinated with a national development strategic plan (Buhalis 2000). The strategic management and marketing objectives for destinations should include (a) enhancing the long-term prosperity of local people, (b) delighting visitors by maximizing their satisfaction, (c) maximizing profitability of local enterprises and multiplier effects, and (d) optimizing tourism

impacts by ensuring a sustainable balance between economic benefits and socio-cultural and environmental costs (Buhalis 2000). To market a destination and therefore achieve successful tourism development, a DMO needs to identify strategic target markets, measure destination awareness and image, develop a destination brand, establish destination positioning in key markets, develop destination branding through logos and advertising themes, develop tourism experiences to potential visitors, identify the price segments for destination competitiveness, and implement marketing and advertising strategies (Ritchie and Crouch 2003).

Destination Image

Destination Image is an integral and powerful part of travelers' decision process and therefore, travelers' behaviors (Stabler 1987; Baloglu and Brinberg 1997; Gallarza, Saura, and Garcia 2002; Rezende-Parker, Morrison, and Ismail 2003). A country's image serves as the foundation for selecting a destination and becomes a link between motivation and destination (Goodall 1991). Destination image is important to the success of tourism development (Tasci and Gartner 2007). Destination image is generally defined as the "sum of beliefs, ideas, impression, and expectations that a person has of a destination" (Crompton 1979, p.18). This definition is based on information processed from a variety of sources, resulting in an internally accepted mental construct representing the attributes and benefits sought in a destination (Crompton 1979; Mackay and Fesenmaier 2000; Gallarza, Saura, and Garcia 2002; Tasci and Gartner 2007).

Hunt (1975) stated that the images perceived by individuals may influence the success of an area's tourism development. A unique and strong image is needed to capture travelers' attention. Therefore, it is essential for a destination to build and maintain a positive image. Destination marketers must set the location apart in the consumer's mind and eyes by developing a distinctive image that separates the location from its competition (McDowall and Choi 2010). Managing destination image appropriately is essential for the planning and marketing of a destination (Echtner and Ritchie 1993). It is also important that tourists have a positive image of the destination because they will be more likely to visit it (Chen and Kerstetter 1999). Conversely, if the destination has a negative image, tourists are more likely to choose another destination to visit. A destination's attractiveness and image can be affected by violence, crime, political instability, natural disasters, and negative environmental factors (Kotler, Bowen, and Makens 2003). Images can affect the level of satisfaction that a tourist may have regarding a destination, and satisfaction can generate publicity via word of mouth (WOM), which can lead to visitation to the destination (O'Leary and Deegan 2005).

In addition to the perception of tourists, it is essential to understand how residents perceive a destination and its tourism industry because of the influence that their support and cooperation can have on tourism projects and initiatives (Harill 2004; Goeldner and Ritchie 2009). Residents' perceptions may also influence the information that they provide to potential and current visitors at a destination. Schroeder (1996) pointed out that the influence of residents' images of their country is related to their intention to recommend it as a destination to other people. Therefore, residents are

considered an important source of information for travelers (Bieger and Laesser 2004; Arsal et al. 2009). Residents are valuable travel information sources for visitors because they can answer potential travelers' questions and have insider knowledge about a destination (Arsal et al. 2009). For this reason, a destination marketing organization should also target local residents with brochures, maps, and a calendar of events (Kotler, Bowen, and Makens 2003).

Projected Destination Image

Gunn (1972) proposed that people's destination image is influenced by two dimensions: an organic image and an induced image. Organic image is defined as a person's assimilation and impression of a destination without visiting a place. Induced image is formed by a continuous effort to develop, inform, and persuade an image of a destination using promotional materials. Bramwell and Rawding (1996) defined projected images of a destination as "the ideas and impressions of a place that are available for people's consideration" (p. 202). The projected destination image is a result of the destination's tourism development plan, the use of narratives, expressed meaning, and produced imagination (Govers and Goo 2005).

The projected destination image is created strategically by tourism marketers using communication channels targeted to specific markets (Ashworth 1988; Kotler, Haider, and Rein 1993; Middleton 1994; Baloglu and Uysal 1996; Pritchard 1998; Andreu, Bigné, and Cooper 2000). Consequently, promotional materials are important because they represent the tourism products and destination until tourists actually visit

(MacKay and Fesenmaier 1997; Sirakaya and Sonmez 2000). The purpose of promotional materials is to establish, reinforce, or change the image of a destination (Gunn 1972; Hunt 1975; Goodrich 1977; Reilly 1990; MacKay and Fesenmaier 1997; Human 1999; Young 1999; Iwashita 2003). Promotional materials are also used for comparison-shopping by potential visitors (Wicks and Schuett 1993). Destination marketers use a variety of promotional sources with verbal and visual messages.

Visual materials are especially significant because they receive more attention and represent the current state of a destination and show how the destination is (Smith and MacKay 2001; Day, Skidmore, and Koller 2002; Hanefors and Mossberg 2002). Destination image depends more on visuals rather than the destination's actual features before visitors are actually on the destination (MacKay and Fesenmaier 1997). The photographs used on advertisements can show elements of the tourists' experience (McDowall and Choi 2010) and influence the destination image. Therefore, the content of the images are of outstanding importance because it "can determinate what kind of image the destination is attempting to create in the minds of potential markets" (Tasci and Gartner 2007, p. 415). Visual images appear to be more memorable and powerful in people's minds than written descriptions (Joffe 2008).

Visual Communication in Tourism

Visual images are a powerful component of tourist destination marketing; photographs of scenery, landmarks, and icons dominate all forms of tourism promotion, from travel brochures and television commercials to internet advertisements (Jenkins 2003).

Photographic images are essential for the creation and communication of the destination's image to potential travelers (MacKay and Couldwell 2004). MacKay and Fesenmeier (1997) pointed out that a photograph "represents the destination... but can also communicate attributed characteristics, concepts, values, and ideas" (p. 538). Beeton, Bowen, and Santos (2006) also proposed that destination marketers use images to portray notions of quality in tourism experiences to the general public. In these circumstances, images can help to define and direct tourism experiences to potential travelers. Images persuade people to visit places and once there, people "gaze" at that which initially drew them to the destination, photographs are then taken, and postcards are sent to those unfortunately left out of the gaze (Morgan and Pritchard 1998). Mass media typically try to promote images signifying the previously established representation of a destination to assure resonance with their audiences.

Visual Rhetoric

In destination marketing and communications, visual rhetoric is essential to communicate information to travelers and persuade them to visit destinations. Olson, Finnegan, and Hope (2008) defined visual rhetoric as the practice and theory concerned with persuasive symbolic actions primarily through the cultural practices of seeing and looking, as well as the artifacts produced in diverse communicative forms and media" (p.3) to influence diverse audiences. In other words, Visual rhetoric is a form of communication that uses images to create meaning or construct an argument (Foss 2004) and to enhance consumers' perceptions (Weiman and Walter 1957). More than

transmitting meanings, the rhetoric of marketing communications has the potential to influence image creation, reputation, and culture, as well as convey meanings symbolically and figuratively (Weiman and Walter 1957). Messaris (1997) stated that visual images have several roles in advertising. Images attract people's attention by eliciting emotions and simulating the appearance of a real person, an object, a place, or a destination and its attributes. They can serve as photographic proof that something happens and can establish a specific link between the product and some other images. In addition, images can persuade people to make a conscious or unconscious decision to change their minds about a destination and their travel choices (Perloff 2003).

In destination marketing, visual rhetoric has been used as a tool to create knowledge about certain places, to provide information about people's culture, and to foster awareness in people's minds about those places (Campelo, Aitken, and Gnoth 2010). Visual rhetoric introduces places to people, creating a sense that they know places and times even though they have never visited or experienced the place (Campelo, Aitken, and Gnoth 2010; Schroeder and Borgerson 2005).

Visual Representations

According to Hunter (2008), visual representations in tourism are "the means by which the original characteristics of a destination are transformed into simulations and conveyed by means of various media for the sake of destination promotion" (p. 354). Representations are considered the mechanism of tourism's discourses (Geertz 1973; Stenberg 1997). Jenkins (2003) stated that tourism representations are "arranged into

discourses or frameworks that embrace particular combinations of concepts and ideologies that vary between cultures, classes, and races” (p. 306).

Schroeder and Borgeson (2005) stated that images provide resources to shape and enhance “our understanding of the world, the identities of people and places” (p. 578). Behind the images lies a system of beliefs and representations that tells something not only about the culture being portrayed, but also about the values that underlie that culture. Therefore, the decisions about which images are shown, the context within which they are represented, and their purpose must to be understood from a rhetorical perspective (Kenney and Scott 2003; Scott and Batra 2003; Bulmer and Buchanan-Oliver 2006; Scott and Vargas 2007).

Hall (1997) proposed “the circuit of culture” to understand how destination marketers construct tourism imagery and how images reflect beliefs and ideologies of those who create the representations. This proposal acknowledged that language, representation, and meaning are inevitably intertwined in a continuous circle whereby language utilizes representations to construct meanings and connects language to culture. Morgan and Pritchard (1998) stated that “tourism imagery is one element in the circuit of culture, reflecting and reinforcing the circuit of knowledge and power” (p. 18). Tourism representation is a key element in the circuit of tourism discourse. The role of the image creator is important to understand because of the meaning systems which inform their creations and in turn reinforce particular ways of seeing the world (Morgan and Pritchard 1998). Therefore, it is essential to understand how discourses are made and how representations are influenced by its creators.

Visual representations are an essential part of tourism because it largely depends on their collection (Papson 1981) as well as their production and consumption (Urry 1990). According to Herbert (2001), photographic representations are physical evidence of “the developer’s intentions, the consumers’ interpretation, and the interactions among them” (p. 317). Tourism makes use of cultural meanings to frame its imagery, which are drawn from many areas in society (Morgan and Pritchard 1998, p. 63).

Residents’ Attitudes toward Tourism

Tourism is a major contributor to economic development in many countries around the world (Kandampully 2000). Tourism contributes to income generation and employment (Yu, Chancellor, and Cole 2011) as well as promoting local culture and attractions. In addition, it can facilitate cultural exchange between hosts and guests. Residents can benefit from tourism facilities also because they can stimulate feelings of pride in communities with local heritage and generate interest in heritage conservation (Wang, King, and Heo 2009). According to Wang, King, and Heo (2009), the involvement of local communities in tourism development is an essential aspect for conservation and sustainable tourism. However, without proper destination planning and development, tourism can negatively impact host communities and can cause adverse impacts on cultural and natural resources (Sirakaya, Jamal, and Choi 2001). Because of the positive and negative impacts that can be produced by tourism, it is important to assess the local residents’ attitudes toward tourism. Ap (1992) and Gunn (1994) stated that residents are major stakeholders in tourism development because they are directly affected by it.

Having local residents' favorable opinions and perceptions toward tourism are paramount for the sustainable development of a destination (Nunkoo and Ramkissoon 2010). Sustainable development can improve the quality of life of the host community, provide a high quality experience for visitors, and maintain the quality of the environment on which both the host community and visitors depend (McIntyre 1993).

Liu also argued that involving and rewarding the local community is essential because "the host population is itself a part of the tourism place product" (2003, p.466). Locals spend time and interact in settings for tourist activities and their attitudes and behavior are part of the hospitality resource of a destination (Smith 1994). Their attitudes and behavior can greatly influence the satisfaction and overall experience of tourists in a destination (Chen and Raab 2009). According to the World Tourism Organization's Global Codes of Ethics for Tourism (2000), local residents should be associated with tourism activities and share equitably in the economic, social, and cultural benefits they generate and in the creation of employment opportunities resulting from them.

There are many factors that influence the attitudes that residents have regarding tourism. Harrill (2004) stated that studies have analyzed residents' attitudes toward tourism in relation to socioeconomic and spatial factors and economic dependency. Lawson et al. (1998) stated that residents' attitudes can be influenced by other factors such as current economic climate, environmental awareness or cultural prejudices, and that attitudes can vary according to a variety of individual, community, or even social factors. Most studies concluded that residents have positive attitudes toward tourism

(Andereck and Vogt 2000). Residents reported positive attitudes regarding more recreation and park opportunities, improved quality of life, improved appearance, and encouragement of cultural activities (Perdue, Long, and Allen 1990; McCool and Martin 1994).

However, several studies reported that residents also raised several concerns with respect to the negative impacts of tourism. One of the most important of these concerns is that residents are mostly likely to suffer from traffic congestion (Liu, Sheldon, and Var 1987; Mok, Slater, and Cheung 1991; King, Pizam, and Milman 1993; McCool and Martin 1994; Snaith and Haley 1995; Carmichael, Peppard, and Boudreau 1996; Christensen and Nickerson 1996; Black and Nickerson 1997; Lindberg and Johnson 1997; Perdue, Long, and Allen 1990; Law 2002). Urban residents have complained about increased crime rates due to urban tourism development (Law 2002). Other concerns include crowding of public facilities and resources (McCool and Martin 1994; Lindberg and Johnson 1997), increased prostitution, vandalism (Liu, Sheldon, and Var 1987), degradation of morality (Mok, Slater, and Cheung 1991), alcohol, openness of sex (King, Pizam, and Milman 1993), parking problems (Lindberg and Johnson 1997), declining resident hospitality (Liu and Var 1986) and environmental degradation (Long, Perdue, and Allen 1990; Perdue, Long, and Allen 1990; Sheldon and Var 1984).

Residents Attitudes toward Destination Marketing

Most studies regarding residents' attitudes focus on tourism development; however, a few studies have researched residents' attitudes toward tourism promotion and

marketing (Kwon 2008). Residents' attitudes and opinions are crucial for the development of marketing strategies (Buhalis 1999; Andereck and Vogt 2000; Jurowski and Gurvov 2004; Liu and Wall 2006). Government agencies should pay attention to resident stakeholders because they are an important target market (Murphy 1985; Jamal and Getz 1995; Kotler, Haider, and Rein 1993; Gold and Ward 1994; Bramwell 1998; Buhalis 1999; Liu and Wall 2006). Kotler, Haider, and Rein (1993) also stated that one of the main targets of marketing destinations is residents. Residents are also part of the tourism product and they can be affected by and benefited from tourism development (Taylor 1995). To make a destination successful, Kotler, Haider, and Rein (1993) suggested that it "must generate support from its citizens, leaders, and current institutions for making the place hospitable and enthusiastic about attracting new companies, investments, and visitors to its community" (p. 20). Fridgen (1991) also indicated that tourism planning and marketing require the efforts of the entire community. Thus, local residents have the right to become involved in decision making processes that will shape their future and will transform their quality of life. Schroeder (1996) commented on the importance of residents' attitudes toward destination marketing, indicating that the image that residents have of their country as a destination is important because of its relationship with tourism development. Residents' support may influence political support for tourism funding and development and it may influence how they recommend their region and the information provided to friends, relatives, and businesses.

Sustainable Tourism Marketing

In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) defined the concept of sustainable development in the Brundtland Commission's report, *Our Common Future*. Sustainable development was defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (p. 1). Sustainable tourism development was based on the Brundtland Commission's definition of sustainable development and identified as important by the World Tourism Organization's Agenda 21 in 1997. Sustainable tourism development is the development that "meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future," and it is envisioned as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems" (WTO 1997, p. 30).

Tourism can damage the destination's environment, cause social and cultural conflicts, and affect the host community in which tourism activities are produced (WTO 2007). Proper planning and management is important to minimize the impact that tourism may cause to the destinations. Sustainable tourism development manages the tourism impact on the destination's environment, economy, and community. The English Tourist Board and Tourism Management Institute (ETB-TMI) recommended that destination managers should meet the needs and wants of the visitors simultaneously, the industry that serves them, the host community, and the environment (ETB-TMI 2003; Liu 2003). Destination managers need to work through partnerships and collaborations

in order to (a) welcome, involve and satisfy visitors; (b) achieve a profitable and prosperous industry; (c) engage and benefit host communities; and, (d) protect and enhance the local environment and culture (Bramwell and Lane; 2000; ETB-TMI 2003). In 2007, the WTO proposed guidelines to achieve sustainable development in tourism destinations. Economic guidelines should be used to assess economic impacts before developing tourism, to maximize local economic benefits by increasing linkages and reducing leakages, and to ensure that communities are involved with and benefit from tourism. Environmental guidelines should reduce environmental impacts, maintain biodiversity, and use natural resources sustainably. Social guidelines require involving local communities in planning and decision-making, assessing social impacts of tourism activities, respecting social and cultural diversity, and being sensitive to the host culture.

Sustainable tourism marketing is an essential function of sustainable tourism development. Jamal and Camargo (2010) proposed a conceptual framework for sustainable tourism marketing focusing on integrated systems, eco-cultural justice, and ethics, in which collaboration and partnership of stakeholders is an essential aspect. Gilmore, Carson, and Ascencao (2007, p. 255) defined sustainable tourism marketing as “marketing that incorporates social, economic, and environmental perspectives in a given region.” Similar to Middleton and Hawkins (1998), Jamal and Jamrozy (2006) argued that sustainable tourism marketing should (a) reflect corporate attitudes, (b) balance the interests of stakeholders (residents and industry) with the long-run environmental interests of a destination, (c) meet the demands and expectation of customers, and (d) ensure quality of life and environments through tourism development.

Jamal and Jamrozy (2006) also stated that destination management and marketing should be an integrated approach through collaboration and partnerships between several stakeholders. The authors also argued that essential destination functions are fragmented rather than well networked, so that marketing, land-use planning, resource use, and conservation efforts have tended to operate in isolation from each other and from societal values and resident/visitor needs. Such a marketing-planning gap is no longer tenable given the range of knowledge available on various resource appropriations (Jamal and Camargo 2010).

Jamal and Camargo stated that an eco-cultural justice approach is needed in sustainable tourism marketing. Eco-cultural justice integrates the concepts of eco-cultural equity and eco-cultural discrimination. Eco-cultural justice is defined as “active involvement of low-income and minority groups, including indigenous groups, in the marketing of their eco-cultural goods for tourism purposes” (p. 5). Eco-cultural equity is achieved when the responsibilities of marketing and promotion initiatives are distributed fairly among different groups. To avoid eco-cultural discrimination and racism, the tourism marketing efforts should include the participation of indigenous people, low income, and minority groups who are usually excluded from participating in decision-making processes of tourism marketing organizations. The authors suggested “a radical shift is needed towards acknowledging the ethical responsibilities of tourism and destination marketing organizations” (p.5). It is essential to remind tourism managers and marketers of the importance of collaboration, education, awareness, and ethical responsibilities. The role of ethics in sustainable tourism marketing is essential to ensure

that the portrayal of places, people, and culture is accurate and represents the values and attributes of the host community. For example, Dilley (1986) analyzed the content of tourism imagery in tourism brochures. The author found that the photos mostly portray scenery, hotels, beaches, and swimming areas. Local people were mostly portrayed as happy, welcoming, clean, and non-threatening. Images did not portray negative aspects of the destination and its people. Wheeler (1995) argued that tourism marketing has the responsibility of not only creating awareness of a destination, but also ensuring that the image is consistent with reality and does not introduce product violations. The role of ethics in tourism marketing also involves effective segmentation, communicating more appropriate messages of the destination, and portraying the reality and fragility of the environment (Wheeler 1995). , It is the task of destination marketers to determine the needs, wants, and interests of target markets such as visitors and residents, and to deliver the desired satisfaction more effectively and efficiently... in a way that preserves or enhances the customers' and the society's well-being (Kotler 1994).

Batra (2006) stated that the marketing mix (product, price, place, and promotion) could be used to achieve sustainable tourism and marketing development. The product function involves activities such as developing sustainable products, conservation of holidays, vacation packages using public transport, and moving away from offering products that are intrinsically not sustainable. The place function encourages trends towards direct selling, leaving out the marketing intermediaries, as this often results in a better price for the consumer and ensures that intermediaries sell a product in ethical ways. In addition, it does not raise unrealistic expectations in the minds of tourists

(Swarbrooke 1999).The price function ensures that tourists pay the full cost for their holiday. This can be done by ensuring a satisfactory experience for the tourist, providing a satisfactory level of profit for the tourism industry, generating an appropriate level of benefits for the host community, covering costs involved in putting right any damage caused by the tourist to the environment, and paying for the resources consumed by the tourist (Batra 2006). The promotion function should reflect the unique attributes of the destination without causing false promises to tourists so they will not be disappointed. It is important that the tourism industry “does not create expectations that the product cannot live up to” (Batra 2006, p. 63).

CHAPTER III

STUDY CONTEXT

This study investigated Puerto Rico as a tourism destination. Puerto Rico is an archipelago located in the northeastern Caribbean Sea, east of the Dominican Republic and west of the Virgin Islands. The archipelago consists of the greater main island of Puerto Rico and a great number of small islands, cays, and islets bordering the coastal zone, the largest of which are Vieques, Culebra, and Mona. Puerto Rico is one of the Greater Antilles and its geographical position provides an excellent strategic position for maritime transportation and tourism (Sánchez Martínez 2007).

People were known to be living on the island of Puerto Rico around 2,000-3,000 B.C. (Sánchez Martínez 2007). The earliest settlers of Puerto Rico included Arawaks Amerindians in four phases: Saladoide or Igneri, Ostionoide or Sub-táina and Taina (Scarano 2008). The Taino Indians were the predominant inhabitants of Puerto Rico when Columbus landed in 1493, and their culture has strongly influenced Puerto Rican history and culture. The Taino were excellent farmers and hunters and were also well known for their pottery and other artifacts using different materials. Their economy relied heavily on agriculture, complimented by fishing, hunting, collecting plants, and trading pottery. The Taino political structure comprised of independent small states called *cacicazgos*, which were comprised of several *yucayeques* (tribes) in each small state (Sánchez Martínez 2007; Scarano 2008). There were many *cacicazgos* around

Puerto Rico and the outlying islands of Vieques and Mona. Many modern towns derive their names from the names of these *cacicazgos*.

The Taino social structure consisted of a hierarchy of four social classes: a *cacique* (chief of a tribe), *nitainos* (lieutenants or the chief's assistants), *bohiques* (religious chiefs in charge of the education, history, and medicine), and *naborias* (working class). Religion and community life were important aspects of their culture. They conducted religious ceremonies, games, and other special celebrations in a *batey* (public square). Music was an essential element in their celebrations. They made musical instruments (drums, maracas) that are still an important part of the Puerto Rican music (Sánchez Martínez 2007). There is also a strong Taino influence on Puerto Rican cuisine. Several ingredients were still used in the Puerto Rican cuisine.

Puerto Rico was discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1493 during his second expedition to the Americas. However, the process of colonization did not start until 1509, when Juan Ponce de Leon arrived at Puerto Rico for the second time. The Spanish colonization greatly influenced Puerto Rican history, contributing the Catholic religion, Spanish language, social and economic structures, cuisine, culture, and traditions to Puerto Rican society. Many traditions are still part of modern Puerto Rican society.

Over the next centuries, the Puerto Rican economy depended heavily on agriculture and livestock. The island was a hub of transatlantic commerce between Spain and the rest of Spanish colonies in Central America, the Caribbean, and South America as well as a major military base. San Juan, the capital city, still has a walled Spanish

historical district, There are also several Spanish forts and colonial buildings that both residents and tourists can enjoy.

The influence of African culture in Puerto Rico began in the 1520s when the Spanish brought in slaves from West Africa. This happened primarily because there was an accelerated decline in the Taino population due to the rebellions and battles between the Spanish and the Taino people (Sánchez Martínez 2007) and the Spaniards needed more workers to work on the gold mines and farms. Africans were influential in the development of Puerto Rico's political, economic, and cultural structure. The Africans introduced their musical instruments and music styles, dances, language, and cuisine to Puerto Rican society. *Bomba* is a style of music brought to Puerto Rico by West African slaves; it utilizes percussion and improvisation to express feelings (Music of Puerto Rico 2011). Musical instruments such as *barriles* (drums) are used while playing *bomba*. *Plena* is a narrative song/folk music style that details the pains and ironies of people and life in their communities, and is derived from a strong African background (Music of Puerto Rico 2011). Many words used in Puerto Rican Spanish have an African background. In particular, the language has been influenced by *ladinos*, who were Africans who spoke Spanish and were Catholics (Hernandez 2011). African influence on the cuisine can be found in the use of plantains, coconuts, and the method of frying various foods (El Boricua 2011).

Puerto Rico remained a Spanish colony until 1898, when it was invaded by U.S. troops. The island was ceded by Spain to the United States later that same year. Puerto Ricans became United States citizens in 1917 under the Jones Act. In 1952, Puerto Rico

officially became a commonwealth in association with the United States and it remains so today. American culture has also had a strong impact on Puerto Rican culture. The American education system, the English language, political and social structures, and many traditions and holidays have been gradually adopted by Puerto Ricans. As reflected by its rich history, Puerto Rican culture is a fusion of Taino, Spanish, African, and most recently, American culture. The racial distribution in Puerto Rico is White (80.5%), Black or African-American (8%), some other race (6.8%), and two or more races (4.2%) (U.S. Census Bureau 2000).

Puerto Rican cuisine is also a fusion of many cultures. Some dishes consist of rice, beans, meat, plantains, and many other ingredients. *Mofongo* is a well-known Puerto Rican dish made of fried plantains with garlic, olive oil, and meat or seafood. *Pasteles*, wrapped green banana stuffed meat pastries, are a traditional dish usually served during Christmas and holidays. Fritters are also an important part of Puerto Rican cuisine. *Bacalaítos*, salt cod fritters, are one of the favorite fritters. They are a traditional snack that typically is eaten with an entire meal. *Bacalaítos* are served at the beach, kiosks, and at festivals.

Salsa, *merengue*, and *reggaeton* are popular Puerto Rican music genres. *Salsa* is a highly danceable and rhythmically sophisticated genre derived from both Cuban and African-Caribbean heritage (Duany 1984; To Puerto Rico 2011). It utilizes a variety of percussion instruments such as guiros (instruments made by the Taíno), maracas, bongos, timbales, and conga drums. *Merengue* is a Latin American genre that uses a two-step beat derived from the Dominican Republic. *Reggaeton* is an urban music genre

derived from Afro-Caribbean and Latin American musical influences in Puerto Rico. In addition to popular music, folk or traditional music is still important in Puerto Rico, especially at cultural events and festivals. *Jibaro* is the folk music played by mountain-dwellers and is derived from a fusion of Spanish, African, and Taíno cultures.

In addition its rich history and culture, Puerto Rico has a wide variety of attractions such as natural reserves, rain and dry forests, cays, historical districts, museums, coffee haciendas, caves, and beaches. Vieques and Culebra are less developed outlying islands that offer natural beauty and wilderness, beaches, and a taste of slow island living. These attractions as well as Puerto Rican history and culture are essential attributes that play a key role in the development of Puerto Rico as a tourism destination.

Overview of Tourism in Puerto Rico

According to Rosa (2001), the idea of transforming Puerto Rico into a tourism destination began soon after the 1898 invasion of the island by U.S. Troops. In 1899, Frederick A. Ober published *Puerto Rico and its Resources*, in which he stated the importance of the tourism industry. Tourism publications were distributed along the east coast of the United States (especially New York) in order to attract tourists and increase economic development with tourist dollars. In 1919, the hotel Condado Vanderbilt successfully started operations. During the late 1920s, the hotel declined in popularity due to the Great Depression in the United States and the prohibition of sales of alcoholic beverages (Puerto Rico Tourism Company 1999). However, Puerto Rico re-emerged as a tourism destination in the 1940s (Compañía de Turismo de Puerto Rico 1999). The

government created laws and programs to develop and promote the tourism industry, including the regulation and development of gambling and casinos. The tourism industry also grew due to increased economic growth in North America following World War II. In addition, the rupture of political and commercial relations between the United States and Cuba benefitted the tourism industry in other Caribbean destinations, especially Puerto Rico. In 1947-1948, 49,000 tourists visited Puerto Rico, providing an economic impact of \$5.5 million (Compañía de Turismo de Puerto Rico 1999).

The 1949 inauguration of the first chain hotel, the Caribe Hilton, is considered as the real beginning of the tourism industry in Puerto Rico (Compañía de Turismo de Puerto Rico 1999). The Caribe Hilton and other hotels in San Juan opened their doors to numerous tourists, artists, and performers, as well as members of the affluent class in Puerto Rico and the United States. The inauguration of the first international airport in 1955 helped to expand the tourism industry. In 1959, the Isla Verde International Airport reported that for the first time since it opened, over one million passengers had come through its gates. In the following decades, the tourism industry continued to expand greatly. Airlines promoted packages to attract visitors to the island. Car rental companies such as Avis also started operations in Puerto Rico. Several important hotels such as the La Concha, Condado Beach, El Conquistador, Mayaguez Hilton, and Ponce International started operations during the 1950s and 1960s, and even more hotels were added during the 1970s.

In 1967, the Camuy Caverns were discovered by a group of Puerto Rican geologists. Today, this cave system is considered one of the most important tourism

attractions on the island. Puerto Rico has also been promoted as a destination for meetings and has hosted several important sport events (surf, regatta, fishing, golf, and the Central American and Caribbean Games), as well as corporate meetings and cultural events. Puerto Rico was the number two destination in the world for cruise passengers during 1991-1992 (Compañía de Turismo de Puerto Rico 1999; Gines-Gonzalez 2009). A milestone in Puerto Rican tourism was reached in 1993-1994, when four million visitors went to Puerto Rico in that year.

Currently, Puerto Rico is known as a hub between Latin America, the Caribbean, and the United States, especially because it is a target destination for cruise ship passengers travelling to other Caribbean Islands. Puerto Rico is a major home cruise port, which influences the number of flights and hotel stays before and after a cruise trip. The island is a popular tourist destination because visitors have the opportunity to experience a mix of Latin American culture and American culture, explore the rain forests and beaches, participate in adventure-related tours and water sports, play golf, and learn about Hispanic heritage by visiting historic sites and districts (Compañía de Turismo de Puerto Rico 2010). Today, over five million visitors come to Puerto Rico each year to enjoy the attractions that it has to offer, over three million tourists stay on the island, and over one million cruise passengers arrive at the Port of San Juan (Puerto Rico Planning Board 2008). Most visitors are from United States, especially eastern states such as New York and New Jersey and from southern states such as Florida and Georgia (Compañía de Turismo de Puerto Rico 2009a). Visitors from Europe, Latin America, and Caribbean also visit Puerto Rico every year.

In addition to inbound tourism, domestic tourism is an important part of the industry because local residents also experience Puerto Rico as a destination during vacations from school and work. A study conducted by the Puerto Rico Tourism Company in 2009 showed that Puerto Ricans take short trips around the island. The tourism industry contributes 6% to Puerto Rico's gross domestic product or \$3.6 billion dollars, and generates approximately 62,000 direct and indirect jobs for the local economy (Ryan 2011, p. 53).

Puerto Rico Tourism Company

A significant event in the history of tourism in Puerto Rico was the creation of the Puerto Rico Tourism Company (Compañía de Turismo de Puerto Rico 1999), which was created through Law #10 on June 18, 1970. The PRTC is the government agency in charge of the development and planning of the tourism industry in Puerto Rico, the marketing and promotion of the island as a tourism destination, and the regulation of tourism services. It is in charge of the projection of the official destination image of Puerto Rico. After its creation in 1970, PRTC acquired other responsibilities and tasks. The agency is now in charge of planning and promoting Sustainable Tourism program and projects. The Sustainable Tourism program's goal is to ensure that the agencies operate areas with important ecological, cultural, and historic values using specific sustainable tourism guidelines. Other responsibilities include coordinating the "Program for the Promotion, Protection, and Conservation of Puerto Rican Beaches" through the Blue Flag Program, managing the operation of slot machines in the casinos and

maintaining control of revenue generated by these operations, and promoting Puerto Rican artisans' crafts to tourists. Its mission is to contribute to the economic and social development of the island, working in an effective and efficient way with all the components of the tourism industry to attract visitors to Puerto Rico and provide the best experience possible. Its vision is to help Puerto Rico become the most vibrant and diverse destination in the Caribbean (Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico 2010).

The Puerto Rico Tourism Company's organizational structure consists of a Board of Directors, Executive Director, Departmental Directors, and other employees in their respective divisions (Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico 1970; 2010). The organization's Board of Directors includes a member of the Executive Committee of the Puerto Rico Hotel and Tourism Association, a member of the Executive Committee of the Puerto Rico Convention Bureau, an artisan or artist, a representative of the Puerto Rican small inns sector, a representative of the businesses that promote the development of domestic tourism, and a representative of the transportation industry. All members are appointed by the Governor of Puerto Rico with the approval of the Puerto Rican Senate. The PRTC consists of the following organizational units: Administration, Development and Planning, Finance and Budget, Gambling, Marketing and Promotion, Tourism Services and Products, Legal Services, Internal Auditory, Communications and Public Relations, Information Technology, and the Office of Executive Director. The agency has 515 full time employees. The operating budget is \$99,043,000 for the 2011 fiscal year, of which \$54,797,000 is assigned to tourism marketing and promotion (Compañía de Turismo de Puerto Rico 2010).

Destination Marketing and Promotion

Several divisions in the Puerto Rico Tourism Company work to develop and execute marketing strategies to promote Puerto Rico as a tourism destination. These functions are carried out through the Divisions of Marketing, Public Relations, Special Events, Tourism Operations, and Sales in Latin America, Puerto Rico, and the Caribbean, as well as other government agencies and private entities related to air and maritime transportation. According to the Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico (2010), the PRTC's current objectives are to:

- create a new destination image and branding,
- establish a similar program to the “Puerto Rico Does It Better” campaign,
- promote tourism outside of metropolitan areas,
- promote sport tourism,
- become host destination for international events,
- create marketing strategies for tourism marines,
- re-design marketing strategies for small inns and small hotels,
- promote other ports in the island to cruise companies, and
- develop specialized markets.

For the purpose of this study, a brief overview of three marketing campaigns will be discussed. Promotional materials from these marketing campaigns have been provided to visitors and residents in the last two years.

Puerto Rico: Explore Beyond the Shore

The *Puerto Rico: Explore Beyond the Shore* campaign promoted Puerto Rico as a vibrant destination rich in natural beauty and activities beyond the beaches (Hispanic Surf 2005). It also included elements of the island's cultural and historic heritage, and Puerto Rican music was featured in television advertising. The ads featured "fast-moving images of activities offered by the island accompanied by Salsa music juxtaposed by snapping fingers" (Vallejavier 2005, p. 24).

The main themes used in the advertising campaign were rest and relaxation, nature and sports, history and culture, entertainment and nightlife, and the regional destination of Porta del Sol located on the west region (Hispanic Surf 2005). In addition, people in the ads were portrayed as vibrant, happy, and welcoming. The campaign was designed not only to promote Puerto Rico as a world-class tourist destination, but also to reiterate a strong commitment to the environment and sustainable tourism. The advertising campaign focused on traditional markets for the destination such as New York, Los Angeles, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, and Miami. New markets in Philadelphia, Atlanta, Charlotte, and Denver were added to expand the U.S. market (Hispanic Surf 2005). A Spanish version of this campaign (*Explora Más Alla de la Playa*) was launched in Latin American markets (Central and South America) focusing on culture, traditions, and attractions (Vallejavier 2006). The U.S. campaign was also adapted for the European market. In addition, a television campaign with the theme of "Discover What's Ours: Tourism Made in Puerto Rico" was launched to promote Puerto Rico among local

residents. This campaign utilized the endorsements of local celebrities. The campaign included print, radio, and television advertisements.

Through the Eyes of Elliot Erwitt

The *Through the Eyes of Elliot Erwitt* campaign was an integrated marketing campaign created by Ogilvy and Mather and De La Cruz Advertising, and was designed to increase awareness about Puerto Rico (Leisure and Travel Week 2009). The campaign was designed to provide a glimpse of life in Puerto Rico as seen from an artist's point of view. Elliot Erwitt, a celebrated photographer, depicted the "true realism" of Puerto Rico by taking photographs of the people, culture, places, natural beauty, beaches, and architecture, in order to provide an idea for travelers of what a trip to Puerto Rico could offer. The campaign consisted of "television, print, and online webisodes with messaging that evokes a personal connection with Puerto Rico and inspires people to visit the islands" (Leisure and Travel Week 2009, para. 6). Each ad featured a specific aspect of what the island has to offer, including history and architecture, dancing, gastronomy, culture, and Puerto Rico's various islands. The campaign ran on several television networks including Bravo, Food Network, Fine Living, Travel Channel, CNN, and CNBC. Print ads appeared in publications such as *Vanity Fair*, *Architectural Digest*, *Food and Wine*, *In Style*, *Town and Country*, and *Travel and Leisure*. Digital and out-of-home advertising were also utilized to support the campaign. Examples of out-of-home advertising are posters in commuter rail stations in Atlanta and Philadelphia, and a billboard inside the American Airlines terminal at JFK airport (Ryan 2010a). The campaign

launched in December of 2009 and ran until June of 2010. The campaign was targeted toward people “who want their vacation to be an enriching experience, who want more than just a pretty beach” (Leisure and Travel Week 2009, para. 6). They want a sophisticated experience where they can learn about culture and history. The campaign ran in New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Washington DC, Dallas, Ft. Worth, Atlanta, and Miami.

Just Think Puerto Rico, Puerto Rico Does It Better

The most recent marketing campaign, *Just Think Puerto Rico*, was a destination-driven campaign “building upon the Puerto Rico Tourism Company’s strategic market positioning as the most diverse and vibrant destination in the Caribbean as well as an attractive destination for the business traveler” (Ryan 2010b, p. 28). The campaign launched in late September of 2010, and ran through mid-April of 2011. The marketing strategy was more consumer-driven and focused on digital media to keep up with the industry’s current trends. Within the marketing efforts, the destination website was revamped, mobile applications were developed, and advertising relied more on social media websites such as Facebook and the use of sweepstakes on Facebook. The campaign also utilized outdoor-media executions such as a newsstand display and a billboard placement in New York Times Squares. The campaign focused on portraying different attributes of Puerto Rico such as gastronomy, nature/adventure, history, culture, and entertainment. It targeted both leisure and business travelers from high-income demographics from mainland United States, because 80% of all tourists are from this

region. The campaign targeted primarily East Coast locations. Other United States target markets included New York, Philadelphia, Miami, Washington DC, Chicago, Dallas, Atlanta, and Los Angeles.

In addition to the three marketing campaigns, the Puerto Rico Tourism Company has *Que Pasa!*, an official magazine for promoting Puerto Rico to tourists, the tourism industry and residents (Casiano Communications 2011). Published every two months, the magazine provides information on accommodations, restaurants, shopping centers, casinos, attractions, and events. It serves travel agencies, wholesalers, and visitors, and it is also used extensively by locals. Visitors and locals can find a copy of the magazine in tourism information centers, newsstands and accommodations. The magazine is also distributed worldwide. The publication has sales of over 10,000 on 2,700 local newsstands and more than 20,000 paid subscribers.

Research Questions

Based on the review of the literature and relevant background of tourism in Puerto Rico, several research questions were proposed in an attempt to gain a greater understanding of how places, people, and culture are represented in destination marketing and how local residents perceive these cultural representations:

1. How do Puerto Ricans perceive Puerto Rico as a tourism destination?
2. How do Puerto Ricans perceive themselves and their culture?
3. How are Puerto Rican culture and Puerto Rico represented in destination marketing materials?

4. How do Puerto Ricans evaluate the portrayal of Puerto Rican culture and places in the marketing efforts of the Puerto Rico Tourism Company?

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

Few studies have analyzed the perceptions that residents have of their own countries as tourism destinations as portrayed in marketing campaigns (Kwon 2008). Visual research methods can be useful instruments to study the visual representations of a destination as well as the residents' attitudes toward marketing campaigns. A qualitative research method was chosen for this study because it allows the researcher to get inner experiences, perspectives, impressions, and opinions of participants, and to determine how meanings are formed (Strauss and Corbin 2008). Qualitative research in communications and marketing generates insights into advertisements and interpretations of those advertising elements that influence people's responses to advertisements (Shimp 2010).

The research for this study was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, a critical visual analysis was conducted in order to have a better understanding of how peoples, places, and culture are represented in destination marketing materials. For this study's purpose, destination-marketing materials consisted of promotional materials employed by the Puerto Rico Tourism Company to promote Puerto Rico as a tourism destination to residents and tourists. During the second phase, photo interviews were conducted with Puerto Ricans currently living in Puerto Rico or in Bryan/College Station, Texas, in order to gain a better understanding of residents' attitudes toward

representation of people, culture, and place in destination marketing, and their perceptions of Puerto Rico as a tourism destination.

Phase I: Critical Visual Analysis of Destination Marketing Materials

Data Collection

Printed tourism promotional materials from the Puerto Rico Tourism Company dated December 2009 to August 2010 were collected during several trips to Puerto Rico. The researcher visited several PRTC Regional Information Centers located in the north, south, and west regions of Puerto Rico as well as a few hotels and bookstores to collect the printed materials. Six *Que Pasa* magazines (the PRTC official tourism magazine) and ten brochures, maps, and flyers were collected. An internet search using key words such as Puerto Rico Tourism Company, Puerto Rico and tourism, and Puerto Rico was also conducted to find TV ads and videos of marketing campaigns from 2009 and 2010. Three marketing campaigns were analyzed for this study, including *Puerto Rico: Explore Beyond the Shore*, *Through the Eyes of Elliot Erwitt*, and *Puerto Rico Does It Better*. During the first two trips to Puerto Rico to collect materials, the researcher noticed that materials from the *Puerto Rico: Explore Beyond the Shore* campaign could be still found at information centers. Three television advertisements from the *Puerto Rico: Explore Beyond the Shore* campaign were found on the PRTC's You Tube[®] website. Three videos from the *Through the Eyes of Elliot Erwitt* campaign were found on You Tube[®] website. Photographs from the *seepuertorico.com* website, as well as TV

ads and videos from You Tube[®], were collected from October 2010 until December 2010. Photos from the website were extracted and saved in a computer file.

Before the critical analysis started, a number was assigned to each photograph located in the printed materials. In the case of *Que Pasa* magazine, photos located in the articles and pages featuring places to visit were analyzed. Maps, drawings, and advertisements belonging to tourism industry providers found in the printed materials were not analyzed because these materials did not represent the projected destination image of the Puerto Rico Tourism Company, which was the focus of this study. TV ads and videos were referred to with the campaign name and a number. In all, 1,139 photographs, three TV ads, and three videos were collected.

Data Analysis

A critical visual analysis of destination marketing materials was conducted from mid-November 2010 to December 2010. Critical visual analysis is a qualitative method used for researching advertising images, websites, film, and photographs developed by Schroeder (2006) that “draws on the theory of visual consumption to show how cultural codes and representation conventions inform contemporary marketing images, infusing them with visual, historical and rhetoric presence, and power” (p. 303). The method does not rely on a structural understanding of semiotics, but does provide researchers with an understanding “of how images embody and express cultural values and contradictions” (p. 303). Cultural values are defined as “the commonly held standards of what is acceptable or unacceptable, important or unimportant, right or wrong, etc., in a

community or society”(Business Dictionary 2011). For example, a group of people may consider the portrayal of their history as important in the visual images.

The critical visual analysis procedure followed specific steps. First, a descriptive analysis was conducted. The researcher described the content of each photograph, TV ad, or video, and pointed out features contained within it. People, objects, and events in the photographs, ads, and videos were identified and described, as well as the way the subject matter was presented was described. Images were further examined to see how cultural meanings were portrayed. The researcher also noted the physical attributes of people, the interactions between people, the interactions of people with places and cultural values, as well as how these were represented in the images. In the case of places, particular attention was paid to the types of places, foods and drinks, day and nightlife, types of activities, tourism scenarios, and the attractions represented, as well as which regions of Puerto Rico were represented. Attention was paid to people’s gender, skin color, hair color, clothing, pose, role in society, and their activities portrayed in the photos, as well as the where people were in the promotional materials. The researcher also paid attention to what was represented and what was not represented. After the descriptive analysis was completed, written notes were revised to identify themes and to interpret and evaluate the results. Next, the findings from the analysis were used to select the questions for the interviews and to select promotional materials that exemplified the findings of Phase I. Materials for the interviews were selected based on the themes found while analyzing the visual materials. The sample included several photographs that

exemplified elements of each theme. Only photographs from magazines and brochures were selected to show to the participants.

Phase II: Photo Interviews

In the second phase of the study, photo interviews were conducted with Puerto Ricans to discover their impressions and opinions of how Puerto Ricans, Puerto Rico, and Puerto Rican culture are portrayed in destination marketing materials as well as what they think of Puerto Rico as a tourism destination. The concept of photo elicitation was first introduced by John Collier in 1967. According to Prosser (2006), photo elicitation uses a photograph as a stimulant in an interview situation. Consequently, photo elicitation interviews are defined as interviews in which photographs are used as stimuli to initiate and guide the discussion between the interviewer and the respondent (Curry 1986; Harper 2002). The method of photo-elicitation is often described as a specific type of interview where photographs are assembled by the researcher and shown to individuals or groups with the purpose of triggering memories and eliciting values, beliefs, attitudes, and meaning (Schwartz 1989; Prosser and Schwartz 1998). According to Cederholm, “photo elicitation can be used as a technique for making the respondent feel comfortable in the interview situation” (2004, p. 226). In fieldwork, photographs are sometimes used as a “can opener,” a starting point from which trust can be developed between the researcher and informants (Collier and Collier 1986; Prosser and Schwartz 1998; Cederholm 2004).

Photo-elicitation is also considered a simple variation of open-ended interviewing (Collier 1967). “The open-ended interview is an exchange initiated and guided by the researcher in which the subject hopefully provides in-depth responses to complex questions” (Harper 1998, p. 35). The open-ended interview rests on the assumption that the researcher asks questions that are culturally meaningful to the subject. In the photo-elicitation interview, interview/discussion is stimulated and guided by images (Harper 1998).

Photographs offer an “opportunity to gain not just more but different insights into social phenomena, which research methods relying on oral, aural or written data cannot provide” (Bolton, Pole, and Mizen 2001, p. 503). In the case of photo-elicitation, it is argued that while ordinary interview talk can explore many issues, discussing a photograph with an interviewee can prompt much more talk about different things (Rose 2007, p.240). Blinn and Harrist (1991) gave two reasons why combining photos with interviews offers a particularly insightful research method: (a) it gives detailed information about how informants see their world, and (b) it allows interviewees to reflect on things they do not usually think about (Hurworth 2003). This technique can be a useful approach in tourism research because taking photographs is a deeply rooted, institutionalized part of the tourism experience (Cederholm 2004).

Data Collection

To participate in this study, subjects needed to be Puerto Ricans or people of Puerto Rican descent currently living in mainland United States and Puerto Rico for at least one

year. Puerto Ricans in both locations were interviewed because of her assumptions about both samples. It was assumed that Puerto Ricans in both samples will provide different perspectives in this study and was interested in comparing the results of both samples. Puerto Ricans living in Puerto Rico will provide a more critical perspective because of their lived experiences at the destination. Puerto Ricans living in United States will provide a less critical perspective because of their feelings of nostalgia. For this study, Puerto Ricans are defined under the following characteristics: a. people of Puerto Rican parents or grandparents, b. people born in Puerto Rico or mainland United States, and c. people of Puerto Rican descent living in mainland United States. Twenty-nine interviews were conducted with Puerto Ricans currently living in Puerto Rico from late December of 2010 until mid-January of 2011. Twenty-two interviews were also conducted with Puerto Ricans living in College Station and Bryan, Texas, from late January 2011 until the middle of March 2011. In Puerto Rico, the researcher spoke with personal contacts who recommended possible participants for the study. Emails were also sent to personal contacts in order to recruit participants. These contacts were asked to recommend possible participants based on different backgrounds, age groups, and socioeconomic status in order to have a representative sample of Puerto Ricans. The researcher also asked interviewees to recommend possible participants using snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is a technique in which the researcher identifies initial key individuals and asks them to name others who would likely be potential participants for the research (Bernard 2000). This technique is used in studies of difficult to find populations. In College Station and Bryan, the researcher used personal contacts and

spoke with the advisor of the Puerto Rican Student Association at Texas A&M University to recruit subjects. E-mails were sent to prospective participants to explain the details of the study and ask for their voluntary participation. The researcher also used snowball sampling in the United States context by asking interviewees to recommend possible participants for the study.

Participants

The local sample consisted of 29 Puerto Ricans or people of Puerto Rican descent. The sample was representative because it included participants of different socio-economic status, age, and gender, who were from different regions of Puerto Rico and held a wide variety of occupations (see Table 1). There were 16 female participants (55.17%), and 13 male participants (44.83%). Twelve participants (41.38%) were from 25 to 34 years old, five participants (17.24%) were from 35 to 44 years old, and seven participants (24.14%) were 55 or older. Twenty-four (82.76%) participants were born in Puerto Rico. Five (17.24%) participants (people of Puerto Rican descent) were born in mainland United States, Central America, or the Caribbean. Twelve participants (41.38%) had a household income of \$25,000-\$50,000. A similar amount of participants (6, or 20.69% respectively) had a household income of \$10,000-\$25,000 and \$50,000-\$75,000. The researcher asked participants if any of them had experience in tourism in order to have a better understanding of their perspectives. Twenty-one participants (72.41%) had no work experience in the tourism industry. However, eight participants (27.59%) did have work experience in tourism, and five currently work in the industry.

Table 1. Demographics for the Puerto Rico Sample

Ages		Work Experience in Tourism	
18-24 (3)	10.34%	No (21)	72.41%
25-34 (12)	41.38%	Yes (8)	<u>27.59%</u>
35-44 (5)	17.24%		100.00%
45-54 (2)	6.90%		
55/older (7)	<u>24.14%</u>	Direct Jobs (5)	62.50%
	100.00%	Indirect Jobs (3)	<u>37.50%</u>
			100.00%
Gender		Household Income	
Female (16)	55.17%	< \$10,000 (3)	10.34%
Male (13)	44.83%	\$10,000-\$25,000 (6)	20.69%
		\$25,000-\$50,000 (12)	41.38%
		\$50,000-\$75,000 (6)	20.69%
		> \$75,000 (2)	<u>6.90%</u>
			100.00%

n = 29

The non-local (Texas) sample consisted of 22 Puerto Ricans or people of Puerto Rican descent. The demographics of this sample are shown in Table 2. Thirteen participants (59.09%) were female and nine participants (40.91%) were male. Two participants (18.24%) were 18-24 years old. Ten participants (45.45%) were 25-34 years old. Four participants (18.18%) were age 55 or older. Nineteen (86.36%) participants were born in Puerto Rico. Three (13.63%) participants (people of Puerto Rican descent) were born in mainland United States and Europe. Nine participants (40.91%) had a household income of \$10,000-\$25,000. Twelve participants (18.18%) had a household income of \$25,000 to \$50,000. Three participants (13.64%) had a household income of \$50,000 to \$75,000. Six participants (27.27%) had a household income of more than \$75,000. Nineteen participants (81.82%) had no work experience in tourism, but three

participants had a direct job in the industry. Six (27.27% respectively) of the participants have lived in United States for 1-5 years and 25 or more years respectively.

Table 2. Demographics for the Texas Sample

Age		Work Experience in Tourism	
18-24 (2)	9.09%	No (18)	81.82%
25-34 (10)	45.45%	Yes (4)	<u>18.18%</u>
35-44 (3)	13.64%		100.00%
45-54 (3)	13.64%		
55+ (4)	<u>18.18%</u>	Direct Jobs (3)	75.00%
	100.00%	Indirect Jobs (1)	<u>25.00%</u>
			100.00%
Gender		Length of Residence	
Female (13)	59.09%	1-5 years (6)	27.27%
Male (9)	40.91%	6-10 years (3)	13.64%
		11-15 years (2)	9.09%
		16-20 years (3)	13.64%
		21-25 years (2)	9.09%
		25+ years (6)	<u>27.27%</u>
			100.00%
Household Income			
< \$10,000 (0)	0%		
\$10,000-\$25,000 (9)	40.91%		
\$25,000-\$50,000 (4)	18.18%		
\$50,000-\$75,000 (3)	13.64%		
> \$75,000 (6)	<u>27.27%</u>		
	100.00%		

n = 22

Similar characteristics of both samples were observed by the researcher while conducting interviews and analyzing the data. Puerto Ricans expressed deep feelings of pride while they were reading images and answering questions. Residents stated that Puerto Rico is an excellent destination that has a variety of attractions to offer to the tourists. In addition, residents found the images somewhat attractive and persuasive.

They felt invited to do the activities the people are doing on the photos and that they like the brilliant colors.

Interview Protocol

First, the purpose of the study and the interview protocol were explained to potential participants. If they agreed to participate in the study, they were asked to sign a consent form. Each interview was audio recorded with the consent of the participant. If the participant did not wish to be audio recorded, the researcher took written notes during the interview and then transcribed them to a Word document. The audio recordings were transcribed by a professional transcriptionist. The interview included questions about age, income, place of birth, occupation, and length of stay in the United States or Puerto Rico. Subjects were shown 20 to 24 photographs that were identified in Phase I of the study. After the interviewees saw the photographs, they were asked questions about their general impressions and opinions of the photographs and their perspectives of Puerto Rico as a tourism destination. Next, they were asked questions about the representations of Puerto Ricans (physical attributes and personality/identity), Puerto Rican culture (food, traditions, music, and history) and places in Puerto Rico (beaches and natural resources). Interviewees were also asked to provide their recommendations on how to represent Puerto Rico in destination marketing efforts better. Interview questions may be found in Appendix A.

The researcher showed photographs during the interview as a key component to the interviewees. Photographs were used by the interviewees to provide a specific

example for the responses they were providing then. If the interviewees' responses were unclear to the researcher during the interview, they were asked to clarify or expand their responses in order to have accurate information for the study. The interviews lasted 25 to 90 minutes and were conducted in Spanish or English, depending on the interviewee's comfort of speaking one of the two languages. Most of the interviews were conducted in Spanish because the participants felt more comfortable speaking in this language. Two interviews were conducted fully in English in Texas. The transcripts were kept in the original language.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was the method selected for conducting the data analysis of this study. According to Howitt and Cramer (2005), thematic analysis is one of the most commonly used methods of qualitative analysis. It is used to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) within data (Braun and Clarke 2006). This method is well suited for analyzing individual narratives or experiences (Mahrer 1988; Spradley 1979; Taylor and Bogdan 1984). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), one benefit of thematic analysis is flexibility. Because of its theoretical freedom and flexibility, thematic analysis can potentially provide a rich, detailed, and complex account of data. There are two approaches to this method of analysis, the inductive approach, and the theoretical (deductive) approach (Braun and Clarke 2006). The inductive approach identifies themes that are strongly linked to the data (Patton 1990). Braun and Clarke (2006) pointed out that inductive analysis consists of "coding the data without trying to fit it into a

preexisting coding frame or the researcher's analytic preconceptions," and that it "can be an essentialist or realist method, which reports experiences, meanings, and the reality of participants." (p. 83). The inductive approach was chosen for this study because it provides the flexibility to report the experiences and opinions of local residents and their attitudes toward tourism in Puerto Rico, as well as toward the representation of culture, people, and places in destination marketing efforts.

Braun and Clarke (2006) provided a step-by-step guide for thematic analysis, and the current study followed their guide. The first step is becoming familiar with the data. For this study, the researcher conducted all the interviews and transcribed some of them, which meant she started the analysis having prior knowledge of the data as well as some initial analytic thoughts and reflections regarding the data. The second step was generating initial codes. Initial coding was conducted using the qualitative analysis software program, Nvivo. This software was chosen because it can manage a large data set of interviews and organize the data. After the initial coding was completed, the third step was to review the initial codes and start to identify themes. The initial codes were sorted into potential themes and grouped according to relevant data extracts within the identified themes. The fourth step was reviewing themes. The researcher re-read all the collated extracts for each theme to see if the themes formed a coherent pattern, and to identify and write down any sub-themes that were identified in the data. An outline of themes and sub-themes was created to verify if the researcher had a compelling story. The coding was reviewed to make sure all data was included. In addition, each theme was refined to make sure the data within the themes came together meaningfully. The

fifth step included defining and naming the themes. This step consisted of “identifying the essence of what each theme is about and determining what aspect of the data each theme captures” (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 92). In this step, the details of each theme are refined and the researcher compiles a detailed analysis of each theme. The relevant literature was revised to enhance the analysis and support arguments (Aronson 1994). Each theme was checked for relevancy to the overall story as well as how the themes answered the research questions. The final step was to produce the final report of the thematic analysis. The final report is a “concise, coherent, logical, and interesting account of the story the data tells within and across themes” (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 93). The researcher selected the most vivid and compelling quotes that captured the essence of the story to be included in this study. Selected quotes were translated to English to provide examples for the Results chapter. Data analysis was conducted completely in Spanish. Throughout the data analysis and writing process, the researcher constantly re-read the data to make sure that the results accurately reflected the information provided by the participants.

Data Collection and Analysis of Archival Documents

Data collection was conducted during several trips to Puerto Rico from December 2009 to January 2011, from university libraries and Puerto Rico’s Legislative Library. The data gathered included: (a) tourism statistics; (b) Puerto Rico Tourism Company reports; (c) newspaper articles related to tourism in Puerto Rico and destination marketing strategies; (d) theses and research papers conducted by Puerto Rican scientists regarding

Puerto Rican culture, Puerto Rican identity, and tourism in Puerto Rico; and (e) and documents not available in English. The purpose of this process was to corroborate evidence from different sources (Creswell 2007) in order to have a better understanding of the study context, the historical context of tourism in Puerto Rico, and destination marketing strategies.

Ethical Concerns

Ethical issues are essential concerns that need to be addressed in qualitative studies. One of the main issues is the relationship between the participants and the researcher, which to be more personal than in quantitative studies. Researchers spend a great amount of time conducting research at the selected research sites and interacting with subjects. Another issue to be addressed is the dissemination and accuracy of the findings. This study uses the following guidelines in order to address both ethical concerns.

Prior to starting the data collection for Phase II, the researcher submitted an exempt application to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Texas A&M University. Once the study was approved by the IRB, the researcher began collecting data. During the recruitment of potential participants, the researcher provided an informed consent form to all subjects that explained the purpose of the study, the potential risks of the study, benefits of the study, the participants' rights, and the procedures to be used in the study. Participation in the study was voluntary. Participants were compensated with a cinema gift card or a Puerto Rican artisan piece. During the interview protocol, the researcher started the interview process by introducing herself to the participant. This

step helped to build rapport with the interviewee because the researcher introduced herself as a Puerto Rican resident and student pursuing a master's degree in Tourism. Some interviewees asked the researcher about her relationship with Puerto Rico Tourism Company, and she clarified this immediately by explaining that she did not have a business relationship with that government entity. The purpose and procedures of the study were also explained to each participant, and an informed consent form was provided to those who agreed to participate in the study. This informed consent form was signed by both the researcher and each participant before the protocol started. A copy of the form was provided to the participant. During the protocol, if participants were not able to answer some questions, the researcher simply proceeded to the next question. Participants had the option to stop the interview at any time.

Several procedures were conducted during the data analysis, interpretation, recording, and dissemination of the findings. All names and other identifiers were disassociated from the responses during the data analysis, interpretation, and recording (Creswell 2003) and pseudonyms were used to protect participants' confidentiality. Records will be kept for five years.

Several strategies were utilized to ensure accuracy of the results. Creswell (2003) suggested several validation strategies to check the accuracy of findings and recommended that qualitative researchers "engage at least two of these strategies in any given study" (p.209). This study utilized self-reflection, methodological triangulation, and writing with detailed and thick descriptions to check accuracy (Creswell 2007; Denzin 2006). Self-reflection includes clarifying researcher bias in the study, explaining

the researcher's role within the study, and commenting on past experiences, assumptions, and other relevant information (Denzin 1978; Merriam 1998; Creswell 2003). Methodological triangulation uses multiple and different sources and methods to collect data (Denzin 1978; Creswell 2007). The researcher conducted a critical visual analysis of destination marketing materials, photo interviews with Puerto Ricans in Puerto Rico and Texas, and a search, collection, and analysis of documents to understand the representation of people, culture and places, and destination marketing strategies better.

The Researcher's Role

According to Creswell, "the role of the researcher as the primary data collection instrument necessitates the identification of personal values, assumptions, and biases at the outset of the study" (2003, p. 200). The investigator's contribution to the research setting can be useful and positive rather than detrimental (Locke, Spirduso, and Sullivan 1987; Creswell 2003). In order to clarify the researcher's role in this research study, the following information has been provided regarding herself, her past experiences, and her assumptions.

The author of this study is Puerto Rican, and born and raised in Puerto Rico. She has lived in Puerto Rico the majority of her life. As a resident, she frequently visited attractions and other tourism-related places and participated in cultural events because she wanted to learn about her "country" and culture. She has lived in Texas for the last two years in order to pursue graduate studies in tourism. She completed a bachelor's

degree in Humanities with a concentration in Touristic Culture at the University of Puerto Rico, at the Carolina campus. While studying for her major in Touristic Culture, she took such classes as Puerto Rico Tourism Geography, Ecotourism in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean, Introduction to Tourism, Cultural Tourism (emphasis on cultural attractions and historic sites in Puerto Rico), and History of Tourism. The professors in these classes particularly emphasized the importance of tourism development and sustainable planning. She also took classes in Social Sciences, Humanities, and Environmental Sciences such as Puerto Rico Art History, Ecology, and Music in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. This curriculum provided a high emphasis on Puerto Rico. These undergraduate classes and class discussions helped the author to form her knowledge and understanding of Puerto Rican culture and Tourism in Puerto Rico. It helped her form opinions and assumptions about what elements of Puerto Rican culture, Puerto Rico, and Puerto Ricans should be included in destination marketing materials. She also acquired work experience in the tourism industry and had the opportunity to work in different sectors of the tourism industry. These experiences helped her to better her understanding of the tourism infrastructure and the development of the tourism industry in Puerto Rico. Throughout these experiences in the industry, she was able to observe and better understand decision-making processes and how things are done within the tourism industry. She observed events through the eyes of a tourism employee, not as a local resident.

In addition to her personal and work experiences, the author also conducted other research prior to conducting this study. She conducted an exploratory study in Puerto

Rico during August 2010. The purpose of the exploratory study was to understand the similarities and differences in the destination image of Puerto Rico projected by tourism entities and the perception that tourists and residents have of Puerto Rico as a tourism destination. Within the findings, residents expressed mixed (positive and critical) opinions about Puerto Rico as a tourism destination and destination marketing efforts. Residents stated some destination attributes such as the variety of options Puerto Rico has to offer and Puerto Rican hospitality. Residents also expressed critical opinions. For example, residents consider Puerto Rico an expensive destination and they would like to see improvements made in marketing efforts. These results increased the author's interest in understanding residents' attitudes toward destination marketing and representation of people, places, and culture in mediated images. It also helped her to construct her assumptions for this study.

Assumptions

Certain assumptions were made for the critical analysis of destination marketing materials: Puerto Rico will be portrayed as a generalization of a Caribbean island. There will be a lack of diversity in the photographs. Puerto Ricans will be portrayed in stereotypical ways. For example, Puerto Ricans will be portrayed in situations where they are doing daily routine activities, such as working. Puerto Ricans will be portrayed in situations where they are doing water sports, such as kayaking. Puerto Ricans will be portrayed in situations where they are dancing to Latin American music such as salsa and merengue, and Latin American music is assumed a key element of Puerto Rican

culture. Puerto Ricans will be portrayed with brown skin color and dark hair color. Puerto Ricans will be portrayed in places near water because Puerto Rico is an island. Puerto Ricans will be portrayed in traditional clothing. Puerto Rican food will be a key element in the promotional materials. Puerto Ricans may be portrayed doing activities at the island's main attractions, such as beaches, historic sites, and golf courses.

Assumptions for the second phase of the study included the following ideas: Puerto Ricans living in Puerto Rico will provide a critical perspective of how Puerto Rican culture is portrayed in destination marketing materials because they are constantly experiencing and enjoying Puerto Rico's attractions and attributes. They may argue that promotional materials may fail to portray all the attributes and attractions that Puerto Rico possesses and destination marketers mainly focus on the same main attractions through the years. However, Puerto Ricans living abroad will provide a less critical perspective because of their feelings of nostalgia. Therefore, it was assumed that Puerto Ricans living in Bryan/College Station, Texas would provide a unique perspective of their culture given that they may have been exposed to the efforts of promoting Puerto Rico in the United States. They probably visit Puerto Rico quite regularly to spend time with family and friends during holidays and vacations, and enjoy visiting Puerto Rico because of feelings of nostalgia caused by living abroad. During data collection, the researcher decided to introduce herself as a Puerto Rican and a resident because she wanted to be able to speak with other local residents about the representation of their shared culture. She wanted them to feel comfortable and tell her their opinions.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

In the critical visual analysis of destination marketing materials, emerging themes were derived from the data (photos). The emerging themes included people (mainly Puerto Ricans), Puerto Rican culture, beach destinations, and luxury destinations. These themes exemplified the destination attributes that the Puerto Rico Tourism Company stressed in its advertising campaigns and promotional materials.

People

The Puerto Ricans shown in the photos appeared happy, full of energy, and joy, and were portrayed as outgoing and service-oriented people. The majority of the people shown were young adults and no photos of older people were found in the sample. A few children were shown in eco-parks and beaches. The people shown in the photos had a variety of skin colors ranging from light to dark brown, which can be attributed to the mixed ancestry of most Puerto Ricans. Most of the people in the photos were shown participating in water sports and other outdoor activities. These findings reflect the typical outgoing Puerto Rican personality and the activities that Puerto Ricans may engage in while participating in tourism related-activities. A surprising finding was that few pictures depicted Puerto Ricans dancing (e.g. *salsa*). Music is an essential aspect of Puerto Rican culture and daily life. A few pictures portrayed locals enjoying nightlife in settings such as bars. Most were portrayed in stereotypical roles as tourism industry

employees (chefs, waiters, housekeepers, massage therapists, and taxi drivers), wearing jibaro attire, and dancing bomba, and plena. Figure 1 shows an example of the stereotypical role of a tourism employee.



Figure 1. Stereotypical picture of a tourism employee

In general, women were portrayed wearing bathing suits or traditional attire, working as tourism employees, or in passive roles such as resting on a hammock. Men were usually portrayed in more active roles than women were, such as participating in water sports and adventure related activities or as tourism employees. A few pictures depicted men in traditional clothing. These findings clearly reflect the difference on gender roles by division of labor and/or sexism and the social construction of what it is considered to be a woman's role vs. a man's role. These images portray women and men in what Morgan and Pritchard (1998) called Level 1 and Level 2 images. Images that depict women and men in limited, sexual, and decorative roles are labeled Level 1. Level 2 images are traditional images that show women and men in traditional pursuits.

There were only a few photos depicting Puerto Rican families or showing Puerto Ricans in daily life settings except for those shown on the job as tourism employees. There were also a few pictures of tourists who were typically portrayed as light skinned, middle aged golfers. Tourists were also minimally portrayed in family settings. This finding was surprising because tourists are usually main characters in tourism advertisements.

Puerto Rican Culture

Several aspects of Puerto Rican culture were portrayed in the pictures, including food, traditional dances, music, and heritage. Gourmet food or restaurant style food was depicted heavily in the photos. Gourmet dishes such as “mofongo with shrimp” were shown (Figure 2). However, “authentic” or daily Puerto Rican food was rarely shown. Popular authentic dishes such as pasteles and rice were sometimes shown in the images, but the photos were usually of holiday celebrations such as Christmas. For example, pasteles was shown in a *Que Pasa* magazine, and rice with beans was shown on the “See Puerto Rico” website. Figure 3 shows a dish of rice and beans. This finding suggests marketers’ intentions of portraying Puerto Rico as luxury destination. However, it doesn’t reflect what a new type of tourists might like to experience in terms of culinary experiences. “New” tourists are interested in trying local cuisine (Wang 2000).

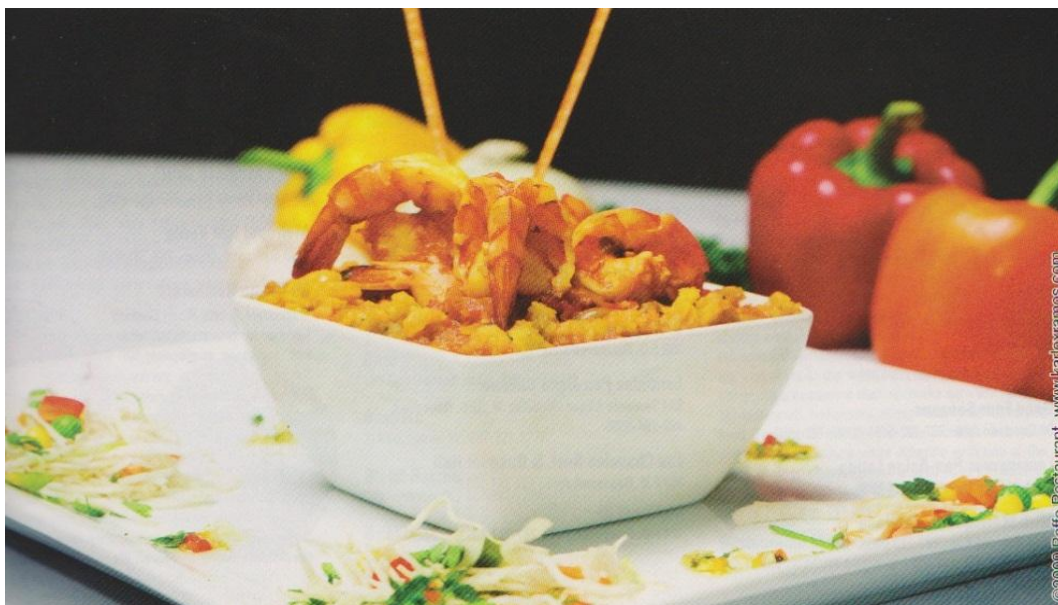


Figure 2. Puerto Rican gourmet cuisine



Figure 3. Dish of rice with beans

Most of the photos of dance and music events portrayed *bomba* and *plena* as the traditional music of Puerto Rico; there was little evidence of popular music such as *salsa*. Classical music was briefly portrayed in the photos, especially when promoting classical music festivals. A few photos showing *jibaro* attire were included in a “Go to Puerto Rico” travel guide. *Jibaro* clothing for men consists of long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and a *pava* (hat made of dried palm leaves). *Jibaro* clothing for women consists of long skirts and short-sleeved shirts or long colorful dresses with flowers in the women’s hair. This attire was used by the mountain-dwellers, people who lived in the heart of the island (central region of Puerto Rico).

There were few photos depicting Puerto Rican traditions. Art was represented by a few paintings in a museum. In terms of heritage and history, the majority of the photos depicted Spanish and African heritage. Spanish heritage was represented by photos of Old San Juan, cathedrals, lighthouses, and women wearing colorful Spanish attire. African heritage was represented by photos of *bomba* and *plena* dance and music events. However, there were few photos depicting the Taino heritage when compared with those depicting Spanish and African heritage. A few pictures showed the Tibes and Caguana indigenous parks located in the south and central regions. Figure 4 depicts Old San Juan, which reflects the heavily portrayed Spanish heritage.

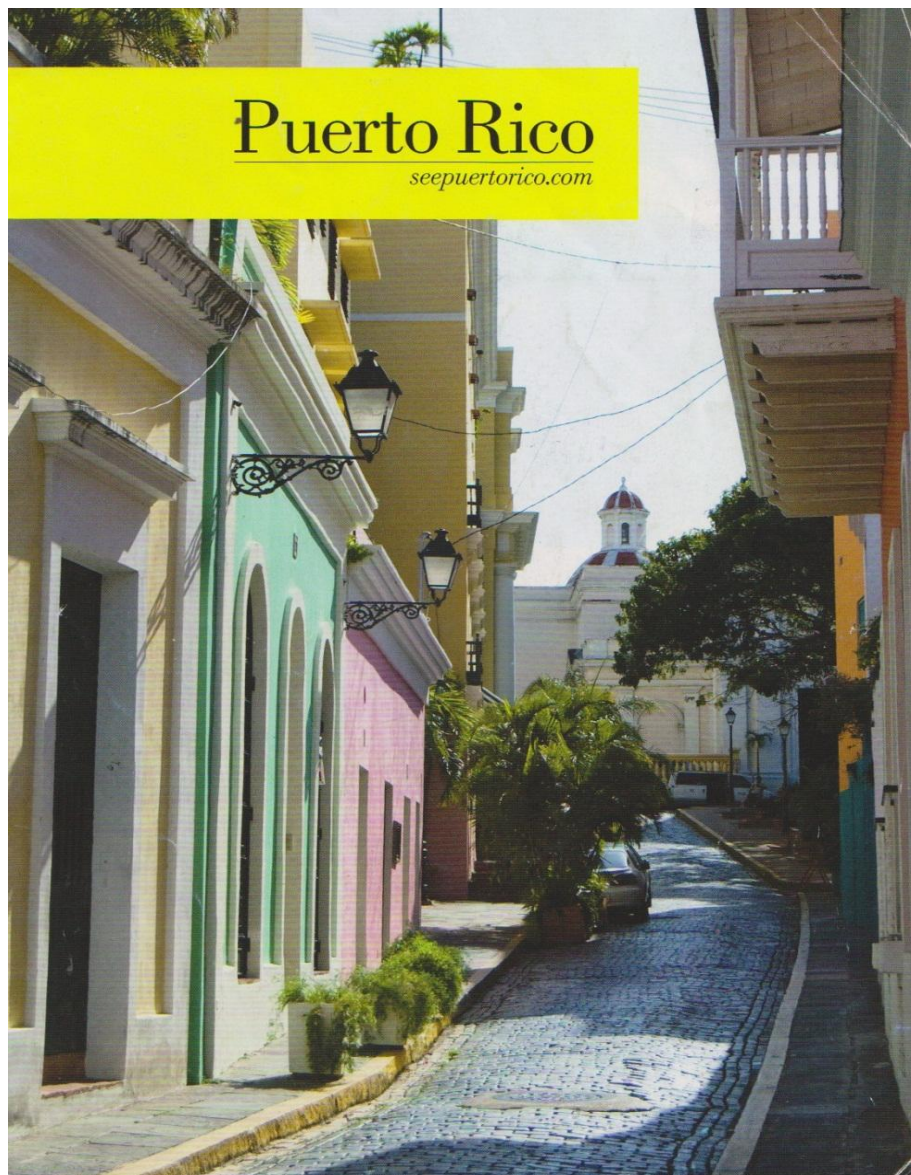


Figure 4. Old San Juan

Beach Destinations

Puerto Rico is often depicted as a sun, sand, and sea (SSS) destination. Photos portrayed a variety of beaches located in different regions of Puerto Rico, including Vieques and Culebra. Some of the activities shown that tourists could experience while visiting

Puerto Rico included snorkeling, diving, surfing, fishing, windsurfing, and kayaking. Adventure-related sports such as rappelling and hiking were also shown in the photos. Puerto Ricans were also shown participating in these activities. A few editions of *Que Pasa* showed a shift toward showing more photos of ecotourism-related activities. In addition to the portrayal of beach destinations, there were many areas of natural beauty depicted in the photos. Most of the photos were of rain forests, waterfalls, mountains, and landscapes from different regions. For example, Figure 5 represents a “perfect” waterfall without showing people engaging in any activity near it.



Figure 5. A “perfect” waterfall

Luxury Destinations

Puerto Rico was frequently portrayed as a luxury destination in the images. There were many photos depicting elements related to luxury such as casinos, golf courses, luxury rooms, and high-end hotels, as well as many photos of people enjoying these venues. People were shown enjoying gambling. Golf courses were portrayed as being near water or beaches to advise the readers that these services are located at beach resorts and hotels. Because of this desire to promote Puerto Rico as a luxury destination, no photos of the small inns known as *paradores* were found. Figure 6 shows an example of a luxury accommodation. This photo reflects an impeccable landscape, a high end resort villa, and a well-designed clear water swimming pool.

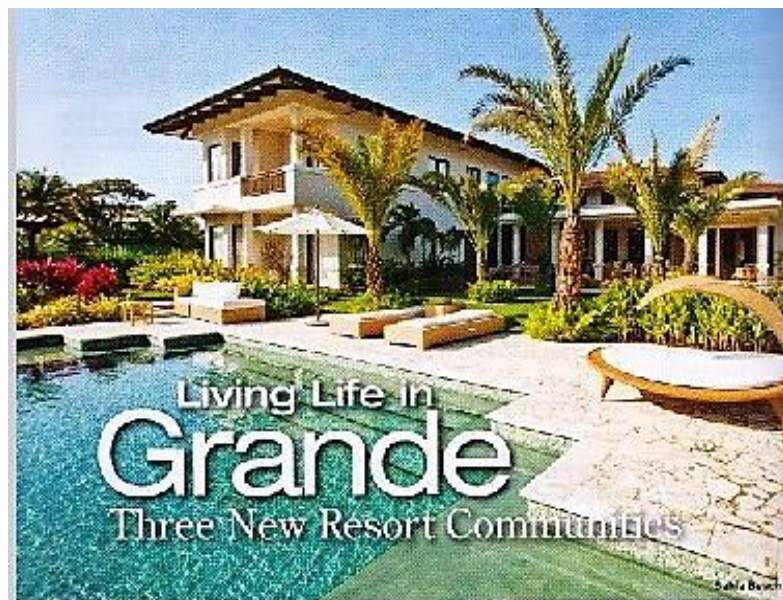


Figure 6. An example of a luxury resort hotel

In summary, Puerto Rico is portrayed as a typical Caribbean island that relies heavily on sea, sun, and sand tourism and natural scenery. Typically, the photos use bright colors such as blue, green, and yellow. These colors communicate life, energy, endurance, nature, and joy, and are in accordance with the main messages conveyed by the photos. In the photos, Puerto Rico is portrayed as an island paradise for active and luxury living. However, it is also portrayed as “paradise contrived” because people and culture are generally excluded from the photos (Dann 1996; Echtner 2010). The majority of the photos show only places. The portrayal also has a certain degree of “paradise controlled.” This term is defined as the portrayal of mostly tourists, with locals acting as servers and entertainers. These images communicate that locals are willing to serve and help the tourists. In addition, people in non-subordinate roles were portrayed in pairs or alone in the scenes. These images may communicate the desire to attract couples or single travelers. People were also shown interacting with the landscape and nature during enjoyable activities.

Black, white, and sepia colors were used in some photos of historic sites (Old San Juan) or cultural scenes (black skinned *bomba* dancers). These colors reflect an emphasis on portraying the past and nostalgia. The portrayal of cultural heritage, national music, and national attire suggests that Puerto Rico and its residents may still be living in the past, in a more carefree time. Another interpretation of the photos depicting history, heritage, and culture is that the images of historic sites illustrate Puerto Rico’s Spanish heritage, while the photos depicting traditional music and dance illustrate the island’s African heritage. In contrast, the photos also reflect a certain degree of

modernity by portraying luxury hotels, gourmet food, and modern buildings. The images reflect mixing the past and modern life together.

The results of the visual analysis illustrate that the photos' content does not follow the principles of sustainable tourism marketing. The photos reflect the destination marketing organization's ideologies regarding the representation of Puerto Rico and their reflections of what the tourists would like to see and experience. Based on the researcher's observations, the ideologies are in accordance with a luxury lifestyle or an active and adventure-related lifestyle for young tourists with high income. Culture and heritage are portrayed as a complement to beach and luxury destinations, not as a key element in the visual representations. The representations reflected corporate attitudes, but failed to reflect an integrated and collaborated approach that balances the interests of tourism industry, tourists, and residents regarding visual images. Many aspects of Puerto Ricans and their lifestyles were left out. The integrated approach is a key aspect of sustainable tourism marketing.

In addition, the photos do not follow ethical principles and concerns in representations. Exclusion, idealization, and exoticization are three ethical concerns in marketing representations (Schroeder and Borgerson, 2005). Exclusion is not representing a particular group of people or lifestyle in marketing communications (Schroeder and Borgerson, 2005). For example, it was observed that local residents were portrayed in stereotypical ways and failed to portray other aspects of Puerto Ricans and their lifestyle. In addition, there was limited portrayal of people in the photographs. The content of the photos excluded many elements such as Puerto Rican popular music and

other types of attractions. Idealization occurs when marketing images routinely depict ideal types, unrealistic scenarios, or unattainable goals (Jacobson and Mazur 1995; Matin and Gentry 1997; Shields and Heinecken 2002). In this case, several photos depicted women in bikinis (young, thin models), or beaches and other places with no people in the photos. These portrayals illustrated an idealized depiction of the island as a paradise. Exoticization is defined as “making someone seem exotic, strange, or different in ways that call attention to certain identity characteristics, such as skin color, dress, or appearance” (Schroeder and Borgerson 2005, p. 588). Many of the photos portrayed people in traditional attire or activities (*jibaro* attire, or dancing the *bomba* or *plena*), and in roles such as tourism employees. These portrayals reflect elements of the culture that can be considered as exotic and different compared to other cultures in destinations of the same geographical locations.

As described in the Methodology chapter, photographs were a key element in the interviews with Puerto Ricans. Photographs depicting people, places, and culture were shown to the participants in accordance with the findings. In the case of people, photographs included tourism employees, people participating in water sports and adventure-related activities, and women in bikinis. In the case of heritage, photographs included Old San Juan, cathedrals, art in museums, and people dancing the *bomba* and *plena*, or in traditional attire. In the case of places, photographs included beaches, waterfalls, natural landscapes, a luxury hotel, and a golf course.

Residents' Voices

Several emerging themes and sub-themes were derived from the final analysis of the interview data. When participants discussed their perceptions and opinions of Puerto Rico as a tourism destination, they listed the favorable attributes that Puerto Rico has as a tourist destination. They also argued about issues and situations that affect the development of Puerto Rico as a tourist destination, as well as experiences and observations they have as they enjoy Puerto Rico. Participants also expressed their opinions of the representations of Puerto Rico, Puerto Rican culture, and themselves as portrayed in the photos. An unexpected finding was that when the researcher showed the pictures to the Puerto Ricans living in Puerto Rico and to those living in Bryan/College Station, they expressed similar opinions about the different themes. Both samples also expressed similar critical opinions about tourism in Puerto Rico. This finding illustrated how strong a culture and its ideologies can be, no matter where people were born, raised, or currently live. Therefore, the findings will be discussed using the narratives of both samples to complement their opinions.

Destination Attributes

Participants listed several attributes they felt Puerto Rico offered as a tourist destination. According to participants, Puerto Rico has a great variety of options to offer to tourists. They consider Puerto Rico as a “paradise” because the island possesses abundant natural beauty, particularly its beaches, rain forests, dry forests, natural landscapes, and mountains. They also stressed the uniqueness of the rich culture, architecture, and

history of the island. Puerto Rican culture is a fusion of three cultures, Spanish, African, and Taino, which are still strong cultural influences. One female doctor residing in Puerto Rico said, “I think it is the perfect destination because it has everything. It has nature, beaches, human warmth, architecture, history; there is something for all tastes. What the island can offer is incredible.”

Participants also consider people to be an important destination attribute. They included human warmth, service-oriented trait, and hospitality as essential characteristics of Puerto Ricans that enable them to take care of tourists. In addition, participants care about tourists’ experience. As an example of this trait, they stated that tourists have the opportunity to experience a great variety of options during their stay in Puerto Rico. However, they were concerned about representations of Puerto Rico in the photos. For them, the photos sometimes failed to represent the reality of Puerto Rico. Participants argued that tourists would see the reality of Puerto Rican society when they actually visit tourist attractions and districts. Participants also stated that tourists would enjoy “typical” activities such as purchasing crafts produced by Puerto Rican artisans and eating typical Puerto Rican cuisine. Their concerns confirmed that they not only care about tourists’ experience, but that they are also sensitive to the tourists’ needs and desires.

Participants stated that location is an important destination attribute. Because of the geographic location of Puerto Rico, residents considered Puerto Rico to have a favorable strategic location in the Caribbean for tourism development. Historically, Puerto Rico has always been a strategic location for maritime transportation. Currently,

it is a major homeport for cruise passengers travelling to other Caribbean islands. A female health professional currently living in Bryan stressed this attribute. She stated that it is “very important, very big, and has incredible benefits. Puerto Rico has a centric point (location).”

In addition to its strategic location in the Caribbean, participants also stated that Puerto Rico’s size is favorable for tourism because of the proximity of different tourist attractions to each other as well as to different regions on the island. According to them, it is easy to get to different types of attractions on the island because they are within a short driving distance of each other. A male geographer living in Puerto Rico said, “You can go from one beach to the forest in 15 minutes. You know? It's not like other places where you spend many hours to go somewhere and come back again. No, you have everything in small spaces here.”

This finding described the sense of place that residents have of Puerto Rico in terms of geographical space. Puerto Rico is perceived as a small island, which is only natural because of the social phenomenon of people who live on an island. Another interesting finding was that political and economic relations with the United States also offer benefits to the local tourism industry. U.S. travelers, especially from the east coast, are a major target market that visits Puerto Rico every year. The Puerto Rico Tourism Company’s marketing strategies heavily stress the benefit of “no passport required” for U.S. travelers. Participants agree that this situation is favorable for tourism in Puerto Rico. A male professor from Puerto Rico stated, “The great advantage that U.S. tourists have is that they don’t need passports...”

Participants felt that U.S. travellers might perceive Puerto Rico as a destination of choice because of security issues, because it has the same currency as the United States, and because most Puerto Ricans speak English. This finding reflects the close relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico. This finding also illustrates the importance of safety in tourism destinations, the different perceptions that tourists may have of destinations, and how significant events in history can influence travelers' behavior. A male translator from Puerto Rico said, "We obviously have a captive audience, which is the Americans who come here from the East Coast. Especially now after 9-11, they perceive Puerto Rico as a safe place, having the same currency, and many people speak English."

Attitudes toward Tourism in Puerto Rico

Participants expressed their concerns about different aspects that affect tourism development and planning in Puerto Rico. Some of these issues include (a) social and economic problems and conditions in Puerto Rican society; (b) politics that can influence how Puerto Rico is marketed; (c) cleanliness and crime near tourism districts; (d) issues that affect the competitive advantage of Puerto Rico as a tourism destination (service and prices); (e) transportation issues; and, (f) environmental impacts. Social and economic problems and conditions in Puerto Rican society may affect tourism development and the tourism experience that visitors may have when they visit Puerto Rico. Social and economic problems are part of any government's busy agendas and

these may have a higher priority instead of developing strategies for tourism growth. A male teacher currently living in College Station has this to say:

I think that the photos are only 50% of a trip and the other 50% are the social conditions of a country. Social conditions (social status, crime, deterioration of the family, school desertion) are deteriorating in Puerto Rico. But the photos have a 100% score; the beauty of Puerto Rico is unique... More importantly, both sides are juxtaposed. We are destroying our nature, all those beautiful scenery in the photos will be destructed quickly. Then, the possibility is that within 30 years, you will return to the same places where the photographer took that picture and it already has a development.

In addition, participants argued about the realism of the photos. For example, they stated that tourists would like to see the actual scenes portrayed in the photos when they first arrive in Puerto Rico. They argued that tourists instead first see the reality of Puerto Rican society and then they visit the tourist attractions, the main reason for their visitation. This finding illustrated that visual images portray only a small glimpse of the reality of a country. Photos do not portray the whole panorama. The following comment from a female graduate student in College Station also illustrates this finding.

For me, Puerto Rico is a destination. When people visit Puerto Rico, they will not get necessarily what is portrayed in the pictures. They have to visit a specific place in order to get what they want to experience... When people get out of the plane, they do not see the elements portrayed on the pictures. They have to go and search and deal with the traffic jam, the projects (*caseríos*) of San Juan and the bus to go see what you're looking for.

Politics also influences and affects how Puerto Rico is marketed and portrayed.

This finding was summarized by a male translator from Puerto Rico.

This particular topic is quite tricky. As you are aware, through the government change of the New Progressive Party administration to Democratic Popular Party and from Popular to New Progressive Party, everything is always adjusted. When a PPD (Democratic Popular Party) government is in power, Puerto Rico is another thing, like in the 80's. Puerto Rico is the shining sun of the Caribbean. Later when they execute marketing campaigns, everything is adjusted

accordingly. They have some parameters to search for people who would like to visit Puerto Rico. They injected a political aspect to everything they do. This political aspect permeates all advertising. In the case when the New Progressive party is in power, the thing is Puerto Rico USA as always. Puerto Rico is part of the United States, to integrate (to become a state). Puerto Rico is something else; this is a territory and you're so welcome as if you were in Hawaii. In the case of PPD, Puerto Rico is like another country. Yes, we are associated with U.S. We have the common flag and currency, but Puerto Rico is a different country. Puerto Rico is another thing... There is a government change and you see that they fire all tourism managers (in Puerto Rico Tourism Company). That's why every time it changes from blue to red (PNP to PPD), and then red to blue (PPD to PNP), it blur everything.

Because of the constant change of political parties with different ideologies, destination-marketing strategies can change as often as the political ideologies and government's plans for Puerto Rico change. This situation affects destination-marketing efforts enormously because tourism strategic plans are inconsistent. As a result, the government may not continue previous tourism development and marketing strategies. Therefore, tourism development and planning is delayed and slow in comparison with other Caribbean destinations that have greater tourism development. According to Partners in Community's Puerto Rico tourism strategy analysis, "Puerto Rico has suffered from an identity crisis where it has had over five different marketing campaigns over a period of ten years" (2011, p. 45). This organization's report stressed the need for a marketing and positioning strategy that "transcends political pressure and governmental administrations" (p.45).

Participants also expressed their concerns about different issues in tourism districts. Some of the tourist districts are near high crime zones. This situation affects tourism as well as how visitors and residents perceive Puerto Rico as a destination. A male nurse from Puerto Rico provided Fort San Felipe del Morro (major tourist

attraction) as an example of this issue. He stated that the Morro is near La Perla, a neighborhood in San Juan with high crime rates. According to him, there are always killings in that area and therefore, you cannot visit this tourist district because of this situation. In addition, participants articulated their concerns about the cleanliness in tourist areas such as Old San Juan and the Garitas (monitoring points) at the Fort San Felipe del Morro. This finding illustrates the lack of consistency in resolving issues that may affect visitation.

Participants stated that several issues affect the competitive advantage of Puerto Rico as a tourism destination in comparison with other Caribbean destinations. These issues include customer service and prices of tourism products and services. Participants perceive Puerto Rico as an expensive destination. Hotels and tours rates are expensive. They suggested that tourism providers should create affordable packages, especially for residents. They pointed out that the Dominican Republic offers similar services and tourism experiences as those offered by Puerto Rico, but at a lower price. Interviewees constantly compared Puerto Rico with the Dominican Republic. A female professor from Puerto Rico explained the situation.

In terms of tourism, Puerto Rico is excellent in terms of variety and sports. People want to relax; they want to do ecotourism, but it is too expensive. In economic terms, there are cheaper packages in destinations such as Santo Domingo, Santa Lucia and Spain. In terms of beach quality, service quality, the variety offer for the family, and activities for children and adults, yes, I think that Puerto Rico is great. It has variety, from people who enjoy gambling at the casino to the person who likes to rest. But it is expensive.

A male graduate student from College Station also elaborated on this situation.

The island is not well organized in terms of how to treat tourists... If you go to countries such as Dominican Republic and Costa Rica, it is cheaper. If you want

to go to the west region of the island or visit Dominican Republic, there is someone who will provide a service at a reasonable cost. In Puerto Rico, my limited experience tells me that does not exist, and if it exists, it is rare (and expensive).

Another issue that participants discussed was customer service. They perceived poor customer service in hotels and other services and many noted a difference in customer service for residents and tourists. A male graduate student from College Station expressed this concern.

I have not been working in the tourism industry but I have stayed in hotels in Puerto Rico. The service actually is not as nice as it is when you go elsewhere. I think the employees then I do not know, if when they see a Puerto Rican, they treated you differently, I honestly have never observed how a foreigner, an American is treated. I don't know if they (tourism employees) treat them differently from how they treat me. But I think that Puerto Rico can be exploited a little more in that (tourism) industry, and make people actually live from that industry.

Interviewees expressed concerns about transportation issues such as traffic congestion and poor transportation to Vieques and Culebra. A female graduate student from College Station commented on the transportation issues in Vieques and Culebra.

To get to Culebra, it is an adventure itself. Like I said, you have to get to the dinghy, make a line, and for an American: can you imagine an American doing the line? As they do not understand, they are lost. I've been there, and I've seen these so poor white boys. Or when so many people come, they are shouting and pushing. People try to pass, and take a lot of luggage with them. Stress. Look, you have to go to Culebra as a tour, or a package, they tell you specifically where to go there. If you do not know, you will not understand the directions system. When you arrive, you do not get to a beach, instead you arrive to the terminal. You have to take a taxi to the beach. And when you get there, you're stuck. If you do not rent a car in Culebra, you have to go to Flamingo and stay here until you find a taxi. They are not there all night. You have to call them. There is no food, unless it is a weekend and the lady, the one with the *frituras* (fried appetizers) is there. They do not open until 9 a.m. In other words, it is a process, and when you go, you have to camp. And people do not understand this. There is people who may not understand that.

Her narrative expressed a significant issue that affects the tourism development for Culebra and Vieques. Due to transportation problems, it is very difficult for residents and tourists to enjoy attractions in Vieques and Culebra. Because of this issue, the economic development of both towns is declining. Vieques and Culebra are home to several of the best, unspoiled beaches in Puerto Rico as well as a great variety of natural wilderness attractions. This finding demonstrated Puerto Ricans' perception of poor tourism management and planning, poor communication, and a lack of priority for tourism development in some cities compared to other regions of Puerto Rico.

Participants also mentioned the poor accessibility of tourist attractions. A resident from Puerto Rico provides the example of Cabo Rojo Lighthouse. The resident expressed that the road to the lighthouse is in very poor conditions. This lighthouse is located in the southwest region of Puerto Rico. Based on the researcher' observations throughout the years, residents and tourists visit the lighthouse, enjoy the beach, and see the dramatic cliffs. This issue makes the visitation to this attraction difficult for future visitors. The irony of this situation is that this lighthouse is shown in destination promotional materials, especially on the TV ads.

The participants agree that tourism is a viable asset for economic development. They believe that the Puerto Rican economy should be able to depend more on tourism. They also pointed out that tourism in Puerto Rico depends heavily on hotels. A comment made by male geographer from Puerto Rico illustrates this dependency. He said, "However, the current promotion, the current design of this industry (tourism industry) is strictly dominated by hotels, like I saw in the images."

The Puerto Ricans interviewed for this study stated that a shift in tourism emphasis is needed to promote other types of tourism such as ecotourism and adventure tourism. Participants also argued that there is a need for improved promotion of other regions instead of maintaining the major emphasis that San Juan has received throughout the years. For example, a female graduate student from College Station explained.

... They arrived on a cruise, which is how you come to Old San Juan, (and they do not leave from the Old San Juan). Then perhaps they are two different things if you're going as a tourist to Puerto Rico or if you're just passing through Old San Juan. They are two different things. Because many people say, oh, I went to Puerto Rico! Where have you gone? To Old San Juan. You did not go to Puerto Rico.

Her anecdote reflects the inconsistent promotion of other regions in Puerto Rico as well as the significant projection of San Juan on destination marketing efforts. It also illustrated the intent of advertising strategies to manipulate the attractions visited by tourists and the elements of their tourism experience.

Participants also expressed their concerns regarding environmental impacts and the important of conservation. Many hotels are located on the beaches or near the water. Their location reflects poor tourism planning and creates a severe impact on the beaches and natural resources. It also illustrated the over-population on coastal zones and the excessive urban sprawl. A female professor from Puerto Rico explained her point of view.

For example, there is always a picture from the Capitol area and others pictures that all you see is concrete and block. And there is a picture from Condado that what you really see is buildings and buildings and buildings on the beach. But you do not see part of the culture, instead buildings. Well, you see the culture of non-appreciation of the coasts, because what you see is the hotel tucked into the beach.

In addition, participants expressed their concerns regarding biodiversity and the effects of construction of hotels near sensitive ecosystems. Participants argued that this construction affects the ecosystems that tourists are interested in visiting. A female graduate student from College Station explained this issue.

...There are empty inns while they are still building mega hotels. Every time, it is more difficult for all independent entrepreneurs working in the Northeast Ecological Corridor. The corridor is not protected. Trees will be planted there. I mean hotels, sorry. They'll knock down trees. They will be planted hotels. It will destroy all the area's biodiversity. They are not going to have what to show to tourists...

Participants also expressed their concerns regarding poor management of natural resources (beaches). A female graduate student from College Station raised this concern.

I think they are offering to tourists that, beach, sun and sand. However, they are not taking care of the beaches and they are not doing a good management of the beaches. Not only that, but hotels are taking the beaches increasingly. So, beaches will be only for tourists. But I think it is insufficient...

Participants also noted the lack of environmental conservation in Puerto Rico and stressed eco-tourism as a form of tourism that protects the environment. A male travel agent from Puerto Rico stated, "Maybe if they put more effort in caring for the environment (eco-tourism) using the example of Costa Rica, we would be better."

Visual Representations

In addition to expressing their attitudes toward Puerto Rico as a tourism destination, residents expressed their perceptions about visual representations of Puerto Rico, Puerto Rican culture, and themselves. Several emerging themes and categories were derived from the data. Regarding Puerto Rico itself, participants discussed Puerto Rico as a

beach destination as well as Puerto Rican cuisine, music, traditions, and history.

Regarding Puerto Ricans, participants expressed their opinions about physical attributes (skin color and roles), roles, settings, stereotypes, daily life, and Puerto Rican personality/identity.

Beach Destinations

Participants felt that the pictures portrayed what Puerto Rico has to offer in terms of sun, sand, and beach tourism. The photos presented good examples of water sports and other water-related activities. They also stated that the representation of Puerto Rico as a beach destination has been well exploited and heavily marketed. They considered the beach as one of the major attractions that Puerto Rico has to offer to tourists. This image is part of what Puerto Rico is about. They associated beaches with rest and relaxation and active activities. As an example of this statement, a female student from Puerto Rico said, “Perfect, Puerto Rico is that... sun, sand, and beach, there are beaches everywhere... When people go on vacation, they want to relax... the beach relax you.” In addition, a female manager from Puerto Rico believed that people come to Puerto Rico to enjoy the beach and emphasized promoting Puerto Rico as a beach destination. She commented,

Excellent. Excellent. There is the beach. I saw lakes and people in kayak. Here are a lot of things, many things. Many areas are just beautiful such as the beach and people are able to sun-bathe. In fact, many people come to Puerto Rico to do that. I understand that we are well promoted. It has been well publicized the fact that the island is a great place to come at Christmas to sun-bathe but it's raining a lot now.

Several participants living in Puerto Rico and Bryan/College Station stated their concerns about the representation of Puerto Rico as a beach destination. Interviewees such as a female graduate student from College Station said, “Puerto Rico is more than beach, sun, and sand.” This statement means that there are attributes of Puerto Rico that have not been portrayed completely. In addition, the interviewees argued that Puerto Rico has been overexploited as a destination for SSS tourism and it is time to make a shift to promote the other destination attributes that Puerto Rico have. Participants stressed that government needs to promote other regions and aspects of Puerto Rico in addition to SSS tourism. They called this image as “worn,” which means that it has been overused. A male graduate student from College Station stated, “Well, I think a person who goes to Puerto Rico is going to find that, but I think that it is worn and I think we have to try to expose other areas.”

Participants also observed that Puerto Rico is portrayed as a luxury beach destination in which tourists can spend their time at the hotels/resorts, have many options for shopping, and experience Old San Juan. This image has been marketed heavily since the early stages of the tourism development and planning in Puerto Rico. This portrayal does not illustrate Puerto Rican culture and rich history in detail. A male graduate student from College Station added this comment.

They always sell this image to the potential tourist... But they always try to attract people with the same image of Puerto Rico: a beach for relaxation, Old San Juan for walking and shopping, many shops, for excessive shopping and a luxury hotel where they can stay. The luxury hotel can be anywhere, on a beach...

In addition to overrepresentation of Puerto Rico as a beach destination, participants also argued about the unrealistic portrayal of beaches. For them, beaches in Puerto Rico are not pristine as they are shown in the photos. According to them, Puerto Rican beaches are usually crowded with people who are enjoying the beach and playing music. Participants recommended that photos of beaches should portray more people. The portrayal of Puerto Ricans on the beaches will provide a more realistic view of the beach scene in Puerto Rico. For example, a female graduate student from College Station had this to say.

And when you're looking at a beach like this: white sand and without people. It is impossible. At ten o'clock, you go at a beach on a Saturday in Puerto. You have to be pushing because the beach is full and then you have the music too.

Puerto Ricans

Participants expressed their opinions about the portrayal of people in the photos. Residents first noted little portrayal of ordinary people in the photos compared to the portrayal of stereotypical people and culture. They also described the attributes of Puerto Rican identity that were represented in the photos as well as what was lacking or missing from the photos. Residents stated that the basic personality attributes of the Puerto Rican identity were portrayed in the photos. The basic attributes mentioned by them were happy, active, and service-oriented people. A male graduate student from College Station said.

Yes, yes. The personality, yes, because everyone is happy. Puerto Rican personality is characterized by being very cheerful, happy and always laughing. And the people here are very happy, friendly and approachable. You can approach them and talk to them. So, I think yes.

However, participants felt that something was missing in the photos. They argued that the essence of the Puerto Rican personality/identity was not portrayed. A male tourism employee from Puerto Rico made this comment.

Personality? Absolutely not... you could say, as you can see in the message (photographs), Puerto Ricans are sometimes happy and joyful. We are willing to help. Well, the pictures are obviously showing that everybody is happy and smiling, but I understand that it is not picked up much of what the Puerto Rican personality is.

Participants described the missing characteristics of Puerto Rican personality in the photos. Puerto Rican personality is described as happy people who are having fun, and hospitable. They are willing to help people, and are willing to receive and/or take care of a total stranger with affection. Puerto Ricans celebrate everything in groups with music, food, and making jokes. Food is an essential part of who they are. They enjoy eating. Family gatherings are an important aspect of their culture. They tend to celebrate events in large groups of people. When they go out, they have the same social structure: groups. A male doctor from Puerto Rico added this to the discussion.

Puerto Rico is very *sandunguero* (fun people), very *salamero* (very affectionate), very polite. These characteristics are not being represented in any of the photos. Photos can present a dish, but a waiter is not there to giving it to you. I mean, I think it needed to express more what we are.

In addition, residents argued that the aspects of their daily life were not portrayed in the photos. A male professor from Puerto Rico said, "It doesn't show the culture of daily life and the practices of our traditions." A male geographer from Puerto Rico provided examples of aspects of their daily life.

I cannot see our everyday life... It is cool to see *bomba*, *plena*, and the folkloric dances. That's okay to show folk dances but I think you do not see folk dancing somewhere or when you go out we don't see that... Let's show how actual

parties are in Puerto Rico, in which you can see the gathering. For example, a person can go to the public squares and still find elder people playing dominoes, things like that.

Participants suggested that scenes representing their daily life could be portrayed in the photos. Puerto Ricans like to socialize in groups. They would like to see Puerto Ricans dancing or participating in festivals (important aspect of their traditions). The interviewees noted that the majority of the photos were set during the day. Photos should reflect the nightlife in Puerto Rico as well. Photos should portray groups of people in nightlife scenes or attending festivals held during the nighttime to portray the fun atmosphere that occurs during these events.

In addition to daily life settings, residents expressed their opinions about how their roles in society were portrayed as well as the settings in which Puerto Ricans were presented. A few participants expressed their discontent with the portrayal of Puerto Rican women. A female medical student from Puerto Rico asked, “Why do they always show women in bikinis? It is what bothers me.” This resident’s argument reflects the tendency of portraying Caribbean women in bikinis. Women are depicted in traditional stereotypical poses such as subordinate, submissive, and dependent (Sirakaya and Sönmez 2000). According to Morgan and Pritchard (1998), women were also portrayed in active and work-related situations and presented as “passive and attractive adornments to the tourism product” (p. 193). A male professor from Puerto Rico expressed his opinion about this portrayal. He said that the women were “very good models but it doesn’t show the whole panorama. You see her as a model; you don’t see her as an executive.” From this statement, it is clear that women should be portrayed in different

roles which reflect postmodern society. However, the researcher was surprised that not all women in the sample expressed the same discontent or disapproval of this portrayal.

Some participants noted that Puerto Ricans were shown in stereotyped roles as tourism employees. They stated this portrayal was not a real representation of Puerto Ricans in the modern society because most Puerto Ricans do not work in the tourist industry. A female lawyer from Puerto Rico said.

There is everything. It is not a real representation. There are stereotypes of tourism employees. I saw a few pictures of people in the sample that you showed me. Photo of Chayanne (popular pop singer) is fine. The picture of women wearing bikini is fine.

Participants approved the portrayal of Puerto Ricans doing water-related activities such as kayaking and enjoying the beach. They expressed that Puerto Ricans usually enjoy these types of activities as part of their free time. A male graphic designer from Puerto Rico gave this example.

I also observed that the girls on the beach were having fun, and you showed me photos of people on kayaks. You know that a Puerto Rican like to have fun and enjoy the beach. It is well represented. There are other things that can be shown.

Participants also discussed their opinions regarding the physical attributes of Puerto Ricans. They talked about the skin color, and the connection between the skin color and the roles that people portray in the images. The photos portray Puerto Ricans as having a variety of skin colors because of the mixture of Spanish, African, and Taino bloodlines. A male graphic designer from Puerto Rico stated, "In Puerto Rico, there is diversity. There are people of all kinds of skin color; there are whites, brown-skinned, and blacks. And Puerto Rico is like that. We are a fusion."

Participants noted that only a few pictures portray the black skin color of Puerto Rico's cultural fusion. In addition, participants commented on the skin color and its role in society. For example, a male tourism employee from Puerto Rico noted the following:

This same photo, bomba and plena, because there is only one picture. They chose people of other skin color to represent an aspect of African culture. They do not choose a black person to do the snorkeling in a bathing suit. In other words, they chose a type of person. If we chose a black, then we will use them on something related with *bomba*, *plena*, and Africa because it is from Africa and it is accepted, and they use it there. But no, no, all types of people are not represented in the photographs they chose.

The black skin color of some Puerto Ricans represents elements of a culture that is considered exotic for tourists. Light skin color represents the tourist and representations of what tourists will experience when they are in Puerto Rico. When they are looking at the photos, they can see themselves doing these activities. In addition, participants expressed that the photos does not portray all types of people nor what is a typical Puerto Rican. They argued that the images should be more realistic in terms of portraying average or ordinary people. A male geographer from Puerto Rico said, "We're not all a sculpture compared with how they portray us in the photos. So there is everything. So they showed there are white people. We're more brown-skinned, more Tainos. We are not so white either."

Puerto Rican Culture

Participants expressed their opinions regarding the portrayal of Puerto Rican culture through the images, including Puerto Rican music, Puerto Rican cuisine, traditions, and history. They observed that bomba and plena are portrayed as the main genres of

traditional music. Other traditional musical genres were not portrayed. They also noticed that popular musical genres such as salsa were not portrayed and stated that popular music is an essential aspect of their daily life. In the case of Puerto Rican cuisine, they observed the heavy portrayal of gourmet cuisine and the little portrayal of authentic or daily cuisine. Participants also observed the heavy portrayal of Spanish and African heritage. They argued that Taino heritage should be portrayed more often. In addition, participants noticed the little portrayal of traditions and provided several examples to improve this representation.

Traditional Music

Traditional music and dance, such as *bomba* and *plena*, were included in many of the images. Residents agree with the portrayal of *bomba* and *plena* as typical traditional music because this genre is part of Puerto Rico's musical history and represents the music of African culture, which is an essential influence on Puerto Rican music. *Bomba* and *plena* are both very traditional music styles played by African slaves. A female marketing supervisor from Puerto Rico stated that *bomba* and *plena* represent traditional Puerto Rican music.

I believe that, if we're going to choose a traditional music genre of Puerto Rico, I understand that yes, those two genres will represent Puerto Rico. Obviously, we dance all types of music. But if we are to listen what is Puerto Rican music, yes, I will chose both genres.

A female academic advisor from Bryan agreed with this representation. She commented that Puerto Ricans sometimes forget about this genre.

I liked it. They have the girls dancing plena. I liked it. And we have Bomba, a typical musical genre of Puerto Rico, and many people forget it. And that's something people can see as interesting. And yes, I liked it.

Participants pointed out that *jibaro* music and Puerto Rican waltz are other traditional musical genres were not portrayed in the photos. However, participants generally agreed that *bomba* and *plena* are found most often in cultural activities such as festivals and this genre is not really part of their daily life. They are afraid that tourists may not see this music on regular basis. For them, *bomba* and *plena* is a “representation of the past to honor African heritage.” They considered the portrayal of Puerto Rican music as incomplete. Participants noted that popular music was not portrayed in the photos. As an example, a male tourism employee from Puerto Rico stated.

It represents something such as bomba and plena. That's something, but it is only a small portion of what is music and dance in Puerto Rico. I understand that in order to achieve a complete image, elements of other Puerto Rican music such as salsa, merengue, and reggaeton are needed to represent the things that really represent what is truly the music in Puerto Rico. Now, music is not my forte. I do know what is the traditional Puerto Rican music, right? But again, it represents what makes is exotic for the U.S. and what can be attractive to show in a magazine of Puerto Rico. But it's not really representing what the music in Puerto Rico is.

Other participants argued that *bomba* and *plena* is not part of Puerto Ricans' daily life.

The following comment from a male marketing manager from Puerto Rico is typical of these arguments.

That was something that caught my attention because I do not see that in the reality of us. Yes. Maybe if you go to a festival in Loiza and Ponce, or a traditional music festival, you'll see the girls wearing the attire and the *bomba* and *plena*. Despite of these events, the daily life musical genres are *reggaeton*, *salsa*, and *bachata*. Obviously, again, I see it from the point of view of what it is portrayed, right? The cultural aspects. But the gringo who comes to Puerto Rico hoping that he will find that (*bomba* and *plena*) in any public place or public square, they will not get it.

Salsa, merengue, and reggaeton are part of Puerto Ricans' daily life. This type of music is what you hear on the radio and that people listen to in their homes. Residents would like to see these other genres portrayed in the photos, too, because these genres represent modern times.

Puerto Rican Cuisine

Participants discussed their opinions about the portrayal of Puerto Rican cuisine in two forms: gourmet cuisine and typical cuisine. Gourmet cuisine is considered the cuisine from the high-end restaurants where Puerto Rican food is prepared in a stylized manner and usually presented on small white plates. In contrast, typical cuisine is considered prepared the way it is in Puerto Rican households or smaller restaurants. A typical Puerto Rican dish consists of yellow or white rice, red or black beans, or any kind of meat and plantains.

Gourmet Cuisine

Participants commented on the portrayal of Puerto Rican gourmet and typical cuisine. For them, gourmet cuisine portrayed in the tourism materials is representative of luxury restaurants found in areas such as Old San Juan, resorts and hotels. They felt that the photos portrayed this type of food well, and that it is usually what tourists are looking for when they eat at the restaurants. A female health professional from Bryan described this type of cuisine.

The pasteles could have been a little more flashy. Mofongo with shrimp is the representation of a typical Old San Juan and the typical hotel. Go to the Fonda de

Dona Juana (typical restaurant) and take a picture of the Fonda, where you can find a typical dish of mofongo and fried meat in its pylon. This was more a classic representation of hotel or a high quality restaurant with a plate like that. Not everyone is looking for that. Many people believe this is Puerto Rico; Old San Juan is Puerto Rico that this kind of representation of food is Puerto Rico and going to El Yunque is Puerto Rico. But Puerto Rico has many other typical things.

A male nurse from Puerto Rico also commented on the gourmet cuisine depicted in the photos.

It is a representation. It is seen to be Puerto Rican food but does not have the appeal of Puerto Rican food ...looks like food from other countries. But that representation was so decorated and it doesn't look like very Puerto Rican... It is very gourmet. They have to show the photo of mofongo to portray what is Puerto Rican; I would have shown this dish into a pylon.

However, participants such as the health professional from Bryan quoted above argued that photos do not portray typical or daily Puerto Rican cuisine. For them, the typical Puerto Rican cuisine includes recipes such as rice, beans, pork, and chicken. A female professor from Puerto Rico provided suggestions for typical dishes that could be portrayed in future tourism promotional materials.

It is well mixed. So, even though we have some dishes such as Mofongo, pork, bacaladito, and the fritters. We have a variety of dishes. And I really did not see them in these photos. For example, some things such as Luquillo kiosks that represent the typical, characteristic food, which are the bacaladito, the fritters, as we say here, the fried food. So, it presented some shrimp or pasta. That may be in Italy, U.S., or anywhere. I think that in Puerto Rico there are dishes for which people come to visit such as rice and beans, pork, blood sausage, or that sort of thing... It is not well represented in these photos.

Residents such as tourism employees provide a different perspective from the tourist.

According to this participant, tourists know that the gourmet cuisine served in the restaurants in tourist areas may not be the typical local cuisine. Tourists would like to eat

food like locals do. A tourism employee from Puerto Rico commented on his experience as a concierge.

As concierge, one of the top questions that I always answered in the hotel is where can I get the best authentic food? And I say, “Well, in my home, where my mom cooks.” I let them know that restaurants have versions. Obviously none of the restaurants inside the hotel where I work have typical Puerto Rican food. Obviously, people are smart and know what they are eating is something that can be eaten in the U.S. and this is the number one complaint. The restaurant does not have any dish that they (tourists) understand that is typical of Puerto Rico. When they (tourists) said this, I answered the only restaurants where you can get something similar are restaurants outside of the hotel.

History

Puerto Rico has a rich history because of cultural influences from Spain, Africa, and the Tainos from the Caribbean. Participants generally considered the portrayal of Puerto Rican history as an incomplete or limited representation. First, they noted that the photos heavily emphasized Puerto Rico’s Spanish and African heritages. A male travel agent from Puerto Rico said, “Well, the representation of history that I saw was of architecture, the towns, Old San Juan, and a public square... Other than that, I did not see anything that was not as historic.”

Other residents noted that other aspects of Puerto Rican history were not portrayed. A female professor from Puerto Rico commented that there was not much about the Taino heritage in the photos.

In terms of history, we have a very rich culture because it is a fusion of three cultures. Currently, there is nothing there that represents the Taino part (culture/heritage). They are not presenting for example the Tibes park of Ponce or Caguana Park in Utuado... There are some areas you do not see them represented. There are some people who actually are interested in history.

Participants would like to see additional historic sites portrayed in the photos, including indigenous parks, coffee plantations, and other forts outside of San Juan, museums, and lighthouses. A male geographer from Puerto Rico provided examples and stressed that historic sites located in the central region of Puerto Rico should be portrayed as well.

They could show more history and more monuments. They always show the same, the cathedrals. Choose specific sites such as Mayagüez, Ponce, and San Juan. Let's go to the island, more to the center of the island, which it is also beautiful and have precious monuments on our island.

A retired woman from Puerto Rico provided other examples. She said, “Apart from Old San Juan, I saw nothing more. Exploit (explore) the castles out of San Juan, Vieques, a farm in Arroyo, and cane sugar plantations... Develop the story of the sugar cane, Coamo Springs and other mountain areas.”

In addition, participants argued that Puerto Rican history should be portrayed in the photos including the past as well as the modernity. A female doctor from Puerto Rico stated.

Thank God, the history of Puerto Rico is very rich because it has many influences from many places and it is a long history. But I understand it should be for continuity. In other words, you cannot only represent a time of Puerto Rican history. Although, it is difficult to capture it all, but it should be portrayed by continuity (a sequence of historic events). I mean, you can represent every important stage in Puerto Rico such as the slavery period, in which many of the current traditions were originated. U.S. also influences us... And it has changed our life because of the industrialization, you know, all those things have changed Puerto Rico greatly. And I understand that culture and history of us have influenced us in so many ways that we need to represent each one of them.

Images that were shown to the participants primarily portrayed historic and cultural sites that represent Puerto Rico in the past; however, a few photos portrayed modern Puerto

Rico. More photos representing modern, urban settings are needed to portray Puerto Rico as a modern destination.

In addition to the representation of different aspects of Puerto Rican history, participants discussed how politics has influenced the way history is depicted in destination promotional materials. To provide political context, three political parties exist in Puerto Rico. The Popular Democratic Party (PPD) would like Puerto Rico to remain a United States non-incorporated territory or commonwealth. The party's color is red. The New Progressive Party (PNP) would like Puerto Rico to become the 51st state of the United States. The party's color is blue. The Puerto Rican Independent Party (PIP) would like Puerto Rico to become an independent country. The first two parties (PNP and PPD) have traded off ruling Puerto Rico since the 1950s. Participants argued that depending on which political party is ruling the government, the way that Puerto Rico is described and how accurately the history is told changes. A male translator from Puerto Rico provided an example.

They projected Puerto Rico as a continent in terms of the great diversity that possess, which in some extent it is true. In most of the Caribbean islands, there is two or three small historical sites and beaches, right? While here, they have a great variety of natural attractions, historic attractions, cultural attractions, which cannot be found in other Caribbean islands. So they focused Puerto Rico as a continent, but there are unchanged basic rules of the game. They were ever say patria or nation... Some things were obviously colored by the politicians. It is a reality. For example, if the red color appears in an advertisement, they requested to delete it because the color represents the opposite party and they don't desire any association with the other party. It was one thing that you say 'this is crazy.' ...Oh, an invasion never occurred here. They arrived here in 98 by boats and it happens that the boats were full of Americans... but there wasn't an invasion. When the populares (Democratic Popular Party) arrives, they say invasion, rolling on the floor laughing. They don't have a problem with that.

Traditions

Traditions are an important aspect of Puerto Rican culture and define many aspects of Puerto Ricans. Participants noted that the photos portrayed few Puerto Rican traditions, with the exceptions of food, bomba, and plena. A male doctor from Puerto Rico made the following comment about the portrayal of traditions.

Well, I think our traditions go far beyond the bomba and plena, which is basically what they focused on mostly. When we are discussing about culture, they always focused on people dancing bomba or dancing plena. But there are other things of Puerto Rican culture that are not represented. This is like Christmas all the time outside. And they do not represent those things (Christmas) and family parties. The pork is cooked all year round.

Participants said they would like to see the festivals, Christmas, familiar traditions, and crafts by local artisans included in the photos. Participants also stated that photos portray what marketers think tourists would like to see; however, they argued that tourists may prefer to have a different experience, such as visiting different towns and gaining knowledge of Puerto Rico's artisan crafts. Participants also acknowledged that Puerto Rican traditions have been declining. A female graduate student from Puerto Rico stated,

Ah, traditions. Well, I saw nothing about the traditions. I saw nothing. It is also missing, or if you think about it, there are no more *parranda*. It is a tradition. The three Kings, well after the riot this Christmas this tradition will be lost too.

Local Residents' Recommendations

In summary, the residents who participated in this study would like to see a better portrayal of Puerto Rican culture, personality, and identity in the tourism promotional materials. Examples include people portrayed in different roles and settings, people

eating typical Puerto Rican cuisine, and photos depicting daily life, nightlife, and popular music. Photos of families at the beach could help to portray Puerto Rico as a family destination. An urban representation is needed to capture Puerto Rico in a more modern setting. In addition, residents would like to see a more representative sample of tourist attractions from different regions of Puerto Rico. They noted that there is currently a heavy emphasis on the coasts and San Juan. The photos could be used to portray Puerto Rico's unique attributes instead of being just generic tourist photos.

Comparison of Results

The researcher noted that the results of the study reflected several similarities between her analysis of the images and residents' opinions. Some residents noted how Puerto Rico was portrayed as a luxury destination with a strong emphasis as a sun, sand, and beach destination and high-end sports such as golf. Residents also noted how Puerto Ricans were portrayed in stereotypical roles. The island's Spanish and African heritages were well represented. Residents noted the high emphasis on gourmet cuisine and provided examples of daily cuisine that they would like to see included in the promotional materials. Participants also observed that Puerto Rican traditions received little exposure. A significant finding was that the participants would like to see more emphasis on the portrayal of daily life, and they provided examples of how to improve this representation.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

A review of the literature revealed the importance of understanding the destination image that diverse stakeholders have of destinations (Pike 2002; Schroeder 2006). Research studies have primarily evaluated the perceptions of tourism industry representatives, potential and actual tourists, students, and consumers in general (Pike 2002). Residents' perceptions of a destination have not been studied as much as tourists' perceptions (Pike 2002). In addition, the review of the literature revealed the importance of studying residents' attitudes toward tourism and most importantly, their attitudes toward destination marketing (Kwon 2008), as well as their role in sustainable tourism marketing (Jamal and Camargo 2010). Sheldon and Abenoja (2001) stated the significance of studying residents' attitudes toward tourism in mature destinations. Puerto Rico is a tourist destination in the maturity stage of the destination's life cycle with a tourism history of over 60 years (Coriano 2005). Formica and Uysal (1996) argued that in this maturing stage, it is important to increase planning activities to revitalize and prevent destination deterioration. Moreover, it is even more critical to determine local residents' needs and desires for tourism development (Sheldon and Abenoja 2001) and destination marketing. Few studies have examined the perceptions that residents have of their own culture as well the representation of their culture as portrayed in visual images utilized in destination marketing strategies. In light of this, this study proposed that the theoretical frameworks of destination image, residents'

attitudes, visual rhetoric, and sustainable tourism marketing can be elaborated based on the understanding of representations and residents' perceptions of destination marketing.

This study took a qualitative approach using visual research methods to examine the representation of culture, people, and places, by utilizing visual data and exposing residents to the data in order to gather their opinions more accurately. This approach worked well because the residents could react more easily to concrete examples of how their culture and country of residence is portrayed in destination promotional materials.

The visual data analysis of destination marketing materials revealed several themes related to Puerto Rican culture, Puerto Rico as a tourism destination and Puerto Ricans. The themes included Puerto Rican music, Puerto Rican cuisine, luxury destinations, beach destinations, and the portrayal of Puerto Ricans as active, happy, and service-oriented people. According to the Puerto Rican residents, the visual images used are not a misrepresentation of Puerto Rico. Instead, they are a selected and limited representation of destination attributes, people, places, and culture. The images are selected for specific markets. The visual images may reflect what the destination marketers think are the best destination attributes to offer to the tourists. However, the images reflect a very selective view of Puerto Ricans, their culture, and their history, as well as a heavy portrayal of Puerto Rico as a luxury and beach destination. The portrayal of light and light brown-skinned Puerto Ricans in the roles of adventurous people reflects a lifestyle and/or role that are more in accordance with the portrayal of tourists rather than normal residents. Puerto Ricans portrayed in the roles of tourism employees and using traditional attire may mislead tourists to think that this is what Puerto Ricans

are like on a daily basis. In the case of Puerto Rican history, the Taíno heritage, which is a major component of the island's heritage and history, is not portrayed very much and the photographs do not reflect the richness of this heritage. More photos of the indigenous parks would help to reflect this important aspect. The heavy portrayal of Puerto Rico's Spanish and African heritage may reflect what is more visible and easiest to show to tourists, but it may lead tourists to think that both heritages are more tangible in Puerto Rican society today than the Taíno heritage. However, it may also give rise to the question of why the three different heritages are not portrayed more equally.

The results revealed that residents care about the portrayal of their culture and country of residence, and that they can provide critical and thoughtful insights about how the representation should be improved in sustainable ways. The data revealed several themes and sub-themes in which narratives of the residents spanned a wide variety of topics ranging from destination attributes to portrayal of culture and places. Overall, the residents interviewed had rather positive opinions of tourism in Puerto Rico and also had largely positive attitudes towards the visual imagery used to market the destination. However, they felt that the portrayal was incomplete and did not reflect the modern way of Puerto Rican life well. In addition, residents argued that culture, people, and places are sometimes portrayed in stereotypical ways and that past promotional campaigns failed to portray the essence of their culture and themselves as local residents. A more accurate and complete destination image featuring more elements of culture and heritage and a more diverse representation of destination attractions is needed to portray Puerto Rico's destination identity and its local residents sustainably. Further, residents

were aware of the importance of providing a satisfactory tourism experiences to visitors. Residents expressed their opinions and concerns about the social-cultural, environmental, and economic impacts of tourism. Residents exhibited knowledge about tourism trends and the importance of diversification of tourism products and services. Residents also indicated that they cared about the conservation of natural resources and the impacts of over-development of tourism regions. This result confirms the significance of identifying resident perceptions of tourism destinations and of how they are marketed so that more sustainable marketing approaches can be developed.

Jamal et al.'s 2010 research study on tourism impacts in Cozumel found that local residents had positive attitudes toward tourism because it improved their quality of life by providing better infrastructure and services. Tourism was integral to the city's survival because it is an integral part of its economy. People who are more dependent on tourism tend to have attitudes that are more favorable toward tourism. In the current study, most residents did not have work experience in tourism, but overall, they still had rather positive attitudes toward tourism. In Puerto Rico, approximately 66,000 out of 3.8 million residents have direct or indirect jobs in the tourism industry (Ryan 2010b; U.S. Census Bureau 2000). Tourism represents only 6% in the gross national income of Puerto Rico (Ryan 2010b). The 2010 findings of Jamal et al. and the current study suggested that there is a need for further research to understand and compare how residents (both dependent and not dependent on tourism) have positive attitudes on tourism. In the case of residents not dependent on tourism, further research should investigate the factors that contribute to their positive opinions.

Jamal et al. (2010) also found that residents noticed that beach and reef destinations were heavily portrayed in the promotional materials for tourists instead of the culture of a destination. Their findings and the current study's results illustrate that current destination promotion strategies are inequitable because they promote certain attractions over others. These findings suggest it is necessary to ensure a fair treatment of intangible aspects of a destination such as culture and heritage, and to portray these elements in tourism promotional materials in order to achieve the principles of sustainable tourism marketing.

Limitations of the Study

Despite the significance of the findings, this study has several limitations. This study only analyzed the representation of places, people, and culture from visual images (TV ads, photographs, and videos) of destination marketing materials that were accessible and available to the researcher during several trips to Puerto Rico from December 2009 to August 2010. No print ads (newspapers and magazines) were analyzed. TV ads of "Just think Puerto Rico" and "Through the Eyes of the Artist" were not analyzed. A textual analysis of the promotional materials was not conducted for this study. With the purpose of having a deeper understanding of destination marketing strategies, the researcher solicited the marketing plan and/or an interview with a representative of the marketing and promotions department of the Puerto Rico Tourism Company. These efforts were unsuccessful despite several attempts made by the researcher. During the data collection of Phase II, the researcher recruited participants using snowball sampling,

in which participants recommend potential participants near their geographical location. Interviewees living in Puerto Rico resided mainly in the metropolitan area of San Juan, or the central, central-east, and east regions of Puerto Rico. However, some participants from both samples expressed their town of precedence during the interview. Participants were from all regions of Puerto Rico except Vieques and Culebra. The researcher spent a month in Puerto Rico collecting the first sample of interviews. Due to time constraints and availability of participants, the researcher was not able to recruit participants in distant locations. During the data collection of the expatriate sample, the researcher collected data using snowball sampling with the help of personal contacts in Texas A&M University and then reached out to the Puerto Rican community in College Station and Bryan. Despite several attempts by the researcher, it was difficult to recruit people of Puerto Rican descent and Puerto Ricans born in mainland United States. Their opinions would have provided a more complete picture of the opinions and insights of Puerto Ricans living in the United States. In summary, the researcher was unable to interview the following groups of people: a) more participants with a household income of less than 10,000 and more than \$75,000 in both samples; b) Puerto Ricans currently living on the south, west, central, northwestern and southeastern regions of Puerto Rico; c) a larger sample of current tourism employees; and, d) more participants of Puerto Rican descent in the mainland United States.

Conclusions and Implications

This study explored the under-researched topic of residents' attitudes toward destination marketing and promotion. A visual and qualitative methodology approach provided the means to examine how people, places, and culture are represented and to understand residents' opinions, perceptions, and concerns regarding the portrayal of their culture and themselves, and of their attitudes toward tourism. This study examined Puerto Ricans' opinions by recruiting residents living in Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans living in mainland United States.

Visual images are powerful tools to attract tourists. The images represent characteristics of the tourism experience that tourists will have when they arrive at the destination. Images lead tourists to have specific expectations about the destinations. However, images potentially can mislead tourists so that they do not have the opportunity to learn more about the destination's culture, to visit other places not portrayed in the travel guides and brochures, or have closer interactions with local residents other than the ones who are serving them. Based on what they learn through the images, tourists may have certain assumptions of what the destination will be like. Tourists may be disappointed or unsatisfied with their tourism experience if the images are inconsistent with what the destination is really like or if the images only represent part of the destination. Images that show only luxury destinations will lead tourists to think everything at the destinations is luxurious or exorbitant, which may not be at all accurate. In addition, selected images of culture, people, and heritage may portray only stereotypes, which may affect the interactions between local residents and tourists.

Depending on their socioeconomic status, portraying destinations as luxury destinations may lead potential tourists to think that they may not be able to afford to visit, thus leading them to choose other destinations instead. In the case of residents, this portrayal may influence how residents perceive their country as a tourism destination as well as under what circumstances they will be able to enjoy attractions and tourism areas.

Depending on their socioeconomic status, residents may not be able to enjoy some luxury destinations such as beaches secluded by resorts or afford to pay high prices for restaurants, entertainment, or accommodations. Residents may need to find other ways of recreational and tourism opportunities outside of tourism areas. The consequences of this are that residents may have negative attitudes regarding social and economic aspects of tourism. Residents will not be able to enjoy what is perceived as theirs. In addition, this situation may lead residents to choose other destinations instead of their own country for their travel choices and may not endorse certain areas for domestic tourism. Based on these potential implications, it is important to examine and reflect closely on the impacts of the selection of visual images for destination marketing materials.

Another issue may be a potential clash between residents' cultural values and the values portrayed in the images used for tourism promotion. The results revealed that residents care about the representation of their culture and heritage, and residents stressed the need for a more accurate portrayal. However, the visual images stressed the luxury life as well as an active and adventurous life. This implied a specific socioeconomic status is needed to experience Puerto Rico. In addition, these types of images may suggest that this lifestyle is more important than the culture of a destination. These

findings suggested that the visual images might not reflect what is important to the residents. Therefore, it is essential to integrate residents into the decision making process. This aspect is essential to the principles of sustainable tourism marketing and it is important to market destinations in ways that truly reflect the nature of the destination.

While several important topics emerged from the results of this study, future studies in destination image, residents' attitudes toward tourism, and sustainable tourism marketing should seek to explore several topics in greater depth. These include the stakeholders' attitudes toward sustainable tourism marketing, the perceptions of residents living abroad, and tourism employees' attitudes toward destination marketing. In addition, the study of residents' attitudes toward destination marketing and tourism raised the following questions:

- To what extent are residents' opinions consulted during the decision-making process in destination development, planning, and marketing?
- What are the residents' opinions about specific tourism attractions?
- How can tourism services and products be improved to cater to residents' needs, wants, and desires?

While this study addressed several issues regarding tourism representations, further research studies should analyze residents' attitudes toward destination marketing in other destinations such as Latin American and other Caribbean destinations. Puerto Rico is still a consistent leader in Caribbean tourism with at least 3,551,000 international tourists arriving each year (Coriano 2005; WTO 2010). The entire Caribbean region receives 19,555,000 international tourists each year (WTO 2010). Therefore, Caribbean

destinations are still a preferred destination. Further destination image studies should be conducted in other Caribbean countries because of the significance of this region in America's tourism market. In addition, one data set is not enough to understand the visual rhetoric of destinations from the residents' perspectives fully. In addition, a comparative study of several destinations would be beneficial to identify generic and stereotypical images in order to understand further if, and how, destinations of the same geographical regions are similarly marketed.

The current research provided significant results in the evaluation of destination marketing efforts and promotional materials, and the relationship between these efforts and residents' perceptions led to the following theoretical and practical implications.

From a theoretical perspective, this thesis supports that

- Residents can provide thoughtful insights about the portrayal of their culture and themselves in destination marketing and promotional materials.
- Residents not only care about the tourism development of their countries, but also care about tourists' experiences.
- Residents are aware of and are sensitive to poor tourism planning conducted by government entities.
- Visual and qualitative research methods can be useful and effective methods to evaluate people's attitudes towards tourism representations because the data provides a rich and substantial account of opinions and experiences.

From a practical perspective, the findings of the study suggest that residents can provide valuable insights about tourism and marketing and promotion of destinations. The study

of the destination image of Puerto Rico and residents' attitudes toward destination marketing and promotion can benefit the tourism industry and host community in the following ways:

- Destination marketers and planners should rely more often on residents' attitudes toward tourism and destination marketing and integrate more participation by residents in the decision making process.
- Destination marketers should conduct research to gather residents' general sense of the country as a unique place to live and a place to visit and discuss strengths and weaknesses as a destination. These efforts can increase residents' feelings of pride about their countries and positive attitudes toward tourism (Kwon and Vogt 2009).
- Planners and developers should develop tourism marketing and promotion strategies that meet residents' needs, wishes, and demands.

Overall, the study contributes to further understanding the importance of sustainable tourism marketing and the critical role resident opinions play in achieving cultural justice in destination marketing campaigns. It also demonstrates that visuals are powerful tools to communicate meanings through these campaigns and, thus, they should be carefully selected.

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APPENDIX A

Consent Form VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF PUERTO RICO

Introduction

The purpose of this form is to provide you (as a prospective research study participant) information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to participate in this research.

You have been asked to participate in a research study studying the perceptions and opinions of Puerto Ricans about the portrayal of Puerto Rican culture and Puerto Rico in tourism promotional efforts. The purpose of this study is to understand how people and places of a destination are portrayed in promotional efforts. The study will analyze residents' perceptions of their country and culture as portrayed in these efforts. You were selected to be a possible participant because you are a Puerto Rican currently living in the United States or Puerto Rico, or because you are a person of Puerto Rican descent.

What will I be asked to do?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to observe a sample of photographs, TV ads and videos obtained from brochures, flyers and tourism websites. You will be asked to answer questions based on your observations of these promotional materials. This study will take 45-60 minutes. The interview will be audio-recorded with your permission.

What are the risks involved in this study?

The risks associated in this study are minimal, and are not greater than risks ordinarily encountered in daily life.

What are the possible benefits of this study?

The study will give you an opportunity to share your perception and opinions of Puerto Rico as a tourism destination as well as the portrayal of Puerto Rican culture and places in marketing efforts. The results of the study will provide tourism marketers valuable insights with respect to residents' attitudes and opinions regarding the representation of Puerto Rican culture in promotional efforts. Your contribution is important as the findings of this study will help the tourism industry in Puerto Rico market the destination in a more sustainable way.

Do I have to participate?

No. Your participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without your current or future relations with Texas A&M University being affected.

Will I be compensated?

A Puerto Rican artisan handmade gift or a souvenir from Puerto Rico will be given at the end of your interview.

Who will know about my participation in this research study?

This study is confidential. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only Mary Ann Davila Rodriguez will have access to the records.

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked if you agree to be audio recorded. Any audio recordings will be stored securely and only Mary Ann Davila Rodriguez will have access to the recordings. Any recordings will be kept for 5 years and then erased.

Whom do I contact with questions about the research?

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Mary Ann Davila Rodriguez, maryann16@neo.tamu.edu.

Whom do I contact about my rights as a research participant?

This research study has been reviewed by the Human Subjects' Protection Program and/or the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you can contact these offices at (979)458-4067 or irb@tamu.edu.

Participation

Please be sure you have read the above information, asked questions and received answers to your satisfaction. If you would like to be in the study, you will be asked to be audio recorded by signing an informed consent. You will be asked to observe a sample of photographs, TV ads and videos obtained from brochures, flyers and tourism websites created by a destination marketing organization. You will be asked to answer questions based on your observations of these promotional materials. This study will take 45-60 minutes.

I have been given a copy of this information for my records. By signing this document, I consent that the researcher may choose to use my responses in this study.

I agree to be audio taped _____yes _____no

I want my real name used in recordings _____yes _____no
(otherwise a fictional name will be supplied)

Signature of participant

Signature of investigator

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions

Information about the participant

1. How many years have you lived in the United States/Puerto Rico?
2. Were you born in the United States or Puerto Rico?
3. If the subject was not born in the United States or Puerto Rico, are you of Puerto Rican descent?
4. What is your occupation?
5. How old are you?
6. What is your annual household income before taxes?
 - \$10,000 or less
 - \$10,000 to \$25,000
 - \$25,000 to \$50,000
 - \$50,000 to \$75,000
 - \$75,000 or more

General impressions and opinions:

7. What are your first impressions of the promotional materials?
8. What is your opinion about its appeal?
9. How do you perceive Puerto Rico as a tourism destination?

Representations of Puerto Rico in the promotional materials:

People

10. Do you think that people portrayed in these promotional materials represent the physical attributes of Puerto Ricans well?
11. Do you think the personality of Puerto Ricans is portrayed well in these materials?

Culture

12. What do you think of the representation of Puerto Rican cuisine in these materials?
13. What you think of the representation of our traditional and popular music and dances portrayed in these materials?

14. What do you think of the representation of our traditions portrayed in these materials?
15. What do you think of the representations of our history portrayed in these materials?

Places

16. What do you think of the representation of Puerto Rico as a sun, sand, and beach destination?
17. What do you think of the portrayal of Puerto Rico as a luxury destination?
18. What do you think of the representation of our natural resources in these materials?
19. Which regions of Puerto Rico are portrayed in these materials? Do you think there are regions that are overrepresented or underrepresented?
20. Is there a balance or misbalance of the representation of tourist attractions in Puerto Rico?

Opinions

21. What kinds of images do you think would represent Puerto Rico better?
22. What recommendations do you have to improve the representation of Puerto Rican culture and Puerto Rico in the promotional efforts?

VITA

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