Themes Related to Islandness in Tourism Logos: Island versus Non-Island Tourism Destinations

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Abstract

Islands hold a special place in the hearts and minds of travelers. The depiction of islands as a *paradise* and the sense of idyllic fantasy that travellers invoke with respect to islands is, in essence, a rudimentary attempt to brand islands. Islands are celebrated as being distinct from non-islands in ways rooted in the place, and the pursuit to discover characteristics that distinguish islands from their non-island counterparts is the quest to understand *islandness*. It should be no surprise then if some island destination management organizations, responsible for the creation of engaging and compelling brand identities, integrate themes related to islandness in the brands they develop to promote island destinations. This paper examines the incorporation of islandness themes as part of the brands developed to promote tourism by comparing islands and non-islands destinations. The tourism logos used by 85 island- and 146 non-island destinations were reviewed to assess the degree to which the logos included themes related to islandness. Employing a modified Likert-scale, study findings show island themes are not used exclusively by islands, but instead are used to various degrees and in different ways by islands and non-islands alike. This suggests that many of the themes related to islandness are not unique to islands and apply in some cases to non-island destinations as well. In addition, the findings may be interpreted to mean that the investigation of logos as a proxy for understanding islandness in island tourism brand identities is insufficient and inadequate, and a more fulsome investigation into the various ways of expressing brand identity might provide greater insights.

Keywords

Islandness, Islands, Logos, Non-Islands, Place Branding, Island Tourism, Tourism Marketing

Introduction

Islands have a well-established allure, particularly throughout the Western world where islands are emblematic of paradise, escapism, hedonism, and respite (Baldacchino, 2012). There is, simultaneously, a common understanding of islands and a profound level of diversity that encapsulates islands dotted around the globe. Island Studies scholars claim that islands are unique relative to non-islands in ways that transcend strictly geographic interpretations and captures the particular sense of self demonstrated in relation to the island place (Baldacchino, 2007 & 2003, Butler, 2012; Conkling, 2007; Vannini & Taggart, 2013). It is this idea - that islands are different in some meaningful and tangible way - that appeals to tourists (Arnold, 2012). If being an island is a desirable factor in attracting visitors, then presumably island brands would, at least in part, emphasize their island identity as part of their brand identity.

In an increasingly competitive global tourism environment, islands are investing in the development of strategic brands to help market themselves amid the array of tourism destinations vying for visitors. Place branding is the application of marketing principles related to branding to geographic places, including but not limited to cities, regions, states/provinces, and nations (Anholt, 2008). Just like with product-based brands, place brands employ a variety of tools to help establish a brand identity. These tools include brand symbols, logos, slogans, jingles, colours, shape, or other means intended to enable stakeholders to easily distinguish one brand (place) from another by highlighting the place's identity, uniqueness, and character relative to other places (Gartner, 2014; Hankinson, 2009; Suman, Rodriguez, & Sar, 2012). Adding to the challenge of island branding is the pre-existing generic island brand and the need to concurrently adhere to and differentiate from that ideal (Baldacchino, 2010a).

The purpose of this study is to examine tourism logos and determine if themes related islandness are used by destinations in their tourism logos in general and if those themes are used by islands or by both island and non-island destinations. Specifically, the tourism logos used by 85 island and 146 non-island destinations were assessed using a modified Likert-scale to identify the degree to which the logos included themes related to islandness. Using correlational analysis of the ratings for each of the destination logos, it is possible to discern if islandness themes are reserved for island destinations or employed by various types of destinations including islands and non-islands. The results of this study may provide insights into the branding strategies used by island destinations vis-à-vis other islands and non-islands in relation to if and how islandness is part of the destination's brand identity.

The Literature

Islands, Island Studies, & Island Themes

Island studies is predicated on the idea that islands are different from non-islands in meaningful ways that extend beyond the overly simplistic definition of islands as being parcels of land surrounded by water (Rasmussen, 2018). The establishment of this field of inquiry was not without controversy. Butler (2012) argued that the differences between islands and non-islands used to justify the distinct discourse were benign, nebulous, and devoid of objective meaning or significance. Others herald the diversity of topics pursued by scholars of island studies as evidence of its meaningfulness and value (Baldacchino, 2003). The on-going quest of scholars in the field of island studies is, in part, an attempt to define and refine what it means to be an island, or *islandness* (Grydehøj, 2017). A clearer picture of the shared

and diverse experiences of islands can enable a deeper understanding of islands from multiple perspectives, including economic, social, cultural, historical, political, and environmental (Norder & Rijsdijk, 2016).

Appreciation for the unique character of islands has a well-established and documented history. The archetype of the *island* as intimately connected to water, land, and surroundedness is a near universal understanding and interpretation of islands despite the rich diversity of islands around the globe. The art world, including literature, the visual arts, and music is laden with fantastical, mythical, and ethereal depictions of islands as safe harbours, an escape, a paradise, and a lifestyle associate with hammocks and daiquiris (Lugovskoy, 2015). Baldacchino (2012) claims that this deeply rooted romanticism about what islands represent, based on real or imagined interpretations, is the first attempt at branding islands, began centuries ago, and continues to shape island branding to this day. He argued that our perception of islands is "part myth, part marketing hype, and part reality" (Baldacchino, 2012, p.55), and that islands are presented in the media, literature, arts, and history books as "platforms of paradise", "locales of desire", and "habitual sites of fascination" (p. 55). Much of the island studies literature also emphasizes the western conceptualization of islands, which may differ significantly from the understanding of islands and islandness elsewhere (Luo & Grydehøj, 2017)

The characteristics that delineate the islands vis-à-vis non-islands continue to emerge within the island studies literature, with no universally accepted inventory among academics regarding the key points of distinction between islands and non-islands (Hay, 2006). Island studies research introduced and utilized the concept of islandness in an attempt to encapsulate the essence of islands (McCall, 1994). Whittaker (2016) offers that islandness is an "ontologically secure marker of selfhood" and is the bedrock (literally and figuratively) upon which the island experience is lived and realized. Baldacchino (2018) attempts to unpack islandness in *The Routledge International Handbook of Island Studies,* choosing to emphasize islands' "boundedness, smallness, isolation, and fragmentation" (p. xxv). And while the term is used quite extensively throughout the scholarly literature, a clear and accepted definition of what islandness is or means remains elusive (Hall, 2012, p. 177). Three approaches are used throughout the island studies literature in relation to the use of the term islandness: First, some researchers offer their own interpretation of islandness in relation to the specific aspect of islands they are investigating (Bourgeault, 1990; McCall, 1994; Stratford, 2008; Vannini & Taggart, 2013), but do not purport that their usage of the term is definitive, all-encompassing, or conclusive. Second, other writers introduce their understanding of islandness using poetic linguistics that captures the romanticized nature of islands (Conkling, 2007; Platt, 2004), but offers limited utility for island studies scholarship. Finally, some researchers use the term islandness without offering any understanding or meaning to the concept, and instead assumes a common interpretation that requires no further clarification (Ancker, 2008; Campbell, 2009; Hall, 2012; Kelman, 2018; Pon & Rullan, 2014; Randall, et al, 2014). The result is that despite its frequent usage in island studies discourse, islandness is not a well or commonly understood idea.

That being said, a thorough review of the literature points to several themes that may help focus on what makes islands unique. Throughout the scholarly and not-so-scholarly literature, authors have overtly pointed to or covertly alluded to various pieces of islandness, without proclaiming the completeness of their assertions. These themes are:

1. *Water* — Water is a central feature of islands, literally defining an island's shape and boundedness. Yet water has served as more than just a geographic characteristic with respect to islands. Water has often been the economic life's-blood for islands, an important mode of transportation and movement, both a protector and a danger, a source of sustenance, and at times a connection to the spiritual world. Water and islands are intricately connected, and thus water forms a critical component of being an island and island identity, both as bridge and barrier, linking or disconnecting the island from a mainland. Increasingly, islandness in relation to water is

investigated through the lens of climate change and/or sustainability, both of which are particularly relevant for many low-lying islands. The land-water dynamic is critical to understanding both islands and islandness, and thus water is a theme related to islandness. (Baldacchino, 2005; Conkling, 2007; Gillis, 2014; Jedrusik, 2011; Kelman, 2018; McCall, 1996; Pungetti, 2012; Stratford, 2008).

2. *Culture* — While all societies have a unique cultural identity, the culture of many islands and islanders is, at least in part, shaped by the island experience, and that perspective is often embedded in cultural expression, including visual arts, music, language, literature/prose, folklore, culinary creations, fashion, and architecture. Some writers claim that living on an island shapes the lived experiences of islanders, that they become one with their island place as the island permeates both their individual and shared existence, and that island culture is rooted in place. Island culture is, simultaneously, dynamic and static, as islands are a cultural crossroads whose cultural identity is tied to islandness. For many islands, culture has been shaped by colonialism, in many cases irreparably altering the Indigenous or founding cultures through systematic eradiation. (Brinklow, 2013; Burholt, Scharf, & Walsh, 2013; Depraetere, 2008; Depraetere & Dalh, 2007; Hong & Pungetti, 2012; McCall, 1996; Norder & Rijsdijk, 2016; Ronstrom, 2012; Weale, 1991).
3. *Nature* — Many islands have unique flora and fauna, distinct from their neighbouring islands or mainland. These plants and wildlife have served as sustenance, economic drivers, and cultural markers that distinguish the island from other places. Much of the scholarly work now focuses on climate change and its current and potential impact on islands, particularly low-lying islands and the ramifications for the pristine natural environments and biodiversity on islands. The unique topography, diverse habitats, climate, ecosystems, and influence on biology and evolution are emblematic of the fragile systems that exist on many islands. (Arnold, 2012; Campbell, 2012; Coulthard, et al., 2017; Depraetere, 2008; Depraetere & Dalh, 2007; Fitzpatrik & Keegan, 2007; Jedrusik, 2011; Kelman, 2018; Losos & Ricklefs, 2009).
4. *History* — Islands often have a history that is markedly different than that of the mainland or neighbouring islands and that history is remembered and recognized through rich traditions. Those histories and traditions are, in part, shaped by the islandness of the place. A significant part of the scholarly inquiry into island history centers on colonization and decolonization, with recognition that the practice irreparably alters the island identity. Although in some parts of the world, the recognition of colonization has spurred a movement toward decolonization, for many islands the legacy of colonization remains embedded in the island identity. (Baldacchino, 2010b; Grydehøj, 2018a; Hay, 2013; Hay, 2006; Luo & Grydehøj, 2017; McCall, 1996; Nadarajah & Grydehøj, 2016; Nimfuhr & Meloni, 2021; Patton, 1996).
5. *Community* — While islanders often take pride in their independence and resilience, islanders also recognize the important of community for their survival and well-being. The sense of community and belongingness encompasses both the people and the island place in shaping individual and collective identity, and is expressed through attachment and social cohesion embedded into community structures and organization. Island communities tend to be highly networked and emphasize kinship for survival and to thrive because islands are collectively vulnerable and collectively resilient. (Baldacchino & Veenendaal, 2018; Burholt, Scharf, & Walsh, 2013; Brinklow, 2013; Campbell, 2009; Cohen, 1982; Conkling, 2007; Cottrell, 2017; Depraetere, 2008; Gibbons, 2010; Marshall, 1999; McCall, 1996; Péron, 2004; Randall, et al., 2014; Ronström, 2012).
6. *Insularity* — Islands are insular, both physically and ideologically. Beyond the geographic separateness that define islands, many islands take pride in their independence, and in the attributes or characteristics that make that island unique and distinct from other islands or the mainland. The isolation inherent in island identity extends beyond geography and includes the island identity of both islanders and islandness. Insularity is a common theme

amidst the islandness literature, as are boundedness, remoteness, and separateness, and is relevant in relation to the island's *otherness* and distinction from non-islands. Some scholars link this aspect of islandness to vulnerability, and its antithesis — resilience. Others argue the insularity of islands is increasingly less potent as a defining characteristic, given advances in transportation and communications which render islands accessible to outside influences. (Baldacchino, 2017; Campbell, 2009; Campbell, 2012; Fitzpatrick & Anderson, 2008; Frieman, 2008; Grydehøj, 2018b; Hau'ofa, 1993; Jedrusik, 2011; Johannesson, Huijbens, & Sharpley, 2010).

These six themes related to islandness are not intended to be exhaustive nor conclusive with respect to understanding islandness, but instead represent a collective starting point from which to investigate how islandness manifests in island identities, including brand identities. These are representative of the characteristics used in the scholarly literature to describe, understand, or interpret islandness, although rarely together and not definitively. One of the challenges facing the investigation of islands is the presumption that islands share common characteristics beyond being islands, when in fact the islands of the world are diverse and unique, which can make generalizations less meaningful. Yet in order to understand islands, a common thread that binds islands together must be woven.

Place Branding, Tourism Marketing, and Brands

This paper examines islandness as represented in the logos for tourism destinations, both islands and non-islands, as part of the marketing of the destination. Place branding is a discrete yet multidisciplinary field that blends marketing, and more specifically branding, and the geographic, political, social, and economic positioning of places, whether it be municipalities, provinces/states, regions, or nations (Briciu & Briciu, 2016; Campelo, et. al. 2014; Dziuba, 2015). Tourism development represents only one of the possible motivations of place branding, which also can encompass branding for the purposes of foreign direct investment, immigration, exports/imports, skilled labour, and exploitation of natural resources (Briciu, 2013; Gnoth, 2002; Konecnik & Petek, 2012). Adding to the challenge of a place brand is the perspective of local residents and the alignment of their sense of place identity with the place brand that is often developed with external audiences in mind (Choo, Park, & Petrick, 2011). Critics of place branding note the complexity of creating a succinct, distinct, and effective brand that will transcend the diverse objectives of place stakeholders (Bernadie-Tahir & Schmool, 2014; Petrea, et. al, 2013). The result is that geographic regions often develop different, and sometimes conflicting, brands to serve specific purposes. Too often this results in generic, universal, or unappealing identities that render the brand meaningless (Beritelli & Laesser, 2016). Yet, well-crafted place brands can be a powerful tool in communicating defined messages to targeted audiences and advancing the specific objectives of a place (Santos & Campo, 2014).

Many islands throughout the world have embraced tourism as a cornerstone of their economic platform and are often complicit in propagating the narrowly defined constructs of islands by paralleling their identity with the established, prevailing, and mainstream understanding of islands based on generic allusions (Péron, 2004). Yet, an increasingly competitive tourism marketplace necessitates that destinations, including islands, find meaningful ways to differentiate themselves from other destinations. If islands rely, in part, on their islandness as the basis of their tourism brand identity, then the ability to differentiate from other islands that also use islandness as the basis of their brand may confuse target audiences (Baldacchino, 2016).

Brands are an important part of marketing that aids in the establishment of a brand identity or personality, intended to communicate marketing messages to key audiences (Yura & Cho, 2016). Research derived from psychology has begun

to examine brands using personality constructs like those used in studies of humans (Gomez Aguilar, Yague Guillen, & Villasenor Roman, 2016). Brands are valuable assets that require investment, strategic intent, creativity, and time so that the messages conveyed via the brand are received, interpreted, and understood by the intended audiences (Deslandes & Goldsmith, 2002). A strong brand elicits the desired response from its target audiences, whether that response is increased awareness, favourable impression, or call to action. Various elements are often pieced together to individually and collectively represent a brand. These elements include, but are not limited to, brand names, colors, design, packaging, pictures, videos, sounds, slogans, and logos. It is not necessary for each of these elements, representing a single brand, to be identical (Kladou, et. al., 2016). Rather, these various pieces of the branding puzzle can fit together to tell a cohesive, unified brand story (Datzira-Masip & Poluzzi, 2014; Koltringer & Dickringer, 2015). Logos, while often confused as being synonymous with a brand, are a simplistic, visual representation of a brand, and are intended to be easily recognizable by targeted audiences (Almeida-Santana & Moreno-Gil, 2018; Seraphin, et. al., 2016).

Methods

This study investigates the inclusion of islandness themes in tourism destination logos by islands and non-islands using visual content analysis (Koltringer & Dickringer, 2015). Content analysis is used to identify and quantify the presence of certain words, concepts, themes, or phrases within communication items (such as documents, images, audio, or video) and assign meaning to the items being analyzed, in this case themes embedded in tourism destination logos (Krippendorff, 1989). The results of the analysis provide insights into if and how islandness is embedded into tourism logos. The use of metrics to measure the presence of specific themes enables comparison between islands and non-islands in relation to the usage of islandness themes.

The 85 island and 146 non-island destinations were identified using several steps. Lists of the popular destinations were collected using sources such as magazines and websites devoted to travel. For example, online searches ranged from “best places to visit in Europe”, “best islands to visit in the South Pacific”, and “best places to visit in the Caribbean”, among various other queries, and specifically included cities, regions, provinces/states, countries, and islands. The search also included tourism magazines such as *Conde Nast Traveler* and *Travel and Leisure*, which publish lists of popular tourism destinations. The resources used to procure this preliminary list of over 400 destinations were limited to English language publications and/or websites, which may result in a bias with respect to the destinations included.

Once the preliminary list of destinations was developed, the tourism logo for each destination on the list was sourced using the following criteria. First, the logo was the most recent logo. Second, the logo was specifically for tourism marketing and not for general place marketing. Third, the logo was for the destination itself, and not for a tourism industry organization. Finally, the logo was mostly an image and did not include extraneous text along with the image. This process shortened the preliminary list considerably to the final list of 231 destinations. The final list of destinations is imperfect. While deliberate effort was made to include destinations from all over the world, the study is limited to destinations with touristic information available in English, thus potentially leading to a westernized bias in the destinations included and which logos were used.

The classification of destinations as islands or non-islands was more complex than anticipated (Rackham, 2012). For the most part, the classic definition of an island as “a parcel of land surrounded by water” formed the basis for this paper. Single islands, along with clusters of islands and/or archipelagos, were categorized as islands, while geographic

areas that did not meet this standard were categorized as non-islands. For most of the destinations included in this study, this system sufficed. However, a few notable challenges arose. Four destinations - Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Saint Martin, and Sint Maarten - required careful consideration because of each of these destinations shares their *island* with another destination. For example, Haiti and the Dominican Republic share the island of Hispaniola, but for the purposes of this study each will be considered to be an island in and of themselves. Finally, several non-island destinations included an island or islands as part of the overall destination. For example, Newfoundland and Labrador, Fort Lauderdale, Amsterdam, and the Gold Coast are destinations where an island or islands comprises an important part of the destination's footprint. However, significant portions of the destination's boundaries are tied to a non-island mainland, and thus the destinations were classified as non-islands. This decision is not without controversy. Some may argue that while the destination itself is a mixture of mainland and island(s), the basis of tourism within the destination or the concentration of the population inhabiting these destinations may be on the island(s) portion of the destination and thus could (or should) be classified as an island. Table 1 provides a list of all islands and non-islands included in this study.

Table 1. Destinations

Islands	Non-Islands
Aleutian Islands, Antigua & Barbuda, Aruba, Azores, Bahamas, Bali, Barbados, Bermuda, Bora Bora, Borneo, Britain, Cape Verde, Canary Islands, Cape Breton, Capri, Catalina Island, Cayman Islands, Cook Islands, Cozumel, Crete, Cuba, Curacao, Cyprus, Dominican Republic, Easter Island, Falkland Islands, Faroe Islands, Fiji, Florida Keys, Galapagos Islands, Greenland, Grenada, Guam, Haiti, Hilton Head Island, Ibiza, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Iles de la Madeleine, Isle of Man, Jamaica, Japan, Kangaroo Island, Kaua'i, Lana'i, Madeira Islands, Maldives, Mallorca, Malta, Maui, Mauritius, Molokai, Mykonos, Nantucket, Nevis, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Oahu, Outer Banks, Outer Hebrides, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Prince Edward Island, Saint Kitts, Saint Martin, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Santorini, Seychelles, Shetland Islands, Sicily, Sint Maarten, Solomon Islands, South Padre Island, Sri Lanka, St. Vincent & Grenadines, Tahiti, Taiwan, Tasmania, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Vancouver Island, Vanuatu, Zanzibar	Adelaide, Alaska, Alberta, Amsterdam, Arizona, Armenia, Athens, Auckland, Austin, Baja Peninsula, Barcelona, Beijing, Belize, Bengal, Berlin, Bogota, Boston, Brazil, Bulgaria, British Columbia, Broome, Budapest, Buenos Aires, Cambodia, Canada, Cancun, Cape Town, California, Charleston, Chicago, Chile, China, Cinque Terre, Colorado, Costa Rica, Croatia, Dubai, Dublin, Ecuador, Edinburgh, Egypt, Florence, Fort Lauderdale, France, Fraser Coast, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Goa, Gold Coast, Greece, Halifax, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh, Holland, Hungary, India, Italy, Istanbul, Jerusalem, Kenya, Korea, Kuala Lumpur, Kyoto, Las Vegas, Lisbon, London, Los Angeles, Madrid, Malaysia, Manitoba, Marrakech, Mayan Riviera, Melbourne, Mendoza, Mexico, Miami, Montreal, Moscow, Myrtle Beach, Namibia, Nashville, New Brunswick, New Delhi, Newfoundland and Labrador, New Orleans, New York, Nigeria, North Carolina, Norway, Nunavut, Oman, Ontario, Oregon, Orlando, Palm Springs, Paris, Perth, Peru, Playa Del Carmen, Portugal, Prague, Quebec, Queensland, Rio, Rome, Romania, Saint Petersburg, San Antonio, San Diego, San Francisco, San Paulo, Saskatchewan, Savannah, Scotland, Seattle, Sedona, Seoul, Serbia, Shanghai, South Africa, South Carolina, Spain, Stockholm, Switzerland, Tanzania, Tel Aviv, Thailand, Tokyo, Toronto, Turkey, United States, Uzbekistan, Vancouver, Venezuela, Victoria, Vienna, Virginia, Washington DC, Yukon, Zambia, Zermatt

To assess the logos for the presence of islandness themes, a questionnaire was developed, tested, revised, and implemented. Seven tourism research professionals tested the initial questionnaire, and their feedback was used to improve the tool (Herbert, 2013). Most notably, the test team suggested a response scale that incorporated more options to reflect the *degree* to which the logo incorporated islandness themes rather than a binary system related to the presence or not of islandness themes. The final questionnaire invited reviewers to use a modified Likert-scale to rate the extent to which each destination logo incorporated each theme related to islands. The response choices were: Present — Main Theme, Present — One of Many Themes, Present — Minor Theme, Present — Implied, Not Present, and Unsure/Don't Know.

Reviewers were undergraduate marketing students, who each received approximately 20 minutes of training prior to reviewing the tourism logos. The training included instruction on how to complete the electronic questionnaire, an overview of what each of the responses on the Likert-scale meant, and a brief introduction to the themes, although the connection to islandness was not included. The data were tabulated to measure the extent to which each islandness theme was incorporated in the destination logos and to compare the use of islandness themes by island versus non-island destinations. Overall, the reviewers were relatively consistent in the ratings assigned to each theme for each

destination. Average standard deviations for each theme ranged from 0.857 to 1.572, leading to a high level of confidence that the ratings reflect a reliable assessment of the use of islandness themes in destination logos. Table 2 includes the number and percentage of responses for each of the response categories on the Likert-scale.

Table 2. Responses per Rating

	Islands		Non-Islands		All Destinations	
Responses	**N (4,026)**	**%**	**N (6,510)**	**%**	**N (10,536)**	**%**
Present — Main Theme (5)	283	7.03%	428	6.57%	711	6.75%
Present — One of Many Themes (4)	331	8.22%	480	7.37%	811	7.70%
Present — Minor Theme (3)	363	9.02%	592	9.09%	955	9.06%
Present — Implied (2)	635	15.77%	823	12.64%	1458	13.84%
Not Present (1)	2255	56.01%	3890	59.75%	6145	58.32%
Unsure/Don't Know (0)	159	3.95%	297	4.56%	456	4.33%

Results

In total, 231 logos were assessed by the reviewers, resulting in 10,458 ratings that form the basis of this study. Results for each logo varied with some destinations including themes related to islandness and others not including any islandness themes. The average ratings for each theme related to islandness ranged from 1.3147 to 2.263 for all destinations. For all destinations, only nature (2.263) and culture (2.179) had an average rating above 2, indicating a presence of the theme in the logos. The remaining four themes had average scores below 2, indicating those themes were not present in the logos when considering all destinations. When the destinations were separated into islands and non-islands the results showed that islands had higher average ratings than non-islands in three themes, whereas non-islands received higher average scores in the other three themes.

Both island and non-island logos included some island themes to various degrees. When considering overall averages per theme, island logos incorporated island themes (with average scores of 2 or higher) in water, culture, and nature, while non-island logos incorporated island themes for culture and nature. The other islandness themes, community and insularity, were infrequently observed in both island and non-island destination logos, with average scores below 2. Table 3 depicts the overall rating averages for islands, non-islands, and for all destinations.

Table 3. Overall Rating Averages By Theme

	Island (672)	Non-Island (1085)	All Destinations (1757)
Water	2.0625	1.6654	1.8173
Culture	2.0595	2.2535	2.1793
Nature	2.5714	2.0728	2.2635
History	1.6071	1.7945	1.7228
Community	1.3318	1.3908	1.3682
Insularity	1.3318	1.3041	1.3147

For both islands and non-islands and for each islandness theme, the most common response provided by reviewers was "Not Present", which represented 58.32% of the 10,458 responses. In comparison, "Present — Main Theme" represented 6.75% of all responses. In general, the number of responses per rating declined as the relative importance or prominence of the theme increased. The only exceptions were the ratings for water for both islands and non-islands, and nature for non-islands, where the number of responses rose slightly for ratings connected to a higher presence of the theme in the logos. Table 4 shows the number of responses for each of the rating options.

Table 4. Island Ratings by Themes Related to Islands/Non-Islands

Islands/Non-Islands						
	Unsure/Don't Know	Not Present	Present-Implied	Present — Minor Theme	Present — One of Many Themes	Present — Main Theme
Water (672)	23/35	308/712	153/124	52/73	64/77	72/64
Culture (672)	29/58	291/409	140/197	91/165	65/133	56/123
Nature (672)	25/48	229/558	106/132	80/99	113/110	119/138
History (672)	30/53	417/609	101/154	58/111	43/93	23/65
Community (672)	20/57	513/768	67/123	46/74	20/42	6/21
Insularity (672)	32/46	497/834	72/93	37/70	27/25	7/17

The results not only varied by islands versus non-islands and by theme, but also by individual destination. When considering each destination separately, 74 islands (87%) of the total 85 islands had an average score of 2 (Present — Implied) or higher for at least one of the island themes, while 11 islands did not have any average scores greater than 2 for any of the themes, meaning that reviewers did not observe any island themes in the logos. Among non-islands, 134 of the 146 logos (92%) had at least one theme with an average of 2 or higher, meaning that reviewers observed at least one island theme in the logo, while 12 non-island logos did not have any average ratings of 2 or higher. Among the 74 island logos that had at least one average theme-related score of 2 or higher, 27 had just one theme with a rating of 2 or higher. Among the remaining 47 logos, 23 had two themes with a rating of 2 or higher, 17 had three themes with a rating of 2 or higher, 6 had four themes with a rating of 2 or higher, and one island (Bora Bora) had five themes with a rating 2 or higher. In comparison, of the 134 non-islands with at least one theme having an average rating of 2 or higher, 52 logos had only one theme with an average rating of 2 or higher, 41 logos had two themes with an average rating of 2 or higher, 27 logos had three themes with averages of 2 or more, 13 logos had four themes with average ratings of 2 or higher, and one logo (Tanzania) had all six themes with ratings of 2 or higher. Table 5 provides an overview of the number of themes with an average rating of 2 or higher.

Table 5. Number of Themes with Average Scores of 2 or Higher

# of themes with an average of 2 or higher	Islands	Non-Islands
0	11	12
1	27	52
2	23	41
3	17	27
4	6	13
5	1	0
6	0	1

While reviewers selected “Not Present” for well over half of their responses, there were some logos that received strong ratings relative to one or more of the themes related to islandness. Zermatt scored a 5.000 on the rating for nature, meaning that every respondent rated the logo as having nature as a “Present — Main Theme”. Other logos with strong overall ratings were Zanzibar (4.800 for culture), Zambia and Playa del Carmen (4.833 for water), and Tonga (4.500 for history). When look at the destinations with the highest average ratings for each of the island themes, several destinations rated among the top five for more than one theme. Notably, Bora Bora appears in the top five for three different themes (water, nature, and community), as does Samoa, Alaska, Nashville, Tanzania, and South Africa. Destinations appearing among the top five twice include Austin, Galapagos, Cook Islands, Saint Maarten, Saint Martin, Britain, Virgin Islands, and Catalina Islands. Tables 6 and 7 show the destinations with the highest average ratings by theme.

Table 6. Islands with the Highest Ratings by Themes

Water	Culture	Nature	History	Community	Insularity
Bora Bora (4.500)	Zanzibar (4.800)	Tahiti (4.600)	Tonga (4.500)	Catalina Islands (2.333)	New Zealand (3.200)
Galapagos (4.214)	Samoa (4.667)	Bora Bora (4.571) Nevis (4.571)	Cook Islands (3.786)	Virgin Islands (2.200) Outer Hebrides (2.200)	Tonga (2.333)
Saint Maarten (4.167)	Cook Islands (4.143)	Galapagos Islands (4.357)	Samoa (3.667)	Bora Bora (2.000) Saint Martin (2.000) Saint Maarten (2.000)	Britain (2.200) Iles de la Madeleine (2.200)
Catalina Islands (4.067)	Virgin Islands (4.000)	Tasmania (4.333)	Britain (3.000)	Samoa (1.833) South Padre Island (1.833)	Cuba (2.000) Saint Martin (2.000)
Vancouver Island (4.000)	Indonesia (3.600) Philippines (3.600)	Grenada (4.286)	Tasmania (2.670)	Maldives (1.800)	Seychelles (1.833)

Table 7. Non-Islands with the Highest Ratings by Themes

Water	Culture	Nature	History	Community	Insularity
Zambia (4.833) Playa Del Carmen (4.833)	Nashville (4.786)	Zermatt (5.000)	Nunavut (4.400)	Tanzania (2.333)	South Africa (2.800)
Buenos Aires (4.00)	Austin (4.333)	Alaska (4.917)	Mayan Riviera (4.200)	Virginia (2.200)	Alaska (2.417)
Curacao (3.929)	South Africa (4.200)	Victoria (4.800)	Seoul (3.667) St. Petersburg (3.667)	Armenia (2.000) Austin (2.000) Nashville (2.000)	France (2.400)
Croatia (3.643)	San Paulo (4.167)	Tanzania (4.667)	South Africa (3.400) Washington DC (3.400)	Cambodia (1.929)	Perth (2.333) Rio (2.333)
Oman (3.462)	Beijing (4.100)	Holland (4.500)	Nashville (3.214)	Alaska (1.917)	Tanzania (2.167)

A large number of destinations had average scores of 1.00, or “Not Present”, for one or more of the themes. An average score of 1.00 (with a standard deviation of 0.000) indicates that all reviewers rated the destination relative to the theme as “Not Present”. Among all destinations, 71 had average scores of 1.00 for water, 15 for culture, 35 for nature, 34 for history, 67 for community, and 33 for insularity. With respect to islands, several islands appear on this list a number of times. Fiji and Vanuatu each have an average score of 1.00 on five themes, while Iceland has an average rating of 1.00 on four themes, and nine different islands have averages of 1.00 on three themes. Among non-islands, 22 non-islands had two destinations with average theme scores of 1.00, 13 had three themes with average scores of 1.00, nine

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destination had four themes with average scores of 1.00 and one destination (Montreal) had five themes with average scores of 1.00. Table 8 depicts the number of destinations that had an average score of 1.00 for each theme.

Table 8. Destinations with Average Scores of 1.00 (Not Present) and a Standard Deviation of 0.000

	Islands (85)	Non-Islands (146)	All Destinations (231)
Water	14	57	71
Culture	4	11	15
Nature	7	28	35
History	12	22	34
Community	22	49	71
Insularity	12	21	33

To determine if associations existed between a destination's classification as an island or non-island and the ratings of themes related to islands in the tourism logos, Pearson's Chi Square was used. Pearson's Chi Square measures the significance of association between data. The response options on the Likert-type scale that measured the extent to which themes related to islands were present in the tourism logos is assumed to be equi-distant from the next closest response, and therefore ordinal, thus enabling the use of Pearson's Chi Square. Results were significant at the 0.05 level. Results of the analysis were mixed. Associations were detected between islands/non-islands and four of the themes related to islands: water, culture, nature, and history. In comparison, no associations were detected among islands/non-islands and two themes related to islands- community and insularity. Table 9 summarizes the results of the measures of association.

Table 9. Measures of Association (Fit) Ratings for Islands and Non-Islands

Theme	Pearson Chi Square Value	df	Sig. (*p*)
Water*	77.960	5	0.000*
Culture*	12.640	5	0.027*
Nature*	57.164	5	0.000*
History *	11.949	5	0.035*
Community	4.939	5	0.423
Insularity	4.162	5	0.526

Discussion

While the use of themes related to islandness was varied across island destinations, the majority of islands in the study, 74 out of 85, did incorporate some themes related to islandness in their tourism logo. This should not be surprising, given the historical, mythical, and alluring appeal that islands have for travelers. Brands are developed, in part, to appeal to targeted audiences and to communicate what the brand represents (Blain, Levy, & Ritchie, 2005). Using islandness themes to brand islands is likely to resonate with travelers who are drawn to islands as a tourism destination. Many of the 85 islands included in the study, 48 in fact, had ratings of higher than 2 for two or more of the themes related to islandness. This suggests that for many island destinations the decision to incorporate islandness themes into the logo was a decision to emphasize the destination's island identity as part of the brand identity.

Yet, non-islands also included themes related to islands in their tourism logos. Among non-islands in the study, 128 of 146 exhibited at least one islandness theme in the tourism logo. It appears that islandness themes are not solely the domain of island brands, but rather are somewhat universal in their usage by islands and non-islands alike in tourism logos. Butler (2012) argued that the existing interpretation of islands as being distinct from non-islands is too generic and ultimately meaningless. Extending Butler's argument, a case can be made that the islandness themes, individually and collectively, are also applicable to a great many non-island locales. These themes may apply to islands generally, but not exclusively. While the themes related to islandness help explain the island experience, those same themes may apply to non-islands as well and the discrepancy in terms of what these islandness themes mean relative to islands and non-islands remains uncaptured in the analysis of simplistic logos.

Themes related to water, culture, nature, and history were observed for both islands and non-islands. This may be because these themes are associated with tourism in general and therefore were an obvious choice to incorporate into the tourism logo, regardless of whether the destination was an island or non-island. These themes may have a positive appeal to potential travelers regardless of specific destination (Prebezac & Mikulic, 2008). For these reasons, brand and logo developers may elect to include these elements into a logo design, and therefore the brand identity, irrespective of whether the destination is an island or not, because tourists are increasingly seeking travel experiences that encompass water, nature, culture, and history. For this study, themes related to islandness were reduced to their most elementary and rudimentary levels — water, culture, nature, and history — when in fact, it is the *way* that these factors have shaped the island and its people that is at the root of islandness. As an example, all places have culture, but culture and its expressions on islands is shaped by the island experiences — so it is not culture that is unique to islands it is instead the way that the island has shaped culture that is relevant. The reduction of islandness to simplistic themes fails to capture this nuanced, but important, distinction.

The incorporation of themes related to islandness in tourism logos varied, with some themes such as water, culture, and nature being more frequently identified in the logos than other themes, irrespective of whether the destination was an island or non-island. The reasons may be connected to the ease with which some themes can be visually represented in a static and simplistic format like a logo. For example, with respect to incorporating themes related to water, several of the logos used the color blue, depicted a wave of water, or embedded water drop shapes in the logo. Nature was similarly represented by renderings of plants, flowers, and animals. Whereas finding a means to visually represent community or insularity may be more challenging to capture (by the creator of the logo) and interpret (by the audience of the logo). Logos are intended to be relatively simple visual representations of a brand (Beritelli & Laesser, 2016; Kladou, et.al., 2016; Lee, Rodriguez, & Sar, 2012). Logo designers know that their target audiences are unlikely to spend considerable time examining or contemplating the components of a logo and therefore often imbue subtle, relatable, and easily recognized imagery into the logos. For both islands and non-islands, decisions regarding which themes to embed into a destination logo may be a matter of practicality, feasibility, and utility, rather than purely strategic.

Logos are just one part of brand, albeit an important one. The inclusion, or lack thereof, of islandness themes in a tourism logo is not the only way a destination can inject themes related to islands in the brand. Brands are complex and multifaceted, using various tools and strategies to convey messages to target audiences (Datzina-Masip & Poluzzi, 2014). While logos were the focus of this study, a review of other components of brand architecture may yield different results. Brand developers may embed themes related to islands in slogans, pictures or videos, sounds, colors, fonts, or other pieces of the brand other than the logo.

The purpose of branding is to establish a unique identity in the minds of target audiences. It is possible that being an island is, by itself, not unique enough to form the basis of a distinct brand identity. After all, there are thousands of islands in the world and 85 islands included in this study. If each of these 85 islands used islandness as the bedrock of their brand identity without adding additional dimensions, then it may be difficult to establish a brand that is unique relative to other destinations. In branding, two concepts are used in the comparison of one brand to another: points of parity and points of difference. Brands often point out the ways in which they are similar to other brands in a particular product category. These points of parity enable target audiences to feel a sense of familiarity and comfort with a brand, particularly a new brand. In contrast, brands also highlight the ways in which they are different, thus creating a compelling reason to favour their brand over another (Daye, 2010; Popescu, 2014, Pratt, 2013). For example, a destination such as Jamaica might emphasize that they have beautiful beaches, swaying palm trees, and warm water. These are points of parity with other Caribbean islands. Jamaica may also emphasize its unique culinary offerings, music, and cultural history as points of difference to set Jamaica apart from other Caribbean islands. The use of islandness themes may be an effective branding strategy with respect to points of parity, but it may be insufficient as points of difference (Gertner, 2010).

Prior to the formal development of a destination brand, many places already have an existing brand identity forged from previous touristic experiences and the destination's existing self-identity. Long before Paris developed their official branding strategy and their destination logo that incorporates a stylized image of the Eiffel Tower, Paris was already renowned as a cultural mecca, culinary powerhouse, and home of the iconic Eiffel Tower. Therefore, it makes sense for brand developers to utilize pre-existing identities in the more formal branding process. Formal place branding is relatively new but that should not mean that places were devoid of many of the parts of branding, including a brand identity, before the formal process began. Leveraging the prior knowledge and perceptions of potential visitors can be an excellent way to inject equity into a brand and can help a new brand reach and resonate with audiences more quickly and easily. When branding *new* tourism destinations - those destinations that have not already developed a tourism persona in the minds of travelers, marketers have greater flexibility to shape the brand to fit the brand position they deem most advantageous to the destination's objectives (Pike, et. al., 2018).

The island identities and how those identities are communicated, interpreted, and by/for whom plays a central role in understanding island branding. The colonial histories and legacies on many islands have shaped island identities (Büscher & Fletcher, 2017). Tourism itself is embedded with colonial over- and undertones. The industry often disproportionally benefits colonizers and exploits local and/or Indigenous communities (Escobar, 2003; Grydehøj, 2018a; Nadarajah & Grydehøj, 2016). Local resources are often redirected away from local use, and instead set aside for touristic consumption. Decision-making, including decisions about destination branding, are not democratically made, and instead may represent the voices of colonizers and exclude local or Indigenous voices. Finally, the target audiences for tourism destination brands are often other privileged people — the colonizers or their peers — rather than other marginalized groups.

The embedded nature of colonialism means that decolonization is a messy, imperfect, non-linear, contested, negotiated, and volatile endeavour (Nadarajah & Grydehøj, 2016). The institutionalization of colonialism, its integration into the local culture, and the ways in which it moulds thoughts and knowledge make incremental progress challenging. Even the act of identifying and rating themes in the destination logos (and thus attempting to construct identities from these logos) is an act of colonialism whereby the privileged and Western-centric perspective of the researchers and logo-reviewers is the reference point from which island identity is being explored, perceived, interpreted, and reported (Mignolo, 2011;

Nadarajah, 2007). The co-created nature of identity, and in particular with who does (or does not) participate in this co-creation, how, and why, means it is easy to see the influences of colonialism on the brand identities of some of the island destinations in this study.

Limitations & Further Research

The study findings may have been influenced by and limited to the western perspectives of the researcher and reviewers in three ways. First, the selection process of destinations employed strategies aimed at including destinations from around the world, but was prejudiced by the availability of English-language information about the destinations and logos. There was a clear western bias in the selection of destinations, and a different set of destinations and logos may yield different results than those from this study. The identification of logos was also biased in favour of English versions, even when multiple versions of the logo existed. Second, the list of island themes used to assess the tourism logos is derived from westernized literature about islands and islandness, and is incomplete in that a fulsome understanding of islands and islandness is still under development and is at times contested (or at least inconclusive) in the scholarly discourse (Butler, 2012; Rasmusssen, 2018; Vannini & Taggart, 2013). The study is perhaps overly simplistic in terms of failing to encapsulate the *ways* these themes are manifest in islands and islandness. This reduction of the islandness themes to trite or rudimentary *categories* fails to appreciate the complex and dynamic meaning of the themes within the context island experience. It is not that islands have *culture* and non-islands do not; rather, it is the way in which culture is shaped by the island and islanders that is unique to islands, and this nuanced difference may not have been captured in this study. Finally, the assessments of the tourism logos were conducted by individuals, each with their own familiarity with or perspectives of the various destinations in the study. While training was provided to help ensure a more consistent application of the assessment scale and a review of the internal consistency of ratings was conducted, results showed that the more familiar a reviewer was with the destination the more likely they were to identify themes in that logo. For example, the tourism logo for Bermuda is the name of the place *Bermuda* in bright pink lettering. For some respondents, the logo was simply a pretty image but others interpreted the pink lettering as symbolic of Bermuda's famed pink sand beaches, which could be connected to water or to nature.

Further research into the use of themes related to islandness in branding is ripe with opportunity. A more fulsome examination of the components of brand architecture, beyond logos, might also be instructive. As the understanding of islandness evolves, using these new interpretations as the lens through which branding is examined will refine the findings in this study as well. Also, this study failed to examine the effectiveness of tourism logos when themes related to islands were used as a part of the branding efforts, which could provide valuable insights. Finally, an investigation into the colonial roots of island brand identities would add to the growing body of scholarly work that considers colonialism in relation to island identities. In summary, the linkages between themes related to islands and tourism branding are not well developed but may represent an interesting, productive, and useful stream of research that can add to both the scholarly knowledge and the practical application of findings.

Conclusion

Understanding how islands use themes related to islandness as part of a tourism branding strategy supports several academic pursuits, including island studies, tourism marketing, and place branding. The mixed findings from this study

and the opportunities for further research mean that the scholarly work in this area is just beginning. The non-exclusive use of themes related to islandness by island destinations suggests that some of the coveted aspects of island destinations are not exclusive to islands but instead important touristic attributes of non-islands as well, at least when considered at a rudimentary level in terms of both the themes and the logo as the representation of the brand. The themes related to islandness identified and used in this study are well established in the scholarly literature, thus the failure here, in this study, is in trying to reduce these themes down to an elementary level and in using logos as a proxy for complex and multi-faceted brand identities. To more accurately suss out the role of islandness in island tourism branding a more sophisticated approach that incorporates the nuanced and specific ways in which each of the islandness themes related to islands and to consider the full array of brand manifestations is needed. This being said, this study adds to the scholarship of island branding in that it raises the question about the linkages between island identity and brand identity, which has thus far not been explored. This study also makes a contribution by honing in on what islandness means because thus far the literature offers little consensus in this regard. Finally, this study may lend credence to the idea that being an island is not enough to distinguish one island destination from another and that many of the standard elements of island tourism are ubiquitous to many islands, and even non-island destinations, resulting in a lack of differentiation.

As the tourism market grows increasingly competitive, and destinations strive to establish unique brand positions for themselves in this landscape, the branding of islands will be an important contributor to the success of island tourism destinations. The parameters of islandness must be continually refined and considered in relation to how islandness is embedded into both island identity and branding. The findings of this study suggest that brand logos are insufficient in capturing the unique touristic appeal of island destinations by emphasizing the islandness inherent in these places. Thus, further inquiry into if and how island destinations embed themes related to islandness in their destination brand, outside of the tourism logo, might facilitate a deeper understanding of islandness and tourism branding.

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