

BRANDING IRELAND: AN EXAMINATION OF THE
CONSTRUCTION OF IRELAND'S NATIONAL BRAND

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ABSTRACT

The Republic of Ireland has advanced the same branding proposition in its tourism campaigns for decades, relying on images that depict idyllic scenery and messaging designed to appeal to those who seek an escape from the complexity of the modern world (Fanning, 2011). Such images have contributed to the formation of Ireland's national brand. The literature demonstrates that national images are the foundation for national brands and most of these images are saturated in stereotypes, many of which are outdated and distorted. In today's global economic environment, nations must be very conscious of the image they project to the world, because this has direct implications for a nation's economic success. The objective of this research is to analyze how images of Ireland as a destination for tourism construct a national brand of Ireland. This study is guided by the following question: how does Tourism Ireland brand Ireland to a U.S. audience? The study found that Tourism Ireland reinforces stereotypical depictions of Ireland in its current campaigns by portraying Ireland as an escape from the modern world and by commodifying the past.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Ireland is renowned for its vast and vibrant green landscape, earning the country its poetic title the “Emerald Isle.” Thoughts of Ireland also depict freckled red-haired people, leprechauns, shamrocks, potatoes, and Guinness. These stereotypical depictions are rooted in the images that Ireland has used to promote and advertise the country and its products for decades. As such, these images have contributed to the formation of Ireland’s nation brand image. A nation brand image can be defined as an image that evokes a series of ideas and associations with a particular country and thus contributes to the formation of an overall perception of the country, its people and its culture (Fanning, 2011). Such national images are the foundation of nation brands and in recent years, nation branding has emerged as a topic of considerable academic interest across the globe (Anholt, 2005). Although the specific terminology may be new, it is acknowledged that countries have always engaged in some aspect of branding, particularly with regards to the images that they portray to international audiences (Anholt, 2005; Fan, 2005). In relation to Ireland specifically, there has been a reliance on simplistic and stereotypical images to brand the country to international audiences. However, Ireland has gained a positive reputation as a “friendly, forthcoming, fond-of-a-drink nation, where celebration, conviviality and the *craic*¹ come first” (Brown & Patterson, 2000).

This reputation is rooted in the portrayal of Ireland as a tourism destination and in tourists’ experiences of Ireland, its culture and its people. In today’s competitive and globalized world, nations need to be concerned with all of the images they project, not only those within the tourism sphere, because images have direct

¹ “Craic” is the Gaelic word for fun

implications for foreign investment, talent, political influence and a nation's general economic success (Dinnie, 2004; Aronczyk, 2008; Stock, 2009; Fetscherin, 2010; De San Eugenio Vela, 2013). It has become commonplace for countries to use conflicting images when trying to attract investment, tourism and talent because finding one image that appeals to tourists and investors alike is next to impossible (Kotler & Gertner, 2002).

Many authors advance the idea that countries should portray images that align with the reality of a country so that tourists' expectations are met and the reputation of the country is upheld (O'Leary & Deegan, 2003). This presents an interesting dichotomy for Ireland. Clichéd, stereotypical images of green fields and rugged landscapes have been attracting tourists for decades but such images are at loggerheads with the reality that Ireland is a westernized country competing in the global market. Understanding the narrative that images construct is important because images often form the basis of selection of a tourism destination and they can also play a role in how tourists evaluate their experiences. If the actual experience does not live up to the expectation, this could damage Ireland's reputation as a tourism destination. Balancing tourists' expectations with reality is something that could become more of a challenge for Ireland, particularly if the images used to promote the country do not reflect the country's continued economic and industrial progression.

This study examines how the visual representations used by Tourism Ireland to promote Ireland as a tourism destination, on the website www.ireland.com, construct Ireland's overall national brand. The focus is on the images and text used on the website and not tourists' interpretation of them. Visual representations in tourism discourse are the product of commercial photography. They have the power to economically transform places into destinations, and in doing so, they should be

cognizant of a place's past, history and also its contemporary voices (Hunter, 2008). However, photographs do not always produce accurate or "mirroring" representations of geographies; they often create them (Urry & Larsen, 2011). Urry and Larsen (2011) observe that photographs within the tourism discourse are regarded as 'real' and 'objective,' not because they reflect complex lived realities but because "they reflect and reinforce stereotypical western imaginations of these worlds" (p. 170). In this sense, they produce what Edward Said refers to as "imaginative geographies" (1995, in Urry & Larsen, 2011, p. 167). This has direct implications for national identity, which is described by many authors as the product of tourism discourse (Salim, et al. 2012). Photographs can define, construct and reproduce ideas about place, space and culture and authenticity not only for tourists but for host peoples as well.

Authenticity itself is a hotly debated topic in tourism research. It was introduced to sociological research by MacCannell (1973) to understand tourists' travel experiences, particularly at historic sites. Bruner (1994) identifies four meanings of authenticity frequently implied in tourism research. Authenticity may be understood in terms of an original; an authentic reproduction; a historically accurate simulation; and finally, with reference to those who have the power to authenticate. The economic value of tourism justifies staging experiences as 'authentic' in order to accord with tourist's expectations, regardless of whether or not this aligns with reality. Some scholars argue that individuals form their perceptions of authenticity based on their experiences, which suggests that the term authenticity is just a state of mind of tourists (Lu, et. al, 2015). However, other scholars contend that because of the ties between tourism and the construction of national identity, tourism discourse should reflect present reality rather than a staged utopia, reflective of a lost past (Baum, et. al,

2008). As already alluded to, this presents a challenge for Ireland because of the significant emphasis on the past and stereotypical naturalistic images that have been relied upon in its tourism advertising to date.

Tourism Ireland is the entity responsible for marketing both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland overseas, as a holiday destination. This study will analyze the three Tourism Ireland campaigns based in the Republic of Ireland that are featured on the website www.ireland.com. The Internet has transformed the tourism communication process from one-way communication between promoter and receiver to the electronic “Word-of-mouth” (Riedl et al, 2002). Tourists are no longer seen as passive customers, but choose their holiday destinations cautiously. When a potential tourist searches for, gathers and processes information, he or she creates an image of what his or her experience at a destination will be (Govers & Kumar, 2007). The three campaigns analyzed in this study are the *Wild Atlantic Way*; *Ireland’s Ancient East* and *Dublin: A Breath of Fresh Air*. The *Wild Atlantic Way* is the world’s longest defined coastal touring route and one of Ireland’s premiere tourist attractions. It is 2,500 kilometers long and stretches along the Atlantic coast from Donegal in the north of Ireland to Cork in the south. *Ireland’s Ancient East* is an umbrella campaign for the Eastern part of the country that offers visitors the opportunity to experience 5,000 years of history on a journey stretching from Newgrange in the northeast through the midlands all the way down via Kilkenny’s Medieval mile to Waterford’s Viking Quarter and County Cork. This region of the country attracted settlers for decades and so it is steeped in rich, cultural heritage. *Dublin: A Breath of Fresh Air* focuses on the country’s capital city and the surrounding area. All three of these campaigns are based in the Republic of Ireland. The research will not address the two other campaigns currently promoted by Tourism Ireland, namely *Derry, Londonderry City* and *Explore*

Northern Ireland. These are primarily the work of Tourism Northern Ireland, a non-departmental public body for the Department for the Economy which has counterparts in both the UK and Republic of Ireland. Thus, for the purposes of this study, all references to Ireland will refer to the Republic of Ireland. Using a visual and textual analysis methodological approach, this study attempts to answer the following research question: **How does Tourism Ireland brand Ireland to a U.S. audience in the three campaigns listed above?**

The analyst discovered two prominent themes in this study's findings. The first theme reflects the popular branding proposition that suggests Ireland is a haven for those who seek an escape from contemporary ills like industrialization, development and modernization. The second theme builds on the first and discusses the reliance on the past in the three campaigns and how it shapes the construction of Ireland's national brand. While there are some aspects of the campaigns that reflect a move toward advertising modern Ireland, it appears that the language and imagery used by Tourism Ireland reinforces common stereotypes about Ireland and Irish people. There has been little change in the branding of Ireland since Ireland joined the European Union in 1973. This study argues that the time has come for Tourism Ireland to use less simplistic, naturalistic images of Ireland in its campaigns and instead use more holistic images of Ireland. Overall, this study suggests that including images of modern Ireland in tourism branding materials could have a positive impact on other aspects of Ireland's national brand.

To provide some context for this study, this thesis begins with a historical account of Ireland, followed by an overview of the development of the tourism industry in Ireland and the role of Tourism Ireland. Tourism is an interdisciplinary area that borrows and applies aspects from many fields and so this thesis includes a

review of two relevant bodies of literature; nation branding and place branding. This review is followed by an explanation of the research methods used and an analysis of the findings.

Chapter 2: Background

Ireland

Ireland's history of colonialism and its relationship with England contextualizes the construction of the Republic of Ireland today. The colonization of Ireland by England began in the 12th century and continued until the late nineteenth century when a 'Home Rule' movement was introduced (Fishers, 2013). This sought to free Ireland from British dominance and to create an independent and united Ireland characterized by uniquely Irish culture and values. In December 1921, following the War of Independence, the island of Ireland was partitioned under the Anglo-Irish Treaty. Southern Ireland gained its independence in 1922, which brought approximately seven hundred years of British domination in Ireland to an end (Mitchell, 2001). Under the Anglo-Irish Treaty, the 26 counties of the south and west became the Irish Free State, covering approximately 80% of the island's land area, and the remaining six counties continued to be part of the United Kingdom. In the 1937, a new Irish constitution, Bunreacht na hÉireann, was introduced which renamed the Irish Free State, 'Éire' (Gaelic) or Ireland (English). Ireland was officially declared the Republic of Ireland in 1949 following the promulgation of the Republic of Ireland Act.

Following the partition of the country, Northern Ireland became a mix of separateness and cohesion, conflict and accommodation (Bryan, 2004). There is widespread disagreement among scholars about the causes of the conflict there, so much so that it is referred to as "the conflict about the conflict" (McGarry & O'Leary, 1995, p. 355) and its true definition lies in the eye of the beholder (Coakley, 2001). Some categorize it as one of the most intractable political conflicts of the twentieth

century (Hayes & McAllister, 2001, p. 918), some insist that it was entirely a religious dispute, while others argue that the essence of the conflict is one of identity: British or Irish? (Lundy, 2001, p. 704). In the decades that followed, the crux of the conflict there became the plight of the Northern Irish Catholics who suffered widespread exclusion, marginalization and discrimination. Peaceful attempts to resolve the conflict failed and so violence between Nationalists (those who wanted a united Ireland) and Unionists (those who wished to remain part of the United Kingdom) became a daily occurrence. This marked the beginning of a thirty-year period of ethnic, sectarian and political strife surrounding the constitutional status of Northern Ireland. This period of disaster, destruction and death is euphemistically known as 'The Troubles' (Coogan, 1995).

After a long and contentious process, the Good Friday Agreement was voted into law on May 22nd 1998. The Agreement addresses both the interstate and intrastate components of the conflict; the formal international border with the UK and the community borders within Northern Ireland. It established a Northern Ireland Assembly which shares power between Unionists and Nationalists; a North-South Ministerial Council to deal with issues of common interest and concern to Northern Ireland and the Republic; and a British-Irish Council to handle affairs and policies that impact the UK and the Republic (Good Friday Agreement, 1998). Ireland joined the European Economic Community (now the European Union) in 1973 along with Great Britain. Although its geographical location is peripheral, Ireland is regarded as irrefutably part of Europe.

Tourism Ireland and Tourism in Ireland

The Irish tourism industry reached a healthy state in the 1960s after a relatively slow development in the post-war era. Its growth was stunted, however, as

the ‘Troubles’ in Northern Ireland unfolded. This bleak period in Irish history had significant negative implications for the tourism industry, which suffered a sharp decline in tourists, especially those from Great Britain (Baum et al, 2008). Following Ireland’s accession to the European Union, there was significant increase in investment and prosperity and in 1997, after two years of research and strategy exploration, the Tourism Brand Ireland initiative was launched by the then Irish Tourism Board, *Bord Fáilte* (Prentice & Anderson, 2000). This initiative positioned Ireland as a “friendly, pre-modern and scenic destination,” (O’Leary & Deegan, 2003, p. 222) relying on the core brand elements of “people, pace and place.” The campaign was summarized by Bord Fáilte as “emotional experience positioning” (Bord Fáilte, 1996) emphasizing a nostalgic view of Ireland that has been reused time and time again in advertisements of Ireland.

Relying on images that encompass illustrations of a rural, green country with no modern development is at odds with the significant economic progression that Ireland has experienced since joining the European Union (O’Leary & Deegan, 2003). Some of the multinational firms operating in Ireland include Google, Facebook, Dell, Pfizer, Intel and Boston Scientific. In a bid to encapsulate some of this growth, Tourism Ireland advanced advertisements of Dublin, which portrayed the capital as a modern and vibrant city. In 2003, the position put forward to promote Dublin as a tourist destination was to portray it as “a separate and distinct brand that appeals to business and leisure travelers alike” (Dublin Tourism, 2003), in order to contrast “Green pastoral” with “Metro-Dublin” (Baum, et al., 2008, p. 54).

Tourism is an incredibly important sector of the Irish economy. Total tourism revenue for the economy in 2014, which includes data from the domestic and overseas market, was 6.6 billion Euro (Fáilte Ireland, 2015). This increased to 7 billion Euro in

2015 (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport). The number of visitors to Ireland has grown steadily over the last number of years. In 1996, 4.6 million overseas tourists visited Ireland and 6.5 million visited in 2004 (Baum, et al, 2008). The targeted goal for 2025 is 10 million overseas tourists (Tourism Ireland, 2016). The North American market, which includes the United States and Canada, has traditionally and consistently been a lucrative market segment for Irish tourism, owing to the level of emigration that has occurred throughout history from Ireland to the US. In excess of 1.5 million people traveled to Ireland from North America in 2015, a figure that has grown steadily since the economic recession in 2007-2008 (Central Statistics Office, 2016). Of this number, 1.2 million visited Dublin. Despite growing competition from other European countries, it is now reported that 10% of all American tourists to Europe visit Ireland (Tourism Ireland, 2016).

Tourism Ireland categorizes visitors into three consumer segments; “Culturally Curious,” “Social Energizers,” and the “Great Escapers” (Fáilte Ireland, 2016). The “Culturally Curious” target are typically over the age of forty and are looking for a holiday that allows them to explore Ireland’s history, landscape and culture. They are attracted to authentic travel and enjoy embracing nature and unusual experiences, as well as getting a feel for the history of a location (Fáilte Ireland, 2016). “Social Energizers” are Tourism Ireland’s millennial target and they are typically young adults looking for an exciting adventure somewhere lively where there are plenty of engaging events, activities and gigs. They are considered likely targets for all-inclusive packages because of how convenient they are (Fáilte Ireland, 2016). The “Great Escapers” predominantly comprise of young parents with young children looking for a holiday that offers them a break from their stressful and demanding lives. This target is particularly interested in rural holidays and staying in remote

places. They participate in activities that allow them to relax and rejuvenate and are typically more interested in connecting with nature than the other targets (Fáilte Ireland, 2016).

These target profiles provide some context for what each segment seeks from a holiday in Ireland. An understanding of this is beneficial for selecting images that will be most influential in motivating each segment to book a trip. However, there appears to be a disconnect between research on millennial travelers and Tourism Ireland's millennial target, the "Social Energizers." According to the State of the American Traveler (Destination Analysts, 2015), 73% of millennials "want to engage a destination's arts and cultural assets" and more than two thirds rated "authenticity" in experiences as extremely important. The research also revealed millennials' dislike of package holidays and their desire to embrace local cultures and discover hidden gems, all of which are facets of the "Culturally Curious" target. Understanding and tackling this disconnect could be crucial for Tourism Ireland in how they engage with and entice millennials to Ireland. Although this is important contextual information to keep in mind, an investigation into motivations for travel is beyond the scope of this study.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

Nation Branding

Evolution of nation branding.

‘Nation branding’ is considered a relatively recent formulation but it is argued that there is actually nothing novel about the concept; only the terminology is new (Olins, 2002). Some authors propose that nations have engaged in ‘hidden branding’ for centuries through the use of language, symbols, imagery and currency (DeSan Eugenio Vela, 2013; Dinnie, 2008). Nations can thus be regarded as “de facto brands” because whether consciously or not, they have always projected a certain image to international audiences, thereby fashioning and forming ideas, attributes and associations in their minds (Aronczyk, 2008, p.49).

The term nation branding is often used synonymously with place marketing and destination branding. There are numerous examples of these concepts in action throughout history, although those specific terms were not used. For example, it is suggested that Alexander the Great was one of the first people to realize that the success of a place was largely dependent on the image it projected to other places (Anholt, 2005; De San Eugenio Vela, 2013). Place branding was used to urge explorers to discover the New World and by the United States to encourage settlers to move West in the 17th century (Gertner, 2011).

The formation of Ireland’s nation brand is rooted in the nineteenth century when William Butler Yeats and a number of intellectuals went to great efforts to differentiate Ireland from Great Britain and position the Irish people in a more positive light than the British (Fanning, 2011). The iconic painting *Connemara*

Landscape, which was painted by Paul Henry in 1925, depicted Ireland as a sort of “nirvana,” and this symbol has permeated advertisements of Ireland ever since.

Nation branding has evolved within the fields of public diplomacy, country-of-origin effect and place branding. Fan (2010) suggests a fourth origin, national identity, which has not been endorsed by other scholars. Public diplomacy involves a government’s efforts at enhancing a country’s image and reputation by forming relationships with its foreign counterparts (Simonin, 2008). It can act as a means of raising awareness and appreciation for a country and can be used as an influential tool in political relations (Bolin & Stahlberg, 2010). The distinction between public diplomacy and nation branding is that nation branding is concerned with the global market and not confined to political figures. Country-of-origin effect, or ‘associationism’, refers to the associations people make about a country based on the brands and products of that country and the quality of those products. Examples include NOKIA for Finland, Volkswagon for Germany and Guinness for Ireland (Patterson, 2009; Van Ham, 2013).

Place branding, along with the place marketing discipline, has been referred to as “the practice of applying brand strategy and other marketing techniques and disciplines to the economic, social, political and cultural development of cities, regions and countries” (Palgrave Journals, 2014). A more consumer-centric definition is offered by Zenker and Braun (2010) who define the place brand as

a network of associations in the consumers’ mind based on the visual, verbal and behavioral expression of a place which is embodied through the aims, communication, values, and the general culture of the place’s stakeholders and overall place design (p. 5).

There is some confusion about what constitutes ‘place branding’ because the term ‘place’ could mean a variety of things. However, it is generally accepted that traditional notions of place branding refer to destination branding, with the term

‘destination’ most often used in tourism literature (Hanna, 2007; Hankinson, 2005). In this context it is accepted that ‘destination’ can refer to a town, city, province, island or an entire country (Hanna & Rowley, 2008). A more comprehensive explanation of destination branding will follow.

The practice of nation branding primarily took off in the 1990s. Technological advances and other contemporary forces, led to social and economic transformations across the globe, which increased competition for a limited pool of investment, tourism and talent (Papadopolous & Heslop, 2002; Gertner, 2011). Governments soon realized that they were competing for this limited pool and in turn realized the need to be more conscious of the images they were projecting to the world (Papadopolous & Heslop, 2002; Gertner, 2011). Those countries that were affected by dramatic political changes such as the fall in communism or accession into the European Union recognized the need to be repositioned in the global marketplace in order to improve their perceived image for economic progress (Olins, 2002). It must be stated that not all countries adopted branding strategies out of choice; some countries were on what Papadopolous and Heslop (2002, p. 295) refer to as the metaphorical “economic sick list” and recognized the need to recuperate to become active participants in the global market. This is similar to what Ireland experienced after the War of Independence in 1922, and the emergence of the Free State. Northern Ireland is still in the process of redefining and repositioning itself today since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, which marked the end of the period of unrest and violence, known as ‘The Troubles.’

Many scholars propose that the relevant question is not whether a country should engage in nation branding, but rather, how to engage in it successfully to maximize a country’s full potential globally (Simonin, 2008; Fetscherin, 2010). The

creation of the 'Journal of Brand Management' has provided practitioners and scholars with a comprehensive forum to propel the discipline forward but there is still a lot of ambiguity about what constitutes nation branding and how it is defined. The following sections will address these ambiguities.

Defining 'Nation Branding.'

Despite the surge in academic interest, a concrete definition of nation branding and a comprehensive theoretical framework still remains elusive. When Simon Anholt first coined the term in 1996, his reasoning behind the terminology was simple; "reputations of countries behave rather like the brand images of companies and products and they are equally critical to the progress, prosperity and good management of those places" (Anholt, 1998, p. 396). However, the term 'nation branding' has since become distorted and interpreted in many different ways by scholars, practitioners and governments alike.

As a starting place it is necessary to define what is meant by a 'nation' and what is meant by a 'brand.' According to the Oxford Dictionaries (2014), a nation is a "large body of people united by common descent, history, culture or language, inhabiting a particular state or territory." Although 'country' and 'nation' are often used interchangeably in the literature, some scholars distinguish the two by describing a nation as a group of people of the same race and language, and a country as an area of land occupied by a nation (Fan, 2005; Hakala, et. al, 2013). Barrington observes that mistaking the term 'nation' for a 'state' or 'country' most often arises in works by American political science scholars. He describes a nation as "a collective of people" and a country as a "territorial component of a state." He defines a state as "the principal political unit in the international political system corresponding to a territory, a relatively permanent population, and a set of ruling institutions" (p.713).

Anderson (1983) proposes the following definition of a nation: “it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (Anderson, 1983, p. 6). A nation is “imagined” because all of its members, regardless of how small it is, will never know all of their fellow-members. It is “limited” because the boundaries of a nation are finite and it is “sovereign” because the nation replaced traditional kinship ties at the creation of the state. Finally, a nation is a “community” because of the underlying sense of communion or “horizontal comradeship” between its people which prevails despite differences and inequalities (Anderson, 1983, p.7).

The process of colonization is identified by Ver Steeg (1964) as bringing “civilization, self-government and true religion” to the colonized territory which leads to a nationhood developing independent of the native land (Ellis, 1991, p.291). Successive periods of colonization, religious strife, political unrest and the partition of the island of Ireland between two states has manifested itself in the existence of two peoples and two cultures on the island; Gaelic and English (Ellis, 1991). This raises a number of questions including; what is the Irish nation, and what does it mean to be Irish? The majority of Irish people identify with a native rather than a colonial past. Thus, to be described as an Irish nationalist implies that one identifies as Gaelic, Catholic and republican, in contrast with Northern Irish unionists who predominantly identify as British and Protestant (Ellis, 1991). To imply that the island of Ireland is one nation disregards the partition of the state and the existence of two peoples and two cultures residing there (Ellis, 1991).

Branding, as a practice, can be traced to the late 19th century when branded consumer goods were first introduced (Hanna & Rowley, 2008). The definition of a brand proposed by the American Marketing Association (AMA) is often criticized for being too product orientated but it is a useful place to commence this discussion on

branding (Hanna & Rowley, 2008). The AMA describe a brand as a “name, term, symbol or design or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition” (American Marketing Association, 2014). Rosenbaum-Elliott, et al (2010, p. 122) insist that brands “exist in the mind of the market and so brand management is the management of perceptions.”

Many scholars choose to define nation branding by what it is not; “it is not ‘destination’ branding or marketing, it is not an ‘image makeover’ or advertising campaign, nor is it a mere logo and slogan” (Aronczyk, 2008, p. 48). Other scholars focus on what it embraces: the political, economic, social, environmental, historical, and cultural aspects of a country (Fetscherin, 2010). Some simply define it as the mental associations or perceptions that people all over the world have of the nation (Fan, 2005; De San Eugenio Vela, 2013). Not only is the precise definition of nation branding contentious, so too is the terminology. Many scholars express concern over the use of the word “branding” arguing that it equates the practice of branding and promoting a nation, with that of a product. Although many parallels can be drawn between two, caution should be exercised in over-emphasizing the similarities. Companies offer distinct outputs and services to international markets, as do countries, whose outputs consist of the products, services and actions of their exporters, government agencies and industry associations (Fetscherin, 2010; Papadopolous & Heslop, 2002). Some authors suggest that countries themselves can be products with a variety of tangible and intangible product offerings (Kotler & Gertner 2002; Hakala, et al., 2013). For example, in the context of tourism, the destination, or country, is the product which makes the tourist the buyer. Investors

also assume the role of buyer when looking for locations for foreign ventures, thus in this instance the location is the product (Papadopolous, 2004).

The same techniques and strategies can be employed to manipulate and influence people, regardless of whether those people are a company's employees, or a nation's citizenry (Olins, 2002; Anholt, 2005). Anholt (2007) draws a comparison between governments and CEOs, noting that both spearhead branding efforts, and a change in either can affect the brand's performance and receptivity. Both companies and countries need to establish loyalties in order to be successful, and in doing so, governments and corporations use similar strategies. However, there are some fundamental differences between branding a nation and branding a commercial product. For example, the application of branding tools such as a slogan or logo may promote a commercial product effectively but it is almost impossible for a slogan to achieve the same result for a nation (Fan, 2005; Stock, 2009). Another argument that authors frequently make is that a nation cannot be re-launched and repositioned and merged, the way a product or corporation can (Fan, 2005; Olins, 2002). On this point however, it is worth mentioning that many countries have successfully 'rebranded' themselves at different points throughout history. Jordan (2014) describes how Estonia enlisted the help of a British company called Interbrand, to position itself as a post-Soviet country and to strengthen its application to the European Union. Similarly, Olins (2002) traces the historical development of France and the contrasting branding efforts carried out by its political leaders throughout the centuries, which altered France's nation brand. Such rebranding endeavors are necessary when the reality of a country changes dramatically, as previously discussed.

Another frequently cited difference is that a nation brand is not the property of a single owner. The only potential 'owner' of a nation brand is a nation's citizenry

and this has a number of implications for nation branding (Dinnie, 2008). First, the image of a nation is not directly controllable, unlike the image of a commercial product. Thus, a strategy needs to be implemented to ensure that outdated or negative perceptions do not hamper a nation's prospects in the global marketplace (Papadopolous, 2004; Dinnie, 2008). Furthermore, country brand managers lack the power to control how a country's image will be perceived after a natural disaster, a spell of political unrest or an economic crisis (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). Nation 'branders' must be mindful that people are not inanimate objects and so when imposing a brand onto a nation's citizens, brand builders must expect and accept some negative responses (Aronczyk, 2008). This is a crucial point of differentiation between branding a nation and branding a product because with regards to the latter, "you don't have to ask the beans in the can how they feel about the label" (Oresund in Aronczyk, 2008 p. 57). Unsurprisingly, branding and marketing a nation is thus a more controversial and fraught process than branding a commercial product (Jordan, 2014).

The differences between branding a nation and a product have led authors to question whether the term 'branding' should be disregarded in the context of nations. According to Olins (2002, p. 246), the word 'brand' acts like "a red flag to a bull" to some authors and practitioners and he identifies three reasons to explain why this is so; "snobbery, ignorance and semantics." With regards to 'snobbery', Olins observes that many people believe that nations should not engage in similar practices to businesses because they regard business as a repugnant practice, solely focused on economic success. The ignorance Olins refers to is the idea that most people are unfamiliar with a lot of the history of the nation in which they were born and continue to live in. Likewise, many employees know little or nothing about the history of their

employer's company. In Olins' opinion, semantics is the most problematic because some people associate the word 'brand' with something superficial like a product label, jingle or slogan, whereas a nation is not as one-dimensional or trivial. However, Olins ultimately concludes that brands help create a sense of identity and belonging, similar to a nation.

Other authors argue that nations are not homogeneous entities and that nation branding reduces a nation to a simplified representation used to boost marketability (Jordan, 2014). As discussed, many of the techniques of product marketing can become powerful, competitive tools for country branding and provide useful parallels for how governments can get their messages across. However, there are limits to what one can and should achieve by it (Anholt, 2005). Some scholars concur that a combination of marketing communications and management is essentially what is required to promote a nation in an international space and to encourage economic growth (Dinnie, 2008; De San Eugenio Vela, 2013).

Adding to the confusion and discussion regarding an appropriate definition and title for the concept is the fact that Anholt 'revised' the concept in 2007, renaming it "competitive identity," which is the "synthesis of brand management with public diplomacy and with trade, investment, tourism and export promotion" (p. 5). Stock (2009) favors the term 'Nation Image Management,' which is similar to Fan's (2010) proposal to redefine it as a process to manage, disseminate and alter nation brand images in order to enhance a country's reputation. This author favors Anholt's definition of competitive identity, because it does not confine the process of nation branding exclusively to image management and dissemination. However, because the word "branding" implicitly reflects the goal of differentiating oneself from the competition, this author argues that the term 'nation branding' should be retained. A

caveat to this is that the term should be used carefully and should not be used to imply that branding nations and products are one and the same. Thus, for the purposes of this study, the definition of nation branding that will be used is as follows; the “synthesis of brand management with public diplomacy and with trade, investment, tourism and export promotion” (Anholt, 2007).

Destination branding and destination brand image

In order to explore how branding Ireland as a tourism destination impacts the construction of Ireland’s overall national brand, it is necessary to define what is meant by destination branding and destination brand image. Destination branding is a way to communicate a destination’s unique identity by differentiating a destination from its competitors (Oliveira & Paynik, 2015; Campelo, et al 2014; Morrison & Anderson, 2002). Thus, destination brands exert two important functions: identification and differentiation. Prentice (2001) identifies three other important functions of destination branding; arousing connotations of quality and relationships with tourists; producing lasting competitive advantage; and suggesting something that goes beyond a set of physical attributes. Studies generally conceptualize destination image as comprising of multiple features, including climate, culture, recreation and scenery (O’Leary & Deegan, 2013). The need for destinations to create a unique and differentiating image is now more imperative than ever for achieving success in the competitive, tourism market that exists today (Byrne & Skinner, 2007; O’Connor & Bolan, 2008; Oliveira & Panyik, 2015).

The study of destination brand image began in the 1970s with Hunt’s (1975) seminal work on the role of image in tourism development and has grown to become one of the most studied aspects in tourism research (Hosany, et al. 2006). The most common definition of destination image advanced in the literature comes from

Crompton (1979) “the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination” (p.18). Thus, this definition implies that the image each person has of a destination is unique and can be influenced by a number of factors such as memories, experience and knowledge, which can be obtained from a variety of sources including promotional materials and the media (Salim, et al, 2012).

Metelka (1981) argues that destination branding and the imagery used can lead to the development of a set of expectations about a place prior to visiting. Chon (in Jenkins, 1999) studied how the perceived image and expectations of a destination and actual experience of it impacted tourist behavior. Her research revealed that a positive previously held image coupled with an agreeable travel experience will lead to a moderately affirmative evaluation of a destination. Contrastingly, a negative prior image and pleasing experience will lead to a highly praised evaluation. A disapproving evaluation is most often the result of a positive image and an adverse experience.

This study signifies the correlation between image, expectation and actual experience. The correlation between image construction and credibility was explored by Gartner (1993), who observed that traditional forms of tourism literature, like brochures and pamphlets, were ranked the least credible media sourced. This is important for this study because it underscores the tension that exists between using authentic images in promotional materials and using images that reflect desirable experiences or as some authors refer to it, “staged authenticity” (Govers & Kumar, 2007). Staged authenticity refers to the power of professional photographers to stage landscapes and townscapes in the right frame and light and to manipulate elements within images in order to thrill, excite and entice the viewer (Urry & Larsen, 2011).

Two prominent themes that have emerged in the branding of Ireland as a tourist destination are “people” and “place.” (Foley and Fahy, 2003 p. 211), According to O’Connor (1993), one of the most poignant aspects of Irish tourism imagery is that Irish people are often depicted as “simple” folk living in a pre-modern age and are regarded as an essential component of Ireland’s publicity package. She identifies three recurring traits of Irish people that appear in tourism literature; “hospitable, friendly, [and] welcoming” (cited in Foley & Fahy, 2003 p.212) and argues that these have negative implications for Irish locals; their identity and self-worth. Furthermore, the word “local” is often used to imply notions of safety and quality, in contrast to the word “global” which is often associated with cheapness and sterility (SERIO, 2008). Quinn (1991) has found that Irish people are often portrayed as though they will become close, personal friends with every tourist (cited in Foley & Fahy, 2003, p. 212).

An analysis of the representation of people and place in advertisements of Ireland is not solely concerned with whether it amounts to an accurate or authentic depiction of reality but moreover how such representations contribute to the narrative about the place. Analyzing how people and place are used in Tourism Ireland’s current campaigns will help uncover the national narrative that is constructed and how this impacts the construction of Ireland’s nation brand as expressed in the research questions. Britton (in Johnson, 1999) proposes that in this context, tourism imagery is a “lesson in the political economy of the social construction of “reality” and the social construction of place and people, whether from the point of view of the visitors, the host communities, or the state” (p.188). This is a useful segue into the next body of literature on place branding, which explores how notions of place are constructed within a destination.

Place Branding

Notions of place

The World Tourism Organization (2002) defines a local tourism destination as:

a physical space in which a visitor spends at least one overnight. It includes tourism products such as support services and attractions, and tourism resources within one day's return travel time. It has physical and administrative boundaries defining its management, images and perceptions defining its market competitiveness.

Although this definition refers to a destination as a physical space, scholars argue that destination is more than just a geographical place (Campelo, et al, 2014). It is an abstract space constructed from a myriad of meanings and values that are connected to it (Campelo, et al, 2014). Anderson and Gale (1992) observe that "in the course of generating new meanings and decoding existing ones, people construct spaces, places, landscapes, regions and environments. In short they construct geographies" (p.3). In his seminal work on place and placelessness, Relph (1976) identified three aspects of place; physical setting, activities and meanings. Those who live in a place, visit it, or imagine it all produce individual meanings based on their experiences with that place.

Oliveira and Paynik (2015) contend that the social construction of tourism destinations generally consists of place promotion and place consumption.

Promotional materials communicate place meanings from the tourist industry's perspective and tourists create and advance their own meanings based on their interaction with the destination; their knowledge, history and preferences. The creation of meaning helps to structure a sense of place (Carter, et al., 2007). Sense of place is a multifaceted concept that involves both interpretations of a place and emotional reactions to it. It takes into account both everyday experiences of a place,

and highly unusual experiences from those living or visiting a place (Lichrou, et. al 2014).

Hakala et al., (2013), identify three ways in which images of a place are formed: previous experience, previous knowledge and beliefs, and stereotypes. Previous experience suggests that one must visit to gather primary information, however the authors suggest that meeting and getting to know someone from another country in one's home country would also fall into this category. Other authors concur stating that most of our knowledge about another country is formed based on at least some direct experience with the people of that country (O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy 2000; Chattalas, Kramer & Takada 2008). Previous knowledge encompasses an awareness of historical traditions, national culture and products and the prevailing social, political and economic conditions. Stock (2009) argues that this is the most relevant factor in the formation of a nation image because it is based on one's existing information about the nation.

However, the third category identified by Hakala, et. al (2013), stereotypes, is regarded as the core of most place images. Stereotypical images are often highly inaccurate and amount to over-simplifications of reality (Kotler & Gertner, 2011; Dinnie, 2008). Fanning (2011, p. 23) notes that such images are often driven by caricature, such as "efficient Germany," "spiritual India" or "as drunk as the Irish." This last one indicates how discriminatory and incorrect such caricatures can be. Many stereotypes about Ireland and Irish people arise from the large selection of alcoholic drinks that the country produces and exports (Dinnie, 2008; Papadopolous, 2004). Although Guinness is arguably the most renowned beverage, Ireland also boasts a plethora of big brand names like Beamish Irish Stout, Bulmers Irish Cider, Jameson and Powers Whiskey and Bailey's Irish Cream (Patterson, 2009). This

association between a product and its country is referred to as the ‘country-of-origin effect’ and for Ireland this has led to the stagnant stereotype of Irish people as drunks.

Nation stereotypes are often rooted in history also, whereby memories of past events create an image in peoples’ minds that continues to resonate today. This is referred to as the “starlight effect” (Anholt, 2005, p. 1129). During the 19th century the Irish were portrayed as “feckless, dim-witted people incapable of organization or hard work” in the influential English magazine *Punch* (Fanning, 2011, p. 24) which had a severe impact on those who emigrated to England during the Great Famine, a period of mass starvation, disease and emigration between 1845 and 1852 (Anholt 2005; Fan, 2005; Papadopolous & Heslop, 2002).

Building an effective brand often begins with countering potentially damaging stereotypes and reinforcing positive aspects (Hakala, et al., 2013; Dinnie, 2008). Some authors observe that negative images may be an indicator of underlying social problems like corruption and war, which need to be addressed before any branding efforts are undertaken (Kotler & Gertner, 2002, Dinnie, 2008). This is an important point because it highlights the fact that branding is neither a mechanism nor a solution for countering social problems. Kotler and Gertner (2002) warn that using images to cover up such societal ills can result in castigation and worsen a country’s image. Although stereotypes are superficial, they act as mental shortcuts for processing information and so places must be mindful that these persistent stereotypical images will not dissipate simply because of a marketing campaign (Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Fan, 2005; Hakala et al., 2013).

It is inherently difficult to get people to change their existing perceptions and it has been suggested that the only way this can be effectively achieved is “to offer to replace what they think with something so much more interesting and captivating, and

yet equally portable, that they will happily oblige” (Anholt, 2005, p. 106). It has been observed however, that saturating the media with positive representations will not necessarily be effective in eliminating negative stereotypes because people tend to cling to their prejudices for simplicity and convenience (Anholt, 2005). For the purposes of this study, it will be important to note whether Tourism Ireland perpetuates stereotypes in the language and imagery it uses to brand Ireland as a tourism destination.

Destinations are tied to the place, meaning that they cannot be separated or considered in isolation of the place and thus naturally comprise of the aspects and characteristics of the place (Pritchard & Morgan, 2001). Destination branding forces destinations to choose aspects of both functional and symbolic characteristics of the local, regional and national culture to portray in its advertisements. It is almost impossible for a country to develop a single image that can be used across all disciplines because a nation is such an amalgamation of images and universal interpretation across fault lines is unobtainable (Fan, 2010; O’Shaughnessy & O’Shaughnessy, 2000, p. 59). Furthermore, there is an ongoing variation in how notions of place change and how the spaces within it are used and by whom (Baum, et al., 2008). Consequently, many nations produce multiple and conflicting images in order to compete for tourism, trade, investment, skilled workers and political influence (O’Shaughnessy & O’Shaughnessy, 2000).

Producing multiple images became a trend in Ireland in the 1980s when many companies aiming to attract investment opted for images showcasing a contemporary, cosmopolitan Ireland instead of stereotypical depictions of the Emerald Isle. In one of its most recent branding efforts, Enterprise Ireland, the government organization in charge of the development and progression of Irish enterprises in the world market,

used a modern-day image of an Irish city with the caption “Ireland at the heart of the trading world” (Enterprise Ireland, 2014). Similarly, the Irish Development Authority, whose function is to encourage foreign-owned companies to invest in Ireland, has recently focused its imagery on Ireland as a very “pro-business” country “at the heart of things” (IDA Ireland, 2014). In August 2014, it launched an infographic with the heading “WHY Ireland” and listed track record, talent, tax and technology as the reasons why investors should choose to locate their businesses in Ireland (IDA Ireland, 2014).

Even within its tourism literature, Ireland has presented contested notions of place. McIntosh and Prentice (1999) argue that the “commodification of pastness” has been a pillar of branding and marketing Ireland for decades. Representations of Ireland tend to characterize it as a “pre-modern country inhabited by old men and rusting bicycles” (Cronin, 2003, p. 3). By heavily relying on imagery and language that depicts a barren and underdeveloped land, tourists picture themselves traveling to a post-modern place free from commoditization and capitalism where they can escape the hustle and bustle of their busy lives. This is referred to as the “tourist gaze,” which Urry (1995, p. 31) describes as looking “individually or collectively upon aspects of landscape or townscape which are distinctive and which signify an experience which contrasts with everyday experience.” By romanticizing Ireland and positioning it as an escape from urban jungles, tourists are able to picture themselves escaping the monotony of their everyday lives.

Freedom from the stresses and strains of the modern world was indeed the communication strategy behind Bord Fáilte’s 1996 campaign “Awaken to a different world,” which utilized the promise of a slow-paced, rural lifestyle to entice American tourists and offered them the opportunity to experience this way of life by taking a

trip to Ireland (Therkelsen, 2003). Johnson (1999) describes the dominant imagery as offering tourists the promise of “empty space,” an uninhabited land, and “empty time,” a place where time appears to stand still (p.191). However, given the proximity of the country to mainland Europe and its position in the global marketplace, portraying Ireland as behind time is paradoxical. Other countries and regions have had similar experiences such as Tapiola, Finland where marketers were faced with the dilemma of wanting to develop a destination brand based on the past but also wanting to showcase how Tapiola was adapting to the future (Johansson, 2012).

McManus (2005, p. 237) notes that urban areas were traditionally depicted as “foreign imports” in Irish tourism literature in order to further the vision of Ireland as a serene, calm and pre-industrial country. However, in the 1990s there was a shift toward branding Dublin as distinct from the rest of the country and thereby presenting a contrasting notion of place within Ireland (Johnson, 1999). Tourist promoters have made an effort to position Dublin as a vibrant, lively, modern city with a rich cultural heritage. This is important because one of the campaigns analyzed in this study deals solely with Dublin.

Anholt contends that building a nation brand image from simplistic and naturalistic images, which are appropriate for destination branding, could potentially damage a country’s other international endeavors (2005). It is argued that circulating images of a country’s landscape and natural beauty will do very little for a country trying to attract investment because they are too focused on topography and do not present the country as a viable business location (Anholt, 2005). However, the literature does not reveal just how damaging this could be. This study attempts to shed light on how a nation brand image founded in tourism can impact the construction of the nation’s overall brand.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Byers (1996) describes photographic images as “the raw material for an infinite number of messages which each viewer can construct for himself” (p. 31). As discussed in the previous chapters, imagery is one of the most researched aspects of tourism, but studies that employ qualitative methods to do so are rare (Govers & Kumar, 2007). Most studies focus on whether the destination generates a positive image in the minds of potential consumers and tourists and how influential this image is in encouraging people to visit. Such studies have relied heavily on structured surveys and quantification in the collection and interpretation of data. Jenkins (1999) notes that there has been a predilection for studies that focus on the attribute component of destination image and the use of Likert and semantic differential scales to characterize stimuli using standardized rating scales.

Recently, there has been a growing interest in performing qualitative research which focuses on visuals themselves in order to explore meaning-making (Frith et al., 2005). Barthes claims that the visual significance of an image can be reduced to “denotation,” the literal meaning of the image and “connotation,” what the image represents (in Aiello, 2006, p. 92). Aiello (2006) writes that the connotation is influenced by a number of factors including cultural norms and codes. The use of unstructured visual methods accompanied by content analysis and coding is increasingly being regarded as the more appropriate method in image research (McDougall & Fry, 1974). O’Leary and Deegan (2003) argue that qualitative methodologies are “more conducive to measuring the holistic components of destination image and also to capturing unique features and auras” (p. 216).

According to Liebenberg (2009), “experiences and meanings become tangible through visual representation and may be understood in ways that other conventional forms of communication may not necessarily allow” (p. 445). However, some researchers have warned against using visual methods in isolation because this removes the image from the context in which it was produced (Frith et al., 2005). Analyzing the language accompanying the image is important because it often tells the viewer how to think about the image or it narrows the avenue for interpreting meaning. According to O’Reilly (2005) language operates as a “representational system” assisting in the construction of meaning, which is often found within a specific context (p. 581). However, analyzing the literal meaning of words alone is not sufficient, one must look at the hidden meaning that could be conveyed by the text (Hassan, et al., 2008).

Indeed, images and language are understood to be “[representative] of how things are and have been, as well as imaginaries – representations of how things might or could or should be” (Fairclough, 2001, p. 233). Pritchard and Morgan (2001) argue that

representations used in destination marketing are not value-free expressions of a place’s identity instead they are the culmination of historical, social, economic and political processes and reveal much about the social construction of space, cultural change, identity and discourse. (p. 177)

In the context of tourism, language is most often used to persuade, entice and motivate people to become tourists by booking a trip to the destination. Thus, in this sense, tourism itself becomes an object of discourse (Salim, et al., 2012). Discourse can advance and validate cultural norms, rituals, myths and traditions and can reinforce stereotypes (Campelo, et al, 2014).

Research Methods

Tourism Ireland uses text and visuals to promote Ireland to a U.S. audience in its campaigns that are featured on the website www.ireland.com. In line with the move toward utilizing qualitative methodologies in tourism research, a visual and textual analysis was deemed most appropriate for this study. The study was guided by the following overarching research question: **how does Tourism Ireland brand Ireland to a U.S. audience in the following campaigns; *Wild Atlantic Way*; *Ireland's Ancient East*; and *Dublin: A Breath of Fresh Air*.** These campaigns were chosen based on the fact that they are the three current campaigns promoting the Republic of Ireland that Tourism Ireland is running. Additionally, they have not yet been researched and analyzed by scholars. To address the overarching question, two more specific questions were used:

- 1. How does the language and imagery found in Tourism Ireland's promotional campaigns construct a national brand of Ireland to a U.S. audience?**
- 2. How does place and destination branding play a role in the language and imagery construction of Ireland?**

In essence, language and imagery help construct the social reality of a destination (Boland, 2008). However, to date, there has been a limited amount of research conducted on the role of language and visual imagery in tourism promotional materials particularly in online and electronic promotions and on how this discourse impacts destination authenticity (Salim, et al, 2012). Digital platforms like blogs, websites and social media networks are increasingly being recognized as essential for inspiring, researching, planning and booking travel (Oliveira & Panyik, 2015). Thus,

this study of the website www.ireland.com makes a timely contribution to a growing field of literature.

The website is a great resource for anyone looking for information on travel to and from, and within Ireland. The site is divided into seven sections; “Explore Ireland;” “Things to do;” “Itineraries;” “Accommodation;” “Getting to Ireland;” “Help and Advice;” and “Offers.” The three campaigns analyzed for this study are listed under the “Explore Ireland” tab and each comprise of multiple sections. The *Wild Atlantic Way* is divided into six sections; an introductory section and five route discovery sections; “Donegal,” “Donegal to Mayo,” “Mayo to Clare,” “Clare to Kerry” and “Kerry to Cork.” Links on the introductory page take visitors to five separate pages to learn more about a particular route. It is worth noting that since the research for this study was conducted in the summer of 2016, the campaign has been updated and these routes have been reorganized and renamed; “Northern Headlands,” “Surf Coast,” “Bay Coast,” “Cliff Coast,” “Southern Peninsulas” and “Haven Coast.” The homepage for *Dublin: A Breath of Fresh Air* opens with a picture montage of Dublin, and has links to its three sections; “Dublin city: see, do experience,” “Dublin city: words, music and crafts” and “Dublin: outside the city.” The third campaign, *Ireland’s Ancient East*, has a video on its opening page and beneath there are links to the three subsections of this campaign; “Land of 5000 Dawns,” “The Historic Heartlands” and “Celtic Coast.” Again, each of these subsections are housed on separate pages of the website.

The web pages of each campaign feature a number of attractions captured by images, captions and text. There are also a number of quotes on each page provided by famous literary scholars, travel websites like TripAdvisor and Lonely Planet, and others without attribution. Each image and piece of text was analyzed individually

using a “thick description” approach in order to examine the layers of meaning and context in each. 212 images, 120 blocks of text and 30 quotes were analyzed in total. The breakdown of which is captured in Table 1.

Table 1

Quantification of data analyzed

Type of data	Wild Atlantic Way	IAE	Dublin
Pictures	74	96	42
Text	61	51	8
Quotes	12	14	4

Note. IAE = Ireland’s Ancient East; Dublin = Dublin: A Breath of Fresh Air.

The data was coded according to the prominent characteristics that emerged from the thick description. After this coding process was complete, the codes were grouped into categories. Three of the categories were consistent across the three campaigns; ‘nature,’ (which included landscape and sea), ‘infrastructure’ and ‘people.’ Other categories that emerged were ‘wildlife’ in the *Wild Atlantic Way*, ‘myth/legend’ in *Ireland’s Ancient East* and ‘culture’ in *Dublin: A Breath of Fresh Air*. A tabulation of the images, text and quotes pertaining to each category is captured in Table 2. Some images and text fell into more than one category. Text providing information about travel, accommodation, booking fees and discounts, which typically appeared on the right-hand-side or at the bottom of the web pages, was not included in the study.

Table 2

Quantification of categories that emerged from the data

Category	Wild Atlantic Way	IAE	Dublin
Nature	80	33	13
Infrastructure	15	62	25
People	19	37	20
Wildlife	15		
Myth/Legend		18	
Culture			14
Other	15	17	6

Note. IAE – Ireland’s Ancient East; Dublin = Dublin – A Breath of Fresh Air.

After the categorization process, the categories were analyzed across the three campaigns to determine the emergent themes. Campelo, et al. (2014) describe “themes” as “a chain or pattern of responses and meanings across the data set (p. 158). Two themes were deduced from the data set. In order to examine each theme thoroughly, the author chose to structure the analysis in such a way as to showcase each campaign’s exploration of the theme. Thus, the analysis section for both themes is subdivided by campaign to allow the reader to evaluate and consider the campaigns individually and for ease of comparison. The broader implications of the themes are interwoven throughout the discussion of the campaigns.

Chapter 5: Findings & Analysis

This study found that Tourism Ireland's *Wild Atlantic Way*, *Ireland's Ancient East* and *Dublin: A Breath of Fresh Air* reinforce commonly held stereotypes about Ireland. The first theme addresses the extent to which Ireland is portrayed as being an escape from the modern world and how this constructs a national brand of Ireland as expressed in research question one. The tourist gaze is directed to features of landscape, such as in *Figure 1*. A personal journey, and *Figure 7*. Adventure awaits you, that are romanticized and exaggerated to convey the idea that Ireland is a break from everyday lived experience. This is in-keeping with traditional advertisements of Ireland that branded the country as being 'behind' modern time (Johnson, 1999). However, *Dublin: A Breath of Fresh Air*, depicts Dublin as being somewhat of an exception to this branding proposition. Although not characterized as a complete 21st century cosmopolitan city, the language and imagery used to portray Dublin set it apart from the rest of the country by emphasizing how it has adapted to the modern world, such as the restaurant captured in *Figure 30*. Dublin city restaurant.

The second theme builds on the narrative put forward by the first one. This second theme explores Tourism Ireland's reliance and focus on the past in the three campaigns. In addressing research question two, this theme explores how the use of heritage tourism and the commodification of the past as a destination branding strategy constructs the language and imagery chosen for the campaigns. In particular, this theme explores the portrayal of Irish people in the campaigns and how it contributes to the overall sense of place of each of the destinations. Ireland is portrayed as unchanging or stagnant since achieving its independence in 1922, which implies that present day Ireland has little to showcase and little to offer tourists.

Similar to the first theme, however, Dublin is presented as an exception to the rule here, with references to some of the recent accomplishments of Dublin's famous musical exponents such as Sinead O'Connor and U2.

Ireland is an Antidote to Everyday Life in the Modern World

Initial analysis of the three campaigns, revealed that each is guided by a different governing thought, which can be encapsulated in one word used to direct the language and imagery of that campaign. 'Escape' is the governing thought behind the *Wild Atlantic Way*, 'embrace' is behind *Ireland's Ancient East*, while 'experience' is the thought behind *Dublin: A Breath of Fresh Air*. The language and imagery used to embody these three governing thoughts helps to construct a time and space where tourism is located (Urry, 2001). This in turn contributes to the idea that Ireland is removed from everyday lived experience. Urry (2001) notes that the portrayal of extraordinary landscapes through constructions of time and space in tourism literature reinforces the binary relationship between the ordinary and extraordinary. Being able to offer distinctive and unforgettable experiences is one of the top criteria in tourism advertisements (Hassan, et. al, 2008). Even the most mundane activities like walking or shopping can be portrayed as extraordinary.

The imagery and language used to portray Ireland as an antidote to the modern world has a number of implications for the construction of Ireland's national brand and Irish people as expressed in research question one. MacCannell (1989) states that within tourism discourse, the important thing is to create a relationship of authenticity between the tourist and what he/she will see. Certain images conjure up promises of what will be seen when a particular destination is reached (Hunter, 2008, p. 356). Keywords, such as "preservation, continuity, novelty, distance, exclusiveness and

attractiveness” also convey promises and are used to entice and persuade visitors (Maci, 2007, p. 55).

Wild Atlantic Way

The *Wild Atlantic Way* campaign portrays the west of Ireland as an ideal place to escape to, away from the stresses and strains of the modern world. The opening image of the wild Atlantic crashing aggressively against the coast with the campaign title and caption “The Wild Atlantic Way – Experience the untamed west coast of Ireland, and start an adventure you’ll never want to end” immediately conveys the notion of escapism. The word ‘wild’ suggests that life on the west coast of Ireland is not constrained by the regularity, rigidity and predictability of everyday life. This idea is further encapsulated in the word ‘untamed,’ which positions the natural landscape of the West Coast as the ultimate contrast to the structured development of an urban area. ‘Wild’ and ‘untamed’ also convey the idea that the west of Ireland cannot be controlled or commanded which, is directly related to how the west of Ireland was perceived during the colonial era. It was famously categorized as an area of desolation and despair during the 1600s by Oliver Cromwell when he gave the Irish that were resisting his colonial efforts the choice go to “Hell or to Connaught.”

According to Gyimothy and Mykletun (2004), all tourism endeavors can be described as adventurous, at least from a theoretical perspective because they are built around the notion of escape from ordinary life and a simultaneous desire for a different or novel experience. Scholars describe the motive for an outdoor adventure as being rooted in either a desire for risk and thrill-seeking (Ewert, 1989) or as a desire for insight and knowledge (Walle, 1997). However, Weber (2001) argues that these motives are not mutually exclusive and that both risk and insight seeking need to be present in order for an adventure to take place.

Presenting the west of Ireland as a metaphorical antidote to modern cities full of ‘dark satanic mills’ is a consistent trend throughout the campaign (Raymond Williams in Urry, 2011, p. 158). The language and imagery of the campaign is heavily focused on the natural landscape of the western coast. According to Campelo, et. al. (2014), constructs of landscape influence sense of place by providing pictorial reference for that place. Daniels and Cosgrove (1998) describe ‘landscape’ as a “cultural image, a pictorial way of representing surroundings” by means of which humans “take control and possession of, and derive pleasures from, ‘nature’” (p. 1). Saarinen (2004) observes that European attitudes toward wilderness were predominantly rooted in fear until the nineteenth century. However, photography has transformed areas of wild, untamed growth into what Raymond Williams (in Urry & Larsen, 2011) terms ‘scenery landscape, image, fresh air’ places waiting for visual consumption by those seeking a break from the congestion and pollution of towns and cities (p. 158).

The romantic gaze assists in framing landscapes as beautiful, picturesque and ‘timeless’ scenery by ignoring signs of modernity such as infrastructure, traffic and development (Urry & Larsen, 2011, p. 175). Furthermore, the semiotic construction of the landscape of the west of Ireland establishes an idea of time, space and power which portrays the destination as removed from everyday experience and also produces two distinct ‘place myths.’ Shields (1990) describes place myths as “the various discrete meanings associated with real places or regions regardless of their character in reality” (in Urry & Larsen, 2011, p. 173). According to Aiello (2006), ‘myth’ causes an immediate impression and is thus “experienced as innocent and eternal speech” (p. 95).

The first myth put forward by the campaign is that the wild, untamed landscape of the west of Ireland is frozen in time. This myth implies that the west of Ireland is not just an ideal place to escape to, but that the destination itself has escaped contemporary ills like industrial development, cellular network architecture and highways. The second myth put forward by the Wild Atlantic campaign suggests that the viewer can have an authentic experience on the west coast of Ireland through nature. This connection between authentic or real experiences and nature is possibly reflective of a past connection between people and land. Saarinen (2004) notes that this connection has arguably disappeared from contemporary, urban life. However, he notes that this lost connection has a time and geographical dimension which accords with this second place myth suggesting that people believe that “real experiences can still be found on the peripheries of the modern world, where nature, wildernesses, and indigenous or other cultural groups untouched by modernity are situated” (p. 438). Repeated representation reinforcing these myths causes them to be experienced as ‘factual.’ Aside from these two myths, however, there are a number of other features of the campaign that support the theme that Ireland is an escape from the modern world including repeated references to the west of Ireland being remote and isolated, symbolic representations of the west’s defiance of modernity, and the way in which the people of the west are portrayed.

Figure 1. Time to reflect, illustrates the first myth. The calm, vividly colored, vast body of water and the rolling hills suggest that this is a quiet, peaceful location. The absence of construction, transportation and people implies that the air and water are pure, fresh and unpolluted. Combined with the caption; “Time to reflect,” the viewer is invited to come and clear their head and contemplate their life. The endlessness of the view could be construed as symbolizing the fact that ‘time’ at this

location is also infinite. This has a number of underlying implications. For the viewer, it could suggest that he or she would not have to attend to any obligations or adhere to any time constraints there, such as those that would exist in his or her usual, busy life. More broadly speaking, the endlessness and timelessness captured could imply that the west of Ireland itself is removed from time. It is not affected by industrialization, it is not plagued by congestion or pollution, it is not inundated with residents and it is not being developed in accordance with the ideals of someone who is not native to the area. It simply exists outside of ordinary time and modern life.

Similarly, in *Figure 2. A personal journey*, there is no evidence of human interference with nature here. The bright, vibrant colors of the open sky, grass and still water, emphasize the rich, natural beauty of the area and suggest that this stunning, untouched, remote place is far-removed from the congestion and pollution of the modern world. Combined with the caption “A personal journey,” this image suggests that this is another ideal, tranquil location for some alone-time and personal reflection away from the hustle and bustle of the modern world. Tresidder (2011) notes that the portrayal of deserted landscapes is an element of an embedded ‘analytical process’ that ‘signposts’ a notion of escape or freedom in which the tourist is freed from the pressures of urban everyday lived experiences (p. 65). Crawshaw, Urry and Scarles (in Urry & Larsen, 2011), examine many ways that professional photographs are altered in order to portray selective deserted landscapes. In order to bolster place myths, photographs will seldom include what Meyer (2006) refers to as “weedy species,” visually and socially undesirable sights that would disrupt the timeless scenery (in Hunter, 2008, p. 361). This may include cars, traffic, litter, derelict buildings, “anything that would date a picture... or anything that is obtrusive” (Urry & Larsen, 2011 p. 174).

While picturesque images of sweeping beaches (*Figure 4. Sandy beach*) and panoramic views (*Figure 5. Towering Vistas*), and text emphasizing fresh air and “clear, unpolluted waters” depict the west of Ireland as a sort of timeless haven, the second place myth depicts the west as an ideal place for an authentic, naturalistic experience through direct contact with nature. As Hill, et al. (2014) note, most of Western society lives in relative isolation from nature and the natural world and thus, tourism experiences rooted in nature play a distinct role in reconnecting people with nature. This reconnection can range from practical to spiritual encounters derived from direct experience with nature. Maci (2007) observes that the language and imagery used in tourism literature strives to portray tourism destinations as “authentically and genuinely off the beaten track,” adding exclusivity to the destination and giving the potential tourist the “illusion of feeling the holiday experience before actually living it, in line with their most optimistic expectations” (p.43).

Previous research suggested that nature-based tourism was a predominantly a visual act (Urry, 1990), but more recent studies suggest that nature has become something for tourists to consume; to hear, to touch, to smell, to taste and to feel (Hill, et al., 2014). The image of Killary Harbor with the caption “Feast Your Senses” (*Figure 3. Feast your senses*) is perhaps the epitome of this. The wild green ferns, still water and sweeping clouds colliding with the mountains are not just picturesque, they are a treat for the eyes, ears and nose. The text further explains that the sensual experience one can have there is “incredibly calming” and has been a retreat for decades, attracting many people including the famous philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein.

By disconnecting with the modern world and immersing oneself in the rugged, barren, rocky landscape of the west, it is suggested that this can invigorate the visitor. There are multiple references to becoming “one with the wild.” One image with this caption shows a dark mountain in the background towering over a beach with wild grass and flora covering the rolling sand dunes in the foreground (*Figure 6. At one with the wild*). By literally feeling the west; the mist coming from the mountain, the sand between your toes, the spray from the waves upon the shore; it is implied that you will rid yourself of the woes of the modern world. There is also an emphasis on language that implores the viewer to embark on a trek or “adventure” through the wilderness like in *Figure 7. Adventure awaits you*. Bell and Lyall (2002) observe that such language is indicative of the evolution of nature from something to look at to something to “leap into” (p. 27). However, they state that words alone are not enough to entice the viewer on such an adventure; words are “still dependent on the glorious vista” (p. 27).

There are a number of other features of this campaign that put forth the idea that Ireland is disconnected from the modern world, in particular the repeated pictorial and textual references to the West Coast’s peripheral and isolated location. Dijkstra (2016) argues that peripherality is socially constructed and central to this construction is the unequal relationship between the center and the periphery. The center, which in this case is mainland Europe, is generally accepted to be urban, modern and developed, in contrast to the periphery which is considered remote, rural and isolated. Dijkstra (2016) describes peripheral locations as “imagined” because they are not only marginalized by geographic location but also exist on the edge of reality. This reflects Said’s (1977) notion of “imaginative geographies” and the dichotomies between “us” and “them.” This idea is consistently presented throughout the

campaign by the way the west of Ireland is portrayed as being disconnected from Europe and by implying that it has somehow been neglected and forgotten by the modern world. For example, Fanad Head (*Figure 9. Out on the edge*), the most northerly point of the Fanad Peninsula in County Donegal is described a “wildly exposed romantic headland.” The image of the headland jutting out into the sea, with no land pictured in the distance and the caption “Out on the edge” gives the impression that standing there, on the edge of Ireland, will give one the feeling that they are standing on the edge of the world. This further emphasizes the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ dichotomy and suggests to the viewer that they are constrained by everyday life in America, in contrast to the freedom experienced by those living on the West Coast of Ireland.

Ireland’s periphery is also emphasized by the image of the rough and rugged Fastnet Rock on Mizen Head (*Figure 10. Ireland’s Teardrop*), the most south-westerly point of Ireland, which is the last stop on the island before you reach America. This is why it is captioned “Ireland’s Teardrop.” The accompanying text explains that for many, this was the final glimpse of Ireland for those who emigrated and embarked on a life in America. A similar story is told about Ireland’s most northerly point, Banba’s Crown on Malin Head (*Figure 11. Sculpted by the sea*). These images and captions reflect how the notion of escapism, as associated with the west of Ireland, has evolved in accordance with Ireland’s past, and the intrinsic role that emigration has played in Irish life.

As alluded to earlier, during the 1600s, many native Irish people fled to the west of Ireland to escape the cruel and impending wrath of British colonizers (Walsh, 2004). During the Great Famine, the west of Ireland was the worst area affected in terms of the number of deaths and also the emigration toll. Approximately 1.5 million

people left Ireland to seek refuge in America during 1844-1845. Now it seems that the west of Ireland has come full circle. Tourism Ireland positions it as a place for its American audience to escape to, away from their daily lives. It is likely that this audience comprises, at least in part, of descendants of those who emigrated during the Great Famine or thereafter. Despite the influx and outflow of people, the landscape of the west of Ireland is presented as having remained relatively unchanged. This reinforces the idea that the west of Ireland is frozen in time, unaffected by modernization. It also suggests that Americans with Irish heritage will experience the West Coast just as their ancestors did, adding a degree of authenticity to their trip.

Some of the other language and imagery used throughout the campaign contributes to the idea that the west of Ireland actively defies modernization. Numerous visual and textual references to the sea's constant attempts to punctuate the coastline with its "swells smashing like giant grey fists into miles of sheer granite cliffs" and Ireland's ability to defy the invading sea imply that Ireland is a staunch, robust and impenetrable land. The wild Atlantic's waves repeatedly thrashing against the coast have carved "dramatic crevices into the rugged headland" along the Atlantic Coast and have sculpted magnificent wonders such as the irregular serrated rocks of Hell's Hole (*Figure 11*. Sculpted by the sea). Other images capturing the artistic power of the sea are the Cliffs of Moher (*Figure 12*. Magnificent Moher) and Downpatrick Head (*Figure 13*. Local Legend).

Despite the sea's unyielding power and force, Ireland is still standing. In this way, it could be said that Ireland is a defiant land, not just in terms of its ability to defy the powerful forces of nature but also as a metaphor for defying industrialization, modernization and the undue influence of 'others.' Although this idea is rooted in colonialism, today, the Irish countryside is a perennial site of struggle between

Dublin-based politicians and the local people (Peace, 2005, p. 496). The idea of land not being put to productive use is often considered a “waste” by economically driven politicians but from a local person’s perspective, land development could cause irreparable harm to the natural landscape (Peace, 2005).

Since the early 1990s, tourism has become the major growth area in the economy of the west of Ireland. Not surprisingly, this has had an adverse effect on many of the west’s most iconic and idyllic locations. Caravan parks, holiday homes and shops specializing in ‘paddwhackery’ are dotted all over the West Coast and have caused many coastal communities to lose their charm (Peace, 2005, p. 505).

Furthermore, many of the primary sightseeing locations featured throughout the campaign such as the Cliffs of Moher (*Figure 12. Magnificent Moher*) have become synonymous with traffic and congestion due to the hundreds of tourists that arrive by bus and car during the summer season (Peace, 2005). However, evidence of this is not found in the campaign. Fairclough (2001) warns that it is important not only to take into account what is represented in discourse but also what is not represented.

According to Baum, et. al (2008), the tourism industry places greater weight on the economic value of the industry than on staging images and experiences that accord with reality. This goes against what Ulldemolins (2014) describes as an effective branding strategy. He writes that “branding narratives should be based on authentic values associated with the location and establish a connection with the genuine local identity” (p. 3029).

It is also important to analyze and understand the way in which people are represented and positioned because this contributes to the overall meaning-making of the campaign (Fairclough, Mulderrig & Wodak, 2011). The people are described as warm and charming, like “friends you haven’t met yet.” It is implied that they will

take care of the visitor when he or she comes to the west of Ireland. They will pour you a proper pint, take you on a boat tour, share their catch of the day with you and beguile you with Irish traditional music. The use of the second person, 'you,' is used in tourism discourse to personalize the message in order to lead the viewer to believe that he or she is the only person receiving it (Chiwanga, 2014). According to Scarles (2004, in Larsen & Urry, 2011) these references to 'you' guide the reader's fantasies and make them seem realizable. This is further emphasized by using very few pictures of people throughout the campaign. In *Figure 11. Sculpted by the sea*, we see a few people, possibly tourists, faced away from the camera, transfixed by the powerful sea. Similarly, in *Figure 7. Adventure awaits you*, we see two people trekking across the rocky lands and again they are faced away from the camera. Cisneros (2008) discusses at length how the angle of the camera or point of view can convey a particular meaning to the viewer. By using 'faceless' people, one does not develop a personal connection to the person (Cisneros, 2008). Tourism Ireland wants its U.S. viewers to go to Ireland, and by making the majority of the people faceless, it becomes easier for the viewer to picture him or herself in the scenes depicted.

Tourism often portrays natives or local people as "stage extras, artists' models, objects which have replaced people" (Dann, 1996, in Baum et. al, 2008, p. 2). Their role in tourism discourse is predominantly servile and they often become infused into the overall destination image and simplified stereotypes of place that underscore tourist's expectations (Baum, et. al, 2008). McRae (2003) observes that tourists in some instances expect their hosts to be "pre-modern," in order to align with their perceived notions of authenticity. The way in which 'local people' are portrayed in the *Wild Atlantic Way* is indicative of this. There are not many people showcased throughout the campaign but those that are, are depicted pursuing traditional tasks,

rooted in local customs. For example, in *Figure 14*. Foraging for food, we see the soil covered hands of Denis Quinn foraging for his supper, while *Figure 15*. Small fishing boat, captures a simple fishing boat with no modern frills or advanced technology.

The term 'local' is often considered synonymous with 'quality,' 'safety,' 'healthy' and 'secure.' Contrastingly, 'global' is associated with 'cheapness' 'storable' 'processed' and sometimes 'exotic' (Wilson & Whitehead, 2012, p. 200). However, Wilson and Whitehead (2012) warn against assuming the connection between 'local' and quality as the converse to global because the term itself is highly contested. The depiction of the rural idyll is largely put forward as an antithesis to urbanization. It effectively brands the people of the west of Ireland as 'simple people,' living simple lives. This is in line with O'Connor's research from the early 1990s where she claimed that Irish tourism marketing has, largely, depicted the country as one inhabited by simple people living their lives in traditional ways, removed from city life (O'Connor, 1993). This is also reflective of Said's (1977) work on the Orient and his constructions of "us" and "them." The American viewer could quite easily be lead to assume that his or her cosmopolitan, sophisticated lifestyle is in some way superior to that of a rural Irish person. Despite their imagined nature, such constructions often become accepted as true forms of knowledge. Aside from this being an insult to the people of the west, it is exacerbated by the way in which Dubliners are put forth as cultured and sophisticated as discussed below. Kavaratzis (2004) writes that "promotion is both easiest and most effective when it is self-promotion" (p. 69). However, the tourist gaze presents rural people with a distorted mirror for viewing their own lives (Linnekin, 1997). The narrative constructed by Tourism Ireland objectifies the customs and traditions of the people of the west of Ireland and those who practice them.

Ireland's Ancient East

Ireland's Ancient East implores visitors to embrace the past and immerse themselves in “prehistoric wonders, monastic marvels, magnificent castles and grand estates.” The land of the east of Ireland is said to “remain almost unchanged from when Aoife first gazed over her domain one thousand years ago.” This is emphasized by the absence of modern artefacts and contemporary signs in both the imagery and the language used to portray these parts of Ireland. By taking a step into history, visitors can metaphorically walk in the shoes of those gone before them. MacCannell (1999) describes tourists as “contemporary pilgrims” seeking authenticity in other ‘times’ and other ‘places’ away from their everyday lives (p. 10).

The language and imagery of this campaign suggests that immersing oneself in history and the lives of people from times past, is an ideal break from the modern world. However, there is a notable difference in the language used throughout this campaign from that used in the *Wild Atlantic Way*. Instead of using a word like “adventure,” which is inextricably linked with exploration and discovery of the unknown, *Ireland's Ancient East* implores the visitor to “wander,” “marvel” and “uncover.” This suggests that the stories and treasures of the east of Ireland are laid out and are waiting to be seen, read and learned by the visitor. In contrast, the portrayal of the west of Ireland suggests that the onus is on the participant to seek out the highlights of the land and write their own story.

The language used throughout the *Ireland's Ancient East* campaign also implies that there is something exotic about the east of Ireland. Exoticism is rooted in colonialism and the alienation of modernization and industrialization inherent in exoticism helps to perpetuate the idea that postcolonial Ireland is behind time. Implying that the east of Ireland has become frozen in an idyllic time machine where

time moves slowly, if at all, is similar to the effect that western travel photography has had on the Orient. Schwartz (1996) describes how the Orient has become imprisoned in a “timeless ancient space of architecture and monuments” (in Urry & Larsen, 2011, p. 169).

Like the *Wild Atlantic Way* campaign, the landscape plays a crucial role in this campaign also. The lush green grass and vibrantly colored flowers depicted throughout the campaign (such as in *Figure 22. Belvedere House*, and *Figure 24. Kilruddery House*) contrast with the rocky, barren, remote and forsaken lands of the west. Another remarkably different feature is the depiction of the skies. In *Figure 16. Land of 5000 Dawns*, and *Figure 17. Historic Heartlands*, we see beautiful, colorful skies which contrast with the vast majority of the skies pictured in the *Wild Atlantic Way* campaign, which are predominantly cloudy, partly grey and ominous (see *Figure 3. Feast your senses*, *Figure 6. At one with the wild*, and *Figure 8. Feel the spirit*). This abundance of color symbolizes the existence of life, bounty and hope in the east of Ireland. In fact, it is stated that the lands of the east of Ireland are what attracted thousands of settlers in the past. This is in direct contrast to the desolate plains of the west of Ireland, which is where people were banished to.

As discussed, many of the images of the west of Ireland depict it as remote, secluded and derelict; almost as if it has been forgotten by man. Contrastingly, the east of Ireland is promoted as having seen the arrival and departure of many peoples; “[t]hese cliffs, harbors and beaches have been besieged by Vikings, visited by Titans of the sea and welcomed world leaders home.” Throughout the campaign, we are given a snapshot into the lives of some of these settlers and travelers. From extravagant royals to poverty-stricken peasants, and from pagans to religious pioneers, the east of Ireland has countless stories to tell.

The viewer is encouraged to relive these stories by visiting some of the prominent sites in the east of Ireland and in doing so, to forget about their own lives. For example, in the glorious green valley of Glendalough (*Figure 18*. Glendalough), visitors can learn about a sixth century monk named St. Kevin took refuge there and whose settlement eventually became one of Europe's most prominent monastic sites. Or at the Rock of Dunamase (*Figure 19*. Rock of Dunamase), a castle ruins perched upon a jagged limestone rock, visitors can follow the evolution of the castle from Christian retreat to Viking target and Anglo-Norman stronghold. However, by romanticizing these sites, Tourism Ireland not only diminishes the extent of Ireland's colonial past but also the suffering that Irish people faced at the hands of these 'settlers.' This is not unique to Irish tourism efforts. McRae (2003) notes that the "uncomfortable and disturbing moments of social unrest and inequality" are often ignored in favor of tourism revenue (p. 242).

There is a considerable emphasis on myth and legend throughout the text of this campaign. The text makes multiple references to "supernatural tales of hellhounds and hidden treasures." Many of these tales have religious connotations such as Lough Diheen in the Galty Mountains (*Figure 20*. Galty Mountains), which is said to be guarded by an "unruly serpent, banished by St Patrick." Almost 100 km east of the mountain, the ghost of Dame Alice de Kyteler haunts St Canice's Cathedral (*Figure 21*. St Canice's Cathedral). Additionally, the Rock of Cashel (*Figure 44*. Rock of Cashel), also known as Cashel of the Kings or St. Patrick's Rock, supposedly sits on a giant rock that was discarded by the Devil. Legend has it that the Rock originated in a mountain 20 kilometers away called the Devil's Bit and when St. Patrick banished Satan from a cave in the mountain, the Rock landed in Cashel. It takes its name from *caiseal*, meaning 'stone fort' and was once the residence of the King of Munster.

The campaign also gives an insight into the turbulent lives of legends like Robert Rochfort who locked up his wife on suspicion of an affair and Lord Strongbow who was gifted Dunamase Castle (*Figure 19. Rock of Dunamase*) for marrying Aoife Rua. During Ireland's Celtic Revival in the 19th and 20th centuries, cultural nationalists placed great emphasis on Ireland's Celtic history and mythology. The goal was to posit an 'authentic' Irish identity that predated British colonial influence (Lennon, 2003). Interestingly, Lennon (2003) notes that many of the Celtic narratives that were constructed were not derived from Celtic Ireland but instead from constructions of the Orient. Indeed, many of the ancient ruins were compared to contemporary Oriental structures. Lennon (2003) further notes that by identifying Irish myth and culture with the Orient the revivalists of the time "imaginatively distanced Ireland from England and 'de-Europeanized' the country with Orientalized images of a non-British, non-industrial, non-urban Celtic, Gaelic Ireland" (p. 150).

Tourism Ireland effectively does the opposite in *Ireland's Ancient East*. The campaign recounts the trials and tribulations that took place in the lives of some of Ireland's religious pioneers, enemies and villains. The campaign implores the viewer to escape the monotony of daily life and picture him or herself as one of the people who had a hand in making Ireland. Although this may seem attractive and exciting, Tourism Ireland is, in many instances, asking the tourist to put him or herself in the shoes of the oppressor. The British government is reputed to have been negligent during the Great Famine thus, Tourism Ireland is in effect, inviting its American audience to picture themselves as one of the gentry who may have been the cause of their ancestor's need to emigrate. The absence of pictures of the people mentioned throughout the campaign, further enables the viewer to easily imagine his or herself as Lord or Lady.

Encouraging tourists to view Ireland through the eyes of colonizers creates an interesting power dynamic between the tourist and local person. This relationship has been explored by many scholars who have found that local people are predominantly portrayed as serving servile roles in tourism literature. Tresidder (2011) argues that this is not reflective of a real or natural classification but rather implies that there is a difference in economic superiority and status between the host and guest. Dann's analysis of people within tourism literature suggests that this relationship of subordination can be enhanced by the angle, position or size in which the native is photographed (Dann, 1996, in Baum et. al, 2008). Campelo, et al. (2014), warn that leaving locals aside in the branding process can lead to a lack of recognition, acceptance and commitment by a destination's community and thus can negatively impact the quality of the tourist's experience. They argue that a strategically sound branding process should be built on the everyday practices of the destination in order to bolster the sense of place, without which, can leave the brand image of a destination and destination identity at odds with each other.

Dublin: A Breath of Fresh Air

Unlike the other campaigns, *Dublin: A breath of fresh air*, does not present Dublin as a complete escape from the modern world, but it does not present it as a 21st century city either. The overarching theme is 'experience.' The language of the campaign is heavily focused on encouraging the viewer to partake in all that the city and the county has to offer through the use of words like "explore," "get lost," "unwind," and "enjoy." The language is also laden with contradictions. Dublin is described as "at once modern and historic, exciting and relaxing." Even the campaign title is a contradiction; who would think of going to a capital city for some "fresh air"?

The ultimate proposition put forward is that Dublin is a place to experience where the “past meets [the] present.” This underscores an interesting thread throughout the campaign; a desire to showcase Dublin city as culturally and historically rich, and a desire to promote it as a vibrant, exhilarating, modern city. This has been a trend in the promotion of Dublin since the early 2000s when Dublin was branded as a destination to appeal to business and leisure travelers alike (Dublin Tourism, 2003). References to Dublin’s modernization throughout the campaign act as a point of contrast between Dublin and the rest of the country, which as discussed, is heavily focused on the past and portray Ireland as being behind time.

Images of iconic, stately buildings like the National Museum of Ireland (*Figure 25*. National Museum of Ireland), the Trinity Arch (*Figure 26*. Trinity College) and The Four Courts (*Figure 27*. The Four Courts), represent the historic side of Dublin. This is also captured by images of less grandiose buildings such as the storefronts and shop windows seen in *Figure 28*. Dublin: creative culture and *Figure 29*. Dublin bookshop, that have maintained their traditional look. Many of the historic buildings pictured throughout the campaign are very much rooted in the present because they are still in use, unlike those pictured in Ireland’s Ancient East.

Some of the images of Dublin show just how modern it has become. For example, the restaurant in *Figure 30*. Dublin city restaurant, is very urban and chic while the artisan meal pictured in *Figure 31*. Gourmet meal, suggests that Dubliners have a refined palette with a taste for gourmet food. The text references “European-style quick eats in the city’s cafes, restaurants and gastro-pubs” implying that Dublin has modernized its dining experiences in-line with other European cities. This is a stark contrast to the cozy fireside pubs of the west of Ireland that specialize in the

‘catch of the day.’ The contrast between quaint and modern here suggests that Dublin and Dubliners are more sophisticated than the people of the west.

The repeated use and reference to people in the imagery of this campaign is a noticeable difference to the other campaigns. As we can see in *Figure 32*. Entrance to Stephen’s Green and *Figure 33*. Streets of Dublin, the streets are busy and buzzing with life, a stark contrast to the desolate, abandoned plains of the West Coast. This conveys the idea that Dublin is a populated place with a bustling social scene. *Figure 34*. Dublin coastal village, captures two people both dressed in modern attire and one using a cellphone. Such a blatant nod to modern life is not found in either of the other campaigns. However, there are some similarities in the way in which people are described in the text to the *Wild Atlantic Way*. They are portrayed as warm and friendly, full of “chatter and laughter.” They also appear to be willing to share their knowledge and stories with tourists. For example, the quote captured in *Figure 35*. Quote from Dublin taxi driver, “the most interesting conversation I’ve ever had about Beckett was with a Dublin taxi driver” implies that local Dubliners are steeped in the city’s history and culture. It also suggests that they have some insider’s knowledge, not available in a textbook. Although the people of the west are also portrayed as knowledgeable, this knowledge is focused on fishing and local wildlife, not on literary scholarship. Thus, it could be implied that people from Dublin are culturally more educated than those from the west.

There are also multiple references to Dublin being a hub for creative arts. This is in line with the growing trend in branding capital cities as ‘creative’ that has emerged over the last number of years (Ulldemolins, 2014). *Figure 36*. The sweet, sweet city sounds, shows a group of eccentrically clad musicians playing on the street entertaining passers-by. The caption “sweet, sweet city sounds” suggests that the

usual sounds that emanate from a city, like construction noises, horns beeping and engines running are not present in Dublin. Instead, music fills the streets of this city. This implies that despite being a city, Dublin, does not suffer from the common afflictions of a modern city. Alternatively, the caption could be insinuating that the usual sounds of the city and its people are a source of inspiration for Dubliners. The text references the fact that there's "music flowing through Dublin's veins" perhaps suggesting that the city itself has had a hand in the success of people like Phil Lynott, front-man for Thin Lizzy (*Figure 37. Statue of Phil Lynott*) and Irish traditional music legends, The Chieftains. Thus, for those seeking some musical inspiration, Dublin could be their muse. A similar idea is put forward in relation to Dublin's literary culture. The city is described as a "haven of learning" where a "love of words is in the air" with references to some of the city's most noted scholars like Joyce (*Figure 38. Statue of James Joyce*), Swift, Wilde and Synge. From this it can be implied that inspiration can be found in all aspects of the city; from the people, to the infrastructure, to the air.

Some scholars have observed that branding a city as 'creative' involves the implementation of elitist policies that favor gentrification, masking the social and economic inequalities that exist in these cities (Ulldemolins, 2014). Rather than achieving the "ultimate goal of city branding" which Kavaratzis (2004) advances as increasing living standards for city residents (p. 71), branding a city as creative has the potential to serve only the 'creative class.' Indeed, it is stated in this campaign that creatives can come to Dublin to "perform, sell their work, mingle with their audience and bask in the creativity that characterizes the city." This implies that a trip to Dublin could be profitable, not just in terms of cultural enrichment. This also aligns with global creative city branding strategies that are broadly focused on attracting tourists,

investors, and trained professionals alike (Ulldemolins, 2014). Neither of the other two campaigns put forward any branding propositions for the cities in the west or east of Ireland. This is significant because it positions Dublin as not only having an elitist class within the city, but implies that Dublin itself is an elite city within the context of the island of Ireland. This reinforces traditional notions of Dublin as the seat of power and the rest of the country as rural and submissive.

Furthermore, the inclusion of County Dublin, the area outside the city, in the campaign puts forward the idea that Dublin can offer tourists both an urban and rural experience. Dublin can accommodate all of the tourist's desires and wishes. In contrast, the predominant focus on the countryside in the other campaigns implies that tourist experiences in those destinations will be entirely rural. Unlike the images of the west coast, the images of Dublin's coast exhibit a lot more activity. For example, in *Figure 39*. Dublin Bay, there are four boats out on the bay and in *Figure 40*. Wet and wild around Dublin, there are four young men diving and paddle-boarding. This gives the viewer the impression that Dublin's coast is not just for viewing, it's for experiencing. There is also a noticeable difference in the words used to describe Dublin's coast; a "wonderland of activities, lively villages and exciting trails" in contrast to the language used to describe the west which was very much focused on the senses and tranquility.

Investing oneself in all Dublin has to offer; its culture, creativity, cuisine and coastline, is described as akin to taking a breath of fresh air. Thus, Dublin is branded as an invigorating destination. Even though Dublin is primarily known as a city, the rural countryside and coastline of County Dublin are on its doorstep. This idea is particularly effectively conveyed in the video montage of Dublin, where the image of the path leading down to the lighthouse (*Figure 41*. Area outside Dublin), is nestled

between images of the bustling city. In some respects, it could be said that Dublin is depicted as the ideal escape for those who yearn for a break from the monotony of their everyday life but aren't looking to leave the modern world completely behind.

The narrative constructed by the three campaigns implies that Dublin is the only part of Ireland that has progressed to the 21st century. However, the image captured by the professional photographer is not always what is seen by the human eye. As discussed earlier, photographers often leave out aspects of a destination that could be considered undesirable to the viewer. In order to advance the notion that Ireland's countryside embodies traditional, stereotypical ideas of the rural idyll, Tourism Ireland does not include any signs of modern life and structural development in two of its campaigns. Thus, this paints a picture in the mind of the potential U.S. visitor that does not totally align with reality. A more holistic image of Ireland would make reference to other major Irish cities, infrastructure and development.

The Commodification and Celebration of Ireland's Past

Exploration of Ireland's past is a consistent thread throughout each of the three campaigns. Explaining the relationship between the past and the present in Ireland is not an easy task and Ellis (1991) warns that any effort to do so, should begin with an understanding of the past in its own terms. The quest for independence in Ireland is a long story and in its campaigns, Tourism Ireland over-simplifies it to an extent. The narrative constructed by Tourism Ireland suggests that Ireland is no longer a contested space and that its troubled past has been long forgotten. Low and Lawrence-Zuniga (2003) have defined contested spaces as "geographical locations where conflicts in the form of opposition, confrontation, subversion and/or resistance engage actors whose social positions are defined by differential control of resources and access to power" (in Peace, 2005, p. 495). Ireland's long history of colonialism saw the island

besieged by Vikings, Normans and of course, the British, all of whom left their mark on the land and landscape of the country. However, none left such a lasting impact than the British, whose era of dominance culminated in the partition of the country into two nations and two peoples. The aftermath of this transition did not reach a peaceful resolution until the late 1990s and for many people, the wounds of Ireland's partition are still very raw.

The way in which the language and imagery used by Tourism Ireland constructs the past broadly implies that Ireland has been at a standstill since it achieved its independence and that present-day, post-colonial Ireland has nothing to showcase that would entice the tourist to visit. According to Sontag (1979): “[Photography’s] main effect is to convert the world into a department store or museum without walls in which every subject is depreciated into an article of consumption” (p. 166). Through the language and imagery used in the campaigns, Tourism Ireland effectively reduces the remnants of Ireland's past to such articles of consumption. In commodifying and celebrating relics of the past, Tourism Ireland not only simplifies the past but it also neglects to promote many of the advancements and achievements of modern Ireland.

Ireland's Ancient East

The entire premise of *Ireland's Ancient East* is that it is “defined by its past, all 5,000 years of it.” The east is a collection of fossils, estate houses, Neolithic tombs, castles and religious relics. Many of the structures seen throughout the campaign represent Ireland's transition from a pagan to a Christian society while others are markers of Ireland's colonial past and serve as a reminder of the troubles Ireland once faced. Despite the fact that these structures symbolize the strife and anguish of colonial Ireland, the language and imagery of the campaign consistently

commends the architecture and craftsmanship of these structures. They are celebrated for having remained intact despite the passage of time. For example, Hook Lighthouse (*Figure 42. Hook Head*), which is still operational after 800 years! In particular, the text assists the viewer in conceptualizing the difficulties that would have been encountered while building these structures such as a lack of modern technology and materials, which contributes the tourist's sense of wonder and amazement.

One example of this is Cahir Castle (*Figure 43. Cahir Castle*), with its magnificently carved turrets and towers, surrounded by an impressive stone wall. It is described as appearing “to grow out of the very rock it sits on,” implying that it was not built on a flat surface, which undoubtedly must have caused some difficulties during construction, not to mention the fact that each stone would have been laid by hand. However, this did not diminish its defensive purpose and it is still a “force to be reckoned with.” The passage of time appears to have had no effect on it other than the growth of some vines along its tremendous, imposing wall. In a similar way, atop the imposing Rock of Cashel (*Figure 44. Rock of Cashel*), sits a cathedral, round tower and large Celtic cross. It must have been quite a feat to build these stone structures on this rock, given that there were no cranes in the Middle Ages. The angle at which the photograph is taken accentuates the height of the rock, making this “medieval masterpiece” even more impressive to the human eye.

The campaign also features a number of castles and historic homes from Ireland's colonial past such as the magnificent Belvedere House (*Figure 22. Belvedere House*), the palatial Castletown House (*Figure 23. Castletown House*) and the incomparable Kilruddery House (*Figure 24. Kilruddery House*). The beautifully crafted gardens featured in these images with their carefully pruned trees, paved pathways and freshly mown, luscious green lawns, offer a stark contrast to the wild

and untamed flora of the West Coast. The text accompanying each of these houses gives the reader a little tidbit of information about the house and/or its former owners. This is done to entice the viewer and to convey the idea that there is more to these magnificent buildings than meets the eye. It also helps the viewer to imagine what it was like living there and put into perspective the difficulties that those who built the houses would have faced having no modern machinery or tools. Grand and robust in stature, it can be inferred that these houses stand in defiance of modernity and the passage of time. They are exemplary of the fact the east of Ireland does not need modern technology or machinery to create time-resistant works of exquisite craftsmanship.

The beautifully carved St Canice's Cathedral (*Figure 21*. St Canice's Cathedral) with its magnificent stained glass windows and the Gothic arches of St Peter's Church (*Figure 45*. St Peter's Church) remind us that the great builders of the past did not just build for defense purposes; they could carve and sculpt remarkable works of art too. Take for example, the 18-foot High Cross at Monasterboice (*Figure 46*. Monasterboice). This 10th century cross is exquisitely engraved with scenes from the Bible. It can easily be inferred that this must have been a painstakingly slow and laborious process to perfectly execute all of the intricacies on the cross. These religious relics are also symbolic of Ireland's conversion from paganism to Christianity, which began in the late 4th century and continued into the 5th century (Walsh & Bradley, 2003). Although popular belief credits St. Patrick with the arrival of Christianity in Ireland, early Christian monks were in fact the first missionaries on the island (Walsh & Bradley, 2003).

There are also a number of abbeys and monastic settlements in the east, such as Glendalough (*Figure 18*. Glendalough), Jerpoint Abbey (*Figure 47*. Jerpoint

Abbey) and Holycross Abbey (*Figure 48*. Holycross Abbey). The most famous of which is perhaps Clonmacnoise (*Figure 49*. Clonmacnoise). This 6th century monastic settlement which was “plundered on several occasions” is celebrated for becoming one of the leading centers of religious learning in Europe. Beyond the architectural value of these religious relics and buildings, the religious subtheme here is significant because it shows the determination of the Irish people to hold onto their Catholic faith and protect their monasteries during successive periods of colonialization and continuous attempts to convert Catholic Ireland to Protestantism.

The people of the past are also commended for their astrological knowledge. For example, Newgrange (*Figure 50*. Newgrange), which is described as “one of the great treasures of the ancient world,” is not just an impressive Stone Age passage tomb. The passage and chamber are aligned with the rising sun at the Winter Solstice. At dawn from December 19-23, the light shines in through a small opening above the entrance and illuminates the passage and chamber. Thus, aside from being gifted craftsmen, those that built Newgrange over 5,000 years ago had an incredible knowledge of astrology.

Examples of modern structures and living people throughout the *Ireland's Ancient East* campaign, are few. Tourism Ireland focuses on the past to entice its American audience. It relies on examples of the architects, the religious pioneers, the Lords and Earls, and the multitude of impressive structures that were built and that have survived for centuries to appeal to potential visitors. However, it appears almost contradictory to celebrate some of these buildings as ‘Irish’ because the majority were built by invaders and colonists. It seems odd to celebrate their endurance when the enduring presence of colonists, particularly from Britain, was the cause of hardship and posed a continuous threat to Gaelic culture for almost seven hundred years.

Paradoxically, however, the way in which Ireland has dealt with estate houses shows how the country has developed a somewhat tolerant attitude toward that era of the past. In the years after independence, the destruction of estate homes, often referred to as ‘Big Houses’ was put forward as an ideal way for the newly independent Irish Free State to symbolically break with the past (Dodd, 1992 in Johnson, 1999, p. 199). Estate homes were viewed as a representation of the colonizers and thus unworthy of public memory (Johnson, 1999). By showcasing the number of these homes that have become popular tourist attractions, Tourism Ireland advances the notion that Irish people have not only developed a tolerant attitude toward the past but have found a way to capitalize upon it. It implies that Irish people can appreciate the homes for the excellent examples of craftsmanship that they are rather than the pain and strife they symbolized in the past.

Wild Atlantic Way

During the colonial era, the lands of the west were a symbol of oppression. Edward Ludlow (in Frost, 1681) famously described the Burren in Co. Clare as a “country where there is not enough water to drown a man, wood enough to hang one, nor earth enough to bury him.” This campaign celebrates the past by emphasizing the west of Ireland’s seeming abhorrence for modernization. For those that lived through the era of British dominance in Ireland, the barren and untamed landscape of the west represented ‘real Ireland’ because it provided the greatest contrast to the lands of England (Nash, 1993, p. 44-45).

One might argue that Ireland’s greatest triumph has been achieving its independence. Thus, Tourism Ireland could be suggesting that by maintaining the landscape in its purest form post-independence, the west of Ireland is, in effect, paying homage to those who fought for Irish freedom. In this way, the landscape of

the west of Ireland can be likened to the “Orient.” Said (1977, p. 235) observed that “the Arabian desert is... considered to be a locale about which one can make statements regarding the past in exactly the same form that one makes them regarding the present.” McRae (2003) interprets this as implying that the “Orient” is always and will always be in the past, and never allowed to be present or contemporary. Tourism Ireland perpetuates the same idea about the plains of the west of Ireland. The viewer is lead to believe that the West of Ireland is, and always will be, in the past. The multiple images of a rural, barren landscape like that pictured in *Figure 6*. At one with the wild, and *Figure 7*. Adventure awaits you, support this proposition suggesting to the viewer that this is an authentic representation of the West Coast. However, in some respects, this is an example of staged authenticity because Tourism Ireland only uses images that align with this proposition. By neglecting to show the many developed towns and cities in the West of Ireland, the prospective visitor is given a distorted image of the west of Ireland which does not entirely align with reality.

The campaign puts forth the idea that there is an energy and spirit to be gleaned from the wild, untamed Atlantic Ocean; an energy that has been “soaked up by the people” of the west of Ireland. The image of the Old Head of Kinsale (*Figure 8*. Feel the spirit) suggests that there is some sort of power and fortitude to be borne from the swell of the waves. The grey clouds looming ominously over the dark grey rock and the waves surging around its base imply that there are mystical forces surrounding this steep and jagged headland. The caption “Feel the spirit” further emphasizes the idea that there is an essence about this location, which can only be felt by being physically present there. It could be inferred that this essence and force gave the people of the west of Ireland the power and courage they needed to defend their territory in the face of colonialism. Similarly, it could be implied that the people of

the west of Ireland call upon this spirit today to help them preserve the landscape in its purest form and repudiate modernization.

However, Tourism Ireland does not specifically state this. In fact, Tourism Ireland downplays the resilience of the Irish people in its portrayal of the past. Unlike other examples of colonization, like Australia and New Zealand which Ellis (1991) describes as “overwhelmingly a product of the colonial process and culture” (p. 291), the majority of Irish people identify with a native rather than a colonial past, evidenced by the prominence of Gaelic culture. However, celebration and praise of this Gaelic culture is hard to find in any of the three campaigns. *Figure 53*. Music session and *Figure 54*. Sights and sounds, which show musicians in a pub participating in an informal music gathering, known as a ‘session,’ subtly hint at this Gaelic culture but do little to convey its prominence on the island of Ireland today. There is no reference to any of the 300 music festivals take place in Ireland every year. Tourism Ireland describes its millennial demographic, the “Social Energizers” as actively seeking events, activities and gigs. Given the absence of reference to these throughout the campaign it can thus be inferred that Tourism Ireland is not looking to attract a millennial audience with this campaign.

Furthermore, there is almost a complete absence of any reference to the Irish speaking regions of Ireland, known as ‘Gaeltachts,’ throughout the three campaigns. The ability of a small nation to hold on to its culture and language in the face of successive periods of colonization and oppression is surely deserving of recognition and praise within tourism literature. Decisions that involve selecting what should be included in tourism discourse and how it should be depicted are not unsystematic (d’Hauteserre, 2004). Tourism Ireland perpetuates colonial forms of interaction by emphasizing the simplicity of the people of the west of Ireland. Portraying these

people as creative, cultured or in any way modern could disrupt the narrative that Western superiority has ascribed to the west of Ireland for decades. Thus, Tourism Ireland relies on imagery and text that portrays the west of Ireland within a universal system of reference with which prospective visitors are familiar.

Dublin: A Breath of Fresh Air

Similar to *Ireland's Ancient East*, *Dublin: A Breath of Fresh Air* celebrates Dublin's impressive, stately architecture. However, in contrast to the centuries old structures of the East, which are for the most part, tourist attractions, Dublin actually utilizes its iconic buildings. For example, Trinity College (*Figure 26*. Trinity College), founded in 1592, is Ireland's oldest University, while The Four Courts (*Figure 27*. The Four Courts), which was built in the late 1700s remains Ireland's main court building today.

The campaign also showcases some of Dublin's most famous creative spaces, which are still prominent venues. For example, the Olympia Theatre (*Figure 51*. Olympia Theatre), whose doors opened for the first time in December 1879 and Whelan's of Wexford Street, (*Figure 52*. Whelan's music venue). Whelan's is one of Ireland's most famous pubs and prolific live music venues. It has changed hands many times throughout history, but it is believed that there has been a pub on the same site since 1772. Although not blatantly obvious from the image, the décor features illustrations from the Book of Kells, which is housed nearby in Trinity College. This is a perfect example of how Dublin has fused its famous literary and musical genres and also the coming together of the past and present. It also suggests that Dublin has embraced its colonial past and repurposed the buildings that were once symbols of oppression and the presence of the English on the island. This is a marked difference to the west of Ireland where, as discussed previously, colonial

interactions are still perpetuated, and the east of Ireland, where the infrastructures of colonialism are, to an extent, commended.

The language of the campaign also gives credence to the campaign's proposition that Dublin is where past meets present. The viewer is invited to "journey through history, from the city's Viking roots by the banks of the river Liffey, to its atmospheric medieval churches with their mummified remains and holy relics, along gracious Georgian streets and past grand buildings." This tells the viewer that Dublin has retained its "glorious sense of history" in its transition to a modern, European city. This is also very simply captured in the description of Dublin's cuisine; one can enjoy Irish coddle or "European-style quick eats." Here again we see Dublin embracing tradition while also promoting the fact that the city now caters for those with modern tastes.

The viewer is also encouraged to experience the historically rich areas outside the city like Dalkey's Cliemore Harbor, which was "once an important port for exports - now the stillness is only broken by the bobbing of small fishing boats." This sentence fuses the past with the present by explaining the harbor's historic purpose and what it is used for now. This is also done in *Figure 40*. Wet and wild around Dublin, where we see some young people paddleboarding around the foot of the historic Poolbeg Lighthouse, which was built in 1768. Other language that reinforces this idea is also found throughout the campaign. The visitor is encouraged to leave the "buzz of the city center behind" to go hiking Dublin's hills which are said to be packed with "legendary tales."

The campaign references some of Dublin's greatest literary and musical figures whose influence have helped make Dublin the haven of creativity that it is today. The text implies that the words and melodies of those gone before us linger

over the city, inspiring today's creative minds. The campaign specifically makes reference to a few living artists including Sinéad O'Connor and U2, a noticeable difference to the other campaigns. One must ask why these specific artists were chosen. What about the hundreds of other Irish people that have composed, created or crafted something amazing in the last one hundred years? This begs the question, how long does an Irish person have to be dead, or how famous does one have to be, in order to be included in a Tourism Ireland campaign in a way that doesn't portray him/her in a servile role?

The language and imagery that Tourism Ireland uses throughout the campaign, *Dublin: A Breath of Fresh Air*, gives a more holistic representation of Dublin to prospective visitors than the language and imagery that Tourism Ireland uses to advertise the rest of Ireland. The campaign shows the continued influence of the past on the present in a constructive way by highlighting how Dublin's historic buildings have been repurposed and are utilized throughout the city. In contrast, *Ireland's Ancient East* celebrates the past but doesn't relate it to the present, at least not directly, and *Wild Atlantic Way* portrays the west of Ireland as if it is still rooted in the past.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The purpose of this study is not to investigate the effectiveness of Tourism Ireland's current promotional campaigns but to understand how these campaigns construct a national brand of Ireland as expressed in the research questions. Tourism promotion is often incorrectly assumed to be the same as nation branding, but it is important to explore and understand the distinction between the two (Hankison, 2007). Exploring this distinction and how tourism destination branding fits within the context of nation branding separates this study from those conducted by other scholars. Such studies have predominantly focused on the images people associate with Ireland and the factors that influence tourists' decisions to travel to Ireland. Thus, the majority of studies have looked at destination branding from a demand-side perspective. This is also referred to as a "consumer- perceived-image," or association approach (Prideaux & Cooper, 2002). This study looked at destination branding from a supply-side perspective, the significance of which is twofold. First, the practical implications of the narrative constructed by the three campaigns allows for reflection on whether this narrative needs to change in order to meet and manage tourists' expectations; and second, in a more theoretical sense, it examines the construction of Ireland's overall national brand.

Tourism-image research to date has been consistently focused on pragmatism, offering limited guidance as to how a destination with multiple narratives should be portrayed (Reilly, 1990). The dilemma in choosing images for branding is that while places evoke all sorts of emotional experiences, it can be difficult for the marketer to provide an inspirational image that would be interpreted the same way by all potential visitors (Nickerson & Moisey, 1999). The relationship between the image and reality

can also be a controversial issue with regards to portrayals of authenticity (Foley & Fahy, 2003).

This study found that the language and imagery used in the *Wild Atlantic Way* campaign is rooted in the idea of escapism. Tourism Ireland relies heavily on depictions of the West Coast's barren, remote, rural landscape. It puts forward the idea that the West of Ireland is frozen in time and that prospective visitors can have an authentic experience there through direct contact with nature. However, the authentic experience that Tourism Ireland portrays to its American viewers is in some respects, staged. Absent from the imagery are references to modern life like industrial development, congestion and people. The notion of escapism is enticing and could find appeal among Tourism Ireland's "Great Escapers" target who are described as seeking holidays that offer a break from their stressful and demanding lifestyles. However, the imagery offers the viewer a staged picture of reality that does little to reflect life on the West Coast of Ireland.

In a similar way, this study discovered that *Ireland's Ancient East*, offers the viewer a very selective depiction of the East of Ireland by focusing on language and imagery that is designed to entice the viewer to come and embrace the its rich history. Like the *Wild Atlantic Way*, references to modern life are few. The campaign commends and celebrates remnants of Ireland's colonial past like castles, estate houses and religious relics. This campaign may be particularly effective in attracting Tourism Ireland's "Culturally Curious" demographic who seek a holiday that allows them to explore Ireland's history, culture and landscape.

Dublin: A Breath of Fresh Air gives the viewer a more holistic representation of Dublin as a destination than the other campaigns do. The campaign is guided by the idea that Dublin is a place to experience where "the past meets present." The language

and imagery reflect this proposition by showing how Dublin's historic buildings have been repurposed and by celebrating creative people that have had a hand in making Dublin a creative city and those that continue to do so. The inclusion of the area surrounding Dublin in the campaign shows the viewer that Dublin is not just a city, it is surrounded by beautiful countryside. This gives the viewer a more holistic representation of Dublin than the representations of the rest of Ireland put forward by the other campaigns. This suggests that this campaign is not designed to attract just one target, but that it aims to find appeal among all demographics.

In addressing research question one, this study examined how the language and imagery used by Tourism Ireland in its promotional campaigns constructs a national brand of Ireland to a U.S. audience. The study found that the campaigns embrace a theme of anti-modernization and present Ireland an antidote to the stresses and strains of life in the modern world. The narrative constructed by Tourism Ireland reinforces Negra's (2001) assertion that "time [in Ireland] has a way of standing still" (p. 89) and that as a country, Ireland is eternally stagnant. The study also found that Dublin is positioned as somewhat of an exception to this branding proposition. Although not wholly put forward as the epitome of modernization, Dublin is portrayed as a 21st century city with a rich cultural heritage.

The second theme encapsulated by the campaigns addresses research question two. It explores how the use of heritage tourism and the commodification and celebration of the past as a destination branding strategy, influences the language and imagery chosen for the campaigns. The "commodification of pastness" has been a pillar of branding Ireland for decades (McIntosh & Prentice, 1999). This study found that Tourism Ireland commends and celebrates relics of the past through the language and imagery that it uses throughout its campaigns. In doing so, Tourism Ireland

effectively reinforces colonial ideas. Ireland's colonial legacy is inescapable and it has contributed to a variety of complex political and societal issues in Ireland, not least the cultural make-up of the country (Fagan, 2003). This is further emphasized by the way in which Tourism Ireland puts forward an alternative destination branding strategy for Dublin. Dublin is promoted as a "creative" city, in line with other contemporary cities across the globe. This branding strategy, coupled with metaphoric constructions of Dublin people as sophisticated and culturally elite, in contrast with constructions of rural Irish people as simple, local and traditional, perpetuates and reinforces colonial ideals of social hierarchy. In this way, Ireland reflects Anderson's idea of an "imagined community" (1983). The construction of a hierarchical separation between rural Ireland and Dublin, establishes an "us" versus "them" situation which, through tourism discourse, has become accepted as a true state of affairs despite its imagined nature.

The significance of this study is rooted in the fact that most governments today recognize the need for engaging in nation branding practices in order to successfully maximize their country's full potential in the global marketplace (Simonin, 2008; Fetscherin, 2010). In the wake of the recent economic recession, and the devastating impact this had on Ireland's economy, it is vital that the Irish government is cognizant of how it is portraying Ireland to an international audience. Portrayals that depict the country as "stagnant" could negatively impact the way Ireland is perceived in the global market place. Thus, it is important to be mindful of the way the country is positioned and distinguished in order to ensure future growth and prosperity.

If Tourism Ireland drastically changes its approach to advertising Ireland, this may harm the tourism industry. However, if Tourism Ireland continues to rely on

stereotypical images, this may present some challenges for the tourism industry and Ireland as a whole. First, there is a danger that visitors may be disappointed when they find that Ireland is not the Ireland of their dreams. It might not be as rugged, and untouched by man as some advertising insinuates. Second, stereotypical representations perpetuating the idea that Ireland is ‘behind time’ could brand Ireland, particularly the west of Ireland, as eternally unchanging and stagnant. Third, the way in which the people of Ireland are represented could influence how they are perceived. This could have potentially negative implications for the Irish in Ireland and abroad. This presents an interesting challenge for Tourism Ireland and the Irish government.

Given the volume of nation branding materials in circulation, this study faced some limitations. First, the study focused solely on three current campaigns used by Tourism Ireland to promote Ireland as a tourism destination to a U.S. audience within one medium. It did not take into account the promotional efforts of Tourism Ireland within other mediums such as social media, magazines, travel brochures or other digital platforms. Second, the study did not explore any differences in the promotion of Ireland to a U.S. audience versus its promotion to a European or Asian based audience. Finally, the study did not consider other aspects of Ireland’s nation branding efforts, such as the promotion of Irish products and the country-of-origin effect; and the strides made by the Irish government and private entities to promote Ireland as an attractive location to invest and conduct business.

In light of the recent economic recession, it is imperative that Ireland regains its position as an active and competitive player within the global economic market. Fanning (2011) emphasizes the need for Bord Bia, Tourism Ireland, Culture Ireland and the Industrial Development Authority to take on the role of redefining what it is Ireland stands for and what distinguishes it from other competitive locations in the

21st century. Including more holistic images of Ireland as modern, industrially developed country in its branding materials could positively impact other aspects of Ireland's national brand.

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Appendices

Figure 1. Time to reflect



Figure 2. A personal journey



Figure 3. Feast your senses



Figure 4. Sandy beach



Figure 5. Towering Vistas



Figure 6. At one with the wild

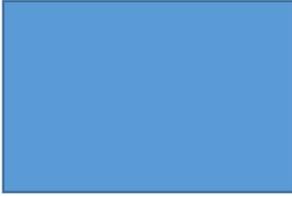


Figure 7. Adventure awaits you



Figure 8. Feel the spirit



Figure 9. Out on the edge

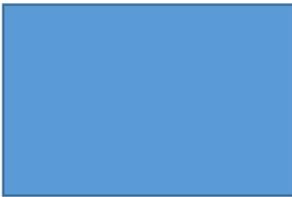


Figure 10. Ireland's Teardrop



Figure 11. Sculpted by the sea



Figure 12. Magnificent Moher



Figure 13. Local Legend

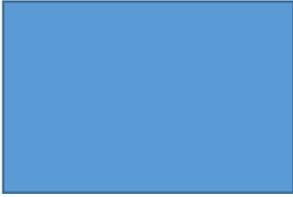


Figure 14. Foraging for food



Figure 15. Small fishing boat

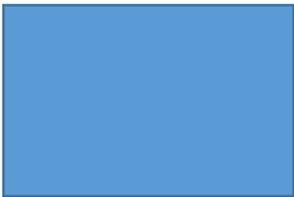


Figure 16. Land of 5000 Dawns



Figure 17. Historic Heartlands



Figure 18. Glendalough



Figure 19. Rock of Dunamase



Figure 20. Galty Mountains



Figure 21. St Canice's Cathedral

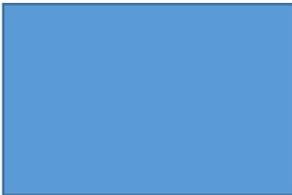


Figure 22. Belvedere House



Figure 23. Castletown House

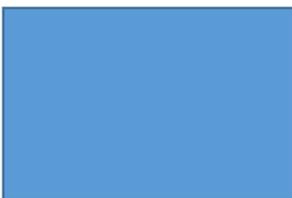


Figure 24. Kilruddery House



Figure 25. National Museum of Ireland



Figure 26. Trinity College



Figure 27. The Four Courts

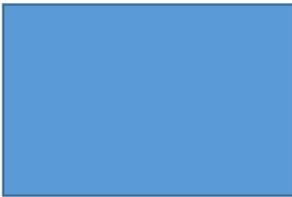


Figure 28. Dublin: creative culture



Figure 29. Dublin bookshop

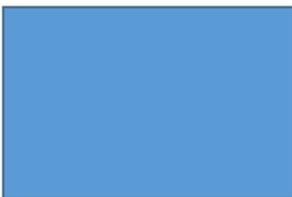


Figure 30. Dublin city restaurant

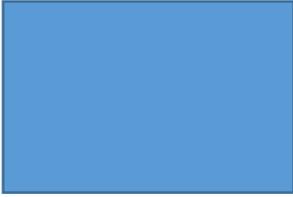


Figure 31. Gourmet meal



Figure 32. Entrance to St Stephen's Green

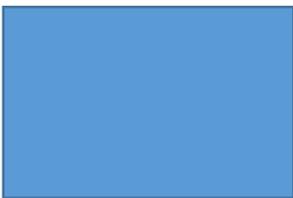


Figure 33. Streets of Dublin



Figure 34. Dublin coastal village



Figure 35. Quote from Dublin taxi driver



Figure 36. The sweet, sweet city sounds

Figure 37. Statue of Phil Lynott



Figure 38. Statue of James Joyce



Figure 39. Dublin Bay



Figure 40. Wet and wild around Dublin

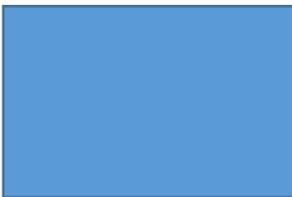


Figure 41. Area outside Dublin



Figure 42. Hook Head



Figure 43. Cahir Castle



Figure 44. Rock of Cashel



Figure 45. St Peter's Church



Figure 46. Monasterboice



Figure 47. Jerpoint Abbey



Figure 48. Holycross Abbey



Figure 49. Clonmacnoise

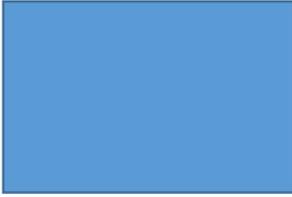


Figure 50. Newgrange



Figure 51. Olympia Theatre



Figure 52. Whelan's music venue



Figure 53. Music session



Figure 54. Sights and sounds

