

Tailor-made tourist marketing communication: the advantages of adapting to the culture of the target group

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Three aspects of marketing communication of a tourist area that will be dealt with

- a) Content of the information
- b) Communication media
- c) Communication style

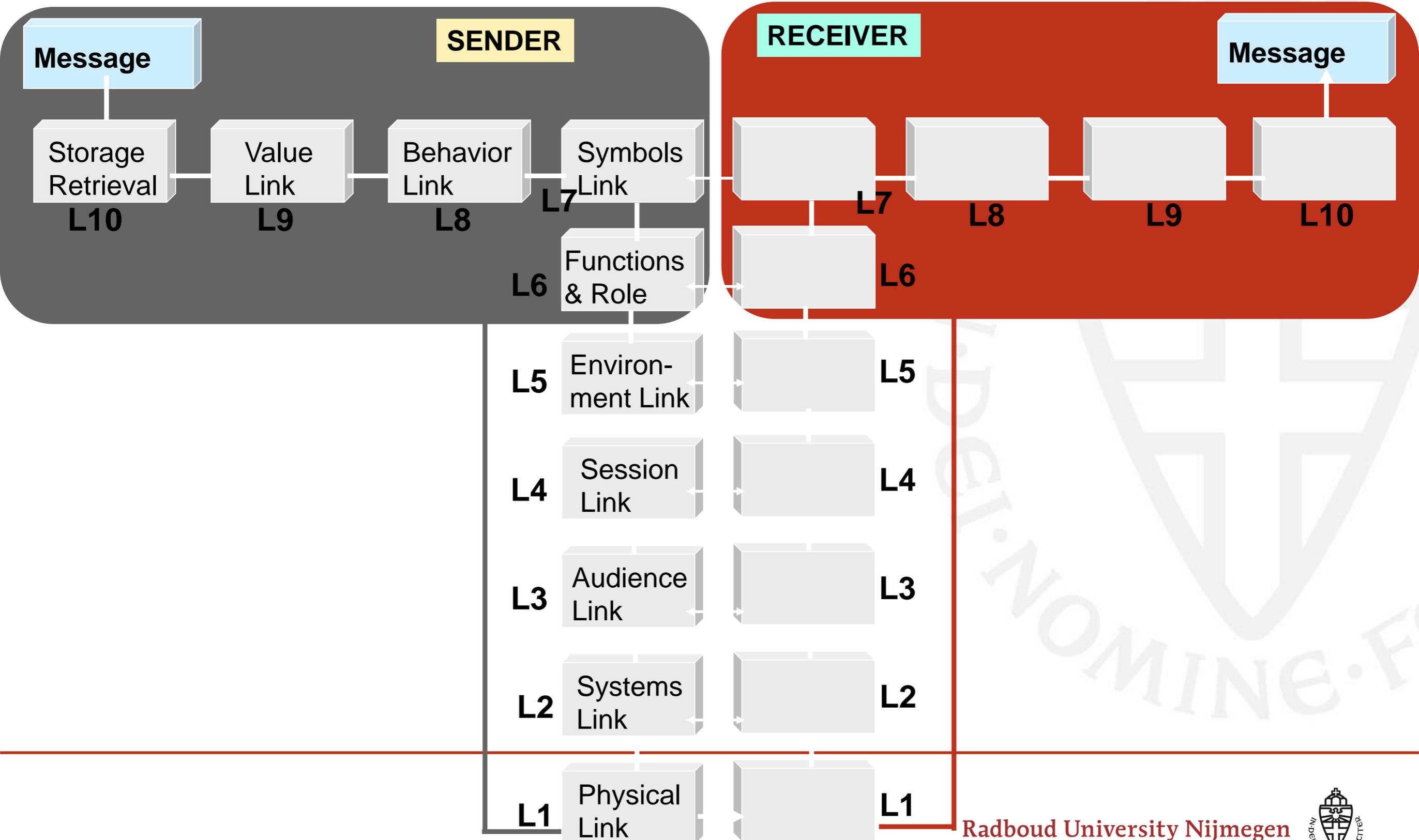
Outline of the paper

1. A model and a hypothesis that indicate that responding to the culture of a target group might be an important device in attracting tourists
2. Which elements of culture should be tailored to the target group: visible or invisible elements or both?
3. Applying knowledge of the culture of the target group in the marketing communication of a tourist area
4. Implications for tourist marketers

Effective communication

Communication between sender and receiver is most effective if the interpretation of the message by the receiver is similar to what the sender intended to communicate with the message

Targowski/Bowman Layer-based pragmatic communication model, part 2





Similarity attraction hypothesis

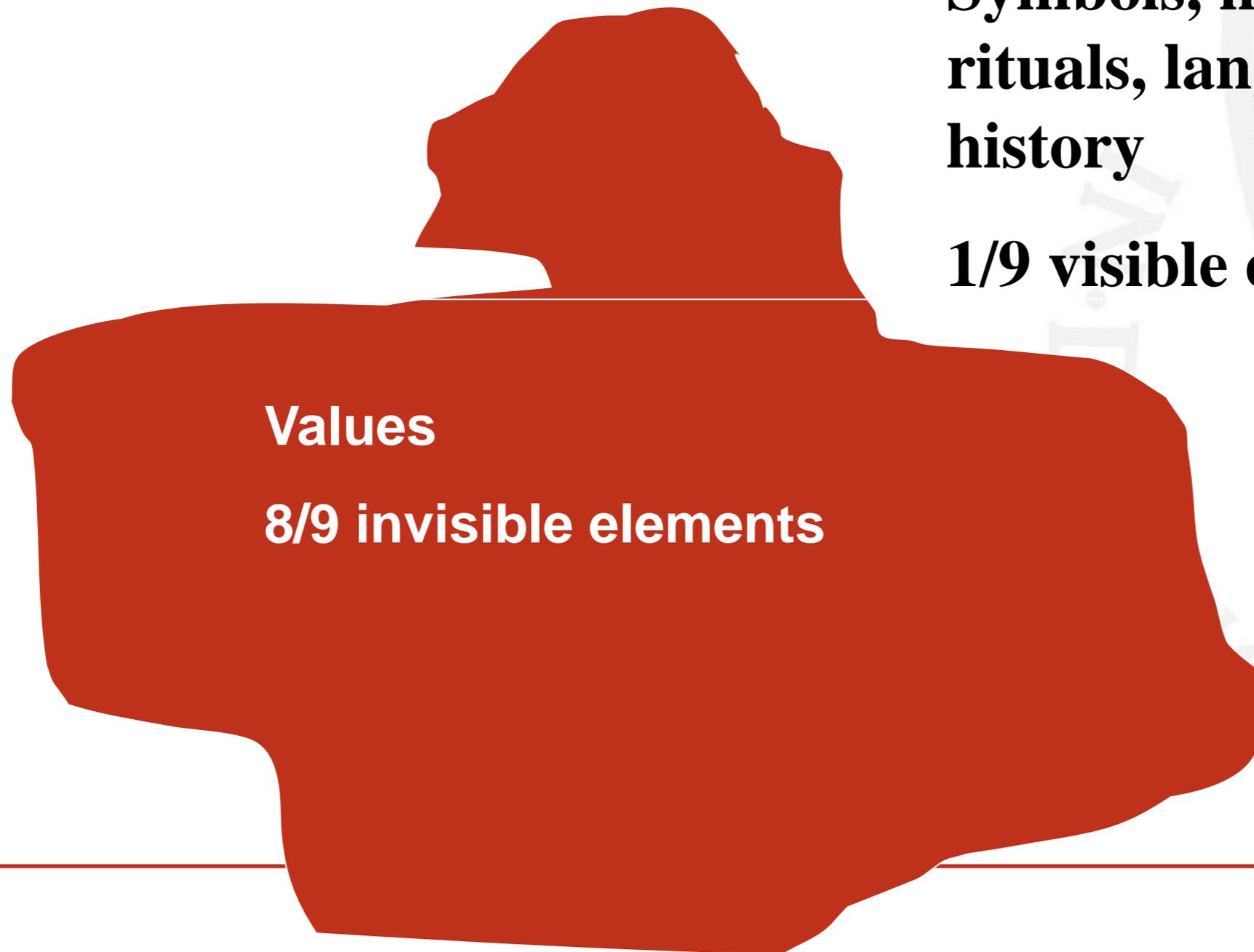
The more similar two individuals are, the higher the attraction between them

..... and that is precisely what a tourist area wants: attract tourists.

Ng et al (2007): Tourist marketers should take into account cultural similarities between their tourist area and the target group in their image building of a tourist area.

Similarity between which aspects of the culture of the tourist area and the culture of the target group may lead to a better image of the tourist area?

Model of culture: The floating ice berg of Edward T. Hall



**Symbols, heroes,
rituals, language,
history**

1/9 visible elements

Values

8/9 invisible elements

Similarity in which elements?

Invisible elements, values, because tourists travel to see and experience new things, and they can especially observe the visible elements of a culture

But reckon with: Differences in attraction of visible elements, individual variation and differences in uncertainty avoidance between cultures

Why taking account of the invisible elements?

Values are learned at one's mother knee. By the age of twelve a child has acquired values and because this learning process has taken place so early and unconsciously, a person believes that persons all over the world have the same values

Values discussed in the literature about tourist marketing

Collectivism-Individualism

Uncertainty avoidance



16 values and the six basic values of (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck 1961)

1. Human nature

2. Underlying motives for acting

Indulgence-Restraint (Hofstede, Schwartz)
Uncertainty Avoidance (Hofstede, Schwartz)
Masculinity-Femininity (Hofstede)

3. Human Relations

Collectivism-Individualism (Hofstede, Trompenaars, Schwartz)
Power distance (Hofstede, Schwartz)
Particularism-Universalism (Trompenaars)
Achieved-scribed status (Trompenaars)
Neutral-Affective (Trompenaars)

4. Time

Past, present, future (Trompenaars)
Polychrony-monochrony (Hall)
Confucian Dynamism (Hofstede)

5. Space

Personal space (Hall)
Private-Public (Hall)
Specific-Diffuse (Trompenaars)

6. Person-Nature

Indulgence versus restraint (the 6th value of Hofstede (Hofstede, Hofstede, Minkov 2010, p. 281))

Indulgence

A tendency to allow relatively free gratification of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun

Restraint

A conviction that such gratification needs to be curbed and regulated by strict social norms

Indulgence and restraint in a number of countries

High indulgence: Venezuela, Mexico, Sweden, Australia, Denmark, Great Britain, Switzerland, Italy

In between indulgence and restraint: Malaysia, Greece, Taiwan, France, Spain

High restraint: Egypt, Ukraine, Bulgaria, China

Indulgence versus restraint and attracting tourists

Indulgent

Content

Aspects that show that one can enjoy life and pamper oneself: wellness, restaurants, shops

Communication media

Glossy magazine

Communication style

Verbal: Exuberant

Visual: Photos of tourists enjoying themselves

Restraint

Content

Aspects that are related to learn (history, geography, art)

Communication media

Modest flyer

Communication style

Verbal: Restricted

Visual: Photos of tourists visiting monuments etc.

Wellness



You can learn something: Pompeii



Uncertainty avoidance

The extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations

High uncertainty avoidance: “What is different is dangerous”

Low uncertainty avoidance: “What is different is interesting”

Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI) and attracting tourists

High UAI

Content

Package tours, all inclusive,
travelling in groups,
Well known hotel chains
Well known destinations,
Booking far in advance,
Risk free activities
Free insurance

Communication media

Travel agency

Communication style

Pprecise, transparency of
information (facts and figures

Low UAI

Content

Individual traveler

Bed and breakfast
New destination
Last minutes
Adventures

Communication media

Internet, word of mouth

Communication style

Information may be less precise

High UAI
Hotel chains
Well known destination



Low UAI:
Bed and breakfast



Masculinity versus femininity

Masculine

division of gender roles, achievement important, “Live to work mentality”

Feminine

Overlap of gender roles, quality of life important, “*Work to live mentality*”

Masculinity and attracting tourists

Masculine

Content

Division of gender roles
One can show achievement in personal life and in for example sport and financial soundness during the holiday

Communication media

Media that show achievement (glossy magazines)

Communication style

Verbal: Flashy
Visual: Photos in a luxurious environment showing achievement

Feminine

Content

No division of gender roles
One helps the population by visiting the area as a tourist (social responsibility, development assistance)
Environment friendly, sustainable

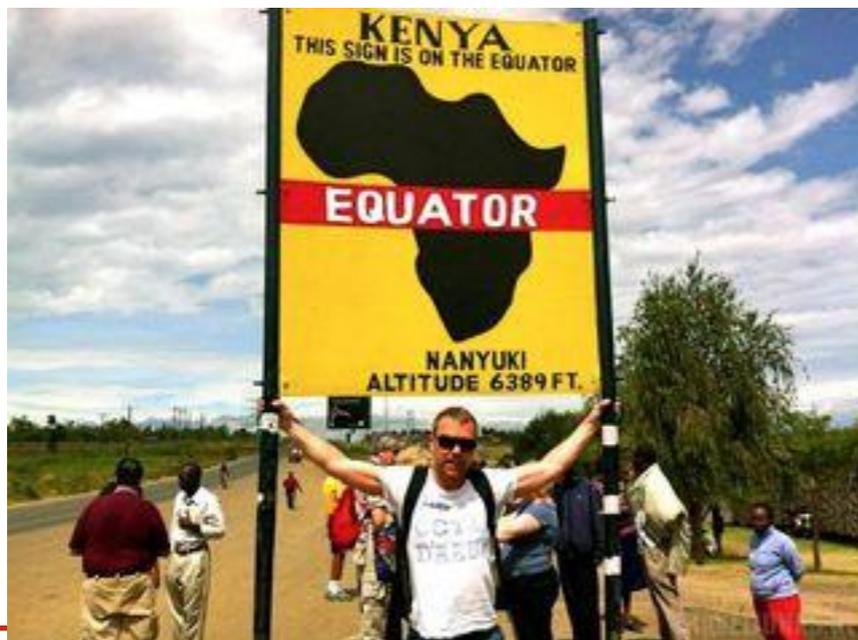
Communication media

Modest environment friendly media

Communication style

Verbal: Modest
Visual: Photos of tourists with locals, in the local environment

Masculine: Achievement



Feminine: Help the locals



Collectivism versus Individualism

Collectivism

People are from birth onward integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lifetime, continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty

Individualism

Ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him- or herself and his or her immediate family

Collectivism and attracting tourists

Collectivism

Content

A holiday with the whole (extended) family and the possibility to travel in groups

Communication media

Reliance on family/ friends or company colleagues for travel information

Media with a high information richness (face-to face)

Communication style

High context, indirect, implicit, flowery style, metaphors, narratives

Individualism

Content

Individual activities that are tailor made to individual desires

Communication media

Reliance on the internet

Media with a low information richness (e-mail)

Communication style

Verbal: Low context, direct, explicit, facts and figures

Collectivism Travel with the family

Individualism Individual traveller



Polychrony and monochrony

In *monochronic* cultures time is sequentially ordered, one prefers to do one thing at the same time and one does not like to change schedules that are settled

In *polychronic* cultures one likes to do several things simultaneously and schedules are not important and can be changed easily

Polychrony and monochrony and attracting tourists

Polychronic

Content

Appointments can be changed easily and time is flexible

Communication media

Many different media and information about an area has not to be univocal

Communication style

Verbal: unstructured

Visual: many images, not necessarily directly related to the message

Monochronic

Content

Everything will be organized in the way that is announced, in time, there will be no changes in schedules

Communication media

Univocal, same information everywhere

Communication style

Verbal: highly and logically structured, facts and figures

Visual: Images help to structure the message and underpin the message

Polychrone: travelling around Madagascar



Monochrome: Travelling in US

May 24th depart Boston Massachusetts US 04.00 PM

May 25h arrival Bar Harbor, Maine US 07.00 AM, depart
03.00 PM

May 26th arrival Halifax, Nova Scotia, CA 08.00 AM, depart
05.00 PM

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Implications for tourist marketers

- Determine target markets
- Adapt the communication about a tourist destination to the communicative conventions of the culture of the target group regarding:
 - Content of the message
 - Communication media used to convey the message
 - Communication style

This implies market segmentation and different marketing approaches for different target groups (Reisinger and Turner 2002, Frias et al 2011)

Suggestion: web sites tailor made for each target group. Just as tourist areas have web sites in different language they could have web sites for different cultures

Consequences for education of tourist marketers

Future tourist managers should have extensive knowledge about the cultural background of their potential customers (Tsang and al 2007).

Grazie per l'attenzione

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THANK YOU
DANK U
Khanwa khun
CUMM
Suspa
SPACIBO
TRIGATO