

IMPACT OF NATION BRANDING CAMPAIGNS ON COUNTRY IMAGE: GERMANY VS. BRAZIL

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to show how a successful nation brand campaign can influence the image of a country and to highlight its positive impact on different areas such as tourism or foreign investments. Two nation branding campaigns, implemented one in Germany and one in Brazil, during FIFA World Cup, 2006 and 2014, were examined in comparison in order to write out the necessary conclusions which support the hypothesis above. The study also proposes to demonstrate that Blue Ocean Strategy was used with success in Germany's nation branding campaign.

Keywords

nation branding, country image, blue ocean strategy, nation brand index, globalization, competitive advantage

JEL Classification

M39, O5, Z29

Introduction

The world today became a single huge market (Anholt, 2007a). With more than 191 independent states, competition became very tight between industries (Kotler and Gertner, 2002). During the last years, the phenomenon called globalization started to intensify and this led to a higher competition between states, which must be prepared to answer permanent to all the challenges existent on the market. So, one of the main challenges is to find a key that can differentiate a nation from another one in order to gain a competitive advantage. In this context, from the '90, nation branding campaigns started to become one of the ways of creating the competitive advantage that all countries want.

This article proposes to show the impact that a successful nation branding campaign can have in the image of a country and if it can provide a competitive edge on economic, social or even political areas. For this, first of all, the article will analyze the ways that nation branding is measured by literature review and then will show taking concrete examples how the campaigns influenced the areas mentioned above.

1. How to measure nation branding

The term nation branding was first coined by the British professor Simon Anholt in 1996 who also wrote the first paper on this subject in 1998. Ever since, he focused on developing new theories regarding this phenomenon and managed to come up with a lot of interesting ideas which were put in practice by authorities from over the world in order to improve their nations' image. "I first began to write about an idea I called Nation Branding in 1996. My original observation was a simple one: that the reputation of countries functions like the brand images of companies and that they are equally critical to the progress and prosperity of those countries" (Dinnie, 2008). At the end of 90's, Simon Anholt wrote for the first time about a tool which could measure how powerful a nation brand is.

To measure the actual strength of a country brand and to be able to evaluate then the image of a nation we must first find the key pillars which influence it and then determine what is their impact (Nicolescu, 2008). At the beginning of 2005 Simon Anholt developed the concept Nation Brands Index and published the first Index in April 2005. "Each quarter, we poll our worldwide panel of over 25,000 people on their perceptions of the cultural, political, commercial and human assets, investment potential, and tourist appeal of 35 developed and developing countries. This adds up to a clear index of national brand power, a unique barometer of global opinion" (Anholt, 2007b). The NBI measures the power and appeal of a nation's brand image, and tells how people around the world see the character of that brand. The nation brand is the sum of the perceptions of a country and its people across six dimensions of national assets, characteristics and competence: Tourism, Exports, Governance, Investment and Immigration, Culture and Heritage, People (Anholt, 2007b).

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Anholt (2008) improved the former model and developed Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index in partnership with one of the most popular research companies - GfK Roper Public Affairs & Media and started to publish a report annually. The model was based on the same hexagon mentioned above, but every pillar could be analyzed more detailed thanks to a higher number of questions. For example, people could be selected by gender, age, education, religion etc. and interviewed in 20 core panel countries (Anholt, 2008). The Anholt-GfK Nation Brands Index is recognized as the most high-profile method to measure images (Aronczyk, 2013; Niesing, 2013, Buarque, 2015). After Anholt, more authors and institutions developed several models for measuring nation branding, but taking in consideration different indicators which offer concrete information regarding nations branding and country image. An important model is the one developed by FutureBrand company, which counts 600 experts from over the world. They started to publish different reports starting with 2005, but the method was improved in 2014. „People were interviewed regarding their opinion about 117 countries in five dimensions: value system; quality of life; good for business; heritage & culture; and tourism. FutureBrand collected quantitative and qualitative data from 2,530 opinion formers and frequent international business or leisure travelers in 17 countries (USA, Canada, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, UK, Germany, France, Russia, Turkey, South Africa, UAE, India, China, Thailand, Japan and Australia)” (FutureBrand, 2015).

The literature review reveals that more authors suggested different scaled of measuring nation branding, but without publishing indexes.

Gudjonsson (2005) conceived a map of influences over nation branding in order to be able to cover the most significant communication channels which can be used when building an efficient strategy of communication. He considers there are four main categories/vehicles that can contribute to the creation of country image: people, economy, geography and politics. (Nicolescu, 2008).

Mihailovic (2006) proposed the model Brand Bond Spectrum (BBS). The analyzed dimensions refer to the relations born from the cooperation between nation branding on one side and product branding on the other side. Keith Dinnie (2008) conceived Nation Brand Architecture Model – NBAR. It is based on several indicators: tourism – regions, cities and relics and cultural and political figures, export – products and services; active investment - specific sector, attracting talent - skilled workers, students; sport - national teams and clubs. Professor José Rojas-Méndez from The Business School Sprout studies and came up with a new model for measuring nation branding in 2013 – Nation Brand Molecule (NBM). He used as a premise that many nations apply ineffective strategies and waste a lot of money.

“Nation brand managers should include a more holistic approach when developing a strategy of international positioning, which should allow their country to be able to differentiate from the competitors through the offer. It doesn't need to be used the entire molecule of nation brand, but it has to be identified the strengths – those sub dimensions which could be more efficient. The more focused we are on the attributes which attract consumers, the more success changes we have” (Hickman, 2014).

The dimensions analyzed by Rojas-Méndez in his research are: economy, tourism, geography and nature, culture and patrimony, society, science and technology and government.

2. Branding the nations

Considering the concepts above, many researchers of nation branding analyzed nation branding campaigns in different countries and tried to explain their impact in country image and implicit in economy.

For example Melissa Aronczyk highlighted a dozen cases of nation branding in her book *Branding the Nation: The Global Business of National Identity* (2013). From the first pages she makes a short review of the media nation branding campaign “Inspired by Iceland”. In order to improve the country image which was deteriorated because of the 2010 financial crisis, regular Icelandic were used in videos to promote the good things from their country. The purpose was also to improve the spirit of the citizens (Aronczyk, 2013).

Alina Dolea describes in her latest book *Twenty years of (re)branding post-communist Romania* the most important nation branding campaigns between 1990-2010 and concludes that “the initiatives of state institutions are considered to have failed because the instrumentalization of modern communication practices within the Romanian Government was not enough for the actions of country promotion to be successful” (Dolea, 2015, p. 264).

On the opposite of the Romanian model, researchers of nation branding consider that Spain is one of the most successful cases of repositioning a nation brand. They say that the transformation took place as the result of a successful rebranding process which started with a tourism marketing campaign launched in 1982 on the occasion of the World Soccer Cup held in Spain (Alvarez Martinez, 2010) and continues also in present.

Governments have understood that countries, regions and even cities need a new approach upon identity, strategy and competitiveness, to benefit from the new configuration of the world stage (Anholt, 2007b). And this

was what Spain did. One of the most important observation drawn from the review of literature is that there is limited theoretical on nation branding tools of measurement, but also on nation branding campaigns. This means that the concept is still new and has room for improvement. Porter (1998) says that „many discussions about international competition emphasizes the idea of global homogenization and diminishes nations’ role”, but that „actually, the differences between nations are the key to success in competition between them”. Based on Porter’s statement and considering the goal of this article, it will be analyzed two nation brand campaigns with similar premises, but different approaches.

3. Methodology

The literature review covered a part of the relevant questions this paper tries to answer. More exactly, it helped understanding how nation brands can be measured through different tools/models developed by researchers. However to examine the impact a nation branding campaign has in country image a case study based on a comparative research between two campaigns was necessary.

I choose the nation branding campaigns initiated by Germany and Brazil with the occasion of 2006 FIFA World Cup, respectively 2014 FIFA World Cup.

When making this choice I followed the following criteria:

- The year of implementation (nation brands started to be measured starting 2005, so I chose two campaigns which were conducted after this year);
- The pretext (similar sport events, FIFA World Cup in the present case)
- Economy (two countries with similar Gross domestic product, Purchasing Power Parity based)²

Monitoring the international media can be an effective way of understanding the image of a country (Anholt 2007b, 2009), that’s why I have also used a qualitative approach. I analyzed and compared from the tone of coverage point of view first 100 online articles resulted after searching the words “Germany world cup 2006 branding” and first 100 using “brazil world cup 2014 branding”. Only the articles that were related to the two nation branding campaigns were taken in consideration. I have also compared the ranks of Germany and Brazil in the most two popular nation brand index: Anholt Nation Brand Index and Country Brand Index, developed by Futurebrand, as follow up of the analyzed campaigns. I have also taken in consideration the number of foreign tourists attracted by both countries during the competition because I believe it is relevant when discussing about the image of the two countries.

4. Who won the World Cup of Nation Branding - Germany vs. Brazil

The opportunity of hosting global events is highly dependent on what a country does with this chance (Anholt, 2010). The analysis of the nation branding campaigns of the two World Cups hosted by Germany in 2006 and Brazil in 2014 shows a big difference in the way the image of nations were perceived internationally after those two major events in terms of improvement. “*The Brazilians aren’t playing! They do magic, they do tricks, they do chip and flick, they lift the ball... that’s Brazilian football, how the world understands it, love it. And the Germans, they do not play either. They grind away, they work like dogs... they battle, they do sliding tackles, they destroy. That’s German football, how the world sees it, fears it, hates it*” (Inthorn, 2007).

The statement above describes perfect not only the way the nations were perceived by the other countries in terms of football, but also in terms of image.

Germany’s brand image in the NBI has appeared “healthy, but hard and cold – it is not a nation much associated with warmth, hospitality, beauty, culture or fun. In a word, Germany is perceived as a factory and Germany’s hexagon in the NBI has always been an unbalanced one, heavily weighted on the ‘hard’ side of economics, production and politics, and rather light on the ‘soft’ side of people, culture and landscape. It is, in fact, the mirror image of countries such as Italy and Brazil, which suffer from being heavily weighted on the ‘soft’ side, and find great difficulty in achieving recognition for their performance in political, economic and industrial matters” (Anholt, 2006). So, through their nation branding campaigns using as pretext FIFA World Cup, Germany had the purpose to rebrand in the world’s view of the nation from dour and humorless to fun-loving and friendly (Crossland, 2006) and Brazil to “prove to the world that we have a growing, stable economy and that we are one of the countries that achieved stability” (Buarque, 2015).

Did the two countries reach their goals? Before analyzing the results in terms of numbers, it is necessary first to make a short description of the two branding campaigns.

² According to World Bank 2015 Gross domestic product ranking table based on purchasing power parity (PPP), Germany ranks fifth with 3,848,272 million of international dollars and Brazil seventh with 3,192,398 of millions of international dollars.

Germany – Time to make friends

When Germany decided to build a strategy of rebranding, first it recruited researchers to look at the way that the country was perceived, and one word emerged: unfriendly. The strategy moving forward was thus centered on dispelling the idea that Germans were efficient engineers but otherwise unfriendly, and it gave rise to the 2006 tournament slogan: Time to make friends (Eberl, 2007) which was approved by the German government, FIFA and Local Organizing Committee.

Right on time for the 2006 FIFA World Cup, Germany had founded one year before the nation branding called “Land of Ideas” which was launched in 2006. The name came from a direct quote from former German President Horst Köhler’s inaugural address in 2004. He spoke of Germany as a country that is distinguished by its history of invention and creativity, especially in the fields of science and the arts. This branding campaign stands out from most of the others that have been launched in Germany due to the fact that “Land der Ideen” was formed, monitored and executed solely by the government (Miller, 2012).

The center of this campaign remained the 2006 FIFA World Cup and included six projects implemented which had the purpose to communicate this image to a world audience:

- o The “Walk of Ideas” with its six giant sculptures at central locations in Berlin represents Germany’s history of invention and culture.
- o “365 Landmarks in the Land of Ideas” describes Germany’s biggest event series and is synonymous of the wealth of ideas in the past, present and future.
- o “Media Service” and “MediaClub 2006” were extremely popular among international journalists as information exchanges.
- o “FanClub Germany” excellently matches the positive, identity-promoting atmosphere which people embraced.
- o “Welcome to Germany – Land of Ideas” presented Germany to the world as a welcoming host.
- o “Invest in Germany – Land of Ideas” advertised Germany as a centre for business and investment in book publications and international PR campaigns (German Federal Ministry of Interior, 2006).

This last presented project had in its center the German supermodel Claudia Schiffer who was supporting the campaign in New York, London and Tokyo, through posters which show her naked, wrapped only in the German national flag, with taglines such as: “Come on over to my place” (Nicola, 2006). “This campaign represented the first time Germans felt proud to wave the German flag” (Aronczyk, 2013). The posters will be sited at major financial sites in New York, London and Tokyo. The press release for the campaign explains: “Claudia Schiffer’s presentation of Germany goes beyond the usual German virtues of quality and thoroughness. She also brings across a likeable and attractive image of her country” (Aronczyk, 2013, pp. 150).

At present the campaign “Land of Ideas” still continues and includes a lot of projects which are launched regularly such as: “Landmarks in the Land of Ideas”, “10th Anniversary: Festival of Ideas in Berlin”, “100 Women of Tomorrow” (Germany Land of Ideas, 2016) and many more.

Brazil - All in one rhythm

“Brand Brazil is strongly biased towards youth market: samba, carnival, music, dancing, gaiety, ecology, sex, beaches, sport and adventure” (Anholt, 1998, p. 402). Those are stereotypes which are still available also today.

In October 2007, when Brazil was announced as the host of the 2014 FIFA World Cup, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva spoke passionately about what was seen as an international achievement of the country. Brazil, he said, should “prove to the world that we have a growing, stable economy and that we are one of the countries that achieved stability” (Buarque, 2015).

Branded as a so-called BRIC economy alongside Russia, India, and China, Brazil wants to be seen a strong and newly emerging international market player. Brazil wants a serious place at the table of international affairs. In this way, the Olympics and the World Cup are tools for generating fiscal advantage. Through hosting the World Cup, Brazil aims to monetize national identity and diplomacy objectives (Campbell, 2014). So, Brazil did not follow the German model to launch a big nation branding campaign which would integrate the two major events they hosted. They just focused on each event different campaigns, focusing on their main purpose: show the economic strength of the country.

The World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games are part of a strategy of sports diplomacy to enhance the country’s reputation symbolizing Brazil’s rise on the international stage and its assuming the role of an influential country in world affairs (Signitzer and Coombs, 1992; Soares e Castro, 2013; Szondi, 2008; Buarque, 2015).

Music and “football” have done so much to shape the culture and the public perception of the world’s fifth-largest country. As the host nation of the 2014 World Cup, Brazil is hoping to bring these two themes together to

establish a uniquely Brazilian aura for the event. The slogan for the 2014 tournament is “All in one rhythm.” The phrase was concocted in May 2012, through the joint cooperation of FIFA, the Brazilian government and the Local Organizing Committee (Carson, 2013). Not being integrated in a larger nation branding project, this campaign had nothing special except the fact that it was a very important sport event with high visibility and the only relevant information found in the literature review or within online articles, except the results in numbers, remains the slogan mentioned above.

5. Results

The analysis of the 200 online articles shows a relevant difference between the two countries from the point of view of the image perceived internationally after the two nation branding campaigns.

Content analysis of 100 online articles with the key words “Germany world cup 2006 branding” and 100 online articles with the key words using Google search engine

Table 1

Tone of Coverage	100 Articles Germany	100 Articles Brazil
Positive	98	46
Negative	-	43
Neutral	2	11

Source: by author based on own research

As we can see in the table above, Germany had no negative articles regarding its campaign. The conclusions withdrawn after analyzing the content were that “the 2006 World Cup was such an overwhelming success that Germany now holds the second most valuable country brand in the Nation Brand Index (NBI), tourism bookings have increased by nearly one third, unemployment has dropped by more than 20%, and investor confidence has surged to an all-time high. Moreover, Germany transformed the negative mood of its population into one of optimism” (Eberl, 2007).

One year after the 2006 World Cup, Time Magazine titled their cover story "Germany revs up", and the Financial Times, notoriously critical of Germany, wrote admiringly of a "new economic miracle" (Eberl, 2009). Regarding Brazil, things are different, with less than half positive articles. After analyzing 3.733 articles which mentioned Brazil in 2014, in the context of 2014 World Cup, Daniel Buarque concluded in his article that “Although the visibility increased, Brazil did not seize the opportunity to rebrand itself in 2014 as a serious nation, and the image of the country continued to be attached to stereotypes related to parties and to social unrest and political problems” (Buarque, 2015).

Ranking and Foreign Visitors Germany and Brazil

Table 2

	Germany - 2006	Brazil - 2014
Rank Anholt Nation Brand Index Before/After the campaign	6/2	21/20
Country Brand Index Before/After the campaign	-	28/43
Foreign Visitors	2 millions	1 million

Source: by author based on own research

As it can be seen in Table 2, following the nation branding campaign during the 2006 World Cup, Germany moved from 6th place in Anholt Nation Brand Index in 2005 to 2nd place in the next surveys. ‘As the country that hosted a successful Soccer World Cup, it could have expected to experience a boost in its international image. The increase in Germany’s score in this period was a respectable 2.3%, enough to move it from 6th place at the end of 2005 to 2nd place in the last two surveys. Until the last quarter of 2006, its year-on-year increase was even higher, over 3% (Anholt, 2007c).

Brazil was on the 21st place in 2013 in NBI and after the World Cup campaign moved up just one rank. Anholt-GfK did not publish special reports to analyze Brazil's nation branding campaign, like it happened in Germany's case.

On the other hand, FutureBrand did not analyze Germany from the World Cup 2006 point of view and there are not Country Brand Index for that period. But FutureBrand experts focused on Brazil on their Country Brand Index 2014-15 which fall from 28th place on the 43rd. After World Cup 2014, "Brazil now has weaker perceptions in attributes like Standard of living, Safety and Value for money" (FutureBrand, 2015).

So even if it couldn't be compared Germany's ranking before and after the campaign from FutureBrand perspective, I considered that it was very relevant for this study, given the special attention paid to Brazil.

From the foreign tourist point of view, according to government figures, 1 million foreign tourists visited Brazil during the month-long event, far exceeding its pre-Cup projection of 600,000 visitors coming to the country from abroad (Armstrong, 2015), while Germany received two million foreign visitors for the 2006 tournament. Even if both tournaments were a success from the point of view of tourism, the comparison of foreign tourist shows that Germany managed to promote better the event, attracting more visitors.

Conclusions

Nation branding does not make miracles, although it works on marketing principles, it cannot fix bad policies ruled by governments (Anholt, 2007b). But if policies ruled by government are good, then nation branding can make miracles. The comparison of the two nation branding campaigns, showed a clear impact of it in the image of the country. While Germany improved a lot the international perception regarding the people, which was their purpose, Brazil did not manage completely to benefit from the big change of organizing an event such Football World Cup.

In my opinion, Germany registered such great results because they applied a blue ocean strategy when they conceived their nation branding campaign. Even if blue ocean strategy is a theory used usually by companies (Tuclea, 2016), it can also be extended to nations when it comes to branding.

What did Germany do? First of all they redefined the problem. Most countries create a branding campaign thinking about two main purposes: attraction tourists or/and increase foreign investment. These are classical goals in nation branding campaign. But Germany established for this campaign a completely new purpose: to make friends. And what will friends do? They'll come to visit and maybe they'll also bring presents. When they conceived posters for the campaign, in the context of the FIFA World Cup, they acted against traditional logic. Everybody would have expected serious banners with serious messages. But they came with supermodel Claudia Schiffer dressed with the German flag, transmitting messages such as: "Come on over to my place", "See you in Germany", "Invest in Germany, boys", "Size does matter", "Invest in a serious relationship".

Things that shocked at first view became a real success afterwards. Media all over the world wrote about the campaign, and suddenly Germany was not only a serious country with cold people, but a serious country with friendly and fun people.

The "Walk of Ideas" was another innovative idea, part of Germany's strategy. Six giant sculptures localized at central locations in Berlin were designed using modern techniques to celebrate Germany's history of innovation. So, "the friends" who came in Germany had also the opportunity to learn some history about the country that innovated so much in the past and that continues to innovate also at present, an example being even the six sculptures.

Therefore Germany, in contrast to Brazil, came with an unexpected approach, adding in its nation branding campaign original elements such as those described above. Germany managed to build a competitive advantage ignoring the competition and creating a new type of consumers – friends, instead of classical tourists or investors. In conclusion they created value innovation and they registered huge success.

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