

# **BRANDING THAILAND AND ITS IMPLICATION**

**By**

**Thidarat Saenjai**

**THESIS**

Submitted to  
KDI School of Public Policy and Management  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

**MASTER OF PUBLIC POLICY**

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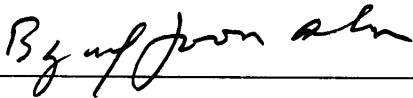
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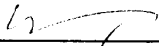
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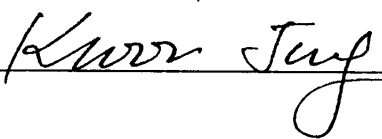
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Approval as of December, 2011

## **ABSTRACT**

### **BRANDING THAILAND AND ITS IMPLICATION**

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**Thidarat Saenjai**

Nation branding is becoming an important issue and interest for the academics, practitioners, business people, government officials, politicians and the public in various countries, particularly in the past decade. More and more countries are jumping on the bandwagon in order to change the world's view of their nations in the attempt to increase their comparative advantage in the international arena. Thailand is no different. It is in the process of improving its image to attract the attention, respect and trust from the potential investors, visitors, governments, media and consumers of other nations. With this in mind, the government is projecting Thailand's positive strengths to give it a comparative advantage in the global market place. This thesis investigates Thailand's effort in trying to improve and broadening its recognition in the international arena by adopting the concepts of nation branding. It examines Thailand in relations to Simon Anholt's competitive identity, which represents the six 'natural' channels of communication through which countries communicate with the world in order to create its successful brand and recognition: exports, governance, investment and immigration, culture and heritage, people and tourism. A qualitative approach of interviews, case studies and survey are used to research on how branding theory can be applied to Thailand. In spite of the complexity of the subject and the suggestion that most scholars and practitioners made

that tourism is the one of the softer element of the comparative identities for a nation to use as a tool to brand the country, this study attempts to develop an appropriate framework to support that Thailand can brand itself using its strengths through tourism. Moreover, other relevant implications are discussed to address the need for a successful nation branding strategy for Thailand.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Many people have given up their time and generous support to this paper. First of all I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Colombo Plan and KDI School of Public Policy and Management for giving me the opportunity and experience.

I would like to also thank Professor Byung-joon Ahn, my supervisor, for his direction, assistance and guidance. I also owe my thanks to all the professors at KDI for their untiring effort in encouraging us to pursue our goals.

My thanks and appreciations also go to my student colleagues at KDI for their moral support and friendship, as well, the administrators and supporting staff for all the administrative enquiries.

Special thanks should be given to all the interviewees, without you this paper would not have taken shape and completed in time.

Last but not the least, my family, for the support and encouragement, thank you so much.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

Throughout the course of marketing history, the practice of branding began in order to build a “recognizable and distinctive identities” (Hankinson, 2010, p. 301). Noted by Low and Fullerton (1994) branding started in the United States back in the late 1800s and early 1900s by business owners and entrepreneurs to differentiate themselves from others in the increasing crowded marketplaces, through advertising and promotion (Low & Fullerton, 1994, cited in Hankinson, 2010, p. 301). Needless to say, branding is perhaps the most powerful tools in marketing. However, with the increased globalization, technological innovations, fierce international competition and an increased convergence of markets, the concept of branding integrated itself in the disciplinary of international relations as well, notably in the last decade.

The concept of branding in the disciplinary of international relations is referred to as ‘Nation Branding’. It is defined as “the strategic self-presentation of a country with the aim of creating reputational capita through economic, political and social interest promotion at home and abroad” (Szondi, 2008, cited in Dinnie, 2009, p. 1). Kotler and Gertner (2002) believe that nations with a strong positive brand identity will have a better competitive advantage over nations that have poorly developed identities or negative reputation in the global marketplace (cited in Skinner & Kubacki, 2007, p. 305). Moreover, Dinnie (2008) has pointed out that as the

“focus on self-presentation and promotion derives from a public relations perspective and emphasizes the importance for a nation to actively manage its reputation rather than passively allowing external parties to impose their won brand onto the nation. Nation branding may thus be conceived as a form of self-defense in which countries seek to tell their own stories rather than be defined by foreign media, rival nations, or the perpetuation of national stereotypes” (Dinnie, 2008a). Countries that have identified their images and key products, as well as prioritize the appropriate policies to strengthen such attributes, are already positioned as successful economies, which can draw on their comparative advantages to find ways to encourage the positive development of the countries. Van Ham (2001) has noted, “Smart states are building their brands around reputations an attitudes in the same way smart companies do” (cited in Dinnie, 2008a p. 5). However, as the vocabulary of the term ‘nation branding’ in the international affairs “is not universally welcomed and there is a widespread sense of cynicism and suspicious regarding the appropriateness and relevance of such overtly commercial practice” (Dinnie, 2008a, p. 5), a comprehensive nation branding strategy should encompass initiatives and programmes to stimulate Diaspora mobilization, while enhancing the coordination of the nation’s key institutions to ensure a reasonable degree of consistency in the country’s official communication and behaviour (Dinnie, 2008a, p. 5). This is important as what most of the government in the branding world is now engaged in, one way or another, is “most visibly through the hiring of public relations agencies in an attempt to manipulate opinion in target audiences” (Dinnie 2008a, p. 5).

As agreed by scholars and academics in the field of nation branding, the goals commonly associated with nation branding include export promotion, the attraction of foreign investments, business partners and qualified professionals, tourism promotion, as well as provide “soft power” in the shape of political, diplomacy and cultural leverage, and more intangibly, an increase in the influence of the nation in world affairs. Because of its benefits and what it could bring to the country, nations and policy makers are striving to shape the image and creating a favourable reputation achieve the attractive outcomes. As a result, the attempt to brand a nation is now widespread and may be conceptualized and practiced at nation, city or region level (Anholt 2007, Moilanen & Rainisto, 2008; Morgan et al, 2004, Hankinson, 2004). Many agreed that specific challenges arise when attempting to brand places and creating a long lasting nation image is a lengthy process that involves visions, efforts and resources. This is because every place has its preconditions, history, culture and people, which are represented through multiple and often contested identities (Skinner, 2005).

Nation branding is, unarguably becoming an important issue of interest. Nations and companies today seek to distinguish themselves through branding in order to compete for exports, human capital, tourism and foreign direct investment and focus their attention on “countries as brands” to make country equity an issue of central interest in business and government alike (Kotler & Gertner, 2002, p. 4). According to Simon Anholt (2010), a nation branding expert, the highly regarded a nation is, the easier it is to succeed in business, tourism and diplomatic relations. A strong brand makes it easier for a nation’s citizen, government and

businesses to interact with other countries and to take advantage of commercial opportunities as they arise (Anholt, 2010).

Widler (2007) described the globalised world as a “marketplace in which nations are competing with each other, and branding is promoted as a strategy to do so successfully” (Widler, 2007, p. 146). As such, the governments of numerous countries in Asia are actively engaging in the concept of nation branding in order to position themselves ahead of others in term of attracting foreign visitors and capitals. However, branding in Asia, as seems, “usually means putting a single adjective in from of the name of the country” (Cranston, 2010). These slogans, as Cranston (2010) has pointed out, “are just words and reputation are built on action” (Cranston, 2010). What a country needs to do in term of creating a strong nation brand is to develop a marketing strategy based on national identity and policy that will helps guide its actions in developing its reputation (Cranston, 2010). Take Malaysia for example, many may argued that it is portrayed as a successful nation branding case in Asia, but it is in fact not so. Anholt (2008a) refers to Malaysia, campaigned as Malaysia Truly Asia” as:

[Malaysia is] often (wrongly) cited as a classic case of successful nation branding. In fact, this is destination branding, carried out with the specific intention of increasing visitors to the country. It was never intended, nor could it really aspire, to impact directly on the world’s overall perceptions of the country, although of course there are plenty of opportunities for indirect impacts on the country’s ‘brand image’ – not least the simple fact that if more people visit the country and enjoy themselves, they are more likely to spread the word and create a positive ‘vibe’ about the place.

(Anholt, 2008a, p. 265).

Like Malaysia, Thailand shares the same successful case of destination branding.

Destination branding is a “sophisticated tourism promotion” (Anholt, 2008a, p. 265) and is relatively close to the kind of branding found in the commercial sphere, which uses many commercial techniques such as corporate identity, public relations, advertising and graphic design in its process of promotion. Why the case of Malaysia and Thailand are identified as destination branding rather than nation branding is because, in the end, the two countries attempt to “promote a product or service that is on sale to the audience one is targeting” (Anholt, 2008a, p. 265), which is one of the main characteristic of destination branding. In the contradictory aspect of nation branding, however, there is no single product or service for sale and no single promotional goal, and this alone, sets destination branding and nation branding apart. Nation branding involves the management of the country’s overall reputation, and does not concentrates entirely on branding popular tourist destinations with the aim of attracting tourists as that with destination branding (Anholt, 2008a, p. 265). Moreover, it has the “desire to make people see the country in a different light” (Anholt, 2008a, p. 265). Promoting tourism, as the key aspect of destination branding, is situated on the ‘soft side’ of the competitive identity hexagon, thus through the success or promotion of this aspect alone will not generate a positive image of the nation and create a ‘strong brand’ or change people’s perception. With this in mind, the Thai government engaged itself in several campaigns with the aim of increasing visitors, FDI, export promotions, and most importantly, to restore confidence, build a stronger image and voice itself as a serious player on the international stage.

Thailand, similar to other nations, competes with others and strives to devise sources of competitive advantage. Thus, this is one of the few reasons, and likely the most important, of why it has jumped on the bandwagon in the effort of promoting its tourism, cultural and heritage and at the same time attracting foreign direct investments, business and development, increases its imports and exports and enhances the product country image. Having succeeded with branding, Thailand will not only have attracted investors and visitors, but it will also attract people (as residents, workforce, and student or future citizens), promoting its reputation and building its political influence abroad (Hummin & Humborg, 2010, p. 185). As Anholt (2002) has noted, having a brand means living in the limelight, with all the benefits and obligations that this confers. However, the imaged projected must be based on facts and reality, honesty and transparency and a promise that can be delivered to the customers (Anholt, 2002, p. 60). “Having a powerful brand is as much an invitation for consumers to complain, as it is their guarantee of quality; as much a requirement for companies to behave correctly, as it is licensee for them to make more money; as much a commitment to continuous innovation, as an opportunity to enjoy customer loyalty. It is, in short, as much a responsibility as a privilege” (Anholt, 2002, p. 60). Therefore, for Thailand to engage effectively in branding the nation, it has to first of all identify its strengths, weakness, as well as its opportunities and threats. As experts, scholars, practitioners and governments have seen the success and failures of those trying to practice and implement the principles of nation branding, Thailand must take careful steps in managing and controlling its branding strategy.

One of the most important questions this thesis will explore is this: How important is nation branding to Thailand? And thus, what necessary steps or strategies need to be ratified and implemented for branding Thailand to work in the long run. While the obvious answer is that nation branding techniques can of course be used to change the negative perception that people have towards Thailand, given that the image are real and cannot be fake, there are several major policy changes in which the government will need to concentrate on to take the task of branding Thailand and to position the country as an important player in the international arena seriously. Hildreth (2010) has pointed out that:

it is an essential truth about perceptions that they cannot be erased, only create. Getting rid of unwanted perceptions, then, should be seen as fostering new and stronger associations that come to dominate and replace the old one. If its reality is very poor, then the first branding task of a place is to improve. But the improvement can – and should – be carried out while working from a thoughtful and imaginative brand strategy.

(Hildreth, 2010, p. 29)

As the success of nation branding depends largely on the commitment of its government, steering committee, stakeholders and the general public, it will be interesting to see whether branding Thailand will produce any effective results that will in turn, have an impact on the country's strategy in improving its image and attracting investments and visitors as it is set out to do. Simonin (2008) has stated, "in spite of the differences of opinions and controversies on the subject, today the relevant questions is not whether to pursue nation branding, but rather how to do it right" (Simonin, 2008, p. 20). Thailand, at the risk of being left behind, jumped on the bandwagon of nation branding with a sense of urgency, but may have

neglected to take the issue seriously and foresee its future and could turnout as many, without great marketing savvy or success.

## **1.2 Some Important Facts and Definitions**

In this study, several technical terms are being used constantly encompassing both the areas of marketing and political fields. Terms such as nation branding and destination branding, for example, are used interchangeably, while there are subtle difference between the two. Additionally, the terms country's image and reputation and soft power also appear in the study regularly.

In the realm of marketing, the term Brand is defined by the American Marketing Association as a “name, term, sign symbol, or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group f sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition” (cited in Kotler & Gertner, 2002, p. 1). Moreover, brands also differentiate products and represent a promise of value, while incite beliefs, evoke emotions and prompt behaviour of the consumers (Kotlet & Gertner, 2002, p. 1).

Comparative Identity, which evolved from Simon Anholt's brand hexagon is constructed to help countries, cities and region position themselves stronger and better in the global marketplace. This is done, as Anholt suggests, in the following ways:



- through courageous and enlightened social, economic, environmental and foreign policies;
- through the dynamic development of tourism, foreign investment and exports;
- through carefully chosen international cultural, sporting and political events;
- through improved cultural and academic relations with other countries;
- through a strategic commitment to international development and poverty reduction;
- through productive engagement with multilateral institutions, regional organizations and with NGOs at home and abroad;
- through effective coordination between government, industry and civil society;
- through enhanced public and private diplomacy overseas;
- through a visionary long-term approach to innovation, investment and education.

([www.simonanholt.com](http://www.simonanholt.com))

In expression of the terms Country and Nation, while they are used interchangeable in this study, there is a subtle difference between the two. Country, refers to “an indefinite usually extended expanse of land, the land of a person’s birth, residence, citizenship, or a political state or nation or its territory” (Merriam-Webster), while ‘nation’

refers to “a community of people composed of one or more nationalities and possessing a more or less defined territory and government” (Merriam-Webster). In sum, a nation generally refers to a large group of the same race and language while a country means an area of land occupied by a nation (Longman, 1995).

As agreed by many in the field of branding, a Country Image and Reputation has a significant effect on how the country is perceived offshore and country image plays a significant part when it comes to branding (Kotler & Gertner, 2002, p. 2). The image and reputation is something this a nation enjoys in the global community. However, the nation’s image is not how a country defined by itself but it is defined by the people outside the country, which involves people’s perceptions that are in most cases influenced by stereotyping, media coverage as well as personal experience. Thus, country image can be understood as the accumulation of beliefs and impressions people hold about places, which results from its geography, history, proclamations, art and music, famous citizens and other features (Kotler & Gertner, 2002, p. 2). To put it simply, as Kotler and Gertner (2002) pointed out, country image is in fact are stereotyped. Interestingly, Kotler and Gertner (2002) analyzed the stereotype of a country’s image as:

[The images] are often the extreme simplifications of the reality that are not necessarily accurate. People who stereotype about a country are usually those in low involvement situation, sloppy cognitive processors...Their lack of knowledge are commonly used as short-cut information processing and often find resisting to changes or adjustments to their cognitive structures or prior knowledge and prefer to ‘adjust what they see to fit what they know’....Such people are more likely to pay attention to information that confirms their expectation, which, therefore, will prove to be a challenge to try and change the perception as stereotyped images can be long lasting.

(Kotler & Gertner, 2002, p. 2).

It is also important to keep in mind that the age of globalization means the increasing and significant role of the media to influence the way people perceived others, as well as impacting on people's perception about a place, particularly those viewed negatively. Further, as the countries' images and reputation are also often identified with product categories such as perfume, electronics, wines and automotives, as well as societal ills such as, political riots, civil rights violations, economic turmoil, poverty and violent crimes, AIDS epidemics and attacks on the environment, racial conflict, countries around the world are adopting the concept of nation branding in the effort of managing their countries' images and reputation in the global community to be able to compete in the global marketplace (Kotler & Gertner 2002 p 2).

Destination Branding, as defined by Simon Anholt, is a sophisticated tourism promotion (Anholt, 2008a, p. 265). Destination branding is fairly close to the kind of branding found in the commercial sphere, and makes use of many commercial techniques such as corporate identity, public relations, advertising, graphic design and so on. Importantly, destination branding is closely linked to the kind of branding in the commercial sphere as there is the obvious attempt for the nation in promoting a product or service to the target audience. Nation branding, on the other hand, is rather different because it usually described as the management of the country's overall reputation and there is no single product or service for sale and no single promotional goals. Rather, the government in question has the "desire to make people see the country in a different light" (Anholt, 2008a p. 265).

Nation Branding, as there is no tangible offer and its attributes are difficult to define or describe, is a term that is widely discussed and argued in the branding aspect of public policy management. Anholt, a nation branding expert, has mentioned earlier in his literature that branding is primarily about “people, purpose and reputation.” It is “a consistent and all-embracing national brand strategy which determines the most realistic, most competitive and most compelling strategy version for the country, and ensures that this version is supported, reinforced, and enriched by every act of communication between the country and the rest of the world” (Anholt, 1998, cited in Fan, 2008, p. 3). As nation branding, to some extent, is designed to change the perception of the people and alter the negativity image of a country, nation branding, then, is “what you get when you take traditional public diplomacy strategies and add marketing tools designed to change national perceptions” (Risen, 2005, p. 2). One of the most important aspect of nation branding lays in the coordination and consistent of the brand message and strategy and its capability to respond to the stereotypes or images already in circulation. Fan, (2006) points out that “one of the most apparent differences between a nation brand and a commercial brand is ownership of the product. Whereas in the commercial product, it is “owned by a sole owner who has legal rights over the product that is protected by law” (Fan, 2006, p. 2), nation brand neither owns by the government or a particular group of the country. Rather, it is owned by the entire population of the country and the purpose of nation branding seeks only to create emotional rather than functional benefits for its audiences and the nation itself as none of the individuals has any control over the use (or abuse) of it’s the country’s name and image (Fan, 2006, p. 5). In sum, as noted by Fan (2006) nation branding

“concerns applying branding and marketing communications techniques to promote a nation’s image” (Fan, 2006, p. 3).

With a review of some close examination of nation branding definitions by scholars, academics and experts in the field, the concept of nation branding and its focus, purpose and outcome differs from one scholar to another. The definitions are summarized as:

1. To remold national identities (Olins, 1999)
2. To enhance a nation’s competitiveness (Anholt, 2007, Lee, 2009)
3. To embrace political, cultural, business and sport activities  
(Jaffe & Nebenzahl, 2001)
4. To promote economic and political interests at home and abroad  
(Rendon, 2003, Szondi, 2007)
5. To alter, improve or enhance a nation’s image/reputation  
(cited in Fan, 2010, p. 100).

In this respect, Anholt has identified a selected group of countries as have national images “so powerful and so positive” that they amount to “megabrands, Turnaround Brands and Brand to Watch” (cited in Risen, 2005). These countries, which include France “chick and quality living”, Italy “style and sexiness”, Germany “quality engineering”, Switzerland “purity, wealth, integrity” and Japan “technology, entertainment, design” are “effortlessly synonymous with a number of valuable attributes” that they need less effort in comparison to others in term of positioning themselves in the global marketplace (cited in Risen, 2005).

As much of its definition is still being discussed and argued in this field of study, it can be seen that there is no single definition to describe the term. Thus, to simply put, nation branding is the field of theory and practice which combines the methods of marketing and public relations that aims to measure, build and manage the image and reputation of a country to increase its influence, importance and participation in the international arena, while at the same time attract foreign investment, human resources to help with the development of the country.

With respect to the National Brands Index (NBI), it is a study of a country's competitive position, which explored the perception of the world towards the country in question, ranging from delight to resentment and tangible and intangible attributes. Its concept, which was developed by Simon Anholt and was first released in 2005, known as the Simon Anholt Brands Index, is used to measure the global perception of a country in several spheres. The criteria underlying ranking of NBI are people, governance, exports, tourism, culture and heritage and investment and immigration. The measurement of each criterion is explained as follows:

*People* measures the population's reputation for competence, education, openness and friendliness and other qualities are assessed, as well as the perceived levels of potential hostility and discrimination.

*Governance* measures the public opinion regarding the level of national government competency and fairness and describes individuals' beliefs about each country's

government, while also looking at the issue such as democracy, justice, poverty and environment as the country's commitment is perceived.

*Exports* measures the extent to which consumers seek or avoid products originate from the country in question to determine the public's image and perception they have on the country's products and services.

*Tourism*, which is seen as an important and most convenience tool for a country to use to brand itself, is the capture of interests level a target audience has that influence their decision on their visit to a country.

*Culture and Heritage* defines the global perceptions of each nation's heritage and appreciation for its contemporary culture, including film, music, art, sport and literature.

*Investment and Immigration*, the key aspects in drawing in the capital and human resources in order to contribute to the wealth and development of a country, determines the attractiveness a country has in order to appeal to the people to live, work or study in each country and reveals how people perceive a country's economic and social situation ([www.simonanholt.com](http://www.simonanholt.com), 2009).

Since 2008, NBI is jointly researched by GfK Roper Public Affairs & Media and Simon Anholt, which resulted in an expansion of the former version created by Anholt and became known as the Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index (NBI). The method of the research is by conducting interviews, using sample population over the age of seventeen in core countries such as the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy,

Sweden, Russia, Poland, Turkey, Japan, China, India, South Korea, Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Egypt, South Africa ([www.simonanholt.com](http://www.simonanholt.com), 2009).

Public Diplomacy (PD) is, to some extent, closely linked to nation branding.

Public diplomacy is defined as the communication of the essence of policy that involves 'getting other people on your side' – PD is ultimately about influencing other people's opinions and attitudes. Its' work is aimed at influencing in a positive way the perceptions of individuals and organizations abroad about one's own country and their engagement with one's country. PD can then be seen as the instrumentalisation of soft power, that is, the power of one's attraction and reputation overseas. PD is tailor-made to the needs of different countries that have given it greater priority in their diplomacy and a variety of reasons. Alternatively PD may aim at boosting a country's exports and foreign inward investment, which is usually a prime driver for public diplomacy in developing countries. PD is as much about listening and receiving as it is about speaking and sending. In this respect PD shares similarities with marketing techniques (Melissen, 2006).

The definition of Soft Power as provided by Joseph Nye is "the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. It arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies...When our policies are seen as legitimate in the eyes of others, our soft power is enhanced." (Nye, 2004). Soft power constitutes the power and ability to gain objectives, which includes propaganda, but is considerably broader, and to some extent seduction. Seduction, as pointed out by Nye, "[Seduction] is always more effective



than coercion, and many values like democracy and human rights, and individual opportunities are deeply seductive. As General Wesley Clark put it, soft power 'gave us an influence far beyond the hard edge of traditional balance-of-power politics.'" (Nye, 2004). In sum, soft power is "when you can get others to admire your ideals and to want what you want, you do not have to spend as much on sticks and carrots to move them in your direction" (Nye, 2004).

Stereotypes, as defined by Widler (2007), refers to the thought and opinion that people hold about other nations because they do not know enough about them. Nonetheless, stereotypes are described as "outdated simplifications", as "generalization based on impressions instead of facts", as "distorted ideas" (Widler, 2007, p. 148). In nation branding, stereotypes seem to be both its enemy and the best friend, as in practice, prevailing stereotypes are often the starting point from which a national brand is developed. Thomas Carlhed calls stereotypes a bridge to people's minds over which new information can be transmitted. "Even if the stereotypes were often wrong, at least there was something to build upon" (Widler, 2007, p. 148).

### **1.3 The Objectives of the Study**

Maintaining a country's positive image and reputation is important as they have a significant effect on how a country interacts with the outside world. Not only that it has an impact on the interaction through trade, investment and tourism, but also on how the country's citizens are treated when they travel abroad for the purposes of business, study or

leisure. If the government can enhance and maintain the country's positive image and reputation of its nation, this will in turn doing a big favour for its citizens as well. As such, today there are more reasons why nations must manage their reputations and images in order to attract tourists, investments, talented people and to find markets for their exports. Dinnie (2003) has pointed out, as the global competition grew fierce and changes rapidly, the application of branding techniques to nations and places is growing in frequency (Dinnie, 2003, p. 3).

The aims of nation branding, as pointed out by scholars, practitioners and experts in the field, is the creation of a precise, clear, simple, diverse, variety and differentiating idea, which is built around true facts, qualities and attributes of a nation that can be symbolized both verbally and visually and understood by diverse audiences in a variety of situations. Note that the reputation and image must be built around true facts as the strengths of a country consist of its culture and heritage and political and economic plurality. For a country that attempt to "impose an artificial coherence, and to spin it to the rest of the world in the way that policy makers or their consultants think profitable, risks undermining both richness and credibility" (Riordan, 2004, p. 9). For nation branding to work effectively, government must embrace political, cultural, business and sport activities or to put it simply the process of nation branding should involve not just marketing, but also every important aspects of a nation's true character (Jaffe & Nebenzahl, 2001, cited in Fan ,2006, p. 3).

Thailand needs to employ suitable branding techniques to exploit its reputation by significantly improving and broadening the recognition of Thai's expertise and capabilities in the global community. The objectives of this study are as follows:

- to analyze and assess the current reputation, image, perception and status of Thailand in the international community;
- to examine Thailand's strengths in the area of tourism and current branding progress; and
- to examine the feasibility of Thailand in term of Anholt's Comparative Identity, to identify its strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats in order to generate recommendations for policy makers

The new evidence will be aimed at recommending possible conclusion for policy makers to make rational decisions regarding the future implementation and approval of political, economic and social policies in Thailand in regards to branding the nation and what area should the country focus on in order to brand itself successfully. While keeping in mind that nation branding is a lengthy process and requires solid commitment, I am convinced that this research will provide well-grounded answers to the steering committee and stakeholders to make decisive decision to work together and build a strong brand for Thailand. Moreover, the research also aims to provide an insight and constructive arguments on the importance of creating a positive image and reputation and maintaining it for the benefit of the country in the global marketplace.

## 1.4 The Importance of the Study

In the age of globalization where the fierce market competition forces nations to compete with one another more intensively, a country's image as a reliable player in global community increased its importance, as this has an effect on how other nation perceive and view one another. This in turn, gives a leverage power to a nation and its interaction with the global community and marketplace as well as the attractiveness and an agreeable place to live, do business and visit. As stated by Anholt (2010c) "with a good national image, attracting tourists, investors and talent, enhancing exports, and winning the approval of other governments and international public opinion is relatively cheap and easy, with a negative or weak image, everything is a struggle" (Anholt, 2010c).

Thailand is an economy that has been showing substantial economic development, considerably more than its neighboring countries. Despite the unique culture, world class tourism and hospitality, attractive economic policies and other positive attributes, a review of the existing empirical works showed that the country's image has been somewhat affected by the political instability. Thus, the country is in need of a carefully crafted policy to improve the way it is viewed by the international community. Although the notion of branding Thailand emerged as a priority during the administration of Abhisit (whose administration was dissolved on 9 May 2011) there has neither a significant process nor thorough research on the topic, let alone the recommendation put forward for the steering committee and policy makers.

Additionally, there is no existing conclusion that branding Thailand is a relatively well-constructed campaign or policy.

Notably, “many countries have wasted enormous sums of public money on communications campaigns, based on the assumption that people don’t respect their country simply because they don’t know enough about it” (Anholt 2010c). What the country in question does then is paying a large sum of money for a 30 seconds slot on BBC or CNN and or a pullout section in the paper with the hope that it in someway affects the perception of the audience and with a bit of luck, alters the negative perception about the place. Sadly, it does not work out easily as planned. Take China and India for examples. Both countries are consistently featured in cover articles of the world’s most important business and magazines about their extraordinary growth rates and transformation even though some of these articles touch on enduring political and social problems. In most cases, although the publications stress the positive aspect of the country and are generally the focus of these reports, however, it does not necessary mean that the publication, report or the readers are unaware or unconcerned about national problems (Gertner, 2007, p. 6). Additionally, Anholt (2010c) interestingly mentioned that:

in most cases, [they] are deluding themselves, and the real reason why their country has a negative reputation is that it doesn’t deserve a positive one. When we’re talking about the middle power, the issue is very often one of relevance: Most people don’t care very much about most other countries, especially if they don’t possess a great deal of economic, military, political or cultural clout. Rather than asking themselves “what can we say to make ourselves more famous?” the government of such countries should be asking “what can we do to make ourselves more relevant?”. The problem is that even if a country truly deserves a better reputation, simply telling people about it is not enough to alter that reputation. People are firmly attached to their views about cities and countries. In general, they will only change them if they

simply have no other choice and the evidence is overwhelming. They don't generally pay much attention to communications campaigns – especially when there is no “product” or offer, and when the “brand” that is speaking is a government rather than an exciting consumer goods company – so even if a lack of communication is indeed the problem, simply providing more information is never the solution. A reputation can never be constructed through communications, slogans and logos: it needs to be earned.

(Anholt, 2010c)

Thus, the importance of this study then is this; although much of the literature exist in relation to branding and many studies have been conducted on both successful and failure cases, the research examining the notion of branding Thailand is still lacking. As Szondi (2010) pointed out that while nation branding has become one of the most popular catchphrases, it has “remained relatively isolated and reluctant to embrace other fields’ contributions, which could further advance its theoretical foundations” (Szondi, 2010, p. 333). Evidently, there is lack of studies on branding Thailand and an investigation on the process of branding the nation is relatively minimal, this paper then, is aimed at contribute to this particular field of study. It will also look at how Thailand can differentiate itself from its competitors in the global marketplace, conveniently through its strength of tourism, without making the same mistakes as others and what it needs to successfully do so. To achieve its purpose, this study will use the most recent data available, interviews and case studies. When this work is completed, the information will provide a tool, based on a recent and reliable study, for policy makers to utilize the information for future formulation of policies regarding branding Thailand through the notion of tourism.

## 1.5 Limitations and Delimitations

There are three main concerns regarding the limitation of this research. First, despite the widespread usage and popularity of the term nation branding, only a few authors have attempted to clearly define it. As suggested by Szondi (2010) “the lack of a coherent and widely recognized definition coupled with various conceptualizations have opened the field to a wide range of interpretations and resulted in the misunderstanding that often surrounds nation branding” (Szondi, 2010, p. 334). While Simon Anholt, the ‘father’ of nation branding, has reconceptualized it several times, the meaning of the terminology is still being contested by both the marketing and political realm (Szondi, 2010, p. 334). The lack of a common definition and vocabulary make it difficult to pinpoint all the limitations and control the scope of the study, because if the scope is not effectively controlled, it can easily widen, and thus, the focus of the study can be lost.

Secondly, as nation branding and its success are, to some extent, difficult to deliver the scientific proof or evidence, the recommendation for government and policy makers are then based on a self recommendation made in regards to the findings analyzed by personal research. As Fan (2006) argued on the case of Spain, which is “very often hailed as a perfect example” of nation branding, is in fact not so. (Gilmore, 2002, Olins, 2002, Quelch & Jocz, 2005, Dinnie, 2007, cited in Stock, 2009, p. 124). Fan (2006) accurately states “the change in the rational image of Spain is the result of fundamental changes in its political, economic and social systems which have taken place over the past 20 years or so” (Fan, 2011, p. 11 cited in Stock,

2009, p. 124), which point to the fact that the effort by the Spanish government that implemented the concept of nation branding in order to create a stronger reputation and image for Spain has little or no effect on the improvement of the reputation or image as it was already emerging as a strong brand due to its profound political and economic transformation.

Finally, due to the fact that I am Thai, I am aware of the risk that my perception might in favour Thailand, which might have some impact on my analysis and conclusion. However, with all efforts, I try be modest and neutral and exercise minimal personal influence and opinion on the subject. Moreover, as the research might not be able to provide all the in-dept information regarding nation branding in Thailand and the two countries used in comparison as case studies, which are Singapore and South Korea, that is considered as a necessity for evaluating and analyzing the result due to the ability and limitation to obtain and access the information, the findings of this research can still be used as a general guideline in developing a comprehensive direction and recommendation for Thailand in order to strength its nation brand in the global market.

## **1.6 Thesis Organization**

This thesis is organized into six chapters. The first chapter is an introduction, introducing the familiarity of the term 'nation branding' and the notion of branding Thailand while discussing the importance of the study and the thesis's objective. Chapter two reviews the existing literatures and theoretical frameworks in relation to nation branding, as well as



discusses the methodology and the way the research was conducted and analyzed. Chapter three deals with the comparative case studies of Singapore and South Korea, while chapter four discusses the case of branding Thailand in details using the analyses, interpretation, results and findings of individual interviews, self-constructed survey, data and statistics. Chapter five presents the conclusion and recommendations.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEWS, THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK & METHODOLOGY

#### 2.1 Literature Reviews

Kotler (2002) refers to nation branding simply as “another term for country of origin effect or place marketing” (Kotler, 2002, cited in Fan, 2006, p. 3). Additionally, Risen (2005) mentioned that nation-branding as a disciplines, “is the confluence of two seemingly disparate fields: marketing and diplomacy” (Risen, 2005, p. 2). Evidently, as he further argued, marketers became interested in what is called the “country of origin” (COO) effect in the 1960s, which can be illustrated through the example of the product label, ‘Made in Japan’. Risen suggested that, by simply sticking a ‘Made in Japan’ label on a stereo boosts its value by 30 percent because Japan has a reputation of being a technologically savvy society, which makes the customers value Japanese technology over similar products from other country (Risen, 2005, p. 2). What then can other nation that wants to position itself as a technologically savvy society like Japan do? The answer is obvious; they adopt the principles of nation branding.

Although the amount of literature on this topic is vastly growing, there does not seem to be consensus among researchers concerning the theoretical implications. In many cases, authors disregard existing concepts and introduce their own ne definitions and meaning, which lead to the contradictory definitions for place branding, nation branding, destination branding, country branding, and place image and so on. Stock (2009) stated that “not only does

this lack of a common definition reduce the chance of a linear, more constructive academic debate, but it also shows that the concept of place branding and related issues is still quite vague” (Stock, 2009, p. 119). Countries are multifaceted and are intangible products. Because of this, they can be extremely difficult to define (Marazza, 2007, p. 2). Besides the complexity of their nature, one must also consider the diversity of the global characteristics as well (Marazza, 2007, p. 3). Anholt and others argue that countries looking to manage their image have to go deeper, “aligning their foreign and domestic policies with a well-researched set of national images, much as a successful marketing campaign requires a company to ‘live the brand’” (Risen, 2005, p. 1). The US, for example, might brand itself as a nation of personal freedom, risk-taking, and cultural tolerance. To emphasize and ensure its reputation and image in this sense, it then coordinates policy around the promotion of that brand or image, for example, by expanding market-friendly foreign aid programmes (Risen, 2005, .p 1).

Most recently, Simon Anholt, coiner of the phrase ‘nation brand’, wrote on his website that he regrets having introduced this term and attempts to contradict himself and the concept that he famously introduced more than a decade ago (Anholt in Teslik 2007b cited in Stock, 2009, p. 119) and that ‘the idea that a country or city can advertise, design or talk its way into a different reputation is just not borne out by facts’ (Anholt, 2008b). Further, he upholds the basic idea that ‘images of places can and do evolve [and that] they can be influenced to some degree’ (Anholt, 2008b). In his recent literature, he has and made it clear that “there is no such thing as ‘nation branding’. It is a myth, and perhaps a dangerous one” (Anholt, 2010a, p. 1) and regretted having introduced this term more than a decade ago.

However, whether or not nation branding truly exists, the term is so wide spread that it has become somewhat a phenomenon in the political realm. Additionally, in his book, “Places: Identity, Image and Reputation”, Anholt describes ‘brand’ and ‘nation’ as the followings:

On the one hand, ‘brand’ is a perfect metaphor for the way places with each other in the global marketplace for products, services, events, ideas, visitors, talent, investment and influence: this is simply the reality of globalization, and it’s inescapable. On the other hand, ‘branding’ makes many people think of superficial marketing tricks, perhaps even some cynical betrayal of the nation state and other human communities. This is a misunderstanding and an unfortunate one for many reasons. Nations may have brands – in the sense that they have reputations, and those reputations are every bit as important to their progress and prosperity in the modern world as brand images are to corporations and their products – but the idea that it is possible to ‘do branding’ to a country (or to city or region) in the same way that companies ‘do branding’ to their products, is both vain and foolish.

(Anholt, 2010a, p. 1-2)

However, he has challenged his own idea that an image or reputation can be manipulated by marketing communications and thus, has been developing and adapting his concepts to reflect new realizations and observations (Anholt, 2008b). The critique of total ‘brandability’ which is supported by additional authors such as Fan (2006) and Blichfeldt (2005) is mirrored in statements such as ‘the idea that simply providing a place with a new graphic device and a new catchphrase can do anything to change its fortunes (or other by wasting its money) is patently absurd’ (Anholt, 2005, p. 118). Nonetheless, other researchers including Avraham/Ketter, Dinnie, Gilmore and Olins claim that marketing communications can be used to manage nation images and influence economic growth (Avraham; Ketter; Dinnie; Gilmore; Olins cited in Stock, 2009, p. 119).

Interestingly, Anholt does not merely change his stance without any supports or evidences. Interestingly, he argues his position and supports his argument with the evidence based on the analysis of the NBI pointing out that:

between 2005 when the Anholt Nation Brands Index was launched, and the latest study in 2009, there has been no detectable correlation between changes in national image and expenditure on nation branding campaigns'. Several countries which have done no marketing (aside from normal tourism and investment promotion) during their period have shown noticeable improvements in their overall images, while others have spent extremely large sums on advertising and PR campaigns and their brand value has remained stable or even declined.

(Anholt, 2010a, p. 2).

In truth, he further argues, nation branding itself is not the solution but the problem. The brands of the countries derived from the public opinion and “reduces them to the weak, simplistic, outdated, unfair stereotypes that so damage their prospects in the globalized world” (Anholt, 2010a, p. 3). What most countries need to do is to fight against the predisposition of international public opinion to prevent them from becoming mere brands. In this relation, they need to understand the reality of their countries, that they are complex, diverse and rich in history, culture and heritage (Anholt, 2010a, p. 3).

Whether it truly exist or not, nation branding is unarguably widespread and has received much of the attention in both the marketing and political realms. Kotler and Gertner (2002) has pointed out that “even when a country does not consciously manage its name as a brand, people still have image of countries that can be activated by simple voicing the name. Country images are likely to influence people’s decisions related to purchasing, changing residence and traveling. (Kotler & Gertner, 2002, p. 2).

As mentioned earlier in this study, the increased globalization, geopolitical rivalries and the fierce global competition are the important elements that cause nations to actively engage themselves in the realm of branding. While there are six pillars of nation branding, with four being the critical including public diplomacy, tourism, exports and foreign direct investment and two additional dimensions of people and culture and heritage, it is evident that some countries only brand themselves intentionally for tourism purposes. The decision of nation varies, based on each country's brand essence and sources of competitive advantage (Simonin, 2008, p. 23-24).

Going back to the notion of nation branding, Anholt has made an interesting point that most countries have "wasted enormous sums of public money on communications campaigns, based on the assumption that people don't respect their country simply because they don't know enough about it" (Anholt, 2010c). In cases such as these, Anholt has pointed out that countries are only "deluding themselves and the real reason why their country has a negative reputation is that it doesn't deserve a positive one" (Anholt, 2010c). In reality, when a middle power is being discussed, most people generally don't pay much attention unless they possess a great deal of economic, military, political or cultural clout. Therefore, to avoid the mistake of asking themselves 'what can we say to make ourselves more famous?', the government of these countries should be asking 'what can we do to make ourselves more relevant?' (Anholt, 2010c). Moreover, as people are firmly attached to their perception or stereotype of a country, simply telling people about it is not enough to change their perception and let alone, the reputation of the countries. "A reputation can never be constructed through

communications, slogans and logos: it needs to be earned” (Anholt, 2010c). Therefore, it makes perfect sense for the government to identify what Anholt called comparative identity to assess their strong point in the six relevant pillars, as well as ensuring the consistency of their behaviour and participation in all areas before launching any campaign to successfully position themselves as relevant players in the international arena.

Looking at the balance perspective on nation branding, Dinnie (2008a) pointed out that it requires recognition of the scope in terms of the objectives which it aspires to achieve including tourism promotion, export promotion, investment attraction, as well as the aspiration to increase the influence and become a more relevant player on this international scene (Dinnie 2008a). Further, such influence may be exercised in the form of bidding to host high profile sporting, political, or cultural events, which not only create profound recognition for the country but also has direct economic benefits for the country as well (Berkowitz et al, 2007; Black & Westhuizen 2004 cited in Dinnie, Melewar, Seidenfuss and Musa, 2009, p. 3).

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

In term of theory, the management of a country’s image or nation branding proves to be a very difficult field of research. This is because this field of study has a relatively young history, as well as there is a subsequent lack of actual debate among authors and researchers in the scientific area. Although the amount of literature on this topic is steadily growing, however, the consensus among researchers concerning the theoretical implications is

somewhat lacking and in many cases, authors disregard the existing concepts and introduce their own definitions and meaning. Not only that this has led to many contradictory definitions surrounding this subject, but it also “reduces the chance of a linear, more constructive academic debate, as well as shows that the concept of place branding and related issues is still quite vague” as well (Stock, 2009, p. 119).

It is widely acknowledged that the subject of nation image and branding are considerably more complex than, for example, a product brand (Blichfeldt, 2005; Fan 2006; Anholt 2006, 2005; Dinnie 2007 cited in Stock, 2009, p. 121). Thus, when one talks about nation branding, a useful starting point for the analysis of such notion will be the Nation Brand Hexagon, introduced by Simon Anholt more than a decade ago, which encompasses six relevant pillars of any nation’s development – tourism, exports, governance, investment and immigration, cultural and heritage and people. Additionally, as one talks more about Anholt and read his essay, the more one realizes that his vision of branding isn’t really about marketing at all. It’s about reforming ‘the product’, which in this case is the actual country, and to reform ‘the product’ is to change the policy (Kahn, 2006, p. 92).

In terms of theoretical discussions, this thesis will base its theoretical framework on the concept of Nation Brand Hexagon (NBH), or as Anholt later refers to as Comparative Identity (CI), which has been developed and advocated for the past decades and is linked to the NBI. However, a useful starting point for the analysis of nation brand conceptualizations should



first be examined and this thesis will draw upon the nation brand conceptualization done by Hankinson's (2004) in his brand typology prior to the discussion of Anholt's CI.



Figure 1: Anholt – GfK Nation Brand Hexagon

Nation brand conceptualization identifies four streams of thought. These are communicators, perpetual entities, value enhancers and relationships. According to Hankinson, brands are first of all, conceptualized as communicators where by the product differentiation is the main focus and the visual elements are emphasized. Although in this approach Hankinson classified brands as communicators, Szondi stated that Hankinson fails to clearly define what exactly is meant by 'communication' (Szondi, 2010, p. 334). Notably, Anholt followed this brand conceptualization in his earlier work, the brand pentagon, which is based on a central

strategy, encompassing 'the most realistic, most comprehensive and most compelling strategy vision of the country' (Anholt 2003, p. 11, cited in Szondi, 2010, p. 335). Later, the brand pentagon evolved into the Brand Hexagon's six points representing the six 'natural' channels of communication through which countries communicate with the world, which includes; tourism, culture, policy, people, brands and investment and recruitment (Anholt & Hildreth, 2004, cited in Szondi, 2010, p. 335).

In the second stream, brands are conceptualized as perpetual entities. This stream appeals to the consumer's sense, reason and emotions and the focus is on brand images. Gudjonsson (2005), stated that "Nation branding occurs when a government or a private company uses its power to persuade whoever has the ability to change a nation's image. Nation branding uses the tools of branding to alter or change the behaviour, attitudes, identity or image of a nation in a positive way (Gudjonsson, 2005, p. 285). The way Gudjonsson defines nation branding, according to szondi, demonstrate that nation branding is often conceptualized as 'national image management' and the image promotion is identified as its central function (Szondi, 2010, p. 335).

Third approach, brands are conceptualized as value enhancers. In this approach is where the brands are regarded as corporate assets that should be nurtured and invested in. In this concept, the strategic brand management is concerned with the role of defining and managing a brand's identity as a means of achieving competitive advantages. As a result, Anholt replaced his national brand strategy in 2007 with Competitive Identity (CI) as the core of

the Hexagon, defining it as “the synthesis of brand management with public diplomacy and with trade, investment, tourism and export promotion” (Anholt, 2007, p. 3). Anholt’s CI model fits into this category where the model is built around three properties; it attracts (people, tourists, investors); it transfer attributes from one object to another; and it has the power and potential of creating ‘order out of chaos’ (Anholt 2008a cited in Szondi, 2010, p. 335). Finally, there is the stream of relationships, particularly in the case of service brands where real relationship develops between the service provider’s contract personnel and the consumer (Hankinson, 2004, cited in Szondi, 2010, p. 335).

A part from Hankinson, Fan also attempts to construct a conceptual framework for nation image known as the Nation Image Management (NIM), which closely relates to branding as it is important to distinguish how a nation believes it is perceived by another nation and how one nation is actually perceived or what Fan refers to as a construed image and an actual image (Fan, 2008, cited in Stock, 2009, p. 122). This framework is defined into six concepts, which are national identity, reference point, construed image, actual image, current projected image and desired future image.

National identity refers to the ‘irrational psychological bond that binds fellow nations together (Connor, in Fan, 2008a, p. 6 cited in Stock, 2009, p. 122). It is based on key elements encompassing history, territory, common language, laws, myths, and memory (Smith in Fan, 2008a, cited in Stock, 2009, p. 122). Weak national identities consequently will have weak nation images, in the sense that “having a clear picture of who one is, is necessary for communicating and promoting this self-perception to the outside world.

(Stock, 2009, p. 122).

Reference point sets the contextual frame for the image-formation process.

Take Israel for instance, it is and wants to be perceived differently by its immediate neighbours compare to that of the United States or Europe. Furthermore, as Gellner, Kedourie, Trandafyllidou pointed out, “national identity becomes meaningful only through the contrast and comparison with other nations” (Gellner, Kedourie, Trandafyllidou in Fan, 2008a, p. 11 cited in Stock, 2009, p. 122).

Construed image refers to “what a nation’s people believe about how their nation is perceived by other” (Fan, 2008a, p. 12). The construed image reflects back on national identity and the way people see themselves. However, the efforts to modify images are also based on the way people believe themselves to be perceived (Stock, 2009, p. 122). Additionally, the innovations of this framework are also the central to the examination of future case studies. (Fan, 2008a, cited in Stock, 2009, p. 122), but actual image refers to the “real image of a nation held by another nation” (Fan, 2008a, p. 12 cited in Stock, 2009, p. 122). The actual image can vary depending on the reference point and context. Nevertheless, the actual image encompasses a “set of associations that people outside believe are [central, distinctive, and enduring]” to a nation (Fan, 2008a, p. 12, cited in Stock, 2009, p. 123). Current projected image includes the efforts of nations in forming and communicating their image to an outside audience based on NIM, which underlined the question of “How is the nation A promoting itself to nation B?” (Fan, 2008a, p. 12, cited in Stock, 2009, p. 123).

Finally, the desired future image is shaped by the point of reference. In essence, the desired future image is the visionary perception the nation would like other nations to have of it sometimes in the future (Gioia/Thomas 1996; Gioia et al, 2000 in Fan, 2008a, cited in Stock, 2009, p. 123). The desired future image is determined not only by the point of reference, but also by the many interest groups and stakeholders involved in NIM (Stock, 2009, p. 123).

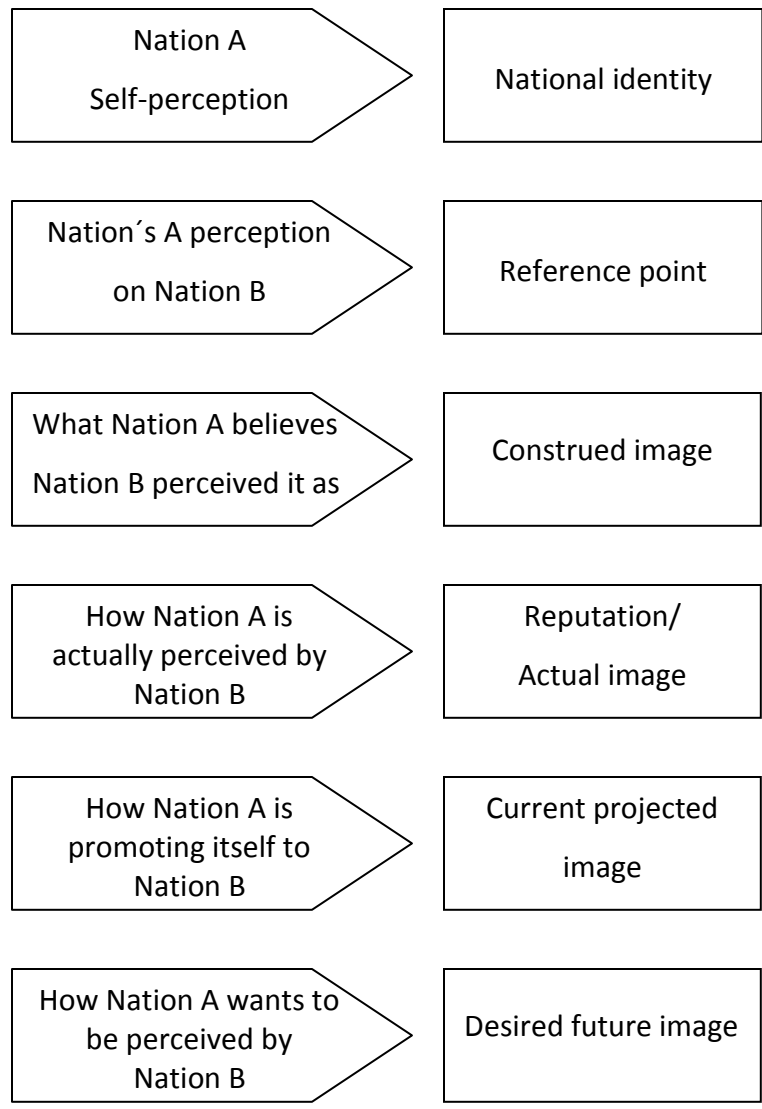


Figure 2: The simplified definition of key perspectives of nation image

(Fan, 2008a p. 18 cited Stock 2009 p. 122.)

There are two main definitions concerning the understand of nation branding where one is the understanding of nation/country image and the other is the nation/country identity. On the one hand, the nation/country image is the “mental representation of a country, the sum of beliefs and impressions people about a certain place. Every nation has an image that can vary across time and space to a greater or lesser extent (Simonin, 2008, p. 22). These images influence that consumers’ perceptions on the country as a whole, its products, services and the political and economic aspects. It effects the perceptions of the country, as well as a place in which to do business, tourists’ expectation, and the attitudes of the public at large. On the other hand, the nation/country identity refers to what a country believes it is (or wants to be). The identity in this case is projected onto the rest of the world though branding and communication efforts to attract tourism and foreign direct investment, boost exports, and carry out effective public diplomacy. Therefore, “for the purpose of crafting a communication campaign, a nation identity should stress a reality that resonates with people, both within and outside the country. Ideally, for communication purposes, the brand essence should easily translate into a clear, simple, differentiated, and motivation offer – a meaningful Unique Selling Proposition” (Simonin, 2008, p. 22). In relation to this, what nations should do is to conduct a SWOT analysis based on the framework of the CI, introduced by Anholt. CI refers to the method of research used to study of a country’s competitive position by exploring the perception of the world towards the country in question, ranging from delight to resentment and tangible and intangible attributes. Its concept, which was developed by Simon Anholt and was first released in 2005, known as the Simon Anholt Brands Index, is used to measure the global perception of a country in several spheres. The criteria underlying ranking of NBI are

people, governance, exports, tourism, culture and heritage and investment and immigration.

The measurement of each criterion is explained as follows:

*People* measures the population's reputation for competence, education, openness and friendliness and other qualities are assessed, as well as the perceived levels of potential hostility and discrimination.

*Governance* measures the public opinion regarding the level of national government competency and fairness and describes individuals' beliefs about each country's government, while also looking at the issue such as democracy, justice, poverty and environment as the country's commitment is perceived.

*Exports* measures the extent to which consumers seek or avoid products originate from the country in question to determine the public's image and perception they have on the country's products and services.

*Tourism*, which is seen as an important and most convenience tool for a country to use to brand itself, is the capture of interests level a target audience has that influence their decision on their visit to a country.

*Culture and Heritage* defines the global perceptions of each nation's heritage and appreciation for its contemporary culture, including film, music, art, sport and literature.

*Investment and Immigration*, the key aspects in drawing in the capital and human resources in order to contribute to the wealth and development of a country, determines the attractiveness a country has in order to appeal to the people to live, work or

study in each country and reveals how people perceive a country's economic and social situation.

### **2.3 Methodology**

The current problem where destination branding is mistaken for nation branding or when nations try to use tourism branding as the country's main branding identity is that it does not deliver or developed an effective branding strategy that can enable the country to differentiate itself from others. Thailand has long used the "Amazing Thailand" slogan to promote itself by focusing on tourist destinations, which proved to be a success as indicated by the number of tourists flocking the country each year and have create an awareness in term of tourism at a global level. While many suggest this slogan can be outdated and started to lose its effectiveness, it is nonetheless exceeded other slogan or campaign in which the Tourism Authority of Thailand attempt to launch including 'Thailand Unforgettable'. As there are more and more competitive countries emerging at the global level where most introduced and implemented much more strategically thought out plans and ideas to catch up with the changing trend, Thailand needs to explore its true potential regarding its competitiveness by carefully analyzing it in the context of Anholt's CI and at the same time focusing on how tourism can enhance these comparative identities. This will help the country identify its strengths and weaknesses and thus, enhance the ability of the country to compete on the international level.



This research used the qualitative methods, as this type of method is most effective and widely used in sociology, philosophy, psychology and history. Qualitative methods, as indicates by Boeree (2005), are methods that do not involve measurement or statistics and can be measured by several techniques. Case study, for example, is popular among physicians like Sigmund Freud, where their published description, treatment and progress are built upon in the later years. Méthode clinique or sometime called experimental phenomenology, is another type of qualitative method, where the basic idea is to present a person with a situation or problem and observe how they deal or handle the situation, while at the same time try to understand the thought processes they are using. However, one of the most useful qualitative techniques, and was selected for this research, is the method of interview. This method, while perceived to be easy, is in fact difficult to conduct. For the interview to be effective, the interviewer will need to listen to the interviewee without any prejudiced ideas and make sure that the interview questions are not directing the interviewee in any biased direction (Boeree, 2005).

The use of qualitative methods was chosen as it allowed the research to assess the nation branding mechanisms in different dimensions. The qualitative methods of interview, self-constructed survey, case study and statistical analysis were used in this research. I am convinced that the aforementioned specific techniques are appropriate as they help gather the information about the current condition, while at the same time provided the flexibility to assess the implemented processes and policies. Moreover, they also leave enough room for further investigation when new issues, questions and ideas arise during the research interval.

According to Polgar and Thomas (1995), qualitative approach generates verbal information rather than numerical values and thus, I am able to use the researched contents to explain and comprehend the results (Polgar & Thomas 1995). Further, Cassell and Symon (1994) have pointed out that, “the main point of the quantitative research method is that measurement is valid, reliable and can be generalized with its clear anticipation of cause and effect” (Cassell & Symon, 1994). Thus, it is most appropriate for this research to use the different facets of qualitative methods.

## **2.4 Research Methods**

The research has opted the qualitative approach of interviews, self-constructed survey, statistical analysis and case studies due to their significant advantages. First, the use of information gathered from interviews was advantageous as the research can gain more insight to the ideas of academics and policy makers on branding Thailand. Along with verbal information, the research also looked at data from various related sources and agencies to determine the correlation between the political, economic and social performance of the country during the period between 2000 and 2010. The primary research method of this thesis is the interview with experts and relevant representatives in the field. The purpose of the interview was to obtain recommendation for sources of the information that related to Thailand’s nation branding as their position and responsibilities in the fields would give this thesis the access to the necessary information. However, in any case that the interviews do not provide direct information, the information obtained from the interview responses will be used

as a guideline to further explore the relevant areas. The interviews were conducted in English by both face to face and via electronic mail. Self-constructed interview questions, with different area scopes depending on the expertise of the interviewees were used in order to encourage the ideas of nation branding from different area perspectives. The selection process of the interviewees was based on the expertise and their involvement with the policy process. For instance, the director of a private company and a tourism representative were interviewed for their in-depth analysis and expertise in the fields, while public servants were interviewed for their direct experience in advising, implementing and revising the branding models. By selecting experts and policy makers based on these selected criteria, the research had benefited profoundly from their views and experience on the subject. Moreover, by interviewing the paper can reflect on their ideas and explanation on specific areas of nation branding, the approach and the implication of the policies, the end results, the strengths and weaknesses, as well as the recommendations on how these policies can be improved or better implemented. The face-to-face interviews, as well as through electronic mails were adopted through the use of open-ended questions, as such questions “have the virtue of allowing the subjects to tell the interviewer what’s relevant and what’s important rather than being restricted by the researchers’ preconceived notion about what is important” (Berry, 2002, p. 681). An interview guide detailed the questions to be asked, although respondents were free to move from one topic to another regardless of the sequence of questions in the interview. In this way, the interview was establish as a conversational-like dialogue rather than asking questions that impose categorical frameworks on informants’ understanding and experiences (Arunould & Wallendorf, 1994, p. 492). In this connection, the interviews scope down to the

relevant focus and placed into a structure in order to make it easier for the respondent to understand while at the same time expand the boundaries of the answer to cover as many types of sources as possible. I am convinced that the use of interviewing method was particularly attractive as they provide well-grounded descriptions and explanations of the concept of branding Thailand, as well as evoke a more realistic impression of the research, which cannot be obtained from statistical analysis and numerical data.

Case studies were also assessed to reflect and identify the strengths and weaknesses of branding Thailand in comparison to other nations that are already experienced in the field. The specific cases of Singapore and South Korea were evaluated to answer these objectives. The information was cross examined to determine each country's strengths and weaknesses when dealing with nation branding and the implementation of the policies. The success and failure cases of the analysis of the different components of Anholt's CI, as well as statistics and data from various sources were examined. By starting with comparing Thailand to Singapore, its neighbour and is situated in the same region, and South Korea, a country that is viewed as actively and ambitiously engaging in the notion of nation branding, it would give Thailand an opportunity to have a comprehensive view of its status in relation to nation branding. As well, the information would become a fundamental step in developing strategic policies for nation branding for the country in the future. In summation, case studies were examined by the information gathered from press releases, interviews with experts and policy makers in numerous relevant articles, as well as through secondary sources including published

articles and literatures. The research is extended to include publications, academic journal, news reports and electronic articles to get a holistic view. For the general public opinions and views, questions and discussion topics were posted on the internet forums, which allowed the research to encompass the relevant information, backgrounds and opinions from specific group of the population who have instant access to world wide information and news. The national poll, performance indicators and national statistics were also reviewed to support the findings.

Lastly, the methods of Survey, and Data and Statistics analysis were used to widen the scope of findings. The survey was self-constructed with the question bearing multiple choices that were designed to encompass all areas including business, tourism, infrastructure, services and the country in general. The self-administered survey questionnaire was distributed randomly to a valid sample size of 40 respondents from different regions of the world including East Asia, Europe, North America, Oceania, the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa. The survey was designed and distributed randomly to internet users and foreigners in order to gain their perspective on Thailand and by using random sample, the research will benefit from the real point of views and perspectives on the country. The data and statistics collected for this study ranges from the economic outlooks, tourism and import and exports statistics and figures, various index on corruption and business relevance as well as Human Development reports and country ranking according to Anholt's Nation Brand Index and destination and product and services rankings. The survey and the variety of data, statistics and figures are to measure the image of Thailand as perceived by foreigners and others.

## CHAPTER 3

### COMPARATIVE CASE STUDIES OF SINGAPORE & SOUTH KOREA

The approach to nation branding is becoming increasingly common to all regions of the world. Japan and Germany, for instance, suffered from worse images than china's half a century ago, are now among the most admired nations on earth (Anholt, 2008a, p. 268). This is through the successful implementation of branding strategies that allow Japan and Germany to reposition themselves in the international arena. While Japan has reemerged as the technological hub of the world, Germany boasts at being the capital of engineering excellence.

In Asia, the idea of branding is generally associated with tourism or destination branding as many countries are now actively engaged in this process because it is apparent to them that tourism delivers favourable capital flow. However, with the realization that a successful tourism brand is not the only means of generating revenue and a successful branding could result in the level of achievement and benefits deriving from exports, resident population and FDI, countries such as Japan and South Korea, that have traditionally relied on exports for their foreign revenues, for instance, are now urgently attempting to increase their visitors numbers. Additionally, countries whose economies and images have focused on their appeal as a tourist destination, such as Thailand and the Maldives, are equally keen to embrace FDI, exports and other sectors (Anholt, 2008a, p. 266).

As mentioned, countries are now becoming more and more active and engaging in the idea of nation branding. Previously relied on exporting country such as South Korea and rich in human capital and exceeding in business capital as Singapore are now shifting their focus to concentrate on their tourism capability, whereas Thailand aims to improve on its other areas in order to attract FDI, increases its exports and talents, while at the same time, maintaining its unique national identity.

This thesis selected the comparative cases of Singapore, South Korea and Thailand on their venture with the process of nation branding as these three cases share the same objective, which is to excel politically and economically in the international arena, while at the same time maintaining their unique cultures, heritage, traditions and identities. Moreover, it is apparent that these three nations are well placed on a different pillar of Anholt's CI and are doing exceptionally well in their area. Singapore, for instance, excel on the scale of government, investment and immigration, while South Korea is exceptional in the area of exports and investment and Thailand is strong on its tourism aspect.

## **SINGAPORE**

On branding Singapore, Chris Davies, Managing Director of Asia Grayling once said, "Singapore's brand overseas is often summed up by three things: cleanliness, order and half-remembered stories from history, but that's a travesty. The latest tourism branding is a great step forward. Singapore offers a huge package in a small island, and can offer many

things to many people” (Chris Davies, managing director, Asia Grayling). For over a decade now that Singapore has undergone many branding and reimagining campaigns. Experts in the field or those related know that Singapore is doing exceptionally well with its position in the international marketplace and ‘brand Singapore’ in term of business is relatively strong and outwit its competitors. Moreover, the Singaporean government set up a national marketing action committee back in 2006 to help ensure the country’s effort of balancing the harder aspects, that is, in term of efficiency and technology, wi the softer side. Many has noted that since the launch of the campaign, the number of visitors to the country has significantly increase (Goh, 2006, cited in Ooi, 2008, p. 290).

From a business point of view, Singapore’s proposition is unique and compelling. The country received the 1st place ranking for 5 consecutive years from the ease of doing business world ranking of 183 countries in total with the exceptionally high score in all criteria (Finfacts.com). Singapore has attractive business incentive, a legal system that is consistent, transparent and enforceable, a mostly corruption-free environment at the business, judicial and government levels that provides a safe, attractive and peaceful environment to work and live in. In addition, it has an educated network and conveniently located Asia with English as its official language (Baladi, 2010). The confluence of the east and west is Singapore’s unique selling proposition of the creative Singapore brand and product (Ooi, 2008, p. 292). While Singapore excels in what is commercial and business and the ‘Commercially Singapore’ may not have pizzazz or colour of Incredible India or amazing Thailand, “it does communicate clearly



something else that is arguably just as incredible or amazing: one of the country's basic truths. Completely differentiated and unassailable" (Baladi, 2010).

Changing the face of Singapore is fully committed by the Singaporean government. In recent years, the Singaporean authorities have sought out the idea of branding Singapore as a creative economy. The government is signaling strongly by offering incentives to attract investments into the creative industries. In 2001, the Singaporean government set up the Economic Review Committee (ERC), consisting of seven subcommittees, with the aim of remaking Singapore and developing strategies to ensure the continuous economic prosperity of the country (ERC-CI, 2002:iii, cited in Ooi, 2008, p. 291). According to this plan, the government aims to reimagine Singapore as a continuous economic prosperity and a creative economy. Thus, Singapore would develop its arts trading sector and reimagine the city-state as a creative center. As quoted by the ERC the city must "harness the multi-dimensional creativity advantage" (ERC-CI, 2002:iii, cited in Ooi, 2008, p. 291). This will be done by inviting world famous artists to perform in Singapore, which in turn will attract FDI and workers, establish the Asian Civilizations Museum, the Singapore Art Museum and the National Museum of Singapore. The aim, in sum, is to make Singapore the art and culture capital of Southeast Asia (Ooi, 2004, p. 291).

Singapore is known for its business and human development capabilities. Thus, the government is enhancing other aspects of its CI and branding and reimaging the new creative Singapore is one of the methods put forward by the government. The authorities are attempting to present a comprehensive brand image to the world, as to promote its softer

sides of its CI. Lee Boon Yang, Minister of the Ministry of Information, Communication and the Arts (MICA) at that time, referred to Singapore's positioning as an "open, multicultural society which is able to draw inspiration from our rich and diverse Asian heritage and at the same time link up with other international partners to widen market access and talent base" (Lee, 2005, cited in Ooi, 2008, p. 292). Moreover, he went on to describe that many companies found "Singapore's unique confluence of eastern and western cultures as a key reason for collaborating with Singapore" (Lee, 2005, cited in Ooi, 2008, p. 292).

Singapore's objective to becoming the creative hub of Asia is exceeding its progress and expectation. The country is building physical infrastructure, while cultural institutions are being established and supported. For example, the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music was set up at the national university of Singapore and several arts schools have been expanded and their profile increased. The government has increased the accessibilities for arts festivals and performances and not only that, but famous world artists and performers have also been invited to perform in Singapore as well. The multitude of cultural developments has in fact, brands Singapore as a vibrant and exciting hub of Southeast Asia. Additionally, in recent years, the government improved its media industry with the aim of attracting talents and positions itself as a hub in the region.

In recent years, the Economic and Development Board has allocated S\$500m (US\$ 350m) to develop the digital media industry for the years 2006 and 2010 (Balakrishan, 2005). Subsequently, another S\$500 m is intended to be made available for the years 2011 and

2015. Media production companies such as Lucasfilm Animation have already set up studios in Singapore (Ooi, 2008, p. 293). For the arts and the Renaissance City Plan, the government spent S\$10m (US\$ 6.7m) per year between 2000 and 2003, the amount was increased to S\$12m (US\$ 8m) between 2004 – 2006. And from 2007, MICA has allocated S\$15.5m (US\$11m) a year for the next phase of the Renaissance City Plan (Singapore Parliament Hansard, 2007, cited in Ooi, 2008, p. 293). As a result, several major media channels and agencies such as MTV, Discovery channel, HBO and BBC have already made Singapore their regional headquarter. A part from hosting major cultural and arts events, the Singaporean government has established a number of cultural diplomacy outreach programmes with the aim of enhancing the creative image of Singapore as well. Minister Lee, while he was appointed as the Minister in charge of MICA stated that “I believe that our arts and creative programmes will change the way we look at ourselves and how others perceive us. [...] Based on the Country Brand Index released by global branding consultants FutureBrand, [...] Singapore was second on the Nightlife/Eating and the Shopping categories and ranked ahead of the USA, which is a country that people generally perceive as being ‘cool.’” Additionally, as Singapore wants to be regarded for its seriousness and respect for its creative economy, it is in a large part doing its best in term of the protection of the intellectual property (IP). This alone, makes Singapore stands out from its neighbours including China, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia (Ooi, 2008, p. 293).

The Singaporean authorities are strongly committed to brand Singapore as a creative economy and this can be seen through the three important tracks. The first track is aimed to promote Singapore as a creative hub and generating the appropriate public images to

create Singapore as a vibrant, creative and efficient, while business functions effectively and profitably and residents lead comfortable and exciting lifestyles. The second track signals Singaporean government and its commitment to promote the creative economy through new creative business-friendly policies on all levels. As such, it has ensured the technologically and legally stable environment where businesses will find attractive to function within. The general business environment of Singapore is already seen as strong has a good industrial relations and qualified workers, but the incentives for doing businesses in Singapore does not stop there. The Singaporean has offered favourable tax incentives and a stable legal framework is being established to protect business interests. The third track involves socially engineering the population and enabling residents to live the creative Singapore image. The authorities cultivate popular acceptance and support for the creative economy, nurture a creative consumer population and train a workforce suitable for the creative economy (Ooi, 2008, p. 297).

Stephen Mangham, Group Chairman of the Oglivy and Mather, Singapore

echoed his idea on branding Singapore as:

A brand exists when people ask me for it by name (“I’ll have a Heineken”, rather than “I’ll have a beer”). When people actively prefer to visit, live in or do business in a certain country because they have a clear set of expectations, then that country is strongly branded. This branding – for good or bad – will happen regardless of whether governments choose to manage it. The smart ones consciously do so.

Singapore does have a strong set of associations which has served it well, particularly as a business hub. And the government has deliberately and carefully nurtured its reputation. One reason why Singapore punches about its weight is because the government has spent time selling what Singapore stands for”

(Stephen Mangham, cited in Balji, 2010)

Singapore is also actively building up to a collection of iconic structures to help define the country. The Merlion, a structure of a half lion, half fish figure, spouting water at the Singapore waterfront, for example, is proving to be a successful tourism icon of the country. Moreover, with the development of the esplanade, which facilitate the country's theatres on the bay in the dome-shaped spiky roofs complex and the two spectacular mega complexes housing casino, conference and entertainment facilities, these buildings have already become a symbolic landmarks of Singapore (Ooi, 2008, p. 292). As Tim Love, Vice Chairman of the Omnicom Group & CEO of Omnicom APIMA expressed on his opinion on whether Singapore can brand itself, "Singapore has done a brilliant job of managing and communicating what it wants to stand for, including its unique benefits as a place to live and to raise a family and a destination from which to engage in business in Asia. (Tim Love, vice chairman, Omnicom Group & CEO Omnicom APIMA, cited in Balji, 2010).

While brand Singapore already stands ahead of its competition in term of business and investment, and has enhanced its status as a regional business hub, the government is also doing exceptionally well in the aspect of tourism. Since 2004, the Singapore tourism board (STB, formerly Singapore Tourism Promotion Board or STPB) launched the "Uniquely Singapore" campaign in order to promote the quintessential Singapore experiences that are unique blended from its traditions, cultures and modernity. The "Uniquely Singapore" positioning was developed with international brand consultant FutureBrand through a consultative exercise with Singaporeans, leisure and business visitors, local and overseas travel industry partners and local government agencies. The new brand positioning is set to capture

the total Singaporean experience, as well as differentiate Singapore as a premier destination, “offering a unique spectrum of enriching experiences for visitors and locals alike - from traditional cultural experiences to cutting-edge modern arts performances - all delivered with a high level of service quality, reliability and efficiency” (Asia Travel Tips.com 2009). Mr Lim Neo Chian, Deputy Chairman and Chief Executive of the STB said in his statement at the launch of the campaign that, “...it is indeed timely for us to launch "Uniquely Singapore" - the new, impactful and compelling brand that reflects the new changes and essence of Singapore's unique strengths and offerings...Singapore has never been as exciting as it is today. The island has transformed and evolved dramatically over the years and today it is a city that thrives on modernity against a backdrop of rich history and tradition. The tourism industry is also showing positive signs of recovery. It is a very exciting time for Singapore's tourism industry” (Asia Travel Tips.com 2009). The launch of what has become a famous tagline for Singapore comes shortly after the announcement that visitor arrivals to Singapore hit more than 6.1 million in 2003. With the aim to increase the number of visitors by a significant 24 percent or 7.6 million in 2004, the new campaign marks an exciting new phase in the STB's efforts to promote Singapore as a premier travel destination to the world (Asia Travel Tips 2009). Since the launch of this campaign, Singapore has experienced a steady increase of tourists and the government is projecting a steady increase in the future.

## KOREA

Anholt (2008) has mentioned that most of the big 'branding stories' of Asia are associated with exports. Japan is a good example of an "export-led miracle" (Anholt, 2008a p. 266) as it has built its economy and image after 1945 and several other countries such as South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan and China have quite deliberately set themselves the task of following the same routes (Anholt, 2008a, p. 266). However, in doing so, all the countries have come to realize that the development of the capacity to produce world-class consumer goods, distribute and market them worldwide and building the consumer service capability behind the products is a long and demanding tasks. "Countries like South Korea and Taiwan are disappointed to discover that, despite the huge successes of several of their manufacturers in other countries, and the major contribution such exporters have made to their economies, they are still not yet widely associated as a powerful country of origin for such goods" (Anholt, 2008a, p. 266). This, in a large part, is due to the image associated with South Korea after WWII. Thus, this is one of the reasons, if not the most important, of why South Korea is eager to project its capability and position itself as one of the main players in the international arena.

Korea, a poor, rural society after WWII, emerged as a rich economy and became identified with efficiency and quality within the period of thirty years development. Support with both good policies, and the communication channels needed to project its foreign policies, South Korea surfaced as a success economy and have overcome international suspicious and

“the envy of many advanced economies” (Oxford Analytica, 2010). Korea’s development in term of both politically and economically has been phenomenon and unique. Its development fascinates the world and earns itself the renewed title as one of the Asian tigers. Arguably, its remarkable development, particularly in term of economic, is the result of overcoming the combative nationalism and trade liberalization (Kim & Lee, 2008, p. 166). Due to its exceptional performance, Korea has emerged as the top 15 economies in the world and is continuing to achieve outstanding results. This development can be explained by numerous factors including the state-led and overly regulated external policies, the existing legacy of mercantilist, the country’s pursuit of market-driven and most importantly and the momentum of globalization after the 1997 financial crisis. It is clear that Korea’s growth has become increasingly competitive on the global arena and the current government trade policies are encouraging its success. After Korea realized its potential and liberalized its foreign investment promotion and trade policies, its growth level increased significantly. Additionally, in 1992 the Korean government officially announced a detailed plan to transform Korea into a world-class logistics center, a knowledge-based economy, as well as an international business and financial hub of Northeast Asia to rival Hong Kong, Singapore and China within five years (Kim & Lee, 2008).

The strong commitment of positioning South Korea as a leading investment hub and tourist destination is at the top of the agenda for the government of South Korea. The use of the tourism slogans such as “Dynamic Korea” and “Sparkling Korea” as a manifestation of the country’s NB initiatives are creating an impact on people’s perception about the country, although it is difficult to assess its effectiveness. As Dinnie (2008a) has pointed out:



In the case of Korea, slogans such as “Dynamic Korea” and “Korea Sparkling” have been used recently, and new slogan are being planned. Although such slogans have a role to play in Korean’s branding, they are no substitute for intelligent coordination of different stakeholders and substantive improvement of the nation’s capabilities, whether in terms of being a good location for business, study or visiting.

(Dinnie, 2008a, p. 3).

Notably, after the Lee government came into office, the national policies of South Korea widen to include technology and cultural emphasis as well as the economic and investment sector of the country as well. Driven largely by the desire to reposition South Korea away from the negative association with North Korea and lingering images of the Korean War, the Lee administration has committed significant resources and energy to brand the country as a vibrant dynamic democracy, creative and open to the world. The Lee administration are fully committed to the notion of portraying South Korea as a serious player in the international arena and an important investment and tourist hub that it established the Presidential Council on Nation Branding (PCNB), which is aimed to deliver tangible outcomes on branding activities initiated by the government Dinnie (2009). The activities that are considered as a part of nation branding scheme is designed to play a role of ‘communicators for nation brand identity’ in promoting South Korea’s tourism and exported products sectors by enhancing its ‘national brand image’ among both country’s internal and external audiences. The new image intended by the government will change the perception of foreigners towards South Korea from the country that consistently has violent student marches and the demilitarized zone to become the one with trendy entertainers and advanced technological nation (Onishi, 2005).

PCNB was established on January 22, 2009, with the objective to enhance Korea's national status in the international community by implementing systematic and comprehensive strategies to inform the world about South Korea and help raise awareness of the Korean brand among people all over the world. It is designed to play the role of a governmental control tower for nation branding based on a master plan designed to raise the nation's international standing by pursuing differentiated branding strategies according to the awareness of Korea by continent/country as part of a plan to achieve systematic management of the national reputation ([http://www.koreabrand.net/en/util/util\\_about\\_pcnb.do](http://www.koreabrand.net/en/util/util_about_pcnb.do)).

PCNB consists of eight ministries, including the ministry of foreign affairs and trade, and presidents of the Korea international cooperation agency (KOICA), the Korea trade-investment promotion agency and the Korea tourism organization with 47 members, 16 of whom are senior government figures while 31 are from various private-sector backgrounds. PCNB is structured into five teams that have been allocated responsibility for international cooperation, corporate and information technology, cultural and tourism, the global community and overall coordination (Dinnie, 2008a, p. 4). The 10-point action plan of South Korea's nation branding are:

1. To promote taekwondo – the government will launch a project to promote the country's most popular martial arts.
2. To dispatch 3000 volunteers abroad every year – the council will launch the “Korean Supporters” a Peace Corps-like programme that dispatch over 3000 volunteers overseas every year.

3. To adopt “Korean wave” programme – spreading of popularity of Korean pop-culture to introduce Global Korea scholarship – a new scholarship programmes “Global Korea Scholarship” will be established for foreign exchange students to help improve the country’s image among foreign students and scholars.
4. To adopt : Campus Asia” program – a separate programme, through which South Korea will seek to develop and recruit young, outstanding workers and academics and will target students from neighbouring Asian countries.
5. To increase external aid – send more aid workers to meet the global humanitarian needs.
6. To develop state-of-the –art technologies – showcase to the world its technological advancement by reaching to high-tech milestones which should hit the international media.
7. To nurture cultural and tourism industries – among the initiatives, the government will unify Korean language institute across the world under the name “King Sejong Institute” and will better manage the growing number of foreigners wanting to learn Korean.
8. To treat foreigners and multi-cultural families better – a campaign to foster better etiquette and improve hospitality. This is aimed at making Korea a more pleasant country to visit to help Koreans become “global citizens” – smooth Korean’s attitude to the world and focus on Korea’s traditional nationalism and anti-Americanism.

9. To treat foreigners and multi-cultural families better – A campaign to foster better etiquette and improve hospitality. This is aimed at making Korea a more pleasant country to visit.
10. To help Koreans become “global citizens” – Smooth Koreans’ attitude to the world and focus on Korea’s traditional nationalism and anti-Americanism.

(<http://nationbranding.info/2009/03/25/brand-korea-10-point-action-plan-unveiled/>)

In a speech on commemorate the 60th birthday of the Republic of Korea in Seoul, President Lee Myung-bak pledged to “upgrade the national brand to make it on par with that of advanced countries.....if the nation wants to be labeled an advanced country, it will be necessary to significantly improve its image and reputation.” (Na, 2009). What is interesting about South Korea and its effort to increase its recognition in the global forum is the fact that while it has succeeded in building a strong industrial base and numerous successful global brands, the association between the products and services with Korea is very limited. Euh Yoon-dae, Chairman of PCNB said in his interview on branding Korea that the value of ‘made in Korea’ is not fully realized (Na, 2009). Dinnie (2009) has pointed out that one of the major challenges for Korean policymakers is the aim to reduce or even eliminate the so-called Korea Discount. This so-called label refers to the belief that the “Made in Korea” marquee carries less prestige and status than other countries of origin such as “Made in Japan” or “Made in Germany” (Dinnie, 2009, p. 2). As a result, many Koreans believe that by creating a stronger image and association of place of origin will lead to the possibility of improving the

competitiveness of South Korean products where the producers will enjoy “the same price premiums as those enjoyed by producers from more highly regarded origin countries (Dinnie, 2009, p. 2).

A survey on foreigners’ perception of South Korea was conducted, questioning more than 4,000 adults aged between 18 and 70 in 25 countries. The survey showed that, foreigners associate South Korea with technology (12 percent), cuisine (10.7 percent), soap opera (10.3 percent), people (9.4 percent), economic growth (6.2 percent), the Korean War (5.4 percent) and North Korea’s nuclear threat (4.1 percent). The survey concludes with an interesting point that the ‘Made in Korea’ tagline is still not providing enough value in comparison to a product from Japan, for instance. While most people perceived a Korean product with the ‘Made in Korea’ label to be worth the value of \$100, a similar product will be estimated at \$141.6 if it has a made in Japan label. As a result, related authorities are seriously thinking about building more sophisticated images for Korean product if it wants to be taken seriously in the global market. In relation to this, Dinnie (2009) has made an interesting point that “there appears to be a strong feeling among South Korean policy makers that the changing reality of Korea has not translate more positive perceptions of Korea among global audiences...perceptions of Korea thus, appear to lad behind reality. The barometer of public opinion most frequently cited in this respect is the Anholt/GfK Roper Nation Brand Index, in which Korea’s relatively lowly standing compared with the size of its economy is taken as evidence of the weakness of the Korea brand” (Dinnie, 2009).

In order to project its influence and enhance its political, economic and diplomatic power more effectively in the international community, South Korea realize the gap between its hard and soft power. As such, the country is increasingly adopting this alternative course to enlarge Korea's 'foot print' in the region as well as the world (Lee, 2009, p. 1). The realization came with the South Korea's strategists beginning to integrate soft power into foreign policy, where South Korean diplomacy has proceeded within the context of two other major debates; one being a more responsible contributor to the world by helping the less developed countries through upgrading its international contribution and the other is defining its strategic role in the Northeast Asia region (Lee, 2009, p. 2).

Since the establishment of PCNB, South Korea has succeeded in numerous projects as outlined in its 10-points branding action plan. The success of the Korean cultural wave or 'hanllyu', the transmission of popular cultures through TV dramas, music and other forms of popular cultures have engaged South Korea with its Northeast Asia neighbours and proven to be extremely popular in Southeast Asia as well. Additionally, the dispatch of 3000 volunteers abroad every year and monetary contribution through official development assistance (ODA) for underdeveloped nations is impressively progressing underway.

*Korean Wave* – "South Korea is a classic case of a country that enjoys a rather positive reputation in its own neighbourhood – the Korean wave of commercial entertainment has made South Korea something of a celebrity in east and even South Asia" (Anholt, 2008a, p. 268). 'Hallyu' or 'Korean Wave' can simply be defined as a consequence of the surge of

popularity of South Korea culture around the world over the turn of the century, particularly among the young generation. Over the last 10 years, South Korea music, soap operas and modern culture has grown popular with its neighbours, in the Southeast Asia region and even extending as far as India, Iran and Central Asia. Moreover, the trend is also approaching the shores of Israel, turkey and Russia. “Because of its centrifuge explosion, ‘hallyu’ is also called the ‘Korea wave’” (<http://nation-branding.info/2009/05/13/south-korea-nation-branding-peace-corps-and-hallyu/>).

In 2004, a survey was conducted on the popularity of the ‘Korea wave’ in China and Japan. The result showed that 68 percent of Chinese and 61 percent of Japanese answered they had watched Korean TV dramas. Out of these, approximately 60 percent of Chinese and 42.5 percent of Japanese who had been exposed to Korean dramas came to have a positive image of the country. Two years later, similar polls was conducted and the result showed a significant increase from the previous pools where the Chinese population sample responded by an increase standing of 92.2 percent and 67.7 percent for the Japanese sample population. Further, a 42.5 percent of Japanese said their perception and impression of South Korea has changed in a positive manner after they watch Korean dramas. The success of ‘Korean wave’ can be seen through the significant increase of tourists visiting during the last 10 years. Statistics have shown a significant increase of tourists, as the influx of Japanese tourists to South Korea following the screening of South Korea soap operas on Japanese television, for example, can be said to have been the positive effect from the success of the ‘Korean wave’ (Dinnie, 2009, p. 5). As reported by the Korea Tourism Organization, the economic effects of

the tourism industry was higher than the electronic industry with the average of 69.1 percent in comparison to the foreign exchange earnings amount from the tourism industry of 85.5 percent in 1999. Moreover, tourism industry was reported to have generated 7.4 trillion Won and indirect economic effects to other industries amounted to about 3.6 trillion Won in the same year. Additionally, the industry created 390 thousand tourism jobs and 40 thousand related jobs in 1999. Since the boom of its tourism era, the income generated by the industry has reached 2 trillion Won and in related industries amounts to 660 billion Won every year (<http://kto.visitkorea.or.kr>).

As the increase in popularity of the Korean wave is significant, the South Korea policymakers are considering representing it as an important dimension of the country's soft power (Dinnie, 2009, p. 5). As well, "the South Korea's nation branding officials continue to explore ways 'hallyu' can boost exports, attract tourism, increase trade and ultimately upgrade the nation's global image in further workshops" (<http://nation-branding.info/2009/05/13/south-korea-nation-branding-peace-corps-and-hallyu/>).

*Monetary contribution* - When South Korea ventures on a new diplomacy, that is, the use of soft power in both bilaterally and multilaterally in the international arena, the soft power is "increasingly viewed as an attractive foreign policy ingredient that can make South Korea's presence more acceptable and effective" (Lee, 2009, p. 3). The use of soft power in the form of cultural promotion through 'hallyu' is already proven to be a success for South Korea. However, as the plan to brand the country as a serious player in the international arena is



ambitious and wide-ranging, South Korea has focused on other tangible activities to engage itself as an active global citizen as well. These include increasing Official Development Assistant (ODA) and dispatching 3,000 volunteers abroad every year under the “Korean Supporters” a Peace Corps-like programme.

South Korea, as pointed out by Euh Yoon-dae, the Chairman of PCNB, has emerged as a successful economy and a wealthy country, but is still regarded as a poor country in some part of the world. This is partly because it failed to provide sufficient contribution to the international community and has not been actively engaged with assisting the underdeveloped economies. This can be seen through his statement where Euh has mentioned that “Korea’s economy has grown rapidly in recent decades, but its global contribution is not commensurate with its economic power” (<http://nation-branding.info/2011/01/19/korea-urged-to-revamp-overseas-pr-system/>). PCNB realizes that for the country to be taken seriously and to improve its reputation in the international community, it needs to increase its ODA for underdeveloped nations. As the significance of ODA is increasingly gaining recognition in the international community, the Lee government has vowed to increase South Korea’s ODA to the DAC countries’ average level through its “International contribution diplomacy”. Despite a steep rise and a commitment with its contribution, South Korea’s ODA remains at a meager 0.05% of its Gross National Income (GNI) or at 517 million US Dollars in 2006, which the ratio is far below the average 0.3% of the OECD’s Development Assistance Committee (DAC) member nations. However, this amount has been increasing slowly but steadily and reached 680 million US Dollars in 2007 or 0.07% of its GNI (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, South Korea).

However, while the figures remained relatively lower than its DAC nation members, South Korea has vowed to increase its donation by 0.118% in 2010 and 0.25% in 2015, as a part of its determination to help meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as set out by the United Nations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, South Korea). However, while it seems that South Korea is a serious contributor in the global community, Lee (2009) has pointed out that South Korea has to ensure that its contribution is not merely seen as the aspiration to enhance its national visibility and an instrument for securing overseas resources. Rather, it is based on the profound values and substantive ideas (Lee, 2009, p. 3).

Another facet of Korean's foreign assistance policy is 'World Friends Korea', which is roughly equivalent to the US Peace Corps. Prior to the launch of this campaign, South Korea's has impressively contributed to the United Nations (UN) Peace Keeping Operation (PKO) or other multilateral military operations (Lee, 2009, p. 2). However, as PCNB seeks to emphasize the recognition of South Korea on the global agenda, the council then dispatches 3,000 volunteers abroad every year for various governmental operated programmes, with the tasks to promote Korean cultures and food, as well as working in areas such as information technology, education, and the environment in addition to its PKO. Having sent about 3,000 volunteers abroad each year, South Korea is beginning to be "taken more seriously as 'Global Korea' emerged as the new brand of public diplomacy" (Lee, 2009, p. 3).

With all the effort of PCNB and the implementation of the relevance policies, the council is hoping that it would help raise Korea's brand from nearly at the bottom of the member states of the OECD to the middle of the bloc by 2013 (Suh, 2009). As evident, the Lee government is embarking on a NB campaign in order to upgrade Korea's brand value in proportion to its economic power, as it is one of the world's 10 largest economies. Thus, it has made the efforts not to be seen as an arrogant donor, but as a responsible member of the international community (Suh, 2009). South Korea is striving to become one of the most advanced nations and an important player on the international stage. It is set to establish "global standards" by overcoming the barriers of nationalism and emphasis on bloodline, which have justified the "of the Koreans by the Koreans and for the Koreans" notion (Suh, 2009). PCNB is initiating programmes with the objective to help "Koreans learn about globally accepted norms and etiquette and become more acceptable to other culture", as stated by Euh, the Chairman of PCNB (Na, 2009). He further stated that "[PCNB] activities will focus on reducing the gap and preventing such firms from receiving undue treatment just because they are from South Korea" (Na, 2009). With this reference, South Korea is creating a pool of 100 billion Won (\$74 million US) to be spent annually on branding by Seoul metropolitan government, the KTO and other government agencies "to spruce up its negative image overseas and build a brand as a "respected and beloved" member of the global community" (Na, 2009).

## CHAPTER 4

### NATION BRANDING: THE CASE OF THAILAND

Thailand is well known for its tagline “Amazing Thailand”. However, as this is mainly linked to the promotion of tourism or destination branding, the Thai government has, in recent years, been trying to showcase its other facets and attributes in order to push the country’s capabilities forward and send a compelling message to the international community that the country is more than a Southeast Asian country that is merely famous for its natural beauty.

NB for export promotion, FDI and tourism are the key commercial objectives of the country engaging in NB strategies and this is also the case for Thailand. While traditionally, the Ministry of Tourism and Sports has been assigned the role of protecting a country’s image and tourist attraction and the Ministry of Commerce and the Board of Investment (BOI) are responsible for boosting imports, exports and investment, the realization that the projected image of the country or the perception that foreigners hold about the country has profound impact on these factors, urged Thailand to employ a different approach to stay ahead of the race. Dinnie (2008) has mentioned in his article that:

one of the prime challenges for nation branding is to adequately balance the diverse mix of attributes that most nations possess. In terms of export promotion, there is an on going debate as to whether individual product/corporate brands enhance the image of the overarching nation brand, or vice versa.

(Dinnie, 2008b, p. 6)

Like many other countries, Thailand has evolved both politically and economically in the 20th century. Its positive qualities and attributes can be enhanced at multiple levels including the physical environment to public services, entertainment and recreation attractions. These collective components, as mentioned by Nuttavuthisit (2006), provide opportunities for Thailand to compete in the global marketplace (Nuttavuthisit, 2006, p. 26). With a rapid recovery from the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis and a competitive labour industry, Thailand is considered as one of the fastest growing economies in Southeast Asia. In recent years, the Thai government has been actively engaged in developing NB activities to boost its exports, FDI and tourism.

Thailand, as appeared in a number of well known publications, polls and surveys, is one of the most desirable places in the world to live, work and visit. Its people are considered friendly, its landscapes are breathtaking and its culture and heritage are unique. It has been competing in the global marketplace based on its natural resources and relatively low labour cost, which give it comparative advantages and made Thailand a regional production hub (Nuttavuthisit, 2006, p. 21). The Thai government, in an attempt to maintain its status in the global marketplace launched several projects including the “Bangkok Fashion City” to promote the fashion industry and local designers, “Kitchen to the World”, in order to promote Thai agri-export sector and “Health Hub of Asia” for the promotion of healthcare, spa and Thai traditional massage. Further, the country has also adopted the famous tourism campaign “Amazing Thailand”, which the country has long adopted throughout the past decade after the failure to replace it with the new “Thailand Unforgettable” campaign in 2006 (the Tourism

Authority of Thailand (TAT) scrap the new campaign and return to 'Amazing Thailand' in 2007 (Nuttavuthisit, 2006, Delforge 2004). Interestingly, with all the government's effort in position and branding Thailand as the hub of numerous campaigns, Delforge (2004) has mentioned that there is "still lack of attention from the domestic consumers who are considered to be one of the important players in the building of strong nation brand" (Delforge 2004).

As a small emerging economy that underwent several political difficulties, Thailand recognizes the need to enhance its nation image in order to compete in the competitive global marketplace. As such the Branding Thailand Project was initiated by the Government in 2001, to develop a better understanding of its position in the international arena. With the support of two important business school, Sasin Graduate Institute of Business Administration at Chulalongkorn University (Thailand) and the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University (USA), Thailand seek to develop a more comprehensive national strategy in the global marketplace with the aim not only to attract visitors but also investments and talents (Maesincee et al., 2003, cited in Nuttavuthisit, 2006, p. 22). However, little has been done as the country witnessed the changes of governments and the idea of branding Thailand went unnoticed. However, not until recently that the issue of branding Thailand resurfaced and received top priority by the government, under the administrative of the former Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva, after the country went through major political disturbance.

The outburst of a series of political turmoil in Thailand, notably by the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD), or the Yellow Shirts, which played a significant role in the country's political crisis in 2005, 2006 and 2008 and the United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD), whose supporters are commonly called "Red Shirts, in 2006, 2009 and 2010, left Thailand with tarnished reputation and negative image, as the international news agencies broadcasted the several months long protests, riots and violent clashes between the protesters and the government and the burning of government and commercial buildings in Bangkok. It was estimated that the country lost approximately \$2.2 billion as a result of the crisis and the confidence level of Thailand fell 10 places to number 60 in the World Economic Forum ranking among 125 countries, indicated that Thailand's competitiveness is declining to attract foreign investors. As a result, Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva, the Thai's Prime Minister at that time planned his first official foreign trip to repair and restore confidence among investors and tourists (Suchaovanich, 2010). Moreover, the Thai's government, under the administration of the former Prime Minister, also launched a national campaign, "Muang Thai Nai Jai Khun" (Thailand In Your Heart), in 2010, in the effort of improving its image and restore its status as a stable nation, both politically and economically, in the international arena. Based on the assumption that every nation is different from the other in the world and the task of differentiating a nation from others is difficult, the demanding task the Thai government faces is to identify the unique characteristics of a nation and to display them in a comprehensive way, without being reductive (Widler, 2007, p. 147). The campaign of branding Thailand then, focuses on defining the most compelling qualities of the country to increase the awareness of Thailand's diverse businesses, investments, commercial, tourism and hospitality and service

capabilities to support Thailand in its engagement in international sphere. Thus, the campaign's objectives of branding Thailand must focus on the promotion of Thailand in all areas such as political, economic, investment and tourism aspects to enhance the depth and profitability of Thai's participation in the global economy through trade and investment. The outcome of the campaign must reflect how the population perceived Thailand and what strength it should focus on in order to broadening its image in the international arena.

'Thailand in Your Heart' is designed to reiterate the positive image of Thailand to the world, through a consolidate message voted and voiced by the Thai population. The message voted by the Thai population is used as guidance for the government to concentrate on the area, which the population sees as the strength of the country and a strong attribute that could differentiate Thailand from the rest of its competitors. The four areas, which the steering committee has crafted is based on the evaluation of a specific survey using 2,000 sample population in Bangkok and other provinces with questions encompassing all areas of Thai's attributes and sum it up to 4 main areas, which the population sample sees are the strong attributes that differentiate Thailand from other nations. These are:

1. The Thai population is open-minded with the capacity to accept, adopt and accommodate.
2. Promoting 'Thainess' in the international community and global marketplace. Thailand is the place where business meets cultural and natural diversities.
3. Thailand as the hub of investment with the best service.



After the campaign was launched, more than 400,000 respondents were received and the steering committee used the result to summarize it under the slogan of “EXPERIENCE THAILAND: Creativity. Diversity. Opportunity.”, which reflects the image of Thailand that is in the heart of the Thai population that Thailand has the capacity encompassing all dimensions including Thainess, rich natural resources, unique culture and tradition, trade and investments as well as the Thai traditional knowledge. All these attributes are seen by the Thai population as the strong points in which differentiate Thailand from other countries and can be used as effective tools to attract foreign visitors and investors. The slogan speaks for itself. ‘Experience Thailand’ implies to the experience that ones should seek and try on their own to gain the better understanding of a place and its culture, people and lifestyle. ‘Creativity’ is portrayed in the everyday life of the Thai people through product innovation and the creative use of the resources around them to craft one of a kind product that stands out from other nations. ‘Diversity’ reflects the openness of the Thai society with the ability to accept, adopt and accommodate the practice of business, tourism and lifestyle. Opportunity refers to the capacity in the aspects of trade and investments, which signals the readiness and the opportunities of being the hub of business and investment ([www.thailandbranding.org](http://www.thailandbranding.org)).

Judging from this, it is evident that the area of tourism is what government feel most comfortable with in term of using this aspect as its nation branding technique. Protecting positive image of country’s tourist attraction is a well established and familiar activity, and the benefits appear to be so clear that there is little media hostility to the public funding of tourism strategies. However, there needs to be more coordination between tourism organization and

trade promotion organizations in order to achieve a multidimensional image of the nation and to avoid the risk of accidentally positioning the nation as a rural backwater (Dinnie, 2008, p. 8). It will be interesting to see whether Thailand could achieve its objective, particularly after a roller coaster ride in 2010. Nonetheless, with the recent estimated economic growth of 3.7 percent by the World Bank, it seems that the economic activity in Thailand is gradually returning to normal. Additionally, a strong recovery of tourism and a surge in external demand for autos and agricultural products has helped boost Thai exports, while the domestic price controls and robust export growth help ease the impact of rising food and international fuel prices in the Thai economy. However, the main downside risks remain external whereby the Thai economy is particularly vulnerable to the risk of exposure to the oil price shocks. Moreover, the follow-on impact on Europe's debt crisis, the United States' fragile economic recovery, the uncertainty regarding the extent of disruption to the auto and electronics industries' supply chains caused by Japan's recent earthquake are undeniable factors that also pose significant risks for the Thai economy. Nonetheless, the government's effort to subsidize for the oil prices to help the less fortunate household and the increase of interest rate by the central bank could help cushion Thailand against the impact of the external factors. In the long run, the government should improve energy efficiency and reducing dependence on imported energy, as this would help Thailand manage the risk of another oil price shock (Frederico, G. S. and Burgard, A., 2011).

To go beyond the point of tourism to other branding context, it is also important to look at Thailand through other important aspects in the comparative identities. The six elements of Anholt's NBH are identified and discussed in relation to the questionnaire as follows:

The first element is *Exports*. Anholt and GfK Group has defined this element as the determination of "the public's image of products and services from each country and the extent to which consumers proactively seek or avoid products from each country-of-origin" ([www.gfk.com](http://www.gfk.com)). According to Dinnie (2008), one of the key concepts of nation branding strategy is export promotion where four important factors are identified as 1) high quality brands 2) effective COO positioning 3) the strategic development of target market and 4) high level of innovation (Dinnie, 2008, p. 222). Thailand is a free-enterprise economy with well equipped infrastructure, generally pro-investment policies, and strong export industries. Between 2000 – 2007, the country enjoyed the average annual growth of more than 4 percent after its recovery from the 1997 - 98 Asian Financial Crisis. Thailand major exporting commodities include machinery and electronic components, agricultural commodities and jewelry, which accounts for more than half of its GDP. In 2010, Thailand's economy expanded 7.6%, although the country was partially affected by the political protests between March – May of the same year, which, at most, had temporary impact on business and consumer confidence. In term of tourism, although this sector was affected during the protests, its quick recovery and the economy is projected to grow steadily in 2011 (The World Factbook, 2011).

Using this logic, this element can be examined through the products, entertainment and fashion brand of Thailand, with the perception that Thailand could benefit from the product recognition identified in the questionnaire. Further it can be explained by the identification of images of the Thai's brand on the consumers' mind by the incorporation of goods and services within the context of using the product to assert certain values. For instance, if the sample population can identify themselves with the products and services, this can indicate how well the brand is known on the international market. Most notably, there are several companies that are playing an important part in operating large business at the global level including the Thai Union Frozen Products Company, Charoen Phokphand Foods Company (CP), Thai Airways International Public Company Limited and Boon Rawd Brewery.

Analyzing the relevant result, it shows that 72.5 percent out of 40 samples identified Thailand with food, 62.5 percent with hospitality and service follow by 40 percent with people and language, 35 percent with shopping, landscape and tourist destinations at 32.5 percent and fashion and architect scores at 15 percent. This indicate that Thailand's brand is strong in the hospitality and service sector, follow by people and language, shopping and fashion and architect comes in on the fifth place. Additionally, when the survey is analyzed based on the Thai brands, 45 percent identified Jim Thompson, 32.5 percent with Pasaya and 25 percent with Naraya. These three are leading Thai brands that have established themselves on both the local and international market. In term of company, high percentage of the sample population recognized Index Living Mall CP and Boon Rawd Brewery as the top Thai brands. Interestingly noted, Tom Yum Goong and Ong Bak, starring Jaa Panom Yeerum or famously

known as Tony Jaa scored at 60 percent and 57.5 percent respectively. Overall, it is clear that Thailand has the potential to grow in the exportation of the entertainment industry and its fashion, giving that the government and relevant ministry or agencies develop and implement the right regulation and guideline to support this market sector. Further, in regards to what type of service or industry does the sample population identify themselves with, it is interesting to note that the hospitality and service is the leading sector on the people's mind follow by people and language. This means Thailand can export its hospitality and service sector by creating hotel chains, catering franchises and language courses and the like internationally.

The second element is *Governance*, which is measured by the public opinion on how they perceive the national government's competency and fairness, as well as the individuals' beliefs about each country's government and commitment to global issues such as democracy, justice, poverty and the environment ([www.gfk.com](http://www.gfk.com)). Thailand is a Constitutional Monarchy with King Bhumibol Adulyadej being the Chief of state and Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra as Head of the Government. In the past few years, there have been numerous occurrences in regards to political and economic aspect of the country. The international audience has witnessed news headline and footage of streets riots and political demonstration in Thailand caused primarily by political motives. However, there were no mentions of any political-related views expressed in this survey when the participants were asked to describe Thailand and none have given their reason for not having visited Thailand because of the negative images they come across in the media. Thus, the evaluation of this element is shifted to focus on other aspect of the country in relation to the satisfaction of infrastructure, safety,

cleanliness and technology and communication, as the government has control of these aspects. The satisfaction shown by the sample population could indicate the effectiveness of the government in implementing these to help facilitate the number of visitors or investors in the country. Most importantly, the indications of political and economic stabilities are also the determining factor of how well the country is governed. In these areas, Thailand scores lower than other parts where only 5 out of 40 rated infrastructure as excellent, 21 as good, 5 neutral and 3 as fair. On safety, 5 rated Thailand as excellent, 17 good, 11 neutral and 2 fair. For cleanliness, 4 rated Thailand as being very clean, 22 as moderately clean and 6 as fair. On the note of technology, 23 out of 40 perceived Thailand as having sufficient technology coverage but only 6 rated this as an excellent service.

The third element is *Culture and Heritage*. This reveals the perception on how nation perceive and appreciate each other's heritage and contemporary culture, including film, music, art, sport and literature. This can be measured through the aspect of tourist destination, entertainment features such as entertainment-related image, famous movies or actors/actresses, fashion and architecture. Moreover, it can be assessed through the use of slogan and tag line, for instance, when the audience hear or see the current tourism slogan 'Amazing Thailand', what immediately comes into their minds? Does the picture of street riots and financial crisis come to mind or do they see the picture of the Grand Palace, sky train, smiling faces, Thai boxing and Thai women wearing traditional costumes? The survey shows that 40 percent of the sample population like people and language, while 32.5 percent like the landscape and tourist destination, follow by culture and tradition at 17.5 percent and fashion

and architecture at 15 percent. Additionally, 57.5 percent recognized One Bak and 60 percent recognized Tom Yum Goong as being the Thai films. Most notably, 75 percent recognized “The Beach” as being the Hollywood film filmed in Thailand, followed by “The Hangover 2” at 40 percent.

The fourth element is *People*. This element measures the population's reputation for competence, education, openness and friendliness and other qualities, as well as perceived levels of potential hostility and discrimination ([www.gfk.com](http://www.gfk.com)). In Thailand, the population is estimated at 66,720,153 with the growth rate of 0.566% (July, 2011). The government has made 12 years of schooling compulsory and the literacy rate of persons aged 15 years and above is at 92.6 percent. Thailand's education expenditure in 2009 was estimated at 4.1 percent of the total GDP (The World Factbook, 2011). In term of living standard, Thailand has recently been voted number 1 on the “Top 10 Cities” in 2011, by the Travel and Leisure magazine, which is the same ranking it received the previous year. The selection criteria used in this case is the evaluation of online and published questionnaire developed by the editors of Travel + Leisure, in association with ROI Research Inc from December 15, 2009, to March 31, 2010. The scores are indexed averages of responses concerning applicable characteristics where `5´ means excellent and `1´ means poor. The overall scores were created by averaging the component ratings of each characteristics. For the characteristics of the best cities in the world, the rating of sights, culture/arts, restaurants/food, people, shopping and value were taken into account ([www.travelandleisure.com](http://www.travelandleisure.com)). In relation to the self-constructed survey, this element is assessed through the similar rating system as the Travel + Leisure magazine. The

survey found that 57.5 percent rated Thai food as excellent, 52.5 percent for hospitality and places and people received a rating for excellence at 45 percent. The results showed that the country is viewed exceptionally high in term of hospitality and service, which involve high level of personal interaction and direct experience of the sample population with the country, as well as the general knowledge about the country and its environment.

*Tourism* is the fifth element in the NBH. This element “captures the level of interest in visiting a country and the draw of natural and man-made tourist attractions” ([www.gfk.com](http://www.gfk.com)). As many has noted, tourism is an area where most countries like to focus their attention on because they believe that it is an area where they have comparative advantage over others. As a result, countries interested in branding their nation are most likely to develop their tourism sector as the key aspect of their branding. Such countries are those with the attractiveness of culture, landscapes and climate for example, but may lack other resources. In this case, the countries’ tourism authority can play a significant part in implementing not only the attractiveness of destination, hotels and the customer service level, but also the level of safety and rules and regulation to accommodate tourists and host country alike. Further, the quality of the destination, accessibility and the value for money are also important facets to support the tourism mainstream as well. Thailand is regarded as a popular nation for travelers as voted by various travel and leisure magazines, polls and survey. According to tourists and expatriates, Thailand is a destination with the value for money. Thailand has been comment as “cheap, safe, and good food” (Tourism Authority of Thailand 2008 a & 2008 b). With reference to the survey, 67.5 percent of participants recognized the Grand Palace as a destination in



Thailand, indicating that this is a tourist hotspot for the country. Other characteristics related to tourism received high percentage of rating as well including hospitality, infrastructure, food, people and places, safety, cleanliness, shop and technology. Despite the sudden decline of tourist as a result of the tsunami back in December 2004 and the political riots in the past couple of years, the number of tourists entering Thailand is now showing a steady trend and the Ministry of Tourism and Sports is projected for a more than 15 million visitors in 2011.

The sixth and last element is *Investment and Immigration*. These are determined through the capability to attract people to live, work or study in each country and reveals how people perceive a country's economic and social situation ([www.gfk.com](http://www.gfk.com)). Investment, in relation to nation branding, the large part is associated with foreign direct investment (FDI). FDI can be defined as a desire of a nation in an attempt to attract inward investment by implementing long term strategy to the extent that the level of FDI is sufficient enough to contribute to the country's economy. To have successful FDI criteria, the country must have a stable political and economic environments and skilled workforce. Additionally, it requires having simple and accommodating administrative procedures and efficient modern infrastructure. After the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997 and 1998, Thailand economic recovered with the support of infrastructure enhancement, a free-enterprise economy, and pro-investment policies. Thailand has maintained and encouraged FDI to stimulate economic development, technology transfer and employment. It is among the best performance in East Asia in 2002 to the year 2004. In 2007, the economic growth was estimated at 4.5 % mainly from the increase in export. For 2011, the economy is expected to grow at 4 – 5 percent with

more emphasis given to the domestic demands ([www.mof.go.th](http://www.mof.go.th)). Looking at the environment for investment in Thailand, the 2010 GDP was at \$586.9 billion and the GDP per capita was at USD 8,700 in 2010, up from USD 8,200 in 2009. The country's main industries include tourism, textiles and garments, agricultural processing, beverages, tobacco, cement, light manufacturing such as jewelry and electric appliances, computers and parts, integrated circuits, furniture, plastics, automobiles and automotive parts. Thailand is the world's second-largest tungsten producer and third-largest tin producer (The World Factbook, 2011). On the Corruption Perception Index, Thailand is ranked at 78 in 2010 at the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) score of 3.5 percent up from 84th place in 2009 at CPI 3.4 percent and confidence range of 3.0 – 3.8 ([www.transparencyinternational.org](http://www.transparencyinternational.org)). In term of exports, its values in the first half of 2011 is estimated at 633,708 million Thai baht and 602,898 million Thai baht for its import values. Its top 5 exporting products include crude oil, machinery and parts, chemicals, jewelry and steel and irons. Japan, China and the US remain its top 3 export and import partners.

The second aspect of this element is *immigration*. The important aspect of this element is about attracting talent, which according to Dinnie (2008), is the assessment of favourable criteria to attract the skilled workers and foreign students and talents to the country (Dinnie, 2008s, p. 222). In order to do so, the criteria should include favourable visa and residency regulations, opportunity for career progression and an attractive lifestyle. Analyzing its immigration policy, although the Immigration Office provides adequate number of statistics and sources for the persons entering and leaving the country, there is no clear response from the government on the explicit policy on international migration

(<http://www.unesco.org/most/apmrnw14.htm>). Further, there is a limited sources on related information such as the labour markets and investors movement , which without this sort of baseline data, it is difficult for the state to formulate its migration policy

(<http://www.unesco.org/most/apmrnw14.htm> ). On the education note, statistic shows that in 2010, both private and public universities in Thailand offered a total of 981 accredited international programs using English as the medium of instruction both at undergraduate and graduate levels. Moreover, Thailand offers numerous international standard primary and secondary schools in all major cities throughout the country (Office of the Higher Education Commission, 2011). The Ministry of Education has been actively involved in regional and international activities through the implementation of memorandums of understanding signed with countries in Asia, Europe, North and Latin Americas to support the exchange of education. The Ministry of Education has initiated quality education systems and invested in upgrading laboratory and information technology equipments nation wide to ensure that faculty and students will have the opportunity to receive a high quality educational field. In term of resources, the Thai higher education institutions have enjoyed academic resources, links, exchanges and networking offered by numerous offices both domestically and from abroad. Additionally, Thailand has implemented numerous exchange and study programs for both Thai students to study abroad and foreign student coming to Thailand. As noted by Kanjananiyot and Nilphan (2011), the Ministry of Education and relevant agencies have “adjusted themselves to accommodate the needs for electronic and other physical facilities for foreign students and guests alike, through the duration of their academic undertakings in the country.....With increased expertise and accumulated experiences in favorable international environments, as

well as the precious cultural heritage Thailand has to offer, Thai higher education has attracted increasing numbers of students, faculty, researchers and experts from neighboring countries and those across the region to study and undertake various joint projects, acquiring and sharing intellectual and cultural richness for mutual academic excellence, benefit and understanding” (<http://www.thailandstudy.com>).

Taking into account the interviews, case studies, survey and statistics from various sources, the study have uncovered several important elements, which can contribute to the building blocks of the nation branding strategy for Thailand. One of the main conclusions derived from the interview is that the strengths of Thailand are mainly associated with tourism, which has minor impact on short term branding, as “people around the world have already known all the strengths it [Thailand] has. Therefore, I don’t think Thailand needs to spend much of its efforts on short term nation branding”, Mr. Yensuang, an official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) an has stated in this interview. What most interviewees agreed on is the fact that Thailand has to shift away from the perception that it is ‘cheap’ and project its other strong points to be considered as a serious players on the international scale. While there is no need for the country to waste its time and money on the short term branding, the country should take the next step to keep up with other countries and learn from the success examples of Singapore and South Korea, which the interviewees mentioned are two of the best examples in Asia.

Most notably, the interviewees from the private, governmental and tourism sectors all agreed that the challenges for Thailand to successful brand itself are the issues of political stability, the economy and people. As Mr. Sangmanee has mentioned;

[People, politics, and economy]. These are the factors towards success as well as challenges for Thailand's image. A lot of Thai people still live under poverty and do not have proper access to education and sanitation. Meanwhile, Thai communities abroad are not credible and reputable enough to sustain the recognition of the host countries especially in the case of low/unskilled workers which project undesired impact on the image of Thailand.

Thai politics is another important issue. The coup and continued unrest have inevitably undermined the confidence of foreigners especially the business investors. Despite the concerns for violence and chaos, efficiency and credibility of the government have also been questioned.

Although the Thai economy may be growing satisfactorily, our export products are not as reputable or sophisticated like those of other countries such as motor vehicle, technology, electrical appliances etc. In comparison, agricultural products, spare parts, jewellery, clothing, appear less appealing and are usually taken for granted.

Mr. Kobboon Sangmanee, (MFA), 2011.

According to the interviewees, for Thailand to successful brand itself relies on the involvement from all stakeholders and to learn from the success and failures from the surrounding neighbours. Mr. Hoonpongsimanont, Director of SCG Chemicals, Dubai Office, has pointed out that Singapore and South Korea are two of the best cases that Thailand could learn from. Singapore is a country that evidently lack natural resources but it has "strategically build good product offerings, such as Universal Studio, Sentosa, Casino, and Formula 1, enlarge the seaports to attract trade, hugely invest in infrastructure to make it convenient to do business and travel to" while "South Korea, another successful case, has managed to drive with technology with a few big conglomerates such as LG, Samsung, Daewoo and Hyundai".

Malaysia, on the other hand, can be considered as a failed example as it has been trying too hard to propagate its image “but unfortunately, they don’t have good products as a country offering. Promotional campaign on good shopping and sightseeing has back-fired” (Mr. Hoonpongsimanont, 2011). This implies that for Thailand to succeed in nation branding, it has to balance all the six comparative identities on the nation branding hexagon and that the image it is generating is based on facts and attributes that truly exist.

In term of case studies, it seems that Singapore has successfully established itself as the Arts and Culture hub of Asia, with the support from its government and adequate funding. The aim to create awareness that Singapore is becoming an ultra-modern society that blended its unique heritage and technology is receiving much attention on the international arena, adding to the already existed aspect of the highly competitive advantage in human capital and workforce. In term of South Korea, it has approached nation branding using the facet of cultural projection, which has also proven to be effective with a strong impact on within the Asian region and expanding gradually in other region of the world. Like Singapore, South Korea is excelled in staging its position in the world through the assistance of the PNBC, which has been playing an important part in strategizing, and implementing policies and programmes to position South Korea as an emerging Technological, Culture and Entertainment hub. Thailand, differ from its two neighbours, is still in the process of formulating its policy and strategy. While the main objective is to give the country a ‘facelift’, to improve its image and put a greater emphasize on the economic and investment aspects of the country, there has

been little progress by the committee to do so. The country still relies heavily on tourism, which of course, is one of the most important revenue generator industries for the country.

On the results of the survey and statistics, it is evident that Thailand is strong on its tourism aspect. Looking at the 62 percent of the sample population that have indicated that they have been to Thailand, 37.5 percent has visited the country for tourism purposes and 27.5 percent have been there for the combination of reasons such as work and travel and work and visiting family and friends. 67.5 percent recognized the Grand Palace as a tourist destination in Thailand and 75 percent recognized the list of cities situated in Thailand. This indicate that most people travel throughout the country or more than one city in Thailand or have heard or the cities other than Bangkok, the capital.

In summation of products including cuisine, goods and entertainment aspect, more than half recognized Tom Yum Goong and Pad Thai as Thailand's original dishes. For local fashion brands, most recognized Jim Thompson as a Thai brand, although the name indicated a Western origin, at 45 percent, Pasaya at 32.5 percent and Naraya at 25 percent. This indicate an exceptional knowledge of those who have been to Thailand, the local brands of Thailand. Moreover, Boon Rawd Brewery and Charoen Phokaphan (CP) have both received 37.5 percent recognition and Index Living Mall comes in at 50 percent. In the entertainment aspect, 57.5 percent have heard or seen 'Ong Bak' and 60 percent can identify 'Tom yum Goong', where these two movies have made a stir in the Asian and European market and boosted the popularity of 'Muay Thai' or Thai kickboxing. At the rating of the overall experience of those

who have been to Thailand, Thai food has secured the top position at 57.5 percent, hospitality and service at 52.5 percent, followed by places and people at 45 percent. These are the rating on the scale of 'excellent'. In comparison, 15 percent rated 'cleanliness' as fair, 7.5 percent on infrastructure and 5 percent on safety. However, none of the categories are rates as poor. See appendix D for the full results of the survey.



## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

In the past 10 years, nation branding has become one of the most popular catchphrases where scholars, practitioners, academics and professionals in the field have been conducting extensive research on its definition and variables. While many countries have boarded the bandwagon with the hope of using this as a tool to improve their images and maintain their positions in the international arena, some have wasted enormous sums of public money on unsuccessful campaigns and have gained very little from their efforts (Anholt, 2010c). According to Anholt (2010c), many countries have misunderstood the concept and approached it wrongly, without prior research on the basic principles and guideline of nation branding hexagon and “based on the assumption that people don’t respect their country simply because they don’t know enough about it” (Anholt, 2010c). In reality, the reason why some countries have negative images or are perceived poorly by the international community is that they approach nation branding at a wrong angle. “Rather than asking themselves “what can we say to make ourselves more famous?” the government of such countries should be asking “what can we do to make ourselves more relevant?” (Anhotl, 2010c). Further, for countries that are simply using the advertisement and campaigns on telling people about what their country is or is not, is not enough to change the perception of the people outside. “They [people] don’t generally pay much attention to communications campaigns – especially when there is no “product” or offer, and when the “brand” that is speaking is a government rather than an exciting consumer goods company – so even if a lack of communication is indeed the problem,

simply providing more information is never the solution. A reputation can never be constructed through communications, slogans and logos: it needs to be earned. (Anholt , 2010c).

Looking at the comparing the case of Singapore, South Korea and Thailand, and the results of survey and statistics, it seems that while Singapore is on the forefront at establishing itself as the arts and culture hub of Asia and South Korea as the entertainment capital, Thailand still has to a lot to learn from its neighbours. For a starter, the prior two countries have established a council or a committee to steer the countries in the direction that serve its purpose, Thailand has taken a step to form a committee but the tasks and progress remains vague and somewhat unknown to the public. Evidently, little has been done since the time of its launch. In term of budget wise, Singapore and South Korea have invested large sums in their projects and have received significant revenue from its investment as investors and tourists flock the countries. Singapore has turned its river banks into a famous esplanade with many of its construction being recognized as the country's landmarks. South Korea, on a similar path, has exported its 'polished' image through the use of the entertainment facets, creating the Korean wave throughout Asia and in the process of extending its popularity to other parts of the world. Thailand, on the other hand, is experiencing hiccups along its journey with the help from the series of street protests, neighbouring disputes and domestic political challenges. Moreover, with the new government coming into power, the country's attempt to brand itself may come to a stall, as the new administration will be revising their policies and agendas. In terms of commitment and budget, Thailand seems to lack both. There is no clear indication

from the committee on how much budget is allocated for any of its projects and commitments. There is no concrete direction on how the previous government has planned to steer the committee forward and no indication of how the plans have been forward to the new administration. See appendix C for the comparative tables on various aspects between Singapore, South Korea and Thailand.

Further, the survey shows that Thailand is strong on the aspect of tourism.

However, it has the potential of increasing its other CI given that the government has a clear direction on how to project the image of these products and how it could assist or support related industries. For instance, as film and TV are incredible powerful to use as channels of communication, Thailand should focus on projecting its image to the target audience, not only as a tourist destination and advertise the beautiful landscape but also emphasize on how strong is the economic development in the country and how to gain the investors' confidence. Thailand's images both positive such as "Land of smiles", delicious cuisine, beautiful islands and landscape and rich culture and tradition, and negative images such as political and economic instabilities, corruption, poverty and sex tourism are constantly broadcast on the international media. While many of its location are being used in major Hollywood films, it did not help to promote the country as one has hoped. In most films, Thailand has been used as substitute for its neighbouring countries. Moreover, many are somewhat still confused about Thailand and Chinese, although the language, cuisine, culture and tradition are distinctly different, but the Western portraying of Thailand through the eye of Hollywood has made the image of Thailand vague and like that of Chinese heritage. Sidhom (2010) has pointed out that:

what sex and the city did for tourism in NY could hardly be matched by the NY Tourist Office. Even clever strategies such as that employed by the Prague city council of offering and promoting Prague as a cost effective, beautiful and exotic film location has managed to place the location in a number of global films from the Bourne Identity to James's Bond most recent Casino Royale. Country marketers should pursue an arts and film strategy to partner with international film makers as well as indigenous talent to apply product placement techniques to the countries values and locations, it's a places placement as it were. This is an active strategy employed by the likes of Prague and Morocco to a great deal of success. The beauty of this strategy is that not only builds awareness of the countries in question, it also delivers iconic images and cultural values not to mention foreign film investments.

(Sidhom, 2010)

The Thai government could establish a committee that foresee the activities related to entertainment and culture, which has the authority to formulate strategies and policies to drive the industry forward. Entertainment is one of the most effective channels to project one's culture and communication with the world. In connection to the efficiency of doing business, Thailand could look at the successful case of Singapore and see what or how Thailand can also emerge as an efficient nation like its neighbour. For a starter, Thailand needs to stabilize its politics. Second, it needs to focus on promoting its strong point and establish policies to help increase its global participation. As the tourism sector is already strong, Thailand should concentrate on other aspects, such as economic and governance. In term of economic, it should set a regulation or rules to accommodate investors and promote the incentives effectively, with creative and innovative ideas on doing business in Thailand. In term of governance, Thailand needs to project the image that it is serious international member that upheld the highest standards of human rights, freedom of speech, and transparent.

“In global marketplace, the nation brand should ideally act as a national umbrella brand, seeking to differentiate the country’s products from international competitors, but the mechanism of its success operates at the micro level of individual customer psychology” (O’Shaughenssy & O’Shaughenssy, 2000, cited in Fan, 2006, p. 9). Based on the concession that branding is an extremely powerful tool for countries to differentiate themselves in the international market, Thailand needs to include all the components of the marketing strategies, such as finance, R & D, production and distribution, because branding is one part of the marketing strategies, which will not be sufficient on its own (Fan, 2006, p. 13). From the analysis, it is clear that Thailand has to analyze its internal assets. From the research of this thesis, the Thai food is proven to be popular from the international target. Moreover, Tony Jaa or Jaa Panon Yeerum, the star who made the Thai films known to the international audience with his movies “Onk Bak” and “Tom Yum Goong”. Tony Jaa can serve as a brand Ambassador for Thailand, as he can represent the nation and can express the value of nation-brand to the audience at large.

For Thailand, what it needs to do is first; re-evaluate its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and second; have concrete direction is then needed to be formed and a adequate amount of funding should be provided to support the tasks. It needs to differentiate itself from its neighbours and concentrate on promoting its strong point, ensuring that the products that the country is projecting truly exist in the country. Taking into account of the result of the research the followings are some suggestions on what Thailand could do to successfully position itself as a serious player in the international arena.

1. Develops and strengthens its competitive identities, particularly in the context of global competitiveness. Position itself as a different and attractive country for investors, foreign partners, tourists and relevant stakeholders.
2. Coordinate all manifestations of nation brands to enhance and promote its economic potentials, cooperation and exchanges.
3. Create value plus products and avoid clichés and focus on the destination's uniqueness
4. Encourage domestic participation, as the population of the country is the most valuable resources, stakeholders and effective brand ambassadors.
5. Focus on the development of a comprehensive new brand positioning by providing support to companies, which are already widely recognized and at the same time encourage new business to become world leading business enterprise.
6. Establish clear communication strategy for communicating the brand, with the involvement from all relevant parties. Keep it simple and flexible to enhance greater impact.
7. Remember that nation branding is a long term process. It involves long term commitment.

In summation, for nation branding in Thailand to work, the picture of the country has to be presented as a whole, meaning not merely the tourism part, investment sector or political side. The government has to set up a committee as that of Singapore and South Korea

to oversee the procedures, effectively manages the budget allocation, encourage participation from all relevance parties and most importantly, the committee should be an organizational body that is separated from the government or in a way that is not under the full governmental authorization where it has to stop or change its operation when a newly elected government comes into office, as this could have negative impacts in the process of successful nation branding. Thus, the committee should have enough authority to maneuver. In sum, all of these will need to combine to project a concrete message to the target audience that Thailand is a serious player in there international arena and not just a “decorative country” (Anholt, 2009).

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## **Appendix A: List of Abbreviation**

## List of Abbreviation

|      |   |
|------|---|
| BOI  | Board of Investment                                 |
| CBI  | Country Brand Index                                 |
| CI   | Comparative Identity                                |
| DAC  | Development Assistant Committee                     |
| ERC  | Economic Review Committee                           |
| FDI  | Foreign Direct Investment                           |
| GDP  | Gross Domestic Product                              |
| GNI  | Gross National Income                               |
| IP   | Intellectual Property                               |
| KTO  | Korea Tourism Organization                          |
| MDG  | Millennium Development Goals                        |
| MFA  | Ministry of Foreign Affairs                         |
| MICA | Ministry of Information, Communication and the Arts |
| NB   | Nation Branding                                     |
| NBH  | Nation Brand Hexagon                                |
| NBI  | Nation Brand Index                                  |
| NIM  | Nation Image Management                             |
| ODA  | Official Development Assistant                      |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Cooperation Development   |
| PAD  | People's Alliance for Democracy                     |
| PCNB | Presidential Council on Nation Branding             |
| PD   | Public Diplomacy                                    |
| PKO  | Peace Keeping Operation                             |
| SCG  | Siam Cement Group                                   |
| UDD  | United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship     |
| UN   | United Nations                                      |

## **Appendix B: Interview Abstracts**

## List of Interview Abstracts

1. Mr. Chalernpol Hoonpongsimanont,.....111  
Director of SCG, Dubai Office &  
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**Interview on Branding Thailand:  
Why Branding Thailand is important to the private sector?**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Mr. Chalernpol Hoonpongsimanont**, thank you for taking your time to answer the questions on “Why branding Thailand is important to the private sector?” My name is Thidarat Saenjai and I’m currently undertaking my Master Degree in Public Policy at Korea Development Institute (KDI). Firstly, let me begin by giving you a brief introduction on “Nation Branding”.

For over a decade now, "Nation Branding" has become one of the most popular catchphrases, particularly for countries that are experiencing negative or damaged reputation. Such countries are jumping on the bandwagon in the hope of saving and improving their images in order to compete against others in the global marketplace by attracting foreign visitors and investments. Thailand, after experiencing political and economic difficulties, recognizes the importance of improving its image to enhance its competitive advantage in the international market. It has launched several campaigns in the hope of differentiating itself from its competitors and the government is becoming more active in trying to “brand” Thailand to maintain its recognition in the international arena.

**1. Have you heard about nation branding?**

*Yes, define as how to position the country domestically and internationally from the political, economic, culture and nature of people perspectives.*

**2. In recent years, we have seen an increasing number of nations taking interests in nation branding as an effective tool to improve their positioning in the international arena. What do you think about this trend and what do you think this will lead to?**

*Trend is there. It would lead to more bilateral alliances. Countries are forced to take side. Most powerful countries are heading to the other counterparts who control resource, people and strategic location.*

**3. As we have seen in the past few years, Thailand have been on a rollercoaster ride in term of political and economic facets, and as image of a company and its products reply, to some extent, on the credibility and image of the country as a whole, how have the political disturbance effected your company both domestically and abroad?**

*No significant effect to our company business as our business does not link to politics.*

**4. Is there a huge difference on the sales volume or how you conduct your business, say, prior to and post the political turmoil?**

*No*

**5. Getting back to nation branding. In an attempt to improve Thailand's image, the government launched a campaign called "Thailand Branding: Experience Thailand" last year, where a committee was formed to play a central role in organizing promotional activities and finding the most effective ways of improving the country's image. Have you heard about this campaign? How should this committee approach branding Thailand?**

*No, have not heard.*

**6. Do you think nation branding can help correct a country's stereotype or change the perception of how foreigners view a country? If yes, how do you think nation branding can help improve the negative image of Thailand? How do you think Thailand and your company can benefit from this?**

*Yes. Nation Branding is what and how we want other people to perceive our country, in what way. Yes, it can help improve negative image of Thailand. As a country, benefits are there. As a company, better image of the country helps attracts new investors and new partners to cooperate with our company and lessens the time to break-the-ice and shorten the period of deal-done decisions.*

**7. Many countries seem to project similar communicate strategies when it comes to nation branding i.e. idyllic place for doing business, beautiful landscape, culture and tradition, friendly people, and the ideal tourist destination. In your opinion, what can Thailand do to differentiate itself from these similar claims? What do you think are the biggest challenges for Thailand?**

*Not true. Not many countries can do so same as end of the day, the basic is that such countries must look on what they have (product offerings). Thailand is fortunate to earn a wonderful and variety of products such as culture, people, food, cost of living, etc, so differentiation is there already, no need to find or come up with any other uniqueness, it is rare enough.*

*Biggest challenges are the Government sector. We must have stable politic and key government functions (ministries) must have same in-line directions and strategies and MUST synergize all together. 1+1 can be a lot more than 2.*

**8. Compare to other countries in Asia that have adopted the idea of nation branding (eg. India, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and South Korea), do you think Thailand is on the right track? What can Thailand learn from its neighbours' experiences?**

*Thailand is on the right track. Just to create more momentum by good synergies within public sectors, so as with the private sectors.*

*Your given example can be used as learning examples. India failed as they want to promote but infrastructure is not ready so as people. People disappointed.*

*Japan is very conservative and hardly 'adapt' but prefer to let people 'adopt' to them. Japan is no longer the leading driver in the world market, and gradually losing to South Korea. Malaysia is trying way too much but unfortunately, they don't have good products as a country offering. Promotional campaign on good shopping and sightseeing has back-fired them to attract people to come to Thailand instead (given our politic is stable).*

*Singapore is one of the best case. They don't inherit any good products and strategically build good product offerings, such as Universal Studio, Sentosa, Casino, Formula 1, enlarge the seaports to attract trade, hugely invest in infrastructure to make it convenient to do business and travel to. A great synergy to bring all together in one pot. Two Thumbs Up! Too bad, they are small and people can get bored after trying once as culture is not deep enough and people are too systematic.*

*South Korea, another successful case, has managed to drive with technology with a few big conglomerates such as LG, Samsung, Daewoo and Hyundai. Then, nothing else. Foods and Dramas Have started to spur in Asia but still, overall products offerings as a country are not that variety and people are rigid.*

**9. As nation branding encompasses areas such as tourism, FDI, export promotion and talent attractiveness, what do you think the government should do to create or maintain consistency across all areas involved in managing the country's image?**

*1. Stable Politic. 2. Less Corruption 3. Less Ego among different ministries. 4. Put one person (PM or deputy PM) to manage the synergy among the ministries. 5. Focus on messages sent to public. 6. Maintain and leverage the existing products we have.*

**\*\*\*Mr. Chalernpol Hoonpongsimanont, Director of SCG Chemicals, Dubai and the Middle East Office and is also the Chairman of the Thai Business Council of Dubai and the Northern Emirates of UAE. He is currently based in Dubai and is overseeing business in the Middle East and countries in Africa and Europe\*\*\***

**Interview on Branding Thailand:  
How relevance is branding Thailand to tourism?**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Mr. Komson Ratchatapan**, thank you for taking your time to answer the questions on “How relevance is branding Thailand to tourism?” My name is Thidarat Saenjai and I’m currently undertaking my Master Degree in Public Policy at Korea Development Institute (KDI). Firstly, let me begin by giving you a brief introduction on “Nation Branding”.

For over a decade now, "Nation Branding" has become one of the most popular catchphrases, particularly for countries that are experiencing negative or damaged reputation. Such countries are jumping on the bandwagon in the hope of saving and improving their images in order to compete against others in the global marketplace by attracting foreign visitors and investments. Thailand, after experiencing political and economic difficulties, recognizes the importance of improving its image to enhance its competitive advantage in the international market. It has launched several campaigns in the hope of differentiating itself from its competitors and the government is becoming more active in trying to “brand” Thailand to maintain its recognition in the international arena.

**1. Have you heard about nation branding?**

*Yes. The things that people think of when they hear about that place.*

**2. In your opinion, how is branding Thailand relevant to tourism?**

*It is not that strong compared to those our competitors set such as Malaysia and Singapore.*

**3. Your position involves you working closely with the tourism board, lecturer on a hotel and tourism industry, a hotelier and a researcher on tourism monitors the tourism related activities in Phuket and Thailand. Within the past 10 years, has the trend in Thai’s tourism industry changed much? Say, number of tourists, type of tourists and destination? What do you think caused this?**

*Tourists normally come to Phuket for their beach purpose while the number of tourist keeps changing every year up and down. Currently, Russian is No.1 coming to Phuket compared to other such as American, European and Asian because it might be cheaper than travel to other destinations.*

**4. During difficult times, such as the political and economic turmoil and even the natural disasters, how badly was the tourism sector affected? What did your organization do to prevent or solve the problems? What did your organization do to restore the confidence of tourists and investors?**

*The number of tourists has decreased badly. Promotions have been launched to get tourists back and maintain the tourism's situation.*

**5. The images of Thailand have significant impact on foreigners' perception and their decision on whether or not to visit the country. Do you think the current perspective on Thailand is positive or negative? How should the government promote the positive images of Thailand and what should the government do to change the negative images or perspective of how Thailand is perceived abroad?**

*Thailand is considered as a valuable destination that might lead tourist's perception to consider Thailand is as a cheap country. The government should promote the positive images of Thailand and its attributes to change that cheap perception.*

**6. Getting back to nation branding. In an attempt to improve Thailand's image, the government launched a campaign called "Thailand in Your Heart" last year, where a committee was formed to play a central role in organizing promotional activities and finding the most effective ways of improving the country's image. Have you heard about this campaign? How should this committee approach branding Thailand?**

*I did not hear any of this campaign.*

**7. Do you think nation branding can help correct a country's stereotype or change the perception of how foreigners view a country? If yes, how do you think nation branding can help improve the negative image of Thailand? How do you think Thailand and your company can benefit from this?**

*The nation branding can help and improve the negative image of Thailand, we should make our country like a dream destination that tourists would prefer to visit once in their life's time then we all can benefit from tourism.*

**8. Many countries seem to project similar communication strategies when it comes to nation branding i.e. idyllic place for doing business, beautiful landscape, culture and tradition, friendly people, and the ideal tourist destination. In your opinion, what can Thailand do to differentiate itself from these similar claims? What do you think are the biggest challenges for Thailand?**

*Thailand should find the country's strengths. Its strength is driven by perceptions of heritage and culture, tourism, quality of life and national value systems where makes peoples' live better.*

**9. Compare to other countries in Asia that have adopted the idea of nation branding (eg. India, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and South Korea), do you think Thailand is on the right track? What can Thailand learn from its neighbours' experiences?**

*Thailand is already on the right track but as a follower. We should learn from the way that Singapore did promote themselves to the world in order to improve our country brand.*

**\*\*\* Mr. Komson Ratchatapan, is an eBusiness Director of the Kata Group Resorts, Thailand and a Guest Lecturer at the Prince of Sonkla University, Phuket Campus. \*\*\***

## Interview on Nation Branding: The Case of Branding Thailand

\*\*\*\*\*

**Mr. Kobboon Sangmanee, thank you for taking your time to answer the questions on Nation Branding: The Case of Branding Thailand.**

### **1. First of all, what is your definition of “nation branding”?**

*It's a marketing strategy employed by a country to earn reputation and good will from other countries especially through specific influential groups in their societies such as the media, academics, scholars, business enterprises, political groups etc.*

### **2. In recent years, we have seen an increasing number of nations taking interests in nation branding as an effective tool to improve their positioning in the international arena. What do you think about this trend and what do you think this will lead to?**

*It's a positive trend because ultimately every country is in favour of a lucrative spot on the global landscape for their best interests. In light of the globalization, all potential nations are challenging one another by utilizing various kinds of policies and strategies to secure the spotlight. For instance, the UAE has won the bid to host the headquarters of IRENA and is constructing MASDAR city in Abu Dhabi to revitalize its image from a mere oil producing country to a responsive nation of the world in addressing a global issue. However, it should be noted that nation branding is not a short term project. It requires a lengthy period of time and substantial efforts from all sectors of the society as they are factors attributing to the established brand.*

*Ideally, nation branding will lead to prosperity as every nation will be determined to bring out their strengths and qualities to impress the world while diminishing their weaknesses and flaws. Nonetheless, branding may lead to fierce competition culminating in conflicts and disputes.*

### **3. Most branding practitioners and consultants say that when a government is thinking about improving its' nation's image, it is thinking about the traditional PR campaign and advertising rather than the actual nation branding. Do you think this is true? What is your opinion on this view? What do you think is needed to change the nation branding perspective from a simple communication approach to making real policy change?**

*It may be the first idea that comes to mind as a country's reimagining is comparable to branding a product but in a more complicated way.*

*In branding a nation, the traditional one way communication approach alone has proven to be inefficient and insufficient in the present days provided borderless mobility of people and information. As a matter of fact, the government will have to be able to come up with concrete evidence to prove that the qualities/strengths required to establish a brand are actually in*

*existence, of which, depend very much on clear and consistent policies especially in human and economic development.*

**4. Do you think nation branding can help correct a country's stereotype or change the perception of how foreigners view a country? If yes, how do you think nation branding can help improve the negative image of Thailand?**

*Certainly. A classic example of this is South Korea where image revamp has proven to be very successful. In light of its political and economical strengths, SK has been able to reposition itself as a country with advanced technology, a top tourist destination, and a trend setter in Asian, through its multibillion dollars film industry.*

*For Thailand, nation branding will be more complicated and will take exceptionally long period of time because the country is still struggling with political instability, social disparity, poverty, corruption, and unrest in the Southern provinces. What's viable for Thailand now would be to promote the industries in which we have strengths including tourism, food, agricultural products, medical tourism, and creative economy. All these will require clear policies and direction from the government as well as active and constructive participation from the private sector and the general public. And in order to establish a more solid brand, the government will have to be able to address the aforementioned challenges which have undermined the reputation of Thailand.*

**5. In 2010, Thailand has launched a campaign "Thailand Branding: Experience Thailand", where a committee was formed to work on branding Thailand. The committee, as I understand it, will play a central role in organizing promotional activities and finding the most effective ways of improving the country's image. Can you tell us more about the committee? What has been done so far with this campaign? And how should this committee approach branding Thailand?**

*No idea!*

**6. In your opinion, what are the top three factors that make nation branding a successful or a difficult task? What do you think are the biggest challenges for Thailand?**

*People, politics, and economy. These are the factors towards success as well as challenges for Thailand's image. A lot of Thai people still live under poverty and do not have proper access to education and sanitation. Meanwhile, Thai communities abroad are not credible and reputable enough to sustain the recognition of the host countries especially in the case of low/unskilled workers which project undesired impact on the image of Thailand.*

*Thai politics is another important issue. The coup and continued unrest have inevitably undermined the confidence of foreigners especially the business investors. Despite the concerns for violence and chaos, efficiency and credibility of the government have also been questioned.*



*Although the Thai economy may be growing satisfactorily, our export products are not as reputable or sophisticated like those of other countries such as motor vehicle, technology, electrical appliances etc. In comparison, agricultural products, spare parts, jewellery, clothing, appear less appealing and are usually taken for granted.*

**7. Many countries seem to project similar communicate strategies i.e. idyllic place for doing business, beautiful landscape, culture and tradition, friendly people, and the ideal tourist destination. What can Thailand do to differentiate itself from these similar claims?**

*It's difficult for Thailand to do otherwise as these are strengths of the country. However, Thailand can also promote medical expertise and creative economy which have strong potential to constitute the new Thailand.*

**8. Compare to other countries in Asia that have adopted the idea of nation branding (eg. India, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and South Korea), do you think Thailand is far behind its neighbours in adopting this concept? What can Thailand learn from its neighbours' experiences?**

*Provided current circumstance, Thailand will not be able to catch up with other countries. Until a good government, political stability, and unity in the society are reinstated, then the country can start moving forward.*

*What Thailand should learn from these countries is how they develop their human resource, which is the most important component in nation branding, to be efficient and well respected by the international community.*

**9. As nation branding encompasses areas such as tourism, FDI, export promotion and talent attractiveness, what do you think the government should do to create or maintain consistency across all areas involved in managing the country's image?**

*The government must have clear policies and direction towards nation branding. A national level committee must be established to direct and guide each agency responsible for different areas involved to ensure responsiveness to the main objective.*

**10. Lastly, how can the success of a nation branding project be measured?**

*The general perceptions of foreign governments, private sectors, and the general public, as well as their reactions towards Thailand and Thai people.*

**\*\*\* Mr. Kobboon Sangmanee, First Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand, is currently posted at the Royal Thai Embassy, Abu Dhabi, United Arab of the Emirates.\*\*\***

## Interview on Nation Branding: The Case of Branding Thailand

\*\*\*\*\*

**Mr. Supachoke Yensuang, thank you for taking your time to answer the questions on Nation Branding: The Case of Branding Thailand.**

### **1. First of all, what is your definition of “nation branding”?**

*In my opinion, nation branding is repackaging strong points of a nation and portraying those points in such a way that appeal the interest of people in different countries. This definition of mine implies 2 important points about nation branding.*

*First, the strong points that are portraying have to be something the nation has already had but might not be emphasized or made clear enough for foreigners. Nation branding is not propaganda because no one can make a nation become famous for something that it is not. Hence, if policymakers would like a country to be famous for something, strategy, long term planning and implementation are needed. Then, when a country has achieved all its goals, marketing campaign to emphasize those strengths will be effective.*

*Second, nation branding has to be tailored made to appeal to audience in different countries and cultures. Strong points of a country that appeal to an audience in one culture might not appeal to an audience in another culture.*

### **2. In recent years, we have seen an increasing number of nations taking interests in nation branding as an effective tool to improve their positioning in the international arena. What do you think about this trend and what do you think this will lead to?**

*I think the hype about nation branding stems from the success of countries like South Korea or Japan which could transform its status in the international arena from developing countries to modernized and high tech countries. Countries in the Middleeast like UAE, Qatar are doing the same thing to make their countries more modernized and meaningful in the international arena than being simply major oil exporters of the world. In my view, the process of Nation Branding's effort is synonymous with the modernization process in this age of globalization. Every nation tries to find its place in this increasingly competitive world. Hence, I think that this trend will lead to something like division of labour in the beginning of the industrial revolution. Nonetheless, in that era, all countries tried to create their comparative advantages toward manufacturing sector. Nonetheless, in this era, the focus will be shifted from manufacturing sector to service sector both in terms of business and leisure.*

### **3. Most branding practitioners and consultants say that when a government is thinking about improving its' nation's image, it is thinking about the traditional PR campaign and advertising rather than the actual nation branding. Do you think this is true? What is your opinion on**

**this view? What do you think is needed to change the nation branding perspective from a simple communication approach to making real policy change?**

*As already stated in question 1, if a country has a specific target to be famous for something it has not yet achieved, I think that simply communicates to the world is not enough. Real policy change is seriously needed. However, if a country has just come out of being a close society or a black box to the world like former communist countries, putting emphasis on all the good points it has, through just communication approach, might be enough.*

**4. Do you think nation branding can help correct a country's stereotype or change the perception of how foreigners view a country? If yes, how do you think nation branding can help improve the negative image of Thailand?**

*Always remember this phrase "any kind of publicity is a good publicity". Sometime negative stereotype or image could help a country get recognized. The question is not how to get rid of the negative image but how to put some more positive images to outshine the negative image.*

*In the case of Thailand, it is a good case study of nation's image. The international community's reactions to Thailand are mixes. Thailand is known for something good like having beautiful landscapes, rich with cultures and traditions and having lots of nice and friendly people. Nonetheless, it is also known for sex tourism and drug trafficking. The mixes of negative and positive images of Thailand make it a very tantalizing place, a place more unique than others. These mixes put Thailand as a top spot for Tourism for many years. I think that without the negative images, only all the positive images it has can't put Thailand on this spot in the international arena.*

*My argument is this. I'm not supporting sex tourism and drug trafficking. I believe that these are issues that have to be dealt with in a long run. Instead of putting significant efforts to changes those negative images immediately, putting more energy to promote more positive images of a country might be a better use of our limited resources. One area that I could think of is creative economy. Thai people are very creative in nature. With the new technology and media coming up each day waiting to be explored ways to utilize them, Thailand has a good chance to make it name in this area. Another area that Thailand could explore is the issue of "Third sex". I think Thailand can be a good example to the world how gays and lesbians can express themselves and live harmoniously in the society in the modern world.*

**5. In 2010, Thailand has launched a campaign "Thailand Branding: Experience Thailand", where a committee was formed to work on branding Thailand. The committee, as I understand it, will play a central role in organizing promotional activities and finding the most effective ways of improving the country's image. Can you tell us more about the committee? What has been done so far with this campaign? And how should this committee approach branding Thailand?**

*I don't know anything about this committee or the campaign. However, the approach it should use is to communicate the areas that Thailand has strengths but not yet known to the world, like creative economy or Third sex that I mention earlier. This can be done in a short term. For the long term branding approach that requires commitment, political instability in Thailand will not allow this process to happen smoothly. Therefore, the focus should be on communication approach in short term on things it possesses or has achieved.*

**6. In your opinion, what are the top three factors that make nation branding a successful or a difficult task? What do you think are the biggest challenges for Thailand?**

*What make Thailand's branding difficult are*

*1. Thailand has already sold out. People around the world have already known all the strengths it has. Therefore, I don't think Thailand needs to spend much of its efforts on short term nation branding.*

*2. For long term branding strategy like the Korean one, it requires a lot of commitment and political will to transform Thailand from, let say a holiday paradise to a hub of modern technology. With the political instability in Thailand at the moment, it seems impossible that such projects can be realized.*

*Challenges for Thailand*

*1. Thailand has to find a very few strong points it has but not yet known to the world to promote its image. With nothing new adding to the brand of Thailand in the near future, its status in term of Tourism in the international arena will decline.*

*2. Political stability is badly needed in order to start the process of long term branding.*

**7. Many countries seem to project similar communicate strategies i.e. idyllic place for doing business, beautiful landscape, culture and tradition, friendly people, and the ideal tourist destination. What can Thailand do to differentiate itself from these similar claims?**

*I still insist on the 2 areas I mentioned. 1. creative economy 2. third sex.*

*For creative economy, it is hard to differentiate itself from others since there are so many ways to be creative. However, the issue of third sex is something that we could differentiate ourselves from others. For example, we can have a campaign like Thailand is a gay and lesbian friendly country. You can be yourself when you are in Thailand. However, this kind of campaign might be too controversy for the Thai tourism authority to promote.*

**8. Compare to other countries in Asia that have adopted the idea of nation branding (eg. India, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and South Korea), do you think Thailand is far behind its neighbours in adopting this concept? What can Thailand learn from its neighbours' experiences?**

*I think Thailand is not far behind any country. Actually, Thailand is more advanced than other countries in our own way. Thailand spends less resources than other countries in Asia to*

*promote its tourism industry. Yet the problem with Thailand is that we want to be famous for modernity like Korea and Japan which Thailand is in no way to achieve recognition in that area.*

*The lesson Thailand can learn from other countries like Korea Japan or Singapore if it wants to be recognized as being modern is to invest for the future. Thailand has to have a real plan and strategy and sticks to it. Don't just come up with 10 different strategies very time a new government takes the office that abandons all the plans and strategies initiated by previous governments.*

**9. As nation branding encompasses areas such as tourism, FDI, export promotion and talent attractiveness, what do you think the government should do to create or maintain consistency across all areas involved in managing the country's image?**

*I think tourism and talent attractiveness is something that Thailand should focus on because the returns to those activities can't be measured. However, for FDI and export promotion the returns to the investors are obvious. If it is really profitable to invest in Thailand or to buy Thailand's export, foreigners will invest in FDI and buy our export automatically without any kind of marketing campaign. Business people are already extremely good at gathering information and looking for business opportunities.*

**10. Lastly, how can the success of a nation branding project be measured?**

*That depends on the target of the campaign. For example, if I would like to make Thailand a destination of gay and lesbian tourists as I already suggested, just measured the number of gay and lesbian tourists coming to Thailand each year after the campaign starts. It is important to set a target that can be measured.*

**\*\*\* Mr. Supachoke Yensuang is a Second Secretary at the Royal Thai Embassy, Tel Aviv, Israel. He has met Mr. Simon Anholt, an expert in Nation Branding, at a special seminar in Singapore on 19-20 September, 2009. \*\*\***

## Appendix C: Comparative Tables

## **List of Comparative Tables**

1. Ease of Doing Business 2010
2. Corruption Perception Index
3. Tourism Statistics – International Arrivals
4. Thailand's Tourism Receipts & Expenditures by International Tourist Arrivals between 2005 - 2010

## 1. Ease of Doing Business

### Singapore

|                             |                     |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Region                      | East Asia & Pacific |
| Income category             | High Income         |
| Population                  | 4,987,600           |
| GNI per capita (USD)        | 37,220,00           |
| Rank in Doing Business 2010 | 1                   |
| Rank in Doing Business 2011 | 1                   |

### South Korea

|                             |             |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Region                      | OECD        |
| Income category             | High income |
| Population                  | 48,747,000  |
| GNI per capita (USD)        | 19,830.00   |
| Rank in Doing Business 2010 | 15          |
| Rank in Doing Business 2011 | 16          |

### Thailand

|                             |                     |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Region                      | East Asia & Pacific |
| Income category             | Lower middle income |
| Population                  | 67,764,033          |
| GNI per capita (USD)        | 3,760.00            |
| Rank in Doing Business 2010 | 16                  |
| Rank in Doing Business 2011 | 19                  |

Source: Ease of Doing Business, <http://www.doingbusiness.org>



## 2. Corruption Perception Index 2000 - 2010: Country in world ranking

| <b>Country/Year</b> | <b>Singapore</b> | <b>South Korea</b> | <b>Thailand</b> |
|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 2000                | 7                | 50                 | 68              |
| 2001                | 4                | 42                 | 61              |
| 2002                | 5                | 52                 | 64              |
| 2003                | 9                | 50                 | 70              |
| 2004                | 5                | 47                 | 64              |
| 2005                | 5                | 40                 | 59              |
| 2006                | 5                | 42                 | 63              |
| 2007                | 4                | 43                 | 84              |
| 2008                | 4                | 40                 | 80              |
| 2009                | 3                | 39                 | 84              |
| 2010                | 1                | 39                 | 78              |

Note: The least number shown having the most corrupt-free environment

Source: Transparency International, <http://www.transparency.org>

### 3. Tourism Statistics – International Arrivals

|             | <b>Countries/Numbers of International Arrivals in million</b> |                    |                 |
|-------------|---|--------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Year</b> | <b>Singapore</b>  | <b>South Korea</b> | <b>Thailand</b> |
| 2000        | 7.7   | 5.3                | 9.5             |
| 2001        | 7.5   | 5.1                | 10.1            |
| 2002        | 7.6   | 5.3                | 10.8            |
| 2003        | 6   | 4.7                | 10              |
| 2004        | 8.3   | 5.8                | 11.7            |
| 2005        | 8.9   | 6                  | 11.5            |
| 2006        | 9.8   | 6                  | 13.8            |
| 2007        | 10.3  | 6.4                | 14.5            |
| 2008        | 10.1  | 6.9                | 14.6            |
| 2009        | 9.7   | 7.8                | 14.1            |
| 2010        | 8.8   | 8.8                | 15.9            |

Note: The numbers are rounded up to the nearest decimal point.

Source: 1. Korea Tourism Organization  
2. Singapore Tourism Board  
3. Tourism Authority of Thailand

**4. Thailand's Tourism Receipts & Expenditures by International Tourist Arrivals  
between 2005 - 2010**

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Number of tourist arrivals</b> | <b>Average length of stay (day/s)</b> | <b>Total expenditure (Baht/pax/day)</b> | <b>Total tourism revenue (Mil. Baht)</b> |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>2005</b> | <b>11,516,936</b>                 | <b>8.20</b>                           | <b>3,890.13</b>                         | <b>367,380.36</b>                        |
| <b>2006</b> | <b>13,821,802</b>                 | <b>8.62</b>                           | <b>4,048.22</b>                         | <b>482,319.17</b>                        |
| <b>2007</b> | <b>14,464,228</b>                 | <b>9.19</b>                           | <b>4,120.95</b>                         | <b>547,781.81</b>                        |
| <b>2008</b> | <b>14,584,220</b>                 | <b>9.51</b>                           | <b>4,142.30</b>                         | <b>574,520.52</b>                        |
| <b>2009</b> | <b>14,149,841</b>                 | <b>8.99</b>                           | <b>4,011.21</b>                         | <b>510,255.05</b>                        |
| <b>2010</b> | <b>15,841,683</b>                 | <b>9.22</b>                           | <b>3,992.60</b>                         | <b>585,961.80</b>                        |

Source: Department of Tourism, [www.tourism.go.th](http://www.tourism.go.th)

## Appendix D: Survey & Results

## 1. Survey Abstract

### BRANDING THAILAND: WHY BRANDING THAILAND IS IMPORTANT

"Nation Branding" has become one of the most popular catchphrases, particularly in the past 10 years, where it has been receiving a vast number of interests. Countries, in particularly those experiencing negative or damaged reputation, are jumping on the bandwagon in the hope of saving and improving their images in order to compete against others in the global marketplace by attract foreign visitors and investments. Thailand is no exception. It has launched several campaigns in the hope of differentiating itself from its competitors and the government is becoming more active in trying to "brand" Thailand to maintain its recognition in the international arena.

I am currently doing my thesis on "Thailand Branding" and would very much appreciate it if you could help me with my survey or send me feedbacks and comments regarding this issue.

Thank you for your cooperation.

---

1. Please select your gender

Male

Female

---

2. Please select your age group

15 - 25

26 - 35

36 - 45

46 - 55

56 - 65

66 - 75

76 - 85

86 - 95

---

3. What is your nationality?

4. What is your profession?

- Doctor
  - Engineer
  - Manager
  - Finance
  - Government services
  - Teacher/ Professor/lecturer
  - Entertainer/ Media
  - Others
- 

5. How often do you travel or take a vacation?

- Once a year
  - 2 - 3 times a year
  - 3 - 5 times a year
  - More than 5 times a year
  - More than 10 times a year
- 

6. Have you been to Thailand?

- Yes
  - No
- 

7. If you have answered "Yes" in Q. 6, what was the reason for your travel?

- Work/ Business
  - Vacation/ Leisure
  - Visiting family/ relatives/ friends
  - Others \_\_\_\_\_
-

8. If you have answered "No" in Q. 6, what was the reason for not having been to Thailand?

- Time/ financial constraint
  - Not enough information about the country
  - Negative images in the media
  - Not interested
  - Others \_\_\_\_\_
- 

9. Which of the following tourist destinations is in Thailand?

- The Forbidden City
  - Gyeongbok Palace
  - Machu Picchu
  - The Grand Palace
  - Halong Bay
  - Sentosa
- 

10. Which of the following cities are in Thailand?

- Bangkok, Chaing Mai, Khon Kaen, Phuket, Sukhothai
  - Hanoi, Bangkok, Samui, Kuala Lumpur, Jeju
  - Bangkok, Tokyo, Narathiwat, Chaing Mai, Phuket
  - Shanghai, Bangkok, Pattaya, Hua Hin, Yangon
  - Pattaya, Ho Chi Minh City, Khon Kaen, Phuket
- 

11. What do you like most about Thailand?

- Hospitality & Services
- Food
- People & Language
- Weather
- Infrastructure & Transportation

- Culture & Tradition
  - Landscape & Tourist destinations
  - Fashion & Architecture
  - Shopping
  - Others
- 

12. Which of the following words have you heard in association with Thailand?

- Thailand: Truly Asia
  - Incredible Thailand
  - Uniquely Thailand
  - Colourful Thailand
  - Amazing Thailand
  - Sparkling Thailand
- 

13. Which of the following dishes are Thai?

- Laksa
  - Tom Yum Goong
  - Ha gau
  - Mi goreng
  - Sashimi
  - Gyoza
  - Pad Thai
- 

14. Which of the followings are Thai fashion brands?

- Jim Thompson
- Pasaya
- Rip Curl



Dresscamp

Frapbois

Naraya

Zara

Mango

---

15. Which of the followings are Thai companies?

Hyundai Motor

Bee Cheng Hiang

Boon Rawd Brewery

Tata Steel

Camargo Correa

Pou Sheng International

CP

Index Living Mall

---

16. Which of the following movies were filmed in Thailand?

Anna and the King

The Man with the Golden Gun

The Beach

The Hangover 2

The Bridge on the River Kwai

Mission Impossible

---

17. Which of the followings are Thai movies?

Ong Bak

Mortal Kombat

- The Elephant Man (this was made in chang mai) but not thai movie
- The Classic
- The Myth
- Tom Yum Goong
- Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

18. Please rate your overall experience in Thailand

|                                 | Excellent                | Good                     | Neutral                  | Fair                     | Poor                     |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Hospitality & Services          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Infrastructure & Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Food & Beverages                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Places & People                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Safety                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cleanliness                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Shopping & Entertainment        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Technology & Communication      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

19. Describe Thailand in one word

20. Have you heard about the campaign "Thailand Branding" or visited the website <http://thailandtoday.org/>?

- Yes
- No

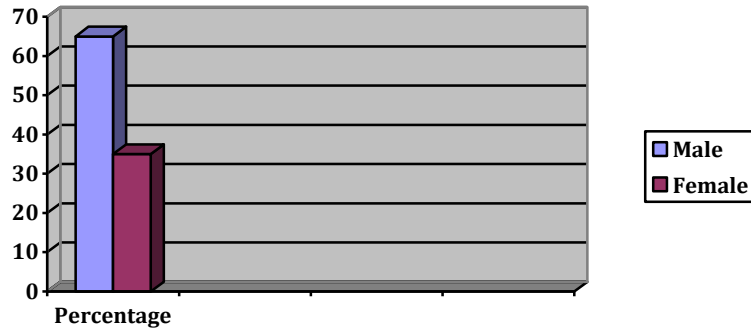
Thank you for your time & kind cooperation

## 2. Results of Survey

### 1. Total sample population: 40

Male - 26

Female - 14



### 2. Age group:

| Age group | # of sample | Percentage |
|-----------|-------------|------------|
| 25        | 6           | 15         |
| 26-35     | 22          | 55         |
| 36-45     | 6           | 15         |
| 46-55     | 5           | 12.5       |
| 56-65     | 1           | 2.5        |
| 66-75     | -           | -          |
| 76-85     | -           | -          |
| 86-95     | -           | -          |

### 3. Nationality of sample population:

| Country of nationality | # of sample |
|------------------------|-------------|
| Afghanistan            | 1           |
| Australia              | 2           |
| Austria                | 4           |
| China                  | 1           |
| Canada                 | 1           |
| France                 | 1           |
| Germany                | 1           |
| Iran                   | 2           |
| India                  | 9           |
| Japan                  | 2           |
| Jordan                 | 1           |
| Kazakhstan             | 1           |

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Kenya       | 1 |
| Korea       | 1 |
| Morocco     | 1 |
| New Zealand | 1 |
| Philippines | 3 |
| Pakistan    | 3 |
| Sri Lanka   | 2 |
| Syria       | 2 |

**4. Occupation:**

| Occupation                 | # of sample |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| Doctor                     | 0           |
| Engineer                   | 8           |
| Manager                    | 9           |
| Finance                    | 2           |
| Government services        | 3           |
| Teacher/Professor/Lecturer | 3           |
| Entertainment/Media        | 0           |
| Other                      | 15          |

**5. How often do you travel or take a vacation:**

| Frequency of travel     | # of sample |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Once a year             | 15          |
| 2 – 3 times/year        | 16          |
| 3 – 5 times/year        | 5           |
| More than 5 times/year  | 3           |
| More than 10 times/year | 0           |
| n/a                     | 1           |

**6. Visit to Thailand:**



**7. Reasons for travel:**

| <b>Reasons</b>                          | <b># of sample</b> |
|---|--------------------|
| Work/Business                           | -                  |
| Vacation/Leisure                        | 15                 |
| Visiting family/relatives/friends       | 3                  |
| Other<br>(incl. combination of answers) | 11                 |

**8. Reasons for not having been to Thailand:**

| <b>Reasons</b>                       | <b># of sample</b> |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Time/finance constraint              | 11                 |
| Not enough info. Re. the country     | -                  |
| Negative images in the media         | -                  |
| Not interested                       | -                  |
| Other (incl. combination of answers) | -                  |

**9. Knowledge of tourist destination in Thailand:**

| <b>Correct response</b> | <b>Incorrect response</b> |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 27                      | 13                        |

**10. Knowledge of cities in Thailand:**

| <b>Correct response</b> | <b>Incorrect response</b> |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 30                      | 10                        |

**11. What do the sample likes best about Thailand:**

| <b>Character</b>                           | <b># of sample</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|--|--------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Hospitality &amp; Services</b>          | 25                 | 62.5              |
| <b>Food</b>                                | 29                 | 72.5              |
| <b>People &amp; Language</b>               | 16                 | 40                |
| <b>Weather</b>                             | 10                 | 25                |
| <b>Infrastructure &amp; Transportation</b> | 1                  | 2.5               |
| <b>Culture &amp; Tradition</b>             | 7                  | 17.5              |
| <b>Landscape &amp; Tourist destination</b> | 13                 | 32.5              |
| <b>Fashion &amp; Architecture</b>          | 6                  | 15                |
| <b>Shopping</b>                            | 14                 | 35                |
| <b>Others</b>                              | 4                  | 10                |

12. Recognition of slogan, "Amazing Thailand":

| Correct response | Incorrect response |
|------------------|--------------------|
| 27               | 13                 |

13. Recognition of Thai cuisines:

| Tom Yum Goong | Pad Thai |
|---------------|----------|
| 29            | 21       |

14. Recognition of Thai fashion brands:

| Jim Thompson | Pasaya | Naraya |
|--------------|--------|--------|
| 18           | 13     | 10     |

15. Recognition of Thai companies:

| Boon Rawd Brewery | CP | Index Living Mall |
|-------------------|----|-------------------|
| 15                | 15 | 20                |

16. Recognition of movies filmed in Thailand:

| The Man with the Golden Gun | The Beach | The Hangover 2 |
|-----------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 3                           | 30        | 16             |

17. Recognition of Thai films:

| Ong Bak | Tom Yum Goong |
|---------|---------------|
| 23      | 24            |

18. Rating on experience in Thailand

| Criteria        | Excellent | Good | Neutral | Fair | Poor | N/A |
|-----------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------|-----|
| Hospitality     | 21        | 13   |         |      |      | 6   |
| Infrastructure  | 5         | 21   | 5       | 3    |      | 6   |
| Food            | 23        | 8    | 2       |      |      | 7   |
| Places & People | 18        | 16   |         |      |      | 6   |
| Safety          | 4         | 17   | 11      | 2    |      | 6   |
| Cleanliness     | 4         | 22   | 2       | 6    |      | 6   |
| Shopping        | 16        | 12   | 5       |      |      | 7   |
| Technology      | 6         | 23   | 5       |      |      | 6   |

**19. Words describing Thailand:**

|                |                        |                     |             |
|----------------|------------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Land of Smiles | Sunset                 | Sanook (fun)        | Incredible  |
| Amazing        | Truly Amazing          | Relaxing            | Inexpensive |
| Unique         | Wonderful for shopping | Fascinating country | Good        |
| Adventure      | Very good              | Exciting            | Friendly    |
| Wonderful      | Vacation               | Sabaidee (well)     | Beach       |
| Beauty         | No response            |                     |             |

**20. Have heard about the campaign “Thailand Branding” or visited the website:**

