

Preface

This article investigates the ‘Incredible India’ campaign. From the author’s initial encounter with this particular campaign an indescribable attraction was experienced. Thus, the performer of this study developed firm faith in the process of executing this research.

It all commenced with a university course named ‘Strategic Mass Communication’ taught by Dr. Etienne Augé at the Erasmus University which is located in Rotterdam. In addition to Dr. Augé thought provoking teachings, the subject matters that were included in the course curriculum were valued by the author of this master’s thesis as decisive in establishing this academic article. During one of the sessions of this course, the researcher of this study read about the concept of ‘nation branding’. The executer of this research study was completely unfamiliar to the concept, yet a direct interest was aroused. As a consequence of this raise in interest, the author of this master’s thesis commenced with an exploration of the concept. The end result was complete amazement.

Never before was the researcher of this study consciously aware of the fact that nations can be branded. Just imagine. In contemporary society, almost everyone associates him or herself with the brand of a particular (commercial or non-commercial) organization. The brand of a country, however, is hardly associated with, by the majority of people globally. Perhaps, that might also not be the purpose of a country’s brand. Yet, many people around the world communicate beliefs and opinions, in other words the reputation, of a country they visited. The result of this form of communication is the creation of a particular image about a particular country. The accumulative image, consequently, forms the brand of that particular country.

The ‘Incredible India’ campaign aims at influencing this (accumulative) image maintained by the public at large and this master’s thesis is exactly investigating this interesting subject matter. In addition to the considerably high interest of the researcher of this study, this description can be considered as a crucial incentive to initiate an investigation into the ‘Incredible India’ campaign.

Before revealing each aspect of this incredible investigation, I would dedicate several words of gratitude to people who sincerely supported me throughout the entire research process. To commence, a word of gratitude is relayed to my parents, who supported me in every possible manner to execute this research. Another gesture of gratitude is destined to my thesis supervisor, Dr. Etienne Augé, who broadened my scope and refined my thoughts on various concepts which are discussed in this master’s thesis. Furthermore, my sincere appreciation is destined to the research participants who dedicated some of their valuable time

to this incredible yet insignificant research study. Undoubtedly, many more individuals have partially contributed to the completion of this research study. My heartfelt gratitude is directed to them as well.

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Abstract

For the last two decades, the notion of nation branding has received abundant attention among academia and practitioners. The consequence concerning the former mentioned group has resulted in an increase in the amount of academic publications, while the interest generated by the second group implies concrete promotional material broadcasted by countries in order to (re)brand themselves. One country that jumped on the nation branding bandwagon is India. In 2002, the Indian government initiated a multimillion dollar nation branding endeavour which received the name 'Incredible India'.

This particular research study replies to a call from Kerrigan et al. (2009), who conducted a research on the notion of nation branding in light of the 'Incredible India' campaign. As a consequence, the researcher of this study answers this call by focusing on the international variant of the second phase of India's branding journey. Nine video clips were selected and presented to sixteen participants. Consequently, a dialogue was created in which questions were posed about various content related elements. In conclusion, it can be noted that this research study has been conducted to illustrate and elaborate on the relationship among identity, nation branding and image. The result of this relationship is inextricably linked to reputation management. Since the domain of nation branding recently stepped out of its infant shoes, the researcher of this study desired to outline this particular relationship. Moreover, investigating the multimedia material tailor made for this nation branding endeavour is an incredible voyage on its own.

Keywords

India; public diplomacy; globalization; identity; nation branding; image; reputation management

Introduction

This master's thesis investigates the 'Incredible India' campaign which was launched in 2002 on a national as well as international level. At that time, two leading personalities of the campaign were *V. Sunil* (Creative Director, O&M Delhi) and *Amitabh Kant* (Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism of India). As stated on one of the official websites that was initiated for this marketing initiative, "the primary objective of this branding exercise was to create a distinctive identity for the country [India]" (<http://incredibleindiacampaign.com/>). This objective was met by replacing the 'I' from the word India with an exclamation mark. This particular alteration "resulted in the iconic Incredible India logo" (<http://incredibleindiacampaign.com/>). From the commencement of this campaign to present day, this logo has not been altered and as stated on one of the official websites of the Indian government "was used to great effect across all communications" (<http://incredibleindiacampaign.com/>).

When translating this propaganda endeavour into an academic concept, the term 'nation branding' can be selected appropriately. The concept of 'nation branding' was allegedly coined by Simon Anholt in 1996. From that moment onwards various definitions of this term has been introduced among academia and (marketing) practitioners. The researcher of this study carefully selected a working definition from which this master's thesis departs. This definition was proposed by Anholt in 2003. The scholar defines the notion of nation branding as follows: "Country branding occurs when public speaks to public; when a substantial proportion of the population of the country – not just civil servants and paid figureheads – gets behind the strategy and lives it out in their everyday dealings with the outside world" (Anholt, 2003, p. 123). As can be derived from this quote, nation branding is also referred to as 'country branding'. In a subsequent section of this master's thesis, an elaborate analysis of the ontology of the term 'nation branding' is provided.

When connecting the primary objective of the 'Incredible India' campaign to this definition of nation branding, the author of this master's thesis values the 'Incredible India' campaign as a genuine nation branding endeavour. It is, however, not the researcher's intent to argue whether the 'Incredible India' campaign should or should not be valued as a genuine nation branding effort. This current research is concerned with the reception of the 'Incredible India' campaign on a global, yet local level. As mentioned in the beginning part of this section, the 'Incredible India' campaign was targeted at residents living in India as well as people living elsewhere on this globe. For feasibility

purposes this research study zooms in on a particular country in Europe: the Netherlands. Thus, the research question that is central to this investigation is:

How do Hindus and non-Hindus in the Netherlands perceive and assess the international variant of the second phase of the 'Incredible India' campaign?

This research question is partially based on a request by Kerrigan et al. (2012). This appeal is formulated as follows: “Further research could examine IIC as it evolves into new stages of its development. These new stages may include different strategic objectives for the campaign, different types of images being portrayed, and different markets that might be targeted in the future” (Kerrigan et al., 2012, p. 325). The author of this master’s thesis would like to accede to this appeal by investigating the second phase of the ‘Incredible India’ campaign, titled ‘Find What You Seek’. In a subsequent section more information regarding this particular phase of the campaign is provided. To conclude, it should be noted in this regard that, although Kerrigan et al. (2012) included imagery produced for the ‘Incredible India’ campaign, this research study focuses on video advertisements. A media format that was also embraced for this campaign.

Contextualization

Brand 'India'

This section discusses brand 'India' and could be perceived as a general indication of what India as a brand constitutes. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) note that the Republic of India is home to approximately 15 percent of the world's population. The same source notes that, as of 2013, the number of inhabitants in India is 1,220,800,359 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013). In this regard, it can be stated that only the mainland of China is inhabited by a slightly larger population. Furthermore, the societal organization of India is divided as follows: Circa 30 percent of the Indian residents are positioned in more than 200 towns and cities spread over the country. The remaining 70 percent of the inhabitants are situated in over 550,000 villages across India (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013).

For approximately a decade now, 'FutureBrand' yearly measure and rank perceptions of citizens in countries around the world - from their cultures, to their industries, to their economic vitality and public policy initiatives (FutureBrand 2012-13, 2012). The measurement of these global perceptions and the consequent categorization of the obtained data is ranked and formally presented in the 'Country Brand Index'. This index is a preeminent global study of country brands (FutureBrand 2012-13, 2012).

In FutureBrand's annual report of 2012, it can be detected that India possesses the 42th spot on the 'Country Brand Index'. In 2011, India possessed the 29th place. In 2010, India was ranked as the 23th contender on the same index. In addition to that, India can also be detected in another ranking list named 'Tomorrow's Leading Country Brands: The Future 15'. On this particular ranking list, India can be found on the 13th position.

In the annual report concerning the latter mentioned ranking list, 'FutureBrand' report rather positive about India's current condition and performances in areas such as tourism, politics, education and trade (business). Yet, the organization also places some critical footnotes by pointing at some obstacles with regards to the same areas. The report describes this as follows: "That being said, India's government often lacks the stability and foresight necessary for sustainable global prominence. Additionally, an enormous disparity between rich and poor indicates a larger issue of human rights abuses" (FutureBrand 2012-13, 2012, p. 56).

Since its independence from Great Britain in 1947, India is gradually gaining strength as a coherent nation as well as a brand. However, although India is experiencing rapid growth which consequently could result in a position among the strongest economies in the world, the country is not fully developed yet. One of the pertinent domains in which the country is not

fully developed yet is the economy. According to Kaur (2012), the late 1980s signified the initiation of neoliberal economic reforms in India. Many described the country as self-assured. In addition to that, India was also rapidly flourishing in terms of its economic situation. This consequently resulted in the obtainment of exceptionally high levels of foreign direct investments and the establishment of an enormous and affluent middle class.

Before continuing with the development of 'brand India', it is interesting to convey the role neoliberal economic restructuring plays in relation to nation branding. Kaur (2012) explains that, over the last several decades, one characteristic of neoliberal economic restructuring was the reshaping of the 'nation-form' into an image that is comparable to that of a corporation. Kaur (2012) refers to this as 'Nationality, Inc'. This version of an image entails a brand image and its own trademark. Furthermore, this approach approves of a relocation of ideas and practices which formerly were utilized in the process of nation building and with this shift are now utilized in the process of nation branding. According to Kaur (2012) this type of shifts often point at the achievement of an elevated and more comprehensive form of nationhood that is in line with the current era of globalisation. Nation building initiatives are largely based on discourse about developments, regardless of the domain. Whether it concerns economic, social, cultural or political developments, each domain is fundamental to the nation building process. This trend was, in the case of India, particularly apparent in the post-Independence years. Nation branding, on the other hand, is inextricably linked to wonderful and appealing images. Kaur (2012) illustrates this statement by conveying the following: "One can frequently witness, for example, the national essence of Malaysia, Qatar, South Africa, Croatia, Brazil and India in 'an avalanche of images' circulated on international media that evokes cultural difference within an aesthetic frame informed by Western sensibilities" (p. 606).

Returning to the development of 'brand India', Kaur (2012) notes that the mid-1990s was a period in which state initiatives resulted in the creation of a viable and global competitive corporate brand for the Indian nation. Furthermore, the scholar notes in this regard: "Brand India had a decade later gained world-wide recognition among multinational corporations as well as the rich industrialised nations as an attractive destination for investments. The global displays of a re-formed nation at the annual meetings of the World Economic Forum at Davos and the enticing images of 'Incredible India' campaigns had by now successfully iterated and circulated the idea of a market-friendly India" (Kaur, 2012, p. 604). Thus, it can be concluded that the 'Incredible India' campaign did have a positive impact on the perception (business) people preserved about India.

Translating this scenario into concrete statistics it can be conveyed that in 2011, India welcomed 6.29 million foreign tourists. Compared to the year 2010, that is a growth of 8.9 percent. In 2010, foreign tourist arrivals in India were 5.78 million. In the preceding year, India was visited by 5.17 million people (Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, n.d.). Thus, when comparing 2009 to 2010, it can be concluded that India experienced a growth of 11.8%. Regarding the current condition of foreign tourist arrivals in India, the Indian newspaper *The Times of India* states: “Arrival of foreign tourists in India grew by 2.3% in the first three months of 2013 despite the Delhi gang-rape and cases of sexual assaults on foreign tourists” (<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/>). This percentage denotes an increase of 46,000 foreign tourists. To be more specific, in the first three months of 2012, India was visited by 198,1000 people. In the first three months of 2013, this digit was incremented to 202,7000 individuals. When comparing these two time periods with each other, it can be concluded that India experienced a surge of 2.3% with regards to foreign tourist arrivals.

The ‘Incredible India’ campaign

In this section information about the ‘Incredible India’ campaign is provided. First of all, the main challenge which the team behind the ‘Incredible India’ campaign encountered is conveyed. Subsequently, a contextualization of this particular campaign is relayed. After having finished this contextualization, the story behind the ‘Incredible India’ campaign is narrated. Consequently, this section concludes with the distinct branding features that can be detected in the diverse multimedia content that was created for this campaign.

To commence this section and in order to encapsulate the sophistication of the ‘Incredible India’ campaign, the following quote by Kant (2009) is of main relevance: “While it is easy to position and brand single-product destinations like the Maldives and Mauritius or a wildlife destination like South Africa, it is extremely difficult and complex to establish a clear, precise identity for a multiproduct like India. India is a land of contrasts, a combination of tradition and modernity – a land that is at once mystical and mysterious. India is bigger than the twenty-three countries of Europe put together and every single state of India has its own unique attractions. ‘Incredible India’, therefore, necessarily had to be the mother brand with the states establishing their own brand entity and emerging as sub-brands” (Kant, 2009, p. 7). This somewhat lengthy quote nicely illustrates the challenge that the ‘Incredible India’ team faced in order to create a brand that represents this multifaceted country. Aside from this challenge, the ‘Incredible India’ team encountered numerous other challenges which

are, to a certain degree, still existing in the country. In the subsequent section more elaboration is provided regarding these challenges.

Contextualization of the 'Incredible India' campaign

This section provides a larger context in which the 'Incredible India' campaign is situated. In this regard, it can be noted that this campaign consists out of a national-international variant and a separate international variant. The most recent version of the national-international variant is called 'Go Beyond'. The Union Tourism Minister, Shri Chiranjeevi, notes the following in relation to this variant: "The 'Go Beyond' campaign focuses on promoting lesser known destinations to domestic as well as international tourists" (Press Information Bureau, Government of India, 2012).

The separate international variant was launched in December 2012 at the 'World Travel Market-2012', which was held at London (Press Information Bureau, Government of India, 2012). The name of the separate international variant is called 'Find What You Seek'. In a press release published by the Indian government, the following is noted about this particular variant: "Tourists from the world over can find the destination or product of their desire in India, be it heritage sites, forts, beaches, backwaters, lakes, mountains, adventure, wildlife, culture, festivals, medical, wellness, MICE, religion or shopping. India offers something for everyone and that is why we proudly say that India is an incredible destination with a range of products as found nowhere else. It is truly in India, you will find what you are seeking" (Press Information Bureau, Government of India, 2012).

When analysing the structure of the 'Incredible India' campaign, it can be concluded that a phase one and a phase two exist. Phase one was launched in 2002 and was completed in 2009. According to the current Union Tourism Minister, the following can be noted about this first phase: "Till now, we had been promoting India internationally from the point of view of the destinations. The Incredible India campaigns which we launched in 2002 has been extremely successful" (Press Information Bureau, Government of India, 2012). Concerning the second phase of the campaign, a paradigm shift can be detected. The same personality points out in this regard: "In our 'Take II' of the Incredible India campaign, we are going to focus on the consumer" (Press Information Bureau, Government of India, 2012).

Before discussing some detailed information regarding the larger context in which this nation branding endeavour is situated, it is interesting to present an applicable quote by Blanke and Chiesa (2007), who both function as editors for the World Economic Forum: "Travel & tourism have important indirect positive development effects. It encourages

infrastructure improvements, such as better roads, electricity, telephone and public transportation networks, which, as well as facilitating tourism, improve the economy's overall development prospects and the quality of life for its residents'' (Blanke & Chiesa, 2007, p. xiii).

In the case of India, it is justified to state that these 'indirect positive development effects' are highly necessary for the residents of the country as well as for visiting tourists. In his book, Kant (2009) refers to results of a survey conducted by the Gallup Poll Organization. The outcomes of the survey approve that in the time period October-November 2006 several crucial market concerns in relation to travelling to India were identified. In order from most critical to least critical, the five prominent and pertinent concerns that surfaced were: (1) cleanliness and hygiene, (2) safety and security, (3) transportation, (4) promotional support and (5) affordability. When evaluating these five concerns in light of the 'Incredible India' campaign, Kant (2009) reacts in retrospect by stating: "For essentially, a brand is what a brand does. The 'Incredible India' campaign could not be sustained if the quality of experience offered to tourists did not remain credible. In the long run, a branding campaign which does not match with the actual experience does damage to the destination rather than promote it. Infrastructure development and destination management, therefore, hold the key to India's sustained growth in the tourism sector" (Kant, 2009, p. 92).

When reasoning that (actual) experiences, to a large extent, are based on perceptions, it is interesting to introduce a statement made by Turney: "Insofar as public relations practitioners can influence people's perceptions, they can affect how those people will respond to another person or organization. And, like it or not, our perceptions can be manipulated in countless ways" (Turney, 2000). In a later section of the same article, the following related statement can be detected: "Public relations is involved in this [the process of mediating messages] because its practitioners often create mediated realities to trigger favourable perceptions of their clients" (Turney, 2000). Additionally, Herstein (2012) validly points out: "Despite these differences, marketing a place (country, region, or city) depends mostly on understanding how people perceive one another" (p. 148). All in all, it can be concluded that, although people in general have developed a more comprehensive mind-set about the content they receive, an attentive attitude remains certainly required.

The story of the 'Incredible India' campaign

In order to get a comprehensive understanding of the original and (to a considerable degree) factual story of the 'Incredible India' campaign, it is wise to trace the roots from which the campaign flourished. In this regard, it can be stated that Amitabh Kant, a civil servant by profession, was one of the key players who created the 'Incredible India' campaign. Kant functioned as joint secretary of the Indian Ministry of Tourism from 2001 to 2007. Prior to his function as joint secretary of the Indian Ministry of Tourism, Amitabh Kant was secretary of tourism in Kerala (one of the official states in India). Kant successfully accomplished the task to put this particular state on the international tourism map by imaginatively building on the 'God's Own Country' brand (Kant, 2009).

Kant wrote a book titled 'Branding India - An Incredible Story'. The book is based on a balanced combination between personal experiences and academic sources. In the book, Kant provides the reader with a description of the condition of the world prior to the initial launch of the 'Incredible India' campaign in 2002. From an economic point of view, one term should be recalled when remembering this year: 'crisis'. Indeed, the world was gradually steering towards a severe economic crisis. Some even argued that this was the greatest economic crisis since the Great Depression which dates from 1929 (Holland, 2008; Stewart, 2008). So, one of the main causes for the initiation of a nation branding endeavour like the 'Incredible India' campaign was the recent economic crisis. In this regard, Kant (2009) points out: "I am certain it was this dire situation [a severe crisis] that catalysed Brand India" (p. 2). In addition to that, several other occasions negatively impacted consumer demand to travel to (widely visited) tourist destinations, including India.

To illustrate these 'other' occasions, Kant (2009) refers to the following events: the attack on the World Trade Center in New York, the war in Afghanistan, the attack on the Parliament House in Delhi, the troop mobilization at the Indian border and travel advisories leading to withdrawal of schedules by airlines from India. Furthermore, Kant (2009) states that this specific time period also proved to be the first instance in history in which global tourism experienced a sharp decline. This downturn can partially be attributed to an increase in sceptical tourists. In light of India, Kant (2009) evaluates this situation as follows: "For India, this was a time for reflection. It was a moment for action. The need of the hour was a strong national policy for tourism. The need was to acknowledge tourism's potential for revenue and employment generation. The 'Incredible India' campaign was launched at the peak of this crisis to bring back consumer demand, generate momentum and enhance growth in the tourism industry" (Kant, 2009, p. 3). As a consequence, Kant and his team identified several

pertinent objectives which basically functioned as the fundamentals for the 'Incredible India' campaign. In the case of this particular nation branding endeavour, six key strategic objectives were established:

1. Position tourism as a major engine of economic growth;
2. Harness the direct and multiplier effects of tourism for employment generation, economic development and for providing an impetus to rural tourism;
3. Focus on domestic tourism as a major driver of tourism growth;
4. Position India as a global brand to take advantage of the burgeoning global travel trade and the vast untapped potential of India as a destination;
5. Acknowledge the critical role of the private sector with the government working as a pro-active facilitator and catalyst;
6. Create and develop integrated tourism circuits based on India's unique civilization, heritage and culture in partnership with the states, private sector and other agencies.

Regarding the vision statement for the 'Incredible India' campaign, Kant identified the following two objectives:

- I. Put India on the world tourism map and develop it as a premier holiday destination for high-yielding tourists;
- II. India should be a global brand, with worldwide brand recognition and strong brand equity, especially in the trade and among the target audience.

With regards to the research phase, meaning one of the stages prior to publicly launching the 'Incredible India' campaign, the following key marketing challenges were identified by the team behind the 'Incredible India' campaign:

- Markets
 - Move from a low-volume, low-value marketing strategy to a high-value marketing strategy;
 - Defend and enhance India's share in traditional long-haul markets;
 - Develop strong short-haul markets;
 - Penetrate the key source markets in Asia.

- Consumers
 - Target the age group of forty to sixty-five years belonging to affluent, well-educated, married, white-collar segments for a value-based strategy;
 - Convert business travel to business-cum-leisure travel;
 - Target Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) in the US and Canadian markets;

- Position and differentiate strongly vis-à-vis key competitors in the region
 - China, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia.

- Ensure active management of goodwill and the country's image.

- Build strong sub-brands as key components of a risk minimization strategy.

- Develop spending avenues to capture higher value from each tourist.

Kant (2009) notes that research formed a fundamental and essential pillar of the campaign. The team with which he collaborated for this campaign identified and consequently clustered 15 countries into three distinct groups. The countries that were identified were either labelled as 'defend', 'invest' or 'seed'. The countries that were categorized as 'defend' needed to be defended. The nations that were labelled as 'invest' had to be subjected to significant investments. Lastly, the 'seed' markets first had to be seeded before any form of investment could be made.

To finish this section, the following question might be posed: Is the 'Incredible India' campaign a nation branding endeavour or should it be valued as a destination branding or tourism marketing effort? Based on the underlying intentions that are described in this particular subsection, it is valid to state that the 'Incredible India' campaign surpasses the status of a mere destination branding or tourism marketing campaign. In conclusion, it can be noted that the aggregate of the discussed underlying aims can be considered as the main argument to assess the 'Incredible India' campaign as a genuine nation branding campaign.

Branding features

When beholding multimedia content created for the 'Incredible India' campaign, it quickly becomes apparent that creativity played a big role. In this regard, Kant (2009) points out: "A new brand like 'Incredible India' had to out-think rather than out-spend competition. It was

necessary to be intensively creative, focus on the right clientele and ensure that the campaign was featured in select media” (Kant, 2009, p. 23).

Of all the various creative elements that are incorporated in the multimedia content created for the campaign, the brand logo - Incredible India - is particularly noteworthy. V. Sunil, who is referred to as one of the advertising stalwarts for this campaign and who functions as executive creative director at Wieden+Kennedy, places this brand logo in a larger context by stating the following: “To be truly powerful, a brand must express itself not just in terms of a product benefit, but in terms of a greater socio-economic truth. Apple told a brave new world to reject Big Blue IBM and “Think Different”. Nike told flabby, procrastinating city-dwellers everywhere to stop making excuses and “Just Do It”, following it up with the brilliant “swoosh” icon, a graphic device that expressed energy and inspired sport without a word” (V. Sunil in Kant, 2009, p. 20).

According to the same person, the ‘Incredible India’ brand logo should be subsumed under this particular generation of branding endeavours. V. Sunil explains in this regard that the exclamation mark represents “the mind-boggling depth and intensity of the Indian experience” (V. Sunil in Kant, 2009, p. 20). Furthermore, V. Sunil points out: “Every aspect of India - be it its ever-accelerating GDP, extreme geography, kaleidoscopic culture, deep-rooted spirituality or even photogenic chaos, even - is summed up by the simple yet profound exclamation mark” (V. Sunil in Kant, 2009, p. 20).

Taglines were also prominently present in the campaign. According to V. Sunil, the following can be stated about these taglines: “They are symptomatic of a much bigger social phenomenon-an optimistic and extroverted new India, eager to make its presence felt in the global community” (V. Sunil in Kant, 2009, p. 20). In a subsequent paragraph, V. Sunil continues by stating: “It is this sub-text that transforms “Incredible India” from a mere branding exercise into a pop culture milestone, denoting a turning point in the evolution of one of mankind’s greatest civilizations” (V. Sunil in Kant, 2009, p. 20). Nandan, who currently functions as a member of the team behind the ‘Incredible India’ campaign, also comments on the creativity that was prevalent in the multimedia content for this campaign: “There is color in every aspect of Indian life—the clothes, the spices, even the homes. The concept was tweaked imaginatively, so “red hot” became the description of chilies drying in the sun while “pure white” perfectly described the purity of love that the Taj Mahal symbolizes. This creative route was a huge hit, and, when carried over to television, the result was breathtaking” (Nandan, 2010).

Since the data collection process of this research study solely includes video advertisements that were created for the 'Incredible India' campaign, it is valuable to briefly elaborate on the standpoint of the creators behind these video advertisements. In the book written by Kant (2009), Bharat Bala, who is a film director, notes the following in this regard: "Today, India cannot be thought of without acknowledging the irony of it being an ancient country with a modern outlook. The film was shot bearing this in mind; we were careful to preserve the eternal quality of its people and landscape, yet remained modern in its execution. There was a clear intent of veering away from the traditional advertising approach. As opposed to staging unrealistic scenarios, the core motivation of the film was to reflect the people, landscape and emotions of India with a sincere honesty and simplicity" (Bharat Bala in Kant, 2009, p. 21).

Subsequently, the film director states: "This simplicity extended across the visuals and onto the soundtrack that would accompany them. One of the primary goals was to achieve a film that would honestly depict the landscape and people of India as visiting travellers would find them when they arrived. We endeavoured to portray the very same, completely real emotions they would feel when they experienced India for themselves. All the moments shown in the film, in that sense, are real and readily accessible to those who seek them" (Bharat Bala in Kant, 2009, p. 21).

Regarding the adoption of media outlets, of which the popular video sharing website www.youtube.com is among them, Nandan (2010) notes the following: "In this era of communication and globalization, outreach cannot be confined to the print and television media alone. The Ministry's campaign has taken into account FM radio and Internet, including the increasingly popular You-Tube. A new direction has been forged with the Incredible India events worldwide, which revolve around the soft power of India. This soft power is drawn from the graceful forms of classical music and dance, the robust and earthy folk culture, the exquisite craftsmanship of artisans and weavers who nurture the craft traditions of the country, and above all, the cuisine" (Nandan, 2010).

This research study focuses on the international variant of the second phase of the 'Incredible India' campaign which commenced in December 2012. The slogan that is created for this particular phase of the campaign is 'Find What You Seek'. In this regard, Union Tourism Minister, Sri Chiranjeevi, stated the following: "Till now we had been promoting India from the destinations and products point of view internationally. The campaign has been very successful so far. But the time has come to take it to the next level and now our focus is on consumers" (<http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/>).

Theoretical framework

This section presents an elaboration on various theoretical concepts which could be related to the ‘Incredible India’ campaign. The researcher of this study carefully selected numerous theoretical concepts that have a considerably high relevance regarding the scope and topic of this master’s thesis. In this section, the following six concepts are discussed:

Public diplomacy

Globalization

Identity

Nation branding

Image

Reputation management

Before elaborating on each of these concepts, the author of this master’s thesis would desire to utilize this opportunity to briefly explain the reason of this particular selection of concepts. According to a fairly recent article by Stock, it has become apparent that it is extremely troublesome to manage the field of research that is dedicated to matters regarding place branding or place image. Stock relays two reasons for this particular situation. As he notes: “This is caused not only by its fairly young history (Anholt in Teslik, 2007), but also by the fragmentation of research and the subsequent lack of an actual debate among authors in this scientific area” (Stock, 2009, p. 119). Furthermore, although Stock has detected a significant surge in the number of publications in the field of place branding, there is hardly any agreement among the recently joined researchers with regards to the theoretical implications. In fact, in numerous cases researchers reject established concepts and introduce novel definitions and meanings. Simultaneously, the renowned scholars in this academic domain adhere to the incumbent definitions. The consequence of this (growing) inconsistency will gradually result in an insubstantial academic debate and it approves of the chaotic status quo in which this field is situated. These statements have hugely contributed to the creation of a discussion with the six selected concepts as points of departure.

Public diplomacy

The term public diplomacy has prominently developed over the last several decades (van Ham, 2012). This development caused a division of the concept ‘public diplomacy’ in a ‘narrow’ (read: traditional) definition and a ‘broader’ definition. The traditional definition was

mostly relevant in the past several decades, while the broader definition is more prominent at present day. The USC Center on Public Diplomacy sheds light on the traditional view of public diplomacy by relaying the following: “In the past few decades, public diplomacy has been widely seen as the transparent means by which a sovereign country communicates with publics in other countries aimed at informing and influencing audiences overseas for the purpose of promoting the national interest and advancing its foreign policy goals” (<http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/>). The traditional point of view approves of public diplomacy as a means to establish and maintain relationships between country leaders and diplomats. To illustrate this type of relationships, the USC Center on Public Diplomacy refers to activities such as educational exchange programs for scholars and students; visitor programs; language training; cultural events and exchanges; and radio and television broadcasting (<http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/>). As an accompanying explanation the USC Center on Public Diplomacy states that these activities are being engaged in to manage the ‘sending’ country’s identity as an approach to characterize the overarching policy environment in the ‘receiving’ country.

When comparing the traditional viewpoint on public diplomacy with the current or new point of view on public diplomacy, it can be stated that the new version encompasses relatively more actors that are involved: “This view aims to capture the emerging trends in international relations where a range of non-state actors with some standing in world politics – supranational organizations, sub-national actors, non-governmental organizations, and (in the view of some) even private companies – communicate and engage meaningfully with foreign publics and thereby develop and promote public diplomacy policies and practices of their own” (<http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/>). The incentive behind the expansion of actors is the increased availability and accessibility of information through new media channels and communication approaches. The Internet, in this regard, plays a prominent role. Unlike the traditional viewpoint, the new approach to public diplomacy enables (global) entities to establish relationships on a multilateral level.

Gilboa (2009), one of the most prominent scholars in the field of public diplomacy, points out that “public diplomacy (PD) is a new field of practice and scholarship” (p. 2). Gilboa continues by relating this concept to the contemporary age. In this regard, the scholar states the following: “PD became a critical element of national security and foreign policy, following the emergence of the information age, the end of the Cold War and the September 11 terror attacks on New York and Washington” (Gilboa, 2009, p. 2). In one of Van Ham’s online publications, the following question is posed: “So what is public diplomacy all

about?” The author provides the following reply to this question: “The basic idea is that in order to achieve a wide range of goals—from economics to military—you need to get support of ordinary people” (Van Ham, 2012). Furthermore, in relation to this question, van Ham notes: “Ultimately, the desired outcome remains unchanged, namely reaching certain economic or political goals. But the methods of the new public diplomacy are much more indirect and subtle than the blunt propaganda of yesteryear” (Van Ham, 2012).

Before continuing with a more comprehensive discussion on public diplomacy it is of essential importance to provide a working definition of the concept itself. In this regard it can be noted that, nowadays, multiple definitions of the term can be detected in academic spheres as well as in political environments. According to Henrikson (2005), the term ‘public diplomacy’ can be defined as follows: “Public diplomacy may be defined, simply, as the conduct of international relations by governments through public communications media and through dealings with a wide range of nongovernmental entities (political parties, corporations, trade associations, labor unions, educational institutions, religious organizations, ethnic groups, and so on including influential individuals) for the purpose of influencing the politics and actions of other governments” (Henrikson, 2005). Interestingly, this particular definition is, to a significant degree, in line with the working definition of nation branding which was proposed in the introductory section of this master’s thesis: “Country branding occurs when public speaks to public; when a substantial proportion of the population of the country – not just civil servants and paid figureheads – gets behind the strategy and lives it out in their everyday dealings with the outside world” (Anholt, 2003, p. 123).

Textually analysing both definitions it can be concluded that public diplomacy as well as country branding represent practices that should be performed by governmental organizations and nongovernmental organizations. Furthermore, the role of individuals is also referred to in both definitions. Thus, it is valid to conclude that public diplomacy and country branding have similarities. The question that becomes interesting in this regard is: Are these concepts one and the same and is the dissimilarity merely in the name? Gilboa (2009) for example notes that nowadays, both states and non-states performers utilize a wide variety of so called ‘public diplomacy tools’. Nation branding is among the public diplomacy tools to which Gilboa refers. Furthermore, regarding the actual positioning of nation branding, Szondi (2008) provides the following description: “Nation branding is clearly situated in the marketing discipline, while public diplomacy largely remains in the

realm and at the intersection of international relations and international communication as host disciplines” (p. 4).

Kaneva (2011) states that “the American field of mass communication research has its roots in the study of propaganda and its imputed effects (e.g., Lasswell, 1927, 1936), as evident in early work on development communication (e.g., Lerner, 1951, 1958), public relations (e.g., Bernays, 1923, 1955), and public opinion (e.g., Lippmann, 1922, 1925; Lazarsfeld et al., 1944)” (Kaneva, 2011, p. 117). In this regard, however, it should be pointed out that the term ‘nation branding’ should not be valued as a mere synonym of propaganda. Moreover, the proposed applications of the concept are not constrained to inducing public opinion through either public relations or advertising.

Globalization

Over the last few decades, the term globalization has received huge attention among practitioners as well as academia. This resulted in the availability of ideologies concerning globalization from various domains, including politics, economics and social. Moreover, the public at large has been served by numerous and varied forms of definitions of the concept. Among others, one such definition was coined by Held et al. (1995). The scholars define globalization as follows: “The concept of globalization implies, first and foremost, a stretching of social, political and economic activities across frontiers such that events, decisions and activities in one region of the world can come to have significance for individuals and communities in distant regions of the globe” (Held et al., 1995, p. 15). From this definition two elements are worth mentioning. Firstly, this definition approves of an extending effect of three types of activities which are related to the economic, social and political sphere. Furthermore, according to the definition, this extending effect is detectable in the several world regions that exist. Translating this to a concrete example it is fair to state that nowadays, numerous individuals across the globe are familiar with terms such as ‘world politics’ and ‘world economy’. The following paragraph provides a concrete example of ‘world politics’. The subsequent paragraph is dedicated to a concrete example of ‘world economy’.

From a world politics perspective one might recall the influential Alexander the Great. According to Tharoor (2011), who is a writer for the respectable magazine ‘TIME’, this personality should be valued as one of the top 25 political icons. In an article the author mentions: “He defeated the mighty Persian Empire, ever the scourge of the Greeks, razed its once mighty capital of Persepolis to the ground and tried to stitch together an incredible

cosmopolitan empire from the Indus to the Hellespont — all while he was in his 20s” (Tharoor, 2011).

An example that captures the notion of ‘world economy’ is the ‘Silk Road’. According to Wild (1992), the first adoption of the Silk Road was in 138 B.C. by Zhang Qian. Furthermore, the author states that Zhang Qian, by many, still is seen as the father of the Silk Road (Wild, 1992). In addition, historyworld.net notes that the Silk Road connected East Asia and Western Europe with each other. Interestingly enough, Historyworld.net states that, at that time, both regions were already accommodated with an extremely high advanced commercial network familiar to human mankind. The connection between these two regions was the result of an unimaginable complex commercial network (<http://historyworld.net/>).

Returning to contemporary day and age, in light of world politics and world economy, the question how these activities are being managed remains? Two main answers can be provided to this question. A first reply to this question is the advancement of information and communication technologies. Due to this development countries have become highly interconnected with each other. A second reply, which partially also can be detected in ancient times is the formation of world institutes such as the United Nations (UN) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These two elements continuously sustain global political activities and global economic activities nowadays.

Held et al. (1995) also refer to an extending effect in the social sphere. This trend is related to an increase in social connectivity among people across the globe. In light of this development, it is of relevance to present a definition of globalization by Giddens. Giddens, who is perceived as the most widely cited social theorist of his generation, as well as being at the forefront of debates within modern sociology, particularly those involving globalization and the nature of modernity, explains the term ‘globalization’ (polity.co.uk, n.d.) as follows: “Globalization can thus be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa” (Giddens, 1991, p. 64). The reason for including this particular definition of globalization is related to ‘the intensification of worldwide social relations’. In other words, Giddens states that, because of globalization, the interconnectivity among people increases. The main factors behind this ‘intensification’ are, as the public at large currently experience, information and communication technologies, such as the Internet.

Regarding the positioning of countries in the globalization debate ‘PR Today’ (2011) points out: “In a globalised world with ever freer movement for people, trade and investment, countries now have to compete ever more creatively for favourable publicity”. One approach

to receive favourable publicity is through nation branding. Widler (2007) acknowledges that, nowadays, nation branding is a valuable practice which should be managed by countries with great care and attention. Furthermore, Widler (2007) explains that the space created by the continuing trend of globalization could be perceived as a marketplace which allows nations to compete with each other based on brand strategies. Van Ham approves of this particular point of view when the author states that two factors, globalization and the media revolution, have caused each country to be more aware of itself (Van Ham, 2001). In a more recent online article, Van Ham, provides an unblemished and practical example of how exactly place branding should be perceived in a global village. The scholar does this by presenting a comparison between commercial brands and the nation's brand: "In today's globalized and mediatized commercial marketplace, the corporate brand has become an essential part of business identity which helps consumers to identify with the company, and — lest we forget — encourage them to buy its products and services. In a similar way, branding has become essential to create value in the relationship between territorial entities and individuals. Just as commercial brands invest a major part of their budget to establish and solidify the credibility of their image, today's territorial actors do the same" (Van Ham, 2012).

Elaborating on the presence of nation branding practices from a global perspective, Risen (2005) notes the following: "The last few years have seen an explosion of "nation branding," shorthand for coordinated government efforts to manage a country's image, whether to improve tourism, investment, or even foreign relations. Firms specializing in nation branding have sprouted up around the world" (Risen, 2005). In addition to that, Dinnie states the following about this trend: "The application of branding techniques to nations and places is growing in frequency given the increasingly global competition which nations and places now face in both their domestic and external markets" (Dinnie, 2003, p. 3). Furthermore, Anholt notes in this regard that the world can be perceived as a unified market. Additionally, the same scholar points out that the advancement of the globalization trend implies that a place, whether this refers to a country, city or region is subjected to a competitive environment. In this particular setting each place is competing for its stake in the world's economy, cultural, social, and political domain. Furthermore, the author conveys that in such an environment, which is similar to that of a crowded marketplace, brand image is highly essential (Anholt, 2008).

India is one of those countries that can be perceived as a contender in that crowded marketplace. Considering the fact that India, by many, still is labelled as a third world country, the remainder of this section is dedicated to the role that third world countries play in

the global market. To commence the concluding part of this section it might be applicable to refer to a statement which was presented by Venkatesh (2012): ‘‘With global travel to emerging economies like India on the rise, and as the curiosity begins to fade, these countries cannot afford to stay in the background and expect visitors to factor them into their travel plans on an ongoing basis. Much effort is needed in this global competitive environment’’ (p. 250). Regarding the latter, Papadopoulos poses numerous causes that have contributed to a more fierce global competition for countries with regards to increasing exports and attracting foreign tourism, specialized and experienced employees, talented foreign students and monetary investments. These causes are: (1) the opening of new emerging markets, (2) health scares including mad cow disease and avian flu, (3) the events of September 11, 2001, (4) labour shortages in technology and (5) the overall globalisation of markets (Papadopoulos, 2004, p. x). Countries have responded to these causes by allocating resources to place equity and systematic marketing. According to Anholt (2005) both allocations can have an enormous impact globally. In this scenario, developed nations enter the global arena with structured and well-coordinated nation branding initiatives, which consequently result in an intensification of competition among similar developed nations. The (accumulative) result of this competition is that weaker countries remain in their vulnerable position, which is considerably detrimental in its own right. So, does that imply that all less capable countries are doomed to fail in this global arena? Is it wise for these countries to not (financially) invest in country branding activities?

Anholt enlightens these countries in particular by offering two applicable insights. The scholar states that, although few countries are fortunate to be financially vital, practically every country is wealthy in terms of intangible assets. To be more specific, almost all countries on this globe possess a wide range of intellectual, geographical, historical, cultural and human capital (Anholt, 2005). However, there are various reasons to accept that a transformation of these natural assets into a substantial and stable economic performance can result in a failure. Anholt notes, in this regard, that the ability or the motivation of numerous countries are considerably low which lead, in light of nation branding practices, to a mismanagement of the country’s unique selling points. Considering that the current state of the global economy is incrementally determined by services, intellectual assets and ‘virtual’ products, it is fair to state that the human capital which nations possess is a potential incentive to allow their economy to flourish. In conclusion, the prominent scholar notes that in comparison to the past ‘a lack of conventionally marketable resources is even less a bar to economic development’ (Anholt, 2005, p. x).

Another approach for relatively new, small and poor nations to establish, relay and utilize their intangible assets is by applying place branding techniques to create a ‘perceptual niche’ in the global sphere. A significant element of the applied techniques for these particular countries is grounded in their genuine cultural, social and historical identity.

Identity

This section discusses the idea of identity. Firstly, with a general definition of this particular concept is presented. Subsequently, the relationship between identity and image is elaborated on. Lastly, this section concludes with an overview of specific information regarding the term ‘national identity’.

According to the official online edition of Oxford Dictionaries, the definition of ‘identity’ can be phrased as follows: ‘the fact of being who or what a person or thing is’ (<http://oxforddictionaries.com/>). In the subsequent discussion the emphasis is placed on a ‘thing’ which refers to a ‘nation’. So, what is the relationship between identity and image? Fan (2008) established the following scheme to comprehend this link:

(Self) Identity → Positioning/Nation branding → Image (held by other)

Based on this scheme, the first revelation is that (self) identity (of a nation) and country image are relative constructs of each other. In this respect, the way in which one nation perceives other nations is of essential importance. Fan (2008) rightly states in this regard that “the quest for uniqueness of identity is inseparable from the conception of others” (p. 7).

According to Triandafyllidou (1998), national identity encompasses those traits of a country that its inhabitants value to be central, enduring and distinctive. This valuation is based on the past, present and future of the nation. In this regard, the cognitive psychological bond functions as a cement to bind associated nationals with each other. Furthermore, this relationship should establish the core of national identity. Triandafyllidou (1998) notes that this type of mental psychological bond is generally referred to as “a sense of belonging”. In addition to that, associations like this can be perceived as the existence of an intimate link among individuals and the collective self, which in this case refers to the nation. So, an appropriate consequent question that might be interesting to ask is: when does a national identity becomes relevant? The authors Gellner (1964), Kedourie (1992) and Triandafyllidou (1998) note that national identity becomes relevant only when contrasts and comparisons are created with other nations. Thus, the author of this master’s thesis would like to conclude that,

in addition to the contribution of the residents of a nation to create and form a national identity, the (adjacent) environment is also an important contributor to the formation of a national identity. In this regard, it should be noted that Gellner (1964), Kedourie (1992) and Triandafyllidou (1998) merely acknowledge the latter as a meaningful factor in the creation and formation of a national identity.

Continuing with the latter mentioned, one important factor that is part of the (adjacent) environment are so called “significant others”. This term was coined by Triandafyllidou. The definition of this notion sounds as follows: “[Significant others] refer to another nation or ethnic group that is territorially close to, or indeed within, the national community and threatens, or rather is perceived to threaten, its ethnic and /or cultural purity and /or its independence” (1998, as cited in Fan, 2008, p. 7). To end this particular discussion an applicable quote by Triandafyllidou, detected in a publication by Fan (2008), is conveyed: “A nation’s identity at a specific time is influenced by its world view, especially by how it sees other nations. This perception and knowledge of others provide the nation a context or *reference point* in defining its own identity. The whole argument of nationalists seems to be reduced to the fundamental question of defining the “we” and the “they” (1998, as cited in Fan, 2008, p. 7).

Returning to the scheme presented in the beginning of this section, the practice that is embraced to communicate a certain image is of particular importance. The subsequent section, which discusses the notion of nation branding includes a statement made by Anholt (2005). This particular statement approves of the enormous impact a brand has in international spheres. As a consequence, nation branding is pertinent when considering a country’s economic, social, political and cultural progress. Kotler and Gertner (2002) maintain a similar viewpoint on this matter when the duo state that nations should adopt conscious branding techniques in case these countries desire to compete effectively in the global arena. Olins (1999) supports both standpoints when the prominent scholar claims that within several years, identity management will be valued as a common phenomenon and a strong brand will be treated as a key national asset.

The notion of image, which will be discussed in more detail in a subsequent section of this master’s thesis, is “the general impression that a person, organization, or product presents to the public” (<http://oxforddictionaries.com/>). In this case, it is a ‘country’ that relays a general impression to the public at large. This ‘image’ is what an individual absorbs.

Zooming in on ‘(self) identity’ it can be stated that a nation’s identity is that which the country represents. Furthermore, Herstein (2012) notes that ‘countries are so functionally

diverse that they are perceived in terms of the representational parts of their brand identity' (p. 148). In addition to that, Parekh (2000) reminds the public that a national identity, like organisational identity, is not constant. Identity is neither fixed, unalterable, nor wholly fluid and amenable to unlimited reconstruction.

Fan (2008) complements this explanation by stating that a country possesses numerous identities. In order to broadcast the fundamental image of the nation to an international audience, intensive identity management is required. The scholar poses the question whether a nation should project a single consistent image or different images targeted at different audiences. The answer, as well provided by Fan (2008), is that the image of a country is depended on both, the context and situation. Thus, it is not manageable for a country to present one image that applies to the diverse circumstances that are existing.

In essence, Anholt notes that a national identity is fundamental to the creation of a national brand. In this regard, the scholar states that a national brand is tangible, robust, communicable and moreover useful to present to the public at large (Anholt, 2005). Furthermore, according to Anholt, a national identity forms the basis for developing countries to economically flourish. To conclude, an interesting question to ask is what the core elements are to establish a national identity. Smith enlightens the general public by providing the following answer: "More specially, national identity has the following key elements: an historic territory, or homeland; common myths and historical memories; a common, mass public culture; common legal rights and duties for all members; and a common economy with territorial mobility for all members" (1991, as cited in Fan, 2008, p. 3). Anholt (2005) places these key elements in a larger framework when the prominent scholar notes that as soon as a nation is eminent and appreciated for its capabilities in particular domains, the incumbent values, and the existing culture, the result is that such a country experiences a considerable benefit compared to nations whose identity is ambiguous, less familiar or less positive.

Nation branding

The concept of nation branding was allegedly coined by Simon Anholt in 1996. From that moment onwards, Anholt has been perceived by the public as one of the 'founding fathers' of the concept (Kaneva, 2011). Departing from this point in time, academia as well as practitioners gradually involved themselves with nation branding (practices). Continuing with Anholt's point of reasoning on 'nation branding' it is valuable to repeat the working definition for this research study: "Country branding occurs when public speaks to public; when a substantial proportion of the population of the country – not just civil servants and paid

figureheads – gets behind the strategy and lives it out in their everyday dealings with the outside world” (Anholt, 2003, p. 123). While numerous definitions of nation branding are available, this particular definition is unique in the sense that it recognizes three parties that contribute to country branding endeavours. Indeed, according to Anholt, nation branding activities are not constrained to civil servants and paid figureheads. The residents of the country as well play a prominent role when it comes to promoting the country’s (unique) characteristics. The significance of the latter group is reinforced by Olins, who by many also is perceived as a founding father of ‘nation branding’. Olins (2002) note: “a major aspect of all brands is the imagery or associations that people hold about them” (p. 246).

This statement by Olins can undoubtedly be related to a country’s historical as well as contemporary events. O’Shaughnessy and O’ Shaughnessy (2000), for instance, state the following about the link between country branding on the one hand and events that occurred either in the past or occur at present: “Any nation can be viewed as a brand as it can be viewed as a compound of contemporary and historical associations that have relevance for marketing. This is commonly accepted, and the notion of the nation as a brand has an instant and even populist resonance” (O’ Shaughnessy & O’Shaughnessy, 2000, p. 56).

Before continuing on the branding part of ‘nation branding’ it is fundamental to define the word ‘brand’. According to the official online edition of Oxford Dictionaries, one of the meanings of ‘brand’ is: ‘a particular identity or image regarded as an asset’ (<http://oxforddictionaries.com/>). Fan (2008) elaborates on this definition by stating that whether nation branding practices are being performed intentionally or unintentionally every country possesses and maintains an image to their own residents and simultaneously to a global audience. In 2007, Anholt attended an interview with Teslik and stated that nations have gained an increased awareness of the pertinence of their brand as being an asset (<http://www.cfr.org/>). Furthermore, in one of his preceding works, Anholt (2005) elaborates on the term brand from a commercial point of view: “Brand is a critical factor because impeccable quality, performance and reliability are simply the cost of entry to most modern marketplaces: they are not sufficient to create lasting competitive advantage or even regular sales. Brand is what drives consumer choice when products and services are broadly equivalent” (Anholt, 2005, p. x). In a subsequent section, Anholt relates the concept ‘brand’ to organizations and countries by stating the following: “‘Brand’ is a useful summation of the intangible competitive assets of an organisation or a country: its vision, its genius, its distinctive character, its people, its promise to the marketplace. These are the factors which,

when aligned around a clear strategy, give it sustainable competitive advantage, the right and the ability to charge a consistent premium, and customer ‘permission’ to constantly innovate and extend the range of products and services on offer. It is not surprising that the market capitalisation of many companies puts a value on their brands which is many times greater than their tangible assets, and if it were possible to measure the brand value of countries, it would exceed their physical resources by an equally large factor” (Anholt, 2005, p. x). This rather lengthy quote does approve of the value of brands whether this is approached from a corporate perspective or a country perspective. Taking the scope of this study into consideration the question that becomes interesting is to what degree academia and practitioners nowadays are aware of the value of country brands.

In 2011, Kaneva points out in this regard that nation branding practices “are yet to be fully understood”. The scholar notes: “In short, nation branding seeks to reconstitute nations both at the levels of ideology, and of praxis, whereby the meaning and experiential reality of nationhood itself is transformed in ways that are yet to be fully understood” (Kaneva, 2011, p. 118). In the statement about the status of nation branding, Kaneva (2011) refers to two interesting concepts, that of ideology and that of praxis. In case of the latter it can be stated that various activities can be subsumed under nation branding practices. Kaneva illustrates this as follows: “In terms of practical manifestations, nation branding includes a wide variety of activities, ranging from “cosmetic” operations, such as the creation of national logos and slogans, to efforts to institutionalize branding within state structures by creating governmental and quasi-governmental bodies that oversee long-term nation branding efforts (Kaneva, 2011, p. 118).

Anholt also relays his point of view on this matter by referring to so called ‘architects of nation branding’ and ‘nation branding programs’. The prominent scholar on nation branding notes: “The most ambitious architects of nation branding envision it as a *component of national policy*, never as a ‘campaign’ that is separate from planning, governance or economic development” (Anholt, 2008, p. 23, emphasis in original). Once such nation branding efforts or programs are being considered, a valid question one might ask concerns which audience is to be targeted. Referring to the working definition for this research study it is interesting to note that, in actuality, the public at large is integral part of the campaign(!).

As might be recalled: “Country branding occurs when public speaks to public; when a substantial proportion of the population of the country – not just civil servants and paid figureheads – gets behind the strategy and lives it out in their everyday dealings with the outside world” (Anholt, 2003, p. 123). Aside from the actors who establish and

execute a nation branding program, the public at large also significantly partake as active disseminators of the ideals of the program.

In addition to that, Volcic and Andrejevic (2011), note that the participatory audience in nation branding campaigns can be widely diverse: “The target audience for branding campaigns is both internal and external, including foreign and domestic markets, tourists, investors, and populations” (Volcic & Andrejevic, 2011, p. 600). This statement is supported by Fan (2008) who notes that every country has a particular image which is portrayed to its international audience. Also, Fan (2008) reminds the public that the brand of a country always exists regardless of the fact whether the brand was managed consciously or unconsciously. In this regard it might be interesting to pose the question what the intentions are for consciously branding a nation. Papadopoulos (2004) conveys four related objectives: (1) enhance the place’s exports, (2) protect its domestic businesses from ‘foreign’ competition (for sub-national places this may include those from other regions in the same country), (3) attract or retain factors of development and (4) generally position the place for advantage domestically and internationally in economic, political and social terms (p. 36). Papadopoulos (2004) assigns these four objectives to two parties around the world, government officials and trade association executives. Anholt (2005) supports the fourth objective when he points out: “A country’s brand impacts virtually every aspect of its international engagement, and thus plays a critical role in its economic, social, political and cultural progress” (Anholt, 2005, p. x).

Kaneva is one of the few scholars who approached the concept of nation branding from a more theoretical point of view. In 2011, an article which discusses the maturing research domain on nation branding was published by this scholar. In the article an appeal was made for an expanded critical research agenda on the topic. Throughout the publication a wide orientation was maintained by discussing 186 scholarly sources across various disciplines related to nation branding. Kaneva (2011) classified each selected article in one of the following categories: technical-economic, political, and cultural approaches. These three categories largely determined the organization of the article. In this regard it should be pointed out that these three categories are borrowed from Bell (1976).

The ‘technical-economic’ approach is a first term that was coined by Bell and applied by Kaneva to classify numerous articles related to nation branding. The articles that can be subsumed under this particular category are largely composed by practitioners or marketing scholars who engage themselves with topics related to nation branding. These two groups of people generally approach the subject from a functionalist perspective. In other terms, nation

branding is perceived and applied as a tool which could be utilized to enhance a country's competitive advantage in the worldwide marketplace (Kaneva, 2011).

The 'political' approach which can be valued as the second perspective was applied by Kaneva to identify publications that are mainly based on 'public diplomacy'. Furthermore, writings that fall within this category depart from a political ground. Regarding the term 'public diplomacy' it can be stated that this concept was introduced in the 1960s. In general, this concept is perceived as the predecessor of 'nation branding'. Unfortunately, however, until present day, there is still no uniform agreement in what manner 'public diplomacy and 'nation branding' are related to each other.

When investigating the domain of strategic mass communication and in particular 'public diplomacy' and 'nation branding', it can be concluded that two camps exist in this particular domain. On the one hand there is a group of academia who perceive the two concepts as separate, yet related to each other (e.g. Gilboa, 2008; Szondi, 2008). On the other hand, there is a group of academia who reason that the two concepts are fundamentally indistinct from each other. This latter group of academia justify this line of reasoning by noting that elements of the technical-economic approach have partially fused with the political approach (e.g. van Ham, 2001; Anholt, 2007). Before elaborating on the last approach it should be pointed out that this current publication about the 'Incredible India' campaign can be subsumed under the political approach.

The third perspective that was initiated by Bell (1976) and referred to by Kaneva (2011) is named 'cultural approach'. Kaneva (2011) notes the following about the position of this particular perspective within the 'nation branding' domain: "The cultural realm is one of studies from disciplines that concern themselves with conditions for economic growth, efficiency, and capital accumulation. These include marketing, management, and tourism studies" (p. 119). The fundamental distinction, between the cultural approach on the one side and the two aforementioned perspectives on the other side, is that the former does not aim at establishing theories about nation branding and the consequent application of those theories to practical circumstances. In fact, the academia who reason from a cultural perspective are mainly concerned with analysing and scrutinizing (i.e. critiquing) the various theories that provide a ground for discourses and activities with regards to the existence of nation branding. These theories, among others, relate to matters such as culture, governance and national identity (Kaneva, 2011).

Image

When searching for the definition of the word ‘image’ in the online version of ‘Oxford Dictionaries’, the second search result encompasses the following explanation: “the general impression that a person, organization, or product presents to the public” (<http://oxforddictionaries.com/>). According to this definition, image is equal to a ‘general impression’. Furthermore, this ‘general impression’ can be relayed to society at large by three specified entities, which are persons, organizations, or products. It is applicable to critically analyse this definition because the entity ‘country’ is not included. Considering the increased attention nation branding has received, as a concept and as a practice, it is fair to state that ‘country’ as an entity should also be recognized in this definition.

The author of this master’s thesis insists on this minor yet essential alteration because with the tremendous adoption of new media channels and communication technologies, people nowadays have increased access to information about (the activities of) countries. Thus, conscious and active country image management has become of utmost importance. Anholt (2009) supports this statement with great confidence when he points out: “In short, nobody doubts that places have their brand images, and that those images are critical to their success in the global contest for products, trade, services, talent, finance, investment, culture, respect and profile” (<http://kommunikationsmaaling.dk/>). Papadopoulos and Heslop (2002) also identified several factors that are related to country image. According to the duo it is not relevant whether the image of a place is positive or negative, converged or diverged, widely accepted or not, developed deliberately or by default, constructed by education, the media, travel, immigration, product purchases, business experiences or a combination of (these) factors. The fundament remains that every place is inextricably linked to an image.

In this discussion, image management is also related to the practical angle of nation branding. In this regard, the following question might be raised: how does the management of a country image differ from that of a brand or corporate image? According to O’Shaughnessy and O’Shaughnessy (2000) the essential difference is that the image of a place (country, region, city etcetera) is not directly manageable by marketers. Moreover, the scholars note that, as a consequence of this essential difference, place branding is relatively more complex than the management of a brand or corporate image. Anholt (2009) approves of this statement. The scholar notes that national images cannot be formed or reformed through communications. In addition to that, Anholt has identified another factor that explains why the image of a place cannot be reformed easily. The prominent scholar supports this statement by referring to publicly available research. As scrutinized in academic publications, national

image is an outstandingly stable (i.e. robust) phenomenon. Anholt illustrates this by stating that a nation's image could be perceived as a fixed asset rather than a liquid currency.

From a more general point of view, Anholt (2005) provides the following practical message with regards to the relationship between developing nations and their image: “This message is of critical importance to developing nations, which simply don't have the time to wait until their image catches up with the rapid pace of their development. For them, place branding represents a way of ensuring that their fundamental human qualities, their efforts, achievements and ambitions are seen, acknowledged, and properly interpreted in their own region and beyond (Anholt, 2005, p. x). In a later section of the same publication, Anholt states the following from the same developing country perspective: “The brand images of countries, whether good or bad, are seldom an entirely accurate reflection of the reality of the country. In the case of developing countries, the most common reason for this disconnect between image and reality is time: the country may change quite quickly, but its image lags behind by years or decades and sometimes even centuries. Most of the ‘transition economies’ suffer from an image which has been forged during an earlier and very different political era, and which now constantly obstructs their political, economic, cultural and social aspirations” (Anholt, 2005, p. x).

Herstein (2012) notes in this regard that at present day, many emerging as well as developing countries reserve a considerable amount of financial resources to form and maintain more positive and appealing images. In the past, however, this practice was solely adopted by developed countries. To conclude, van Ham (2012), extends this particular point of view when the scholar mentions that in the contemporary marketplace, which is oversaturated with various ideas, image and reputation management of states have become of paramount importance in relation to its strategic equity.

In the following and concluding section, an elaboration regarding the role of reputation and the management of it in relation to nation branding is presented.

Reputation management

In this subsection, a general and specific discussion about reputation management is relayed. The general discussion concerns an encompassing definition of the term ‘reputation’, while the specific discussion is related to a nation's image. The online version of the Oxford Dictionaries is absolute regarding a definition of the concept ‘reputation’: ‘the beliefs or opinions that are generally held about someone or something’ (<http://oxforddictionaries.com/>). When considering the more specific discussion, the terms

that become pertinent to zoom in on are ‘beliefs’ and ‘opinions’. The origin of the phenomenon ‘beliefs’ has been investigated in a variety of studies. Among others, these include parental attitudes, group norms, social influence and propaganda, and in various aspects of personality (<http://www.britannica.com/>). One of these studies is of particular importance when taking the topic and scope of this research study into account: ‘propaganda’. So, what is implied with the concept ‘propaganda’? According to the respectable encyclopaedia Britannica, propaganda can be defined as follows: “Propaganda is the more or less systematic effort to manipulate other people’s beliefs, attitudes, or actions by means of symbols (words, gestures, banners, monuments, music, clothing, insignia, hairstyles, designs on coins and postage stamps, and so forth)” (<http://www.britannica.com/>).

In relation to the topic of this research study, it is interesting to pose the following question: in what manner is propaganda related to nation branding? An initial answer that can be provided is that there is no single answer to this question. Simon Anholt (2005), for instance, states that ‘it doesn’t work’. To be more specific, nation branding as a propaganda tool does not result in a successful attempt to manipulate the perceptions of humans directly. The respected scholar continues by stating that two conditions, a closed society and control over sources of information are prerequisites for executing propaganda. With this ongoing trend of globalization, these two conditions are almost not achievable in most of the countries, let alone in the international sphere. Kaneva (2011) states in this regard that nation branding is not a mere synonym for propaganda.

Based on Szondi’s (2008) viewpoint on this matter, nation branding can be valued as the post-modern transformation of public diplomacy. This particular notion approves of a line of evolution that is sprouted from propaganda. Van Ham (2008), reasons in a more or less similar fashion when the scholar states the following: “One can therefore conclude that the theory and practice of place branding is part of a wider discourse that involves propaganda at one end of the spectrum, and public diplomacy at the other” (p. 11). Grounded in these two similar perspectives it is valid to conclude that nation branding is closely related to propaganda. Moreover, although Szondi (2008) does not refer to specific persons, the author does mention that ‘some scholars might even view both public diplomacy and nation branding as synonyms for propaganda’ (p. 30). From this discussion it can be concluded that there is no unified agreement about the relationship among propaganda, public diplomacy and nation branding.

Now it might be a suitable time to elaborate on the relationship between image and reputation. Whetten and Mackey (2002) validly explain this relation by stating that image is

the object being presented, whereas reputation involves the feedback provided by others. Thus, it can be concluded that image and reputation are mutually related to each other. Furthermore, the scholars note that image as well as reputation are part of a symmetrical communications process between the organisation (self) on the one side and the relevant stakeholders (other) on the other side. In light of nation branding, Fan provides a rather encompassing description with regards to this explanation: “Thus, a nation’s image is what a nation’s people want the world to understand is most central, enduring and distinctive about their nation while reputation is a particular type of feedback received by the nation from the outside world, concerning the credibility of the nation’s identity claims. Identity, image and reputation are all mental associations generated by knowledge and past experience” (Fan, 2008, p. 3).

A pertinent question, based on the discussion about reputation management so far, is whether or not a nation’s international reputation can be altered and managed. Although no specific examples are provided, Anholt does convey that there are ample instances available that approve of successful attempts of changing and managing a country’s international image. Anholt continues to explain that a clear country branding strategy, leadership and a proper coordination among the government, the public and private sector and the society at large are of paramount importance when the end goal is to improve the representation of the contemporary reality and future ambitions of a particular place. Zooming in on the element ‘country branding strategy’, van Ham, mentions that states use place branding to influence and moreover to alter their reputation by utilizing similar tools and activating comparable processes to that of commercial brands (e.g. trust and consumer satisfaction) (van Ham, 2012).

To conclude this section, the following question is posed: How relevant is a nation’s reputation and who is responsible for its management? First of all, Anholt (2009) notes that a nation’s reputation can be perceived as one of the most valuable assets of the nation’s society. In addition to that, the prominent scholar on nation branding continues by explaining that, especially in the age of globalization, every stable government is responsible for the nation’s reputation. Moreover, every incumbent or newly assigned government should aim to maintain the current condition of this reputation, regardless of the prevailing political standpoints, and if possible improve it for the welfare of future generations (Anholt, 2009).

Methodology

This section provides an extensive overview of the various components that were considered in order to establish a comprehensive data collection process.

First of all, the methods that were utilised for this research study are discussed. Secondly, the two populations that were created for this investigation are elaborated on. Consequently, information about the actual data collection process is provided. Lastly, prior to the presentation of the results of this research study, specific research publications about the 'Incredible India' campaign are briefly discussed.

Methods

This research study embraced an interpretivist approach. Walsham (1993) defines this particular research approach as follows: "Interpretive methods of research start from the position that our knowledge of reality, including the domain of human action, is a social construction by human actors and that this applies equally to researchers. Thus there is no objective reality which can be discovered by researchers and replicated by others, in contrast to the assumptions of positivist science" (p. x). In addition to that, Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991), assign the following definition to 'interpretive research': "Interpretive studies assume that people create and associate their own subjective and intersubjective meanings as they interact with the world around them. Interpretive researchers thus attempt to understand phenomena through accessing the meanings participants assign to them" (p. 5).

From an epistemological point of view, the interpretivism approach can be summarized as follows: In essence, the reservoir of information which is maintained by the human mind is based on certain interactions with the environment of a human being. This interaction involves the five senses each person possesses. Any scholar who conducts a research study from an interpretivist approach is interested in the manifold and sometimes complex nature of human interaction with fellow human beings and the various environments in which that human being is situated. Kerrigan et al. (2012) rightfully notes in this regard: "In other words, the way we perceive the world is intricately bound to our life experiences" (p. 320). The notions that are discussed in this sub-section were incorporated in this research study by disseminating a short questionnaire. This questionnaire is based on several personal questions as well as questions that refer to the participant's relation with India *and* the 'Incredible India' campaign. In a subsequent section a brief elaboration on the composition of the questionnaire is provided.

Populations

For this research study, two populations were created. One population concerned interview participants. A second population involved video commercials which were created for the 'Incredible India' campaign.

Initially, the researcher of this study decided to create a sample of seven participants. In this regard, the researcher decided to solely focus on Hindus who are currently residing in the Netherlands. After some consideration and the accumulation of novel knowledge (in particular through the journal article by Kerrigan et al. (2012)), the researcher's initial decision was revisited. Several days prior to the first interview, the researcher of this study decided to increment the sample size from seven to sixteen. Another decision alongside this alteration concerns the ethnic groups that were included in the sample. The researcher of this study eventually decided to divide the sixteen participants in two groups. One group included non-Hindus (read: Dutch people), whereas the second group solely consisted out of Hindus. In order to create a fair balance, out of the eight Dutch participants four were males and the remaining other four were females. This particular division was also made for the eight Hindu participants. Thus, it can be concluded that purposive sampling was applied in order to create the sample for this research.

Approaching this sample creation process from a more general point of view, the researcher of this study had two prerequisites. The first concerned the current location of the participants. Considering the fact that the executer of this study resides in the Netherlands, a country which is situated in Europe, and the fact that the performer of this study does not have immediate (financials) means to conduct this research in another part of the world, the researcher of this study decided that the participants should also reside in the Netherlands. This first prerequisite greatly enhanced the feasibility of the study.

The second precondition for the selection procedure of the interviewees was that he/she should attend a 'Hogeschool' or University study programme or that he/she should recently have completed (i.e. not more than 3.5 years) one of both programmes. This precondition is partially in line with the research study that was executed by Kerrigan et al. (2012). With regards to this investigation, this prerequisite was established in order to secure a group of participants which have obtained knowledge from a specific type of learning institute.

The second sample involved material that could be presented to the participant. The research by Kerrigan et al. (2012) selected imagery from the 'Incredible India' campaign to present to a selection of participants. Taking this fact into account the executer of this study

decided to focus on a set of video commercials. In this regard it can be noted that the team behind the 'Incredible India' campaign produced several video commercials. The widely popular video-sharing website *www.youtube.com* was consulted in order to search for these videos.

In total nine short video clips² were selected for this investigation. From those nine video clips, eight video clips were selected from the most recent (read: second) part of the international variant of the 'Incredible India' campaign. This particular part of the campaign was globally launched in December 2012. The slogan that is present in each of the eight short video clips is 'find what you seek'. The ministry of Tourism of India notes in this regard: "India Tourism has launched two new campaigns: an International Campaign called 'Find What You Seek' and a Domestic Campaign called 'Go Beyond'. These campaigns were launched at the recently concluded "World Travel Market-2012", which was held at London" (Press Information Bureau, Government of India, 2012). From an Indian perspective, Europe and in particular the Netherlands can be labelled as an international market. Thus, the researcher of this study decided to solely focus on the international variant of the second part of the 'Incredible India' campaign. A second motive to incorporate this particular aspect of the campaign was grounded in the fact that each of the participants could behold one or more video commercials on Dutch television. Thus, compared to the national variant of this campaign, focusing on the international variant appeared to be more applicable.

In addition to the eight short video clips, one additional video clip was presented. This particular video clip is part of the first phase of the 'Incredible India' campaign. Yet, the researcher of this study personally valued this video clip as a fairly comprehensive sequence of images of India. To the executor of this research study, this particular video clip was valued as the cherry on top of the cake during each interview. Thus, the researcher decided to include this video clip as well.

The genuine status of all nine video clips were assessed based on several characteristics. Regarding the eight short video clips from the second phase of the campaign it can be conveyed that each of these were similarly structured. Prior to the commencement of the video clip, a signature was shown. In this regard, however, it should be pointed out that it was not detectable to whom this signature belongs. Below the signature the words '*incredible india*', *the duration of the video clip* and *the number of each video clip* (imagine as: 'film x') was presented. Also, every video clip lasted for 15 to 25 seconds and contained two very short taglines. Additionally, another characteristic that recurrently appeared in each video clip was a Caucasian woman. Furthermore, at the end of each video clip, a returning scene of a bank of

a river on which boats were floating was shown. In this part of the video clip, the woman ignited a lampion and hoisted it with a rope on one of the boats. Simultaneously, the slogan *'find what you seek'* and the 'Incredible India' logo appeared. A last characteristic involved the exclusive *'Incredible India'* sound which was also situated at the end of each video clip.

Although the name of the YouTube user 'Techmarq' is not familiar to the author of this master's thesis and did not appear to be related to the Indian Ministry of Tourism, the researcher of this study selected eight of the video clips based on the described characteristics. On the other hand, the YouTube user did mention the following in the caption: "India's new Minister of Tourism, the Hon. Dr K Chiranjeevi, travelled to London this November during World Travel Market, to launch Incredible India's new international campaign "Find What You Seek" to the EU market". For seven of the video clips this particular caption was detected. The caption of the one remaining video ended with 'to the *UK market*' instead of the more common 'to the *EU market*' which was found in the other seven video clips. The researcher of this study assumed that this was a human mistake of the YouTube user.

The video clip that was intended for the first part of the campaign was accessed through the official YouTube page of The Government of India. Thus, the genuine nature of this particular video clip was secured. In the appendix section a full overview of the nine YouTube web links can be found.

This comprehensive collection of video clips was consequently presented to the participants during an interview. Prior to the actual interview the selected participants were informed by two e-mails of which one contained a short questionnaire. The following section provides an elaboration on this particular questionnaire.

Data collection process

Prior to the actual interview and shortly after an agreement was established with a potential participant, two e-mails were transferred by the researcher of this study. The first e-mail contained a sincere gratitude for participating and some detailed information about the structure of the interview. The second e-mail contained information about the questionnaire and the questionnaire¹ itself (in the form of a Word document). After the participant completed the questionnaire and returned it to the researcher of this study, an appointment was scheduled for the actual interview.

Zooming in on the questionnaire itself, it can be stated that the form was divided into two parts. The first part, named 'personal questions', contains questions about specific personal information with regards to the participant. Among others, these include age, gender

and nationality. The complete overview of personal questions can be found in the appendix section.

The second part of the questionnaire was based on questions which provide general insights of the participant's relationship with India and to a lesser extent with the 'Incredible India' campaign. By incorporating these questions, the researcher of study could make an initial assessment of the participant prior to the commencement of the interview. This allowed the researcher of this study to prepare himself on how to approach the interview. For example, a participant who is well conversant with India and the 'Incredible India' campaign does not need much support from the researcher of this study, whereas a participant who is poorly conversant with India and the 'Incredible India' campaign might need more information to comprehend matters related to India and the 'Incredible India' campaign. Among others, specific insights that were obtained by posing these questions include in what manner the participant is related to India; if the participant plans to visit India in the (near) future; what a main motive would be for the respondent to visit India and whether or not the interviewee is familiar with the 'Incredible India' campaign. A complete overview of the questions that were posed in this part of the questionnaire can also be found in the appendix section.

All in all, the questions that were included in the questionnaire were a means to obtain a general personal profile of the participant as well as a somewhat specific indication of the participant's familiarity with India and the 'Incredible India' campaign.

The sixteen interviews that were scheduled for this research study were conducted in light of the deductive approach. Brenner (2006) explains in this regard: "In the deductive approach, a researcher brings theoretical constructs to the research project. Questions are framed using these constructs and the analysis can be done by examining how the informants address these constructs during an interview" (p. 360). Yet, in this regard the question might be posed: Why are interviews in particular selected as a proper method considering the subject of this research study? The intent of this academic process was to obtain a comprehensive understanding of how Hindus and non-Hindus, both residing in the Netherlands, perceive the 'Incredible India' campaign. This understanding was not merely limited to the (background) images that were filmed for the video clips. In fact, the interviews elaborated on matters such as the interaction of the actors which was present in some of the video clips as well as the various taglines that were presented in each video clip. In addition to that, the association and the current mind-set of the participant in relation to India were elaborated on as well. Therefore, the researcher of this study decided to conduct interviews in order to acquire the required data for this investigation.

In this regard, it can be noted that the researcher of this study decided to execute the interviews in a semi-structured³ manner. The following two questions were posed prior to the presentation of the series of video clips:

- *Could you elaborate on your familiarity with India as a country?*

This initial question was posed in order to obtain a more specific indication of the participant's familiarity with India. As might be recalled, the second part of the questionnaire contained questions that were related to the participant's familiarity with India and the 'Incredible India' campaign. The answers that were provided to these questions allowed the researcher of this study to obtain a rather general indication of the participant's knowledge about India. However, the researcher of this study desired to acquire a more specific picture of the participant's understanding of India.

In conclusion, it can be noted that this question was posed as a point of reference for the respondent to the questionnaire and an opportunity for the researcher of this study to acquire a more comprehensive picture of the participant's familiarity with India.

- *If you had to describe India in three words, which three words would that be?*

Since the notion of image perception and identity management maintain a rather grand role in this research study, the author of this master's thesis desired to acquire a sense of how the participant would describe India as a nation. Contrary to the first question, it was not the researcher's intent to obtain an elaborate description of India from the participant, rather the researcher desired to obtain a direct and concise description of India in three words. However, if the participant proposed a unique term, the researcher of this study kindly requested to somewhat elaborate on the concept.

Once these questions were answered, a selection of video clips were shown to the participant. After each video clip a short dialogue was created based on the following three questions:

- *Could you relay your initial thoughts about the video clip?*

Since one or more of the selected video clips could also be watched on television and discussed consequently in the participant's spare time, the author of this master's thesis aimed

at obtaining this type of situation. The researcher of this study was curious about the preliminary judgements of the participant shortly after having watched the video clip. In light of the formulated research question for this academic investigation, this particular question was posed to address how the respondents initially perceived video content that was produced for the international variant of the second phase of the 'Incredible India' campaign.

To conclude the discussion about this question, it must be noted that the answers to this question should be labelled as apparent considerations. In other words, this question merely discusses initial contemplations regarding the content of the video clip. From a practical point of view it should be mentioned that this question was not posed to acquire extensive and elaborate explanations or insights. On the contrary, the author of this master's thesis valued this question as one that could be posed to someone with whom this video clip was perceived on, for example, television or YouTube. In other words, this question could be asked in a completely natural setting (e.g. watching television and during a television timeout one of the video clips is being broadcasted. Consequently, a dialogue is created regarding the broadcasted video clip).

- *What message do you think this video attempts to relay (to an international audience)?*

With these video clips, the Indian government intends to relay a particular message to the public at large. The researcher of this study desired to obtain an indication of what the participant thought this message was that the Indian government attempts to broadcast to an international audience. This message is a stimulus to positively or negatively alter the image that the receiver currently maintains of India. In comparison to the previous discussed question and the formulated research question for this investigation, this question aimed at obtaining a more specific and elaborate understanding of how the participant perceived content that was created for the 'Incredible India' campaign. In conclusion, it can be noted that this second interrogation is situated between the level of an apparent consideration and the level of an actual consideration. In other terms, this question could be posed in a natural setting, however, it would not be as obvious compared to the previous discussed question.

- *To what extent do you think this video shows the actual/genuine image of India?*

Considering the fact that in general nation branding efforts can be valued as propaganda, the researcher of this study was desirous to determine whether or not the interviewee assumed

that the presented video clip was prove of a genuine representation of India. Considering the central research question, with this particular third question, the participant was allowed to provide an assessment of video content that was created for the international variant of the second phase of the ‘Incredible India’ campaign. Replies to this question can be considered as actual considerations. More specifically, this particular question aims at discovering underlying contemplations regarding the presented video material. Although the elements (imagery, written text, human interaction etc.) in the video clips are necessary to formulate a reply, an understanding of the (social) customs in India is required in order to provide an answer to this particular question.

When noting that the last three questions were posed in the same order (after each video clip was shown) as is discussed in this section, an appropriate question that might be asked in this regard concerns why the deliberate decision was made to pose the questions in this particular order. The absolute reply in this regard is that the first question is labelled as an interrogation that result in apparent considerations (i.e. perceptions and assessments). Answers to the second question are situated between the level of apparent considerations and the level of actual considerations. Lastly, answers to the third question represent actual considerations. The researcher of this study endeavoured to secure the distinction among these three types of questions by naturally (instead of suddenly) and gradually transit from questions that result in apparent considerations to the third question which result in answers that represent actual considerations.

Finally, during a number of interview sessions, not all interview sessions, the researcher of this study posed the question whether or not the interviewee agreed with the following statement which was communicated by the current Union Tourism Minister named Shri Chiranjeevi:

“India offers something for everyone and that is why we proudly say that India is an incredible destination with a range of products as found nowhere else. It is truly in India, you will find what you are seeking” (Press Information Bureau, Government of India, 2012).

Consequently, the respondent was kindly requested to elaborate on his or her initial answer (yes/no). This question was mainly intended to conclude the interview session in a natural manner and not so much as a source of information to answer the central research question. In this regard, it can be noted that the researcher of this study aimed at a natural conversation

with the respondents. In fact, the questions that were asked after each video clip functioned as a fundament from which more natural questions were posed to the interviewee.

Before the commencement of each interview, the respondent was requested for their consent to record the interview on an audio recorder. As relayed to the participant in an earlier stage, the duration of the interview would be 45 minutes with a maximum of approximately one hour. This duration is in accordance with a research conducted by Kerrigan et al. (2012) who conducted a similar study on the ‘Incredible India’ campaign. To conclude, the location in which the interview would occur was entirely based on the preference of the respondent.

Previous research publications

The ‘Incredible India’ campaign received, until present day, considerable attention from academia as well as practitioners.

Amitabh Kant, for example, presented his book about the ‘Incredible India’ campaign to the world in 2009. This person functioned as the joint secretary in the ministry of tourism in India from 2001 to 2007. The title of this publication is ‘Branding India - An Incredible Story’. The book discusses matters related to the campaign from both, a personal as well as an academic perspective. Among others, the book elaborates on the causes and approaches that were embraced to establish an all-encompassing brand for India. Kant (2009) notes in this regard: ‘‘Incredible India’, therefore, necessarily had to be the mother brand with the states establishing their own brand entity and emerging as sub-brands’’ (Kant, 2009, p. 7).

In 2010, a second publication about the ‘Incredible India’ campaign was released to the public at large. This article was written by Nandan (2010), who is a member of the team behind the campaign. The article, which has been published in the Public Diplomacy Magazine, discusses various matters related to the campaign. Among others, these include the imperatives behind the branding exercise, the logo, the first phase of the campaign, the means of communication and the obtained successes.

Kerrigan et al. (2012), also executed a research study on the ‘Incredible India’ campaign. As stated by the scholars, this particular research study investigated the following: ‘‘We explore the concept of nation branding in order to understand how India has imagined itself as a tourist destination and the role of nation branding in the commodification of people, culture, and space for the affluent tourist market’’ (p. 325).

At the time of writing (May 2013) this particular section, the author of this master’s thesis encountered an extremely recent publication regarding the ‘Incredible India’ campaign. This publication, which was exploratory of nature, focused on the following aspect of the

campaign: “In this article, I explore the formulation of the Incredible India campaign and analyze a set of images and events linked to its production and dissemination within the last eight years” (Geary, 2013, p. 36). The scholar continues by noting that through the creative efforts of the ‘Incredible India’ team, nation branding practitioners in general are supported and encouraged to embrace and realize ‘a language of symbolic and cultural capital that mirrors wider attempts to claim international recognition’ (Geary, 2013, p. 57).

To conclude, according to Geary (2013), similar to the Olympic Games and other major global events, the brand image offers an exclusive opportunity to redefine cultural elements which reaches beyond the mere presentation of a tourist destination. Moreover, in the case of the ‘Incredible India’ campaign, this is an opportunity to create and reveal a brand new India to its citizens and the world. An India ‘that is confident, self-assured, and uses tourism as a window to elevate its geopolitical importance on the world stage’ (Geary, 2013, p. 57).

Results

Before the analysed data is presented, the following information should be relayed: The presented results are not destined to generalize to all non-Hindus and Hindus residing in the Netherlands. The results are mainly presented to illustrate in what manner Hindus as well as non-Hindus could perceive and assess video content that was produced for the international variant of the ‘Incredible India’ campaign. This section individually discusses a selection of the presented video clips. The reason for this decision is grounded in the observation that each video clip portrays a sequence of unique images. Per video clip numerous relevant responses from the selected participants are presented and discussed.

The researcher of this study randomly ordered the web links which represent the video clips in a text editing document. During the interview the web links were accessed from this document. Consequently, the video clips were watched by the interviewer and the interviewee. In this regard, it must be noted that the predefined order of the web links (and thus the presentation of the video clips) remained unaltered during each interview. Prior to the presentation of the first video clip, two questions were posed by the interviewer.

The first question concerned the familiarity of the participant with India. The replies that were provided to this question can be categorized in two camps. All members of the first camp, which consists out of Hindus, stated that they are familiar with India to a considerable extent. Each Hindu was aware of the various common traditions that are adhered to by Hindus in general. Furthermore, some of the Hindu participants engaged themselves in activities that are related to the Indian culture. For instance, playing of North Indian percussion, performing Bollywood dance and reading of sacred Hindu scriptures. Moreover, several of the Hindu participants visited the country in the past. To conclude, most Hindus indicated that they are familiar with the country and commonalities because of parental education and interactions with social contacts. The second camp, consisting out of non-Hindus, proved to possess mere superficial knowledge about India. To quote some exemplary initial replies to this question from members of this camp:

“So, to what extent I am familiar with India? Well, actually dramatically bad.” (21-year-old non-Hindu male student on a master’s level).

“That I continue with my familiarity? Well, my familiarity [with India] is very low.” (23-year-old non-Hindu female student on a master’s level).

“Familiar as in...I know it from TV.” (22-year-old non-Hindu female student on a master’s level).

“Because what I factually know is actually not very much. No. I know that it is the second largest country in the world qua number of residents, but other than that, my knowledge about India is non-existent.” (24-year-old non-Hindu male student on a master’s level).

These types of reactions approve of a significant absence of knowledge among the non-Hindus who are living in the Netherlands. When the non-Hindus elaborated on their initial response, they could indicate some general statistics regarding the amount of citizens and the current condition of the mainland itself. However, some in-depth knowledge about this emerging country was absent. As might be recalled, Kant (2009) described that there are three types of countries: Countries that need to be defended, countries in which it is pertinent to first invest, and lastly countries in which it is essential to first seed (awareness) before any form of investment can be made. It seems that the Netherlands is a country which first should be subjected to the seeding process prior to making any form of (financial) investment. This conclusion is based on the surprisingly high absence of any form of knowledge about India among the non-Hindus.

The second question that was posed prior to the presentation of the first video clip sounds as follow: *If you had to describe India in three words, which three words would that be?* The most frequent terms that were referred to are: *beautiful/beauty* (five times); *colourful* (four times); *history/traditional* (four times); *huge* (four times); *chaotic* (two times); *culture* (two times) and *interesting* (two times).

Considering the fact that India, by many, still is perceived as a developing nation (e.g. Rosenberg, n.d.; Schneider, 2012) there was not a significant number of terms that specified this particular status of the country. Although, based on this absence, it cannot be concluded that India has surpassed this condition, it is fair to state that most of the participants do not maintain an image which prove that India is currently perceived as a developing nation. On the contrary, as can be derived from the proposed terms, the participants were rather favourable with regards to the identity of India. When asking about the providers which enabled the non-Hindu participants to propose these particular terms, two recurrent sources were referred to: Media outlets (television, the Internet and travel magazines) and social contacts.

Video clip 1 - selected elements for this discussion: Initial thoughts and level of authenticity

The first video clip that was presented to the participants included scenes of a beach and sea. In addition to that, an elephant was shown as well. Furthermore, with every video clip that was selected for this research study, a Caucasian female with brown short hair was featured. When asking what the initial thoughts were, the majority of the participants responded with words such as *'beautiful'* and *'(complete) serenity'*. As one Hindu respondent points out: *"On the basis of this video clip, literally two words come to mind: 'pure serenity'."* (20-year-old Hindu male student on a bachelor's level).

A non-Hindu female reacted as follows: *"Wow! Yes, I find it really beautiful."* (22-year-old non-Hindu female student on a master's level).

Although other participants did approve of similar initial thoughts, they were more critical:

"Well, my first thoughts are of course funny with regards to what I just said about the chaos and the big cities and now you see what India is of course as well. At least what I hear. That gorgeous nature. And this totally focuses on that inner serenity and that inner feeling. It is really a serenity, serenity, serenity [video clip] and that is kind of funny, because that is in my case, if I would go to India, not the first what I think of. When seeing this, and this is more personal, I would think it is more Thailand, but that complete serenity is funny to see. However, I do believe it is here [in India] as well." (22-year-old non-Hindu male student on a master's level).

"Yes, beautiful video clip. The reasoning behind this is of course to attract people and I think that that works. You see someone swimming with an elephant, which is spectacular. Does not happen always and everywhere." (21-year-old Hindu female student on a bachelor's level).

Derived from this particular analysis, it can be stated that the majority of the participants perceived and consequently assessed this video clip by utilizing positive-laden terms (e.g. beautiful and serenity). However, some participants put on their critical glasses. The provided criticism should not be considered as being negative. Rather, these respondents pointed out a potential reasoning behind this video clip. This form of reasoning can be labelled as an actual consideration. The following paragraph - including the relevant reactions - sheds more light on this particular consideration.

When inquiring about the extent to which this video clip represents India in a genuine manner, most of the participants conveyed that this merely represents a small part of India. In addition to that, most of the interviewees were not convinced about the genuine representation of the activities (walking and swimming with an elephant) that were executed in the video clip. To conclude, although several respondents were sceptical, they did state that it is possible to visit such places in India:

“Well, to a certain extent, I think that this might be correct. Look, I shall never believe that I can go there and swim with an elephant or something.” (24-year-old non-Hindu male student on a master’s level).

“Well, on a very small scale this might be correct, but I think that there are many areas in which this is completely incorrect. I do believe that there are places in India in which you can exactly do this [walking and swimming with an elephant], but India is so big. In general, I do not think that these thirty seconds are representative for India. I do not believe that at all.” (22-year-old non-Hindu male student on a master’s level).

“No, this is the very beautiful tourist picture and of course there will be places like this, but you do not see anything of the people, the country. You just see a part of a beautiful beach.” (22-year-old non-Hindu female student on a master’s level).

“Yes, somewhere in between. It has not been put in scene or something. You do have this. I have seen this myself, but if I should reward this with a grade...think six.” (20-year-old Hindu female student on a bachelor’s level).

Based on these responses, it can be stated that the participants were hesitant to accept the imagery that constituted the video clip. However, based on the presented imagery and the fact that a video clip of approximately twenty seconds are not representative for the entire mainland of India, most of the participants did agree to a certain extent that the presented visuals were genuine.

In this regard, it can be concluded that this particular video clip and the video clips that still had to be shown were not convincing for most of the participants to alter their current image of the country. Anholt notes in this regard: “Most publics today, I have always

maintained, are simply too well inoculated against advertising and too savvy about the media to believe mere government propaganda.” (<http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/>).

Video clip 2 - selected elements for this discussion: Initial thoughts and taglines

The second video clip showed two extremes of one another. The two taglines that were included in this particular video clip approve of this observation: ‘*experience war*’ and ‘*experience peace*’. When beholding this video clip, an imaginary division in the video clip can be made. The ‘first’ part of the video clip showed the Caucasian woman riding on a horse while simultaneously slapping a stick against a ball. Sequentially, the same woman battled against someone else with a fake (wooden) sword. The ‘second’ part of the video clip portrayed the woman in a yoga/meditation position. The tagline ‘*experience war*’ was presented in the ‘first’ part of the video clip, whereas the tagline ‘*experience peace*’ was placed in the ‘second’ part of the video clip.

When requesting the initial thoughts of the respondents, the following recurrent replies were relayed:

“Yes, because you have to see, because look, we should know that India is not only peace. India is not only busy. Of course there are contrasts of each other and it is correct to show that as well, because there is an area where you can go because it is really busy, but you have also areas where you can become peaceful. That is really important to show. I think it’s good that they thought about this.” (29-year-old Hindu male who possesses a bachelor’s degree).

“I think that it is very diverse, that you ‘experience war’, ‘experience peace’ and that there is a lot of diversity in India. Especially things you can ‘experience’.” (22-year-old non-Hindu male student on a master’s level).

“No, I think they chose it correctly. I think they try to properly emphasize that India is a country of many possibilities...that you can go into many directions. Sportive as well peaceful, spiritual.” (25-year-old non-Hindu female student on a master’s level).

Since the taglines were quite impressive and interesting, the interviewer of this research study posed the question how the respondent valued the taglines. However, during several

interviews, the respondents themselves relayed their assessment of one or both taglines before this question was even posed. Below, first an overview of the sceptical reactions is provided:

“The first...especially the first. ‘Experience war’. I mean, for that I do not eagerly go on vacation.” (22-year-old non-Hindu female student on a master’s level).

“I do not understand ‘experience war’. What, as being a tourist, is the approach of ‘experience war’? That is also not something I associate with India.” (22-year-old non-Hindu male student on a master’s level).

“I think it is a special choice as well that they dare to say it. I do not really associate ‘experience war’ with India. Actually never did it either. I have never...I actually do not know if they participated in wars...” (24-year-old non-Hindu male student on a master’s level).

“Yes, I think it is correct to place these contradictions adjacent to each other, but ‘experience war’ might be a bit tricky.” (25-year-old non-Hindu female student on a master’s level).

“You know...look. If you show it in a realistic manner, then everyone will be very sad. Do you understand? So, it is shown in a more playful manner. On the one side, I think that is correct. On the other side, if you are a little pessimistic, then it might as well distort your perception. Because then it is something like ‘happy war’, ‘happy peace’.” (20-year-old Hindu male student on a bachelor’s level).

On the other hand, several interviewees assessed the taglines as follows:

“No, I think it is being executed nicely. That ‘war’ already sounds rather dramatic, while it is actually not like that. But it properly shows that there are many contrasts in India. One side you have that ‘war’, that bustle, but on the other side you can also meditate and the spiritual what I just talked about. So, it shows...Yes, it does fit India to show contrasts.” (23-year-old Hindu male who possesses a master’s degree).

“I find that, I find that it has been performed nicely. Actually, I find this one very attractive and then I also mean the slogans.” (20-year-old Hindu female student on a bachelor’s level).

“I find it rather nice, because it shows the diversity. So, I find that very nice to see. It is, yes, a bit of an eye-catcher for the commercial actually. Because first you see fierce images and then suddenly actual peace.” (22-year-old Hindu female student on a bachelor’s level).

Clearly, based on these statements, it can be concluded that there was not a consistent manner of assessing these taglines among the participants. Referring to the conclusion that Non-Hindus do not maintain a considerable reservoir of knowledge about the country and the developments which the country currently experiences, it can be concluded that the first tagline (‘experience war’) is pleasingly executed in visuals, yet poorly relayed in written text. In this regard, one respondent noted that all the video clips (including this second one) felt a bit too forced. As this participant points out:

“Yes, a bit forced again. I find them a bit forced all the time, you know, with ‘find war’, ‘find peace’...yes, ‘experience war’ and then ‘visit a...’. Yes, it is very, very forced, but it is funny. I find this one [referring to another video clip] funny.” (22-year-old non-Hindu male student on a master’s level).

So, how relevant (or irrelevant for that matter) is it that some participants value the tagline positively and some respondents negatively? According to Papadopoulos and Heslop (2002), this question is redundant to pose. The scholars note that the fundament remains that every place is inextricably linked to an image. On the other hand, however, these assessments might be valuable for the team behind the ‘Incredible India’ campaign, because it appears that some caution is required. Especially in the case of value-laden words such as ‘war’. As one respondent described: *“On the other side, if you are a little pessimistic, then it might as well distort your perception. Because then it is something like ‘happy war’, ‘happy peace’.”* (20-year-old Hindu male student on a bachelor’s level).

Video clip 3 - selected element for this discussion: Human interaction and taglines

The third video clip that was presented to the interviewee addressed two specific cultural elements namely ‘food’ and ‘language’. The first tagline that was included in the video clip was ‘enjoy the food’. The second tagline was ‘learn the language’. During the interview, the interviewer proposed to split the video clip in two parts. The first part concerned the tagline ‘enjoy the food’ and the accompanied imagery. The second part involved the tagline ‘learn the language’ and the images that were presented in relation to the tagline.

The discussion about this third video clip focuses on the human interaction and the first tagline that was present in the video clip. Yet, it might be interesting to briefly elaborate on both taglines in light of the theoretical concepts that are fundamental to this research study.

To commence, the author of this master's thesis would like to zoom in on the tagline 'enjoy the food'. A first question that might be posed in this regard is what a reason could be for the team behind the 'Incredible India' campaign to place an emphasis on 'food' as a cultural element. A reply to this question is provided by Raviv (2002). As the scholar notes: "Whether it is individual foodstuffs that are held up as markers of national affiliation, or the idea of a common, shared cuisine, food plays an important role as a cultural product, defining who we are. Food can be employed to draw borders and create distinctions between "us" and "others," or it can serve as a tool for bringing together people with diverse background and as an instrument of unification." (Raviv, 2002).

In the case of nation branding, which eventually is destined to attract people to a particular country, the argument that food can be utilized as a tool to bring humans with diverse backgrounds together seems to be most appropriate. With regards to the country that is central to this research study, it would be original Indian food that is perceived as an incentive for a global audience (consisting out of individuals with diverse backgrounds) to visit India. As a consequence, these visitors would expend money to consume original Indian food. Moreover, it can be stated that the eventual result is twofold: First of all, utilizing financial means in this particular form positively contributes to the Indian economy. A second result is the unification of people from all over the globe in one country, India. This latter result could also positively contribute to the formation of a truly global brand 'India'.

A last question that might be posed in this regard is whether or not food can be valued as an element that contributes to the formation of a national identity. In this regard, Raviv (2002) provides the following reaction: "Food offers a tangible and concrete window into the illusive concept of national identity. It is useful particularly because it is not a pure category, but rather, it is implicated in and influenced by historical changes, political and ideological shifts, and economic considerations." (Raviv, 2002). In short, although it appears that Raviv does not acknowledge the existence of an actual national identity, it can be concluded that food contributes to the formation of a national identity.

Continuing with the second tagline, '*learn the language*', the same questions (1: *What is a reason for the team behind the 'Incredible India' campaign to place an emphasis on 'language' as a cultural element?* 2: *Can 'language' be valued as an element that contributes to the formation of a national identity?*) might be posed. In an online article by Abbassi both

questions are served with an answer. With regards to the first question, the author notes: “Beside a boundary, a name, a flag, or a currency, what makes a country become a respectable and unique nation is its national language. Indeed, national language is a clear indicator that represents the national identity of a country. Language is a sensitive issue. It’s also part of a nation and a person’s heritage. To understand and penetrate deep into a community, one must be able to speak and understand the language of the community. Fluency in the national language will surely enable the person to fully understand that community’s particular nuances and cultural aspects.” (Abbassi, n.d.).

To elaborate on the first question and the provided answer it can be stated that with the ‘Incredible India’ campaign, India desires to portray itself as an inimitable country. A nation that supersedes every other imaginable country as a destination to visit. In the words of Abbassi a ‘unique nation’. In order to achieve this particular status, it is recommendable to emphasize the country’s unique characteristics. Moreover, Abbassi validly points out in this regard that language can also be valued as an element that is part of ‘a nation and a person’s heritage’. All in all, it can be concluded that language is a unique feature to a country (or group of countries) as well as to the citizens inhabiting that country. With regards to nation branding endeavours, it is advantageous to utilize this unique characteristic.

Concerning the second question, Abbassi provides a direct reply: “Indeed, national language is a clear indicator that represents the national identity of a country.” (Abbassi, n.d.). In the case of a visitor of India, it is unimaginable that the person learns the language (Hindi) in a typical vacation period. In the video clip, the visuals that accompanied the second tagline were presenting non-verbal communication, which can also be valued as a form of language. Thus, it can be concluded that this second tagline should be assessed more flexible. All in all, the researcher of this study attempts to make the point that language is intrinsically linked to a nation’s identity.

Returning to the video clip itself, it can be conveyed that in both parts an interaction between a random Indian man and the main character (a Caucasian woman) was being displayed. The researcher of this study posed ten, not all, respondents the following question with regards to this interaction: *If you had to utilize one word to describe both interactions shown in the video clip, which word would that be?*

Five respondents (four Hindus and one non-Hindu) immediately replied with ‘*hospitable/hospitality*’. Additionally, four interviewees offered a word or explanation that was closely related to these two concepts. These words were ‘*friendly*’ (two times), ‘*open*’

and 'welcome'. Lastly, concerning this question, one respondent could not familiarize himself with the perception of a hospitable interaction. As he notes:

"Specifically focusing on the video clip, I do not consider that you can say something about it." (24-year-old Hindu male who possesses a master's degree).

In conclusion, it can be stated that India is willing to welcome visitors from abroad hospitably. At least, if one had to draw a conclusion from the human interaction. As can be derived from the assessments by the participants of this interaction, this perception can be validated.

Continuing with several perceptions on the first tagline, it is valid to note that most of the participants considered 'food' to be a typical, distinct or special (read: unique) characteristic of the Indian culture and thus constitutes a part of India's original identity. Below a selection of several approving statements are being presented:

"Yes, yes, I do think so. Absolutely, yes...that...I think that the Indian kitchen is very typical for that...for that area. I have never been really further in Asia, so I cannot really compare it with Thailand or Indonesia or...because I have never been there, but I do think that the spices they use and the manners of preparing, that, that is traditional for India. So, that, that maybe really adheres to that culture, yes." (25-year-old non-Hindu female student on a master's level).

"Certainly, no certainly, certainly, that is really...the Indian curries and all the spices and all the spicy things and the food on the street and the food on the small markets. I definitely, definitely associate that with India. I definitely associate food with India, so in that case is the 'enjoy the food'...for me it is just, yes...Indeed, I would associate that with India. As one of the few countries which you really can associate with food." (22-year-old non-Hindu male student on a master's level).

"Yes, I would associate food directly with India. In any case, India has distinct food. It is not standard food. It is food that fits their culture. It is not food that you can find everywhere, except for restaurants then, but food there is different of course. Not everyone eats it daily, so it is just nice to try it out then." (20-year-old Hindu female student on a bachelor's level).

“Yes, definitely. They actually could have shown more traditional Indian food to make it even more attractive, but I think that that [that food typical is for India] indeed is the case.” (22-year-old Hindu female student on a bachelor’s level).

“Yes, food is really important there. You also have as much...as much languages you have there, you also have as much preparations per city or even per village. So, yes, food is very important. Food there is very important for the people. Also a lot of types of food. A lot of spices. Yes, yes...also a bit of everything. There is something for everyone...yes.” (23-year-old Hindu male who possesses a master’s degree).

“Yes, I think so. I think with regards to nourishments...or with regards to food that India is different than other countries. Why? Yes, in Eastern countries you mainly have rice which is very popular. In principal, that is also the case in India, but also, yes, roti. That is something you have there, but also in different...other types such as paterna...I do not know if you are familiar with that? Yes, yes, it is also a type of roti and Indian people also have many different types of spices. You also know them, right? Yes...no...so ‘enjoy the food’, that is something I find appropriate for India. I think that they try to convey that...yes, ‘learn the food’, ‘learn the language’ it is just pure typical characteristic for India....that they desire to convey that to people, especially abroad.” (24-year-old Hindu male who possesses a master’s degree).

“Yes, that is...also already...how do you say that in Dutch? ‘Prior to’? Prior to this video clip, I already had that association with food with India. So, indeed, with spices...that is where it is really known for and with food and also with special food. So, that association I already had with India. Yes, that is...I also have the feeling that India desires to position itself like that...that they are special in food and in particular spices. Just like I said, Morocco and Turkey also have that very much...” (24-year-old non-Hindu male student on a master’s level).

“I think that you can make an attempt [to find original Indian food in the Western world], however, I always think that in the country itself it tastes completely different, just authentic recipes. Here, it is of course westernized, but...no...yes. I think it definitely adds something. At least for me, because I find it very important that where I go on vacation, I can eat delicious food. So, yes. I find it also interesting that you can discover a completely new

kitchen there, because it is very different from the Dutch kitchen of course.'' (22-year-old non-Hindu female student on a master's level).

Video clip 6 - selected element for this discussion: message

This video clip was shot in two different geographical landscapes. Based on these two geographical landscapes, the video clip could be divided into two distinct yet related parts. The first part of the video clip was recorded in, what appeared to be, a plateau. This particular part was accompanied by the tagline *'ride on two wheels'*. Referring to this part, the lead player, the Caucasian woman, was part of a group of people who travelled through a tableland on motorcycles.

The second part of the video clip was shot in a more plain green geographical area. The same Caucasian woman was accompanied by a man who verbally and non-verbally communicated with her. At a certain time in the video clip, the woman was smiling while holding a photo camera in her hands. In addition to the man and woman, this part of the video clip also contained several rhinos and at least one elephant. This particular part of the video clip was accompanied by the tagline *'ride on four legs'*.

When asking about the message that this video clip aimed to relay, the following similar responses were provided:

'If I see it like this, I think that you have to try both. Yes, machine and animal.''' (20-year-old Hindu female student on a bachelor's level).

'Yes again...again yes...a lot of colour and diversity. Something for everyone, yes. If you love nature, then you can ride on four wheels. Do you love active summer vacations, then you do the 'ride on two wheels'.''' (23-year-old Hindu male who possesses a master's degree).

'You can see [India] on a motorcycle. You can use that as conveyance. So, actually a machine, but as well of course nature, animals, which can actually do the same. So, actually you are sitting on an elephant and it brings you here and there.''' (24-year-old Hindu male who possesses a master's degree).

'That you can go from a to z differently. Via a moped, via an elephant or rhino. You have the possibilities to go from here to there.''' (29-year-old Hindu male who possesses a bachelor's degree).

“Again, I think how broad India is. How much you can do. You can nicely cross on a motorcycle and also a moped. But that you have the animals as well and go visit more the nature.” (22-year-old non-Hindu female student on a master’s level).

“Nature and...nature and humans. Machine and nature. So just the contrast, but I think that is a bit in response to the experience. Like experiencing freedom on a motorcycle and freedom on animals. So, freedom in nature.” (22-year-old non-Hindu male student on a master’s level).

“That there are multiple manners to explore India...to tour around. I thought it felt a bit too much tourist like, because it were Caucasian people. So, I do not know then whether or not it addresses authentic India, but I certainly think that it is possible in India if you search for that kind of adventurous things. You can find it there, yes.” (25-year-old non-Hindu female student on a master’s level).

Based on these similar perceptions, it can be concluded that the participants value India as a diverse country. This diversity involves the various conveyances to explore the country as well as the rich variety of landscapes that can be detected in India. All in all, it can be stated that India is a land of contradictions in multiple aspects.

From the producer’s point of view, it can be concluded that one of their aims has successfully been accomplished when considering the perceptions of the respondents. To illustrate this accomplishment, it is relevant to refer to a statement by the Union Tourism Minister, Shri Chiranjeevi, who notes: *“India offers something for everyone and that is why we proudly say that India is an incredible destination with a range of products as found nowhere else. It is truly in India, you will find what you are seeking”* (Press Information Bureau, Government of India, 2012). This particular statement seamlessly coincides with the diversity that was perceived by the participants of this study.

Video clip 7 - selected elements for this discussion: Initial thoughts and authenticity

Towards the end of the interview, the seventh video clip was presented. This video clip was accompanied by the following two taglines: ‘*outplay the locals*’ and ‘*outwit the gurus*’. The first ten seconds showed the Caucasian woman playing football with a number of locals in the rain. In the remaining seconds of the video clip, the same Caucasian woman participated in a chess game with two gurus.

When asking about the initial thoughts of the interviewees, eight participants valued the video clip as ‘funny/nice’. Below a selection of this type of comments is presented:

“Well, alright, guru is a word which I do associate with India and I find the accompanied image with the old men [referring to the guru] funny as well. Those who are dressed in bright coloured clothes. So, if you see something like that, interaction with such a guru so to speak in a playful way...via the element ‘play’ ...that brings along...that approves of something...that communicates a certain openness. A certain hospitality across all ages so to speak. Especially in combination with the first part in which you see the youth so to speak, who lives also there and who is hospitable as well. And that is funny with that element.” (21-year-old non-Hindu male student on a master’s level).

“Funny, finally a guru in there. Yes, funny. Yes, the first, however, I find that slogan a bit, not denigrating, that might be a bit strong, but it is as if the Western tourist...while according to me you should offer incredibly much respect to a guru. [He] has a lot of prestige in the country, ‘outwit the gurus’ ...yes, no...” (22-year-old non-Hindu female student on a master’s level).

“The second part that the woman is playing chess with those gurus was very funny, but I think that it is a bit unrealistic. And the first part is playing in the mud and I do think that it is representative for India.” (21-year-old Hindu female student on a bachelor’s level).

“I found it funny. Yet, also not super realistic. No, because I do not think that if you go there then you can really [engage] with the locals and so on. I think you are more a tourist and that you not completely...yes...no.” (23-year-old non-Hindu female student on a master’s level).

“This one is funny. Funny in the sense that you simply see children play. Does not matter where, they just play. So, this is something recognizable...” (20-year-old Hindu female student on a bachelor’s level).

“From a more marketing technical approach it is a funny choice to play it like this. That they show soccer...I think that was funny. Of course both are two major games which enjoy enormous publicity. At least one in Europe, the other worldwide. That they show it in an

authentic way...I think that is funny.'' (24-year-old non-Hindu male student on a master's level).

Based on the proposed perceptions, it is somewhat challenging to draw a realistic conclusion. The reason for this is that, as pointed out by the majority of the respondents, what exactly is the apparent intention of this video clip? In this regard, it might be fair to state that two types of Indian citizens are being shown. However, from a visitor's perspective, it seems somewhat challenging to participate in the presented scenarios. Moreover, is it genuinely adequate that Indians are as open (to visitors from abroad) as is being displayed in the video clip? The responses of the participants approve of this particular behaviour. However, some scepticism remains.

The underlying intention of this video clip is to show some elements which are intrinsically related to the country's image: chess and gurus. To place the former in a historical context, the following description by Golombek (1954) can be conveyed: "Chess, 'the game which', says Voltaire, 'reflects most honour on human wit', arose in the fifth century A.D. in north-west India. No more precise indication can be given as to its origin and it is not known who actually invented the game. It was then called 'chaturanga' and though the game differed in some respects from the modern version it was clearly chess. No evidence exists for its having been played earlier and the occasional rumour that crops up to the effect that it was played in old Egyptian times has no foundation in fact. In the sixth century it spread from India to Persia and a little later in the same century the Arabs learnt the game. Chess entered Europe round about the tenth century.'" (Golombek, 1954)

Regarding the gurus (the humans in saffron cloth), it can be stated that they commonly are not part of the mainstream Indian society. This group of humans usually solely engage themselves in religious matters (for the welfare of the public at large and for personal advancement on the path of religion). According to the respectable encyclopaedia Britannica, the (original) definition of 'guru' can be phrased as follows: 'Guru, (Sanskrit: "venerable"), in Hinduism, a personal spiritual teacher or guide who has himself attained spiritual insight' (<http://www.britannica.com/>). In conclusion, it can be stated that the image of a guru is distortedly presented by, ironically, another aspect that is inherently part of India's identity, chess. The following two perceptions approve of this conclusion:

"Yes, I do think it was nice to see a bit more people from the street. As it is in reality. Playing chess with gurus? Yes, that is a bit awkward. I would not approach someone in that

manner...as in 'hey, let us play a game of chess', but it is nice to see that it apparently is possible.' (22-year-old Hindu female student on a bachelor's level).

'Awkward. Accompanied by the slogans, 'outplay the locals'...like yes, what do they exactly mean by that? In a game or in actuality? And the other one as well with the guru.' (20-year-old Hindu female student on a bachelor's level).

To conclude, regarding the authenticity of this video clip, the following statistics can be relayed: Three persons thought that this video clip was (more) realistic (than the other video clips), while three other participants questioned the authenticity of this particular video clip. The remaining ten participants did not mention something about how genuine this video clip was at first sight.

Video clip 8 - selected element for this discussion: tagline

When considering the taglines that were presented in this video clip, the researcher of this study assumed that this particular video clip was the most personal of the nine selected video clips. The first presented tagline was *'change the way you look'*. The second tagline was *'change how you see the world'*. The assumption of the researcher of this study was based on the fact that the word 'you' was included in the taglines. Thus, these taglines directly targeted the viewer. Compared to the other video clips that were selected for this research study, this observation could not be validated. With regards to this video clip, a question that was posed to the interviewee was related to the second tagline.

The interviewer was interested whether or not India has the potency to alter the perception of the interviewees on the world after a visit to the country. Out of the 16 participants, 15 individuals were subjected to this question. From those 15 participants, eleven interviewees responded that India could cause or contribute to such an alteration. The remaining four participants were (somewhat) sceptical in this regard. Below a selection of the approving reactions is presented:

'Certainly, yes. If there is one country, then it is India. You have so many differences in one place. That is why I think that exactly in such a place, someone can see, all what is to be seen.' (22-year-old Hindu female student on a bachelor's level).

“Certainly, yes. It can be negative, but it can also be positive. It is not only certainly positive. I think that when you go to India some sort of realization is being created like...we have it actually pretty good here [in the Western world]. So, I do think that that ‘change’ is being caused.” (23-year-old Hindu male who possesses a master’s degree).

“Yes, I do think that that is certainly possible. Especially because our culture is so different from their culture. That is why I indeed think that you will experience a lot which makes you realize that things are not as obvious as you know. You will learn to value things differently.” (22-year-old non-Hindu female student on a master’s level).

“Yes, but not because of this video clip. No, no, no, not because of this video clip, but like I said in the very beginning of the interview: I hear from a lot of people that India was really, really special to visit and that you maybe will look differently at things because it is just... Yes, I cannot describe it very well, because I never went there myself, but it appears to be very special. So, I do believe that when you have visited India, that you might look at the world in a slightly different manner. That is something I can believe, yes.” (22-year-old non-Hindu male student on a master’s level).

The following two responses are provided by participants who were a bit more sceptical:

“Not rigorously...no...that is what I am saying now. Who knows when I come back I am a different person. No, but I think that such a trip to such a country...and if you gain these type of cultural experiences...I think that your vision on everything, on the entire whole is being enriched and intensified” (21-year-old non-Hindu male student on a master’s level).

“I do not think that it is the right country, because we live in a world in which we have to network more. Everything needs to be faster, everything needs to be bigger and everything needs to grow. And we do...the Western world is doing all of this now. Granted, it does go bad, but India is a country that desires to do this. And I have the idea that India now is following how the world currently looks. So, it does not look like it, but it desires to become how the Western world currently looks like. Thus, that is why I think that, in actuality, India and very few countries have that, but that that is a country [referring to India] which can change your vision on how the world currently looks like. Because India would love to look like the Western world: A bit more structured, economic growth, social laws and rules that

are actually being applied. That is what they really desire.'' (20-year-old non-Hindu male student on a bachelor's level).

Since both taglines place the beholder at the centre of this video clip rather than any (distinct) characteristic of the country, it is fair to state that the reputation is of particular importance in this video clip and the consequent discussion. A particular form of feedback that a country receives with regards to the credibility of the nation's identity claims is defined as the reputation of the country. Translating this relation (between the beholders and India's identity) to the video clip, a first conclusion that can be drawn is that India desires to emphasize the different clothing that is available (first tagline: *'change the way you look'*) in the country. Furthermore, regarding the second tagline - *change how the world looks* - India aims at relaying that the country has the potency to change the viewpoint of people on the world. These two inducements approve of different customs and a distinct culture that exist in the country.

Considering the country's identity, it can be claimed that India is a distinct and unique country in its customs and the prevailing culture. The important question that remains is: do the participants of this research study approve of this particular identity? Based on the provided replies, it can be concluded that a majority of the participants assume or are certain that India can cause a change within a person. To complete the puzzle, it should be noted that the proposed arguments for this alteration are mainly related to the different customs, circumstances and distinct culture that prevails in India.

Conclusion

This exploratory research study focused on numerous video clips that were produced for the international variant of the second phase of the ‘Incredible India’ campaign. In particular, the researcher of this study was interested how these video clips were perceived and assessed by selected Dutch and non-Dutch participants who are currently residing in the Netherlands.

Considering the continuing trend of globalization, it is possible to broadcast this nation branding campaign to a global audience. Nowadays, citizens around the world have access to a wide variety of (global) media sources. Whether this involves television, radio, film or the Internet, people all over the world have the opportunity to access media content because of this evolving trend of globalization. As a consequence, the global citizen is enabled and able to create a particular image of virtually anything. In this regard, Anholt (in an interview with Teslik) provides an approving note by stating the following: “However, it’s a good thing in one respect, because it does give a bit of a break to some of the poorer and weaker countries. By correctly understanding these issues and managing them well, they do have an opportunity to participate in the global marketplace as niche players, which a few generations ago they wouldn’t have had the chance to do” (<http://www.cfr.org/>). In a subsequent part, the respected nation branding specialist elaborates on this statement as follows: “If we move toward a marketplace model, which globalization is compelling and which nation branding is a part of, then you have the interesting situation where a small, poor, remote or less-known country, is nonetheless is able to find a niche in the marketplace because of one interesting thing it does that appeals to one sector of the public” (<http://www.cfr.org/>).

Although the ‘Incredible India’ campaign contains heavily influenced and controlled media content created according to the wishes of the Indian government, still a particular identity (read: image) is being relayed by traditional and new media sources. The result of this information is the creation of a personal image by the receiver. All these personal images are perceived and valued as feedback by, in the case of the ‘Incredible India’ campaign, India. This feedback, in actuality, represents the reputation of the country. To complete the puzzle it might be relevant to refer to a situational sketch by Nicolas Georges Trad who is the Executive Partner of Reputation Institute. In an interview with Forbes, the following situation is proposed: “Think about it. When you book a trip, do you consider the destination’s reputation before buying your ticket? Most of us do” (Rogers, 2013). The puzzle is complete in the sense that the relationship among ‘identity’, ‘nation branding’ and ‘image’ all result in one pertinent element: ‘reputation’.

So, in what manner does this current research study contribute to exemplify this subtle relationship? The researcher of this study aimed at presenting how Dutch and non-Dutch citizens, who are currently residing in the Netherlands, perceive and consequently assess video material that was produced for an international audience. This particular aim has been reached by conducting 16 personal interviews with individuals who meet the requirements established for this research study. During the interviews, multiple aspects were selected and consequently elaborated on. Based on the provided perceptions and assessments, it can be concluded that the 'Incredible India' campaign contains beautiful and engaging video content. On face value, the video clips that were shown to the participants were perceived and assessed positively. Associating words in this regard are: beautiful, colourful, interesting, diverse, hospitable/hospitality, friendly, open, welcome, typical, distinct and special (read: unique).

This overarching assessment constitutes the apparent consideration. There is, however, a more actual consideration. So, what constitutes this actual consideration? One element, that was intrinsically part of each interview and moreover each video clip was the notion of authenticity. The question that concerned the authenticity aimed at discovering how apparent (or how actual) the discussion was prior to this particular question was posed. As can be observed in the appendix section, the question that concerned the level of authenticity was posed as a concluding question after each video clip. This order of questioning was deliberately processed in order to distinguish the apparent consideration from the actual consideration.

From the selected video clips several instances, as can be observed in the previous section, do approve how the participants *also* perceived and assessed the presented video clips. This change in assessment is rather interesting considering the enormous amount of financial means that is expended for a nation branding endeavour of this level. Indeed, although the participants were considerably positive about the presented video material, when talking about the actual consideration, more scepticism and disapproving observations were relayed.

The positive evaluations of the participants are, first of all, encouraging for the team behind the 'Incredible India' campaign to continue in this particular manner. In addition to that, this particular assessment was, considering the majority of the participants, (once again) a confirmation of the relatively strong positive image which the participants maintain about India and all aspects (i.e. culture, citizens, customs, traditions, rituals, landscapes, city life etcetera) that are intrinsically related to it.

However, a note of caution is required when considering the enormous amount of financial means that is expended to this cause. The reason for this note is because, based on the results of this research study, it appears that on face value this campaign creates some positive stimulus for the participant to alter his or her image about India. However, when zooming in on the actual consideration, it seems that the participants are hardly stimulated by the presented video content. This interesting phenomenon pleads for additional investigation. In a subsequent section, a formal request is being relayed regarding this particular instance.

To conclude, this research study especially aimed at providing an academic fundament for the second phase of the international variant of the ‘Incredible India’ campaign. The reason for this decision is based on the shift in paradigm which the ‘Incredible India’ campaign experienced because of the initiation of this second phase. As the current Indian Union Tourism Minister Shri Chiranjeevi points out in this regard: “Till now, we had been promoting India internationally from the point of view of the destinations. The Incredible India campaigns which we launched in 2002 has been extremely successful. In our ‘Take II’ of the Incredible India campaign, we are going to focus on the consumer” (Press Information Bureau, Government of India, 2012). Thus, the establishment of a ‘novel’ academic basis was essential for the continuation of future investigations on the ‘Incredible India’ campaign and the domain of nation branding in general.

Limitations

The author of this master's thesis honestly admits that the process of completing this research study involved some limitations. This section elaborates on each of these constraints.

A first limitation concerns the manner in which the selected video clips were presented to the participant. In a natural setting, a respondent would most probably behold one video clip on television or YouTube and might discuss it with someone. However, with regards to this research study, the participant was presented with nine video clips consecutively (after each video clip a short discussion occurred about the video content). This constant stimulus of imagery regarding India might distort the image a respondent would create or recreate when merely watching a *single* video clip, which is more likely the case. On YouTube, however, the possibility does exist that a person could view more than one video clip consecutively.

A second limitation concerns the somewhat inexperience nature of the researcher of this study, who simultaneously functioned as the interviewer. In this regard it should be noted that the interviewer, especially during the first several interviews, explored which structure he should apply as a practical framework for the discussion with the interviewee. After several interviews were conducted, the researcher of this study applied a potential framework in a more consistent and constant manner. In this regard, it should be mentioned that this particular limitation was inadvertently, which in this case relates to the inexperience nature of the researcher of this study. Newton (2010) explains in this regard: "Comparability is reduced because sequencing and wording will probably be different in each interview" (p. 5). A few sentences later, Newton (2010) briefly elaborates on the cause of this reduction: "The method depends significantly on the skill of the interviewer" (ibid.).

A last limitation involves the honesty of the participant. As Newton (2010) states: "Whenever individuals are questioned, even under oath in court, it cannot be certain they have told the truth. With this method interviewees may say what they think the interviewer wants to hear or the opposite of what they think they want to hear" (Newton, 2010, p. 5). This phenomenon is also referred to as 'social desirability'. Callegaro (n.d.) defines this behaviour as follows: "Social desirability is the tendency of some respondents to report an answer in a way they deem to be more socially acceptable than would be their "true" answer" (p. x). Since the data collection process of this research study was based on semi-structured in-depth interviews, some respondents might have behaved in a comparable fashion.

Future research

This research study is situated in the academic domain on ‘nation branding’. The topic that is central to this particular research study is the ‘Incredible India’ campaign. In this regard, it can be stated that the domain on nation branding is already familiar with several publications regarding this topic. A first instance involves a book composed by Amitabh Kant (2009), who maintained a prominent and respected position within the formation behind the ‘Incredible India’ campaign. Another contribution, a journal article, comes from the hand of Nandan (2010) who currently possesses a prominent role within the team behind the ‘Incredible India’ campaign. Furthermore, an academic research study was executed by Kerrigan et al. (2012). Lastly, a very recent publication was composed by Geary (2013).

The researcher of this study sincerely aspires that this academic article can be added to the current body of literature on nation branding. Furthermore, the author of this master’s thesis would request academia who are interested in the domain on nation branding and the ‘Incredible India’ campaign in particular to academically contribute to this body of publications. A first area of contribution involves an analysis of the various strategic aims that have been set for the campaign. In addition to that, the team behind the ‘Incredible India’ campaign continues to deliver new multimedia material, nationally as well as internationally. Various points of departure can be accessed to conduct research on the produced multimedia content for this campaign.

A third aspect, from the receiver’s point of view, that could be interesting to scrutinize are the various global markets that are targeted for this campaign. Yet another potential research study that could be conducted in light of the ‘Incredible India’ campaign concerns multimedia content produced for the national variant of the campaign. According to the current knowledge of the researcher of this study no research has been conducted from this angle till date. This is highly unfortunate since sufficient material is available to investigate this variant of the campaign.

Lastly, as relayed in the *conclusion* section, one interesting instance emerged from the analysed results of this research study. This instance concerns the minor impact that the video content eventually had on numerous participants. In this regard, the question might be posed what the cause (or causes) is of this minor influence on the participants. A future research study could investigate this particular phenomenon more elaborately.

To conclude, the researcher of this study complies with the following statement by Kerrigan et al. (2012): “[i]t would be useful to build up a database of research that includes a range of data on the IIC so that a comprehensive analysis can be undertaken of the campaign”

(p. 325). The author of this master's thesis sincerely desires that such a comprehensive analysis will be undertaken in the (near) future and would be keen to execute such an analysis in team formation. Such a study would not only be beneficial for the existing body of literature regarding the 'Incredible India' campaign, it would also be valuable for the current pool of literature available to practitioners and academia who are interested in matters regarding nation branding.

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Appendix

¹*Questionnaire which was disseminated among the selected participants:*

Dear all,

This questionnaire functions as a precursor to the actual interview. In this document several questions regarding you as a person and your relation with India and the ‘Incredible India’ campaign are posed. Kindly follow the instructions per question in order to successfully fill in this questionnaire. To conclude, please return the completed questionnaire to sanjiv.balagobind@outlook.com. Consequently, a meeting will be scheduled in order to execute the actual interview. Thank you so much in advance for participating.

Personal questions

1. *Could you indicate your age?*

2. *Could you underline your gender?*
male female

3. *Could you state your nationality?*

4. *Do you currently reside in the Netherlands?*

5. *Could you indicate on which level you are currently studying or the highest level you have studied at in the past? (E.g. ‘Hogeschool’, University etcetera).*

Questions specific to your relation with India and the ‘Incredible India’ campaign

6. *In what manner are you related to India? (E.g. you or your ancestors were born in India).*

7. *Could you please specify the amount of times you have travelled to India since you were born?* (This question does not have to be answered by persons who were born in India).

8. *On a scale from one to ten, how pleasant did you find your accumulative experience in India?* Please underline your response. (This question solely applies if you have visited India at least once).

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

9. *Are you planning to visit India in the (near) future?* Please underline your answer.

Yes

Not sure

No

10. *What would be a main motive to visit India?* (E.g. holiday, family visit, business).

11. *How do you currently rate India as a country to visit?* Please underline your answer.

Negative

Fairly negative

Fairly positive

Positive

12. *Are you familiar with the 'Incredible India' campaign?* If yes, please relay what you think about it in a few sentences.

End of the questionnaire

²*List of video clips which were selected for this research study:*

The video clips as listed in the exact same order below were presented to the participant during the interview:

Search term on www.youtube.com: 'find what you seek incredible india'

Video clip 1 (20 seconds)

Video clip 2 (15 seconds)

Video clip 3 (20 seconds)

Video clip 4 (15 seconds)

Video clip 5 (20 seconds)

Video clip 6 (20 seconds)

Video clip 7 (15 seconds)

Video clip 8 (20 seconds)

Search term on www.youtube.com: 'incredible india'

Video clip 9 (2 minutes, 03 seconds)

In order to access the video content, press Ctrl and click on 'Video clip x'.

³*The following questionnaire was consulted by the interviewer in order to semi structure the interview:*

In order to semi structure each interview, the following questionnaire was created and consulted. Before the interviewer presented the nine selected video clips the following two questions were relayed to the interviewee:

- *Could you elaborate on your familiarity with India as a country?*
- *If you had to describe India in three words, which three words would that be?*

After each video clip a short dialogue was created based on the following questions:

- *Could you relay your initial thoughts about the video clip?*
- *What message do you think this video attempts to relay (to an international audience)?*
- *To what extent do you think this video shows the actual/genuine image of India?*

During a number of interview sessions, not all interview sessions, the researcher of this study posed the question whether or not the interviewee agreed on the following statement communicated by the current Union Tourism Minister named Shri Chiranjeevi:

“India offers something for everyone and that is why we proudly say that India is an incredible destination with a range of products as found nowhere else. It is truly in India, you will find what you are seeking” (Press Information Bureau, Government of India, 2012).

Consequently, the respondent was kindly requested to elaborate on his or her initial answer (yes/no).