



**Strategic nation brand-building guidelines that can
contribute towards the South African National
Development Plan 2030's objectives of social cohesion,
nation building and transformation.**

**Dissertation submitted as part of the requirements for the
Master of Arts in Creative Brand Leadership**

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Dedication

The work is dedicated to my family (both present and those who have passed on). I am grateful for all the support and encouraging words over the years. Most importantly, thank you to Mr. W.B Khumalo (my grandfather) who remains an academic inspiration. He managed to achieve high academic accolades within an oppressive system.

Mtungwa!

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Abstract

“South Africa remains a divided country despite progress made since 1994” (National-Planning-Commission 2012). Although the country officially managed to transition from an oppressive apartheid state to a democracy in 1994, the government still lists social cohesion and nation building within the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, chapter fifteen, amongst the top priorities for the country. The goal of this study is to determine how a nation brand-building strategy may help the South African government to achieve the goals specified in Chapter 15 of the NDP 2030.

Considering that the objectives listed in the NDP aim to benefit the citizens of the country, the purpose of this study is to develop strategic nation brand building guidelines to follow when developing nation brands that incorporate citizens as an important stakeholder in nation brand building. The secondary objectives, as described within the problem statement, aim to address the imbalances present within strategic nation brand building activities, such as unequal stakeholder engagement. It is argued that when it comes to nation brand building, greater emphasis is placed on external stakeholders, mainly with the purpose of attracting tourism and foreign trade and investment, with very little emphasis placed on internal stakeholders.

When reviewing the literature, the emphasis on external stakeholders in nation brand building activities is found to be contradictory to corporate brand building strategies. The comparative discussion between corporate brand-building strategy and nation brand building strategy is thus addressed through the lens of the literature review. Brand building strategy is conceptualised in the literature review and the similarities between corporate and nation brand building strategy are explained. This ultimately allows for the conclusion to be drawn that a nation brand building strategy should aim to align to corporate brand building strategy, specifically with regard to balanced stakeholder engagement. The abductive approach, which guided this research, allowed for scholarly insights to mould the approach and provide greater depth and insight in understanding the subject. The insights were measured against data collected through semi-structured interviews conducted with brand experts to ultimately provide guidelines for nation brand building that can contribute to nation building and enhancing social cohesion.

Within this study, it was found that a nation brand inclusive of strategic elements such as a brand purpose, vision, values, and personality are ideal for strategic nation brand building activities, which, in turn, contributes towards social cohesion, nation building and possibly transformation. The guidelines to follow when developing strategic nation brands are therefore defined and proposed within this study as follows: developing purpose, vision, values, and personality. The guidelines proposed illustrate the importance of strategy and, more importantly, stakeholder engagement within strategic nation brand building. The guidelines developed further highlight how strategic nation brands could contribute towards the set problems mentioned in the NDP 2030 (chapter 15) in terms of promoting social cohesion, nation building, and transformation.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

“A nation is great not by its size alone. It is the will, the cohesion, the stamina, the discipline of its people and the quality of their leaders which ensure it an honourable place in history” (Yew, 1963). Strategy has been applied by prominent leaders throughout history ranging from ancient wars fought over religion or natural resources to modern day politics experienced both internally by local political parties to global interactions by various political leaders. Within this study, the importance of investing in a strategy, specifically within nation brand building is again highlighted and supported by both literature as well as the data collected.

The research undertaken within this dissertation aims to provide guidelines to consider and follow – from both an academic as well as industry perspective – when developing nation brands where the intention is to contribute strategically towards government’s internal development objectives of building a nation, transformation, and establishing social cohesiveness. The motivation for the study was the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, chapter fifteen’s objectives that aim to build a united South Africa.

The findings are presented using a qualitative research method where in-depth discussions were conducted with brand experts from both industry and academic backgrounds. Their opinions about what a nation brand building strategy should entail compared to a corporate branding strategy, as well as the South African landscape, are pinpointed in this study. It is crucial to keep in mind that the opinions, on South Africa, gathered from the experts were clearly aligned with the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, chapter fifteen’s problem statement that despite the progress made by South Africa since the 1994 democratic elections, the country’s society remains divided. The experts further attribute this lack of progress with a lack of effective leadership.

The study is significant because it is argued that nation brand building may have a role to play towards achieving the objectives set within the NDP 2030 as was previously observed when South Africa changed its brand image during the post-1994 transition into a democratic country. The said change was as a result of South Africa transitioning from an apartheid government to one of democracy and inclusivity. Once the country successfully held the first democratic elections in 1994, a critical need arose for the international perception to be adjusted in order for South Africa to successfully participate once more globally (National-Planning-Commission 2012).

Within this first chapter of the dissertation, the political history of South Africa is discussed in detail within the section that follows. The National Development Plan 2030 (NDP 2030) is introduced next and discussed followed by the discussion of *Brand South Africa (Brand SA)*. The importance of incorporating strategic nation brand building within a country's branding activities is explained, thereafter the importance of incorporating social cohesion within a nation brands' strategy. Finally, the rationale and objectives of the study are introduced and explained.

1.2 Background to the study

The background of the study is discussed and analysed within four subsections: the brief historical overview of South Africa, The National Development Plan 2030, Brand South Africa, as lastly the importance of building a nation brand. The discussion formed within the subsections helps to develop the foundation in which the research is based. The history and brief overview of South Africa is discussed first in order to understand the contributing elements now highlighted as challenges within the NDP 2030 (Chapter 15).

1.2.1 South Africa: Brief historical overview

A nation can be described as a large body of people united by common descent, history, culture, or language, inhabiting a particular state or territory (Oxford Languages, 2017). South Africa, in particular, is unique as the country's cultures and languages vary broadly with eleven official languages, multiple cultures and numerous religious beliefs. This is a result of the country's history that saw a culmination of different people from different locations coming together over a period of time (South

African History Online, 2018). Relevant to this study is the history of South Africa and the impact it has had on the current problem of a divided society outlined in the NDP 2030, chapter fifteen on '*transforming society and uniting the country*'.

Ziltener and Künzler (2013) and South African History Online (2018) state that South Africa was governed under colonial rule for an estimated period of 342 years, firstly by the Netherlands, followed by The United Kingdom (UK), and lastly by the settlers. South Africa then achieved democracy in 1994, which ushered in several democratic elections thereafter. Unlike, other African countries, the South African democratic election process continues to create a positive image for the country as the elections are never marred with allegations and/or accusation of rigging and corruption. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) (2017b) further argues that South Africa has the most advanced economy in Africa owing to its advanced financial systems, telecommunications, and energy infrastructure.

Per the study conducted by Statistics South Africa (2019), "the South African population is estimated to be 58.8 million and according to the WorldBank (2019), the unemployment rate remains a key challenge for South Africa and is further aggravated by low intergenerational mobility (i.e. inequalities are passed from generation to generation with little change over time). As a result, a considerable part of the population has to survive on less than US\$2 a day". According to Malik (2014), most of the black citizens of South Africa remain disadvantaged because of social inequality emanating from long lasting, historic, cultural, and social practices. The tremendous progress made from the oppressive apartheid era to the new era that ushered in democracy still marks a great achievement for the country despite the violent history, conflicts and dispossession in the country. However, the country's human development performance is ranked 119th out of 188 countries. The contributing factors to this poor rating among other factors, are the weak educational and skills development levels within the country (Jāhāna, 2016).

Furthermore, after more than a quarter-century of democracy, South Africa still faces nation building challenges as the country is still not fully transformed nor socially cohesive and remains deeply divided. As a of which, nation building, transformation,

and social cohesion were identified as hindrances for development and are addressed within the South African National Development Plan 2030 (NDP 2030), specifically in chapter fifteen, which focusses on transforming society and general population unity.

The NDP 2030 (chapter 15), forms the basis on which this research rests, the brief South African historical overview highlighted within this section therefore assists in contributing towards this foundation. This contribution is clearly supported by the various aspects as well as historical milestones included in the South African historical overview of a generally unequal, non-transformative and non-cohesive society, which clarifies where the current problems magnified within the NDP 2030 (chapter 15) may have originated from. The NDP 2030 is discussed in detail within the subsection that follows in order to further discuss these problems and also help to inform some significant parts of the objectives within the study.

1.2.2 National Development Plan 2030 (NDP 2030)

The slow progress towards nation building post the 1994 elections as well as the rising frustrations of South Africans due to poverty, unemployment, poor living conditions and social inequalities forced the government to take action. In May 2010, a committee of 26 people was appointed by the former President Jacob Zuma to develop a plan towards nation building. The committee assessed the conditions within the country and then developed a report where the following issues were highlighted:

- The ratio of employed versus unemployed citizens was problematic,
- The quality of education for black citizens was poor,
- The country's infrastructure was inadequate, under-maintained and poorly located,
- Distinctions in space hampered development that is open to all,
- The economy was resource-intensive in an unsustainable way,
- The public health system was unable to meet demand or maintain a high level of quality,
- The public sector was uneven and often of poor quality,
- The amount of corruption was high,

- South Africa's society remained divided (National-Planning-Commission, 2012).

After identifying the aforementioned issues, the committee proceeded to draft a national development plan with a timeframe that aimed to achieve its objectives by the year 2030. Consequently, the plan was approved in 2012 and then labelled as the National Development Plan 2030, herein after referred to as the NDP 2030.

The goal of the NDP 2030 is to alleviate economic inequality in South Africa by harnessing the energy of its people, establishing an inclusive economy, building capacities, strengthening the state's capacity, and fostering leadership and partnerships across society (National Planning Commission, 2012). As a result, the NDP 2030 concentrates on the fundamental qualities required to restructure the economy and society. It specifically seeks to address the nation building challenge through:

- Uniting all South African citizens around a common goal,
- Getting citizens involved in development and democracy,
- Boosting economic growth, expanding investment, and absorbing more workers,
- Emphasizing important human and state capacities,
- Developing a capable and developing state; and
- Encouraging exceptional leaders to work together to tackle societal problems.

The NDP 2030 is discussed in detail within this chapter. However, it is crucial to keep in mind that through examining the remarkable design of the plan itself – specifically focussing on chapter fifteen, which aims to achieve social cohesiveness and nation building within South Africa - the planning commission did not include nation branding as part of its nation building strategy. It can therefore be argued within this study that strategic nation brand building should be incorporated within the set actions and objectives in chapter fifteen as an effective brand strategy could successfully contribute towards the set action plans of transformation, uniting society and ultimately building the nation.

In conclusion, it is essential to bear in mind that strategic nation branding may have a significant role to play towards the objectives set within the NDP 2030 as was previously observed when South Africa changed its brand image during the post 1994 period where South Africa was able to transition into a democratic state using the *Brand SA* entity. In the following subsection, *Brand SA* is discussed as well as the importance of incorporating strategic nation brand building within the set goals of the NDP 2030 chapter fifteen.

1.2.3 Brand South Africa (Brand SA)

The *Brand South Africa Trust*, also known as *Brand South Africa*, and hereinafter referred to as *Brand SA*, was established in 2002 in South Africa under the Trust Property Control Act No. 57 of 1988 (Brand South Africa, 2019). *Brand SA* reports to the Department of Communications and its role is to help to implement the National Development Plan, Vision 2030, the constitution, and related programs aimed at achieving the economic growth goals for the country and development through the alleviation of poverty, creation of jobs and building social cohesiveness (Brand South Africa, 2019).

Brand SA also researches and monitors the international sentiment as well as the performance of the nation brand both locally and globally to draw information and data that can be used towards decision-making and communication. It further markets the nation's brand internationally by communicating South Africa's value proposition in a way that can achieve increased tourism, foreign direct investment (FDI) and trade. As a result of ensuring that the aforementioned are successfully attracted to the country; an increase in revenue is possible, which could, in turn, be channelled towards poverty alleviation and economic development.

Analysis as per nation brand performance makes use of seven elements to measure the overall reputation and performance of the nation brand. World order, prosperity and equity, science and innovation, culture, peace and safety, and health and wellbeing are among the aspects measured. Influenced by Anholt-GfK Nation Branding Hexagon model, *Brand SA* is able to further analyse the elements that make up a nations brand and also use the analysis to inform planning, and help to identify

issues that require attention within the country's environment. The approach also provides for a comprehensive evaluation of a country's position, making it one of the most effective instruments for managing a country's global reputation (Brand South Africa, 2019).

The findings from these analyses are therefore used to inform municipalities, metros, provinces, the Presidency, national departments, and other relevant stakeholders on the current nation brand issues and help them towards the planning process. Overall, the brand performance analyses prove to be useful towards management decision making as well as the overall country development processes. Furthermore, it rates the performance of the nation brand as well as individual cities as part of a continuous improvement and performance management initiative. The nation brand performance is measured using six items, namely: exports, people, culture, governance, tourism and investment, and immigration. The nation brand index for 2017 is shown in Figure 1 below (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2018).

Figure 1.1: Nation brand index



On the other hand, the performance of each city is measured using the city brand index (CBI), also using six elements, namely: presence, place, prerequisites, people,

pulse, and potential. The 2017 CBI reflected on three cities within the 2017 report; Cape Town, Johannesburg, and Durban. These are shown in Figures 2, 3 and 4 below (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2018).

Figure 1.2: Cape Town 2017 CBI scorecard



Figure 1.3: Johannesburg 2017 CBI scorecard

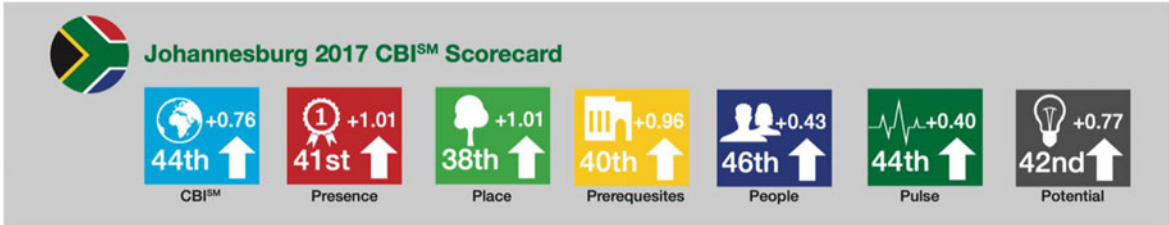
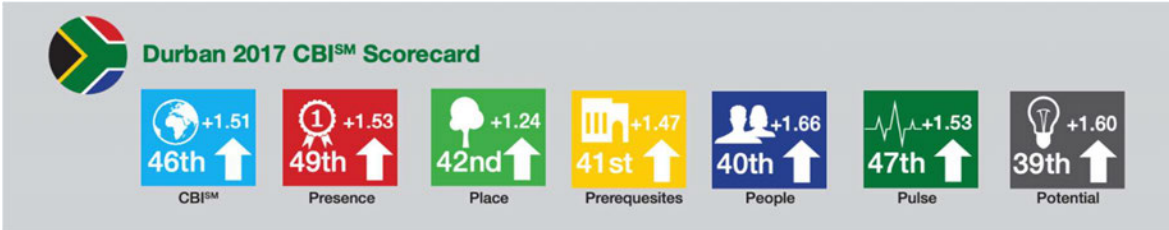


Figure 1.4: Durban 2017 CBI scorecard



1.2.3.1 Nation brand index

The South African ranking of 38/50 in 2017 indicated that the country’s international standing remained strong. However, while this result showed strength it is also important to note the country’s closest competitors such as Chile and Peru who display good rankings as well as good statistical scores within the study compared to previous years. Another nation within the African continent that showed significant improvement was Egypt (40/50). With a perceived score of 3.5, South Africa continued to beat countries like Nigeria and Kenya.

While these markets still ranked behind South Africa, their improvement in the 2017 statistical measurement indicated that these markets may be building momentum and stand to outpace South Africa's lower statistical improvement (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2018).

1.2.3.2 City brand index

South African cities are maintaining or improving their rankings, resulting in a growing admiration among global citizens for the country's cities. The rankings looked at 50 countries, and Cape Town came in 43rd overall. Johannesburg ranked 44th with a score of +0.76 points. South Africa's largest city, Johannesburg, was ranked lower than Mexico City (42nd), however, ahead of Durban (46th). Durban achieved the most success in improving the city's image as they improved their ranking to an overall rank of 46th place advised Anholt within the city brand index (South African Government, 2018).

Pertinent to this study is one of the *Brand SA*'s roles already discussed above; to support the National Development Plan, Vision 2030. It can therefore be argued within this study that nation brand building has a significant role to play towards the objectives set within the NDP 2030 previously mentioned. The following subsection expounds on how strategic nation branding could be incorporated within the set goals of the NDP 2030 chapter fifteen while reviewing the important role *Brand SA* once had within the post 1994 South African transition.

1.2.4 The importance of strategic nation branding

Perceptions of a country can have a major economic impact on that country. According to The Best Country for Entrepreneurs is (2016), Impressions people have of a nation's innovativeness, receptiveness to entrepreneurship, financial infrastructure and related matters affects the success rate of attracting foreign trade and FDI. For instance, if a couple looks for a honeymoon destination, Italy and Brazil is likely to come to mind as they have established a reputation of being romantic and scenic countries. Additionally, France maintained a nation brand of being a safe and family friendly city until the 2015 terrorist attacks, resulting in a reduction of 3 million visitors that year (Reibstein & Bedi, 2018).

Furthermore, a good nation brand can attract FDI as investors look at how effortless it is to do business in that country as well as how secure their investment will be. Consequently, a negative nation brand can deter investors leading to a reduction of FDI inflows. China and India have established their brand of having low cost production labour (Reibstein, 2017); as a result, it influences those who are seeking to set up production plants to invest in these countries. This leads to increased FDI inflows, job creation, infrastructure development, and technology diffusion.

Nation branding is often predominantly focussed on external factors such as attracting FDI, as was already mentioned. It was consequently only natural for *Brand SA* to follow suit. According to the *International Marketing Council of South Africa (IMC)*, the new democratic age that began after 1994 gave the country the opportunity to re-establish itself globally in business and tourism. South Africa then embarked on a nation branding project and created *Brand South Africa (Brand SA)* to assist the country in re-asserting itself within the international market and, most importantly, to ensure that the world received one consistent message when engaging with South Africa (Dinnie, 2015).

The IMC was created in August 2000 when the South African government realised the importance of establishing a strong and appealing brand image for the country (Dinnie, 2015 & Brand South Africa, 2020). *Brand SA* was then developed by the IMC as a nation brand. *Brand SA* has since succeeded in creating a fairly positive perception about South Africa. However, the IMC acknowledges that the focus of *Brand SA* should not only be on external stakeholders, and that efforts to promote *Brand SA* to South Africans and create mobilised support for the brand internally, is imperative. The IMC therefore recognises the importance of involving different stakeholders, such as government departments, public entities, and the private sector in mobilising national support for the brand (Dinnie, 2015 & Brand South Africa, 2020).

The example listed above further supports why nation brands should be involved within a nation's strategic development plan, which aims to contribute towards social cohesion and nation building. Concepts of strategic nation branding should be utilised once more, within the NDP 2030 chapter fifteens' objectives on nation building, transformation and social cohesion.

According to Kaneva (2011), nation branding can be utilised by governments to promote the respect, self-esteem, and national identity in the country in such a manner that enables and facilitates social cohesion. On the other hand, the results of politicised national identity along the lines of race, ethnic background, and culture may actually lead to low social cohesion (Hoefte & Veenendaal, 2019). In this regard, nation branding can help to erode racial, cultural, financial, and social divides by uniting the citizens of South Africa under a common identity. It can be seen that nation branding can contribute immensely towards the rectification of the lack of social cohesion and inequalities within the country. Social cohesion is discussed and analysed in detail within the next subsection, in order to understand the impact it has towards the NDP 2030 objectives.

1.2.4.1 Social cohesion

"Social cohesion is the extent to which people are co-operative, within and across group boundaries, without coercion or purely self-interested motivation" (Burns, Hull, Lefko-Everett & Njozela, 2018:14). The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2011:28), claims that a society that works together works towards the well-being of all its members, creates a sense of belonging, and promotes social mobility. According to Cloete (2014:1) "there is no conceptual clarity of what social cohesion means. However, Janmaat (2011:61) ultimately advises that social cohesion is "the glue that holds society together", and therefore it is imperative to create and promote social cohesion.

The South African government, since the successful transition into a democratic nation, has been promoting social cohesion in an attempt to eradicate the apartheid legacy. Two and a half decades have passed since and social cohesion is yet to be realised despite government's interventions (Social Cohesion: BUILDING A

SOCIALLY COHESIVE SOCIETY, 2020). Yet, social cohesion is believed to be a key towards the improvement of the economical and social development of a country.

Within the context of South Africa, social cohesion can be viewed as a nation building initiative whereas from an international perspective social cohesion becomes “more localised”. Where social cohesion is connected to a country, it is usually a reflection of how a country's citizens feel about their country (rather than each other) (Palmary 2015:49). Social cohesion and the importance thereof within the South African context will be discussed in greater detail within chapter 3.

1.3 Rationale

Since 1994, when South Africa became a country governed by democracy, nation building has been a continuous challenge and has stood in the way of accelerated transformation, which, in turn, hinders the strengthening of social cohesiveness within the nation.

According to reports, the economy in South Africa is among the most unbalanced globally, emanating from skewed opportunities defined by race, gender, geographical location, class, language, and background, which reinforces inequalities in financial, human and social capital (National-Planning-Commission 2012). The government of South Africa, in an effort to promote social cohesion and nation building, drafted the NDP 2030 with the aim of addressing some of these challenges that hinder nation building and transformation.

It can be concluded that the problem of transformation, social cohesion and nation building outlined within the NDP, chapter fifteen, does not incorporate branding as a possible solution to contribute towards nation building. Relevant to this study is that strategic nation brand building does not seem to have been integrated within the plans, set actions and objectives in achieving these 2030 goals. It will therefore be argued that strategic nation brand building should be involved within a nation's development plan to contribute towards social cohesion and nation building. The example of *Brand SA's* achievements in the past in creating a positive image for South Africa externally, as stated previously, supports this argument.

It can therefore be contended that strategic nation brand building should be utilised again, within South Africa's national activities, to also create a positive image for South Africa internally by focusing on its citizens and thereby contributing towards the NDP's chapter fifteen's objectives of transformation, social cohesiveness and nation building.

1.4 Problem Statement

Through examining the South African National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, it has become evident that the commission who were tasked with developing the goals and objectives for the NDP 2030, did not include strategic nation brand building as part of its nation building strategy. *Brand SA*, the nation brand, managed to strategically contribute towards the repositioning of the country, which once had a tainted image within the global community (Dinnie, 2015). Thus, it seems as though *Brand SA* was advantageous in terms of South Africa's externally focused interests of business and tourism by creating a solution for the country to align its image and messaging to other nations', in the form of *Brand SA*.

The current problems listed within the NDP 2030 chapter fifteen are, however, internally focussed and thus affect the citizens (internal stakeholder) as opposed to the external South African image and messaging once resolved through *Brand SA*. It can therefore be argued that strategic nation brand building inclusive of all stakeholders (citizens) could then also be advantageous in reaching the goals of the South African NDP 2030 by contributing towards the current problem of a divided society outlined in chapter fifteen.

A notable contention is that strategic nation branding generally tends to mostly focus on the external factors of tourism and foreign business investment. General Manager for Research at *Brand SA*, Dr Petrus de Kock, makes reference to the same challenges highlighted in the NDP 2030 including poverty, unemployment, homelessness, and historical divisions around race, class and gender. He goes on to state that the same challenges listed in chapter fifteen of the NDP of social cohesion and a society that is not united make it difficult for *Brand SA* to assist South Africa in reaching its full potential especially without a concrete plan to build the countries capacity towards dealing with the listed national issues (Brand South Africa, 2017). An

investigation into how strategic nation brands could contribute towards the internally set problems listed within the NDP 2030 chapter fifteen could prove to be advantageous for both the nation as well as brand building activities. This research could further contribute theoretically towards the ongoing study towards nation branding.

It can therefore be argued within this study that strategic nation brand building should be incorporated into the South African National Development Plan 2030, chapter fifteen on 'societal transformation and bringing the country closer together' as a strategic element supporting the already set actions and objectives within this chapter. This will foster constitutional values and promote social cohesion across society.

Based on the aforementioned knowledge, the research problem formed to be addressed within this study, is that the strategic nation brand building is not incorporated with the NDP chapter fifteen's plans to transform, unite and build the nation. In addition to this, there is limited knowledge and literature available that could inform how strategic nation branding could strategically contribute towards the NDP 2030-chapter fifteen's goals of transformation, social cohesion and nation building.

1.5 Research paradigm

The research approach within the study is qualitative in nature. The philosophical approach is interpretivism. Interpretivism is deemed to be a qualitative paradigm as the aim within it is to understand how individuals interpret social phenomena that they encounter. In this context, interpretivists believe that knowledge is an expected corollary of interpretation by individuals from different perspectives (Swadener & Ndimande, 2014; Alharahshen & Pius, 2020).

Interpretivism and qualitative research are a good fit towards the aim of this study in terms of attempting to analyse strategic nation brand building through the views, professional opinions, and experiences of the brand experts. This is due to the interpretivist paradigm that is described to consider reality as socially constructed in the sense that it is constantly mediated by individuals' worldviews and perceptions about life (Swadener & Ndimande, 2014; Alharahshen & Pius, 2020). The emphasis of the study is also on gaining a comprehensive understanding of their views and

opinions; hence, the emphasis is on depth (quality) as opposed to breadth (quantity in order to generalise).

A detailed analysis on the research paradigm chosen for the study is included within the methodology chapter (Chapter 3).

1.6 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to develop strategic brand building guidelines to follow when developing nation brands, which incorporate citizens as an important stakeholder. The purpose of this study in a nutshell is to contribute towards the South African government's internal goals of transformation, social cohesion and nation building detailed within the NDP 2030 chapter fifteen.

1.7 Research objectives

The study's research objectives are as follows:

- To propose strategic brand building guidelines to follow when developing nation brand building activities that can be used by those responsible for developing nation brands that will contribute towards nation building and social cohesion
- To justify why nation brand building should be incorporated within the NDP 2030 objectives (Chapter 15).

1.8 Research questions

The key research question of the study is as follows:

How can strategic nation brand building contribute towards the development of social cohesion and nation building as stipulated with the NDP 2030?

The following are sub-questions posed within the study:

- How can corporate brand strategy theory be used to inform a nation brand building strategy?

- How can sub-branding (region/city/event) strategies contribute towards a nation brand building strategy that could promote social cohesion and nation building in South Africa?
- How can stakeholder engagement in nation brand building contribute towards the South African activities aimed towards nation building and enhancing social cohesion?

1.9 Chapter organisation

The dissertation contains the following five chapters:

Chapter 1

The research topic is introduced first, followed by the study's background, which expands on the topic's context. Following that, the rationale is discussed, then the problem statement, and finally the research paradigm. The research goal, objectives, and research questions are presented last.

Chapter 2

The literature on strategy is reviewed within the context of both nation as well as corporate branding within this chapter (structured in line with the research objectives). Information related to nation branding and how it can contribute towards the National Development Plan 2030 objectives is included.

Chapter 3

The lessons learnt from corporate branding through reviewing literature is elaborated on in this chapter. Aligned with the research objectives, a clear path for strategic nation brand building is summarised and concluded within this chapter as guided by the literature reviewed.

Chapter 4

The research paradigm and design are discussed initially including descriptive information on the research approach used when collecting the data. The research methodology is discussed thereafter in a bid to input information that is detailed and

content specific on the qualitative research methodology. The research instrument, sampling method and the procedures that were followed for collecting and analysing the data are also included.

Chapter 5

This research findings and the discussion of the study findings are included within this chapter. The information gathered during the interviews is analysed, evaluated, and presented in conjunction with relevant literature.

Chapter 6

The conclusions and recommendations that are included in this chapter will be to put forth the recommended guidelines.

1.10 Conclusion

Strategic nation brand building is a key element that can contribute positively towards the NDP 2030. Within this chapter, the following were established; why nation branding is important; why it should be included in the NDP 2030; the research objectives and finally the research questions of this study. The premise that the study is based on is ultimately established within this chapter. The literature review is discussed next in order to promote an understanding of the varying views as well as theories incorporated within the nation brand building construct.

To be able to assist with the goal of this research, the focus within the literature review is primarily on social cohesiveness, nation building and nation branding, as well as the objectives listed within chapter fifteen of the South African National Development Plan 2030, which include equal opportunities, citizen inclusion, and redress. This literature review is two-fold, contained within separate chapters in order to ensure that the discussions are expressed concisely within two all-encompassing themes where each of the focusses listed above are explored in depth.

The focus within chapter two is strategy with the lessons learnt together with the reflections forming the content in chapter three. The discussion within chapter three explores how strategic nation branding activities could include citizens, thus proving

to be aligned to both place brand strategy as well as corporate brand strategy. The strategy theme is covered within Brand strategy alignment: Nation and Corporate brands (chapter two) which is discussed next.

CHAPTER 2:

BRAND STRATEGY ALIGNMENT: NATION AND CORPORATE BRANDS

2.1 Introduction

The origination of branding as well as how it has evolved is discussed initially, in this chapter to establish a background for the literature review and to also assist in the understanding of how branding has evolved into branding of nations and cities. Two theoretical frameworks, which are brand strategy and stakeholder theory, are then introduced and discussed continuously within this chapter through a descriptive breakdown focussing on an argument amongst nation branding scholars and experts on the topic that states that nation brand building strategy should be closely aligned to developing a corporate brand strategy.

In particular, the strategic formation of corporate brands, which encompass stakeholder engagement, are extensively discussed as this relates to both the research problem as well as the argument set by scholars that nation brand building should encompass corporate branding strategies to ensure complete stakeholder engagement. Ultimately, within this section, solutions and arguments aimed at contributing towards the research question as well as the aim of the study, are presented and discussed. The research problem is that the NDP does not consider branding and brand strategy as a contributor towards the set objectives listed within chapter fifteen of the NDP, that aims to assist government with its transformation, nation building goals and social cohesiveness. The objective of this study is therefore to propose strategic guidelines for the development of a nation brand that strategically incorporates the citizen, and thus able to contribute towards the NDP 2030's goals of nation building and creating social cohesiveness.

2.2 The history of branding and how it has evolved

The term 'brand' is said to be of both Germanic and North American origin. The Germanic reference dictates that "the word 'brand' derives from the Norse word 'brandr,' which translates to "burn" (Blackett & Russell, 1999; Starčević, 2015). Norsemen, better known as Vikings, formed part of the Germanic tribes; a historical ethno-linguistic group, originating from Northern Europe. The Vikings branded their

livestock by burning a mark on them in order to identify ownership and origin. This later further developed into craftsmen applying distinctive marks to their products for customers to easily recognise their work. Similarly, in the Wild West, the distinct marks branded onto cattle ensured protection from thieves. In North America, branding also guaranteed that there were no disputes over the cattle's ownership and differentiated cattle belonging to one ranch from those belonging to another. Moreover, branding, in North America, was used to segment cattle stock according to quality levels. Thus, branding was used to differentiate poor quality stock from good quality stock and branding consequently evolved from being a mark that indicated ownership to becoming a symbol of quality (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2017; Kapferer 2012).

Despite the various versions of the origins of the concept of branding, throughout history, branding was consistently used to distinguish the goods and services of one seller from those of another seller through the use of a name or symbol (Kapferer 2012). The practice of branding goods has since evolved and is no longer merely used as an identifiable name or symbol, but rather incorporates brand strategy elements, such as brand identity, values, and purpose, which contribute towards the basic functional purpose enhancement of both products and services, thus adding value to both (Laforet, 2010; Laforet, 2017). These aspects and how they inform brand strategy as well as the purpose of the study is discussed in greater detail within this Chapter.

The practice of branding has also developed further to include the branding of services, corporates, and places, such as nations and cities. The branding of places has created opportunities for business investment as well as tourism through the branding of places as holiday destinations or tourist attractions. This branding is, however, mostly focused on external stakeholders, such as tourists and investors, and is mostly not incorporative of the nation's citizens. Branding strategy, which is only focused on external stakeholders, is discussed in detail within this study in order to highlight the purpose of the study and to assist in providing solutions for the research problem. The purpose of the study then is to develop strategic guidelines to follow when building a nation brand strategically that incorporates the citizens of the nation, as internal stakeholders.

The development of branding, which now includes the branding of places, is of particular relevance to this study and is discussed within the section that follows. Prior to discussing the development of branding further, brand strategy and stakeholder theories are discussed first as the theoretical frameworks used to support the study.

2.3 Theoretical frameworks

Within this chapter, two theories are discussed and linked to the research problem. These are brand strategy theory and stakeholder theory. These two theories thus form the theoretical framework within the study and support the purpose of the study. These theories thus assist in outlining the foundation needed to develop guidelines that could possibly be used to contribute towards the South African National Development Plan 2030, chapter fifteen, on transforming society and uniting the country through transformation, social cohesion, and nation building.

Brand strategy is said to utilise the organisation in its entirety, inclusive of company culture and company philosophy. As a result, brand strategy becomes a central element which acts as a guide within the organisation (Balmer & Podnar, 2021). Stakeholder theory has always been viewed amongst scholars to form a part of corporates. Expanded to also provide solutions to some complex business challenges, such as value creation, ethics of capitalism as well as the managerial mindset, the theory is still evolving with no conclusive conclusion drawn as yet by scholars (de Colle, Freeman, Harrison, Parmar, Purnell & Wicks, 2011).

The two theories forming the framework within this study have been described to be linked by scholars and fitting to the study, the two theories are aligned towards the purpose of the study which involves both branding as well as stakeholders. The two theories are expanded on further within the section that follows in order to understand how they could be instrumental towards the research purpose.

2.3.1 Brand strategy and stakeholder theories

For the purpose of this study, brand strategy as well as stakeholder theory is analysed within the context of corporate brand strategy in order to establish a sound link that further supports the argument discussed within this chapter that developing a nation brand strategy should be closely aligned to developing a corporate brand strategy. Stakeholder theory has mostly been viewed to be linked to strategy throughout early scholarly research. Developed as a means of organising information viewed to be important in strategic planning (Freeman, Phillips, Sisodia, 2020).

Nation branding is considered to be similar to corporate branding according to scholars such as Anholt (2013) and Dinnie (2015). It therefore can be argued within this study that developing a nation brand building strategy should be similar to developing a corporate branding strategy. In particular, national governments should also consider incorporating the country's citizens when developing a nation brand strategy as a key stakeholder, similar to corporate branding where employees are considered an important internal stakeholder.

A corporate brand strategy incorporates all stakeholders concerned to ensure that the brand values and strategy are reflected effectively to the various stakeholders. In order to ensure strategy alignment, nation brands should also consistently incorporate all stakeholders, particularly citizens, within strategic brand planning. Relevant to this study is therefore the comparison between the employee stakeholder within a corporate and the citizen within a nation.

Within a corporate brand structure as well a nation brand structure, stakeholders may differ and vary from the chief executive officer (CEO), country president, executives, cabinet ministers, shareholders, internal and external investors, consumers, tourists, service suppliers, citizens, and employees to mention a few. However, for the purposes of this research, the emphasis is on the following stakeholders:

1. Within the corporate brand context: the external stakeholders, who are the customers, and the internal stakeholders, who are the employees,
2. Within the nation brand context: the external stakeholders who are tourists, international business investors, as well as other nations, and the internal stakeholders, who are the citizen of the country (Aaker, 2004; Dinnie, 2015; Kapferer, 2012) .

A stakeholder is defined as a group or individuals who are able to influence the set objectives of an organisation. However, an organisation may also be viewed as a stakeholder when dealing with another organisation (Freeman, 2010 cited in Deslandes, Painter & Pérezts, 2021). Kadembo, Makasi and Nyadadza (2019) further expands on the internal stakeholder(s) by stating that these are people that have an interest in the activities performed within the organisation accompanied by rights (Clarkson, 1995 cited in Kadembo, Makasi and Nyadadza, 2019).

Freeman *et al.* (2020) ultimately advise that Stakeholder theory is about knowing how to engage stakeholders and create value for them. Aligned to the purpose of the study, scholarly review indicate that stakeholder theory is strongly present with organisations. Moreover, stakeholder theory is influential towards the corporates (brand) activities and strategies. The alignment mentioned is discussed in detail within within section 2.5 and 2.7 respectively. It is however important to first introduce how stakeholders influence both the corporate brand as well as the nation brand.

According to Anholt (2013) and Dinnie (2015), nation brand strategy is said to stem from corporate brand strategy. The general strategic operational model for nation branding is therefore to attract more customers (tourists) and business investors, in the form of external stakeholders in order to profit financially. This is similar to how corporate business models operate. Branding within a corporate environment has become a key contributor in successfully attracting, retaining and managing sophisticated consumers who are now more educated and well-equipped to distinguish among competing brands, products, and service offerings (Laforet, 2010; Laforet, 2017). Papadopoulos (2004) states that nations as corporations aim to brand themselves in a similar way in order to gain a competitive advantage over other

nations, resulting in both corporations and nations having similar intentions of becoming more profitable.

However, even though the link between corporates and nations is acknowledged, the aim within this study is not to focus on how nation branding can be used to attract more investment. Instead, emphasis is placed on the citizen of the country and how a nation brand could be beneficial towards citizens as a corporate brand is towards employees, thus highlighting the purpose of this study of developing guidelines on how nation branding can contribute towards nation building through the analysis of both brand strategy and stakeholder engagement to contribute towards the NDP's goals of enhancing social cohesion, transformation and nation building.

In conclusion, both brand and stakeholder theories are fundamental towards the purpose of this study as they can be strategically incorporated into both nation and corporate brand strategy development. In order to further investigate how these two theories are able to contribute to the purpose of this study, they are discussed further on in the body of this chapter. Strategic nation branding is discussed first within section 2.4.2 so as to outline the strategies that form a part of a nation brand. Stakeholder theory is then discussed thereafter throughout the literature review in order to solidify the argument set forth within this study that all stakeholders should be incorporated within strategic nation branding activities.

Prior to discussing nation branding, it is critical to first establish that the concepts of nation and city branding as they can be seen to be linked to each other since both involve the branding of places. Nation and city branding from here on is referred to as place-branding.

2.4 Place-branding

Ashworth and Kavaratzis (2009) as well as Ho (2017) advise that nation and city brands are said to form part of place-branding. This is as a result of a nation and a city being a category of a place. Place-branding is therefore referenced within the study when discussing both nation and city brands.

2.4.1 Place branding: Nations and cities as brands

The term 'nation' is referred to as "a large body of people united by common descent, history, culture, or language, inhabiting a particular state or territory" (Oxford Languages, 2018). Governments, branding experts, as well as brand building scholars, however, seem to only focus on the latter when engaging with nation-branding. As a result, the place itself is then valued more than the citizens inhabiting the place. This distorted focus by the groups mentioned results in nation branding activities that mostly exclude the citizen (large body of people) as the nation branding efforts are only concentrated towards the state or territory. This notion is discussed continuously throughout this study as it supports the foundation on which this study is founded on.

Within this study, the focus is on how citizens can be incorporated within place brand building strategies, specifically the South African citizen being incorporated within the South African nation brand building strategy and ultimately the NDP 2030's goals of nation building and creating social cohesion. Therefore, all references made within this study, which refer to the link between nation branding and place-branding, are inclusive of the citizen as an integral part of nation branding as per the definition previously mentioned. Within this study, nation branding within place branding is incorporative of the citizens that make up a nation and a place. Furthermore, within this study, nation branding refers to the country whereas city branding refers to the city or region.

In the crux of this section, nation and city branding is discussed further and it is argued that nation branding could contribute strategically towards the National Development Plan's chapter fifteen's aim of nation building and the development of social cohesion. The argument is supported by the notion that a nation brand strategy should align to both corporate and city (place) brand strategies. The strategic alignment benefits are discussed in detail next.

2.4.2 Nation branding

A country, region, or city/town are examples of geographical areas or place-scales. Each of these places can be branded and can function as a brand. Place branding then, is defined as the practice of applying brand strategy and other branding techniques and disciplines to the economic, political, and cultural development of cities, regions, and countries (Kavaratzis, 2007; Hakala & Lemmetyinen, 2011).

Moreover, Anholt (2009) supports the definition, previously mentioned, within his 'hexagonal model' of branding a nation where a nation's brand strength is assessed within areas of corporate branding, which are; people, products (exports), policy (governance), culture and heritage, tourism and lastly investment. He argues that "successful brands need to elicit considerable consistency across these six areas" (Anholt, 2009 cited in Browning, 2016).

The hexagonal model (Figure 2.1) exemplifies the complexity of the nation-brand construct. Using the six characteristics of the national brand, it is argued that a nation may understand, measure, and ultimately establish a strong national image and reputation (Browning, 2016). This hexagonal concept not only shapes policymakers' thinking, but also is nearly verbatim repeated by them. It is crucial to get the 'hexagon of branding' right," says Arthur Mutambara, Zimbabwe's Deputy Prime Minister: "[y]ou must be well known in those six areas of branding, and they must interact and feed into one another (Browning, 2016).

Figure 2.1: The nation brand hexagonal model



Source: Browning (2016)

Although mentioned, the study does not focus on the 'hexagonal model' developed by Anholt, but rather draws inspiration from the conclusions reached that a nation brand strategy should incorporate a balanced structural foundation that incorporates people, or in this case, citizens (internal stakeholders). The model is referenced again further on in the study in order to further highlight the imbalance currently found within nation branding.

The argument set within this study that nation branding could be linked to corporate branding is supported by both the definition previously mentioned as well as the 'hexagonal model' mentioned. The parallels drawn between nation and corporate branding, which are strongly supported by the practice of applying brand strategy that encompasses stakeholder engagement, are investigated in depth within section 2.4.2.1.

It is important to first understand and define the various geographical areas, such as a country and a city that makes up a place, in order to support the argument that these two strategies should be aligned.

Cities, in comparison to countries, are increasingly reliant upon market developments and serve more self-expression demands, whereas countries have more stable and enduring brand images. If both nation and city branding are compared to corporate branding products, then a city would be a product that tends to be consumed more erratically than a country would. Nation brand operations generally concentrate on the sentimental and representational elements of the brand, but cities, due to their reduced size, focus on the utilitarian aspects of brands, a nation brand is therefore considered as more stable than a city brand (Hakala & Lemmetyinen, 2011).

If the analogy is expanded further, a city brand may be perceived to be more reliant on market trends and are more focused on specific promotions and events, whereas nation brands, on the other hand, have a more stable and enduring image. For example, the *Pick n Pay* store brand has been established in the consumers' minds as stable, reliable, and enduring compared to product items sold within the store, which may at times be unavailable due to seasonal supply, decrease in demand due to change in trends or be only available at specific periods due to societal trends and traditions, such as Easter or Christmas. At a high level, within this example, *Pick n Pay* represents a nation brand and the in-store products represent city brands.

The insights into both country (nation) and city branding when compared to corporate and product branding, wholly supports the argument already established within this study that place (country and city) branding is strategically linked to corporate branding. Hakala *et al.* (2011) describe this strategic link as “the practice of applying brand strategy and other branding techniques and disciplines to the economic, political, and cultural development of cities, regions, and countries” (Ashworth & Kavaratzis 2009; Hakala & Lemmetyinen, 2011).

The application of strategy and other branding techniques forms part of the foundation for the argument fixed within this study that nation branding objectives are misaligned to those of corporate branding as most activities aimed at developing nation brands do not fully incorporate branding techniques and disciplines.

For the objective of this study, it is crucial to examine where the misalignment between nation and corporate branding is and thereafter establish the reasons behind the two strategies not aligning. The misalignment discussion aims to contribute towards the objective of this study, which is to develop guidelines that aim to inform the creation of a nation brand that incorporates all stakeholders, specifically the citizen, and ultimately aim to contribute towards the NDP, 2030 goals of social cohesion, nation building and transformation.

In order to comprehend the misalignment, it is important to analyse the strategy which ultimately forms the foundation for both these entities. The encompassing strategy is brand strategy – which seemingly seems to be the link between corporate and nation branding attempts and is discussed next.

2.4.2.1 Brand strategy: Comparing the nation brand to the corporate brand

“A strategy is a plan of action aimed at achieving a long-term or overall goal” (Oxford Languages, 2018). For the objective of this study, which is to propose strategic guidelines that may assist in nation brand building, strategy is analysed within the context of both corporate and nation brand strategy because nation branding stems from corporate branding and should therefore align with each other strategically.

2.4.2.2 Nation branding strategy: Analysis of the nation branding objectives within place branding and a comparison between the objectives set within city branding as well as corporate branding

The objectives set within nation branding are discussed in the body of this section and concluded to be misaligned to those found within place branding. The cause is made akin to the unbalanced focus that nation brands have, where the citizen is rarely hardly incorporated within the stakeholder engagements that occur.

The commonly acceptable understanding of what a nation brand is understood to be is generally uncontested. Although different studies focus on different applications, nation branding serves three types of objectives, which are:

- enhancing the country's exports;
- protecting the country's domestic business from competing countries; and
- attracting or retaining development plans, and generally positioning the country (place) at an economic, political, and social advantage domestically and globally (Hakala & Lemmetyinen, 2011).

The nation branding objectives mentioned mostly seem to be purely commerce-based focusing on the need to attract tourists and foreign investment, with very little focus on internal stakeholders. As was already stated, nation branding strategies should align to corporate branding strategies, implying that internal stakeholders should be considered and valued to at least the same degree as external stakeholders. A relevant alignment for this study is ensuring a balance of stakeholder engagement within nation branding. The objectives which encompass nation branding do not entirely include the internal stakeholder engagement, the citizen of the nation, as compared to corporate branding. The result in this instance would be that nation branding's contribution towards social cohesion and nation building does not take place.

The third listed nation branding objective, mentioned above, is partially inclusive of the domestic factor. However, nation brands are generally created to purely support a country's government's external objectives, and this seems to be the general focus of nation branding as nation brands are frequently concerned with other countries' perceptions of their particular country when it comes to politics, the economy, and cultural dimensions.

Brand South Africa (Brand SA) is a great example in South Africa. It was first introduced as a nation brand to achieve the objectives stated previously. The original aim of the brand was to ensure that other nations receive a singular consistent message when engaging with South Africa post 1994 as the nation evolved from an apartheid state into a democratic dispensation. *Brand SA* then succeeded further and aided in increased business interests and tourism to the country (Dinnie, 2015; Fan, 2006 cited in Fan, 2008; Kaneva, 2011; Papadopoulos, 2004).

Another relevant illustration of this notion of nations being generally concerned with how other countries perceive them is the FIFA World Cup 2010 held in South Africa. The country was presented with an opportunity to change negative perceptions about the country based on the problematic associations linked to the African continent, such as crime, civil war, famine, disease, and corruption. The 'African brand', which is closely linked to the South African brand, was altered positively to the outside world through the significant event and experience of the FIFA World Cup 2010. After the FIFA World Cup 2010, brand awareness climbed by 9%, and the intention to visit the country in the near future increased by 35% (Allen, Knott & Swart, 2013; SA Tourism, 2010).

South Africa's strategic nation branding activities also seem to follow the nation branding objectives of external perceptions based on the two examples listed. Apart from world sporting events such as the FIFA World Cup 2010, nations may also choose to expand the three nation branding objectives listed above into various branding strategies such as generic nation branding; a functionalist approach strategy; political perspective approach strategy; nation branding driven by positive perceptions and nation branding and its impact on business organisations and external investment. The choice seems to largely depend on the commerce-based nation branding goals of that particular country. As already highlighted, the goals are generally geared towards mostly improving the image of that country when reviewed externally. These strategies are discussed in detail below in order to further support the statement posed within this study; that nation branding seems to mainly focus on external stakeholders.

Generic nation branding: The focus within this approach is when the building of a nation brand is spearheaded by the government through concerted activities. The government focusses on aspects that will enhance the image and reputation of the country externally. This is done through creating awareness, excitement and promoting facets of the country that could provide rich and memorable experiences to those visiting the country. Bruneel, Clarysee, Groen and Ratinho (2012) claims that it is also about having policies that could manage issues that might be a risk to the reputation and image of a nation. When taking a more local view, load shedding could be highlighted as an issue that could jeopardise the reputation and image of South

Africa and would thus need to be addressed within the context of poor service delivery. Eskom defines load shedding as a managed technique, launched in 2008, that responds to unanticipated events in order to safeguard the energy power system from a total blackout. Blackouts occur as a result of high electrical demand and insufficient supply, causing the power system to become imbalanced and, as a result, tripping the entire power system, according to Eskom, the South African state-owned electricity utility (Eskom n.d). This illustrates that it makes nation branding as a whole highly problematic internally as well as externally.

de Colle, Freeman, Harrison, Parmar and Wicks (2011) adds towards the generic nation brand strategy by highlighting the importance of brand management. Brand management is focused on improving the relevance and uniqueness of the promises of a brand and what it represents. The different components, such as the projection elements, is about what a nation is offering to the rest of the world. This projection is the brand identity, that entails aspects of a nation such as its vision, scope, personality, and positioning, as shown in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2: Nation branding components



Source: (de Colle *et al.* 2011).

The second component, as illustrated within Figure 2.2, is perception, which incorporates the image being presented to the external stakeholders. As much as a nation may have all that it takes to be a favourable destination, when compared to other countries, Wang and Sengupta (2016) argue that the perception circulating around, or that which has been projected, is what would determine with what such a nation should be associated. The inability to manage this component will present a nation as not having any unique qualities to which any association could be linked.

Communication, the third listed component, also plays a major role in conveying what the brand represents through its delivery of its projected story and promises to the external stakeholders. It also shapes the relationship between external stakeholders and the nation. This influences brand recognition, awareness, and loyalty, while improving the uniqueness of a brand.

The environment component of branding, listed last, has an important function to play as well in the outlay of a basic foundation for the brand's relevance. The challenge of this component is the ever-changing trends that all shape the perceptions that stakeholders hold of a nation and what it offers to the world. Managing this component, as advised by Wang and Sengupta (2016), is about being adaptive and proactive in terms of the nation branding strategies employed while considering that each aspect of branding might require a different approach in addressing its challenges.

The generic nation branding strategy discussed above is a clear indication of the place (nation) branding distortion mentioned earlier on. The details within this strategy are purely focussed on external perceptions of the nation when viewed by other countries, foreign investment as well as tourists. As a result, the place is valued more than the citizens inhabiting the place, which is not aligned to place branding strategies, which should also place importance on the citizen equally.

The other dimensions which further emphasize this imbalance is the functionalistic as well as the political nation branding approach, these are discussed next.

2.4.2.2.1 Functionalist approach

Kaneva (2011) mentions the economic, functional, functionalist approach, which could also be referred to as the technical-economic approach, arguing that nation building is a strategic tool to be used in enhancing a country's image and position. Based on this approach, the focus and objective of nation brands and nation building is ensuring that external stakeholders have a favourable perception of the country. Such an approach has, if successfully implemented, a positive impact not only on the country but also the various products, services, and resources of that country, making them more attractive in the global market. Anholt (2009) maintains that nation branding is all about how effective a nation positions itself or competes with other nations for a favourable perception, using different approaches that could provide them with a much-needed positive image. Important to the study is the incorporation of the citizen within nation branding activities. Evident within the functionalist approach, the focus is only external.

As was already established, governments, branding experts, as well as brand building scholars, seem to only focus on the external factors when developing nation branding activities. The analysis of the internal stakeholder exclusion within nation branding activities is important within the study as it will aid towards understanding how the citizen could then be incorporated within nation brand strategies. This understanding could then contribute towards the purpose of the study which is to develop guidelines for nation brand strategy which could contribute toward the NDP 2030 objectives of social cohesion, nation building and transformation.

2.4.2.2.2 Political perspective approach

The other approach to nation branding is the political perspective, where government activities are aimed at coordinated efforts in managing the reputation of a nation. This is done with a view of promoting tourism, investment, and its relations with other nations (Volcic & Andrejevic, 2011). This approach is seen as a powerful mechanism, especially for smaller nations, positioning themselves and strengthening their

bargaining powers against other powerful nations in relations to their economies, military, and finances.

Another view would be that this approach is a form of augmented propaganda as well as an inoffensive approach of nation building, which is undertaken through the promotion of a country's natural resources, culture, and history. Ultimately, it is viewed as a form of progressive patriotism. Within academia, scholars do propagate this approach in terms of nation building, but they also caution against emphasising the positioning of a nation in the market, and its global competitiveness, arguing that such an attempt is risky and runs the risk of being counterproductive towards the same efforts of winning over investments and tourism (de Colle *et al.* 2011; Wang & Sengupta 2016; von Wallpach, Hemetsberger & Espersen 2017).

Volcic and Andrejevic (2011:599) echoes such concerns, arguing that "in an era of capitalist globalisation," nation branding could bring about "the continuation of warfare by other means." Throughout history, the world has seen a lot of conflict in the form of wars that were started and fought for various reasons. The concerns raised by de Colle *et al.* (2011) of nations having to be cautious when incorporating the political perspective approach is founded as nations do not want their nation branding activities resulting in other nations perceiving them to be portraying a brand that is superior than other nations due to their military and financial standings.

However, although nation branding is not created from nothing, but existing resources of a nation such as its military and financial status, thus justifying the efforts made, the domination of market imperative justifies such above concerns. It then becomes important to consider an alternative, which could assist nations in overcoming challenges of nation branding.

The alternative approach to the political perspective is the cultural-critical perspective of nation branding, which examines the extent to which the social sphere is influenced by marketing and branding, and how such practices impact on the perceptions of individuals and the identity of a country. This links the dimension of branding a nation to the ideals of nationalism, national identities and social relations of nations (von

Wallpach, Hemetsberger & Espersen 2017), as it relates to nation building and social cohesion.

The cultural-critical perspective approach as an alternative does, however, initiate raging debates against nation branding that incorporates this approach into their strategy. Some scholars believe that it has the potential impact of promoting ethnocentrism and a distorted image of a nation, by propagating ideals and values that are different from what the citizens practice and experience in that particular nation. It is argued that it is a perpetuation of lies that the citizens of a country have to live with as a reality. This has the implication of denying a country its own authentic culture.

In this case, as Volcic and Andrejevic (2011) and Vallaster and von Wallpach (2013) explain, a government becomes the institution in charge of marketing the nation, and aligning it with local and international policies, yet this approach bundles up the responsibilities and the risks that comes with it for all stakeholders; citizens; businesses or business owners such as entrepreneurs. This means that citizens are given the same responsibility as entrepreneurs and businesses of promoting the image of the nation. A business, although operating in the same country, has a different purpose and expectation from the nation when compared to citizens who are not conducting any business. It must be realised that a business will benefit greatly from nation branding efforts through tourists purchasing from those businesses. This in contrast with citizens who do not benefit financially via tourism profit.

This touches on the dynamics of stakeholder engagement. The citizen and entrepreneurs form part of stakeholders within a nation. Arguable, they should both be incorporated within the nation branding activities, however, there does seem to be a misalignment within this cultural-critical perspective approach. A detailed discussion is included further on in this chapter, as it will also strengthen the argument set within the study that nation brands should incorporate all stakeholders, particularly the citizens of the country.

Evidently, the incorporation of citizens as well as the effort of promoting or improving the countries internal affairs is not carefully considered within the strategies discussed thus far. As already established, nation branding strategies are mostly concerned with external factors and the strategies listed provide clear support towards this argument. This misalignment thus supports the argument within this study that such approaches do not benefit any attempts to build a nation as well as social cohesiveness. Countries are now employing the services of communication consultants to address and resolve such challenges.

According to von Wallpah, Hemetsberger and Espersen (2017), such nation branding activities orchestrated by communication consultants, may seek to improve the global public relations of a country and improve its exports competitiveness through associating them with the positive perceptions of a country. A nation's entrepreneurs and business organisations may then take advantage of the new positive perception a country is receiving, to improve the volume of their exports as a result of the positive Country of Origin (COO) effect. It would be ideal for the consultants to incorporate the citizen as well to ensure that they also benefit from any positiveness achieved through nation branding activities, however, there is still misalignment of how stakeholders are engaged.

Other facets to be undertaken by such communication consultants include the promotion of a country's infrastructure, favourable investment policies and tax structures, or other investment incentives targeted in luring foreign investors. Those countries with a skilled workforce, or abundant natural resources, may decide to place emphasis on these resources as their strong points. These could be tourism, culture, or even mining.

While some countries, such as Slovakia and Croatia, who were all part of Yugoslav before their secession, have been successful with their nation branding, because their aggressive marketing campaigns managed to distinguish them from Yugoslav, based on their focus on scenic venues and a unique, rich culture, there are those countries like Switzerland who had limited success due to its banks linked with the holding of Nazi gold (de Colle *et al.* 2011; Johnson *et al.* 2017).

Although the efforts made by Switzerland in correcting such damaging revelations, eventually they had to abandon their campaign efforts. Vallaster and von Wallpach (2013) noted that nation branding never fails, just that nations have to be patient, and consistent with their activities and messages – arguing that “while policymakers may not have the patience, politicians do not have the time to wait for nation branding activities to alter negative perceptions”.

It is evident that nations do indeed value the implementation of strategy within their nation branding activities. As evident, these are mostly commerce based thus not inclusive of how citizens may also benefit from such nation branding strategies. It is important that this misalignment is explored further, and solutions discovered in order to support the arguments as well as the objectives set within this study. Prior to analysing how nation brands can be more inclusive of citizens, other commerce driven nation branding activities are explored below.

2.4.2.2.3 Nation branding driven by positive perceptions

Nation branding strategies may be of a short-term or long-term nature depending on the outcomes set by a country. An example of such may be the need to measure a country's perception amongst the stakeholders, who could either be the citizens, global stakeholders or customers. Strategies that meet the desired measures set out within the planning phase could result in a country being synonymous with certain practices, a particular identity, quality, or values in the minds of its targeted stakeholders. A practical example is Germany, which is associated with quality, precision engineering, as well as the flagship ‘German’ cars, such as *BMW*. This type of positioning presents a unique, competitive edge as the country's selling point. The strategy employed by Germany, as Urde, Baumgarth and Merrilees (2013) explained, includes investing in research, cutting edge facilities and modern infrastructure, apart from putting in place policies and regulations that spearheaded the integration of those values and practices as a national identity.

Another example of a country with a synonymous global quality vehicle brand is Japan, which is globally associated with manufacturing of quality motor vehicles, such as the *Toyota* range of cars. Achieving such a distinct global position would involve a multitude of processes and activities. These may include government, institutions, investors, and also the citizens of the country, who would need to be aligned and embrace the strategic nation branding goals.

However, these precise steps listed may not always produce a positive image for the country as planned. Branding activities linked to the country's economic activities may showcase a negative impact for a country's image. These circumstances are discussed next.

2.4.2.2.4 Nation branding and its impact on business organisations

The perceptions that have been formed in the minds of business leaders, investors and even individuals in relation to a specific country has a profound effect on the purchasing decisions that potential buyers make on goods and services produced from such a country. "The social-political, cultural and also the economic environment and perceptions of a country have an effect on the perceived quality of a company's products and services" (Johnson, Angwin, Regnér, Scholes and Whittington, 2017). When it comes to purchasing decisions, this is referred to as the country-of-origin effect (COO), in which brands are related to the origination country. A brand's country of origin influences the perceived positioning of the brand by providing a "referral" and a guarantee in terms of risks, quality and other aspects of the brand. It thus makes a significant contribution towards purchasing decisions by offering a competitive edge for the brand.

The COO is also reflected in other countries, such as France, where its capital city, Paris, is associated with beauty and elegance – and this has contributed to the significant growth of French cosmetic business brands such as *L'Oréal*, and *en Provence*, with the Swiss being linked to watches, the Danish to designs and the Italians with fashion. This COO, which comes about through national strategic branding, could also be detrimental to business organisations, especially when the

global rating of a country is low or its global perception is negative (Iglesias, Ind and Alfaro 2013; Johnson et al. 2017).

A country like China has a global negative perception, with its brands being associated with low-cost and poor-quality. However, the debate has been that the poor global perception that China has is due to the 'cold-war' between China and the United States of America (USA), with allegations being that the poor perception is a result of USA media propaganda against anything that comes from China. Although the COO effect has been an impediment for many of China's brands and the global positioning of their business, (de Colle *et al.* 2011; Wang and Sengupta 2016) *Huawei*, a Chinese' technogiant has managed painstakingly to position itself in the global market by overcoming the negative perception of the COO effect. The company has achieved that through research, innovation, innovative products, and a good customer experience of its products, such as the *Huawei* range of smartphones, which have become competitors to South Korea's *Samsung* smartphones. This implies that a country's branding is essential as it provides its local businesses with a good foundation on which to launch their products and services. It is also significant for a country to brand itself by removing negative impressions and stereotypes of COO, as they could become part of that country's companies' brand images and contributing to the labelling of the brands that originate in that country.

According to Iglesias, Ind and Alfaro (2013), and Gyrd-Jones and Kornum (2013), the label "made in" on a company's products is not the only contributing factor to the perceived perception of the product. There are other aspects that have an impact, such as:

- The brand identity of imported products versus locally made products. The local image of some global brand products, such as perfumes associated with France and fashion with Italy;
- The local image of the manufacturing company.

According to France, Merrilees, and Miller (2015), nation branding can help provide much-needed confidence, credibility, and knowledge about a place of origin and its products. This could create an intangible perception to the consumers/buyers – with

such intangibility including product features, quality, conformability, and reliability. Given the importance of nation branding, France *et al.* (2015) explains that it is critical that major players be involved, and also to find a balance in relation to the various conflicting interests that they might be having. Finding an integrated approach though could prove a step in the right direction in benefiting all the stakeholders.

Looking at this approach, it can again be seen, as was already established, that the nation branding objectives are mostly concentrated on how a nation is perceived externally and the strategies already discussed are to illustrate this argument. Important to this study is that evidentially not all stakeholders are described to benefit from such a strategy. It is not clear how citizens benefit from this strategic approach towards nation branding and how these approaches could assist with nation building and creating social cohesion. Another form of nation branding is focussed on the external investment generated by a country and that will be discussed next.

2.4.2.2.5 Nation branding and its impact on external investment

Having a strong, positive perception in the global arena, positions not only a nation in a more competitive position, and making it a choice of destination for tourists, investors, skilled labour and a hub of global social-economic activities, but it also provides a nation with resilience in times of financial crises, due to the confidence that investors have in the brand identity and value that such a country possesses (France *et al.*, 2015).

According to Wang and Sengupta (2016), a nation branding trajectory reflects the economic position of a country, its regulations and policies, culture, practices and their mindsets on business and customers. There are nations that have managed to successfully position themselves on the global map as brands – with notable examples being Singapore, which is associated with high-tech products; exotic beaches being tied with Thailand; and South Korea synonymous with high quality electronic products and scenic beauty. Such nations have invested in research and innovations to build their nations as global brands. In addition to that, Bruneel *et al.* (2012) added that they also communicate their branding ideals to their stakeholders in a consistent manner.

The economic benefits derived by these nations, as a result of nation branding and the COO effect, have placed them on the same footing as the Asian nations, with Singapore having transformed itself from a third-world nation to a developed, first-world trading stop, with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) generated from its financial sector, while its exports, accounts for over 70%.

The aforementioned nation branding examples of Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea and Japan, and the potential that nation branding has brought such countries, indicate that a nation that has successfully branded itself, shapes how it is perceived by both domestic and international stakeholders. The brand positioning of these successful Asian countries could be associated with the quality of its products and services, the attractive nature of its culture, investment opportunities, policies, and foreign policies. However, as France *et al.* (2015) explains, branding a country is a process that requires solid strategy and consistency in the marketing of a country, just like the manner in which *Coca Cola* has consistently marketed its products, with evident benefits of becoming a global household product.

In an era where the world has become a global village, wherein digital technology continues to bring trends and improvements in business and governance models, nations are now recognising the critical role that a positive image and reputation could bring to a nation. This has led to nations allocating resources to nation branding and implementing brand strategies in a bid to position their perceived image and reputation in a manner in which they could be recognised. Similar to how business organisations embark on marketing, governments have now embarked on hiring professional firms in fields such as advertising and public relations to help them brand or rebrand the nation based on what a government wants to achieve (Gyrd-Jones and Kornum 2013; Urde, Baumgarth and Merrilees 2013; von Wallpach, Hemetsberger & Espersen 2017).

In view of these, Gyrd-Jones and Kornum (2013) argue that a successful nation branding strategy would require putting an emphasis on positive and appealing assets that a nation has, or want to be identified with, by making it the dominant association with a nation's reputation. The potential of such nation branding stands to benefit even

smaller, poorer nations that have something to offer to the world in the form of a branded, which is about finding a niche in the global marketplace.

The neglect of including the internal focus within nation branding strategies ultimately continues to contradict place branding strategies. A nation has been established to form part of a place and should therefore aim to include the citizen as well when developing any nation branding strategies. The nation branding strategies discussed thus far all seem to have a clear external agenda of increasing tourism, trade and investment and neglect how citizens could also benefit from nation brands, especially in terms of nation building and enhancing social cohesiveness.

Important to the study are nation brand strategies which aim to include the citizen as part of the stakeholders engaged as this will ultimately support the objectives of the study which is to propose guidelines for nation brands to follow when developing strategies ultimately contributing towards the NDP 2030 objectives of nation building, social cohesion, and transformation.

African countries have also taken some initiative in terms of nation branding, noting that, as Anholt (2009) posits, without nation branding, which could distinguish a nation from the negative perceptions associated with others, a country like Botswana, which is considered as being fairly governed and prosperous, could be wrongly perceived to be similar to Zimbabwe, which has a history of poor governance, or similar, to Ethiopia and South Sudan – both linked to famine and civil war. Such negative perceptions could come about from those who do not understand that Africa is a continent with nations that have distinct identities from each other. It is such cases, among many others, that make a nation brand building campaign imperative in developing a unique image and position that could benefit a country in the global arena.

African countries that can be cited as having embarked on national branding is Kenya, having founded “The Brand Kenya”, an initiative mandated in the creation of an integrated brand identity that could restore global confidence in the country among its potential investors, local, and international stakeholders. The goal is to create a strong, positive image of Kenya. The country has taken advantage of its rich cultural heritage,

natural resources, and the hospitality of its people as unique assets that could bring out the best for the country in its branding strategy. This is also supported with Kenya's Vision 2030, part of their branding strategy in making the country more competitive and prosperous (Kenya Vision 2030, 2009), in its effort to position itself in the global market.

Kenya consistently promotes tourism, exports products such as tea and coffee, and is a favourable country for direct foreign investment. However, tourism is the branding dimension that is mostly promoted. The other dimensions that the country has taken into consideration in its efforts to brand itself, is instilling pride in the citizens, promoting a positive outlook of the citizens and the country. These are deemed crucial in the sense that citizens' support and knowledge of the concept of a nation's branding is critical if the branding objectives are to be met.

As much as the involvement of different stakeholders is essential for a successful nation branding in attracting investment, there are also challenges due to difference of views, priorities, and national qualities from among the stakeholders in a country. It also brings about mixed messages from the stakeholders that could be confusing to the targeted audience. An example of this is when a tourism board promotes a country's offerings to tourists, but those in charge of promoting investments, or culture and education, could, in fact, have conflicting messaging towards the stakeholders concerned (Anholt, 2009). This form of confusion could also impact the products exported by a nation, which is an important aspect that is discussed next.

2.4.2.2.6 Export branding

The focus within this strategy is on the external promotion of products or services associated with a particular nation. As a result, the external consumption of these products then contributes towards the perception of that particular nation thus contributing towards the nation branding activities. South Korea and Japan are such examples of nations that have successfully marketed their nations in relations to their rich culture and products produced in those nations (Gyrd-Jones & Kornum, 2013).

The strategic nation branding objectives previously discussed are generally not inclusive of all the stakeholders involved. The minuscule evidence of stakeholder inclusion, in particular reference to the citizens, is not sufficient. Further to this, the nation brand building strategy objectives previously mentioned are not aligned to place brand building objectives as one can identify a lack of stakeholder engagement, which is apparent to place branding (nation and city). Place branding objectives are discussed next as it has become evident that nation brand building strategies seem to have partly inherited place branding objectives.

Place branding (nation and city) should be used by both national and local government to achieve two main aims:

1. To minimize social exclusion, communities must be developed, local identities and citizen identification with where they reside must be reinforced; and
2. To achieve a competitive advantage in order to boost tourism and investment, and (Florek & Glińska, 2013).

The latter is currently attained through the nation brand's objectives, as already discussed, but nation branding seems to not incorporate the first aim listed whereas cities do. As discussed, when compared to nations, cities tend to concentrate on the more functional facets of brands such as the dependency on specific promotions and events as well as specific trends in the market. Nations, on the other hand, tend to have more stable brand images and are not dependent on the trends of the market (Hakala & Lemmetyinen, 2011).

It can therefore be argued, within this section, that city brand strategy engages more internal stakeholders when compared to a nation brand, especially considering the different consumption levels previously mentioned. It is also argued within this study that internal stakeholder engagement is dependent on a successful city brand strategy that aims to support the nation brand strategy, as they are all closely linked. City brands could therefore aid nation brand building strategies, as it is argued within this study that city branding engages more internal stakeholders when compared to nation branding.

2.4.3 City branding

Zenker and Braun (2010) advise that place branding may be interpreted as “a network of associations in the consumer’s mind based on the visual, verbal, and behavioural expression of a place, which is embodied through the aims, communication, values, and the general culture of the place’s stakeholders and the overall place design”. A citizen will ultimately identify with the country (nation) they reside in as well as the city they were either born in or might have relocated to for various reasons. Branding activities and brand strategy should therefore not only be designed at a nation brand level but also incorporate the city as a strategic contributor towards the nation brand strategy.

Since a city brand engages with more internal stakeholders when compared to a nation brand, the city and nation brand strategies need to coordinate in order to produce the same desired results. City brands should thus align with nation brands when setting out strategic national objectives. Kapferer (2012) indicates that brand strategy incorporates various elements, which operate simultaneously at times depending on the brand, product, or corporate. What is relevant from this statement is the notion of brand architecture and the use of sub-brands within a brand strategy.

2.4.3.1 Brand architecture: Sub-brands

Sub-branding can be described as a process where the master or ‘parent’ brand is adjusted in order to create a sub or ‘child’ brand/s beneath it. Sub-brands could be viewed to possess distinct audience benefits, which can help to differentiate them from other brands with similar offerings. A sub-brand is created to mainly strategically support the “parent” brand in some way (Reeves & Chiron, 2016).

Within a corporation, sub-branding is a regular practice. Strong brands can often expand into adjacent categories, which create sub-brands. For example, *Clorox* started out as a bleach product, but has launched into several cleaning categories. *Clorox* Disinfecting Wipes is a sub-brand of the *Clorox* master brand. All of the *Clorox* branded products stand for disinfecting, which one can trust, but there are several sub-brands that help bring the brand promise to life (Reeves & Chiron, 2016).

In some instances, there may be some qualities linking one sub-brand to another – but all the sub-brands are still strongly linked to the master brand. For example, within the *BMW* brand, *BMW* is considered to be the parent brand and the various car models then become sub-brands. For example, the Z4 roadster possess different characteristics as compared to the X-Series four-wheel drive. However, within the consumers' mind there are some tangible qualities that the different sub-brands share, by virtue of being a *BMW*, such as German engineering and luxury (Reeves & Chiron, 2016).

In fact, innovation around these brands is determined through consumer research that identifies a distinct need, which, while it could 'fit' within the master brand, is different enough from current sub-brand offerings to warrant a new sub-brand. The sub-brand distinguishes the part of the market that is owned by that sub-brand and aligns the organisation accordingly (Reeves & Chiron, 2016).

In most cases, sub-brands are adopted by corporates within their brand architecture to assist with the obstacle of aligning the main brand's strategy to the greater business functions. Sub-brands are also sometimes introduced to assist in effective stakeholder engagement and management. A brand that is encompassing of all business units and stakeholders ensures healthy and successful brand building (Aaker, 2004).

Brand architecture and sub-branding has been included within this section as a possible strategic resolve as a nation brand building strategy, which seems to not engage as many citizens (internal stakeholder) as compared to a city brand. The city brand could possibly become the nation brand's strategic sub-brand that ensures certain messaging, and that the nation's values and culture are kept consistent and relevant towards the citizens of the nation.

Nation brands have been already established as place brands within the study and should therefore encompass the full theoretical definition of place brands, already discussed, and should simultaneously also incorporate all place branding.

The combination of brand strategy, branding techniques, and other disciplines to ensure the economic, political, and cultural growth of cities, regions, and nations is what place branding is characterised as in theory. Place branding aims, which are internally incorporative, are also aligned through the suggestion that nation branding aims be to develop communities, reinforce local identities, and assist towards citizens being able to identify themselves with where they reside, to avoid social exclusion (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2009; Hakala & Lemmetyinen, 2011; Florek & Glińska, 2013).

City branding as a strategic sub-brand of nation branding would be able to assist in achieving nation branding goals. As already established, city brands have the capacity of engaging with more internal stakeholders when compared to a nation brand. This advantage could then assist strategic nation branding activities to ensure that the citizens are consistently included and communicated with. Nation branding campaigns, dependant on the strategy developed for them, could be targeted and customised for all the various citizens within a nation.

This is of course one of the possible solutions towards nation branding's strategy misalignments when compared to those present within place branding. Ensuring the strategic alignment of nation branding to place branding is relevant to this study as it will contribute towards the objective of this study, which is to develop strategic guidelines that could assist the nation brand to contribute towards the South African government's internal goals of transformation, social cohesion and nation building and, in that way, contribute to the NDP 2030.

Nation brand building strategies has already been established to be misaligned to place brand building strategies. The findings have been confirmed through the evaluation of the place brand strategies as well as by the detailed inclusion of the strategies usually adapted by nations, which do not seem to create a balanced stakeholder engagement. In order to further investigate how nation branding strategies should adjust and be aligned, it is important to explore corporate brand strategies.

Strategic nation and city branding, as place brands, have already been established to be linked to strategic corporate branding. This section will therefore further explore how nation brand strategy in alignment with the city branding aims, techniques, and

brand strategy, could aim to be strategically balanced and maintain an alignment to place brand strategies. Nation brand strategy, in alignment with city brand strategy aims, may contribute towards building social cohesion and nation building whilst incorporating nation branding strategy, that is aligned to corporate branding strategy.

Corporate brand strategy is discussed next alongside stakeholder engagement, in order to further strengthen the argument set within the study that nation brand strategy seems to only focus externally thus resulting in nation brand strategies to be also misaligned to corporate brand strategy.

2.5 The formation of a corporate brand strategy: Encompassing stakeholder engagement

Business ideas and strategy can be visually captured through corporate brands, mostly through marketing initiatives, which have a direct effect on all relevant stakeholders such as customers, employees, and investors. Relevant to this study is the corporate employee stakeholder, as they form a critical strategic link to the purpose of this study. When comparing corporate brands to the nation brand, employees (within a corporate context) are equivalent to a nation's citizens (within a country context).

Stakeholder engagement is discussed alongside corporate brand strategy within this section because corporate brands incorporate all stakeholders concerned when developing their brand strategy. Corporate brand strategy that incorporates the employee is important for the objective of this study, which is to develop guidelines that aim to contribute towards nation brand development initiatives and ultimately contribute towards the NDP 2030 goals of social cohesion, nation building, and transformation.

Within corporate branding, the brand strategy performs the role of magnifying the business strategy already set up by the business. This strategic action then ensures that the values (company culture), business purpose, characteristics and mission of the business are aligned with those of the corporate brand. Through brand strategy, all the other business functions adhere to and are aligned with the business's strategic

goals. Ultimately, for the corporate brand strategy to reflect the business strategy successfully, the brand needs support from the entire business and not just from the traditional corporate departments that manage brand building such as the marketing and public relations departments (Aaker, 2004; Foster, Punjaisri & Cheng, 2010; Dinnie, 2015; Leijerholt, Chapleo, & O'Sullivan, 2018).

Literature further suggests that a corporate brand supported by its brand strategy is the key link in imparting the business's strategy onto all business divisions because it is more flexible and easily adaptable into various business functions. Further to this, Punjaisri and Wilson (2017) postulate that a business strategy should acknowledge the equal importance of the different stakeholders and how each one contributes towards the overall goal of the business.

Therefore, the brand strategy, which aims to amplify the business strategy as discussed earlier, should be cognisant of all the stakeholders involved (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2017). Aaker (2004) focusses on the employee and states that employees become an important extension of the brand as they need to reflect the attributes and values of the brand by 'living them' (Aaker, 2004). Joseph and Jerome (2017) further adds that employees can be seen as major stakeholders in any corporation. A consumer's most frequent interaction with a brand is the employee within the organisation.

A corporate strategy therefore ensures that in as much as it reflects the business strategy's external aims, which are mostly making a profit, it also focuses on internal stakeholders to ensure that employees and divisions all understand, support, and reflect the same values, culture, purpose, brand story and strategy set out by the corporate brand strategy (Aaker, 2004).

Within a corporate brand strategy, when the brand is developed, a unique tone, messaging and strategy is formulated – specifically for the employee. As was already discussed, it is ensured that the strategy includes the company's values, purpose as well as culture. Once established, the brand therefore aims to incorporate, inform as well as educate the employees (mostly through corporate communication platforms)

about the business's strategy and aims while encompassing the culture and values within the corporate. This approach, suggested by Aaker (2004), aims to ensure that employees work together as business units as well as with top management towards a similar business goal supported by the brand strategy as well as the overall company strategy.

When British Petroleum merged with Amoco and then ARCO resulted in a good example of successful employee inclusion within a corporate brand strategy. The business renamed itself as BP, updated the logo, and concurrently began a campaign aimed at the workers and the public stating that it was heading "beyond petroleum." Moving from an old-style, closed corporation to an open, collaborative, new-economic venture, the company repositioned its brand and put aside its identity as an oil company to become an energy company. Employees from each of the original enterprises gained a new and distinct identity as a result of this rupture with the past. According to a survey conducted after the internal branding campaign was launched, 76 percent of the total of workers were pleased about the new brand, 80 percent of the total were aware of the brand principles that formed the new brand messaging, and 90 percent of the total thought the firm was on the right road (Mitchell, 2002).

Elrick and Thies (2018) advises that corporates do not always achieve this level of inclusion within their stakeholder engagement. The long-held definition of stakeholder's theory, which is grounded in capitalism, posits that stakeholders are only those who hold shares in a company. This perspective excludes any other person or group of individuals – whether they have an interest, directly or indirectly, in such a company. This is an earlier view of stakeholder's theory as propagated by economist, Milton Friedman. The other view of the theory, as held by Edward Freeman, who argues that stakeholders are all those who are impacted by a company's operations, and this include internal and external customers.

According to Elrick and Thies (2018), Friedman's view of the theory is anchored on a company's compelling need for making profit, which is its core function and reason for its formation. It is there to make such profits for the benefit of its shareholders. By contrast, the view held by Freeman is that an organisation cannot succeed, neither

achieve its goals, without those who support it in various ways. The group includes local communities, lobby groups, government departments, its customers and suppliers, media organisations and even financial and insurance companies.

In this context, the adopted view of the theory that underpinned this study is the later one, as held by Edward Freeman. This view indicates that the environment in which organisations operate in are similar to an ecosystem of interrelated groups – with all of whom having to be taken into consideration, and meeting their expectations, if an organisation is to be successful.

While the comparison between strategic nation branding and strategic corporate branding continues to support the purpose of the study, it is to note that a nation brand is a complicated multi-faceted construct that remains mostly dependent on other countries' perceptions of that particular nation. Special events such as the FIFA World Cup and other special occasions are reminiscent of this dependency. The most difficult aspect of developing a nation brand strategy is determining how to communicate a single brand or message to audiences from many nations as well as people of the country for which the brand is being developed. Moreover, nation brand building is regarded broader and more complicated than corporate brand building because it “involves multiple levels and components, and various disciplines such as international relations and public diplomacy” (Hakala & Lemmetyinen, 2011; Dinnie, 2015; Fetscherin, 2010).

It therefore becomes impossible to develop a simple core message about a country, through one brand, that can be used by different industry sectors in different countries as well as internal stakeholders towards internal activities. No matter how great or original a slogan or campaign is, it cannot encompass or represent everything to everyone and that is why it is mostly more meaningful and practical to have nation branding conceptualised, measured, and executed at different sublevels (sub-brands) as a place (nation and city) brand, event brand or export brand (Fan, 2006, cited in Fan, 2008).

Sub-branding (through city brands) has already been defined and established within this chapter as a possible solution towards strategic nation branding that is able to incorporate internal stakeholders (citizens). Below is a further analysis of this strategy in order to extrapolate further solutions that could be applied by nations when conducting nation branding activities.

2.6 Sub-branding strategy

Within the formation of a corporate brand strategy, all messaging publicised by the brand through the use of media and other platforms, is consistent. The conceptualisation of the brand ultimately entails deciding on the best solution that will ensure that both the business and brand strategy are applied effectively throughout the business. Since the nation brand is more complicated compared to a corporate brand, Fan (2006, 2008) suggests that the nation brand is to be split up into sublevels (sub-brands) of place, event, and export brand to ensure the same effect of amplifying both business and brand strategies within corporates is also achieved within government's strategic activities, such as ensuring the NDP 2030 goals of transformation, nation building, and social cohesion are achieved.

Some of the sub-levels (nation and city brand as well export brand) suggested by Fan (2006, 2008) have already been explored within section 2.1.4.2.1 where the misalignment of nation branding is discussed and the sole focus on export brands is highlighted. The event brand is explored further in the section that follows in order to create an understanding of how this sublevel could strategically contribute towards government's nation branding exercises.

2.6.1 Event branding: A sublevel brand aimed at building customer relations

Within a corporate environment, events are also considered to be impactful towards corporate brand building as they are an effective tool for implementing the experiential marketing perspective. Event branding experiences are extremely participatory, allowing customers to shape and co-create their own experience. From a commercial perspective, events aim to realise two major corporate objectives. One objective is to realise profit by staging events as a service provider (which is alternatively referred to as profit-oriented events). This is evident when companies hold festivals, open air

concerts, or sport events in order to sell this platform to different target groups such as visitors, the media, or sponsors. Events can also be used as a communication tool to create awareness or to positively influence the image of specific brands (this is alternatively known as communication-oriented events).

Within nation brand building, a country usually utilises several tools in order to promote a nation's image. For example, assets deemed to be the main attractions of a particular area, such as the big five animals in South Africa, Statue of Liberty in New York City or Victoria Falls in Zambia can be utilised as visual assets within nation brand building exercises. However, events are also used as strong brand building tools within a nation brand building exercise and ultimately become connected to a place, such as "the Oktoberfest in Germany, Rio Carnival in Brazil and the Wimbledon Tennis Tournament in England" (Altschwager, Conduit & Goodman, 2013; Jahn, Drengner, Gaus, & Cornwell, 2011; Gertner & Kotler, 2002).

When analysing the creation of *Brand SA* for South Africa, sub-branding (sublevel) was introduced by the *International Marketing Council of South Africa (IMC)* to enable the nation brand to focus on the intent behind its creation. South Africa, at the time of creating *Brand SA*, had recently transitioned from an Apartheid government into a democratic government and therefore needed an entity that would assist in building a positive image for South Africa and ultimately attract trade, tourism, and investment (Dinnie, 2015). The South African image as well as the representatives that were chosen to market the country post the Apartheid era, did not seem to communicate a similar/unified message to the global community, hence the need for aligning the messaging from South Africa sent out to the rest of the world. Various sub-brands were developed under the tourism and business category, such as *Business Events* and *South African Tourism (SA Tourism)*. These sub-brands focused on tourism and business as were needed by South Africa at the crucial transition period between the Apartheid era and democratic period (Dinnie, 2015). Typical of a nation brand's objectives, the focus was purely external though, thus, it neglected the internal stakeholder (the citizen).

The *Brand SA* example mentioned, contradictory to the British Petroleum (BP) example mentioned previously, echoes the argument set within this study that nation branding is mostly not incorporative of the internal stakeholder (citizen), thus, not aligned to corporate brand building strategies and practices. Kavaratzis (2007) asserts that a corporate brand strategy is concerned with, both the external and internal stakeholders. Pike (2005) adds to this by stating that all stakeholders within brand strategy should be valued equally.

Many theorists agree that a strong and favourable organisational brand needs to incorporate a crucial anchor, which is the internal brand. Similarly, nation brands, which are similar to corporate brands, should also incorporate the internal brand strategy in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders. Since a country is a certain kind of organisation, a nation brand is similar to a corporate brand, and, as a result, nation branding theorists view internal elements as crucial. However, a deeper analysis reveals that a country's identity is the fundamental idea of the internal branding ideology and its identity building is an important driver of overall brand equity because nations and countries are not empty containers into which random people, practices, and objects may be placed – individual stakeholders in a business or everyday life environment discursively or performatively position and align themselves and others with the country using its name and stories, pointing out correct behaviour and desirable ways of conduct. An individual's identification with an organisation (or in this case, a country is influenced by their experience and significantly influences their behaviour (Davies & Loo, 2006; Hankinson, 2007; Lionikaitė, 2012).

The analysis of the corporate brand strategy and the comparison thereof to nation brand strategy clearly indicates the misalignment between the two, as nation brand strategies are not incorporative of all stakeholders. In the section that follows, stakeholder engagement and the inclusion of internal stakeholders within strategy is explored in greater depth.

2.7 Encompassing stakeholder engagement within strategy

Regardless of the sublevels (sub-brands) formed within a corporate brand strategy, corporate brand strategies are formed inclusive of all stakeholders within each sublevel as the brand image is important to relevant stakeholders (Aaker, 2004; Dinnie, 2015).

The corporate brand's stakeholders extend to more than the consumer and can be divided into both internal and external groups as follows:

1. Internal stakeholders
 - Employees
 - Board of Directors
 - Investors
2. External stakeholders
 - Suppliers
 - Unions
 - Media
 - Strategic partners and
 - The broader community, to mention a few.

As was already mentioned, the employee as internal stakeholder is important to this study because of the link that the study wishes to establish between the nation/place citizen and corporate employee as internal stakeholders. Within nation branding, the relevant stakeholders to this study are as follows:

- Internal citizens,
- Government,
- Investors; as well as
- Tourists.

When analysing stakeholder theory within the corporate context, some scholars caution against some potential issues. These issues may be seen to be contributors towards nation brand building strategies that are not aligned to place brand building

strategies. de Colle *et al.* (2011) highlights how prioritising the relevance or importance of each stakeholder in contributing towards the strategy may often present itself as an issue. The issue of stakeholders who could be measured as having equal status within a company strategy, is also expressed by Freeman, in his book “Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach.” Freeman expresses the view that, within a corporation, the core function of an organisation is ultimately to bring in returns to its shareholders, and nothing more. Ultimately expressing the importance of the shareholder over other stakeholders within the corporation.

Milton Friedman’s argument in his book “Capitalism and Freedom,” supports this view by illustrating that the attempt for a corporation to be “socially responsible” through charitable activities or donating to universities is an inappropriate use of corporate funds and that the decision should solely come from shareholders, thus emphasising their hierarchal importance as stakeholders within a corporation.

Within the nation branding context, most democratic governments and public institutions may be seen to carry out their functions, reflecting on Edward Freeman’s assertion on stakeholder theory. Policies, such as community participation in the process of policy making, is not always fully exploratory of all stakeholders as per the stakeholder theory where citizens’ involvement should form a key function towards the success of any government initiative or policy in a country. This approach is not aligned to place branding strategies as already discovered.

The view of Wang and Sengupta (2016) is that a government’s functions and its primary existence is to provide governance and public services to its citizens, and those who live in it. In the context of stakeholder theory, the stakeholders in a country include its citizens, those who live in it, local and international investors, and institutions, and all those who could directly or indirectly be impacted by a country’s actions, such as its policies, regulations, or even a change in its social-economic, or political administration. It is also important to highlight that the view expressed by Wang and Sengupta (2016) aligns to the place branding strategic objectives already discussed within section 2.4.2.6.

Stakeholder theory, which underpins this study, asserts that organisations and corporations must ensure that they carry out their functions and operations in a manner that will not only involve its stakeholders but also meet their needs and expectations – as this is one of the fundamental elements of achieving lasting success. The influence and views of all stakeholders of a country, would help in shaping any government project initiative or policy, and the initiative will be well positioned in achieving its goals. The stakeholders' involvement and support, as in the case of a nation brand building strategy, could bring benefits to a country, and the shaping of perceptions of a nation's branding campaign, not only with stakeholders beyond the borders of a country, but globally too.

When properly implemented within strategic nation brand building activities, Wang and Sengupta (2016) and Elrick and Thies (2010) are of the view that it could lead to positive results and feedback, including greater returns worthy of the efforts and investments made. This is true in nations such as the United States of America, where patriotism is more evident compared to other countries. The ideals and practice of democracy in the USA provides each citizen with an opportunity to influence policies and the directions of the country – with one such way being the checks and balances put on the presidency and the regular general elections, among other factors. Within the corporate world, when employees are treated with respect, with their views being sought by management, they become motivated within their work, and this has a positive impact on their performance and productivity – leading to higher production volumes and satisfied customers.

However, critics of stakeholder theory (de Colle *et al.* 2011; Gyrd-Jones and Kornum 2013; Wang and Sengupta, 2016) argue that the varied needs and expectations of the various stakeholders cannot be equitably addressed in a manner in which all will be satisfied. Reasons that are given is that stakeholders come from multiple groups of varying sizes, and diverse interests – and while some might be vocal in the championing of their views, due to their power and influence, there are others that might take a back seat, leaving the dominant groups to take the lead.

In the context of nation branding, such diverse groups with different positions and sources of influence could be the root of tension and discord. This could be reflected in the case of politicians, or members of a ruling party, in contrast to the influence the ordinary citizens or members of a minority ethnic group are able to exert in a government in relation to an application of a given government directive or project, such as how a strategy on nation building should be applied, or the priorities of such a campaign.

In relation to a normal project, such a challenge can easily be solved through a stakeholders' management plan – detailing an analysis of each group of stakeholders, together with their needs and expectations, and a plan on how communication with them is to be managed. It also prioritises stakeholders based on their levels of power and influence on a project. Perhaps, in the case of a government, successful management of stakeholders is effective communication, considering that it may not be possible to bring all citizens around a table to discuss a policy or nation brand building initiatives. It may also not be possible to meet the needs or expectations of all stakeholders, but what could mitigate the negative impact of diverse stakeholder groups is engaging in constant communication and maintaining a positive relationship with them. This could happen when reasons behind certain policies or secessions are communicated to them.

Such an effective communication plan could provide a healthy ecosystem, which is needed if a strategy on nation branding is to achieve its goals in the long-term. The effectiveness of stakeholder theory in nation brand building is evident amongst several government nation building activities and is seen to be beneficial to the local citizens of that particular area or the citizens in general of a country. Some examples of this are the construction of modern infrastructure to attract investors, the preservation and protection of game reserves to attract tourists, and where the local citizens benefit from improved infrastructure facilities, or revenue collections from, for example, the game reserves (Li and Feng, 2021).

According to Bruneel *et al.* (2012), successful branding, whether conducted by a nation or a corporate, needs to include conducting an analysis of the entity (corporate or nation) in order to understand and establish what the entity stands for. This includes

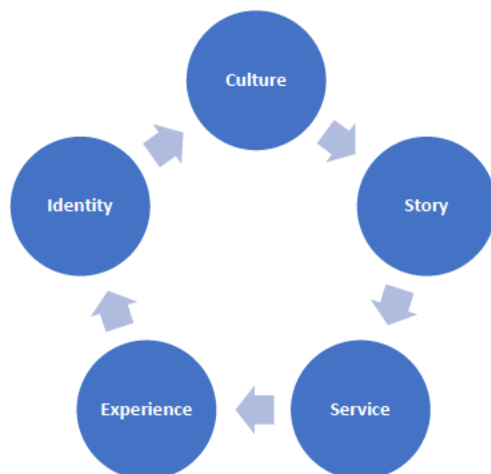
the values and behaviours that define a particular country or company. Once these pillars are researched, developed, analysed, and in place, certain brand communication activities take place, such as internal communication, workshops, and culture change management, all of which are focussed on the employee.

Within the context of drawing comparisons between nation and corporate brand strategies, it is important to further discuss in detail how the two strategies (nation and corporate) strategically incorporate the stakeholders. Corporate brand strategy incorporates the employee (internal stakeholder) through the inception or alignment to company culture and values. When the corporate brand strategy is formed, the following pillars are put in place, analysed, and then vetted against the business strategy (Switchbrand, 2018):

1. Brand Purpose
2. Brand Values
3. Brand Culture
4. Brand Tone

Whereas nations mostly seem to not incorporate stakeholders within their strategy. Bruneel *et al.* (2012) highlights five essential pillars for nations to consider when developing nation brand building initiatives. These are detailed within figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3: Brand pillars



Source: (Researcher's adaptation, cited in Bruneel *et al.*, 2012)

2.7.1 Culture

This pillar entails the description behind a nation's identity – what it is known for, what differentiates it from other nations, its unique values and what stakeholders stand to gain from it. The next important brand pillar is the story (Bruneel *et al.*, 2012).

2.7.2 Brand Story

Telling the world what the nation stands for is a form of storytelling. The aim within a brand story is to present a compelling picture of that particular nation towards other nations as well as the citizens within. The story is supported through marketing narratives that shape the history of a nation, contributes towards the nation's credibility, and ultimately shaping and lending value towards the brand. The next brand pillar focusses on what a nation is able to offer the world (Bruneel *et al.*, 2012).

2.7.3 Products and services

As Bruneel *et al.* (2012) and France *et al.* (2015) explains, this is what a nation presents to the world market, alternatively what the nation wants to be known for, in terms of the resources that it has to offer. This is usually in the form of products or services such as exotic beaches and wildlife for tourists, rich traditions, infrastructure, policies and more. The next pillar discussed is brand association, which is ultimately the connection between the nation and the stakeholders.

2.7.4 Brand association (Experience)

The connection between the nation and its stakeholders is the experience gained through interacting with that particular nation. Alternatively, known as the brand association, these experiences may include physical artefacts such as national colours, the chosen national logo, as well as the nation's tagline. The expectations created for the stakeholders (the promise) is usually reflected through the brand association/ experience. The goals within this pillar is for nations to showcase their visual and aesthetic features and qualities (through the nation brand) – ultimately

influencing how the nation is viewed externally by investors and visitors, as well as internally by its citizens (France *et al.*, 2015; Johnson *et al.*, 2017). Identity and culture seem to influence each other within a brand strategy. This influence is further discussed.

2.7.5 Brand Identity

As much as identity is important in nation branding, and even that of a business organisation – due to its association with a brand, culture also plays a major role within the sustenance and success of a brand. The manner in which decisions impacting stakeholders are made, the nature of response to their needs, the story told about a nation, its promises, and the stakeholders' experience, are all anchored on the culture portrayed within the brand.

The five pillars, when combined, create a promise that a nation or a business organisation makes towards the stakeholders. They reflect what they may expect. These pillars, once established, become the differentiation factors, setting apart a nation from others within the same region and/or globally. It also influences the citizens' knowledge of what their nation may stand for. According to Vallaster and von Wallpach (2013), the pillars become embedded in every action, policy, goals or plans that the nation makes.

It is crucial to keep in mind that the nation branding pillars tend to be externally focussed with an aim of increased external investment and tourism opposed to the corporate pillars initially mentioned that incorporate the employee (internal stakeholder) through the inception or alignment to the company's culture and values. Within nation branding, brand pillars are viewed as traits that set a nation apart from others. These are distinguishing unique points targeted at the external stakeholders, in order to establish a relationship with them and the particular nation. These pillars vary from nation to nation and could be multiple assets such as: game reserves, state-of-the-art infrastructure or a skilled workforce that a nation may possess. The 'story' pillar is further discussed, within the context of corporate branding in order to further

support the argument set within this study that nation branding mainly focusses on commerce-based nation branding, thus neglecting the citizens (internal stakeholder).

Corporate brand strategy further aims to equip the brand with a 'good story', which stakeholders, both internal and external, can believe in and support. Characteristics of a good story are those that start with a strong prominent persona and easily recognisable. This characteristic is the vital connection between what is communicated (what the brand can say) compared to what is executed (what the brand can do) within both the brand and corporate activities. This "brand persona creates a lasting intimate connection with the audience because it is easily identifiable and unforgettable; people can relate to it, and it is consistent" (Crystal & Herskovitz, 2010).

To ensure longevity and real value for the corporate brand, the brand story goes beyond "words" by enabling the audience to connect with the brand on an emotional level. Good stories utilise various factors such as history, imagery, and colour to express to the public the organisation's beliefs, values, and mission (Crystal *et al.*, 2010).

As already established, nation branding objectives do not seem to be strategically aligned to corporate branding strategies. Evident within the British Petroleum example, a corporate brand strategy is concerned with generating consistent profit through various channels, mostly through increased market share and increased sales, which at most times result in profits. However, the corporate brand strategy also acknowledges contribution from the company's employees in order to reach the preferable profit targets as well as to ensure that the brand values and strategy are reflected effectively throughout the organisation. Therefore, stakeholder engagement becomes a pivotal inclusion to ensure corporate brand success.

For the purpose of this study, it is argued that a nation brand building strategy needs to incorporate the internal stakeholder in order to ensure a balance already relevant within the corporate brand. The balance mentioned within this study refers to nation branding activities, which aim to engage the internal stakeholder (the country's citizens) thus, ensuring social cohesion, nation building and transformation in

accordance with the NDP 2030 objectives. The application of place (nation and city) branding necessitates finding a balance between the nation and city brand as well as the wider support in the place's communities. This is essential because as already stated, place branding involves multiple stakeholders (Braun, Kavaratzis, & Zenker, 2013).

Houghton and Stevens (2011) argue that the importance of involving stakeholders is found in the fact that although engaging them is demanding, it can stimulate new perspectives and ideas for places. The formation of nation brand strategy, incorporating values, purpose, and culture (as evident within the British Petroleum example) should be a co-creation exercise involving all stakeholders involved. Co-creation is a concept within stakeholder theory that may assist nation branding efforts to not only have externally focused strategic objectives, as already argued, but also incorporate the internal stakeholder (the citizen). Co-creation ensures that place stakeholders, particularly a place's residents, are involved in place branding processes, as they have specific roles and rights because they form part of the place in which they live, and they have distinct responsibilities as citizens (Aitken & Campelo, 2011).

Nation branding should therefore consider incorporating co-creation, which should see government, citizens and business collaborate in formulation of the country's values, culture, image, attractions, infrastructure, and people. The dynamics of the different groups of contributors are referred to as stakeholders. Co-creation, within this study, relates mostly to the citizens (internal stakeholder) as they should have a more prominent contribution towards the creation of their national brand (Hakala & Lemmetyinen, 2011).

In South Africa, specifically when considering the National Development Plan (NDP), different stakeholders were engaged when it was developed. The national development plan's background section, states that the research of the NDP committee took on the form of public forums that entailed a commission meeting with national departments, provincial governments, parliament, the judiciary, financial institutions, entities owned by the state, local government as well as talks with unions,

government departments, and religious leaders (NPC National Development Plan 2030:25).

The South African government should perhaps look into taking a similar approach advised by Aitken and Campelo (2011) and include different stakeholders again when engaging in nation brand building. Perhaps the South African national planning commission responsible for the outcomes listed within the NDP 2030 should also be involved within the nation brand creation process in order to inform the objectives set of nation building and social cohesion within the NDP 2030. The list of the different stakeholders mentioned previously would also include nation branding practitioners (creative and strategic branding agencies) as well as the South African citizen. The South African citizen includes all demographics within the different living standards measure (LSM). The South African citizen is discussed in detail within section 2.2.3.1 in this chapter.

The government of South Africa, through the NDP 2030 committee, should enlist branding agencies who are able to contribute towards the set objectives detailed within the NDP 2030, chapter fifteen while incorporating the citizen as a key stakeholder. This process would follow that of a corporate re-brand or new brand launch, as evident within the BP example included earlier. Within this strategic exercise, the corporate sets out its business strategy that clearly outlines its objectives, within the context of a country such as South Africa, this would be the NDP 2030 plan. Thereafter, the corporate aims to partner with creative brand agencies who are also aligned with the same company strategic goals, thus, able to deliver the appropriate creative resolve to ensure success of the company strategy. As discussed, the creative agencies would then develop a brand strategy that aims to support the company strategy both visually (through logos, images and colour) as well as strategically, through the creation of a brand purpose, brand values and brand culture, which are aligned to those within the company strategy. Most important to the study is the strategic support the brand development would offer the NDP 2030 by ensuring the citizen is incorporated in order to offer them buy in into national values, a brand purpose as well as a culture that are aligned to their own values and culture. This would ultimately contribute towards the NDP 2030, chapter fifteen objectives of equal opportunities, citizen inclusion and

redress, which would ultimately ensure social cohesiveness, transformation, and nation building for South Africa.

Stakeholder theory concepts should therefore form part of brand strategy development as already evident within the corporate brand strategy. However, Ashworth and Kavaratzis (2010) advise that prior to initiating nation branding activities, it is necessary to explore the citizens' perceptions of the identity of a country, in other words, what the nation's self-understanding is, as there is often a misalignment between the agenda of branding practitioners and the needs and objectives of the local communities (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2010 cited in Lionikaitė, 2012).

An example that supports this statement, is that of the research conducted in Lithuania. Within the research to develop the Lithuanian nation brand strategy, the focus was on the citizen's involvement. Information on how citizens perceive the Lithuanian brand was captured and considered within the brand strategy research, thus illustrating how co-creation could be strategically incorporated within nation branding attempts by the national government. This exercise of conducting research into the citizens aimed to investigate the citizens' core perceptions related to Lithuania as well as the potential for these associations to be included within the nation brand strategy and thus form part of the core values for the Lithuania's internal brand (Lionikaitė, 2012).

The Lithuania example emphasises that examining the needs of all stakeholders, specifically the internal stakeholders, is vital because place branding tactics are more likely to fail if stakeholders don't buy in. There are, however, many different and sometimes contradictory motivations to involve citizens within place branding strategies, such as to:

1. Increase the quality and efficacy of policies through citizen engagement and the mobilisation of people's expertise and resources;
2. Close the communication gap between public institutions and citizens in order to restore legitimacy to government action;
3. Strengthening a feeling of citizenship, belonging, and environmental stewardship;

4. Enhancing a feeling of citizenship, belonging, and environmental stewardship (Braun, Kavaratzis & Zenker, 2013).

The motivators listed above may be beneficial because they may contribute towards the citizen's well-being. However, the motivators listed above mostly aim to support government's political objectives. The citizen inclusion appears to be an after-thought by government officials or brand experts when carrying out place branding exercises. The focus is mainly on policies, regaining state action legitimacy as well as maintenance of local environments. The lastly listed motivator does, however, seem to have a distinct focus towards the citizen, specifically those citizens that may be deemed not to have a voice towards the governing of the country. In this instance, the citizen's mentioned would refer to the citizens who do not have any political representation through to their chosen political party that may have not won any parliament seats through a national election.

Places in general, and nations and cities in particular, are very complex constructs, and the residents that make up nations and cities are even more complex. Logistically it will be impossible for all the citizens to participate in nation branding, and this is often provided as a reason (by branding practitioners) for using the corporate brand top-down approach when implementing nation brand building initiatives. Within the corporate brand strategy, a top-down approach refers to corporate structures that do not involve the employees in decision-making; where top management chooses to dictate down to employees. In fact, this is a growing concern of several commentators within the literature regarding the same top-down approach commonly demonstrated within corporates that is now becoming evident within nation brand building strategies as well. Governments and nation branding practitioners equally apply a top-down approach when developing nation brand building strategies. However, allowing diverse groups of residents to participate in nation brand building strategies and activities has many benefits, despite the complexity and effort involved in this approach (Braun, Kavaratzis & Zenker, 2013).

As was already discussed, stakeholder engagement is a critical contributor towards strategic place-branding activities. Within a corporate, the employee (as a vital stakeholder) is incorporated and considered, nations should therefore also learn from

corporates by applying the same approach within strategic nation brand building activities. Nation branding that is incorporative of citizens is important towards the aim of this study, which is to propose guidelines towards the development of nation branding which is inclusive of citizens. When examining chapter fifteen's objective of the NDP 2030 closely, the specific action plans associated with the nation building and social cohesion creation objectives are:

1. Promoting a social compact,
2. Addressing inclusion and redress,
3. Promoting constitutional principles,
4. Promoting social cohesiveness across society,
5. Encouraging active citizenship and leadership, and
6. Ensuring equal opportunities (National Development Plan vision 2030).

Having reviewed the objectives listed within chapter fifteen of the NDP 2030, it is noted that there was an oversight from the planning and research process by the commission appointed to develop the NDP 2030 objectives. The commission did not include an investigation into the possible role that nation branding can play as part of its nation building strategy in ensuring cohesion amongst South African citizens. Within the plan, some form of citizen involvement is already present (co-creation), which were included when the plan was initially drafted. It can therefore be argued within this study that the incorporation of nation brand building strategies (aligned to stakeholder engagement) would ensure the objectives set are met in the plan.

Having explored the various opinions from scholars relating to place brand building strategies (nation and city), corporate brand building strategies as well as stakeholder theory, it is important to further unpack these discussions in order to define some of the lessons learnt. The lessons learnt are instrumental towards the purpose of the study, which is to develop guidelines for nation brands to follow when developing nation brand strategies inclusive of citizens. Ultimately, these brands could then contribute towards the NDP 2030 objectives of social cohesion, nation building and transformation. The lessons learnt are explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3:

REFLECTIONS: STRATEGIC GUIDELINES AND SUCCESSFUL COHESION FOR SOUTH AFRICA

3.1 Introduction

Within Chapter 2, nation branding has been explored and compared to corporate branding as these two constructs are deemed to be similar. It is therefore important to analyse the lessons learnt that could be beneficial for strategic nation branding inclusive of citizens. Corporate brand strategy as well as place brand strategy are inclusive of all stakeholders involved. However, nations seem to be mostly concerned with external and commercially based strategic nation branding activities.

This misalignment presented by strategic nation branding does have a solution, which is summarised below within the context of lessons learnt. The strategic brand pillars of corporate brands are discussed first, followed by the brand story. The section is then solidified by a lengthy exploration of the stakeholder within South Africa as well as a discussion of elements that may have achieved some social cohesion amongst South Africans in the past – such as the FIFA World Cup 2010. Strategic nation branding is also explored and discussed within the African context also to draw some elements that may contribute towards any South African strategic nation branding activities.

3.2 Strategic brand pillars of corporate brands

In summary, the employee as internal corporate brand stakeholder, is incorporated within the formation of a corporate brand strategy, which entails the following foundational pillars:

- brand purpose,
- brand values,
- brand culture, as well as
- brand tone.

The lesson learnt is that within the formation of the corporate brand strategy, a communication plan aimed towards ensuring employees understand and support the brand strategically, are developed to ensure that employees inherit and support the brand pillars (Switchbrand, 2018).

To inform the objective of the study, it is essential to discuss these findings within the nation brand context, thus detailing what nation branding could inherit as lessons learnt from corporate brand strategy.

For the purpose of this study, the building of corporate brand strategy is discussed in order to enhance the argument that nation brand strategy should be closely linked to corporate brand strategy. This argument further contributes towards the objective of this study, which is to determine how brand strategy can contribute towards the National Development Plans' (chapter 15) aim of nation building and social cohesion. The corporate brand strategy discussion within this chapter includes attributes that should be considered within a nation brand strategy; such as purpose, culture and a good story, thus ensuring that the nation brand strategy aligns to the corporate brand strategy (Aaker, 2004).

When analysing the findings within corporate brand strategy and upon reviewing the case studies connected to it, it is evident that corporate brand strategy considers all stakeholders compared to the nation brand strategy, mostly the external stakeholders where emphasis is placed on the objectives of making profit and attracting potential tourists or investors (external stakeholders). Relevant to this study is that corporate branding considers the employee within set corporate objectives in order to secure the corporate strategies success. Nation branding activities should then also consider the citizens, within set strategic strategies.

3.3 Brand story

Nation brands should ideally incorporate similar characteristics found within corporate branding, such as a good brand story, as they are considered to be similar by scholars such as Anholt (2013) and Dinnie (2015). The good brand story, within nation branding, will aid the development of strategic guidelines to assist a South African nation brand to contribute towards the development of social cohesiveness and the building of the nation.

South Africa has a lot of rich history such as the constitution adapted in 1996, hailed highly and also used as an example by many other countries. The South African constitution “is a model for law and constitutional experts as it seeks to establish a society based on democratic values, social justice, and fundamental human rights” (Fisher, 2021). This asset, accompanied by this knowledge, if used strategically as part of the nation brand story, could see South Africa united based on the pride the citizens could have of the success story that the constitution has created.

Crystal *et al.* (2010) advise that a good brand story goes beyond “words” by enabling the audience to connect with the brand on an emotional level supported by factors such as history, imagery, and colour. As was already established, South Africa emerged from an apartheid state to that of democracy, therefore the aspect of history becomes evident within the story of the constitution’s success. Imagery developed to illustrate the various chapters within the constitution supported by visually appealing colours could also support the story.

Once the nation brand strategy aligns to the corporate brand strategy – involving the internal stakeholder – the next step is to then study and research the diverse South African residents. In order to support the proposed guidelines and to give context to the objective of the study, which is to propose guidelines that may contribute towards the NDP 2030 goals, the citizen (internal stakeholder) further discussed in detail.

3.4 Social cohesion in South Africa

The South African citizen as an important stakeholder in nation brand building has already been established as an important link within the purpose of the study which is to develop strategic guidelines to consider when developing nation brands which are inclusive of the citizen. This nation brand would then strategically contribute towards the NDP 2030 goals of social cohesion, nation building, and transformation. Ultimately, these guidelines assist in informing the research problem, which is the exclusion of nation branding strategies within the NDP, stated in chapter 15 - objectives.

3.4.1 Revisiting the 'Rainbow Nation' analogy

Now that the alignment of nation brand strategy to that of corporate brand strategy has been established in order, to determine how nation branding could contribute towards the NDP's goals of enhancing social cohesion through successful stakeholder engagement, it is important to discuss the dynamics within South Africa, specifically looking at the citizen, who is the internal stakeholder. It is highlighted within the NDP 2030 that the problems currently observed by government are race, religion as well as the living standards measure (LSM). These will then be the dynamics mainly discussed in this section as well as possible contributors thereof.

As per the national consensus that was conducted in 2016, the South African citizens constitutes of more than 55,6 million people. This figure is segmented into racial groups, namely Black African, Coloured, White, and Indian/Asian. Stats SA (2019) reports that "the population of South Africa increased from 40,6 million in 1996 to 51,7 million in 2011 and 55,6 million in 2016". The South African population was 58.8 million when last recorded (Stats SA 2019).

The age and sex distribution numbers in South Africa are proof of a young population. Within the age ranges of 0 to 9 years of age. The population rise is greatest among individuals aged 5 to 9 years old, according to age group analysis (from 4,8 million in 2011 to 5,6 million in 2016). During the last consensus count in 2016, Gauteng remained South Africa's most populous province, with a population of 13,4 million (24,1%). With the exception of the Western and Northern Cape, the population distribution among provinces has been largely stable since 2011, with Black Africans

accounting for over 4/5 of the population in all provinces (Statistics South Africa, 2019). Despite advances since 1994, South Africa's society is still fractured. Many schools, suburbs, and places of worship are integrated, but there are still a lot of them that aren't. The economy of South Africa is one of the world's most unequal. In South Africa, race and non-economic elements such as class are linked. As a result, the privileges associated with race, class, space, and gender have not been totally reversed (National-Planning-Commission 2012).

Despite rapid improvements in access to basic services, the quality of services continued to be affected by where citizens are located within the country. South Africa has transformed tremendously from an apartheid history that divided the nation along racial lines, into a nation that aims to be inclusive. However, when opportunity has been skewed for centuries, this tends to produce a distribution of financial, human, and social capital that continues to reinforce inequality of opportunity even if the legal elements of discrimination have long ended. Opportunity thus continues to be defined by race, gender, geographic location, class, and linguistic background (National-Planning-Commission 2012).

Unemployment in South Africa is high, particularly among black youth, and women are still often subjected to discrimination in both the education system and in the labour market. Women, for example, are less likely to be able to access jobs that provide learning opportunities or personal growth. Many rural communities live in areas far from economic activity, and while access to public services has improved in rural areas, infrastructure remains weak, and the quality of education and healthcare is often poor. Within urban areas, the apartheid spatial patterns mean the poor often live far from places of work and this makes it harder to find work, thus raising the cost of transport (National-Planning-Commission 2012).

The inequalities highlighted within the NDP chapter 15 (2030) are a significant hindrance towards any efforts made by the government of South African towards nation building and social cohesion. The proposal set within this study of incorporating a nation brand building strategy within the NDP 2030, chapter 15 objectives is further strengthened by these issues. In alignment with the purpose of the study, the South African government should consider applying place branding strategy towards

developing a resolution for this issue. As was already established, place branding (nation and city) should be used by both national and local government to achieve two main aims:

1. To minimise social exclusion, communities must be developed, local identities and citizen identification with where they reside must be reinforced; and
2. To achieve a competitive advantage in order to boost tourism and investment, and (Florek & Glińska, 2013).

The latter is mostly effective when implemented through a city brand, as was already discussed within section 2.1.4.3., as a city brand strategy engages more internal stakeholders when compared to a nation brand. The importance placed on citizens as internal stakeholders when government conduct strategic nation branding activities remains very important. As highlighted within the NDP 2030, the resident of South Africa as well as the government in South Africa could benefit from such stakeholder engagement as the outlook of the South African citizen seems to be unequal and in need of assistance in order to transform into an environment that is inclusive of all citizens.

Haphazardly, nation brands may at times appear to be internally oriented as some nation-brand building campaigns appear to provide an opportunity to increase cohesiveness and the communal notion of a national consciousness, thus promoting social cohesion among a country's citizens (Browning, 2016). This was evident within the FIFA 2010 World Cup, which saw South Africans rally behind a common goal resulting in short-lived social cohesion. It was also reminiscent of the "*Rainbow Nation*" analogy, which has since lost traction. The FIFA 2010 World Cup as an instrument towards social cohesion is discussed next, but the *Rainbow Nation* analogy is discussed first as both are good examples towards this endeavour even though they did not maintain any traction.

The "*Rainbow Nation*" metaphor was initially used by Archbishop Desmond Tutu at a time when South Africa was characterised by major political unrest. This was a critical period that saw South Africa transition from an oppressive Apartheid state into an inclusive democracy. Desmond Tutu was at the forefront of the movement that was to

steer the nation towards a better future. He had been an active voice against the Apartheid government, and people generally trusted and respected him and were willing to follow him as a leader (Baines, 1998; Oliver & Oliver, 2017).

In order to ensure citizen's long-term support for the South African government's social cohesion activities, a nation brand should be established to support these activities. Strategic brand pillars then need to be utilised, including the 'good story' already mentioned. In the past, South Africa has depended on short-lived experiences that did not carry any long-term strategic plans towards creating and sustaining social cohesion – such as the *“Rainbow Nation”* metaphor, which has since lost traction. Sporting events have, however, been successful in capturing the comradeship needed to unite South Africans, even though the effects did not last. These sporting events include the 1995 Rugby World Cup as well as 2010 FIFA World Cup, which is further discussed.

3.5 The FIFA World Cup 2010 hosted by South Africa

Allen, Knott and Swart (2013) state that for the majority of local South African residents questioned, the 2010 FIFA World Cup resulted in a legacy that contributed towards an increased sense of pride, social cohesion and self-confidence amongst South Africans. The CEO, 2010 FIFA OC supports this by noting what South Africans said at the time: *‘You know what? This is the South Africa we want to live in. This is the country we want’*. The CEO went on to state that at the time everyone was a proud South African, a patriotic South African, an appreciative South African and just a South African that was probably celebrating a special achievement. The Chief Director of Client Support, Liaison, Events and Facilities, SRSA supports the sentiment by stating that the nation was ‘united, and in a more significant way, than during the hosting of previous mega sport events’ (Allen, Knott & Swart, 2013).

According to the Head of the Legacy Unit, 2010 FIFA OC, the World Cup gave those involved 'the confidence to do anything', by leaving a legacy of 'skills' and a 'can-do attitude'. In addition, the head of the Legacy Unity states that South Africans were now 'engaging the world from a very secure base and were confident'. This confidence had also been enhanced by the 'human capacity' that had been developed internally to manage future events of this nature.

According to the Global Manager, Events Platform for SAT: a year before the World Cup there were a lot of negative perceptions amongst South Africans as to whether hosting the World Cup would be beneficial for the country. A simple campaign was therefore launched – which, in essence, communicated to South Africans *'listen, you need to be proud of who you are as a South African. The fact that you even won the bid to host an event like this means that we are capable'*. This campaign managed to get South Africans excited about hosting the World Cup and rally behind the national campaign that managed to unite the nation (Allen *et al.*, 2013).

According to Allen *et al.* (2013), the local and national press also played a role in promoting this message as newspapers were permeated with messages that emphasised the role of the World Cup in promoting patriotism and improving the country's image internationally. These stories were closely accompanied by reflections of feelings of national pride especially at the efficiency with which the event – the first of its kind in Africa – was undertaken. Some newspaper reports even indicated how South Africa was turned from a 'Rainbow' nation to a 'Yellow' nation, revealing a support for the national team and a breakdown in barriers that set people apart. 'The manner in which the event brought South African people together was just amazing', declared the Head of The Legacy Unit of the 2010 OC; *'I mean, I read in so many papers people saying that it was the first time ever that they felt so united'*. CoCT's 2010 Technical Director also spoke for many when he explained how crime over the World Cup period reduced dramatically, which meant that everyone was united. The director explained how he witnessed a unity from *'the guy selling the newspaper on the corner, to the taxi driver, to the security guard, to the doctor, dentist; we were all of one and proud to be South Africans to host that event'* (Allen *et al.*, 2013).

Although successful in uniting the South African nation, the World Cup has failed to maintain this cohesion, as evident within the NDP 2030 chapter fifteen. Nation brand strategies that are aligned to corporate brand strategies and incorporate the internal stakeholder (citizen) would ensure social cohesion that does not lose traction, thus contributing towards the NDP 2030 goals. This feeling of social cohesiveness does not have to be fleeting, as some proponents of nation branding claim that brands (whether national or product brands) may give a fresh sense of belonging that addresses both individual and societal needs, allowing individuals to find meaning in who they are. Specifically, within South Africa, it would help South Africans to unite by belonging to a South African purpose as opposed to a political party or ethnic group as these have contributed towards the Apartheid period already discussed (Browning, 2016).

The South African government has, in the past, attempted to unite the nation through metaphors, such as the *Rainbow Nation* as well as the major sporting events as already discussed. However, these have not seemed to maintain the spirit and sense of cohesion amongst the citizens. This may be as a result of the external focus, nation brands tend to have, where the concern is external perceptions by others. As a result, cohesion then becomes a result of, and not the main focus of brand building.

Important to this study, is the strategic involvement of citizens as internal stakeholders within strategic nation branding activities. As was already established, nation brands that are not strategically aligned to corporate brands then tend to neglect the internal element when planning strategic nation brand activities. It is therefore important to once again examine how strategic corporate brands achieve levels of consistency within attempts of building cohesion amongst employees as compared to nations that fail to maintain the same.

3.6 Cohesion: The corporate brand vs the nation brand

In the case of corporate branding, to ensure a sustained cohesion informed by the brand, the organising practices ensure that there is an 'authority' to develop and manage the corporate or product brand, with the right to allocate the necessary resources as requested and with the power to impose the brand on employees (as

part of the organisational culture in the best case) ultimately ensuring (through branding exercises) that employees understand and adhere to the company's values and keep the brand promises.

This corporate brand approach is not evident within place branding where political and democratic legitimisation of brand values, brand policies and the necessary investment to develop and pursue those is vital as evident within the NDP 2030 objectives of nation building and encouraging social cohesion. Braun, Kavaratzis and Zenker (2013) relate that the lack of a nation brand manager (as evident within the corporate environment) to the two following reasons: (1) like in all other policy measures - because local authorities have to explain, justify and defend their place branding related actions against several types of political controls imposed by democratic systems. (2) the place brand, its values, propositions and all measures that communicate the brand must have the agreement, support and assistance of local people in order to be effectively developed (Braun *et al.*, 2010).

The involvement of all stakeholders, specifically the internal stakeholder, which is important to this study, remains relevant. As was previously mentioned, nation brand strategy is capable of aligning with corporate brand strategy in ensuring social cohesion attempts remain consistent and gain traction through the establishment of an official manager who is able to allocate the resources required towards brand strategy and ensuring brand strategy alignment with that of corporate strategy, as was already discussed. The manager would also have the power to impose the brand on citizens as already evident within corporate branding.

The failure to engage the relevant stakeholders, specifically the internal stakeholders, can result in a lack of social cohesion. Place (nation and city) branding processes that fail to include the residents (internal stakeholder) in the development of nation brands and choose to only focus on an external target audience could lead to residence resisting attempts at nation building, which, in turn, makes any initiatives by the government to enhance social cohesion futile.

For example, the marketing effort of the city of Hamburg mainly concentrates on communicating stereotypical images of Hamburg as a 'city on the waterfront', with 'rich' and 'creative' residents, offering a range of cultural programs like 'musicals' to its visitors. This illustration is a perfect match for the perceptions of the external target audience about Hamburg, but it neglects the image that most of its current residents have of the city. These branding attempts led to "in low identification with the Hamburg brand and even in public protests against the place branding activities", for example the 'Not in our Name'-campaign where hundreds of citizens protested against the gentrification caused by the government attracting tourists and the so-called 'creative class'. Residents thus seem to not want to be branded as a creative city and could not identify with the goals of the official place branding campaigns. Due to the limited concentration on attracting wealthy new residents and tourists, this ultimately resulted in citizens not trusting the city government authorities (Zenker & Beckmann, 2013).

Another example of residents resisting forms of nation building is in the form of the so-called 'non-official' or 'counter branding' campaigns. These are grass-roots movements of citizens who in one way or another get together to raise their voice against official place branding campaigns or policies altogether. In some cases, these movements are limited to a series of discussions, or they go further to suggest to local authorities alternative policies, and in some cases, there have even been counter branding campaigns. For instance, when the organisation responsible for marketing the city of Amsterdam introduced their 'I Amsterdam' brand, a group of residents responded with an 'I Amsterdamned' counter suggestion. Perhaps the most well-known example is the 'Birmingham: It's not %\$#@!' website and blog that opposes to a great extent the official 'Be Birmingham' brand developed by the city and suggests alternative policies in several fields (Braun, Kavaratzis & Zenker, 2013).

However, there are different intended citizen grass roots branding like in Budapest, where the residents' associations of the 'I love Budapest' campaign has actually played a catalytic role in the official marketing strategy of the city. A campaign is described to be "a series of planned activities that are intended to achieve a particular social, commercial, or political aim" (Oxford Languages, 2018). Within the context of branding, this refers to the activities and supporting collateral formulated to execute a particular branding activity.

The association started as a group of residents who indeed loved Budapest and felt that they should react to several policies implemented by the local authorities (as much as to the lack of certain needed policies). Interestingly, the main initiator of this movement ended up heading the then newly set up city branding office in the Budapest City Hall (Braun, Kavaratzis & Zenker, 2013).

According to Parkerson and Saunders (2005), who examined the cases of Birmingham, there are several explanatory factors for non-official branding. These are (a) image gaps (the gap between the perceptions of the residents of their own city and the image of the city suggested by official promotion), (b) the visual appearance of the official brand/logo, (c) citizen's involvement and ownership of the brand (or rather the lack of it) and (d) the existence and characteristics of an official branding effort. All the above are indicative of what happens when the residents or specific groups of residents are left out of the decision-making and brand-development process.

The examples are indicative of the problems caused by the exclusion of the internal stakeholder (citizen). Place branding implementation tends to ignore the multi-faceted role of the residents in place branding. (Braun, Kavaratzis & Zenker, 2013). The examples previously mentioned all support the main argument set within this study that nation branding attempts should incorporate the citizen. The South African government should also take heed of these examples mentioned when engaging in strategic nation brand activities. The other complementary argument, which has been discussed already, is that nation brand strategy should align to corporate brand strategy. The alignment of the two strategies will ultimately ensure effective stakeholder engagement with strategic nation branding exercises, as discussed.

Social cohesion within the African continent has been a continuous struggle, especially given the history of colonisation within the continent and specifically the Apartheid system in South Africa that sort to divide rather than unite, as was previously discussed. Since this study is based within the African continent, it is relevant to also examine how other African nations manage nation branding activities aligned to those of corporate branding.

3.7 Nation brand strategies inclusive of stakeholders in select African countries

As was already discussed within the place branding section, some African nations, such as Zimbabwe, are already strategically aligned with corporate branding practices such as Anholt's hexagonal model which assists the nations to comprehend, quantify, and eventually establish a positive national image and reputation.

While '*[b]randing is part of the reason there is such an ever-increasing gap between the developing and developed countries*,' according to Akotia, the Chief Executive Officer of the Brand Ghana Office, Ghana might be able to close this gap by implementing a professional branding program. According to Western branding consultants, building a strong nation brand will attract foreign investment, promote national self-esteem, and even 'enhance citizenship behaviours'. In other words, it is claimed that branding can reduce 'crime and violence, corruption, an unstable political environment, poor safety and security, poor labour productivity, poor public health and sanitation' by emphasising citizens' responsibilities as national brand carriers (ambassadors) and fostering a stronger sense of national identity and social solidarity (Browning, 2016).

As a result, the potential power attributed to country branding is substantial, with branding presented as a relatively simple cure for a variety of economic and social issues. Such assertions also raise problems about what constitutes a successful country branding strategy.

It's worth noting that branding experts and governments in Africa have quite different perspectives on this. Some argue that nation branding is fundamentally about narrative, and that compelling and aspirational branding stories about the country may be sufficient to achieve tangible and material results (Browning, 2016).

Therefore, like Ikalafeng suggests; "people are liable to grow into the national image projected, say "incredible India" long enough and soon the Indians see themselves as incredible and behave accordingly" (Browning, 2016). Others, like Akotia of the Brand

Ghana Office, see national brands as expressions of the 'true self,' and therefore resist change,' but also argue that the brand's identity and values need to be 'internalized through conscious citizenship programs,' which will promote 'appropriate citizenship behaviour' (Browning, 2016). "All stakeholders (people, business, government, academics, political parties) should be unified by the nation's brand vision and shared values to work together and align their behaviour to a single national strategy", to put it another way explains Akotia. Citizens who fail to do so and act "off brand" are committing acts of being unpatriotic and risk being chastised for jeopardising the brand strategy's effectiveness.

Matola emphasises that South Africans "need to unite with one strong voice, committed to thinking, acting and speaking positively about the many things that South Africa is getting right, instead of constantly focusing on the negative and stimulating global negative sentiment" (Browning, 2016). Despite protests to the contrary, such disciplining features demonstrate that, in a nation-branding setting, good governance is more a synonym for the development of order and a stable and secure environment for capital investments than it is for the promotion of a lively participatory democracy.

It is often advisable to focus mostly on the positive rather than the negative, the classic 'glass half full' analogy. Within South Africa, it would be in the citizen's advantage to heed the advice offered by Matola towards a goal of transformation and cohesion. However, this objective cannot be reached without some level of compulsion or dictatorship from an authoritative body as advised by Akotia. Implementing compulsory actions towards social cohesion and nation building through brand strategy may be an option, however, it is also important to consider Ortmann and Thompson (2018) as they note the fact that Singapore is often championed as a successful example of nation branding without the use of force, owing to the cohesion and consistency of its national message, should provide pause for thought in this respect.

Within the African context, in this instant, South Africa - as was already mentioned, fundamental economic, social, and political changes are required for branding to operate. Schoeman and Thuynsma (2016) advise that there is currently no standard index that is able to measure the concept of social cohesion within the South African context. However, the data interpretation (looking at data from both the Afrobarometer survey as well as the four Waves of the National Income Dynamic Study (NIDS), Burns, Hull, Lefko-Everett and Njozela (2018) indicate that a nation's social cohesion seems to be linked to its citizens' economic prosperity. Furthermore, they found that the higher the levels of education, per capita income, employment, and municipal competence (especially at the provincial level), the more citizens seem to trust and respect others and the more willing they are to act on perceived inequality.

Branding, therefore, becomes something that follows and reinforces other developments. Thus, positive brands will only emerge if corruption is addressed, good governance is established, the issues of inequality, poverty and unemployment margins are addressed and, ultimately, new and exciting products for the marketplace is created and launched. Most notable here, is Anholt (2009) who argues that to be successful, nation branding requires integrating the brand story into the development of public policy across the full range of political, social, and economic activities. Thus, if a nation is troubled by poverty, corruption, and insecurity, branding it as transparent, open, secure, and technologically advanced is unlikely to work unless fundamental changes are being introduced to bring this about. From this perspective, branding is best understood as a longer-term venture rather than a quick fix (Fan, 2006), and one where limited claim may be more credible.

Finally, it is also important to note that nation branding generally entails significant disciplining elements that raise questions concerning what a nation brand building approach to development means for the promotion of democracy. Stakeholder engagement remains an issue that stands out. Despite proclamations that nation branding can have positive social effects by promoting national solidarity through providing an aspirational story of the nation, which can enhance the overall sense of national pride, it is important to remember that such processes are not neutral. The reason is that central to nation brand building strategies is the aim of establishing

social consensus around certain stakeholders (Philo & Kearns, 1993; Clouse & Dixit, 2017).

Specific to this study, consensus should be established by the internal stakeholders (the citizen). Once a story and identity have been agreed upon, national identity is solidified around certain inclusionary/exclusionary components. For example, the re-envisioning of South Africa as a 'rainbow nation' could promote multiculturalism (Fawcett & March, 2011; Widler, 2007).

In conclusion, the NDP 2030 does not consider brand strategy, specifically nation brand strategy to be one of the possible solutions that may assist within the set action plans of nation building and promoting social cohesion. Within this study, this oversight is criticised, through the argument that brand strategy has an important function to play for the South African citizen within the set objectives obtained within the NDP 2030. As already stated, nation brand strategy, once aligned to corporate brand strategy, should be inclusive of all stakeholders. The purpose of this study was to propose strategic guidelines when developing a nation brand that could contribute towards the NDP 2030 goals of enhancing social cohesiveness and nation building. Within the planning and formation of the NDP, branding has not been considered as a possible contributor towards the set action plans within chapter 15 of nation building and social cohesion. The NDP 2030 is therefore analysed next in order to understand, specifically where brand strategy could be beneficial.

3.8 The South African National Development Plan (NDP) 2030

The national development plans' background section states that the national planning commission, comprising of 26 experts, was appointed in May 2010 by the then President Jacob Zuma. The aim of these appointments was for the commission to research the possibilities of how South Africa, by the year 2030, could further improve as a state by "eliminating poverty, reducing inequality and developing further cohesion amongst South African citizens since the inception of its democracy in 1994". The commission submitted a report that highlighted both achievements and shortcomings of South Africa. In the report, the achievements are not described in detail; however, the shortcomings are. The two main shortcomings provided as the main reasons for

the slow progress towards reaching the NDP's goals stated in the report, are "the failure to implement policies as well as an absence of broad partnerships". A review of the NDP by *Price Waterhouse Cooper* describes partnerships, in this context, as collaboration between the government and citizens and/or the private sector.

The national development plans' background section further states that the research of the NDP committee took on the form of co-creation as was already discussed within section 2.7 (Brand identity). These different entities who were involved in the process, accepted the research findings as truthful and constructive. Input gathered from the forums and talks led to the formation of the "National Development Plan vision 2030" (NPC National Development Plan vision 2030).

The NDP is divided into fifteen different objectives and there are specific action plans associated with each objective. The last objective in this plan speaks to nation building and social cohesion. Establishing constitutional principles, equitable prospects, redress and inclusion, encouraging cohesiveness throughout society, citizen participation and leadership, and building a sense of community are the action items specified under this objective. Having reviewed the plan, focusing more specifically on the last objective of nation building and social cohesion, it has become evident that the planning and research process by the commission appointed did not include an investigation into the possible role that nation branding can play as part of its nation building strategy. It is argued within this study, that nation branding should be incorporated within the set actions and objectives in chapter 15, which have been discussed previously. Effective brand strategy will contribute towards the set goals within the plans of transformation, uniting society and ultimately building the nation. Nation brand building strategy and the role it plays within the South African context, has been discussed and analysed.

3.9 Conclusion

In conclusion, there are several debates within the literature review that are put forward by different scholars such as Anholt (2009) and Dinnie (2015). Some of these debates include; the origination of branding and how it has evolved into the branding of nations and cities as well as the strategic formation of corporate brands that

encompass stakeholder engagement and the analysis of stakeholder as well as stakeholder theory. The chapter includes debates focusing on both government as well as branding officials and the role they should perform when conducting nation brand building activities that are inclusive of citizens.

The review of the literature highlights the importance of incorporating brand strategy within government's transformation, nation building and social cohesiveness activities. Brand strategy is discussed within the context of corporate brand strategy as these two strategies have been discussed to be similar. However, strategic nation brand building, which forms part of place branding, was found to be misaligned both towards place branding aims as well as when compared to corporate brand strategy (Anholt, 2013 & Dinnie, 2015, Florek & Glińska, 2013).

To be able to contribute towards the objective of this study, which is to develop strategic guidelines to follow when developing nation brands that are inclusive of the citizen, nations should be more aligned, towards corporate brand strategy, as corporate brand strategies analysed are deemed capable of effective strategic stakeholder engagement. However, it has also been established within the literature that nations are more complex than corporates and that a direct comparison should be supported by other debates such as the introduction of sub-branding (such as city brands), which aim to support a nation's strategic objectives.

Ultimately, the debate within the literature expands onto the misalignment nation (place) brand strategies tend to have - which finds them focusing on external factors such as strategies on increasing tourism and business investment. Nation (place) brand building strategies within the literature was described as prioritising numerous activities but most relevant is that place (nation and city) branding aims to develop communities, reinforce local identities, and ensure citizens' needs are catered for within their place of residence, as well as to activate all social forces that stands in the way of social exclusion (Florek & Glińska, 2013).

Numerous examples of nations having successfully incorporated citizens (internal stakeholders) into their nation brand strategy were discussed and vetted. The

commission behind the formation of the NDP should therefore also consider including branding as a possible solution based on the positive outcomes evident within the study, which involve nations applying strategic nation brands that are aligned to corporate brands and incorporate the internal stakeholder (the citizen).

In concluding the literature review, the NDP 2030 - chapter 15, should incorporate nation brand building strategies within the set action items of: Establishing constitutional principles, equitable prospects, redress and inclusion, encouraging cohesiveness throughout society, citizen participation and leadership, and building a sense of community. The stakeholder has already been established as an important link within the objective of the study, which is to develop strategic guidelines in developing nation brands which are inclusive of the citizen. The nation brands developed would then strategically contribute towards the NDP 2030's goals of social cohesion, nation building and transformation. Ultimately, this would inform the research problem, which is the exclusion of nation branding strategies within the NDP, chapter fifteen's objectives.

The research methodologies and design used within the study are discussed, in order to test and measure the findings gathered within the literature review.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The analysis of brand strategy, within both corporates and nations, has been discussed within the previous chapters to be able to support the purpose of the study, which is to propose guidelines for nations to follow when developing brand strategies; guidelines that could ultimately contribute towards the NDP - chapter 15 objectives.

The findings within the theoretical discussion were then presented as a set of points to support the conversation and interview discussion held with both the academic and corporate brand experts.

Within this chapter, the techniques and methods adopted and followed towards identifying the research participants, collecting the data, the data analysis method as well as the steps followed to ensure that the research was done in an ethically sound manner, are discussed. The research design is discussed first, followed by the population and sampling method, data collection method, data analysis method, bias, trustworthiness and ethical considerations. The motivations for the use of the specific research approach are also provided. It is, however, important to first highlight the philosophical approach taken within this chapter.

The philosophical approach taken within the study is that of Interpretivism. Research philosophy refers to the understanding as well as the articulation of certain beliefs gathered during the knowledge gathering process. "Positivism and Interpretivism are the two main research philosophy paradigms. Positivism is associated with quantitative studies, and interpretivism with qualitative studies" (Swadener & Ndimande, 2014). The differences within the two paradigms are evident within the approach when gathering realities within the study as well as the how things are perceived. The nature of the study is accommodative towards interpretivism as it is qualitative. The interpretivism philosophy is discussed further, in order to establish the link of this approach to the study.

4.1.1 Interpretivist Paradigm

The Interpretivist paradigm is described to consider reality to be socially constructed in the sense that it is constantly mediated by individuals' worldviews. Interpretivism is deemed to be a qualitative paradigm as the aim within is to understand how individuals interpret social phenomena. In this context, "interpretivists believe that knowledge is an expected corollary of interpretation by individuals from different perspectives" (Swadener & Ndimande, 2014). Interpretivism was a good fit towards the aim of trying to analyse strategic nation branding through the views, professional opinions, and experiences of the brand experts interviewed.

As advised by Du Plooy-Cilliers (2014) the epistemological position within the interpretivism paradigm is that common sense guides people's daily living and should therefore be thought of as an essential information source when attempting to understand people and phenomena. Interpretivism It is about gaining in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). In the context of this study, the interpretivism paradigm was suitable towards gaining an in-depth understanding from the brand experts of how they believe nation branding could and should be used to contribute towards nation building and enhancing social cohesion.

The ontological position of interpretivism is that people may not necessarily experience reality in the same way. Variables, such as culture and experiences, may contribute towards this outcome where people view the social world as fluid, fragile and constantly changing as people's perceptions change. Within this study, versatile brand experts were selected so as to allow for diverse knowledge sharing based on their lived experiences both professionally as well as citizens within South Africa. Within a nation, such as South Africa, where the citizen is made up of various languages and ethnicities, one cannot begin to measure a study through an objective, external reality experienced by all approach as evident within the positivism. Interpretivism allowed for an internally experienced sense of reality (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014).

4.2 Research Design

A qualitative research approach has been chosen for the purpose of assisting the objectives of this study, which is to propose strategic guidelines for the development of nation brands which strategically incorporate the citizen, thus able to contribute towards the NDP 2030 goals. Moreover, due to the nature of this study, a qualitative approach was regarded to be the most relevant one as it allows for greater capacity to gain greater depth and meaning based on the personal experiences of each brand expert interviewed.

Creswell (2014) describes the research design as a road map used within research to coherently integrate different components, thereby enabling a researcher to effectively address the problems identified. Ultimately, this provides answers towards the questions posed. An exploratory design was adopted for this research. According to Pratap (2019), an exploratory design entails the discovery of research insights within a given topic and does not necessarily provide conclusive answers. Pratap (2019), further highlights the potential of an exploratory design when used within a qualitative study by stating that one is granted the ability to examine research problems in depth. An exploratory design therefore becomes instrumental in researching new problems, especially where there is not much information, or where previously conducted studies are available.

Qualitative research is viewed to be “non-numerical, and commonly used towards gaining underlying reasons and insights into the lived experiences of research participants” (Creswell, 2014; Kothari, 2004). Within the context of the research problem, the research approach is suited towards uncovering trends within opinions and viewpoints of the brand experts.

A benefit, relevant to this study, in the use of qualitative research methodologies is how these methods allow for extensive descriptions of the participants’ feelings, views, and experiences; as well as assist in interpreting the meaning behind their actions (Rahman, 2020). This access to in-depth human experiences, along with all the subjective and personal mannerisms, that characterise individual experiences are

ideal towards accessing the professional opinions on South Africa, the economy and most importantly the government NDP 2030, chapter 15 objectives and how brand strategy could be most beneficial. The author perceived appropriate to utilise the qualitative approach as each expert's experience, both personal and professional would result in diverse and substantial data that would benefit the themes developed.

A qualitative approach does present some disadvantages as well such as leaving the exclusion of context - specific sensitivities and focussing on experiences and meanings, such as the phenomenological perspective, which strives to unearth, interpret, and comprehend the experience of the participants rather than any other imperative issues within the context of the study (Rahman, 2020).

The qualitative method used is discussed further, in order to establish relevance to this particular study

4.3 Methodology

A research strategy is a plan of action that guides a researcher through the process of conducting a study in a methodical manner in order to create credible and trustworthy results. The research strategy used is determined by the nature of the study topic, as this contributes towards determining whether the study will be qualitative, quantitative or one of mixed methods. As was already discussed, the approach within this study is qualitative, hence in-depth interviews with brand experts were employed (Archibald *et al.* 2015; Aspers and Corte, 2019).

In order to source deeper insights from the brand experts, within both academia as well as the industry, in-depth semi-structured interviews were utilised as the data collection research methodology within this study. The experiences and opinions of the brand experts were investigated within the study using Skype, telephonic as well as physical interviews. The process that was followed when interacting with the experts detailed in section 3.9.1.

The brand experts selected for the interviews are among contacts gathered by the researcher through referrals, which is known as snowball sampling. These consisted

of eight brand experts who were from both an industrial as well as an academic field. Saturation had been reached after the eighth participant was interviewed. The requirement to qualify for participation within the study was that they had to be knowledgeable within the context of brand strategy. Experience of having worked on nation branding projects was advantageous. The data collection method and process used within the study is discussed.

4.4 Data collection

Data collection, within a qualitative approach, varies, with the most common methods being focus groups, observations and interviews. In a qualitative study, the sample size is generally small, since the emphasis is on depth and not on breadth, in comparison to a quantitative approach. The focus within qualitative research is on including enough participants in the sample so that the data saturation point is reached and not so much on ensuring that the sample size is big enough to be representative of the entire population. The focus is on how many individuals must be interviewed in order to acquire a thorough grasp of the study subject, because at a certain point, participants stop offering new information because everything is repeated by various participants (Kothari, 2004).

The interviews were conducted in person, via Skype calls or telephonically and the experts were asked the same basic questions. There were eight research participants in total and the researcher allowed the conversation to flow and sometimes probed on the topic in order to allow for deeper meanings and additional insight.

The author recorded the interviews using a Zoom H1n audio recorder. The recorded responses were transcribed verbatim from each individual interview immediately thereafter and captured onto a record matrix for data analysis purposes. Field notes were also made to record the behavioural data displayed by the participants during the interview. The interviews were done in English since it was the most suitable mode of communication for the participants. The research problem was considered throughout the interview process and therefore only relevant questions were posed towards the experts for the purpose of addressing the research questions.

According to Kothari (2004), the selection process of determining representatives from the targeted population is referred to as sampling. Sampling may then be categorised as either probability or non-probability sampling. The latter was more suited to the qualitative approach used within the study.

Kothari (2004) explains that “non-probability sampling, which is used in qualitative studies, has no possibility of any random unit of the study population being part of the study sample size. In this sampling technique, the selection of the samples is deliberate, with the assumption that the samples are representative of the population”. Taherdoost (2016: 22), posits that “the sample of participants do not need to be random, however, a clear rationale is required to include some items over the others”.

The researcher used non-probability sampling with a focus on a combination of purposive and snowball sampling since the branding experts were handpicked because they had knowledge that might provide meaningful information about the research challenge. Purposive sampling, a technique in which a single participant is chosen purposely to offer information that would not be available from other sources, was ideal for the study because the focus is on brand strategy specifically within both a nation and corporate setting. Identifying experts within both these fields was beneficial to the study as it would assist in identifying specific themes and patterns from the responses given. The sample individuals are thus chosen because the researcher believes they are worthy of inclusion (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016).

This option of non-probability sampling is most ideal, as the selection of specific experts that are deemed to have information relevant to the study (brand strategy as well as guidelines for nation brands to adapt) are beneficial. The sample size thus becomes subjective since not all members of the target population had an equal chance to be a part of the study (Kothari, 2004).

According to Charles, Gentles, and Ploeg (2015), qualitative research employs smaller samples than quantitative research. This is due to qualitative research approaches, in which the goal is to gather meaningful information that will aid the researcher in comprehending the diversity, depth, context, or complexity of the subject topic. Following that, the sample size is explored in depth.

4.4.1 Sample and Size

According to Creswell (2014), sample size refers to the number of participants or respondents taken from the target population that are included in research. The population of the study consisted of brand experts residing in Johannesburg and Cape Town, in South Africa. Information about the total population of brand experts in these cities were not available to the author.

The inclusion criteria: prominent professional and academic brand experts who are well known and established within the field of branding such as persons who hold high positions within the branding industry e.g., CEOs, Managing Directors and Global Heads of Departments.

The exclusion criteria: brand experts outside of Johannesburg and Cape Town were excluded as they were not easily accessible to the author. Also, professionals and academics without an established reputation were also excluded from this study. The process followed when interacting with the experts are detailed in section 3.9.1.

4.4.2 Research Instrument

Sileyew (2019: 5) asserts that “the primary data collection instrument in qualitative data consists of field observations, interviews, and informal discussions”. Within a qualitative study, Sileyew (2019: 5) stipulates that “with people who are recognised as being considerably knowledgeable on the subject matter, the interviews become unstructured and in-depth”.

Semi-structured interviews were used as the research tool in this study. "Interviews are one of the most often employed approaches when acquiring qualitative data," (Bauman, Beck, Beck-Gernsheim, Benhabib, Burgess, Chamberlain, Thompson, Chamberlayne, Bornat, Wengraf, and Devine, 2002). These become important as people's expertise, experience, and interactions with a certain topic of research are usually useful as part of the research. The interviews conducted allowed the experts

to share detailed responses aligning to strategy, both within corporate as well as nation branding.

Semi-structured interviews were used for the study because of their capacity to acquire extensive information from the participants' perspectives, experiences, and perceptions. It is also great for gathering information from a smaller number of research participants.

According to Bauman *et al.* (2002), when developing the interview agenda, the following must be considered:

- The degree and breadth of knowledge necessary on a particular topic.
- The scope of work that must be completed.
- Is there a need for a follow-up question?
- What will the next question be?

How will the interviews be conducted?

Bauman *et al.* (2002) insists that “the interviewer must know how to phrase the questions, what words to use and have a planned demeanour when asking the questions to be successful in conducting the interview”. The interview questions were drafted based on the outcomes gained from the literature review. Supported by the research objectives and questions, the literature review findings guided the discussions held with the experts. Bauman *et al.* (2002) states that “it is important for the interviewer to make good use of their senses during the interview, listening, remembering, observing, and achieving a good balance between talking and listening all add value to the interview process”. This assisted in expanding the conversations, where necessary, in order to allow the experts to share beyond the parameters of the specific question, hence the semi-structured approach.

4.4.3 Research setting

The data was collected from brand experts in Johannesburg and Cape Town, which are cities in South Africa. Brand experts from both industry as well as those practicing within the academic sphere were requested to take part in the study. The reason for

selecting these experts for this research study is that some have experience in strategically managing nation brands within industry, while some have experience in researching strategic nation brands within the academic sphere.

4.4.4 Interview Process

There is an option for researchers to use structured, unstructured, or semi-structured interviews. As Kothari (2004) posited, “structured interviews have standardised questions, where an interviewer asks all interviewees the same set of questions. Although rigid, since pre-set questions are read from a script, the organisation and quantification of the findings become straightforward” (Kothari, 2004).

An interviewee's environment and setting influence an unstructured interview process, which has the advantage of making a respondent feel calm and responsive to an interviewer's queries. As a manner of reflecting on the research's problem statement, an interviewee creates, adjusts, and generates follow-up questions.

Semi-structured interviews were used in this study, and they were directed by a set of prepared questions based on identified themes from the literature review. The justification for this approach was that it bridged the gaps between organized and unstructured interviews, allowing for follow-up questions and probes to generate insightful responses. The use of an interview guide aided in the direction and emphasis of the interviews on the topic and issues. The interview guide also aided the interviewer in ensuring that the interviews were conducted in a thematic manner. However, participants were also given the freedom to elaborate on matters or bring new topics into the conversation.

As was already established, the participants interviewed included brand experts based in Johannesburg and Cape Town. Data within this research was acquired through semi-structured, individual qualitative interviews (See Appendix B). Six of the interviews were conducted in person (one-on-one), one interview was conducted via Skype, while the other one was conducted telephonically. The interviews were recorded using Zoom H1n audio recorder. The recorded responses were transcribed

verbatim from each individual interview immediately thereafter and captured into a record matrix for data analysis. The process followed when interacting with the experts are detailed in section 3.9.1.

4.5 Storage and Security of Data

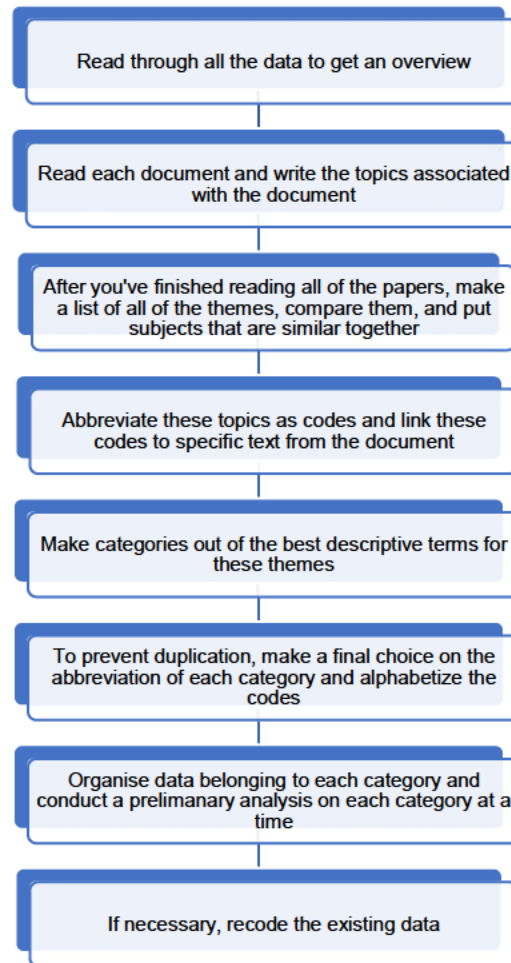
The collected data is being stored in a password-secured laptop and can only be accessed by the researcher. The data will be stored for a period of 5 years, and thereafter, it will be destroyed through cryptographic erasure or data erasure.

4.6 Data analysis

During the data analysis phase, the researcher examined all of the transcriptions in order to acquire a complete picture of the subject. As ideas came to mind, they were scribbled down. A list of all the subjects mentioned in all of the interviews was compiled, and comparable themes were grouped together into important and distinct coded groups. Sarantakos (1998) and Elliot (2018) states that codes are keywords used to categorise or organise text, which is an essential part of the qualitative research process and allows researchers to unravel data towards creating something new. The codes were recorded next to every relevant text, and the most comprehensive phrasing for the themes was identified and organised into categories. Through grouping themes that are linked together, the number of categories was decreased. Each category's data was gathered in a single location. Themes were created to reflect the relationships between the major categories and subcategories. During the procedure, the discovered patterns of correlations were analysed, revealing similarities and differences in the data.

According to Nowell, Norris and White (2017), thematic analysis is useful in giving an overview of the key features of the data collected and also assists the researcher to produce a clear and organised report. Moreover, themes/categories were developed using Tesch's method of qualitative analysis (Tesch, 2013). This method follows an eight-step process of content analysis that is illustrated in Figure 3 below.

Figure 4.1: Tesch eight-step process for content analysis



Source: Adapted from Tesch (2013:142-145)

4.7 Trustworthiness

The manner in which the entire process was carried out must demonstrate a degree of confidence in the research process. Trustworthiness, as defined by Connelly (2016), is a level of confidence in research that develops processes and procedures that provide a research study a level of confidence worthy of consideration by readers and other researchers. Trustworthiness is associated with qualitative studies, with qualitative researchers having agreed on the following criteria as being essential in establishing trustworthiness. They are discussed below:

- Transferability; and
- Confirmability.

4.7.1 Transferability

According to Korstjens and Moser (2018) “transferability is the extent of the applicability of a particular study finding to another context or setting with a different set of participants”. This study and the guidelines developed are transferable within other nation branding activities. There may be differences such as the cultural differences as well as the history of each country – which does influence the nation brand as evident within the study.

4.7.2 Confirmability

According to Korstjens and Moser (2018) "confirmability" refers to proving that the data gathered, its interpretation, and the conclusions made are affected by the information supplied by the participants rather than the researcher's conjectures. This study meets this trustworthiness requirement by disclosing the whole data gathering procedure, as well as how the data was evaluated and analyzed, such that any other researcher may easily check the study's trustworthiness.

4.8 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The notion of restrictions and delimitations refers to the presentation of boundaries and reservations that are common in most investigations. De-limits are the scope of a study as restricted by a researcher, whereas limitations are based on factors over which a researcher has no influence (Kothari, 2004).

4.8.1 Limitations of the Study

According to Swadener and Ndimande (2014), “research limitations are factors or influences that are beyond the control of a researcher – and they impose restrictions on what a researcher can or cannot do in a study”. They are potential flaws in a

research study that a researcher may come upon. In the context of this study, utilising qualitative methods, the limitation was the sample size. This was acceptable within the parameters of qualitative studies as the data reached a saturation point, which was reached during the data collection process. The other limitation was that the researcher is South African, thus creating an opportunity for the research not to be non-bias. This was prevented by the institution's processes of a dedicated supervisor who ensures that the research remains neutral and is always supported by evidence and data collected. The other limitations are listed below:

- A few of the brand experts contacted cancelled the appointment due to the Covid pandemic, thus creating delays, as the research was dependent on participants who are experts in their field.
- It was difficult to achieve a balance between academic as well as industry experts due to a lack of availability of the experts contacted.

4.8.2 Delimitations of the Study

The focus of a study is defined by delimitations. It is determined by what a researcher chose to concentrate on, such as who the population is and what the demographic characteristics are, the sample size, or the study's geographical location (Kothari, 2004). It might also be due to a preference for a certain country, area, or sector as the study's emphasis. One of the delimitations of this study was that the study was based on South Africa. Another delimitation was the population parameters that were determined by the focus within the study, and therefore only brand experts were selected from both industry as well as academia. Most importantly, the focus was on brand experts with some experience developing or researching brand strategy.

4.9 Ethical Consideration

Concerns about how a research study can negatively affect persons, society, or any other study subjects are referred to as ethical considerations. Participants in a study should not be subjected to any injury, humiliation, or situations that make them feel uncomfortable or put them in risk (Creswell, 2012). Ethical issues in a research project need the observance of ethical norms when doing research, which are mentioned below.

4.9.1 Ensuring participants have given informed consent

Participants were instructed on the research's goal, what would be required of them, and their rights when participating in the study prior to the commencement of the interviews. They were also given a participation information sheet and permission form, which clearly stated the study's goal as well as the protocol to be followed if the participant decided to withdraw for any reason (See appendix A). The participants were informed that they might withdraw from the study at any time without providing a reason at any time during the trial. They also had the option of answering or not answering questions if they so desired.

The participants were contacted using by both e-mail as well as a telephone call, when they were requested to take part in the research and the interviews were on average forty minutes long.

4.9.2 Ensuring no harm comes to participants

The researcher took precautions to guarantee that the participants were neither inconvenienced nor exposed to any danger as a result of their participation in the study. This was accomplished by concentrating on the following issues:

- Before being a part of the study, participants had to provide their consent after being offered a summary of what the study entailed.

- There was no deceit in the research design that may have put participants in risk in any way. The participants were allowed to request clarification on any issue or concern they had.
- The author was aware of the participants' names throughout the research procedure, but they were not included in the study, guaranteeing anonymity.
- For research participants, the importance of anonymity and secrecy is crucial because it gives them the confidence to offer information pertinent to the study without fear or anxiety. The information was recorded in such a way that no one participant could be identified as the source of the information or as having taken part in the study.
- Prior to the start of data collection, ethical approval was acquired. This information was collected from the research and ethical committee of the institution (See Appendix A).

4.10 Conclusion

The approach employed in this investigation has been presented in this chapter. It explains why the research methodology, approach, and techniques were chosen, as well as the philosophical framework that this study is based on. The study's demographic and sample size have been established, as well as the justification for the participant selection process. Various sampling strategies and methodologies have been explored, as well as the reason for using non-probability sampling and the mix of purposive and snowball sampling. Ethics and trustworthiness, as well as how they were addressed and attained, were also examined. The data analysis and discussion of the findings are covered in the next chapter. The following chapter discusses the conclusion and recommendations made in light of the problem statement's findings.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The data is analysed and expanded on, within this chapter, for the purpose of establishing further support for the findings established within the study. The findings are important as some of the branding experts clearly expressed very strong opinions on how brand strategy could be instrumental towards the NDP 2030's objectives of enhancing social cohesion, nation building and transformation. The tools and methods used to collect and capture the data within this study were in-depth interviews, both in person and technology mediated, with various brand experts. The interviews were captured and transcribed for data analysis purposes.

The data collected was categorised into themes that relate to nation branding and social cohesion in line with the study objectives. This chapter is therefore divided into three sections, namely: research question, sub-questions and objectives, participant demographics and credentials, the main themes that were identified as well as the discussion of the findings, which then culminate into a conclusion. The interviews that were conducted with the brand experts are reported on and analysed in this chapter in order to provide an in-depth understanding of nation branding and to draw conclusions and ultimately propose guidelines for strategic nation branding activities, which are addressed within chapter 5.

5.1.1 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To propose strategic guidelines for nation brand building to follow when developing nation brand building activities;
- To explain how nation brand building could be incorporated within the NDP 2030 objectives (chapter 15) to contribute towards the creation of social cohesion, nation building and transformation.

5.1.2 Research questions

The research questions posed in the study are as follows:

- What is the relationship (differences and similarities) between corporate branding strategy and nation branding strategy?
- How can sub-branding (region/city/event) strategies contribute towards the South African social cohesion nation brand strategy?

5.2 Demographics of the study

Table 1 illustrates the demographics within the study:

Table 1: Demographics of participants

Participant	Gender	Education	Occupation	Experience
Participant 1	Female	Honours in Arts and Social Sciences	Executive Marketer	Over 17 years' experience
Participant 2	Female	Doctorate in Branding	Brand Strategist	Over 30 years' experience
Participant 3	Male	Postgraduate Diploma in Marketing	Brand Consultant	Over 30 years' experience
Participant 4	Male	Doctorate in Philosophy and Master's in Political Science	General Manager (Nation Brand Research)	Over 20 years' experience
Participant 5	Male	Doctorate in Marketing and Business Studies	Agency CEO (Marketing and Brand Strategy)	Over 26 years' experience
Participant 6	Male	Qualification as Chartered Marketer	Brand Management and Strategic Marketing & Communication specialist	Over 25 years' experience
Participant 7	Male	Honours in Business, Economics and Advanced Strategic Marketing	Agency CEO (Marketing and Brand strategy)	Over 28 years' experience

Participant	Gender	Education	Occupation	Experience
Participant 8	Female	Bachelor's in Marketing	Brand Strategists	Over 15 years' experience

The participants consisted of eight brand experts as illustrated within Table 1. All of the participants have achieved a postgraduate qualification related to marketing, branding, communication as well as business studies. Additionally, it is also detailed that the participants all possess extensive experience within the branding environment that ranges from 15 to over 30 years' experience. Combined, these brand experts have 191 years' brand building experience among them. The table thus indicates that the participants were able to contribute meaningfully, appropriately, and sufficiently towards the study.

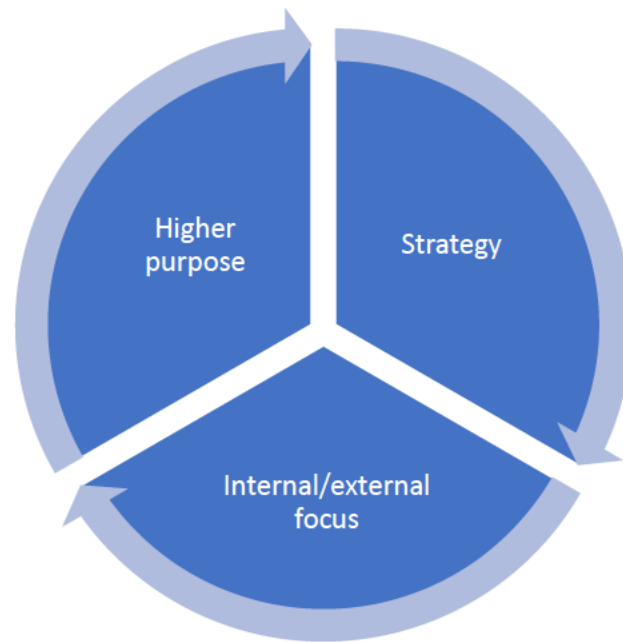
5.3 Themes and discussion of findings

By applying a qualitative methodology using semi-structured interviews, two research questions were answered within this study: 1) What is the relationship (differences and similarities) between corporate branding strategy and nation branding strategy? and 2) How could city brands contribute towards the nation brand building strategy? The results from the thematic analysis applied on data gathered from the eight (8) branding and marketing experts are presented in the next section.

5.3.1 Research Question 1

All the participants seem to agree that corporate branding and nation branding are more similar than different, some expressed it more clearly than others. Three (3) main themes were elicited from the data collected: higher purpose, strategy, and internal and external focus. Stakeholder engagement then became a constant within all the themes. These themes are discussed below in no particular order of appearance in the data.

Figure 5.1: Main emerging themes of the study



Source: Researcher's own adaptation.

5.3.1.1 Theme 1: Higher Purpose

The discussions presented within the literature review as well as the data collected both reveal purpose as one of the prominent strategic brand attributes needed within any strategic brand activity (both corporate and nation brand strategy); regarding the incorporation and support of all stakeholders within the nation or corporate brand strategies. Stengel (2011) defines purpose as an ideal element within strategic branding as it becomes the entities' (nation or corporate) inspiration and motivation for existing because purpose presents an opportunity for the entity to create a higher impact in the world (Stengel, 2011 cited in Hsu, 2017). As already included within the section 2.5, Aaker *et al.* (2004) encompasses purpose within the overall business strategy by advising that it is instrumental in achieving the entities strategic goals.

Almost all participants mentioned that branding is about a higher purpose – something that everyone can sign up for and take ownership of through accepting it as something they respect and admire. One participant captured the essence of this theme precisely, illustrated below as:

Participant 1: "It [strategic nation or corporate brand objectives] should be a higher purpose, that is not attainable but something that we all feel we can sign up for, but that doesn't necessarily make sense to the accountants, the spreadsheet people. The guys on the sales floor, they want to sell something that is tangible, but brands are just that one level higher."

The participants strongly expressed that strategic nation brand building, incorporating purpose, would not be successful within any nation brand building activities without leadership that aims to be aligned to the same strategies. Within the context of the study, the experts discussed the Presidents who have led South Africa within the democratic era and compared them to a chief executive officer (CEO) of a corporate. The discussions were all conclusive that South Africa has lacked good leadership, especially when examining, how purpose would need to be driven by a leader who leads by example as evident within corporate branding?

Leadership in South Africa has been tainted by corruption and an inconsistent track record of service delivery, expressed by the participants. Ensuring a strong purpose for the nation therefore becomes more difficult if the citizens do not fully trust the leadership structures.

Participant 3: "We [South Africans] have no clear purpose. We have the value of Ubuntu, but our other value is corruption. Let us be as corrupt as we can be, full stop. And the other value from government is that we are in it for ourselves."

Further to this, based on the views from the participants, it would appear that they agree that strategic nation branding, specifically, must be designed in such way as to speak to the "man on the street" too, as one of the participants put it. They agree that the purpose developed should be understood by all stakeholders, thus inclusive of all citizens.

Several participants further mentioned that branding is not about the product, rather, branding is about communicating the values, vision, and mission of the company, or in this case, the country. This vision and values are what gives everyone a purpose to follow.

As was already proposed and discussed within the study, strategic nation brand building could be beneficial towards the South African government's initiatives, such as those listed within the NDP 2030 - chapter 15, of enhancing social cohesion, nation building and transformation. However, it is critical to make certain that the nation brand is developed using adequate processes prior to it being able to contribute successfully and as highlighted by the participants, the South African government still need to form a purpose understood by all, as one does not seem to exist currently.

Participant 3: "We [South Africans] don't have purpose and we don't have clear values. Forget about strategy if those are not in place. The strategy is meant to bring us towards that and make us competitive to wanting to be a South African".

Similarly, another participant mentioned that currently, there is no common purpose for South African citizens. The need to establish a common purpose, seems to be strongly linked to cohesion. According to one participant, cohesion through nation branding must focus on what makes us similar, not what sets us apart. One of the participants proposed that employing corporate structures such as external marketing agencies or experts could be a solution for South Africa. "It is marketing's responsibility to shift the narrative from negative to positive in order for citizens to unite", whilst another suggested cohesion can be created by a deliberate and constructive message, with which all citizens can identify.

The comments from the participants were aligned with literature. According to various studies (de Colle *et al.* 2011; France *et al.* 2015; Johnson *et al.* 2017), the case for nation brand building, its goals and its potential, needs to be so compelling to the

various stakeholders so that they could feel that they are part of the bigger picture of the branding campaign.

As was already established, stakeholder engagement is vital within the context of the study. The inclusion of stakeholders within strategic nation brand building activities needs to be at the core of the nation brand strategy, thus enabling citizens (internal stakeholders) to also adapt to the overall objective the brand strategy aims to achieve. As was expressed by some participants: the nation brand strategy must be designed in such way as to speak to the “man on the street” too. Failure to achieve this inclusion may unfortunately result in a lack of support from the internal stakeholder (citizen) as already evident within the case studies reviewed within the literature review section.

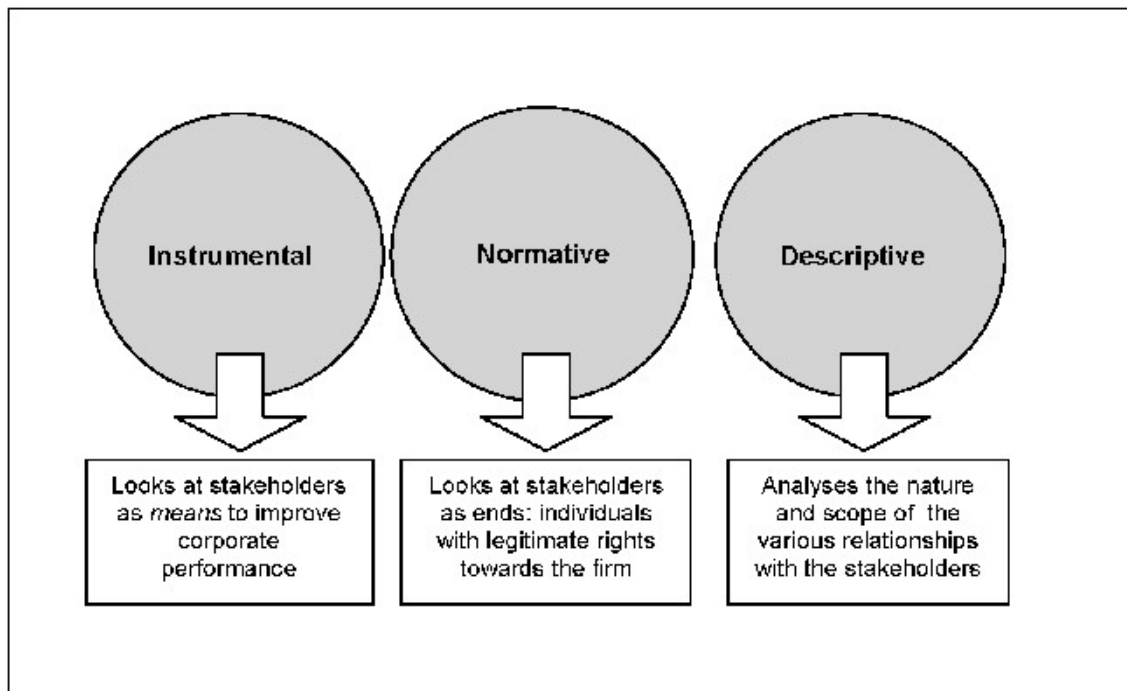
One of the participants – Participant 4, argued that:

“Most of the projects initiated by a government are noble and aimed at helping the citizens of the country, however, lack of participation by the people deny such initiatives the drive that they need to achieve its goals.”

The sentiments of this participant echoes those of the others who shared such a position as well as those from scholars such as de Colle *et al.* (2011) who also emphasise the involvement of stakeholders in decision-making as guided by stakeholder theory. The scholars elaborated on the stakeholder involvement by stating how critical it is for the nation brand building strategy to be able to communicate to the citizens of a country in a manner in which they are going to benefit as this would provide them with the impetus of providing the government with the much-needed support in achieving its goals.

Figure 5.2 below, based on stakeholder theory, illustrates the significant position of stakeholders in any given initiative. The figure is discussed in detail below.

Figure 5.2: Three approaches to stakeholder theory



Source: de Colle (2011)

In relation to the findings of this study, Figure 5.2 above indicates the critical position of appreciating the position of stakeholders and ensuring that they have fully understood the goals of a brand building campaign, since they are instrumental in the success of a nation branding campaign. Although focussed on stakeholders within a corporate, Figure 5.2 above, can also be referenced for strategic nation brand building activities, specifically the normative and descriptive approaches. The instrumental approach has a focus on how corporates profit, based on the relationship the corporate has with the stakeholders, this strategy is therefore not applicable to nation brand building.

The normative aspect of stakeholder theory is to acknowledge and appreciate that as citizens of a country, a government has an obligation in involving them in any brand building initiatives in the way corporate brands manage to incorporate employees. Various examples have been included within the literature review section where corporates adhere to the principle of including employees in brand building strategies

and nation brand building strategies do not. The ramifications of such exclusion are evident within the case of both the Hamburg and Amsterdam examples discussed within the literature review section.

The normative aspect of stakeholder theory also has to ensure that stakeholders, both internal and external, stand to benefit. To this end, a nation brand building strategy has to be very clear on how its stakeholders stand to benefit, and the role they are to play.

The descriptive element of stakeholder theory is about appreciating the fact that various stakeholders have different interests, in relation to what they expect to benefit. The descriptive strategy should also use these differences and relationships among stakeholders to bridge the social-cultural, and economic gaps amongst its internal stakeholders in South Africa.

The higher purpose theme emerged as one of the prominent discussions within the study. Most evident within that was the intricate inclusion of stakeholder engagement within nation brand building strategies. Nation branding strategies developed with all stakeholders included are said to benefit a level of support towards the set purpose from the nation's stakeholders. Purpose, as a strategic element, has been described to be unmeasurable since the essence within this notion is to inspire and motivate. The measure is, however, evident when citizens are made to understand the nation brand's purpose through them being involved in all the strategic nation brand building activities formed.

South Africans will believe in a common purpose for the country once government (as well as the experts recruited to assist in forming nation brand strategies) involve them when developing plans and strategies. The critical aspect is, however, leaders (government) that will aim to also practise, alongside the citizens, the same purpose defined within the set nation brand building strategy. As was already discussed, the success in attaining traction towards citizens' support towards the set purpose is dependent on how the leaders of a set nation choose to conduct themselves.

5.3.1.2 Strategy

Strategy remains a consistent discussion within the study as evident within both the literature review as well as the data collected. All participants mentioned that brand building needs to happen on a strategic level as this gives direction to all stakeholders, including citizens. One participant suggested that strategic brand building provides the operating model for a country or a company to use and everyone must follow the given direction. They agree that this is similar to employee engagement and internal brand building. In fact, many participants stated that citizens need to be intricately involved in brand building, similar to how employees need to be engaged with their corporate brand. Employee engagement is important to fulfil the message of the brand that is communicated to customers and potential customers. In addition to citizens, most participants in this study emphasised the significance of engaging all stakeholders in nation brand building. Most participants agree that stakeholders in both private and public sectors must be involved as clearly expressed by participant 2.

Participant 2: "Every stakeholder group needs to be engaged, needs to participate, [must] have the opportunity to engage with what that ecosystem or what the brand stands for and hopes to achieve all the time."

Some participants highlighted that for nation brand building to be effective, good leadership is needed – leaders need to live the brand values and set the example. Some participants referred once again specifically to the political leadership of the time, which, according to them, have been detrimental to the South African brand. Many participants highlighted that good leadership is important in both public and private spheres.

Participant 6: "[The brand] has to have vision, it has to have a set of values, it has to have leaders, ethical leaders, not just any leaders but ethical leadership and that leadership has to endure a 360-degree view of the brand."

Similar to how corporates build brands, the strategic intent of the brand built by the nation as well as the leadership will set the scene, not only for designing a good strategic plan, but also for the implementation and execution of the plan, how it is managed, who is held accountable and how progress and success is measured.

The strategic plan, its management and execution, who is accountability for what, and how progress and success will be measured are all aspects that must form part of nation brand building as suggested by some of the participants.

Participant 5: "Our problem is we probably have a lot of that documented as a framework, but we are not managing that process from an implementation point of view. It comes back to that: where is the accountability, where is the measurability, where is the consequence?"

The differences between corporate brand building and nation brand building come through in this theme where some participants say nation brand building is far more complex than corporate brand building and it is much more difficult to control, especially when examining the aspect of the complexities around involving citizens (in a nation) versus an employee (in a corporate).

Participant 2: "The performance mandate for the corporate is that corporates attract the particular profile of employees, whereas within a nation brand we have so many different stakeholders, a heterogeneous nation which is a vastly more complex process of building the internal brand and ensuring that every single one of your nation brand internal stakeholder groups and citizenry all feel connected, all feel recognised, all feel supported, in their contribution and their takeout."

The other measure of complexity between a nation and a corporate was the evidence of incentives.

Participant 5: “The fact that one gets paid a salary, everyday it then means there is a certain license to request of one what to do in order to earn that salary. “SA Inc” is slightly different because we have a lot more complex and moving parts, a lot more dimensions to it.”

The conclusion that nation branding is far more complex than corporate branding is also evident within the literature review. The participants did, however, consistently highlight the stakeholder when drawing comparisons of the complexities between nation and corporate brand building.

Participant 2: “...with a nation brand we have so many different stakeholders, a heterogenous nation which is [a] vastly more complex process of building the internal brand...”

Participant 5: “Of course, this would be a much bigger job because in a corporate space there is a bit more control, the senior corporate team manages and controls that entity and have a lot more jurisdiction in shaping and unifying.”

One participant mentioned that one difference between corporate and nation branding is: citizens cannot be mandated to follow the brand culture, yet employees can. One participant said it is necessary to legislate nation brand building in South Africa, because political stakeholders are not mandated to follow the brand culture or to account for any reputational damage.

Participant 4: “.... The debate we’ve been having, and it may be a direction we have to move to at some point, is to legislate. Or get a firm cabinet resolution again, but part of that cabinet resolution we already know – we need to either go into legislation or the cabinet needs to say: this is not a choice, you have to.”

Accordingly, some participants propose, rather than like a Marketing Department reporting to the Executive Committee in a company, any nation brand building agency must not report into a political structure or politically motivated committee.

Participant 6: "...I don't think that anybody should be entirely reliant on government because when you have a body like the Brand SA or what we call the International Marketing Council of SA, it reports to politicians and when it reports to politicians who have stuff to hide, that body can never do its work."

One participant also highlighted that corporate brand building differs from nation branding in as far as it is much easier to recognise when a company loses top talent and act upon that knowledge, whereas in a country-wide context, it is much more difficult to recognise the loss of citizens due to emigration.

The findings of the study also shed light on the critical role of having a good strategy in nation brand building, arguing that (Participant 5),

"It is important as it will provide the government and other stakeholders a sense of guidance on how the country's branding should be carried out".

Such sentiments are captured by France *et al.* (2015) who posits that having a good strategy would provide clear outlines of measurable goals; assisting on evaluating the progress of the campaign, and adapting to approaches when need be. A way of achieving this is by having clear strategic objectives of the nation brand building activities, and then having a realistic approach in achieving them.

Participant 3 noted that:

"If the government wants to succeed in nation branding and its NDP Vision 2030, they have to show the people how they stand to benefit them. It should also be goals that they can achieve, rather than having white-elephant projects, where millions of taxpayers' money is sunk."

Another view, by Participant 4, noted that:

“A good strategy on blending nation branding with the NDP vision 2030, is to make sure that the goals are clear, relevant to the ordinary citizens, and are clear as to when and how they will be achieved.”

Such views, shared by other study participants, highlights key components of a successful nation brand building campaign. These goals, derived from such views, are that it is important to have clear and measurable goals, which will help the stakeholders in understanding and supporting the government initiatives. It will also be easier for stakeholders to understand the role they are expected to play. The views highlighted also focused on the need of articulating to the stakeholders the impact of their support, and any potential gain which is in it for them. These will motivate the stakeholders in being supportive of the nation branding campaign.

Other factors, as revealed by the research findings, is the need of having a strategy that is attainable, with a participant as quoted above, indicating that there is no need having a project which will be ‘still born’. As France *et al.* (2015) noted, a good strategy should have relevance, and it must be possible to track and monitor its progress. These are important factors that a government has to focus on when developing a nation brand building strategy - if ever a government expect to get support for the strategy.

5.3.1.3 Internal and external focus

The analysis of the views from the participants indicates a strong position on the need for the inclusion of stakeholders in any nation brand building campaign initiative, with some participants arguing that there is an internal and external component to nation branding, which is similar to corporate branding. According to one of the participants, internal service delivery is essential in managing the external reputation that South Africa has.

The inclusion of citizens (internal stakeholders) as well as the support gained from them can only be beneficial towards any strategic nation brand building activity, such as citizens intentionally welcoming and accommodating tourists and confirming the nation brand image portrayed through a lived experience. Within the African context, in this instant, South Africa - as was already mentioned within the literature review, strategic nation brand building can only work on the back of fundamental economic, social and political changes such as ensuring consistent service delivery to South Africans.

Aligning to the literature reviewed, Anholt (2013) support this notion as well through the argument that to be successful, nation branding requires integrating the brand story into the development of public policy across the full range of political, social, and economic activities. Thus, if a nation is troubled by poverty, corruption, and insecurity, branding it as transparent, open, secure, and technologically advanced is unlikely to work unless fundamental changes are being introduced to bring this about.

Internal service delivery thus becomes an important hindrance towards achieving support of nation brand building initiatives from the citizens, as expressed by one of the participants.

It is also about balancing the varied interests of all the stakeholders – both internal and external. Such views are anchored in the underlying principles of stakeholder theory, which emphasises the involvement of all stakeholders (internal and external), if an organisation is to achieve its goals. Figure 5.3 below illustrates the various categories of stakeholders in nation branding, which tend to focus on internal and external stakeholders, ensuring inclusivity.

Figure 5.3: The Nation Brand Hexagon



Source: Anholt (2009)

As already established, governments do tend to focus on the external factors when conducting strategic nation brand building activities such as increasing tourism and exports. Important to the study is the inclusion of the internal stakeholder (citizens). A formidable channel effective in communicating a nation's complexities are the nation's people. Citizens of a nation are able to embody ambassadorship passionately for his or her country and city, not only the selected celebrities, diplomats or politicians but the ordinary citizen (Anholt, 2009).

Stakeholders should ultimately be viewed as interrelated with a nation or a company towards a shared vision of the brands success (von Wallpach, Hemetsberger, & Espersen, 2017). As Participant 6 noted:

“Branding is all about the formation of values, visions, and goals of the stakeholders, and not of those spearheading such initiatives. If South Africa has to succeed with vision 2030 of the NDP, then it has to consider those who matter most – stakeholders.”

It is also about incorporating elements of branding that would contribute positively towards the ultimate goals of nation brand building such, as the governance of a country – with good governance being a pulling factor to investors, and also a mobilising factor to the citizens. Others are tourism, culture, and heritage that could be used in drawing global interest to a country, while shaping perceptions of such a country. The people and exports of a country, as the participants expressed their views, are central in making any brand strategy a success.

“If the people of a country are not with the government, on the issue of nation branding, the NDP of vision 2030 will not be achieved,” argued Participant 4. “Our products and services have to be of a higher standard, but this all depends on how our politicians and other leaders govern the country,” as Participant 6 explained.

Anholt (2009) also emphasises the significance of inspirational leadership in ensuring that the shared common vision and purpose by each stakeholder of the country's future and identity is sustained.

Other views from the participants are reflected in the words of Participant 3;

“Internal brand building and external brand building are ultimately about brand reputation. So, what is the reputation of South Africa from the viewpoint of our citizens and what they told us at the voting polls?”.

The views expressed by Participant 3 are based on the low turnout in numbers of the citizens that came out to vote in a recently held national government election. The sentiment within the country (internally) is that citizens do not have a common purpose and therefore chose not to participate in any initiative where the purpose and brand (country) reputation is not positive.

In examining the internal and external focus theme further, one participant highlighted a difference in that destination branding is not the same as nation branding. In fact, it was pointed out that destination branding must not impede the nation brand message.

Participant 7: “The destination brand is different to the nation brand. Inside, a nation brand is not just the destination but also Commerce, FDI, social values exchange, community development (all of it)”.

When conducting strategic nation branding activities, the focus should be shifted to only focussing on the nation as a destination as this causes regression in the nation brand strategy developing a focus on tourism through promoting the nation as a destination. Participant 7 further advises that a nation offers more, including a destination.

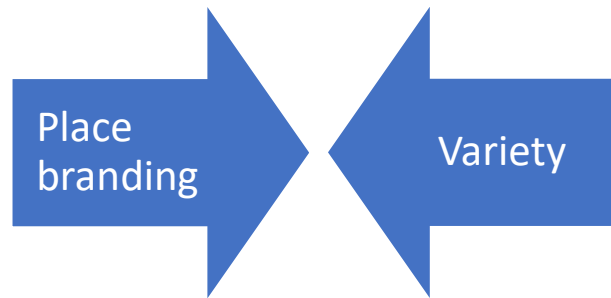
Referencing corporate identity elements once again – the logos and use of the logos in communication material – one participant highlighted the importance of stakeholders using the logos within the prescribed framework when communicating internally or externally as this also influences reputation. Currently there seems to be no uniformity within the collateral used by cities or provinces when interacting both internationally as well as internally. This may cause some level of reputational damage as the documentation may appear to be fraudulent internally or the external stakeholders may not trust that the country operates in unity.

The following section is a presentation of the themes elicited to answer the second research question.

5.3.2 Research Question 2

Research question two was to establish how individual city brands contribute towards the nation brand. One theme of sub-branding was elicited from the data and is discussed within two sections:

1. Sub-branding strategy: nation and city brands
2. Sub-branding strategy: varied approach.



Source: Researcher's own adaptation

5.3.2.1 Sub-branding strategy: nation and city brands

One of the emerging themes from the interviews was the incorporation of city brands within the nation brand building strategy as a means of assisting the nation brand building strategy. The shared views of the participants are that city branding provides a nation with a benchmark and a way of focusing on the strengths of each city – considering that different cities have their own unique characteristics, providing them with their own identity, if, when used strategically, could propel nation brand building towards success. It also stimulates a healthy competition among cities to the advantage of the nation brand building initiatives.

As Participant 5 states:

“Place branding is a good strategy for South Africa to achieve the goals of vision 2030 NDP, as this could provide division of labour, with different cities concentrating on what they are good at, and what could help in nation branding, as the ultimate goal.”

Many participants mentioned that using a city brand should be done within a strategic framework with consideration for differentiation and competitive advantage. Customer experience was proposed by one participant as a means of differentiating one city from another. Similarly, one participant said careful consideration should be given to the touchpoints of the city brand – service delivery can impact negatively or positively on the city brand and therefore the nation brand.

Participant 2: “For us, it's my access to media, my access to legal support, whether I've got a pothole in my road or not, whether I've got access to running water, whether it's a tremendous challenge to take a little person to a clinic once a month. All of those elements are touch points. We tend to just push those back to Brand South Africa”.

Aligned to the problems highlighted within the NDP 2030 chapter fifteen, participant 2 also mentioned similar issues experienced by South Africans from various backgrounds within the country. The incorporation of city branding within nation brand building strategies could utilise these issues mentioned as touch points or benchmarks towards ensuring that city brands assist nation brands in addressing these directly at a city level. Cities have already been identified within the study to relate better with citizens compared to nation brands.

Although recommended, some participants shared that city brands can negatively impact the nation brand through them appearing more superior amongst the citizens. The caution is therefore the imperative inclusion of strategic alignment of stakeholders, in particular government departments, when developing the strategic partnership of cities and nations.

Participant 5: “So absolutely, we can be proudly Jozi, proudly Durban or Cape Town.... each one of these need to be strong in their own right, but ultimately needs to support the hero brand”.

One participant said that a strategic brand partnership between a city and a nation should ensure that all resources and assets are consistent when communicated. Assets such as the logo usage, brand colours or tone of voice in written communication. Many participants mention that there should not be silos, nor any branding work done in isolation – the nation brand message must be communicated in a consistent manner.

Participant 4: “You make the case: here is the corporate identity, you are Limpopo province, we don't mind you doing whatever you

do but as long as you are aligned, because it's better for you and it makes you stronger that you are clearly associated, here's the country and here I am, Limpopo.”

This is particularly relevant for provincial branding, where some participants mentioned having experienced inconsistent messaging from province to province and even forms of cannibalisation – one province or city bidding for investment against another province or city.

Participant 2: “...even on an international stage you would have provinces playing foreign investment off against one another, and how can that possibly be allowed? You cannot have the bigger nation brand eroded for provincial best interest or city best interest”.

The inclusion of cities as sub-brands could prove to be beneficial for strategic nation branding activities as cities are able to incorporate the citizen within the set strategies more efficiently when compared to nation brands.

5.3.2.2 Sub-branding strategy: varied approach

Although participants do agree that city brands function as a form of sub-branding and therefore forms part of nation brand building, the underlying message from participants is that it is not just about the place.

Branding on place alone, excluding the people, is an easier way as it is more tangible, according to some participants, yet there is a variety of elements or symbols that form the brand of a city or a nation.

Participant 2: “They [sub-brands] lie in symbols, they lie in people, they lie in moments of social and collective achievement. But in each instant, we need to link them firmly with the highest level of cohesion. It's the nation's brand's reason for existing. That is the highest level of cohesion that we can achieve”.

Thus, according to some participants, combining place and people in a brand narrative is a better strategy than just using place branding. Similarly, brand messages must stem from various fields such as arts and culture, sport, education, economics and so forth.

Participant 3: “Sport sort of holds us together when you celebrate our teams together”.

Participant 7: “Yes, you could use Table Mountain...you could tell a story about a person that runs the cable car at Table Mountain, tell them about their job but in the background is the Table Mountain, they do not have to be separated.”

Moreover, one participant mentioned that consideration must be given to everyday citizens’ stories, not only to celebrities’ achievements. As suggested by one participant – there is a need for narratives that unite the citizens.

Participant 4: “...the form it takes is to say then what we do through play your part we celebrate South Africans whoever they are wherever they are”.

Sub-branding strategy does not need to be limited to a city. Using the citizens within such strategies could also be beneficial when developing messaging and campaigns aimed for the citizen. Individual stories can be more relatable for the citizens. Events such as sports could also be utilised as strategic sub-brands aimed at supporting the overall nation brand strategy.

5.4 Discussion

The data as well as the literature consulted seem to be aligned regarding the benefits of incorporating brand strategy within nation brand building activities. Moreover, strategy that is aligned towards a balanced inclusion of all stakeholders affected, in particular the citizen of a country, should be included within strategic nation brand building. Ultimately, the research presented supports the objectives set within the

study of including brand strategy within the NDP 2030 objectives (chapter 15) of social cohesion, transformation, and nation building.

As stated by Anholt (2013) and Dinnie's (2015), the relationship between corporate brand building and nation brand building do exist. This is further demonstrated within the data presented, which further highlights that nation brand building stems from corporate brand building and that there are many more similarities than differences between corporate brand building and nation brand building.

The strategic relationship between nation brand building and corporate brand building is evident within the opinions shared by the participants within this study. These opinions also indicate that both entities share strategic elements such as all-inclusive stakeholder engagement, national (or business) values, a purpose, as well as leadership. These opinions further clarify how these strategies form an integral part of nation or corporate brand building. The results gathered further confirm the arguments made within the literature review regarding the importance of stakeholder inclusion and engagement as well as the relevance of brand strategy, currently not included within the NDP 2030 objectives (chapter 15).

The results discussed reveal the importance of applying sub-branding strategies in order to support nation brand building activities. The opinions gathered support the incorporation of city brands as sub-brands for nation brands. It is essential to highlight, however, that the data and literature indicate that the facilitation of nation brand building through city branding requires a prominent strategic alignment inclusive of all stakeholders as well as resources.

These results are reflective of Florek & Glińska (2013) view that place (nation) branding should serve two types of objectives geared towards both domestic and international activities. The objectives are:

1. To minimize social exclusion, communities must be developed, local identities and citizen identification with where they reside must be reinforced; and
2. To achieve a competitive advantage in order to boost tourism and investment.

Similarly, the brand that is communicated to the outside world has to be experienced in the internal environment through service delivery and customer experience strategies. As was already presented by some of the data as well as within the literature reviewed, South African citizens may only support a nation's brand strategies if inclusionary elements are in place, such as consistent service delivery. Ultimately, the focus within nation brand building activities should not only be on managing the external perceptions of the nation but internal perceptions as well.

Florek and Glińska (2013) further supports this by stating that place branding (nation and city) must be done to reinforce local identities and assist in the acknowledgment of citizens within their place of residence to prevent social exclusion. Accordingly, the results confirm that nation and city branding should not only be about the tangible aspects of the place, but about all symbols and elements that make up the place. In a stakeholder engagement context, this includes the stories of everyday citizens as well as stories from other fields such as sports, arts and culture, education, economics, and so forth. By using these personas strategically, branding can contribute towards social cohesion – as it may create long-lasting emotional connections with the audience because these examples can be instantly recognisable and memorable; people can relate to them and they can remain a constant for the nation brand (Crystal *et al.*, 2010).

It is further noted that Matola's 2012 statement of how: 'South Africans need to unite with one strong voice, committed to thinking, acting and speaking positively about the many things that South Africa is getting right, instead of constantly focusing on the negative and stimulating global negative sentiment' is reverberated in this study's results – the focus must be placed on positive aspects rather than negative ones, on South African's similarities rather than their differences, in order to yield positive results towards any efforts in building a brand for South Africa (Browning, 2016).

The purpose of this study is to develop strategic guidelines to follow when developing nation brands that incorporate citizens as part of the planning stage, ultimately contributing towards the South African government's internal goals of transformation, social cohesion, and nation building, detailed within the NDP 2030 (chapter 15). The

proposed guidelines as well as the justification of why brand strategy could be beneficial towards the NDP 2030 objectives (chapter 15) is covered within the chapter that follows, however, it is important to conclude the data finding and discussion in order to develop a foundation for these guidelines.

5.5 Conclusion

Evidence that supports the inclusion of strategic nation brand building within the NDP 2030 (chapter 15) objectives is well presented within the study. The strong indication of a balanced stakeholder engagement is repeatedly evident within the study. The similarities between nation and corporate brand building exceed the differences and this relationship is also presented and supported within the data.

Although a lot more complex than corporate brand building, nation brand building should align to corporate brand building, especially when involving stakeholders. The consensus within the study is that nation brand building plays an important role towards facilitating cohesion amongst the nation's people (stakeholders), especially when service delivery needs have been met - citizens are then able to buy into a strategically formed nation brand story and identity, and as a result, solidified unity and cohesion takes place.

Moreover, supporting the argument that nation brand building should not only have an external focus of managing the external perceptions of tourists and potential international investors, but also incorporate citizen participation, as the exclusion of citizens from strategic nation brand building activities could work against any success the brand wishes to build. Citizens do want to be acknowledged by government and this begins with them trusting government with service delivery before engaging them on other activities such as nation branding.

It is therefore important to be able to summarise the findings within this study in order to ensure that they are easily accessible and, more importantly, clearly interpretable to ensure that nation brand building activities are able to create balanced strategies inclusive of citizens, ultimately able to support the South African government's

objectives of social cohesion, transformation and nation building. The recommendations and strategic guidelines are discussed next.

CHAPTER 6:

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The data analysed within the previous chapter proves to be aligned with the literature reviewed thus supporting the objective of the study. Within this chapter, the overview of the study is discussed first followed by the findings, which expands into the detailed literature and primary research findings. The recommended guidelines as per the detailed findings are then included as follows: strategy; leadership; stakeholder engagement as well as sub-branding strategy. The guidelines are summarised thereafter in order to provide an overview. Finally, the overall chapter overview is discussed followed by future studies as well as the limitations of the study and conclusions.

6.2 Overview of the study

The purpose of the study was to propose guidelines for nation brands to follow when developing strategic nation brand building activities that are inclusive of the citizen. Ultimately, the goal is to provide a justification for why nation brand building should be incorporated within the NDP 2030 objectives (chapter 15) to assist in nation building and creating social cohesion. The specific guidelines are detailed further on in this chapter.

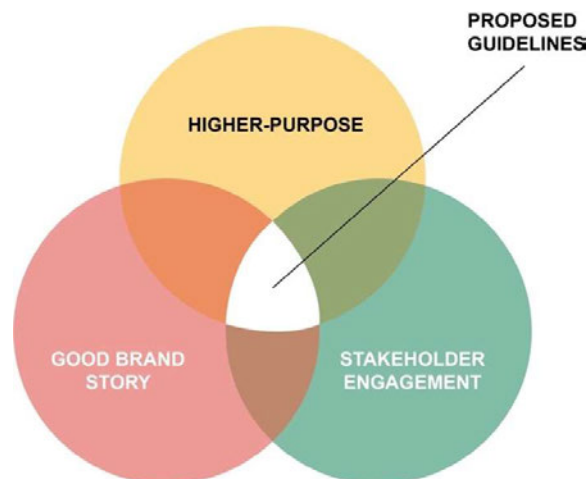
The research questions formulated were: 1) “What is the relationship (differences and similarities) between corporate brand building strategy and nation brand building strategy?” and, 2) “How could city brands contribute towards the nation brand’s strategy? The approach used within the study involved a combination of deductive and inductive reasoning, by allowing the literature review to guide the process through gathering specific scholarly understanding of the subject and then comparing it against data collected through semi-structured interviews conducted with brand experts and adding insights from them inductively.

The varying findings are discussed next in order to help achieve the objectives of the study and to answer the research questions posed within the study.

6.3 Findings from the study

The focus within the study was that of brand strategy, and how it could be incorporated within the NDP 2030 objectives (chapter 15). The analysis of the study's findings indicates that such an undertaking could be achieved by incorporating three dominant themes within the proposed guidelines detailed in section 6.4. The three themes that emerged from the findings were: higher-purpose, stakeholder engagement as well as utilising a good brand story. These three themes have established the foundation for the proposed guidelines to follow when developing strategic nation brand building activities inclusive of citizens. The foundation for the guidelines can be visually presented within a Venn diagram where the overlapping areas of the circles (themes) create a common area that allows for the formulation of the guidelines to follow as illustrated in Figure 6.1 below. Most importantly, as already established, it is crucial for the nation brand strategy to be able to elaborately show how the various stakeholders are expected to fit into the bigger picture, and also illustrate the potential benefits of such a campaign for the stakeholders concerned.

Figure 6.1: The three themes emerging from the findings



Source: Researcher's own adaptation.

The most significant themes that transpired from the analyses were those evident within brand strategy. The strategies utilised within corporate branding should be the same as those used for nation brands. Nation brands, which aim to fully incorporate stakeholders (particularly the citizen), could see success in terms of contributing

towards the creation of social cohesion efforts. When analysing the governments' objective patterning to social cohesion within chapter fifteen of the NDP 2030, the government acknowledges that combating the unemployment, poverty and inequality challenges is critical towards building social cohesion within South Africa. Service delivery, accompanied by the incorporation of good leadership would be vital towards creating some resolve for this issue. As was already established, citizens will, however, tend not to support any government initiatives (nation brand building) unless there is a level of consistent in the delivery of services, thus there needs to be something in it for them to gain. Stakeholder engagement has remained prominent within the three themes that emerged from the findings. The proposal set within the study of incorporating brand strategy towards the set objectives listed in the NDP 2030 chapter fifteen would then only be successful if stakeholder engagement is included.

The strategic brand elements, now identified as themes within the findings, such as higher-purpose and a good story would then be more effective when implemented within an environment where there is already satisfactory service delivery for the citizens.

The South African government also acknowledges, within the NDP 2030 objectives, that society needs to come together in support of an image of a more prosperous South Africa. Upon examining the three themes emerging from the study, the higher purpose as well as a good story could assist the government towards formulating the vision mentioned within the NDP, but packaged as a strategic nation brand, accompanied by a strategically crafted brand story and supported by the higher purpose created for the country. It is also worth mentioning that - as was already established - cohesion is eminent once the collective citizen believes in a common purpose. Most importantly, this higher purpose should be portrayed, lived, and personified by the leaders in place.

Similar to corporate brands, the aim should be to always include the internal stakeholder (employee/citizen) resulting in successful culture building and brand loyalty from the employees/citizens.

Another interesting finding within the study was the benefit of mirroring the sub-brand strategy within nation brand building activities. Similar to how corporates subdivide certain efforts or product offerings in order to reach different target markets, nations could also take advantage of cities as sub-brands in order to drive the nation building agendas of social cohesion or transformation more effectively. An alternative finding was how nation brands could also utilise national key points or national sports heroes as sub-brands that support cohesion (such as Table Mountain in Cape Town or Saray Khumalo (the first black African woman to ascend Mount Everest)).

The data collected highlighted how people like to see themselves within the set strategic nation brand activity (nation building and social cohesion). This means that the strategies such as sub-branding should not only utilise places such as Cape Town (the city), but also include iconic figures such as Saray Khumalo or more specifically to Cape Town, the employee working at the cableway on Table Mountain, as an example. Table Mountain is one of the iconic landmarks within South Africa. The incorporation of the citizens towards the set strategies of nation building and social cohesion would result in a more positive and sustainable outcome as the citizen will relate more positively towards the set vision and strategy.

Further to this, the critical involvement of the stakeholders in decision-making, in the form of community participation, is also emphasised in this study – noting that for any nation brand building strategy to be successful, there should be an effective model of communication to enhance knowledge of the shared information, and the vision of the nation brand building campaigns. This would provide the citizens with the impetus in providing the government with the much-needed support in achieving the goals of the NDP 2030.

Within the data collected, the opinions expressed were in unison with the literature referenced. The consensus is that strategic nation brand building should aim to be more aligned with strategic corporate brand building especially when analysing the strategic inclusion of all stakeholders.

The agreement within both the literature as well as the data is that corporate- and nation brand building strategies could be seen as utilising the same strategic approaches. Therefore, specific guidelines can be extracted and formulated towards assisting the development of nation brand building activities, which could contribute towards the NDP 2030 objectives (chapter 15).

6.3.1 Findings from the literature

When analysing the literature, one of the factors to be considered are the pillars of nation branding that either already exist for that particular nation or is already relevant to that country. These are distinguishing, unique points within these pillars that matter the most to the stakeholders to understand how they fit in within the bigger picture of a nation. These pillars vary from nation to nation and could be anything from culture and governance to investment opportunities or the skilled workforce that the nation possesses. By ensuring an effective analysis of a nation's unique branding pillars, the process of coming up with a nation brand building strategy becomes less challenging.

A common pillar utilised for strategic nation branding activities by most nations would be culture. Culture is used to then evaluate a nation's identity – what its known for, what differentiates it from others, its unique values, and what stakeholders stand to gain from it. The nation needs to present its culture within a compelling picture, with a marketing narrative aiming to portray an overview on how culture shapes and lends value to the nation brand. An analysis of the literature indicates that a nation that has successfully branded itself, such as the link that Kenya made with tourism, have managed to communicate effectively what they want to be known for both internally as well as to the global market.

The concept of an all-inclusive nation brand building strategy, has also been highlighted through stakeholder theory by R. Edward Freeman, who laid it out in his book "Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach." Freeman (date) promotes the notion of looking at all potentially affected stakeholders with equal status. The emphasises is on incorporating all stakeholders in brand building, internal and external, and involving them in different ways, as a way of identifying their needs and expectations. The rationale for the inclusion of external stakeholders is because of

shaping their perceptions of the country, and most importantly, it is in making the country attractive to them in terms of their needs, while for the internal stakeholders, the literature shows that considering that a government's functions and its primary existence is to provide governance and public services to its citizens, and those who live in the country – the citizens – have a right to participate in such an undertaking. They are also critical to the success of a nation branding campaign.

There is also a need for having an effective communication plan that would connect the various stakeholders with the government – and although it is not practical to reach each and every stakeholder, an effective communication plan should all be about the sharing of information with the stakeholders, on a regular basis, while providing them with a forum for their feedback and participation. Failing to have a good communication plan could result in the disengagement of the stakeholders with the nation brand building strategy, or even not offering their unwavering support to the government initiative.

The literature shows that successful nation brand building brings about benefits in terms of the Country-of-Origin effect (COO) and this is an enhancement to the products and services produced in a country – since the country is rated highly and perceived positively. Such benefits could bring about social-economic growth and even political stability in a country. Examples of countries that have grown due to COO are Japan, Germany, and Switzerland.

Ultimately, the findings from the literature indicate that strategies used in corporate brand building are also relevant to nation brand building, and they provide a country with a starting point in laying down a nation brand building strategy. However, a government approach is much broader since it has varied interest groups to address their needs and expectations.

6.3.2 Findings from the primary study

The focus within the study has mainly been on developing a nation brand building strategy that could be incorporated within the NDP 2030 objectives (chapter 15), in order to assist with nation building and promote social cohesiveness among South

Africans. The analysis of the primary data indicated various factors that have to be taken into consideration for a nation brand building strategy to be successful. One of the key findings is the need of having compelling traits or values that could mobilise and drive the stakeholders to align with the goals set within the nation brand building activities. The success of nation brand building activities could be achieved if stakeholders (especially citizens) stand to gain from such initiatives. The stakeholders have to buy into the brand building agenda, they also need to appreciate the benefits in the short and long term of the nation brand building campaign. The conclusion that can therefore be drawn from the evidence is that any nation brand building campaign that fails to mobilise its stakeholders around its vision, risks lacking the support of the very same stakeholders a country intends to be the beneficiaries of such initiatives. However, winning the support of the stakeholders would involve establishing effective communication metrics on what the nation brand building strategy is.

The results within the study indicate that a good brand building strategy is critical towards the success of a nation brand building campaign. The strategy should be attainable, so that efforts and funds are not wasted, and this could be achieved if the campaigns are measurable through progress tracking. The attainability of an inclusive and successful nation brand is possible when the strategy includes the conduction of a stakeholder analysis and ensuring the inclusion of both internal and external stakeholders in the project. The emphasise within the findings is thus the establishment of an effective communication plan and strategy, inclusivity, and a clear focus on what a country should be identified with in terms of its available resources and its capacity to make use of them.

A nation brand building strategy, according to the findings of this study, should focus on the internal and external push and pull factors – this includes the inclusion of stakeholders' needs and expectations and ensuring their participation in the nation brand building activities. From the perspective of internal stakeholders, a country must increase the quality of its services to its residents. Facilities, policies, and infrastructure, focussing on things such as health, education, security, investment opportunities, and the living condition of its citizens, need to be improved. The findings

show that a good focus on external stakeholders would ensure that their needs are met, and that the country is competitive within the global market.

The primary study findings put a spotlight on city branding as part of the nation brand building strategy, citing it as a means of achieving nation brand building, as it could provide a nation with a benchmark and a way of focusing on the strengths of each city – considering that different cities have their own unique characteristics, providing them with its own identity, if, when used strategically, could propel nation branding to success. It also stimulates a healthy competition among cities to the advantage of the nation brand building initiative.

The findings gathered and analysed within the study have contributed towards the extraction of some guidelines that could be followed when developing nation brands. The ultimate objective would be for these nation brands to be able to contribute towards the objectives listed within the NDP 2030 (chapter 15). As was already established within the study, that nations are more complex than corporates, it is acknowledged within the study that not all the suggested guidelines may apply to all nation brand building activities. The recommended guidelines are summarised in Figure 5.2 and then discussed in detail thereafter.

6.4 Recommended Guidelines

Nation brand building activities, inclusive of all stakeholders, should aim to incorporate the following guidelines when developing strategic nation brand building activities (Figure 6.2):

Figure 6.2: Strategic nation brand building guidelines



6.4.1 Strategy

The findings within both the data collected as well as the literature reviewed indicate that building the brands of nations, similar to corporates, has an external as well as an internal focus. Within the context of nation brand building, the external brand would be the strategy of attracting tourism, foreign investment and trade. The internal brand focussing on the citizens as internal stakeholders towards ensuring that they are engaged within the set nation brand activities – ultimately support the external efforts initiated by the external brand. As was already established, the citizens will only support strategic nation brand building activities once they are fully engaged on all levels, including service delivery, initial strategic planning as well as all economic activities planned, including all profitable gains yielded through such activities.

Leijerholt, Chapleo and O'Sullivan (2018) advise that internal brand strategy promotes alignment between the corporates' goals and values to those of the employees, thus improving how employees identify with the corporate brand as well as their commitment and loyalty. The nation brand strategy has already been established to be similar to a corporate brand strategy along with employees being comparable to citizens. It is therefore advisable for strategic nation brand building activities to incorporate the following corporate brand strategies within the internal nation brand developed in a clear and structured manner in order to ensure alignment between citizens and the nation brand:

- The purpose and vision of the nation brand
- The values associated with the nation brand
- The personality and voice of the nation brand

Purpose and vision: The nation brand purpose and vision should allow the nation to clearly define what the country stands for. Kramer (2017) equates this process of defining the purpose and vision through understanding the intelligence element within the entity (nation). The intelligent element supported by the other two elements of information and knowledge helps to identify the purpose and vision to be developed for the nation brand (Figure 6.2).

The information element is set to represent the most tangible nation brand elements such as the specific people tasked with certain responsibilities, the actual description of the responsibilities as well as when these may or may not be carried out (what, who, where and when). Applicable to South Africa would be detailing that South Africa is a country (what) situated within the African continent (where).

The knowledge element articulates the processes followed as well as the infrastructure already in place in order to clarify elements that are already in existence and functioning for the nation brand to promote or include within the strategy. This would be governance, policies, and/or the gross domestic product (GDP). Kramer (2017) expresses that the knowledge elements is also known as the "know-how". These are attributes that the country can confidently state as tangible facts that they

are able to offer any prospective investor or tourists (external stakeholders) as well as all citizens from the country (internal stakeholders).

The “know-why” is then evolved from the knowledge element (know-how) and is clearly defined within the intelligence element. The “know-why” is a clear reason for existence for the entity (nation) supported by the values, the “why” defines why brands exists and ultimately defines the purpose. The focus within the intelligence element is the uniqueness that can be highlighted within the nation such as how the nation maintains governance and policies and may even go further to highlight how the history of that nation may have presented the country with the current structures and amenities in place.

The three elements ultimately should then be driven by the intelligence element when developing the purpose and vision, the “why/know-why” of a nation brand. Sinek (2009) explains it to be an inspirational approach that has contributed towards more successful corporate brand strategies in the past such as for the *Apple* brand. He advises that the approach should be from the inside out, defining why the nation brand exists first, followed by how the nation brand exists, before presenting the “what”, which is the nation brand being promoted.

In summary, a nation brand example within the context of South Africa were to be created based on the information provided within the NDP 2030, the three elements within the purpose strategy would be as follows:

- **Why/intelligence:**

- South Africa thrives with diversity, ranging from the landscape, mammals from both the ocean and land such as the big five.
- The country boasts with 11 official languages, multiple races, cultures and religions.

- **What/knowledge:**

- South Africa fights continuously to protect the prominent diversity present within the country. Injustices may attempt to create separation

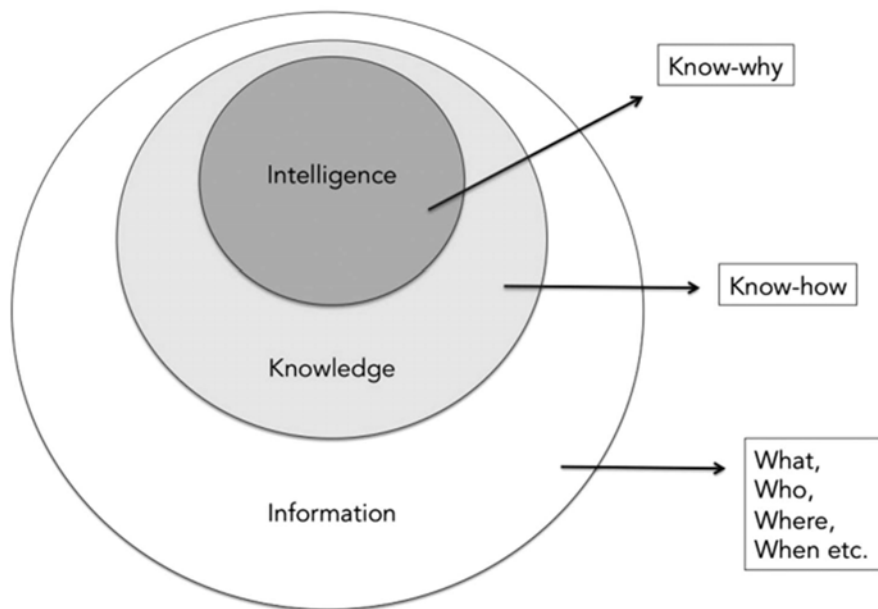
amongst the citizens through identifying and highlighting only the negative aspects of the country.

- Supported by the globally recognised constitution that seeks to protect the diversity that defines South Africa, the country continues to claim its uniqueness within the global market.

- **What/information:**

- We are South Africa, an African country, offering great experiences and a rich history.

Figure 6.3: The new know-how is the know-why



Source: Kramer (2017)

The purposed purpose (higher purpose) for the South African nation brand could therefore be developed to be: We (South Africans) embrace our (South African) diversity because it unites us (as South Africans).

The values aim to support the characteristics developed for the brand purpose. The characteristics are the elements already discussed above, including the values and personality are termed the “brand core” of the brand strategy as they assist the brand to communicate to its audience what the brand represents. Li and Sun (2015) acknowledge that there may be different scholarly views but expresses that ultimately the brand core values are generally considered to be the difference offered by a brand when compared to other brands. They add that brand values define the unique benefits and value offered by the brand to the stakeholders. They define brand values as the soul of the brand, the inner spirit included when building a brand.

Brand values consists of the brand attributes, benefits, value, and personality. The attributes and benefits can be summarised within the values a brand has to offer. Linked closely to stakeholders, values can build or strengthen the relationship citizens or tourists (stakeholders) have with the brand. The relationship, whether emotional or practical, contributes towards brand loyalty from stakeholders (Li & Sun, 2015). In the context of South Africa, especially when focussing on the internal brand and internal stakeholder – the constitution is a good source to help define and formulate strategic nation brand values for South Africa. The constitution has already been included within the NDP 2030 (chapter 15) as a possible contributor towards the objectives of fostering constitutional values and is thus an ideal source when developing the values for the nation brand.

The NDP already considers the Constitutional clause of: “South Africa belongs to all who live in it and seeks to build a society where opportunity is not defined by race, gender, class, or religion” (NPC National Development Plan vision 2030). This value of inclusion and equality inspired by the extract already included within the NDP 2030, chapter fifteen’s objective of fostering constitutional values could be proposed as one of the values to be added within the South African nation brand strategy.

Additionally; within the NDP 2030 the government of South Africa notes that “the key to the country’s unity is in embracing the reality that all South Africans have many identities” (NPC National Development Plan vision 2030). This notion could strengthen the cohesion objective set within the NDP if included as one of the nation brand’s values. This extract from the NDP also aligns with the suggested nation brand element

(why) which is: **Why/intelligence:** South Africa thrives because of diversity, a uniqueness that the citizens could be proud of as diversity is rarely present in other global societies. The South African diversity ranges from the landscape to mammals from both the ocean and land, such as the big five. The country boasts with 11 official languages, multiple races, cultures, and religions.

South Africa is already recognised for having a world-renowned constitution. Recognised globally not only as the most progressive constitution but also transformative as the primary objective of the constitution is facilitating change within politics, the economy as well as social relations in South African (The SA Constitution 25th Anniversary, n.d.).

This element would make for a successful contributor towards the values included within the nation brand developed for South Africa especially because the constitution already includes a citizen focus.

Personality and voice consist of human personality traits that are considered to be also applicable and relevant to a brand (De Wulf, Geuens & Weijters, 2009). Brand personality and voice is termed the “brand persona”, which is what a brand is perceived to sound like or how it is perceived to behave by various people who engage with it. A brand persona could be captured in visual representations such as logos or colours as well as the language style used when developing any communication elements. A brand persona, similar to the brand values, are termed the “core brand” elements and are therefore important within strategic brand building. It is therefore important that a persona and vision for the South African nation brand, including the purpose and vision of the nation brand, is developed based on detailed and thorough research conducted on South Africa, by professional researchers or branding agencies who aim to include within their research factors such as demographics and the anthropology within the country.

The researchers should work directly with the stakeholders the brand is being developed for (the citizens) as evident within corporate branding where employees are invited to also participate within strategic brand building exercises. As already evident

within both the literature and data collected, nations are, however, more complicated than corporates, so co-creation, although difficult to achieve, could be a suitable approach for stakeholder engagement. Co-creation would allow for equal representation from all citizens within the country. Co-creation has been already identified within the literature as a solution towards resolving the inclusion of stakeholders within strategic nation brand activities and could take on the form of, for example, nation brand building workshop inclusive of South African citizens representing the different races, religions, sexual orientation, cultures, age, varying economic scales, business owners (small and big), sub-cultures etc.

Once the experts (agencies) that has been hired to develop and finalise the nation brand strategy (including the brand purpose, vision, values, and personality), key people need to be identified as brand custodians by the selected stakeholders who helped to create the brand strategies through co-creation.

The nation brand strategy should still be protected as it is meant to belong to all stakeholders involved, however, a select few should be granted the position of overseeing that the strategy developed remains consistent and effective as per the initial development. As an example, brand custodians could oversee how the brand strategy remains consistent when a city embarks on a new campaign to attract hosting a global event such as the commonwealth games. Elements developed to support this should still be aligned to the set strategy so as to ensure the nation brand strategy remains consistent. The elected custodian then forms part of the leaders within the nation brand strategy.

As was already suggested within the findings, the nation brand should not be solely led by the government though; instead, all stakeholders should be represented within the leadership of the nation brand. Leadership is discussed next as another important guideline to consider when developing a nation brand building strategy.

6.4.2 Leadership

Within a corporate brand, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) may give direction to certain brand campaigns but the crux of the research, strategy implementation, and resolve mainly sits with the agency hired by the company to assist with all brand strategy activities. Within a corporate, an agency may be granted permission (by the corporate) to make decisions for any strategic brand activity as they are seen to understand the brand strategy better than others.

In the case of a nation brand, as suggested within both the data analysis (Section 5.3.1.1) and the literature reviewed (Section 2.7 – brand identity), the task to make decisions for any strategic brand activity could sit with a designated committee formed through the various stakeholder co-creation engagements suggested. Similar to the direction taken by the research committee when developing the NDP 2030, the committee should include representatives from all stakeholder touchpoints such as the religious community, representation from the various languages and races within South Africa, representation from all political parties, cities, etc.

It is worth mentioning that, as highlighted within the findings, that the brand strategy may not be effective if good leadership is lacking. As was already established within the study, leaders need to live the brand purpose, vision and values and set the example for the citizens to follow. Good leadership, especially within nation brand building, should be accompanied by good ethics and accountability by the chosen committee.

As South Africa is governed by a democratic state, it may be advisable for the committee to be voted in and also cycled within an agreed upon period in order to allow for full transparency and a true focus on the task at hand of ensuring success for the nation brand building strategies.

6.4.3 Stakeholder Engagement

The focus of the nation brand building strategy should be both internal and external – implying that the internal stakeholders should be provided with incentives/ motivation

in supporting such initiatives. This also implies having quality services and facilities in a country that improve the lifestyle of the citizens.

The South African government acknowledges the importance of service delivery in contributing towards the agenda of nation building as detailed within chapter four of the NDP 2030 and also highlighted within chapter fifteen. Basic services such as electricity, water, sanitation, telecommunications, health care, and public transport remain an issue in South Africa where most communities still lack adequate access to these as detailed within chapter four of the NDP 2030. According to the government, the lack of service delivery is mostly due to a lack of infrastructure maintenance as a result of the increasing economy, as well as limited resources available to maintain the infrastructure (NPC National Development Plan vision 2030).

The contradicting perspective to the lack of service delivery by the South African government to the citizens is corruption. Thornhill (2012) defines corruption within public service to be the act of offering or granting, directly or indirectly, to a public official or any other person, of any goods of monetary value, or other benefit, such as a gift, favour, promise or advantage for himself or herself or for any other person or entity, in exchange for any acts or omission in the performance of his/her public functions (Munzhedzi, 2016).

Munzhedzi (2016) acknowledges that “corruption is a universal problem but is evidently harmful in developing countries such as South Africa particularly because the state seems to be the most vulnerable as compared to the developed world”. According to Lodge (1997), 46 percent of South Africans consulted in 1997 felt that most officials were engaged in corruption. Recently, former presidents as well as official government representatives have since been implicated in corrupt dealings.

Unfortunately, citizens may not support any strategic nation brand building activities, regardless of the brand strategies developed of a higher purpose, values or a brand persona if basics such as service delivery are not met. In the context of South Africa, the highlighted instances of corruption by elected government officials unfortunately may work against any nation brand strategies regardless of any research developed.

Evident within the NDP 2030, the government has officially equated the lack of service delivery to a limitation of funds, yet the general public may not be content with that resolve as they may feel that the corruption is closer to the truth towards the lack of service delivery.

The external focus of a nation brand building strategy should be in meeting the needs and expectations of tourists or foreign investors – such as good policies and regulations for investors, state-of-the-art facilities in the country, an attractive culture, solid values, and a conducive environment for external stakeholders. Unfortunately, the external brand may also be affected negatively by any evidence of corruption when attempting to attract external stakeholders. Further to this, financial efforts made by the nation brand towards attracting tourists (external stakeholder) through upgraded infrastructure should be equally delivered to the citizens (external stakeholder) of the country towards ensuring their experience of the country is just as pleasant as those experienced by tourists.

Stakeholder engagement has been highlighted as important within the study towards ensuring citizens' support for any nation brand building activities. A nation brand building strategic approach, which aims to benefits both the internal (citizens) as well as the external (tourists and foreign investors) stakeholders, may benefit from also incorporating social consensus theories towards combating corruption and a lack of service delivery. Predating online social networking, human behaviour has always been influenced through the observation of individuals and social networks that link them together. Offline interpersonal social networks are known to be major factors in determining how societies move towards consensus when adapting ideologies, traditions, and attitudes (Korniss, Lim, Sreenivasan, Szymanski, Xie & Zhanga, 2011).

Basic service delivery does remain the government's responsibility, however, strategic nation brand building may assist towards eradicating corruption should the majority of stakeholders (including government officials) buy into the concept of a common high purpose and values defined within the nation brand strategy. Once the strategic brand elements such as purpose, values and persona are finalised, accompanied by consistent alignment to them by the country leaders as well as the chosen committee,

there should be positive stakeholder engagement and buy-in from both the citizens as well as the external community. The nation brand may benefit through assistance provided by cities in the form of a sub-brand strategy. Cities have been viewed, within this study, to potentially be able to articulate certain strategies more successfully compared to a nation brand as cities may at times be more relatable to citizens. Sub-branding strategy is discussed next.

6.4.4 Sub-branding strategy

It is advisable for the nation brand to be supported by the cities within the various strategic activities. A city should be strategically positioned and equipped to function as a sub-brand that aims to support the nation brand strategies. As was already explored, cities have a way of being able to meet the varied needs and interests of various stakeholder groups. Cities, being smaller, tend to focus on the more utilitarian aspects of brands (Hakala & Lemmetyinen, 2011).

In the context of South Africa, specifically looking at the proposed purpose the South African nation brand could adopt of: Why/intelligence: South Africa thrives with diversity, ranging from the landscape, mammals from both the ocean and land such as the big five. The country boasts with 11 official languages, multiple races, cultures and religions. Within a city, this purpose could be targeted to highlight the specific offerings each city contributes towards the country's purpose statement detailed within the "Why/intelligence" statement. This approach could ensure that citizens (within each city) also feel proud of their city resulting in a greater pride aligned to the bigger national pride.

The various national key attractions within a country could also be utilised as sub-brands towards achieving the same nation brand objective of cohesion. Considering South Africa that has different cities and unique traits and landmarks, the national key attractions strategy should be taken advantage of towards supporting the nation brand building objectives, specifically that of cohesion. Citizens do take pride in national assets and achievements, especially when recognised globally. An example of which is the global recognition that according to archaeologists, humans come from South Africa. Similar to when the country hosted the FIFA World Cup in 2010, citizens tend

to come together within a shared prideful experience or recognition. Brand strategy could then ensure that this perception continues to drive cohesion amongst citizens as the strategy ensures evolving brand stories, lived experiences, and interactions resulting in continuous cohesion.

As was already discussed, this may only be effective when the citizens form part of the strategic nation asset positioning. As per the Table Mountain example illustrated earlier, similarly citizens or local communities should be educated about national attractions so as to instil pride and belonging in them. Also, any marketing promotional material produced for these attractions should also include the citizen or local communities. The result of such inclusion, as evident within corporate branding, is that a sense of belonging is established, which aids towards eased collaborations formed between cities/municipalities. The external focus of the nation brand also benefits when tourists are welcomed by local citizens who take pride in the national asset as they also feel a part of the nation strategy and goals set.

Within the NDP 2030 (chapter 15), the South African government included cultural activities and art as a possible contributor towards social cohesion. The idea is for the creative sector within South Africa to produce art that invokes dialogue and healing amongst South Africans. These are ideal elements that could also be strategically assisted by a strategically crafted nation brand story towards creating social cohesion amongst the South African citizens. As was already discussed within the literature reviewed (section 2.7), common strategies utilised by most nations when building brands is culture and a brand story. Culture is used to evaluate a nation's identity – what its known for, what differentiates it from others, its unique values, and what stakeholders stand to gain from it.

The matter of incorporating city branding, areas of interest, cultural activities and brand stories within the nation brand building strategy, is critical, as it would provide a nation brand with different areas of strength, based on how these are able to support the nation brand strategy. Most importantly, they would be important in ensuring the citizens are also included within the strategic nation brand activities.

The guidelines discussed within this section would need sufficient support from all parties involved. In the context of South Africa, an ideal environment for the guidelines to be successful would be when stakeholders embrace the diversity evident within both society and the nation. It is also important to note that even if implemented successfully, the strategy should have mechanisms in place that would be able to track and monitor the progress of successfully ensuring that all stakeholders form part of all strategic nation brand activities. Corporate brands utilise quarterly or annual brand audits to measure consistency, governance, and adherence to set brand rules when developed. Within the context of nation branding, national regulatory governance could be implemented to ensure that governance and consistency is adhered to.

6.5 Summary of the guidelines

It is advisable for the selected committee, inclusive of all stakeholders representing the facets of South Africa, to conduct thorough research, including obtaining advice from experts within the field of brand strategy development prior to implementing any strategic nation brand building activities. All stakeholders are stewards of the nation brand and therefore the procedures connected with stakeholder engagement and the management of place and brand experience are critical to developing a strategic nation brand as well as the management thereof.

The experts sourced by the selected committee need to lead the development of the brand building process through engaging all stakeholders represented by the committee. The engagement process would be in the form of negotiating and facilitating a sustained consensus as to the positioning and promotion of the brand built as well as the translation into an experience. Incorporating all the elements listed within the guidelines such as purpose, values, personality and tone, the selected strategists would be able to form the basis of what the nation brand would be.

Strategies such as leadership as well as sub-branding would then aid towards further development and shaping of the nation brand strategy by finalising how the brand strategy should be navigated and also expanded on with an aim of supporting the core assets developed of purpose, values and tone.

Ultimately, towards the aim of housing all the nation brand building strategies developed, a brand story should then be formed guided by the already set strategies of purpose, tone and values of the nation brand. A brand story is able to sum up all the strategies discussed within the guidelines and also support the visual elements such as a logo, brand colours and supporting marketing collateral (posters, websites and promotional videos). Dependant on the scope briefed into the brand strategist, strategic nation brand creation could be developed from strategy to the final visual brand inclusive of a logo, slogan and supporting collateral such as a website, posters, or brochures.

The guidelines developed may not be applicable to all strategic nation brand building requests, they are, however, instrumental towards nation brand building where the aim is to incorporate the citizen within the set strategic nation brand activities. Some discoveries have been made within the research but are not directly applicable towards the purpose of the study, these have been detailed next as suggested future studies.

6.6 Conclusion

Developing a good brand strategy, as evident within the findings, should involve the incorporation and integration of various elements and factors. Most importantly, when developing a nation brand, the inclusion of stakeholders, as per the principles of stakeholder theory, is critical, as it will ensure that such an initiative receives the full support and backing from the stakeholders. Stakeholders should be included in order for them to share their views, priorities as well as to generally participate within the nation brand building activities such as the initial strategising phase of what the brand should be regarding personality, purpose, and values. Further to this, stakeholders should still be incorporated once the brand has been established and campaigns such as enabling social cohesion or nation building commence.

The nation brand building strategy, also evident within the findings, needs the prioritisation and identification of what the purpose of the nation brand is assisted by the chosen brand strategy agency or expert also involving the citizen (in the form of the identified committee). The identification process of the committee should be in the

form of a nationwide research process, which could potentially be a vehicle towards establishing the base of social cohesion. The process of mobilising citizens towards establishing a common purpose for the brand could contribute towards the ultimate goal of cohesion.

In as much as the inclusion of brand strategy, along with the guidelines listed, is aimed at assisting the NDP 2030 objectives (chapter 15), it is also worth noting the problems and issues identified within the NDP 2030 (Chapter 15). One of them is the unequal economic standings within the country, which could pose some restrictions on any efforts towards developing a brand strategy inclusive of all citizens. As was already established within the background of the study, South Africa emerged from an oppressive state into a democratic government that brought hope for inclusion of all citizens as well as social cohesion and transformation. However, as evident within the data analysis, these goals have been hindered by poor leadership and a lack of service delivery, thus resulting in an overall unequal society where the gap between rich and poor has not decreased significantly. Unfortunately, in the context of social cohesiveness and nation building, this reality hampers the process of nation building and social cohesiveness since adequate transformation has still not been achieved. The prioritisation of equal distribution of resources, eradication of corruption as well as the lack of service delivery thus becomes central towards the nation brands' strategies.

South Africa has proven in the past to be successful towards efforts of social cohesion and nation building. This is evident in the athletic events such as the Rugby World Cup and the FIFA World Cup, both of which were held in South Africa. Another prime example was the development of the Rainbow Nation euphoria that created another sentiment of cohesion amongst the citizens when the country transitioned from an apartheid state to that of a democracy. The only problem is that the momentum built by these grandeur social cohesion milestones does not last and the cohesion existing at the time loses traction. The incorporation of strategy in the form of a nation brand could see some of these initiatives 'live longer' amongst the citizens, thus ensuring success for the NDP 2030 objectives listed within chapter fifteen.

As evident within the findings, sub-brand strategy is instrumental towards supporting the nation brands' overall objectives towards ensuring sustained cohesion amongst citizens, annual events aimed towards brand building and re-emphasising the purpose and values developed for the nation brand could be successful towards ensuring the citizens are consistently driven towards cohesion. Further to this, event branding experiences are said to be engaging and can offer the citizens the ability to form and co-create the experience themselves, thus taking ownership of the nation brand and the experience. Another benefit presented within nation brand strategy – event sub-brands – is the communication aspect as events can also be used to positively influence the image of the nation brand through the awareness created (Altschwager, Conduit & Goodman, 2013; Jahn, Drengner, Gaus, & Cornwell, 2011; Gertner & Kotler, 2002).

The government acknowledges the urgency of addressing the issues within South Africa as detailed within the NDP 2030. The objectives set within the NDP 2030 (chapter 15) would receive great success if assisted by nation brand building activities that are strategically developed to not only address the issues of social cohesion, nation building and transformation on a grand national scale, but to also visit the various communities, cities, sub-cultures, and provinces in the form of sub-brands and engage at all the levels and expose how the citizen actually experience the country/nation brand.

The objectives within this study were to propose guidelines to follow when developing strategic nation brands. Specifically, nation brand building incorporative of the citizens within the set plans and activities. The guidelines developed and presented within this study would be beneficial towards creating a nation brand in South Africa able to contribute towards the NDP objectives. The guidelines are of a hybrid nature and would thus be applicable to all nation brand building exercises. However, it is crucial to keep in mind that brand strategy is dynamic in its form and requires specific data collected within the environment, in this instance, South Africa would need the assistance of experts to source the relevant data so as to clearly inform the strategies ideally suited to the nation brand. The society envisioned once the country emerged

from the apartheid era could be made possible through the assistance of strategy in the form of a nation brand for South Africa supported by all stakeholders.

6.7 Future studies

- Some examples were included, however, future studies should examine more case studies of countries that have successfully branded themselves towards addressing issues of social cohesion and nation building. This examination could also include examples of why some nation brand building efforts of certain countries have failed to achieve their goals.
- The complexities of nation brands compared to corporate brands could also be a study that could help contribute towards the strategies one should develop for nation brand building activities. This study could also add to the guidelines already detailed within this study.
- The limitation within the study was the sample size used, even though saturation point was reached. Thus, using a bigger sample could improve the validity of the data.
- Leadership has been highlighted as an important strategic pillar within forming a nation brand building strategy. It would therefore be interesting to investigate further how brand strategy can possibly influence leadership. The focus could be a comparative study between a corporate brand leader (Chief Executive Officer or Managing Director) compared to a country leader (President or a monarchy).

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APPENDIX

Appendix A:

Letters of consent shared and signed by each participant for their data to be used in the research.

Appendix B:

Interview guideline for semi-structured interviews with the brand strategists.

Appendix A: Letter of consent

EXPLANATORY INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

To whom it may concern,

I would like to invite you to participate in my study. My name is Muziwandile Makhanya, and I am a Master's student at The IIE Vega School of Branding. I am currently conducting research, under the supervision of Doctor Franzél du Plooy-Cilliers, about the inclusion of citizens within nation branding strategy.

The research focus is on South Africa, specifically investigating how nation brand building strategies can be inclusive of citizens in order contribute towards the South African National Development Plan 2030's objectives of nation building and creating social cohesion among South Africans. These objectives are detailed within chapter fifteen of the plan and expands into a set of objectives such as equal opportunities, citizen inclusion and redress.

I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of nation brand building strategy as well as to contribute towards the government's objectives of transformation, nation building as well as creating social cohesion.

In order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions below that aim to clarify your involvement in the study so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.

Ethics clearance for this study was also obtained from The IIE's Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee (ref. number c.7430).

What will I be doing if I participate in your study?

I would like to invite you to participate in this research because you are an expert within your field and are able to contribute expert knowledge and insight towards the study. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to conduct a one-on-one interview with you. The interview will take approximately one hour of your time. It will be scheduled at a time that it is convenient for both of us, and will take place at a location that is convenient to you. I will be asking you questions about your experiences within the field of brand strategy as well as nation brand strategy.

You can decide whether or not to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer particular interview questions.

Are there any risks or discomforts involved in participating in this study?

Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this study. You will, however, add knowledge and insight within the field of nation brand strategy. If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.

Do I have to participate in the study?

- Your inclusion in this study is purely voluntary;
- If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so;
- Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.

Will my identity be protected?

Should you wish, I promise to protect your identity. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you.

I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only my supervisor and I will have access to these recordings. Nobody else, including anybody at The IIE Vega, will have access to your interview information. I would like to use quotes when I discuss the findings of the research, but I will not use any recognisable information in these quotes that can be linked to you.

I would however encourage you to allow me to use name within the research as I believe the aims within the study aim to contribute towards a national problem that affects all South African citizens.

What will happen to the information that participants provide?

Once I have completed all the interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my Master's in Creative Brand Leadership. You may ask me to send you a summary of the research findings if you

are interested in the final outcome of the study. You can also ask to check and approve the findings before it is sent for examination purposes.

What happens if I have more questions about the study?

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate.

You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed.

My contact details are as follows:

Muziwandile Makhanya

[REDACTED]

The contact details of my supervisor are as follows:

Doctor Franzél du Plooy-Cilliers

[REDACTED]

Consent form for participants

I, _____, agree to participate in the research conducted by Muziwandile Makhanya about developing guidelines for successful strategic nation branding initiatives which are inclusive of citizens.

The ultimate aim within the study is to contribute towards the NDP 2030's objective of nation building and social cohesion set within the objectives listed within chapter fifteen of the South African National Development Plan 2030 which include equal opportunities, citizen inclusion and redress.

This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve.

I understand that:

1. I agree to be interviewed for this research.
2. My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.
3. My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research.
4. I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.
5. I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.

Signature

Date

Appendix B: Semi-structured Interview guidelines

Introduction:

1. Who am I and the reason for doing the study?
2. Ask the participant to share their background in relation to the focus of the study

Questions:

1. What are your views of South Africa post 1994, both as a citizen of the country as well as an expert within branding?
2. In your opinion, can brand strategy contribute towards the NDP 2030 chapter fifteen objectives?
 - a. If so, how?
 - b. If not, why?

Opinions and discussions from findings:

1. Please share your opinion on how brand strategy is utilised within corporate.
2. Do you believe it can be applied within a nation brand?
3. How do you think citizens could benefit from nation branding?
 - a. Will this help towards social cohesion?
4. Please share your opinion on sub-branding and if this could be applied to nation branding in the form of cities as literature suggest that cities are closer to the citizens compared to nations.

5. A nation is described as the people, yet the focus when creating a nation brand is on the place, are you able to give some insights?

Consent form for audio-recording/video recording

I, _____, agree to allow Muziwandile Makhanya to audio record my interviews as part of the research about developing guidelines for successful strategic nation branding initiatives which are inclusive of citizens.

This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve.

I understand that:

1. My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.
2. The recordings will be stored in a password protected file on the researcher's computer.
3. Only the researcher, the researcher's supervisor and possibly a transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings.

Signature

Date