The Image of Sweden

A Study of the Swedish Embassy’s Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy in Germany

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ABSTRACT

Title: The Image of Sweden - *A study of the Swedish Embassy’s Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy in Germany*

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Purpose/Aim: The purpose of my research study is to examine how the press, culture and PR department at the Swedish Embassy in Berlin is organising its external communication of Swedish affairs and “branding” Sweden as an attractive and competitive nation in Germany. My research objective is therefore to investigate the nature of the Embassy’s Nation Branding by means of one specific media channel, which is the Embassy’s German website, in order to find out how Sweden’s nation brand is communicated according to my chosen theory.

Material/Method: The method of analysis is a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods: a qualitative interview in terms of collecting information about the Embassy’s external communication, as well as a quantitative content analysis of the Embassy’s German website. Furthermore I’m making use of secondary data from previous research, various articles and several information sources from the Internet.

Main results: On the basis of the results I have gained by dint of the content analysis, it can be concluded that the Embassy’s German website foregrounds and focuses on communicating cultural topics, whereas political and governmental issues are being undermined. Hence, the website shows an uneven representation of Anholt’s nation brand key areas which denote that it is communicating a too one-sided and unbalanced picture of a national image, thus Sweden’s nation brand.

Keywords: Nation Branding, Public Diplomacy, external communication, content analysis, case study, Swedish Embassy Berlin, channel of communication, information flow.
# CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.................................................................................................................. 5  
   1.1 Purpose of Study ........................................................................................................... 6  
   1.2 Question of Research .................................................................................................. 6  
   1.3 Plan of Research ....................................................................................................... 6  
   1.4 Previous Research .................................................................................................... 7  
   1.5 Delimitations ............................................................................................................ 7  
   1.6 Disposition .............................................................................................................. 7  

2. THEORY................................................................................................................................ 9  
   2.1 Basic Concept and Terminology ................................................................................ 9  
      2.1.1 Public Diplomacy ............................................................................................... 9  
      2.1.2 Nation Branding ............................................................................................... 9  
   2.2 Choice of Theory ...................................................................................................... 10  
   2.3 Anholt’s Theory ....................................................................................................... 11  
      2.3.1 Anholt’s Nation Brand Model ......................................................................... 11  
   Figure 1 – Anholt’s Nation Brand Hexagon ................................................................. 11  
      2.3.2 Nation Branding and Competitive Identity ......................................................... 11  
   Figure 2 – Anholt’s Competitive Identity Hexagon (2006) .............................................. 13  
      2.4 Anholt’s Concept .................................................................................................... 13  
      2.4.1 The Anholt Nation Brands Index ..................................................................... 14  
      2.4.2 The NBI Methodology ....................................................................................... 14  
      2.4.3 Previous Results: The NBI Winners Of 2005 ..................................................... 14  
         2.4.3.1 “Brand Sweden” vs “Brand Australia” ...................................................... 15  
   Figure 3 – NBI 2005 Q2 ............................................................................................... 15  
   Figure 4 - Brand “Sweden” in 2005 (Anholt’s NBI 2005 / Q2) ...................................... 15  
   Figure 5 – Brand “Australia” - No. 1 in NBI ranking 2005/Q2 ...................................... 16  
      2.4.3.2 A Short Comparison ...................................................................................... 16  
      2.4.4 Recent Development - The NBI in 2006 ............................................................ 17  
   Figure 6 - NBI Quarterly Report No 3 / 2006 ................................................................. 17  

3. METHODOLOGY............................................................................................................... 18  
   3.1 Collecting Information ............................................................................................... 18  
   3.2 Collecting Secondary Data ....................................................................................... 18  
   3.3 Case Studies ............................................................................................................ 18  
   3.4 Quantitative and Qualitative Methods .................................................................... 19  
      3.4.1 Qualitative Research ......................................................................................... 19  
      3.4.2 Quantitative research ....................................................................................... 20  
   3.5 Content Analysis ....................................................................................................... 20  
      3.5.1 Content Categories and Subcategories ............................................................. 20  
   3.6 Collecting Primary Data .......................................................................................... 21  
   3.7 Sampling Unit ......................................................................................................... 21  
   3.8 Limitations .............................................................................................................. 21  
   3.9 Tool of Research ..................................................................................................... 21  
   Figure 7 – Pattern of a Data Matrix ............................................................................. 23  
      3.10 Reliability and Validity ....................................................................................... 23  

4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION...................................................................................... 25  
   4.1 Sweden’s Representation in Germany ....................................................................... 25  
   4.2 The Swedish Embassy Berlin .................................................................................. 25
4.3 The Embassy’s Web Presence.................................................................................. 25

5. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS ...................................................................................... 27
5.1 Communication Structure ..................................................................................... 27
5.1.1 The Embassy’s Flow of Information ................................................................... 27
5.1.2 Communication Channels ................................................................................. 27

Figure 8 - The Embassy’s Flow of Information............................................................ 28
5.1.3 Main Channels of Communication ....................................................................... 28
5.1.4 Complementary Channels .................................................................................. 29
5.1.5 Co-operations and Networking ......................................................................... 29

Figure 9 – The Embassy’s Information Network of Foreign Affairs ......................... 30

5.2 Website Content .................................................................................................... 31
5.2.1 Data Matrix ........................................................................................................ 31
5.2.2 Frequency distribution ....................................................................................... 32
5.2.3 Difference of Methodologies ............................................................................. 32
5.2.4 The Embassy’s Nation Brand Hexagon ............................................................... 33

Figure 10 – Distribution of the NB and CI Key Areas on the Website ....................... 33
5.2.5 Analysis of my Results ...................................................................................... 33
5.2.6 Qualitative Content – a short semiotic analysis ................................................ 34
5.2.7 Summary ........................................................................................................... 35

6. CONCLUSION AND COMMENTS ............................................................................ 36
6.1 The Website Content ............................................................................................ 36
6.2 The Communication Strategy ............................................................................... 36
6.3 Suggestions for Further Research ........................................................................... 37

7. SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND FINAL THOUGHTS ............................................. 38

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ............................................................................................ 43

LIST OF REFERENCES .................................................................................................. 44
  Literature .................................................................................................................. 44
  Websites .................................................................................................................... 44
  Articles, Reports and Conference Papers ................................................................. 45

APPENDIXES .............................................................................................................. 47
APPENDIX 1: Quality of Life Index 2005 .................................................................. 47
APPENDIX 2: First NBI Ranking, 2005 / Q1 ............................................................... 48
  2.1 First NBI Overall Ranking (Q1 / 2005): Sweden No.1 Nation Brand ................. 48
  2.2 NBI Governance Ranking (Q1 / 2005) ................................................................. 48
  2.3 NBI People Ranking (Q1 / 2005) ....................................................................... 49
  2.4 NBI Culture Ranking (Q1 / 2005) ..................................................................... 49
  2.5 NBI Tourism Ranking (Q1 / 2005) ................................................................... 50
  2.6 NBI Investment Ranking (Q1 / 2005) ................................................................. 50
  2.7 NBI Export Brands/Products Ranking (Q1 /2005) .......................................... 51

APPENDIX 3: Embassy Access Page November/December 2006 ........................... 52
APPENDIX 4: Website’s Seasonal Images ................................................................ 53
APPENDIX 5: Image Selection .................................................................................... 55
APPENDIX 6: Map of Sweden, Calendar of Events ................................................... 56

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS ............................................................................................ 57
1. INTRODUCTION

One might wonder if it is true to say that, in the wake of European unification, nations are becoming more similar and adapting to each other. Or is it precisely the reverse? Does this blurring of borders make the different nationalities more conscious of their own roots and therefore revert to them more often? Investigating the brand value of Poland, Kubacki and Skinner make following consideration in their essay:

“Although there have been opposing perspectives as to what constitutes a nation, contemporary thought is that it is based upon a wide range of economic, political and sociocultural factors. However, factors such as globalisation and the enlargement of the EU have given rise to claims concerning the contracting role of the nation state. There are also opposing views as to whether such an enlarged EU will have a more convergent or divergent identity.”

Inspired and provoked by these questions I came up against two fairly new phenomena within the PR and Communications sector: Nation Branding. Nation Branding is an intrinsic communication strategy within the field of Public Diplomacy and deals with the improvement of a nation’s reputation in foreign countries. Nation Branding is a fairly new notion that is comparable to the marketing and advertising of a product. In some respects this is right; nowadays, within a more and more globalised world, disparate countries are connected by trade and economy, and hence a country is more than just a geographical territory. Nowadays a nation can also be seen as a global trademark - as a brand.

Simon Anholt, the current “expert in the field of image makeovers for nation-states” argues that a nation’s brand image is the perception of the brand that exists in the mind of the audience and virtually the same thing as reputation. It includes a range of associations, memories, expectations and other feelings that are bound with the product, or more precisely the nation.

Sweden’s Nation Branding, Public Diplomacy and the “Image of Sweden” were the main issues on the Swedish Institute’s 60-Year Anniversary Conference which took place in Stockholm in 2005. The Conference’s principal topic was the “Image of Sweden” and how “to set Sweden on the map”. Many of Sweden’s neighbour countries already have well-elaborated Public Diplomacy strategies and campaigns for their Nation Branding, as is highlighted by the examples of “Enterprise Estonia”, “Germany – Land of Ideas”, “Visit Britain” or “Branding Denmark”.

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2 Simon Anholt “developed the concept of the Nation Brands Index in 2005 and the first Index was published in April 2005 (Q1). He is recognised as one of the world’s leading authorities on the branding of countries, regions and cities. He advises a number of national governments including the UK government and UN agencies on brand strategy, public diplomacy, cultural relations, investment and export promotion, tourism and economic development. He is editor of the quarterly journal, Place Branding and Public Diplomacy, and the author of Brand New Justice, Brand America and several other books.”
The way in which a nation is represented and communicated by certain public institutions in a foreign country is of great importance for a country’s international reputation – above all economically, politically and culturally. Nation Branding is a new policy that has emerged in an increasingly globalised world. With the formation of the European Union, European countries are forced to take part in this competitive environment of nation unification. Nations feel impelled to stand out from the crowd, to show their own identity and differentiate themselves by communicating their culture, their habits, their achievements, their preferences and benefits both abroad and worldwide.

In respect to foreign affairs, an embassy fulfils important representative functions abroad and has the task of informing about their country of origin besides other administrative duties. The Swedish Embassy in Berlin is an important foreign consultant regarding German-Swedish affairs, regardless of its economical, political, cultural or any other concerns. An Embassy can be seen as an essential informant, mediator, organiser and promoter abroad, and carries the duty of presenting its nation in a positive light.

1.1 Purpose of Study
The purpose of my essay is partly to describe and discuss how the Swedish Embassy’s press, culture and PR department11 at the Swedish Embassy in Berlin is communicating the “Image of Sweden” in Germany. I intend to examine how the department is accomplishing its main function of informing Germans about Sweden and how it is forming, maintaining and strengthening a positive and attractive national image. The department’s external communication plays a crucial role in how Sweden as a nation is presented and represented in Germany, and how it is perceived by the German public. Thus, the main issue and guideline of my thesis shall be how the Swedish Embassy is branding Sweden as a nation within Germany.

1.2 Question of Research
The Embassy is making use of a number of communication channels in order to spread information and to “brand” Sweden in Germany. First I am going to present and describe the Embassy’s information flow and communication network, whereupon I will investigate the “Nation Branding” of one specific communication channel, being the Embassy’s German homepage. The main interest of my study is directed towards the following questions:

• How does the Swedish Embassy present Sweden in Germany and inform about Sweden? Which communication channels do they use in general?
• How is the Embassy dealing with Anholt’s concept of Nation Branding on its own German website? Does the Embassy’s website create a balanced image of Sweden?

1.3 Plan of Research
My plan of research is structured as follows:

• Qualitative interview with a staff member of the press and culture department in Berlin in order to get relevant internal information about the Embassy’s external communication channels, network and structure.
• Quantitative content analysis of the Embassy’s website in order to investigate whether the Embassy’s homepage content follows the chosen theory.

11 note: when calling it the “press department” in the following, I will immanently mean all three areas.
1.4 Previous Research

After conducting a literature search I didn’t find any published academic texts which deal with German perceptions of Swedes, and accordingly Sweden. Neither did I find any academic research on the “Brand Sweden”. Rather, I came across different reports of a so called Nation Brands Index (NBI) which have been published quarterly since 2005. These reports analyse and account for how certain countries are rated by the citizens of other countries. I will later consider these reports, utilising Simon Anholt’s Nation Brand (NB) and Competitive Identity (CI) models. These determine a nation’s brand value and competitiveness among other nations to compare my own case study with - the Swedish Embassy and its web presence.

1.5 Delimitations

I have limited this essay to how the German public is informed about Swedish affairs and addressed by the Swedish Embassy in Berlin as it is my main interest to study what picture or image the Swedish Embassy is communicating of Sweden as a nation in one particular country and how it is using its website as an informative tool of communication.

Unfortunately it was not possible to investigate the general picture the German population has of Sweden because this would have gone beyond the scope of my thesis and made my theme too extensive. Since the purpose of my study is to examine the Nation Branding of the Swedish Embassy in connection to my chosen theory, it seems natural to focus primarily on the Embassy’s external communication, thus how the Embassy is branding Sweden within Germany. I am aware that the Embassy in Berlin only plays a small part in Sweden’s Nation Branding abroad – this involves a complex system of several Swedish institutions which are all cooperating and networking with each other in order to create the Image of Sweden abroad, or in this case in Germany.

Within the selection of different communication channels the press department is using, I’ve chosen to limit my study to investigating the Embassy’s web presence, more precisely its extent of Nation Branding and formation of Sweden’s national image on the Internet. I chose the website as my object of investigation because the Internet is, according to an UCLA Internet report from 2003, the key source of information nowadays12 and is an interesting media to investigate as it can lead to new insights.

1.6 Disposition

Chapter 1 presents an introduction to the issue, topic, purpose of study, question of research, previous research, collection of data and information, delimitations of my topic and the disposition.

Chapter 2 is divided into three parts: the first contains a clarification of the essay’s relevant terminology. The second part covers the choice of theory, the model of the Anholt Nation Brand Hexagon of 2002, completed by the latest, enhanced model of the Competitive Identity Hexagon of 2006. In the third and last part the theoretical framework is presented which contains previous research within the subject of Nation Branding, Sweden’s nation brand in 2005 and a comparison to the then No. 1 nation brand “Australia”. The chapter concludes with Sweden’s nation brand’s recent development in 2006.

Chapter 3 comprises the methodology of my study, shows up the appliance of several empirical methods, explains the method of content analysis, and presents the website’s content.

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categories and subcategories, shows the process of data collection, appoints the sampling unit, considers the limitations of a website investigation and introduces the tool of research.

Chapter 4 gives relevant background information about Sweden’s representation in Germany and the Swedish Embassy in Berlin, as it gives a short introduction of the Embassy’s web presence.

Chapter 5 contains the results and analysis. The chapter is subdivided into two parts: the Embassy’s general external communication structure and its website content there the results of the content analysis are presented. The delimitations of my case study and connection to my theory are given before illustrating the Embassy’s own nation brand hexagon concerning its web performance. Last but not least an analysis and a short semiotic valuation are conducted.

Chapter 6 In this chapter conclusions are drawn, the main results discussed and how they regard Anholt’s model of the Nation Brand Hexagon. It discusses the question how the “ideal” nation brand would look like. Furthermore the Embassy’s website content and external communication are commented.

Chapter 7 contains a general discussion on the topic of Nation Branding, my personal criticism on Anholt’s model and methodology of the NBI, and last but not least what the Embassy could improve in their communication regarding Nation Branding.
2. THEORY

2.1 Basic Concept and Terminology

Before I begin with my theoretical part I first want to clarify a few fundamental notions which will be of major importance throughout my essay. These notions will be of relevance in order to understand the main topic, my theoretical framework and subsequent analysis.

2.1.1 Public Diplomacy

The Embassy’s press department staffs have the function of public diplomats. As Anholt argues in his recently published book “Competitive Identity”, there is much more collaboration and integration between embassies, cultural bodies and trade and tourist offices nowadays then ever before. Therefore an embassy’s press department should see promoting trade, tourism, investment and culture as an essential part of their job.13

Today it is commonplace that ministries of foreign affairs and their foreign services must practise something that is called Public Diplomacy – a discipline closely related to Public Relations.14 The USIA (United States Information Agency), who used the term Public Diplomacy as the first in the early 1960s15, defined it as follows: “Public Diplomacy seeks to promote the national interest (...) through understanding, informing and influencing foreign audiences.”16 According to Anholt it deals with the trans-national flow of information and ideas and

“(…) with the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. It encompasses dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy; the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries; the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with those of another; the reporting of foreign affairs and its impact on policy; communication between those whose job is communication, as between diplomats and foreign correspondents; and the processes of inter-cultural communications.”17

Tuch defines it in a more abstract manner and describes Public Diplomacy as “a government’s process of communicating with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about understanding for its nation’s ideas and ideals, its institutions and culture, as well as its national goals and current policies.”18 In the following I’m going to present one important part of Public Diplomacy which coevally is the theme of my essay – Nation Branding.

2.1.2 Nation Branding

Nation Branding is an increasingly important concept in the contemporary milieu. Globalization means that countries compete with each other for the attention, respect and trust of investors, consumers, donors, tourists, immigrants, the governments of other nations and the media. To paraphrase Simon Anholt, today’s world has become one market.19 On this market a powerful and positive nation brand provides a crucial, competitive advantage. It is essential for countries, both affluent and poor, to understand how they are seen by nations around the world; how their achievements and failures, their assets and liabilities, as well as their people and products are reflected in their brand image. According to Anholt

14 Ibid., p. 18.
15 Ibid., p. 12.
17 Ibid.
“every country (...) must compete with every other for its share of the world’s consumers, tourists, investors, students, entrepreneurs, international sporting and cultural events, and for the attention and respect of the international media, of other governments and the people of other countries.”

Anholt proceeds to propose that all responsible governments need to discover how their nation is accounted by other nations and develop a strategy to manage it, both on behalf of their people, their institutions and their companies. In this context, an embassy plays a crucial role as a country’s representative abroad. The notion of “Nation Branding” is fairly new and one might wonder what it actually means. To define it with Anholt’s words, “branding (a nation) is the process of designing, planning and communicating the name and the identity, in order to build or manage the reputation (of a country).” However, he emphasises also that nations cannot be branded like products since countries aren’t single products or organisations. It is more about pointing out the key values and advantages of a country and communicating these on an international level, which is indeed a much more complex and intricate project than a common advertising campaign. Pointing out the key values of a nation and making them understandable and attractive to another country or even culture is a difficult challenge. Kubacki and Skinner articulate the complexity of this task as follows: “The problems arise, in part, due to the realisation that a nation is itself difficult to define, and its brand values are difficult to identify and therefore to communicate.”

2.2 Choice of Theory
Simon Anholt has created a fairly comprehensive concept of Nation Branding and two models that show which factors constitute a strong nation brand and how to create, respectively maintain, a competitive national identity. These areas form and influence the national image, thus the nation brand. Anholt’s Nation Brand Hexagon model includes the six key verticals (Anholt often calls it “national assets” or “national competence”) which determine a nation’s brand value. It was difficult to find an adequate theory and model that would reflect my area of research in a comprehensive way because the topic of Nation Branding is a fairly new subject that has arisen during the past two decades, rapidly gaining importance but still yet to attract comprehensive analysis. Anholt himself has pointed out the existing gap in the literature examining the relationship between national culture and a national brand. Significantly more information about Nation Branding can be found on the Internet and recent magazines than in literature, which confirms the newness of this field and justifies my reliance on many Internet sources and web articles, as well as explaining the comparatively small number of applied literature throughout my study.

I’ve chosen Simon Anholt’s concept of Nation Branding as my theoretical framework as he has conceptualised an approved theory and methodology of measuring a nation’s brand value that can be transferred to my case study. Concerning my case, Anholt’s models of the Nation Brand and Competitive Identity Hexagon reflect all relevant areas an embassy is supposed to communicate and inform about in foreign countries. In the following I’m going to present Anholt’s Nation Brand Hexagon, the basic model of how a nation brand is composed, followed by the model of Competitive Identity which is an enhanced model and also considers the competitive factor of Nation Branding. Moreover, I’m going to present and explain the research that has been done in the field of Nation Branding, and reflect the research that has
been done by Simon Anholt, currently one of the most significant experts within the field of Nation Branding.

2.3 Anholt’s Theory

Simon Anholt has developed an index that ranks the nation brand value among nations, the so called Nation Brands Index (NBI). This index is based on the Nation Brand hexagon and will be presented more thoroughly later on, after I have given an introduction to Anholt’s concept of a competitive nation brand.

2.3.1 Anholt’s Nation Brand Model

According to Anholt, a nation’s brand value is determined by the following six key areas of national competence: Exports, Governance, Investment and Immigration, Culture and Heritage, People and Tourism. This method is Anholt’s proprietary methodology and is a unique barometer of measuring a global opinion of a nation’s brand value.26 A nation’s brand is the sum of people’s perceptions of a country and its people across the six areas of national assets, characteristics and competence. Together, these areas form the Nation Brand Hexagon27 which Anholt has illustrated by the following model:

![Figure 1 – Anholt’s Nation Brand Hexagon](https://www.nationbrandindex.com/report.php)

The Nation Brand Hexagon shows the relevant areas that constitute a strong nation brand from Anholt’s point of view. According to this model, this can be accomplished by evenly communicating all areas, thus not favouring one specific field.

Anholt has recently developed a new model which shows new, respectively renamed areas that determine a nation’s competitiveness, being the Competitive Identity Hexagon. However, this model should not be seen as a replacement of the former Nation Brand model, but rather be interpreted and utilised as a completion or extension of it.

2.3.2 Nation Branding and Competitive Identity

Building a strong Competitive Identity (CI) is according to Anholt “a complex task and not just designing a new logo for a country and a slogan to go underneath it”.28 It is more about

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creating and maintaining the national reputation which is a big and complex task. One might wonder what a national reputation or image actually is; Anholt refers to it as stereotypes, both good and bad, and contends that they rarely reflect the current reality of the place. A nation’s image can lag behind by years or even decades; or as Anholt articulates it metaphorically:

“National image is like starlight which, by the time it reaches us on Earth, is only the distant echo of an event that started and finished long before.”

However, he also states that there is a way of shortening this time gap. All you need is a clear strategy; and this is what Nation Branding is all about – a “proper coordination between government, the public and the public sector, and the community”. According to Anholt, the creation of a strong CI and Nation Brand is mainly accomplished through the following six areas of national assets, characteristics and competence. Below I have combined the several areas of both models because I think they complement one another favourably and mirror all relevant factors concerning Anholt’s general concept of Nation Branding.

1. Tourism - Tourism is often the most visibly promoted and loudest voice in branding a nation, as most tourist boards and many other public institutions spend lots of money on ‘selling’ the country around the world.

2. Export and Brands - In this point of the hexagon, consumers are asked about their level of satisfaction with products and services produced in each country, and also about their perceptions of each country’s contribution to progress in science and technology. Export brands often can be seen as “ambassadors” of each country’s image abroad (e.g. Mercedes as the brand of Germany or Sony for Japan).

3. Governance and Policy - Here, respondents are asked to rank countries according to how competently and fairly they are governed, how much they respect the human rights of their own citizens, how far they trust them to make responsible decisions which uphold international peace and security, what their international contribution is to the environment and poverty reduction and policy decisions a country’s government makes both foreign as well as domestic policy.

4. Investment and Immigration - This point of the hexagon looks at the ‘business-to-business’ aspect of the nation brand, asking respondents about their personal willingness to live and work in each country for a substantial period, and their views on which country would be the most suitable location for setting up an overseas branch of their company. Inward investments, which mean the recruitment of foreign talents and students and the expansion of foreign companies into the own country do also belong to this sector.

5. Culture and Heritage - In this point the hexagon measures the perceptions of a country’s cultural exchange, activities and exports: The appreciation of or intention to consume its popular, more commercial cultural products and activities (as e.g. music, art, literature, design, famous film-makers etc.) and the perception of a nation’s sporting prowess can influence a nation’s reputation immensely.

6. People – is representing the ‘human capital’ of each country, that shows how welcoming the people of a country are perceived to be, how their mentality is valued and whether they are the kind of people that respondents would choose to have as a close personal friend.


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29 Ibid., p. 27.
30 Ibid., p. 28.
With the term *Competitive Identity* Anholt describes the “synthesis of brand management with Public Diplomacy and with trade, investment, tourism and export promotion.” He defines Competitive Identity as “a new model for enhanced national competitiveness in a global world, and one that is already beginning to pay dividends for a number of countries, cities and regions, both rich and poor.”³¹

That’s why I would interpret the CI Hexagon as an enhanced or complementary model of the Nation Brand Hexagon which Anholt had developed in the first place to illustrate the six key verticals that constitute a nation’s brand value. In contrast to that, the CI model also highlights the competitive nature of a nation brand within a cut-throat environment and underlines the perspective of a global reputation and competition instead of the more economic idea of a brand. In this model Anholt has changed *Export* to *Brands* and *Governance* to *Policy* and taken away *Heritage* and *Immigration*.

![Figure 2 – Anholt’s Competitive Identity Hexagon (2006)](image)

According to Anholt, a country needs a clear and believable idea of what their nation really stands for and where it is going. He continues by saying that if a country’s government is able to “coordinate the actions, investments, policies and communications of all six points of the hexagon so that they prove and reinforce this idea”, then there is a good chance to accomplish “a competitive national identity (...) to the lasting benefit of exporters, importers, government, the culture sector, tourism, immigration, and pretty much every aspect of international relations” (...) “and all the bodies, agencies and organisations at each point of the hexagon have to work together, meet together, and align their behaviour to a common national strategy.”³³

To interpret the shape of Anholt’s models, which are both symmetric hexagons, all areas can be assessed to be of the same weight and importance. Hence, to accomplish a strong nation brand it is crucial that the representation or communication of the six areas is even. Working within Anholt’s paradigm, it also seems important that the particular areas don’t perform their “own” Nation Branding, but that all six areas attempt to collaborate in some respects in order to communicate a similar, complementary image of their country, as well as common values.

### 2.4 Anholt’s Concept

Before continuing with the methodological part I want to present some important background information on the NBI research method that has been applied on measuring a nation’s brand. One of the most current ratings around Nation Branding is Simon Anholt’s NBI.

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³³ Ibid, pp 26, 27.
2.4.1 The Anholt Nation Brands Index
Anholt’s NBI is my practical background and it is the first analytical and official ranking of the world’s nation brands.34 This index is based on the Hexagon model and gives information about how consumers around the world see the character, personality and value of a nation’s brand. The NBI was created and developed by Simon Anholt himself and measures, respectively ranks, the power and appeal of a nation’s image, which is the perception of a foreign country’s cultural, political, commercial and human assets, investment potential, immigration and tourist appeal. Based on a unique, proprietary methodology of mapping and measuring the brand values of nations, and the responses from GMI’s35 unique panel of 5.5 million consumers in over 200 countries around the world36, the NBI provides a quarterly report on the changing brand values of currently 35 of the world's most significant nations (both developed and developing countries). The first Index was published in May 2005.37

2.4.2 The NBI Methodology
The NBI is conducted in a cross-section of countries throughout the world. Today a total of 25,900 consumers in 35 nations are regularly surveyed. In this context a global view is necessary to provide an accurate assessment of the image of a nation among the global community. To replicate representative sample, a quota system is used based on age, gender, and where applicable, geographical region, race and ethnicity.38

Every country has its brand strengths and weaknesses, so there can be a different "winner" for each point of the hexagon. The overall "Top Nation Brand" is the one with the highest marks across all points of the hexagon.39 The global NBI survey polls respondents worldwide amongst others about how they view a country’s culture, government, export products, people, and appeal as a place to visit, invest in or migrate to.

2.4.3 Previous Results: The NBI Winners Of 2005
The top brands of the NBI 2005 were Sweden in quarter 1 (Q1) and Australia (Q2). In total Sweden got ranked first in Q1 but it must be acknowledged that within the first official NBI ranking only ten countries were polled and only eleven countries got ranked (cp. Appendix 2.1). Consumers in the following ten countries were polled about their opinion on eleven nation brands (cp. nation brands in Appendix 2): Canada, China, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Japan, South Korea, United Kingdom, and the United States. Representative samples of 1000 consumers (3% margin of error) were collected in each country for a total of 10,000 consumers surveyed. Consumers were not asked questions about their own country.40

The diagrams in Appendix 2 show how Sweden’s nation brand came within the particular areas. In the following I’m going to present the previous NBI results and compare both nation brands in order to explain how the NBI ranking works and how the results can be interpreted.

35 GMI (Global Market Insite, Inc.) “is a Seattle-based firm which provides e-Business solutions for global market research offering a range of software applications and database services. Founded in 1999, GMI has a staff of 180 talented professionals located on 5 continents, serving customers in more than 40 countries.”
2.4.3.1 “Brand Sweden” vs “Brand Australia”

In the second quarter of 2005, the poll was more extended and hence comprehensive, more countries were polled and more nations were included. Australia was ranked first and Sweden still came fifth of 25 countries. Below you see the top 15 of the 2005 / Q2 ranking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Anholt uses also the hexagon model to illustrate the ranking results which show how the several areas are ranked pro-rata. Below you can see the “Brand Sweden”-Hexagon of 2005/Q2 with the relative ranking results within the particular areas.

If one area of national competence is rated best of all nations it fills out its angle. As the model of Sweden shows in the second quarter of 2005, brand “Sweden” has all six areas quite evenly represented but no area comes on first place. Investment and Immigration are most behind

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which is surprising if you consider that Sweden comes fifth on the *World’s Quality of Life Index* that was evaluated by *The Economist* in 2005 (cp. rating in Appendix 1).43

However, it can be perceived as a positive sign that Sweden’s nation brand was this evenly high-valued in almost all areas. This highlights the balance and strength of its national brand. Below, a graph of Australia’s nation brand distribution in 2005 / Q2 is pictured.

### Brand Australia

Figure 5 – Brand “Australia” - No. 1 in NBI ranking 2005/Q2 44

According to the second Anholt-GMI Nation Brands Index in 2005, Australia was the panel’s overall first choice for People, Tourism and Investment/Immigration. This trio of top rankings positions Australia in first place overall as the World’s most powerful nation brand.45 To clarify Sweden and Australia’s brand hexagons of 2005 / Q2 in a more comprehensive way, I’m now going to compare both models and evaluate the results from a more qualitative perspective.

#### 2.4.3.2 A Short Comparison

Compared to “Brand Sweden”, Australia’s nation brand is fairly uneven in its strengths and weaknesses. “Brand Australia” is indeed strongest in Tourism, People and Investment/Immigration, but Culture/Heritage and Exports are quite weak of value. One could wonder if this has something to do with a poor international communication of Australian export brands or cultural heritage, whilst too much focus is placed on marketing the land as a tourist destination or place to live. To interpret the graph, it is obvious that Australia needs to concentrate more on promoting the weak areas on a global level. Contrastingly Australia has its flaws where Sweden has its strengths. Although Sweden is never placed first in any category, it has a quite high and even evaluation across the board. You can at least recognise the shape of a hexagon in Sweden’s nation brand model, whereas Australia’s is more rectangular because its brand is ranked much lower in Culture and Exports. The hexagons show clearly where the nation brand has to become better in communicating these areas

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43 In this investigation 111 countries were observed after nine factors as for example material wellbeing, health, community life, job security and political freedom, to name a few. On a scale from 1 to 10 Sweden got 7,937, compared to Ireland who came first in the ranking of the country with the best life quality and got 8,333 on the scale. *Source: [http://www.economist.com/media/pdf/QUALITY_OF_LIFE.pdf](http://www.economist.com/media/pdf/QUALITY_OF_LIFE.pdf), 2006-12-10.*


abroad or to work on its, in Australia’s case, cultural, and in Sweden’s case, attraction for investment.

2.4.4 Recent Development - The NBI in 2006

In the recent report of the 2006 Nation Brands Index (Q3) Sweden came seventh over the world’s leading nation brands, even ahead of the No. 1 in 2005, Australia (who got ranked only tenth this time). In this survey a representative sample of 25,900 people from 36 countries were surveyed to rank 35 countries on the basis of how they understand a country’s form of government, economy, people, culture and tourism.46 Below you can see the recent ranking list of all 36 countries:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
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<tr>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
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<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
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<tr>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
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<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6 - NBI Quarterly Report No 3 / 200647

These results I’m going to discuss more thoroughly in chapter 7 by evaluating Anholt’s methodology and connecting them to social and contextual factors that could have had an influence on the rating.

Within my next step, the methodological part, I’m going to conduct an own case study on the basis of Anholt’s theoretical framework. First of all I’m going to do a quantitative content analysis of the website content by allocating the content categories (respectively subcategories) to the six key verticals of Anholt’s hexagon model in order to see how the website is reflecting and communicating these areas.

3. METHODOLOGY

My study is in general a qualitative study of how the Swedish Embassy as an organisation is dealing with Nation Branding and communicating the “Image of Sweden” to the German public. This study includes two separate case studies, one of which is qualitative and the other being of a quantitative nature. According to Merriam, case studies are a suitable method for understanding and interpreting certain phenomena within a complex environment. In her opinion, all kinds of research should include the context or coherence of external factors in its estimation. The advantage of a case study is that you can both develop and test a theory; the sample units can be conducted in different ways and both quantitative as well as qualitative information can be used. Allowing non-experimental research can be used in order to describe or explain a procedure by direct observations or systematic interviews.

3.1 Collecting Information

Databases (including DISA and fulltext databases such as Emerald and Communication & Mass Media Complete) at Uppsala University Library have been used to find relevant articles and literature. Moreover I have made critical use of the Internet and the online search engine Google to gather relevant information, data and material for my subject of research. Using the Internet for collecting information cannot always be considered as a reliable source as the tremendous content of the World Wide Web also includes a great amount of unfounded data and facts. In this respect I was very accurate with selecting and operating my Internet sources and have therefore primarily used trustworthy references in form of academic essays, conference papers, reports and articles from high quality magazines (e.g. The Economist or The Journal of Brand Management) which have been published online. In addition, I have used information of various official homepages, for example swedenabroad.se, nationbrandindex.com or insightcafe.com. Keywords used to search include among others: Nation Branding, Nation Brand, Public Diplomacy, quality of life, national image, national identity, external communication, PR. Moreover, I have gained essential internal information about the Embassy’s external communication network through a qualitative interview with Ph.D. Wiebke Ankersen, consultant for press and culture at the Swedish Embassy in Berlin. This interview was held on October 5th 2006 at the Swedish Embassy in Berlin.

3.2 Collecting Secondary Data

Secondary data, or “data that already exist among the wealth of data available in the public realm”, like previous research results, were used in the research process in order to obtain certain knowledge about the subject of investigation and to find a frame of reference. Furthermore, an extensive study of literature and various articles, reports and academic essays proved useful in the research process of collecting secondary data.

3.3 Case Studies

In this instance, one case study is qualitative and focuses on the Swedish Embassy’s communication and information network, thus how and by which channels the Embassy does PR in Germany. The interview was an important means in order to get relevant internal

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49 Ibid, pp 22-23.
50 DISA is the online catalogue of Uppsala University Library. It contains bibliographical information over material that exists in the different units of Uppsala University Library.
51 Swedish Embassy, Rauchstraße 1, 10787 Berlin, Germany.
52 http://dpls.dacc.wisc.edu/types/secondary.htm, 2006-12-08.
information which assisted my understanding of the Embassy’s external communication structure and enabled me to present and describe its information flow and PR work. Moreover, this interview helped me to discover the dominant and current issue facing the press department, this being the project of Nation Branding.

In my second case study I’m going to focus on one specific media channel, which is the Swedish Embassy’s German website. There I intend to examine how the Embassy’s press department is using it in terms of branding Sweden as a nation in Germany, according to Anholt’s models. My method of research will in this case be a quantitative content analysis.

3.4 Quantitative and Qualitative Methods

It is often stated that using both qualitative and quantitative methods should rather be seen as a continuum than as a dichotomy. Qualitative research involves an in-depth, case-oriented study of a relatively small number of cases, including the single-case study, and seeks detailed knowledge of specific cases, while quantitative research can either prove or negate a disposed hypothesis or theory by means of a specific case and the collected data.

In my case the qualitative part delivers useful information about the context of my object of research, being the Embassy’s press department and its external communication structure. Both collecting information by means of an interview as well as using it for a descriptive analysis are of a qualitative nature. The quantitative part is a specific study of one media channel which is tested on the basis of a theory.

3.4.1 Qualitative Research

In my qualitative analysis I’m going to:
1. Use the relevant information regarding the press department’s external communication from the interview,
2. make flip charts by means of this information in order to get a general overview of the press department’s communication network and PR.

Qualitative research is often used to gain a general sense of phenomena and to form theories that can be tested using further quantitative research. First through the interview (which had more the character of a question-guided conversation) I was introduced to the concept of Nation Branding, its rising importance as well as high impact and advanced my study subject on this phenomenon. I became particularly interested in investigating the Embassy’s own way of Nation Branding. Moreover, the qualitative interview was a useful tool for comprehending the nature of the press department’s PR work, how they are communicating with the German target group and dealing with the current issue of Nation Branding. Gathering this information was relevant in order to present the Embassy’s communication structure and different channels it is using for branding Sweden, and to avoid giving a too limited and partial picture in my thesis by only investigating the website.

As we have assessed, the biggest marksmanship and best foundation is reached by combining quantitative and qualitative methods. A qualitative investigation can provide a basis or pre-study to a more comprehensive quantitative examination; or vice versa to make a separate qualitative survey after a quantitative for a better understanding of the investigated results. In my case I used the interview I had with the staff member before starting with my research as

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55 Erikson, p.120.
my qualitative basis and inspiration for my further research. This interview can therefore be seen as a pre-study and opportunity to collect internal information about the press department’s duties in terms of delivering a complete picture.

3.4.2 Quantitative research
To deepen my study and test Anholt’s model, I decided therefore to do a quantitative study of one specific media channel. Quantitative research can be divided into several steps which include:

- The generation and usage of models and theories
- The development of instruments and methods for measurement
- Collection of empirical data
- Modelling and analysis of data
- Evaluation of results.

These steps are used within my study of the quantitative website content. My empirical basis is the Embassy’s German homepage, more precisely the access page, its main topics and categories.

3.5 Content Analysis
Content Analysis is a term mainly used to describe the quantitative analysis of content.57 Quantitative content analysis is according to Esaiasson et al. a very useful tool for getting answers for the incidence of different types of content categories within a material; with this method you can examine how often or how frequently certain categories occur within a text or how much space the several categories get.58

Already in the 1950’s the communication researcher Berelson gave a quite accurate definition of content analysis as a “research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication”59, and according to Deacon it is an extremely directive method which gives answers to the questions you pose.60 Thus, the question of my case study would be: To what extent does the Embassy’s website reflect the six key verticals of Anholt’s hexagons of Nation Brands and Competitive Identity? Are all areas evenly represented on the website in order to give a complete picture of the nation brand?

3.5.1 Content Categories and Subcategories
The website content is divided into the following parts: the table of content, the calendar of events, the current main topic, respectively key issue (e.g. a cultural event), a map of Sweden and the current press releases. The table of content contains the biggest amount of information. At the time of my study the website’s table of content consists of twelve categories and 51 subcategories. A detailed list of the website’s table of content categories and their respective subcategories are highlighted below. These and the rest of the website content will be considered further in the content analysis later on in chapter 5.

57 Deacon, p. 389.
59 Berelson (1952) Content Analysis in Communication Research, p. 147.
60 Deacon, p. 117.
Table of Content

1. The Embassy: Telephone Hours, Embassy’s Holidays (both Swedish and German holidays), Staff, Visit the Embassy


3. News & Events: News, Calendar of Events

4. Press & Information: Contact Persons, Swedish Media


6. Science & Technology: Research and High Technologies, Biotechnology

7. Travel Destination Sweden: Tourism (links to various websites as www.visitsweden.com), Visa

8. Study in Sweden (more info: www.studyinsweden.se and www.sweden.se )

9. Work & Live in Sweden: Work in Sweden, Purchase of Real Estate, Information for retirees who plan to move to Sweden

10. Service for Swedish Citizens: Request for a new passport or ID, Marriage in Germany (for Swedes), Renewal of a Drivers Licence (link only in Swedish)

11. About Sweden: Sweden overview (demographical data), FAQs, Young Swedes (link to www.sweden.se), Estate inventory, Swedes and Sweden (SI’s facts about famous Swedish people, economy, culture, nature, society), Sweden.se in German language (cooperation with SI)


3.6 Collecting Primary Data

Using primary data, which means data that has been collected first hand by one’s own means, can be helpful in order to test a hypothesis or compare to existing secondary data. Through a content analysis I can investigate the frequency of the six areas of national competence on the Embassy’s website which can then be analysed and connected to Anholt’s hexagon model.

As Deacon argues, the problem with a quantitative content analysis is that no matter how objective you try to focus on your coding schedule and only count the manifest content of a text you always have to interpret certain parts of the sample of content. Even with well-piloted coding schedules and manuals, you may encounter certain examples that do not really fit neatly within your pre-designed categories. Deacon recommends to apply a coding schedule according to themes in cases where it is difficult to distinguish between the different content categories because of their abstractness. Investigating a national image and how it is communicated on a website cannot be accomplished by only counting the manifest content but

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61 Deacon, p. 128.
rather by using both, quantitative data collecting with the help of a qualitative categorising of the website content. In my case it wasn’t possible to only count the manifest content like words for example. At this point I have to remark that an investigation like this – even though it is applying a quantitative method – cannot be continuously objective and value-free since there are a number of decisions that need to be made in the process of obtaining results. I had to decide which sub-category would fit best into which theme in my coding schedule – and even when trying to be as objective as possible the subjective judgement of what is significant plays a crucial role within the research process, according to Deacon: what I count, how much I sample, how I categorise, etc. Furthermore, Deacon states, “statistics are ‘constructs’, not ‘facts’”63. Hence, I am now going to exemplify the several steps of my research method according to Deacon’s “guideline” by determining my range of sampling, how I operationalised my variables, the qualifying criteria I have used and the way I selected my unit of analysis.64

3.7 Sampling Unit
To investigate the Embassy’s website content according to the six areas of national competence (Culture/Heritage, People, Tourism, Government, Investment/Immigration and Export) I first have to define my themes (or categories) and my sampling units (or variables). I have decided that my themes would be the six key verticals according to the Hexagon Model. My sampling units will be the twelve content categories on the Embassy’s website which have been detailed earlier.

In connection with analysing content according to themes, Deacon refers to Beardsworth (1980) who describes theme analysis as follows: “Theme analysis (…) does not rely on the use of specific words as basic content elements, but relies upon the coder to recognise certain themes or ideas in the text, and then to allocate these to predetermined categories.”65 On this note I allocated all subcategories (besides the last category “Links”) to the six themes and added “Other Info” as an additional theme which is meant for all subcategories that don’t fit into any of my predefined themes. The last category includes various links to other institutions’ websites which I do not want to include in my analysis. This extra theme contains subjects that lie beyond the Nation Brand Hexagon and its six areas.

3.8 Limitations
I decided to analyse the several content categories that can be found on the access page as these are an inherent part of the website. First I am going to perform a content analysis of the website’s table of content and subsequently I will take a look at the website’s access page, how it is structured and what impression of Sweden as a nation one might get at the first glance. At this point I want to mention that the sampling period of my analysis is of no importance within my analysis since the categories themselves are almost never changed (only their contents).

3.9 Tool of Research
I have decided to combine Deacon’s and Esaiasson’s methodologies66 in order to create a proper coding schedule. Both are completing each other in a preferable way since both use a coding frame (or data matrix) for content analysis which seems to be the easiest and most concise way to illustrate the range of content categories and subcategories on the website.

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62 Ibid., p. 131.
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid.
65 Deacon, p. 119.
First of all I have to determine my *unit of analysis*, the *variables* and the *categories*. According to Deacon, the variables are the properties or areas of investigation within the phenomenon or unit of analysis. Esaiasson calls the object of investigation for *unit of analysis*, which in my case is the Embassy’s website itself. Then I go on defining my sampling units, which are the *table of content*, the *calendar of events*, the website’s *current key issue* on the access page and the Embassy’s *current press releases*. The variables with their particular subcategories are listed up in the *vertical axis*. The categories (or as I called them “themes”) are positioned on the *horizontal axis* and contain in my case the six areas of a Nation Brand, and respectively of the CI Hexagon. Below you can see a pattern of a data matrix which I am going to fill with the website’s content later on in my analytical section (chapter 5).

**DATA MATRIX**

| Category 1 | Theme 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | ...
|------------|---------|---|---|---|---|---|-----
| Subcateg. 1 |         |   |   |   |   |   |     
| ...        |         |   |   |   |   |   |     
| ...        |         |   |   |   |   |   |     
| ...        |         |   |   |   |   |   |     

*Figure 7 – Pattern of a Data Matrix*

In the following chapter I am giving some background information about the Swedish Embassy and their German web presence before continuing with presenting the results of my investigation and the analysis.

### 3.10 Reliability and Validity

A quantitative study has to be conducted in a reliable and valid way if you want to achieve a significant result. Reliability has to do with the quality of measurement and cannot be calculated, only estimated. In my study I have made an effort to count the Embassy’s website content according to Anholt’s six key areas, respectively themes. As I stated earlier, the process of categorising cannot be done without making personal and subjective, thus qualitative valuations of the website content. It could happen that another person would categorise certain variables to another theme. Scientists call this the *Inter-Observer Reliability*. This reliability estimate is used to assess the degree to which different observers give consistent estimates of the same phenomenon. To test this I would have to make a test with a number of random people in order to see if their way of categorising is according with mine. However, I can estimate that the Inter-Observer Reliability of my content analysis is satisfying as the content categories of the website aren’t very ambiguous in terms that they would be categorised much differently by another person.

To test the validity of a research project you need to consider whether you are measuring what is intended to be measured or with how your observations are influenced by the circumstances.

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69 Note: Only contents in German (or with the option of choosing German language) are included in my analysis.
in which they are made. My question of research in this context was: To what extent does the Embassy’s website reflect the six key verticals of Anholt’s hexagons of Nation Brands and Competitive Identity? To get a valid result and answer to my question I’m going to do a quantitative content analysis there I first categorise my variables into Anholt’s six categories and then count the particular category contents. I would estimate the validity of my study as high as I am investigating the question I have posed in the beginning and measuring the proportion of the six key areas, thus the content I have stated that I want to measure.

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4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The last few years have seen an explosion of Nation Branding, shorthand for coordinated government efforts to manage a country's image, whether to improve tourism, investment, or even foreign relations. Firms specialising in Nation Branding have sprouted up around the world. Simon Anholt and others argue that countries looking to manage their image have to go deeper, aligning their foreign and domestic policies with a well-researched set of national images, much as a successful marketing campaign requires a company to "live the brand."73

In the following sub-chapters I am first going to give a short introduction and explanation to some relevant terms concerning my subject of Nation Branding, followed by some background information about Sweden’s representation in Germany.

4.1 Sweden’s Representation in Germany

The country of Sweden is represented in Germany by the Swedish Embassy in Berlin. The ambassadress is Ruth Jacoby (since 2006). The embassy works closely together with the “Svenska Institutet” (SI), a public agency promoting interest in and knowledge about Sweden.74 Sweden’s General Consulate is situated in Hamburg. In addition there are eleven Honorary Consulates spread all over Germany. The Swedish export council has a trade office in Berlin. The Swedish chamber of industry and commerce is located in Düsseldorf and Sweden’s travel and tourist council has its office in Hamburg.75

4.2 The Swedish Embassy Berlin

The Swedish Embassy in Berlin is a part of a complex of buildings which consists of the Nordic nations Denmark, Norway, Finland, Iceland and Sweden. This embassy complex is called “Die Nordischen Botschaften”76 (transl.: “The Nordic Embassies”) and is unique by having five different nations united in one building. It was inaugurated on 20 October 1999.

The Swedish Embassy consists of five major departments:
1. The Ambassadress’s Office
2. The Section of Political and Economical Affairs
3. The Section of Press, Culture and PR
4. The Section of Administration and Consular Affairs
5. The Representatives of Other Ministries.77

4.3 The Embassy’s Web Presence

According to the Swedish Institute most people nowadays get in first touch with a country through the Internet.78 Therefore it is crucial that an embassy’s homepage is well updated and contains a broad assortment of information a foreigner might be interested in or should know

75 www.swedishtrade.se/i_utlandet/landrapporter/tyskland.htm, 2006-11-08.
about the country. The web performance should be of high quality and reflect the nation’s cultural identity.

The Swedish Embassy’s website is closely linked to a number of Swedish institutions, as for instance the SI website. These connections have a complementary function since it gives the user deeper and more detailed information about certain subjects which are not directly concerning the Embassy’s fields of duty. In this respect the press department describes itself rather as a “crossing point” between the German and Swedish press, several co-operative institutions and the German public.

It is crucial for every country’s embassy to have a good web performance, to show the most positive and attractive sides of a nation. For the SI it is a central part of its function to communicate Swedish culture abroad, to make people interested in their country and culture, and hence the Embassy is closely collaborating with them.

The Swedish Embassy’s German homepage is (almost) completely written in German language (but with the option of a Swedish version) and therefore primarily directed towards Germans as the target group. There is only one category that is directly targeted to Swedes living in Germany, giving information about special services for Swedish citizens.

In the following chapter I will first clarify which communication channels the press department is frequently using and which ones to a minor extent. Thereupon I will present the results I obtained through my quantitative part, the content analysis of the Embassy’s German website in order to investigate what extent the website follows the two hexagon models. By that I can find out which areas are emphasized, which ones are penalised, and to what extent the website is “branding” Sweden according to Anholt’s agenda.

81 Cp. category: “Dienstleistungen für schwedische Staatsbürger”.
5. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The theory I have used is based on the model of Anholt’s Nation Brand Hexagon of 2002 and his latest model, the Competitive Identity Hexagon of 2006 as it was my aim to discover whether the Swedish Embassy’s way of Nation Branding, thus communicating Sweden abroad, is aligned with Anholt’s model of an “ideal” and competitive nation brand. Moreover I’m going to illustrate the case study results of the Embassy’s communication structure and the website content in the form of flip charts, a data matrix and finishing with a graph. As Merriam states, figures and matrixes are an integral part of a case study description and reveal important relations within the context of investigation. Moreover, the constructed figures and graphs must be explained, interpreted and related to the own case study in order to give a complete and comprehensive description.

5.1 Communication Structure

According to Jonas Jonsson, information can be seen as a strategic means of control. The Embassy’s way of informing about Swedish-German affairs and the information’s content can be seen as a strategic way of controlling Sweden’s image and the public attitude towards Sweden in Germany. To describe which communication channels and information sources the Embassy uses is an essential part of giving a complete picture of the communication structure. At this point I want to remark that every single channel uses its own way of Nation Branding and might have different focuses on the six NB areas. The Nation Branding on the website does not say anything about the Embassy’s Nation Branding in general, but only the web performance. Furthermore I am going to show the different co-operations the Embassy is having with other Swedish institutions which are all somehow dealing with foreign affairs.

5.1.1 The Embassy’s Flow of Information

The Swedish Embassy makes use of various communication channels to inform the public. To reach its target group, which primarily is the German population, the press department is communicating mainly through the following five channels:

a) Press
b) Internet (website)
c) Special events
d) Exhibitions
e) Brochures (in cooperation with the SI).

However, the Embassy is not using all channels to the same degree. I am now going to present the Embassy’s use of media and communication channels in detail.

5.1.2 Communication Channels

Below is a model detailing how the flow of information about Sweden and Swedish-German affairs is structured and what channels the press department is primarily using for its communication (numbered after importance and regularity of use). I created this model on the basis of several theories (e.g. Miller’s Communication Theories, 2002) and the Embassy’s internal information I obtained in the interview with one of the heads responsible for press matters.

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5.1.3 Main Channels of Communication

The main channel of communication is without a doubt the German press which consists of around 200 press contacts (2/3 journalists and 1/3 freelancer). The press department regularly (weekly) sends out information and press releases concerning important Swedish-German affairs to journalists working for the German press. The content of information must possess news value for German citizens and hence, a connection to Germany, as for example when the Swedish Royal Family is visiting Germany.

Besides for the press channel, there is of course the Internet, more precisely the Embassy’s own website, which is an increasingly important channel of information in contemporary society because it is the only channel that automatically networks beyond borders and provides internet users with information globally. The advantage of the Internet as an informative medium and a website as an educational space is that it can be frequently updated without any temporal or spatial restrictions, and it is easily accessible to anyone who is interested in Swedish affairs. The Embassy in Berlin is making use of its website by having both general and permanent informative content (as Embassy opening hours or bureaucratic information) as well as information that is updated weekly (primarily the calendar of events or press releases), informing about current issues. Through the Internet the Swedish Embassy is also linked to several Swedish institutions, for example the SI, the Tourist Council, the Swedish Trade and Export Council, VisitSweden and the ISA. I will present and explore these in greater detail later on.
5.1.4 Complementary Channels

Another way of communicating Swedish affairs is by having special events, exhibitions, symposiums or being personally present at public events concerning Swedish-German affairs. This mode of communication is the most interactive one, or as Miller would say “person-centered”84, since the Embassy can be in direct (face-to-face) contact with its target group. Events that are organised by the Embassy most prevalently take place in the Embassy’s building in Berlin. Swedish firms with a significant German sales market often sponsor certain public events, organised by the Embassy, as a vehicle for proactive and positive PR (e.g. Vattenfall, IKEA). A current event is an exhibition the Embassy organised in co-operation with the German Technology Museum about the Swedish architect Alfred Grenander who built over 70 underground stations in Berlin between 1905 and 1931 (Appendix 3)85. In this case the event is sponsored among others by the Swedish energy generator Vattenfall86.

The Embassy’s press staff tries to be present at important public events that aren’t organised by the Embassy itself but have a connection to Sweden. However, the staff concedes that unfortunately, they often do not have enough time to maximise this effective channel of PR and communication. This time consuming and hands on method of PR is a very effective way of getting in personal touch with the target group, casting a positive light on the Swedish Embassy and promoting Sweden in a favourable way. The attention of and publicity through the German media is an important part of the Embassy’s representation in Germany – it draws attention, as it strengthens Sweden’s image by making a positive public impression.

5.1.5 Co-operations and Networking

In Swedish organisation theory it is common to use “network” as a notion to describe and denote the special form of organisation between enterprises and other economic subjects.87 The Embassy’s press department can also be seen as a part of a network as it has tight co-operations with a number of Swedish institutions which are promoting Sweden abroad, among others with the SI, both regarding printed and electronic information. The SI has a big assortment of brochures in German language promoting the Swedish way of life, Sweden as a country, Swedes as people and Sweden as a nation. The brochures are edited and published by the Swedish Institute in Stockholm and it is therefore one of the most important co-operation partners of the Swedish Embassy concerning information resources. The institute provides the Embassy with a well-elaborated selection of cultural information about Sweden. The whole selection of the SI’s brochures in German language can be found online88 and are also available to local visitors at the Swedish Embassy in Berlin as well as at the several Swedish Consulates in Germany. Since the brochures and pamphlets are all edited and published through the SI and do not include any editing by the Embassy’s press department, I have illustrated this information channel by a dashed line (cp. figure 8).

The Embassy’s information department has more or less close co-operations with a number of other Swedish institutions, as can be seen illustrated below in figure 9.

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As the model shows the flow of information is one-way-directed which is unusual for a network. As the name already suggests a “network” is supposed to “work as a net” that is communicating in both directions. In our case though, the Embassy has no need to inform its co-operation partners but is still a crossing point within the network of Sweden’s institutions dealing with foreign affairs. The several institutions do not need information about the Embassy’s duties and affairs in Germany. They are only dependent on the website linking with the Embassy because it forwards many German users and potential business partners. The only exception would be the connection to the Foreign Ministry in Sweden (UD) that needs to get regular reports from the Embassy on topical issues in Berlin and Germany.

In figure 9 we can figuratively see that the Embassy indeed is a “crossing point” or a “mediator” between the several Swedish public services and the German group of interest. The group of interest can then be supplied with information about Sweden which the Embassy’s press department obtains from its cooperation partners. Furthermore, the Embassy’s website is linked to these institutions’ websites which contain more detailed information about the user’s individual subject of interest. The Embassy’s website can therefore be seen as an “information mediator” within the network of several Swedish institutions of foreign affairs.

To sum up, the Embassy’s primary task is to provide and present all fields of interest, which represent, form and maintain Sweden’s national brand. The Embassy does not produce its own information within specific fields like tourism or economics but rather prefers to be linked to the respective institutions that specialise in these specific areas. The press and information department receives and distributes printed, informative material from many of these institutions, primarily from the SI, and is in addition to that linked to these institutions’ websites but does not provide them with information regarding the Embassy’s affairs (besides the Foreign Ministry in Sweden). A lot of current information which may be of interest to the
German public is translated and edited by the Embassy in order to adapt it to the German audience. These current press releases can also be found on the Embassy’s website.

5.2 Website Content
In order to conduct a thorough quantitative content analysis of the Embassy’s German website, I will now apply a data matrix to allocate and count the content.

5.2.1 Data Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE OF CONTENT:</th>
<th>Culture/Heritage</th>
<th>Export/Brands</th>
<th>Governance/Policy</th>
<th>People</th>
<th>Investment/Immigration</th>
<th>Tourism</th>
<th>Other Info</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Embassy</td>
<td>Embassy's Holidays</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tel. Hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>Swedish Companies</td>
<td>&quot;Sweden Street&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News&amp;Events</td>
<td>Calendar of Events</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td>News</td>
<td>News</td>
<td>News</td>
<td>News</td>
<td>News</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press&amp;Information</td>
<td>Swedish Media</td>
<td>Swedish Media</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Trade&amp;Investment</td>
<td>Swedish Trade Council</td>
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<td>Swedish Trade Council</td>
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<td>Swedish Economy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>International Fairs</td>
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<td>Investment in Sweden</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>International Fairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel Destination Sweden</td>
<td>Visa</td>
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<td>Visa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Study in Sweden</td>
<td>Study in Sweden</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work &amp; Live in Sweden</td>
<td></td>
<td>Work in Sweden</td>
<td>Purchase of Real Estate</td>
<td></td>
<td>Info for retirees who plan to move to Sweden</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service for Swedish Citizens</td>
<td>Request for a new passport/ID</td>
<td></td>
<td>Marriage in Germany</td>
<td></td>
<td>Renewal of Drivers License</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About Sweden</td>
<td>Sweden overview</td>
<td>FAQs</td>
<td>FAQs</td>
<td>Young Swedes</td>
<td>FAQs</td>
<td>FAQs</td>
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<td>FAQs</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Swedes &amp; Sweden</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Sweden.se
By means of using a matrix I obtained data results which I am now going to analyse in more detailed and in connection to Anholt’s hexagon model.

5.2.2 Frequency distribution
At a total of 63 subcategories\(^{89}\) (100%) that can be chosen by the website user, the following results were obtained:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture/Heritage:</th>
<th>24 (= 38 %)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Export/Brands:</td>
<td>8 (= 13 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance/Policy:</td>
<td>6 (= 9 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People:</td>
<td>3 (= 5 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment/Immigration:</td>
<td>14 (= 22 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism:</td>
<td>8 (= 13 %)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.3 Difference of Methodologies
To illustrate the Embassy’s online presence according to Anholt’s six areas of national competence, I am now going to create a hexagon model on the basis of my own results. Here I have to clarify that my hexagon only shows the *relative* proportion of the website content, which means how the six areas are averaged, and does not show an *absolute* rating of quality as is the case with Anholt’s NBI in Figures 4 and 5. Hence, this rating of an NBI cannot be compared with my proportional graph of the six nation brand areas. The relative proportion of

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\(^{89}\) Note: The additional category “Other info” was not included in the counting since it does not include in the hexagon model.
my model is quantitative, while the absolute rating of the NBI is an absolute measurement of quality. I am only using Anholt’s six key areas to examine how the Embassy’s website mirrors, respectively communicates them.

5.2.4 The Embassy’s Nation Brand Hexagon
I decided to use a hexagon to illustrate my results because I think this model best reveals if the six areas of national competence and the nation brand are evenly represented. It enables you to decipher what area is weak or which area is emphasised too extensively in relation to the others.

The “Status quo” line in the graph shows how the Embassy’s website content is proportionally representing the six key verticals in percent, thus which areas are more emphasised and which subjects are dwelled upon less. The “Best practice” line however reflects how Simon Anholt would have represented the six areas according to his theory and model.

![Hexagon Diagram](image)

**Figure 10 – Distribution of the NB and CI Key Areas on the Website:** “Status quo” is the present frequency distribution of the website content, while “Best practice” would be more balanced.

5.2.5 Analysis of my Results
The “Status quo” line in figure 10 shows clearly that the cultural section is significantly predominant in the website content whereas the proportion of “People” is fairly small. However, taking into consideration that the subcategories “Young Swedes”\(^\text{90}\) and “Swedes & Sweden”\(^\text{91}\) both link forward to the SI website\(^\text{92}\), which contains a big assortment of information in German language about Swedes, their way of life, attitudes and mentality, and therefore equilibrates the lack in this area on the Embassy’s own homepage, the representation or information content of People can still be valued as balanced. If the user is interested in this area he is offered more extensive information by surfing to the SI homepage.

*Culture and Heritage* is no doubt the main theme on the Embassy’s website. Not only because of its big selection of various cultural issues, but also because on the website’s access page

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\(^{90}\) Orig.: “Junge Schweden”.

\(^{91}\) Orig.: “Schweden und Schweden”.

\(^{92}\) [www.sweden.se](http://www.sweden.se) (official homepage of the SI).
Swedish culture and heritage is predominantly promoted. More than half of it promotes diverse Swedish cultural events all over Germany. One of the few pictures that can currently be seen on the access page (besides the Embassy logo and layout images) depicts an important and historic Swedish architect (see Appendix 3).

Neither governmental nor political issues stand out which is due to the fact that the Embassy is more responsible for governmental issues regarding Swedes living within Germany than informing Germans about Swedish politics or governmental affairs. Also here the website has several links that forward to other homepages, for example the Swedish media. In addition, these sources are in Swedish and/or English, and therefore not directly addressed to the German users.

The area of investment and immigration is fairly well represented on the website and even has its own category in the table of content, “Trade and Investment”. However, here it must be noted that for more information about investment affairs the website forwards to the ISA homepage which provides a broad selection of information about investment and business opportunities within Sweden in German language.

The same applies for the tourism and export section. The tourism area is also represented with its own category in the table of content, “Travel destination Sweden”. However, this link also forwards to the SI homepage. Likewise, the “Trade” category contains fairly little information about Swedish exports but prefers to forward link to the Swedish Trade and Export Council.

The areas Tourism, People and Culture are in addition promoted by general layout images on the Embassy’s access page. These are seasonally changed and run on all Swedish Embassy homepages worldwide and are published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Currently, it displays typical Swedish winter images: Stockholm city covered by snow, a blond little girl playing in the snow and a wide, snowy landscape (Appendix 4). Moreover, a map details the geographical position of Sweden, which is the only image that is a permanent feature and shown on all Swedish Embassy websites across the globe (Appendix 5).

5.2.6 Qualitative Content – a short semiotic analysis

Pictures are important in terms of communicating a certain image, or as Deacon states: Images structure meaning. They transfer a feeling, an atmosphere and a style that words can hardly achieve. Visuals can underline an existing image or try to correct stereotypes. In this case the (moving) pictures (called “signs” in semiotics) that can be seen on the access page are rather underlining the (stereo-) typical image of Scandinavia: A blond girl playing in the snow, snowy landscapes, lonesome nature and a view of a beautiful, silent city in the darkness of the Swedish winter (Appendix 3). The associations people often have when thinking about Sweden are usually of this kind.

The images could be related by their denotative (manifest) content to our “themes” and would therefore count as quantitative content; but according to Deacon they must also be considered by its qualitative and connotative (latent, associative) meaning. Pictures carry a plethora of connotative meanings and subliminal associations, depending on who the viewer is and what cultural background s/he has. On the website Sweden is mirrored by beautiful pictures that

96 Deacon, p. 196.
97 Deacon, pp 138/139.
show the most attractive and typical sides of the country: nature, happy people and a distinct culture (Appendix 5). Positive images like these do play an important role for a nation’s own image and their impact should not be underestimated. They may not be that informative but do indeed give certain impressions that might last longer in the viewer’s mind than the informative content of the website. However, I did not include the pictures in my quantitative study because I only wanted to count the manifest and informative content of the website. However, I did not want to ignore the fact that the theme areas culture, people and tourism are highlighted through a range of positive images.

5.2.7 Summary

All in all, the website can be seen as a fairly good representation of Sweden’s nation brand as it includes all six areas of Anholt’s hexagon, though not very evenly; some areas are more and some less emphasised. Anholt’s original model is a balanced, symmetric hexagon which does not accentuate one specific area. The NBI methodology however measures a nation’s reputation by means of the GMI ranking method. Inspired by this method I tried to find out how the Swedish Embassy is reflecting these six areas of national competence on its German website. On the basis of the results I obtained through a quantitative content analysis of the website I can conclude that the key area Culture and Heritage is best represented, which means that there is most information concerning cultural issues, while policy and governance are predominantly disregarded.
6. CONCLUSION AND COMMENTS

As I remarked earlier, there are two ways of interpreting and applying Anholt’s NB Hexagon: either it can be applied as an illustration of a nation ranking (NBI) or as a means of showing the relative percentage, respectively distribution, of communicating the six key areas of national competence. In my study I applied the latter one.

According to Anholt’s NB and CI Hexagon, the “ideal” nation brand would be where all six areas are evenly represented. A “top nation brand” on the other hand would be if all angles were filled out, which means that it was ranked best in all six areas. According to Anholt, a strong nation brand is built and maintained by communicating all six areas with some degree of equality. However, the Embassy’s web performance is placing significant emphasis on the cultural sector and disregarding the “Governance” area. These are in my eyes quite important factors that should be communicated in a more effective and comprehensive way as these elements play an important part in building the “Image of Sweden” and Swedes abroad. The mentality of people and the governance of a foreign country are crucial considerations when deciding whether to commence trade and business with a foreign country such as Sweden. Hence, these aspects should be given more detailed attention on the website.

6.1 The Website Content

Both of Anholt’s hexagon models are certainly models that can hardly be realised in practice. But it is an ideal which should be interpreted as a useful paradigm for Nation Branding. Within the building process of a strong nation brand not only certain areas should be highlighted in order to avoid a one-sided or partial image. Only being strong in one area, for example as an attractive travel destination, fails to make a country’s image into a strong nation brand. The aim should rather be to build a nation brand that communicates and informs about all six points in a more or less equal way, and to build an attractive brand that covers all areas of interest.

As the Embassy is playing a decisive role in communicating Sweden abroad as a neutral representative, it is its duty to communicate a balanced picture. The political issues and governance of a foreign country are significant factors within its image and opinion building. This area should therefore be mentioned more extensively and in a more detailed manner on the Embassy’s website, as there are not many other sources in Germany for obtaining this political information about Sweden. The policy representation is the only area of the hexagon model that shows an obvious lack of information on the website as the information that is available or the links referring to the subject in question are either in Swedish or English. Germans who are interested in Sweden’s political actions and happenings do not get any current information in this regard.

6.2 The Communication Strategy

As we could observe on both communication models in chapter three (figure 1 and 2) the Embassy works within a fairly broad information network. The Embassy’s flow of information and the channels they use to spread information about Swedish affairs in Germany is well elaborated. They use many different channels which is advantageous if you want to reach a wide range of people.

However, the Embassy puts the main focus on press relations with German journalists. Without doubt, this is a highly important relation and channel but as Miller argues, individual interaction is able to manage goals that are both instrumental (e.g. persuading or informing
The Image of Sweden - A Study of the Swedish Embassy’s Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy in Germany

someone) and relational (e.g. presenting yourself in a favourable light). This can be achieved most easily by organising or being present at certain public events as well as by having direct and personal contact with the target group. Personal attendance at public events might not only impress the present audience, but will primarily be noticed by the press which can set the Swedish Embassy in a favourable light. Unfortunately, the Embassy does not have the time to perform this PR strategy in an adequate way, which can be seen as an obvious lack in their strategic communication.

6.3 Suggestions for Further Research

As I pointed out in the beginning and as Simon Anholt has stated as well, the research on Nation Branding as a concept of marketing and competition has not been very extensive yet because of its relative newness. This is why the field is open for further studies and research. During the last decades the importance of Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy has increased due to growing globalisation. Anholt has been one of the main developers and is the current expert within this field, as his NBI is the first official ranking of nation brands that is extending its polling system with every quarter. The survey is getting more sophisticated and the results increasingly representative and valid as the amount of respondents is constantly growing and more countries are being included.

Further research could be done within the qualitative field on the subject of Nation Branding. The NBI could include more qualitative background information in terms of finding out why weak nations are rated negatively in order to find out the flaws and develop new theories and strategies for assisting them. Often there are simple reasons which can explain a bad ranking that can only be fixed if you know the cause. Questions to be investigated in further research could be for instance:

- Which contextual or historical factors may have influenced the ranking decision?
- Have the respondents been influenced by certain stereotypes or did they feel that prejudices helped them to ignore an existing information gap?
- How important are media in terms of building a nation’s image? Do they form our view of the world; do they form our perception and valuation?
- In what respect can media coverage create stereotypes or evoke a distorted image of a nation? Or, vice versa: Can only media defeat old prejudices, respectively correct a false image?

Further research could also be directed at the comparison between strong and weak nation brands, or moreover on the question of why nation brands can change their value this rapidly (as it was the case with Brand Australia in 2005/2006). In this respect one could investigate what factors might have influenced that change?

To summarise, it is not only important to find out which brands are most popular and who “rules” the NBI, but rather for what reason they do lead the ranking. Only by this, “weak” nations can be given professional advisory and help in building or improving their nation brands and getting a competitive identity, thus an attractive image worldwide.

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98 Miller, p. 99.
7. SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND FINAL THOUGHTS

Based on the results of my interview and the content analysis, I have arrived at the conclusion that the Swedish Embassy in Berlin is following a well elaborated communication strategy in terms of informing the German public about Sweden and Swedish-German affairs and strengthening its national brand. By both having communication co-operations and a broad information network, as well as using different communication channels, the Embassy’s effort in extensive and effective PR and Nation Branding is undeniable.

Public Diplomacy has become increasingly important in an increasingly globalised world where borders are becoming more fluid and nations as well as enterprises build global co-operations and networks. At the same time, people and nations get the increasing urge to emphasise their identity, their origin, their culture, their traditions and national assets. Not only the economic success of a country is of importance, but also a country’s image and reputation is a decisive factor within international relations, no matter if it regards tourism, business or interpersonal ties.

In my case study of the Swedish Embassy’s website the results have shown that the information content of governmental and policy issues is behind all other areas of “national competence”, as Anholt calls it. This can, according to Anholt’s model, be interpreted as a sign for an unbalanced communication of Sweden’s nation brand and a lack of information regarding Sweden’s political affairs. As a “strong” nation brand is composed of the six key areas which are all of same importance, they have to be communicated in an equal way, and presented in an attractive and authentic manner. Thus, to achieve a best possible rating a nation must have performed a balanced cross-cultural and international promotion of these areas, which are a country’s national strengths and capabilities. Anholt believes that the politics of a nation can affect every single aspect of a person’s perception of a country.99 Accordingly, the Embassy should put more effort into communicating this area to the German public as it is its weakest area on the homepage. While the website’s main strength lies in the cultural section (which is without doubt a very important issue for an Embassy to communicate) they should also try to include more political issues within their regularly updated information in terms of giving a balanced picture of all national assets.

An Embassy is not only a cultural accredit but also a political one. I am not suggesting that the Embassy should minimise the cultural content of its website, but to extend the content of political and governmental topics. Also, the information content of “People” should be enlarged, which is an important factor that influences a country’s attractiveness of for example being a business partner or a travel destination. More general information about these areas would be of advantage for a balanced communication of Sweden on the Embassy’s website.

However, to take up my question of research from the beginning, I can now conclude that “Brand Sweden” is communicated in a quite beneficial way. The Embassy puts a lot of effort into using various channels for communication and PR purposes. Although the website is not reflecting all areas evenly, it can be argued that this may not be of major importance in Germany. As the press staff member stated in my interview, there is no need to improve Sweden’s image within Germany (because it already is positive), only a need to strengthen and maintain it and to keep people informed about Swedish-German affairs or connections.

To summarise, the press department’s general function is it to represent and present Sweden in Germany, to highlight its national advantages and assets, as well as to enlighten and inform the German public.

Anholt’s model has the shape of a hexagon which illustrates certain national assets that have to be communicated in an equal extension and on an international level. In this context I would like to broach the issue of whether the six hexagon points really do cover all relevant areas that might impact a nation’s image. It might have its flaws in being too limited. A nation brand, thus the general image and value which people have of a country, can be constructed or influenced by further variables; variables that Anholt hasn’t considered in his model or his rankings. For example, do stereotypes often control a country’s reputation. Sweden for instance is known for being neutral, sophisticated, developed and modern, and having an efficient and liberal governance with a strong tradition of social welfare; or many people still seem to have the stereotype of all Swedish people having blond hair, blue eyes, driving a Volvo, living in red, wooden IKEA homes and wearing fashionable H&M clothes. However, these stereotypes are positive, so there is no urgent need to correct them; but many countries still have to struggle against old prejudices that are hard to remove, even by intense Nation Branding strategies. I would argue that a nation’s history for example is an important factor which cannot be controlled or easily changed by a simple strategy and which a nation has to live with for a long time; as Germany for example still is, in some respects. Anholt states that Germany suffers under a “somewhat unbalanced image”. There still exists many old prejudices against Germans, even amongst young people. According to Anholt, Germany has a positive international image regarding governance, economy and popular brands but “it’s not a country that’s usually associated with warmth, hospitality, (...) culture or fun”. German people are highly regarded as potential employees or managers rather than as friends or hosts.

For the first time during the 2006 Soccer World Cup in Germany, the country finally got the chance to show themselves as a friendly and hospitable nation; certainly the reason why the head slogan of the World Cup was “The World Visiting (or: Being Guest At) Friends”. Germans finally got the opportunity to correct old prejudices, which have persisted during the last 60 post-war years, and were able to present themselves in a new light and on an international platform. To cite the international media “the image of Germans as detached and unsmiling (was) laid to rest once and for all”. Anholt asserts that the 2006 Soccer World Cup certainly was a great means that Germany and above all the media used strategically to improve its own national brand and made the country “a serious contender for the top spot in future NBIs”.

This case proves that an international event could help the Germans to change their reputation of being “cold and unfriendly”, and to “warm up”, “soften” and “boost” the image of its people around the world, as well as to show Germany’s potential as a destination for fun and friendliness. As a result, the NBI 2006 / Q3 shows that after hosting the 2006 Soccer World Cup, Germany’s nation brand raised its profile from sixth to second place.

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101 Ibid., p.69.
104 The original FIFA 2006 slogan in German: “Die Welt zu Gast bei Freunden”.
107 Ibid.
However, does this result prove that it is possible to overcome certain stereotypes, historical stigma or, as Anholt puts it, certain “narratives people have held in their minds about Germany for years”\(^{109}\)? If this was the case, how often does a country really get the chance to act in the spotlight of the global media, in front of millions of people and hundreds of nations to improve its image, as was the case with Germany in 2006? Germany was fortunate to get this opportunity and was aware of this unique chance to be on its best behaviour.

It is difficult to change a country’s negative reputation or certain associations that have existed in people’s minds over a long period of time; and at this point I would disagree with Anholt who has stated that “time usually clouds over the associations”\(^{110}\). As a matter of fact certain events cannot or should not be forgotten over the years. History is a significant factor that shapes a nation’s image, positively or negatively. On the other hand I agree with Anholt who argues thereupon that communications play a major role in fixing a negative image, where only new policies and behaviours are the answer in changing a nation’s international reputation.\(^{111}\) In this context Anholt talks about “deserved” and “undeserved reputation”. Germany has a dark history and has once indeed deserved this reputation, but the people of today certainly have not deserved to still be stigmatised by their country’s history. That is when a nation has to deal with an obvious “information gap” that exists in peoples minds, and which has to be corrected or improved by positive information and intense Nation Branding.\(^{112}\)

Through the global media attention that focused on Germany during the summer of 2006, the country’s population seized the opportunity to change old prejudices and correct a widespread attitude by showing a new and positive side of its people and being a welcoming and warm host nation. In the international spotlight they could overcome many old prejudices and assumptions within a short time and in doing so, gain more attraction.

Furthermore, it is questionable whether certain areas of national competence are not of greater significance than others. One could wonder if governmental issues are not more important within the image building process than tourism for example; or if it is not more necessary to communicate the value of a country’s strong export brands than informing about the nature of a nation’s people? Of course one might argue that certain areas are of greater importance or value than others; but often the “smaller” or “less important” areas are the ones that actually influence and build a nation’s image and overshadow some negative sides of the “important” areas.

One good example would be Britain’s national brand image. The UK got ranked first in the recent NBI (2006 / Q3), despite its very precarious politics at the moment, its close and public alliance with the US during the Iraq conflict, the recent terrorist bombs, cow disease and so forth. It still has a general positive reputation of being a strong, self-confident, traditional and exemplary nation, a tourist hot spot with its own unique culture, history, monarchy, and it is considered an important country for investment and business. It must be a combination of all of these factors that still put the UK on top of the NBI, if not its political stance. Anholt considers furthermore that the most important factor for gaining a strong competitive identity and nation brand is that the nation believes in itself, is confident in all of its actions, shows national pride, keeps its traditional habits, has common values, stands for its cultural heritage,

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\(^{110}\) Anholt (2007), p. 64.
\(^{111}\) Ibid.
\(^{112}\) Ibid., p. 65, 67.
and respectively communicates all of this through a well-elaborated Public Diplomacy concept.\footnote{Anholt (2007), p. 71.}

In other words, it is not all about being number one in the NBI, to be best in maybe one or two areas but weak in the other ones. A strong and consistent nation brand is more about having an \textit{even} distribution of strong national assets and a diversified national competence that mirrors the stability of a nation and its population that has a clear idea of what their nation really stands for and where it is going. Sweden has already developed and accomplished a strong and consistent nation brand within the last centuries, and is confident enough in its actions and national competence; but according to Anholt, Germany still \textit{“needs to learn how to believe in itself before it can inspire belief in others”}.\footnote{Ibid.} To create a competitive identity for a country, its people need to talk positively about itself.\footnote{Ibid., p. 30.}

The Soccer World Cup was a good start, there Germans finally “dared” to show a benign nationalism and self-confidence, which had an immediately positive effect on its national reputation throughout the world. This result can rather be seen as an immediate effect; yet a persistent change needs a long term Nation Branding – both “internal”, thus on a national level, as well as “external”, thus internationally.

The “Image of Sweden” is positive and strong, as the NBI has proved with every quarterly ranking so far, there Sweden has always been among the top 10 nation brands, and the Embassy’s press staff member also confirmed this in the interview. When a nation like Sweden does not have to fight against prejudices or a negative international reputation, hence it is easier to uphold a strong national confidence and to communicate this confidence worldwide. Sweden can look back on several decades of effective Public Diplomacy abroad and the merit of having constantly been internationally communicated as a stable, reliable, fair, modest, trustworthy and socially just nation\footnote{Ibid, p. 70.}, among others by political campaigns, the international media and its popular export brands and products. No political mistakes have put Sweden in a negative light. No weak export brands have deteriorated Sweden’s image.

However, one might wonder how it can happen that Australia for example is the top brand in 2005 and then is suddenly ranked tenth only one year later. This is one aspect that makes Anholt’s ranking method appear slightly unreliable and unstable. One could interpret it as fairly superficial and above all highly dependent on current affairs and happenings that influence a country’s rating, only because it is “popular” at that moment. Germany got ranked very highly in the third quarter of 2006 because it was a popular and internationally visible country this year, due to the Soccer World Cup. Next year there might be an international event taking place in another country which may rouse interest and hence displace Germany. Thus, this NBI ranking has a more short-term value and cannot be generalised for a longer period of time. It is very dependent on current happenings, thus the media’s and public agenda. Countries have to keep themselves constantly “up-to-date” and must be present in the international media to get attention and positive publicity from all around the world; but still, I would argue that a truly strong nation brand that has a constant Public Diplomacy and effective Nation Branding will remain among the top 15, maybe varying from time to time depending on the attention of the international media.

In opposition to a product brand, it takes a while (often several decades), a lot of effort and national cooperation as well as international communication to build up a strong nation brand.
or to correct negative global attitudes towards a country. All areas of national competence have to collaborate within a country in order to build or strengthen a positive national image and to keep the nation brand among the top 15 of the NBI.

As I stated before, the Internet is evaluated as the most important source of information nowadays; but is the Internet an effective media for Nation Branding or communicating a Competitive Identity? Anholt doesn’t appraise web communication as an appropriate or effective tool for Nation Branding and doubts that “anything which needs to be (...) opened on a computer” can “change anybody’s mind or behaviour”, and proceeds to say that “in order to achieve the right effect, face-to-face contact is indispensable.” Therefore the Embassy’s usage and prioritising of certain communication channels could be reconsidered. More emphasis and time should be spent on public events and more “personal” Public Relations. But as has been concluded, there is no urgent need for the Swedish Embassy in Berlin to change their strategy since Sweden does not face any current problems with its national image or negative reputation among the German public; these final thoughts can rather be seen as a conclusion of Anholt’s view and theory.

As a concluding remark it can be considered that if it takes so much effort and time to build a strong and consistent nation brand, it consequently must take a while to destroy a hitherto strong and trustworthy nation brand that has existed over several decades. Since the NBI is an all new ranking, we have not seen any dramatic decrease of a nation’s brand yet; but it would be interesting to keep track of the correlation between Britain or America’s political actions and their nation brands’ development in future.

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Uppsala, January 2007
Heidi Marie Nömm
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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1: Quality of Life Index 2005

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Country</th>
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<th>Rank</th>
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<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>8.068</td>
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<td>Norway</td>
<td>8.051</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>8.015</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>7.937</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>7.925</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>7.911</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>Italy</td>
<td>7.810</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>7.796</td>
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<td>New Zealand</td>
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Following countries were polled: Canada, China, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Japan, South Korea, United Kingdom, and the United States.

APPENDIX 2: First NBI Ranking, 2005 / Q1

2.1 First NBI Overall Ranking (Q1 / 2005): Sweden No.1 Nation Brand

2.2 NBI Governance Ranking (Q1 / 2005)

2.3 NBI People Ranking (Q1 / 2005)\textsuperscript{120}

2.4 NBI Culture Ranking (Q1 / 2005)\textsuperscript{121}


2.5 NBI Tourism Ranking (Q1 / 2005)\textsuperscript{122}

2.6 NBI Investment Ranking (Q1 / 2005)\textsuperscript{123}

2.7 NBI Export Brands/Products Ranking (Q1 /2005)\textsuperscript{124}

APPENDIX 3: Embassy Access Page November/December 2006

Architect Grenander is the website's main topic

APPENDIX 4: Website’s Seasonal Images

Winter 2006/2007
The Image of Sweden - A Study of the Swedish Embassy’s Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy in Germany

APPENDIX 5: Image Selection

A selection of the Swedish Embassy’s website images (Dec. 2006)
APPENDIX 6: Map of Sweden, Calendar of Events

6 Apr 2006 - 30 Jan 2007
Lapland. Der eisige Norden Europas.

5 Sep 2006 – 8 b 2007
Bergman-Retrospektive

6 Sep 2006 – 2 May 2007
Nordischer Filmklub

24 Sep 2006 - 7 Jan 2007
Ausstellung “Prins Eugen (1865-1947)”

10 Nov 2006 - 19 Jan 2007
Ausstellung Håkan Rehnberg

21 Nov 2006 - 31 Jan 2007
Märchenspiel
SCHWANENWEISS von August Strindberg

2 Dec 2006 - 15 Jan 2007
SOMETHING SWEDISH

7 - 9 Dec 2006
El Cimarron

7 Dec 2006
Informationstag: Arbeiten und Studieren in Schweden

# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>CI</td>
<td>Competitive Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cp.</td>
<td>Compare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.g.</td>
<td>for example (abbreviation of Latin “exempli gratia”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Et al.</td>
<td>et alii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GMI</td>
<td>Global Market Insite, Inc.</td>
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<td>Ibid.</td>
<td>Ibidem</td>
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<td>ISA</td>
<td>Invest in Sweden Agency</td>
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<td>NB</td>
<td>Nation Brand</td>
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<td>Nation Brand Index</td>
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<td>Original</td>
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<td>PR</td>
<td>Public Relations</td>
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<td>SI</td>
<td>Svenska Institutet (Swedish Institute)</td>
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<td>Translated</td>
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<td>UCLA</td>
<td>University of California, Los Angeles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UD</td>
<td>Utrikesdepartement (Foreign Ministry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USIA</td>
<td>The United States Information Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>Quarter</td>
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