UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF LAW, ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES

Winchester School of Art

A CONTEMPORARY BRAND CHINA

An Investigation into the Development of Brand China in the Context of Global Socio-political and Cultural Influences in the 21st Century

by

Xiaoyan Lu

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2009

Abstract

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the cold war the global economy has begun to shift its centre of gravity towards the East. This, combined with the consolidation of the power of multi-national corporations and banks and the globalisation of markets at virtually all levels, has led to the emergence of massive new global players in terms of markets and production. Despite the fact that China, unlike the Soviet Union, maintained its political system, it has emerged as a major economic global power and is extending and consolidating it's economic and political global influence into the 21st Century. Despite China's economic influence which is acknowledged in its positive economic and political relations with its historical ideological enemies, the ubiquitous presence of Chinese made products and unprecedented domestic and international openness it remains dogged by broadly negative perceptions in the West. This study aims to address this problem through the application of the emerging theories of Nation Branding to envisage China as a brand and to investigate possibilities for the establishment of a competitive brand identity for China as a nation. Therefore, the research addresses the issue of how China can establish a contemporary nation brand and identifies the parameters for its sustainability and management in the 21st century. To this end the study has developed a working definition of the term 'nation branding' as a strategically managed process of applying branding techniques to nations in order to gain competitive advantages by improving the perceived image and promoting the principle values of a nation. The study underpins the application of this theoretical model with an investigation into the specificity of the historical context of advertising and branding in China in the 20th Century. The aims and objectives of the study are incorporated into the design brief for a contemporary logo for brand China and it is through the execution of the brief by the researcher as reflective practitioner in the role of art director and designer that the study consolidates the findings of the theoretical research through specific design problems. The study concludes with an evaluative reflection of the interactions between the theoretical and practical outcomes of the research in which it is proposed that addressing the highly specific design problems of brand identity development provides a focussed point of convergence for the extensive and complex issues involved in the conceptualisation of the nation as a brand. It is proposed that the study provides the conceptual tools for the development of China as a contemporary nation brand.

Table of Contents

List of Figures and Images

Declaration of Authorship

I, Xiaoyan Lu,

declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

[title of thesis]

A CONTEMPORARY BRAND CHINA
An Investigation into the Development of Brand China in the Context of Global Socio-political and Cultural Influences in the 21st Century

 I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;

2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;

3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;

4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;

5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;

6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;

7. Either none of this work has been published before submission, or parts of this work have been published as: [please list references below]:

Signed: ....

Date: 1 September 2009

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my gratitude to my supervisors Mr. Gordon Hon and Dr. David F. Birks for their supervision throughout this work and for their constructive comments on this thesis. I wish to thank the designers who participated in the experiment for their contribution, particularly Mr. Rui Yang. I am also very thankful to Mr. Robert E. D'Souza and Mr. Tim Metcalf for their professional contributions and comments. I also wish to express my thanks to Professor Maozu Lu, the Director of the Centre for Contemporary China, University of Southampton for his valuable advice and support. Thanks also go to Mr. Tony Galsworthy for his continued support and Ms Sara Roberts for her valuable assistance by proofreading the thesis. I also wish to thank Mr. John Gillett, Director of Research and Dr. Beth Harland, Director of Graduate School at Winchester School of Art for creating a suitable and supportive environment for such a cross-disciplinary research. Finally I wish to express my gratitude to Professor Bashir Makhoul, Head of Winchester School of Art, as my supervisor in the early period of this research for his encouragement, guidance and having faith in my ability to accomplish this project.

To My Family

A CONTEMPORARY BRAND CHINA

An Investigation into the Development of Brand China in the Context of Global Socio-political and Cultural Influences in the 21st Century

INTRODUCTION

China is currently undergoing a rapid cultural, economic and social change. Having isolated itself from the rest of the commercial Western world for over 30 years, it is now facing an elevated brand identity crisis as a nation. Several complex intertwined issues have contributed to a non-positive image of China internationally; the impact of the Cultural Revolution; a large population that needs careful management; unprecedented economic growth, pollution and environmental problems, cheap products, institutional corruption, political and foreign policy, and the lack of democracy, to mention only a few. This research, in its broader sense, aims to investigate possibilities for the establishment of a competitive brand identity for China as a nation. Early in this research it has become apparent that China's awareness of nation branding is uncertain, and to some extent there appeared to be little need for China to be overly concerned by how the people of other countries perceive them as a nation, or indeed a brand. It also became clear that the realities of the soaring global economy made China stand out for two reasons. The first reason is that its successful bid to the 2008 Olympics showed clear signs of an effective competitive approach, as an attempt to join developed nations in their quest for a prominent position that would reflect their economic power. The second reason is that China is attempting to regain a position appropriate to the world's oldest surviving civilisation while keeping as its governing principles the maintenance of its independent, specific cultural identity and avoiding recreating itself in America/the West's image.

The case for nation branding in the context of China is rather compelling, primarily from the point of view of competitiveness, China needs to embrace its full breadth of cultural and social development as well as its political and economic future. In the current globalised world, nations that are not actively competing with each other will miss out on their share of the world resources, wealth and influence. The Chinese government has already displayed clear indications that it intends to expand its economic growth and to become an influential player on the international stage. From this viewpoint, China appears completely aware of the dynamics of its positioning. However, from a branding view point, every aspect of the brand has to make sense and work consistently and in coordination with each other towards the overall goal. Therefore this research will argue the necessity for China to gain a full understanding of the nation branding concept and embrace the concept in its attempts to improve its image. There are many conflicts in China's current reputation: on the one hand it promotes itself as a beautiful tourist destination and a land of business opportunities, with serious attempts to produce quality goods; on the other hand, it operates a totalitarian regime, subjugates minorities and oppositions, pollutes the environment, is institutionally corrupt and neglects its people. It further argues that a branding strategy will necessitate the identification of the true weaknesses and the ways to address them in order to reach the consistency needed for a successful China brand.

The hypothesis of this research is that *it is possible to enhance the competitiveness of China globally through the management and improvement of its international image and the way it is perceived and to embrace a distinctive identity with shared national values as well as placing a strong emphasis on worthiness.* This hypothesis suggests four interlinked and highly complex, yet essential, aspects of the China brand. It is however fraught with dilemmas as to its many negative and subjective associations, particularly when it is measured through external perception. In order to address this assumption, the structure of the

13

research incorporates six elements based on Anholt's model as it will be explored in Chapter 4: Culture and Heritage, Exports, People, Governance, Tourism and Immigration and Investment. In order to test this hypothesis, the following research question has been developed: **how can China establish a contemporary nation brand and what are the parameters for its sustainability and management in the 21st century.** The purpose of this research is primarily developed to identify the areas in which China may improve and actively manage in order to achieve a positive outcome. In addition, a practice-based experiment involving the researcher as a participant art director and designer has been generated in order to establish a contemporary visual representation/identity for China through the formation of a nation logo. It is anticipated that this practical and applicable visual experiment may provide an arguably reasonable example that appropriate Chinese agencies could view as a pilot for a larger more comprehensive and strategically aligned project for an improved China brand.

The content of this research is divided into eight chapters. Chapter 1 will address the overall position of this research and identify the nature of the sources and the decisions for their selection. It goes on to justify why action research and case study are the key research methods deployed with specific focus on tacit knowledge, offering descriptions of its rationale and suitability as well as its philosophical basis. Its suitability is described fully with regard to the epistemology of nation branding and its relation to perception. This chapter also consists of strategies for data collection, processing and presentation. In addition, this chapter includes a description of the role of the researcher as practitioner and how the researcher deploys action research in the context of the practical element of the research by adopting the position of art director and designer, including the use of cyclic process of planning, taking action, evaluating and reflecting.

Chapter 2 starts to introduce notions of advertising, marketing and branding, focussing on definitions of the key terms involved in this study

and their relationship both to each other and to the subject of the branding of China. It is necessary to establish definitions that are relevant and suitable for the context of this research. This will provide the theoretical and practical backdrop of the structure that will be pursued, for example, it identifies branding within which contains marketing and its visual component in advertising, of which visual identity represents a small part. This provides a clear theoretical thread that forges links between theory and practice in this research.

Chapter 3 will conduct a detailed investigation into the three key periods of visual advertising in China in order to determine the key visual elements associated with each period. These key periods of visual advertising have made a significant contribution to the current perception of the image of China, and some of these visual factors will be examined in Chapter 7 where they will be used within a creative practice in an attempt to form a contemporary visual brand identity for China. These key advertising periods include emergent and early development, industrialisation of commercial print advertising, and political propaganda during the Cultural Revolution. The first part traces the history of the development of advertising and visual communication in China from ancient times to the beginning of the Opium War in 1840. The second part focuses on the specific period when print advertising became a widespread phenomenon introduced by European and American commercial companies. The third part examines propaganda posters produced before and during the Cultural Revolution.

Chapter 4 will introduce the concept of Nation Branding by establishing a working definition that will be used in this research. A study of the two key factors underpinning nation branding, country of origin and culture, will be explored. The study extends to central aspects related to stakeholders and positioning. The role of government in the nation branding process will also be addressed. This chapter will also identify the most suitable model for the effective measurement of nation brands.

Chapter 5 will examine two nation brands: America and Japan, both of which are rated highly in the selected nation brands measurement- Anholt Nation Brands Index. These two nations have deployed very different and distinctive forms of communications to reach a high level of international reputation prior to the establishment of a nation branding concept: America through cultural influence and Japan through country of origin, the essence of which is the spirit and unity of its people. This chapter also identifies the threats facing these two major nation brands, and suggests a potential solution through conscious nation branding exercises. This provides a living example in the analysis of the potential China branding exercise by identifying their success and failure.

Chapter 6 is designed to explore the current perceived image of China and identify the key weaknesses of its image, based broadly on the Anholt Nation Brands Index (ANBI). A study of the key weaknesses will be conducted, in an attempt to uncover the omissions and shed light on the possible ways of addressing these problems for an improved Brand China. This includes the examination of issues such as investing in people by improving the educational ethos, a national insurance system including health care and improving the governing system. The latter is perceived to be fundamental in the drive for an improved brand China. This part also explores how China operates on the international stage by examining its international relations through contrasting foreign policies and in the adoption of oppositional positions. In addition it explores the debate surrounding democratic developments and international relations by testing the rule of law against the rule of man. This section will also look at possible improvements in a variety of different areas but more specifically in culture, tourism and country of origin effect through exports. This chapter will offer some solutions to priorities discussed in the weakness category including the setup of a coordinating body for carrying out the nation branding exercise for China.

Chapter 7 will present the practical component of this research: the role of the researcher as an art director and a designer, as well as providing

an example, within realistic practical parameters, of an experimental brief for the creation of a logo to become a new ideographic identity for China that incorporates the aims and objectives of the development of a contemporary brand China. This will be followed by the final chapter which presents a summary of the research outcomes and suggestions for future research drawn from this research.

1 METHODOLOGY

This chapter begins by addressing the overall position of this research and identifying the nature of sources and decisions for their selection. It goes on to justify why action research and case study are the key research methods deployed with specific focus on tacit knowledge, offering descriptions of its rationale and suitability as well as philosophical basis. Its suitability is described fully with regard to the epistemology of nation branding and its relation to perception. This chapter also consists of strategies for data collection, processing and presentation. In addition, this chapter includes a description of the role of the researcher as practitioner and how the researcher deploys action research in the context of the practical element of the research by adopting the position of art director and designer, including the use of cyclic process of planning, taking action, evaluating and reflecting.

This research involves a range of research methods. It deploys a variety of different methods and techniques. Each method is relevant to the type of knowledge required, including tacit knowledge, practical knowledge and theoretical/conceptual knowledge (Becker and Howard S., 1996).

1.1 Sources

The research deploys traditional research methods, such as qualitative research in the form of data collection, analysing and presenting or reporting. As this research is involved in cross-discipline and indeed growing subject matters, qualitative research seems to be the most relevant method in this context. Qualitative research is exploratory by its nature, unlike quantitative methods, which aim at being conclusive. In this research, qualitative research is primarily utilised in the form of action

research and case study. It relies on four ways of gathering information: participation; observation; interviews; and analysis of documents. Analysis of documents and a form of participation most accurately describe the research for this study. Case study and action research emerge as the main methods that serve this study, as case study lends itself to both generating and testing hypotheses and action research is a reflective, cyclic process of progressive problem-solving led by an individual. In the context of this research both methods have facilitated practical experiments and creative work as well as the analysis of data and the identification of patterns. This research utilises a number of different sources: both primary sources that are central to any historical research; and secondary resources, which are used in the absence of the primary source. The research utilises several types of documents that could be considered primary sources, such as biography, official publications, newspapers, magazines, diagrams, catalogues and so on. On the other hand, the research uses what cannot be described as original but secondary sources, such as quoted material, textbooks, encyclopaedias, dictionaries, printed posters, the internet and art objects. Although the researcher is aware of the limitations of the secondary source, as this is a cross-disciplinary work, the information has been checked and cross-referenced for the purposes of accuracy before its use. In addition, the researcher makes use of sources in different languages, namely Chinese and English. Hill stresses the importance of using secondary sources of data where possible:

> The value of secondary sources should not be minimized. There are numerous occasions where a secondary source can contribute significantly to more valid and reliable historical research than would otherwise be the case.
> (Cohen L. et al., 6ed, 2007)

1.2 Research Design And Planning

When this research started, the work was conducted around a broad question of how China can become more competitive in the current

volatile marketplace, both culturally and economically. The plan at the initial stages was based on a literature review in order to establish existing work in the field and to formulate operational questions. To that end, data has been collected through books, magazines, journals and articles, TV, interviews and the worldwide web. As the collected data began to suggest a path for the direction for the research, the need for a coherent research design that is able to deal with the complexities of the types of knowledge that is utilised became apparent. It has become clear that the data is diverse, broad and implies different types of knowing. The research planning and its design have focused on selecting the relevant design that is able to provide connections that hold the project together and provide the main structural elements. The methods are intended to work effectively together in order to find answers to the research questions and address the research hypothesis. It is useful at this stage to reiterate the hypothesis of this research: "*It is possible to enhance the competitiveness of China globally through the management and improvement of its international image and the way it is perceived; to embrace a distinctive identity with shared national values as well as placing a strong emphasis on worthiness.*" This hypothesis suggests four interlinked and highly complex, yet essential, aspects of the China brand. It is however fraught with dilemmas as to its many negative and subjective associations, particularly when it is measured through external perception. In order to address this assumption, the structure of the research embraced the six elements based on Anholt's model as described in Chapter 4: Culture and Heritage, Exports, People, Governance, Tourism and Immigration and Investment. In order to examine the hypothesis, a research question has risen specifically to test the extent of the hypothesis through **how can China establish a contemporary nation brand and what are the parameters for its sustainability and management in the 21ˢᵗ century.** The purpose of the research is primarily developed to identify the areas that China may improve and actively manage in order to achieve a positive outlook. In addition, a practice-based experiment involving the researcher as a participant art director and designer has been developed in order to

establish a contemporary visual representation/identity for China informed by the theoretical findings. It is anticipated that this practical and applicable visual experiment may provide an example to inform China's wish to implement similar projects for an improved China brand.

The research strategy is based on establishing the end-point, which is the direct result of the application of the model for the China brand, and it aims to define criteria, identify weaknesses and prioritise actions. In this section, we have established the broad strategy for the research and its approach.

1.3 Epistemology Of Nation Branding

The fundamental focus of this research in terms of its methods is based on the notion of process. There are several methods that have been deployed for data collection, its analysis and presentation of the results. In addition, other methods and techniques have been developed in the context of this research with particular emphasis on the idea of nation branding. Nation branding is a relatively new field; it combines both theory and practice that aim to measure and establish distinctive identity and manage of reputation of a country. The theory of this field is closely related to and relies upon methodology from commercial brand management and the broader field of branding. It is reasonable to suggest that the branding is fundamentally reliant upon commercial practices in brand management and marketing.

The practice of branding a nation has been adopted by many countries, such as the USA, the UK, South Africa, New Zealand and many other countries in Western Europe. The approach taken relies heavily on how others think of a nation; therefore, the notion of perception occupies a central position in the development of this research. In addition it is important to note that the development of a nation brand demands an increasing interconnectivity via advances in information technology. For

example, East West Communications, which developed its own nation branding indexes, states that the methodology for collecting and analysing data for the purpose of nation branding is primarily based on the use of information technology, as mentioned in Chapter 4.

> The East West Nation Branding Indexes use a proprietary Natural Language Processing text analysis system, developed by Perception Metrics. This rule-based system is comprised of dictionaries that include almost 16,000 words and phrases indicating either a positive or a negative message. From the analysis of these positive and negative messages and country mentions, a score is calculated and compared to other entities in the study.

The central emphasis of the method used to establish a perception of a country brand is based on perception metrics. Although the system applies a computer analysis of the information, it is with the assumption that there is no human influence on the result. However, almost all the data entered into the programme is the creation of humans and in this case the relationship between reality and perception is mediated through a systematic analysis of the dictionary that the software provides. This example exploits information technology to its extreme; however, it is questionable whether they are able to complete the task accurately without addressing how humans are influenced, informed or indeed how they acquire knowledge. In psychology and in cognitive sciences, perception is the process of obtaining awareness or understanding of sensory information.

The word *perception* comes from the Latin words *perception, percepio,* meaning "receiving, collecting, action of taking possession, apprehension with the mind of sense" (OED).

Based on this definition, it is reasonable to suggest that perception can be a key mode of knowing and in many respects can be described as knowing tacitly; this possession of knowledge is fully acknowledged by this research. Tacit knowledge is similar to the relationship between

action and perception. Without perception, action will not be guided and directed. And without action, perception will be pointless. If we relate this to the methods used in the systems of nation branding by a variety of different agencies, we will be able to conclude that unless people outside the country in question have the knowledge and the perceived image of that country, their opinion and viewpoint will be ineffective. For example, when Anholt prepares its nation brand index, it bases many of the results on the extensive interviews it has conducted (approximately 1,000 in each country). Interviews are considered to be complex; measuring public opinion through interviews may not provide repeatable results and its validity is questionable. In other words, if Anholt would interview different people with different levels of knowledge and experience, it is likely that it might reach different results each time the event takes place. Relying on human, non-expert opinion for information in this way can be a risky strategy.

The data nation branding processes are gathered from a variety of sources that are generated through human experience, knowledge, feeling, and general awareness of a country. This includes culture, products, politics, policies, racial composition, and direct experience. Many of the opinions that we form are directly based on knowing through experience, which is the type of learning that is described and developed by Professor Michael Polanyi as tacit knowledge.

Central to Polanyi's thinking was the belief that creative acts (especially acts of discovery) are shot through, or charged, with strong personal feelings and commitments (hence the title of his most famous work, 'Personal Knowledge'). Arguing against the then dominant position that science was somehow value-free, Polanyi sought to bring into creative tension a concern with reasoned and critical interrogation with other, more 'tacit', forms of knowing.

Polanyi's argument was that the informed guesses, hunches and imaginings that are part of exploratory acts are motivated by what he

describes as 'passions'. They might well be aimed at discovering 'truth', but they are not necessarily in a form that can be stated in propositional or formal terms. As Polanyi M. (1967) wrote in *The Tacit Dimension*, people should start from the fact that 'we can know more than we can tell'. He termed this pre-logical phase of knowing as 'tacit knowledge'. Tacit knowledge comprises a range of conceptual and sensory information and images that can be brought to bear in an attempt to make sense of something (Hodgkin, 1991). Many pieces of tacit knowledge can be brought together to help form a new model or theory. This inevitably led him to explore connoisseurship and the process of discovery (rather than the validation or refutation of theories and models) (http://www.infed.org/thinkers/polanyi.htm).

If we accept the argument that individuals' opinions are based on knowledge that combine conceptual and sensory information and images, then the perceived image of a nation can be true; and if the task is to evaluate what others think of the nation then Anholt's model is an acceptable instrument in bringing empirical evidence which is derived solely from experience. Polanyi eloquently explains how we reach an opinion through experience.

> We must conclude that the paradigmatic case of scientific knowledge, in which all faculties that are necessary for finding and holding scientific knowledge are fully developed, is the knowledge of approaching discovery.
>
> To hold such knowledge is an act deeply committed to the conviction that there is something there to be discovered. It is personal, in the sense of involving the personality of him who holds it, and also in the sense of being, as a rule, solitary; but there is no trace in it of self-indulgence. The discoverer is filled with a compelling sense of responsibility for the pursuit of a hidden truth, which demands his services for revealing it. His act of knowing exercises a personal judgement in relating evidence to an external reality, an aspect of which he is seeking to apprehend.
> (Polanyi M., 1967)

Having established what is the relevance of tacit knowledge to nation branding, it is necessary to point out its relevance to the researcher as

practitioner. Knowing through experience for a designer is the primary factor in making aesthetic decisions during the creative process. People who know tacitly are not always aware of the knowledge they possess and how it can be useful to others. In practice terms, the knowledge people acquire tacitly is not explicit, not easily shared and it consists of habits, and it is culturally influenced to the extent that people cannot recognise it in themselves. This type of knowing is often referred to as knowledge that is only known by individuals and it is not easy to share and communicate fully with others. For a designer this knowledge represents a routine studio activity completely oblivious to its value. The researcher in this context will make a conscious decision to observe the way through the design process tacit knowledge deals with conceptual and sensory information and images. In contrast however, explicit knowledge is the type of knowledge that it is possible to articulate, codify, store and transmit to others. In order to transmit or transform tacit knowledge, it has to go through a process of categorisation, codifying and articulation. As a designer/art director, the researcher is using both types of knowledge and in some ways attempts to bestow validity on information that is based on tacit knowledge. However, it is reasonable to argue that tacit knowledge represents personal, internalised and perhaps not conscious awareness of how someone may accomplish a particular task, especially in the form of creative practice. On the other hand, with explicit knowledge the individual is mentally aware and consciously focused. Branding is one area where tacit knowledge is transformed into explicit knowledge by translating what is internal into information.

According to the *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, epistemology is one of the core areas of philosophy. It is concerned with the nature, sources and limits of knowledge. Epistemology has been primarily concerned with propositional knowledge, that is, knowledge that such-and-such is true, rather than other forms of knowledge, for example, knowledge of how to do such-and-such. There is a vast array of views about propositional knowledge, but one virtually universal presupposition is that knowledge is true belief, but not merely true belief. For example;

lucky guesses or true beliefs resulting from wishful thinking are not knowledge. Thus, a central question in epistemology is: what must be added to true beliefs to convert them into knowledge? (Klein P.D.,1998).

If we assume that epistemology is a study of knowledge and justifiable belief, this study in the context of the nation branding process is concerned with the necessary conditions, its sources, and indeed its structure and limitations. It is also concerned with its ability to provide a valid outcome that can be justified and validated.

The processes used in nation branding in research terms, such as opinions, impressions, perception, awareness of an individual about a particular nation, can be regarded in the traditional context of reliability as redundant and not useful. However, humans are able to understand intuitively without apparent effort, an understanding that is seemingly independent of apparent knowledge or experience. In addition, validity is not determined by a single element of the argument or statistic but instead by a body of research that is able to demonstrate a relationship between what a nation actually is, and what the nation branding process determines it to be. Instead, the concern of this research is making choices as to what type of methodological approach it is best to adopt and implement. The issue of validity is a less central concept and it is proposed that the adaptation of the Anholt model is appropriate to the context of the research.

1.4 The Role Of The Researcher

This part describes the role of the researcher as practitioner and how the researcher deploys action research in the context of the practical part of the research. It will explore how the position of art director and designer is supported by the use of cyclic processes of action and reflection. Action research essentially is a process by which change and understanding can be pursued at the same time. At its most basic it is described as cyclic,

with action and critical reflection taking place in turn. The reflection is used to review the previous action and plan the next one. Dick (2000) translated the cyclic process of action research into the following Figure.
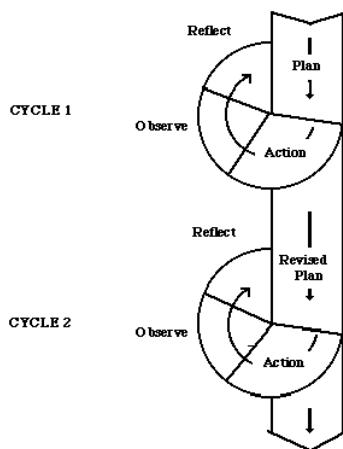
Figure 1-1 Cyclic process of action research
Source: Dick (2000)

According to Cohen L. et al. (6ed. 2007),

> The scope of action research as a method is impressive. It can be used in almost any setting where a problem involving people, tasks and procedures cries out for solution, or where some change of feature results in a more desirable outcome.

There is a strong connection between tacit knowledge and action research, particularly formed around the involvement of people finding solutions to problems.

It has been expressed earlier that tacit knowledge is acquired through experience. People who know tacitly are not always aware of the knowledge they possess. Action research is able to support practitioners to know and discover through action, and in this context, through practice. A significant part of the cyclic process of action research is evaluation and reflection. These two aspects in the context of practice can easily be internalised and therefore it is not easy to share or transform, and knowledge is only known by the individual, in this case, the practitioner.

The personal involvement in the cyclic process includes reflection of a personal viewpoint which justifies and necessitates the switching of the form of expression from a third person account to the first person in order to articulate the researcher's own design practice. Speaking from a third person account seems absurd when the expression is personal and does not assume impartiality, and adopts a position offering a personal opinion.

Thus, in addition to engagement with theoretical and historical investigation and analysis, the practical element is conducted through my own practice, which is guided and informed by findings and conclusions drawn in the context of branding China. It is inspired by an historic overview of advertising, political propaganda and calendar posters in China and facilitated by modern technology and concepts. My own practice is focused on implementing theoretical findings by taking the position of an art director as well as a designer. At the early stage, I act as an art director, determining the brief, applying selection and analysis, and providing the overall artistic direction. This position is responsible for the visual look of a project, and it is essentially about directing the art and its production ensuring that the images, whether moving or still, are aesthetically resolved, reach the desired meaning and deliver the message in an effective and relevant way. At a later stage, I will switch my position to that of designer, taking action to respond to the brief guided by the evaluation and reflection which took place at the early stage. This position functions as the one which is providing a visual solution in responding to the brief.

As stated above, the practice element of this research requires the researcher to participate both in the planning through preparing the brief, analysing and evaluating, as well as providing a creative solution through her own action as a designer. The action in this context is determined as the act of participation in the design process from inception to realisation. According to O'Brien (2001), action research involves utilising a systematic cyclical method of planning, taking action, observing, evaluating (including self-evaluation) and critical reflection prior to

planning the next cycle. Art direction is the main role that I will play in the first cycle of this process while in the second cycle my position will change to be the designer at the action point. In normal circumstances the cyclic process in action research is supposed to be repeated in order to test challenge and refine the objectives. It is still true in this case where the refinement of the objectives determined that my involvement at the action point is to turn from art director to the designer in the second cycle. The second cycle can be repeated for the purpose of refinement. By combining reflection on other designers' work, my own experience as a designer, experts' views as well as my theoretical understanding of the subject, I am able to synthesise and produce proposals. The following Figure illustrates the process and the position I have adopted in each stage. This process has enabled me to innovate and build up my design solution and experiences through reflection and responsiveness. Taking similar steps in the creative process can be counterproductive. The critical evaluation and reflection have enabled me to learn and make changes for improvements, as well as helped me to test, challenge and refine my designs.
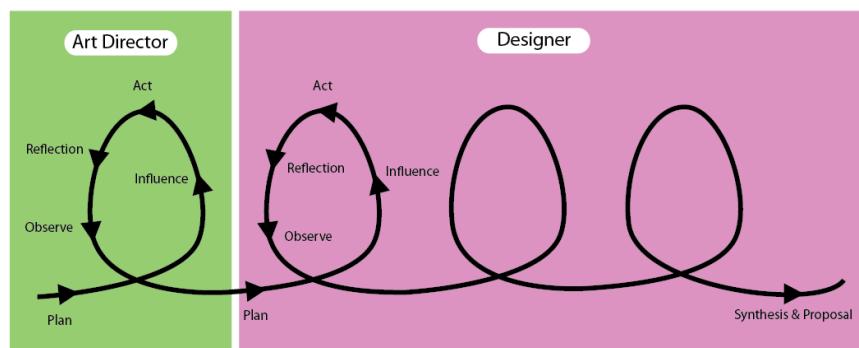
Figure 1-2 Cyclic process of action research in context

This chapter has provided a description of the research design and of the way it is planned. It shows the way it is implemented according to various notions of knowledge. It reveals that nation branding is closely related to the way we know and learn. It identifies several flexible approaches to data collection and analysis. Finally it defines that the dual role of the

researcher as well as practitioner is determined within the boundaries of action research. This chapter also reveals a development and extension to the cyclic process by enabling not only action and reflection at the same time, but also shifting roles from art director in the first stage to designer in the later stages. This has resulted in action learning from different perspectives.

2 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ADVERTISING, MARKETING AND BRANDING

This chapter introduces notions of advertising, marketing and branding, focusing on definitions of the key terms involved in this study and their relationship to each other and informs future understanding and positioning in the subject of nation branding. It argues the case that branding is a broad term and includes in it mission and vision, brand essence, values, identity and business tactics as well as marketing. Marketing, on the other hand, includes product, price, distribution and promotion. Promotion consists of four key areas and at the centre is advertising, which is the most visible part involving visual communications and representations. The relevance of this section is to prepare the ground for making the relationship between theoretical findings and practical manifestation in the form of a visual identity for China branding. It will also establish definitions that are relevant references for future chapters in this research.

2.1 Differentiating Advertising, Marketing And Branding

When terms such as advertising, marketing and branding are mentioned, confusion often arises as to what differentiates them. Therefore it is important and useful to define the concepts and understand what relationship they have one with another. This helps to clarify what is advertising, marketing and branding in the context of this research and establishes clearly the scope of this research. For that reason, the research will provide an overview of what constitutes advertising, marketing and branding by introducing relevant definitions that have been offered by other authors. It is not, however, the scope of this study to investigate the notions of advertising, marketing and branding in any

significant depth, but for the maintenance of rigor it is relevant to use or partly adopt key experts' views on the subject.

2.1.1 Advertising

Advertising is a common term in modern life and a large body of research has been carried out in this subject area, both in theoretical and practical terms. Two appropriate yet popular definitions of advertising are derived from two sources focusing on advertising and marketing: *Advertising Excellence* and *Marketing: Principles & Perspectives.*

> Advertising is the paid, nonpersonal communication of information about products or ideas by an identified sponsor through the mass media in an effort to persuade or influence behaviour.
> (Bovee C. et al, 1995)

> Advertising is…a marketing communications element that is persuasive, nonpersonal, paid for by an identified sponsor, and disseminated through mass channels of communication to promote the adoption of goods, services, persons, or ideas.
> (Bearden W. et al, 1995)

As defining the term advertising is not the main purpose of this research and these two definitions use very similar terms to describe the essence of advertising, both definitions are acceptable and suitable for this research. With its persuasive nature, advertising is able to make various contributions to businesses and organisations. Bartle J. (1999) suggests that businesses use advertising to announce promotional information to attract customers, to enforce confidence in their products and companies, while governments and other organisations use advertising to communicate their policies and other information to the public. The broad view presented is central to this study. For example, part of this study is to examine the political advertising of the Chinese Communist Party and its persuasive and reinforcement ability.

To deliver various kinds of products and services and to maximise its
effectiveness, advertising has developed into different types. Individual
companies or organisations select the most appropriate type of
advertising to suit their needs. According to target audience, geographical
division, communication media and the main purpose, advertising can be
classified in four groups.

EXHIBIT 1.3 How to Classify Advertising			
Advertising can be classified in four ways: by target audience, geographic area, media used, and purpose.			
By Target Audience	**By Geographic Area**	**By Media Used**	**By Purpose**
Consumer	International	Print	Product or nonproduct
Business	National	Newspaper	Commercial or noncommercial
Industrial	Regional	Magazine	Primary demand or selective demand
Trade	Local	Electronic	Direct action or indirect action
Professional		Radio	
Agricultural		Television	
		Out-of-home	
		Outdoor (posters, bulletins, spectaculars)	
		Transit (buses, trains, terminals, and stations)	
		Direct mail	
		Directories	
		Other media	

Figure 2-1 Advertising Classification
(Source: Bovee C. et al, 1995)

Further to Bartle's suggestions for the contributions of advertising, Bovee
C. points out the main functions of advertising. In the commercial sector,
advertising is used to achieve one or more of the following goals:

> ...to differentiate products from their competitors, to communicate
> product information, to urge product use, to expand product
> distribution, to increase brand preference and loyalty, and to
> reduce overall sales costs.
> (Bovee C. et al,1995)

Or in other words, businesses are ultimately seeking financial profit
through the application of advertising.

Political parties, government, charities and other non-profit organisations
are not always in the same position as businesses. Often they utilise

advertising to develop an identity of themselves in the mind of the public and to communicate their fundamental values and benefits to the people in order to seek support from the public. In the context of this research, the Chinese government led by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) played a significant and dominant role in the political advertising campaigns before, during and after the Cultural Revolution. The major purposes of the campaigns included enhancing CCP's leadership and seeking public support of, and participation in, the national political movement.

The above Figure Advertising Classification informs that in terms of media used, advertising can be communicated through still images (newspaper, magazine, posters and bulletins, and transit), moving images (television), sound (radio) and other format.

A significant part of modern advertising is its visual element including corporate identity in the form of logo. The central position that a logo occupies means that its extensive use is necessary in a variety of media in the process of advertising. The design and the use of logo form part of advertising strategy. The success of an advertising strategy or campaign is partly mediated by the effectiveness of the logo.

2.1.2 Marketing

Advertising is perhaps the first thing people think about when considering marketing. Some even think that marketing is the same as advertising. The following study of the definitions of marketing and the model of 'marketing mix' attempts to reveal the difference between the two terms and to clarify the relationship between them.

The Figureered Institute of Marketing and the American Marketing Association are two leading marketing specialist organisations. They offer two of the most useful definitions of marketing.

Marketing is the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customers' requirements profitably.
(CIM)[1]

Marketing is an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders.
(AMA)[2]

The definitions indicate that marketing is a coherent and complex process to meet customers' needs in order to achieve profitable benefits. Communication is only a part of the process. In order to understand the whole process of marketing and the precise role of advertising within, it is necessary to introduce the concept of 'marketing mix'.

'Marketing mix' was first coined by Professor N. H. Borden at Harvard Business School in 1953. He introduced this term to describe the overall marketing efforts companies made to influence the consumer's purchasing decision. Later Professor E. J. McCarthy, also at Harvard Business School, further explained that the 'marketing mix' consisted of four key elements: product, price, place and promotion. 'Marketing mix' therefore used to be called the marketing '4Ps'. Recently some scholars such as Bovee C. et al. (1995) argued that transportation and marketing channels were equally important as place, so they suggested the four elements in the 'marketing mix' should be product, price, distribution and promotion. The following illustration clearly shows the key components of 'marketing mix' and the role of advertising within.

---

[1] CIM is the world's largest organisation for professional marketers.
[2] The American Marketing Association (AMA) is the largest marketing association in North America. It is a professional association for individuals and organizations involved in the practice, teaching and study of marketing worldwide.
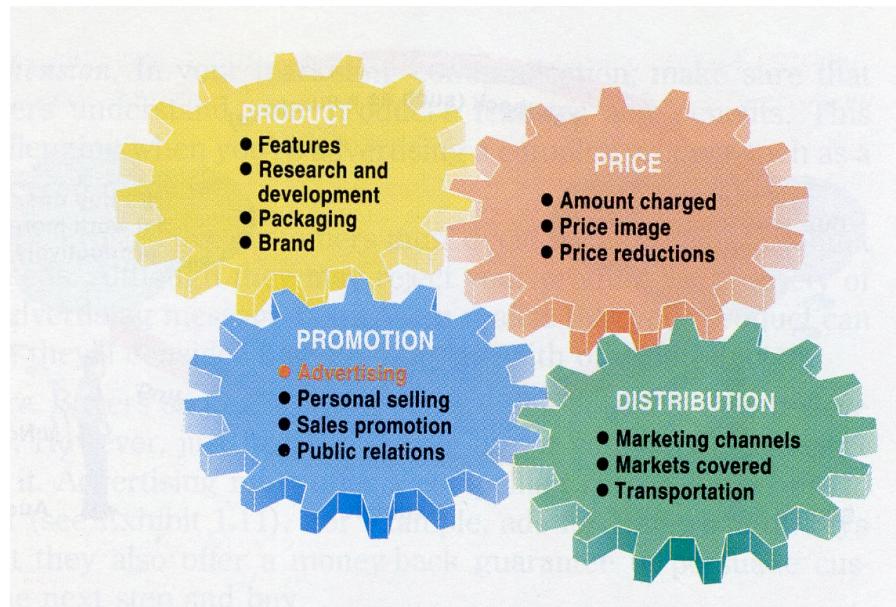
Figure 2-2 'Marketing Mix'
Source: Bovee C. et al, 1995

Bovee C. et al. (1995) explains that promotion includes "a variety of techniques used to communicate with customers." As the above illustration suggests, advertising is one of the techniques of communication alongside personal selling, sales promotion and public relations. While promotion is one of the four key components in the 'marketing mix', advertising is only one of the major types of promotion. It is now clear that, while advertising is a very important and often the most visible part in marketing, it has a relatively limited role in the whole process and certainly cannot be regarded as equal to marketing. For instance, an excellent advertising campaign can generate a great deal of interest in a newly launched car, but an unrealistically high price, poor service record, or a long waiting list due to inefficient delivery channels could drive some consumers away and fail to satisfy their needs.

Some marketing researchers, such as Doyle P. (2000), criticised the notion that 'marketing mix' is problematic due to its strong emphasis on marketing objectives instead of financial objectives, and because fulfilling

the consumer's satisfaction at low cost is not necessarily the best option for profitability. However, it is not the main interest of this research to explore the suitability of the model. It is therefore appropriate at this stage to adopt the model of 'marketing mix' to understand the relationship between marketing and advertising.

2.1.3 Branding

Brands and branding are always closely associated and in fact it is necessary to understand the term 'brand' before 'branding' can be defined. The Compact Oxford English Dictionary (2005) gives the following definition for brand:

> • noun 1 a type of product manufactured by a company under a particular name. 2 a brand name. 3 an identifying mark burned on livestock with a heated iron. 4 a piece of burning or smouldering wood.
> • verb 1 mark with a branding iron. 2 mark out as having a particular shameful quality: she was branded a liar. 3 give a brand name to.

AMA currently defines brand in the context of branding as:

> A brand is a customer experience represented by a collection of images and ideas; often, it refers to a symbol such as a name, logo, slogan, and design scheme. Brand recognition and other reactions are created by the accumulation of experiences with the specific product or service, both directly relating to its use, and through the influence of advertising, design, and media commentary.

Compared to the Oxford definition, AMA's definition has extended its scope from goods to services, and from a physical name or symbol to slogan and design scheme. Since this research focuses mainly on non-product advertising involving design practice, the AMA definition is preferred.

When buyers or consumers establish an understanding and a consistent image of a particular brand in association with quality and reputation, the brand becomes the source of a promise and a guide to choice for the consumer, and therefore influences behavior. Brands with a positive image encourage buying and therefore create tangible and intangible value by increasing sales and popularity.

On 18 September 2008 BusinessWeek published its annual ranking of the World's Top Brands, by looking at the world's most valuable 100 brands according to an annual survey in conjunction with leading branding consultancy Interbrand. The three most valuable brands Coca-Cola, IBM and Microsoft were valued $66,667 million, $59,031 million and $59,007 million respectively. As Lindemann J. argues, more and more companies and organizations realize that in the modern global competitive environment, "brand is one of the few assets that can provide long-term competitive advantage" compared to others such as technology (Clifton R. and Simmons J., 2003). In that sense, a strong brand is almost invaluable and definitely worth continuous investment. Lindemann's quotation of John Stuart, Chairman of Quaker (ca. 1900) is probably the best footnote for the magic value of brands:

> If this business were split up, I would give you the land and bricks and mortar, and I would take the brands and trademarks, and I would fare better than you.
> (Clifton R. and Simmons J., 2003)

Branding is therefore described on Brandchannel.com as

> …selecting and blending tangible and intangible attributes to differentiate the product, service or corporation in an attractive, meaningful and compelling way

Marketing consultant Lake L. suggests that, as brands are rooted in the minds of consumers,

> Branding is not about getting your target market to choose your offering over the competition, it is about preconditioning consumers to see your offering as the only one that provides a solution to their problem.

Both definitions of branding seem to agree that the results of branding largely depend on the way the brand is presented to its audience. This has two implications. One is that the brand message should avoid comprising platitudes, empty promises or even worse, lies, and the other is that the message may work more effectively if it is audience-oriented and uses the power of persuasion instead of force. Understanding the essence of branding is extremely important for this research, which aims to explore one of its ramifications, nation branding. The concept of nation branding will be explored in detail in Chapter 4.

2.2 The Relationship Between Advertising, Marketing And Branding

The relationship between branding, advertising and marketing is best illustrated in the following illustration of Brand Organisational Context.
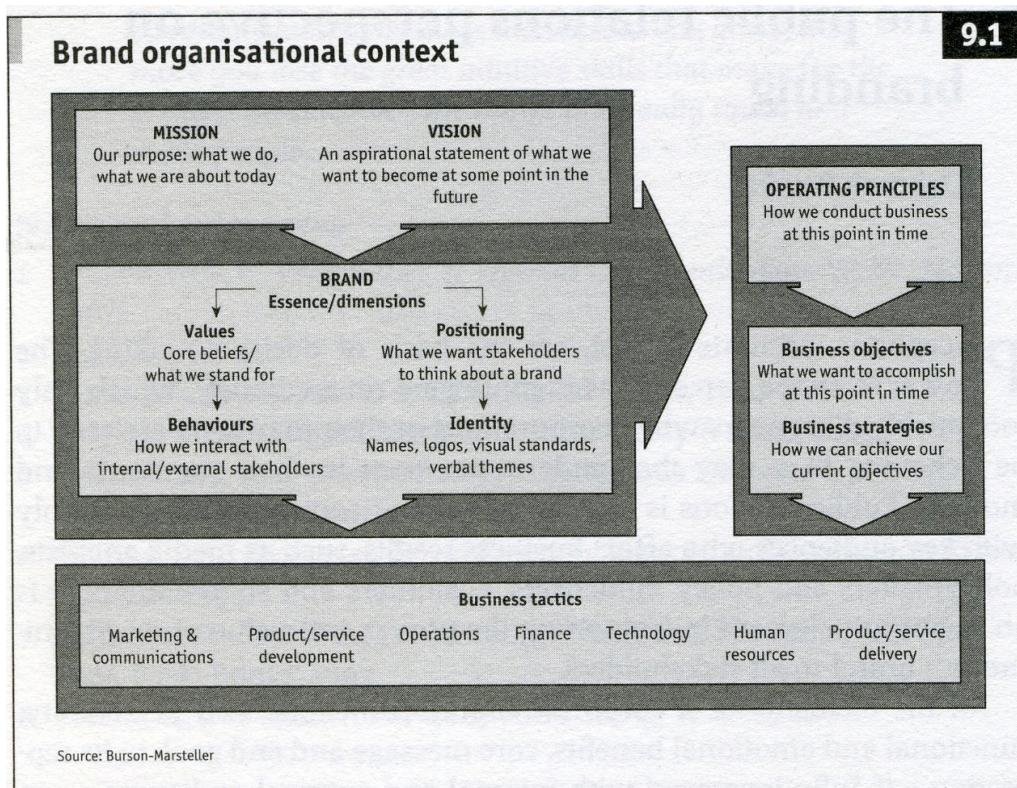
Figure 2-3 'Brand Organisational Context'
Source: Clifton R. and Simmons J., 2003

It suggests that a brand develops from an organisational mission and vision and reflects them in tangible operations by determining operating principles and business tactics. Marketing and communications, one of the six business tactics, is required to serve and contribute to the brand. It is far from being the only determining fact for the entire brand, especially when the organisation is a government or political party; other elements such as product/service delivery, operations, human resources and finance could be more important than marketing strategies for a positive brand image. This is even more distinctive in the context of nations. In fact, even in the 21st century, the governments of nations that enjoy relatively positive nation brands, such as Switzerland and Germany (ANBI 2008), are not always actively engaged with marketing or advertising for improving or enhancing their nation images.

As we have explored, advertising is a small visual part of marketing; it is appropriate to suggest that advertising is an element or fraction in the general process of branding. Therefore, it is clear that branding is a much bigger concept and far more complex process than marketing and advertising. Advertising is often the visual aspect in marketing and branding, playing an important but limited role. Their relationship can be illustrated in the following Figure, in which the position of logo design is also included. Figure 2-4 is constructed to illustrate the connection between branding and logo design which the practice element of this research will focus on.
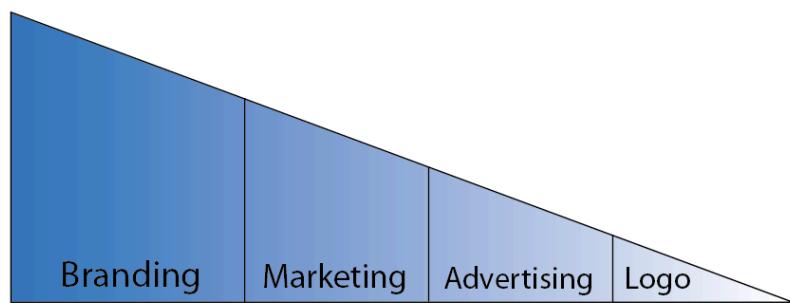
Figure 2-4   Mapping Branding to Logo

3   A HISTORIC OVERVIEW OF KEY ADVERTISING PERIODS IN CHINA

This chapter will explore the development of advertising and its visual output in China. It will provide an overview of the key advertising periods, within the backdrop of their historical contexts. Using early visual communication tools, it draws a picture of how advertising emerged prior to 1840, then traces the early industrialisation of commercial printed advertising, such as calendar posters. The calendar posters were largely commissioned and influenced by Western companies who started operating in China after the Opium War. This period extended from 1840 to 1949 when major political change took place in China. This radical change caused a change of direction and changes in the concept of what purpose advertising was supposed to serve. From 1966 to 1976, China witnessed the Cultural Revolution which resulted in a radical shift from advertising to propaganda using visual vocabulary as a tool of persuasion.

The relevance of this section is to trace what type of visual culture has developed in Chinese history. This informs notions of modern branding of a nation based on its heritage of visual advertising culture as well as establishing what may be termed as a visual language familiar to the Chinese nation. It will define key visual characteristics in each of the three periods and suggest ways of determining what visual aspects can be strategically considered in the creation of a logo design for a contemporary brand China.

3.1 Before 1840 - Emergent And Early Development

Graphic advertising was developed only after the invention of printing technology in the Sui Dynasty (Appendix 1: the timeline of Chinese Dynasties). The first printed text dated back to year 636 in the Tang Dynasty. The earliest known pictorial advertising in China was made around year 1127, in the late Song Dynasty. Prior to that, China had developed various types of primitive advertising, which can be grouped in the following categories.

3.1.1 Totem (Tuteng)

> A totem is an entity which watches over or assists a group of people, such as a family, clan or tribe.
> (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary)

Humans have historically selected certain animals, and sometimes plants, as their symbols of protection, and used their images on buildings, pillars, flags, containers, and so on. These become their totems. Chinese totems were used originally as symbols of clans or tribes, and played a significant role in object exchange and clan or tribe identity in the long history of China. Totems changed accordingly to the clan's social and political needs. The most famous Chinese totems are the dragon and the phoenix, two animals that do not exist except in people's imaginations. According to Zhao (2005) the totem 'chinese dragon' was believed to originate from the symbol of a snake. When the clan with a snake totem defeated another clan, they added the main character of the totem of the other clan to the snake totem. They believed that it would gather all the power of different totems and become stronger. In the Xia Dynasty, the very first image of the 'chinese dragon' showed an uncanny creature with a snake's body, deer's horns, tiger's eyes, lion's nose, bull's ears, eagle's claws, horse's teeth and boar's buckteeth (image 3-1) (Zhao C., 2005). The first dragon-shape jade piece extends its significance beyond its relation to history entering the mode of representation of Chinese heritage and the origins of the Chinese spirituality. This inevitably will play

a considerable role in the design work that will be produced at a later stage.

As it was believed to be the most powerful animal in the world, all the heroes or heroines in Chinese legends were presented in the form of a dragon or snake body (image 3-2).

Image 3-1 The first dragon-shape jade piece, excavated in 1971. Age: 5000-6500 years. Photo: Chinese Academy of Science, Archaeology Research Institute.Source: Zhao C. 2005

Another successful totem is the phoenix. It was formed in a similar way as the dragon. The phoenix was developed from a big bird that sported a rooster's head, snake's neck, turtle's back and fish's tail (image 3-3) (Zhao C., 2005). Somehow, the dragon and phoenix totems reached an agreement and shared the ancient Chinese territory. As the dragon represents power and the phoenix represents intelligence, after the Qin Dynasty they gradually developed a sexual identity, as symbols of man and woman respectively. In ancient China, emperors saw themselves as

human manifestations of the dragon god and empresses as the phoenix goddess. Although these two totems are both used as symbols of the Chinese and Chinese culture in the modern world, the phoenix is preferred by business perhaps because of its representation of intelligence and a more attractive appearance than dragon, which is often the symbol of evil in Western culture. The phoenix is used in the logos of the Hong Kong-based TV company 'Phoenix' (image 3-5) and the national carrier Air China (Image 3-4).

Image 3-2 (left) Fu Xi & Nv Wa, a couple who were regarded as early leaders of the Chinese nation. Their images were engraved on a piece of brick in Han Dynasty. Collection of Henan Provincial Museum. Photograph: Zhao C.

Image 3-3 (right) The first phoenix-shape jade piece, excavated in 1991. Age: 4,000-4,500 years. Collection of Hunan Provincial Archaeology Research Institute. Source: Zhao C. 2005.

Image 3-4 (left) Air China logo
Source: Air China official website (UK), http://www.airchina.co.uk

Image 3-5 (right) Phoenix TV logo
Source: available from http://www.nipic.com/show/3/81/2890919b4be5c399.html

In the Han Dynasty, the dragon and the phoenix were developed into a pair of lucky symbols, in addition to their royal status. Their images therefore are associated with good luck, mysterious power and the spirit of God (images 3-6).

Image 3-6 Modern mature images of the lucky dragon and phoenix.
Left: Paper cut by Wang Yuling   Right: source: china.com.cn

Other totems also emerged in the Han Dynasty. The white tiger, scarlet finch, black turtle and the green dragon were seen as the four spiritual animals that represented the gods for four directions (image 3-7). 'Taiji' is another important totem in Chinese history (image 3-8). It was first drawn in the Song Dynasty, to illustrate the abstract philosophy of *Yingyang* (phenomena of opposites in the natural world, such as dark and bright, male and female). *Taiji* became one of the most known totems in China and a successful logo for Taoism. It was widely disseminated around China and was even adopted in the Korean national flag pattern (image 3-9).

Totems, the dragon, phoenix and *taiji* in particular, were used widely in advertising Chinese people and Chinese culture. They are still used in modern and contemporary advertising.

Image 3-7 (left) Four spiritual animals in the Han Dynasty.
Collection of Chinese Ancient Observatory Museum. Photo: Zhao C.

Image 3-8 (upper right) Image of *Taiji*
Source: http://www.baidu.com accessed 15 July 2009

Image 3-9 (lower right) Flag of South Korea,
Source: http://www.mapsofworld.com/flags/ accessed 15 July 2009

3.1.2 Flags And Signboards

Flags appeared in Emperor Huang's time and originally used in armies. Later Emperor Huang introduced flags of five colours to represent five directions, green for the East, red for the South, white for the West, black for the North and yellow for the centre. Gradually yellow was seen as the royal colour and its status surpassed red, the favourite colour in China. From the Wei Jin period, flags were used to represent the status of the user or owner by their sizes, and decorative stripes or feathers. In the Qin Dynasty, the flags of five directions were developed into eight directions and the yellow flag became the national flag.

Gradually flags were adopted in business and used for advertising, which was first recorded in the history book *Hanfeizi* in the Chun Qiu period, in which a retailer hung a flag higher than others to indicate the good quality of its alcoholic drinks. Many years later, flags were widely used by restaurants and off license stores. The main difference between flags used in armies and in business was that flags for business advertising usually did not have stripes and were often stretched over a frame, and bore the trade name in the middle. They were usually hung high in the air to be seen from a distance and to maximise the advertising impact (images 3-10, 3-11, 3-12).
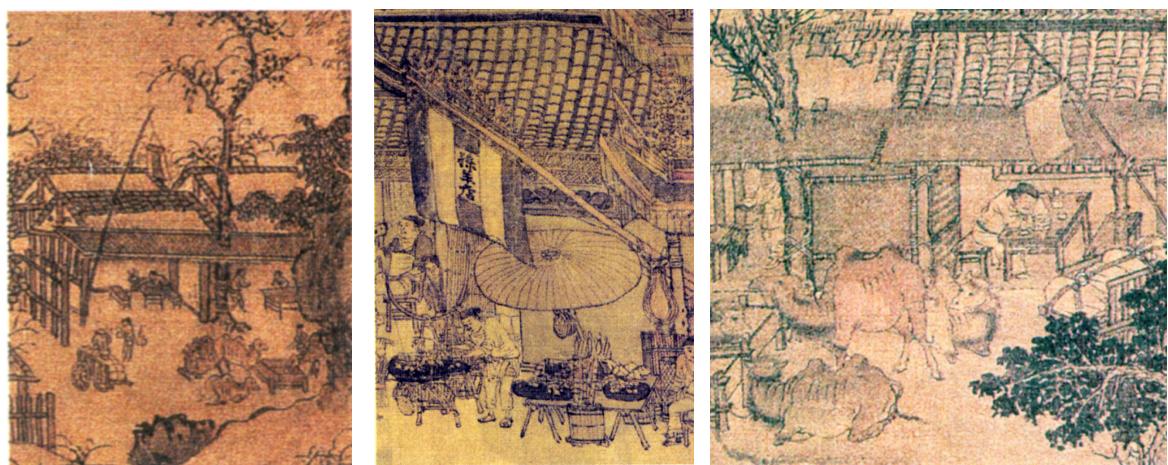
Image 3-10, Image 3-11, Image 3-12 (from left to right)
Flags for commercial advertising in late Song Dynasty, Source: Zhao C. 2005

A displayed flag meant the shop was open, no display indicated that it was closed. Flags were sometimes used to indicate the level of service and the size of business, when used by restaurants. Flag advertising was so effective and popular that it continued to the 20th century (image 3-14).
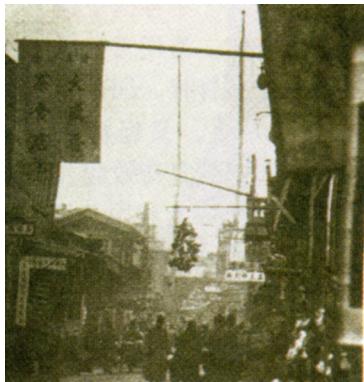
Image 3-13 (left) A shop flag in Qing Dynasty, photo from *Old Times In Tianjin*, quoted by Zhao C.

Image 3-14 (right) A factory's flag hanging in Xiaogangzi Street in Dalian, 1920s. Photo: Curtsey of Zhao C.

Flags were vivid and could be hung high in the air; however, they were easily affected by wind and rain. Colours and text easily faded away and cloths were worn and torn after a time. Some shops and businesses started using longer lasting signboards, mostly made out of wood: above or next to the entrance (images 3-15, 3-16, 3-17). Signboards are still widely used in modern times in Hong Kong and many other places.
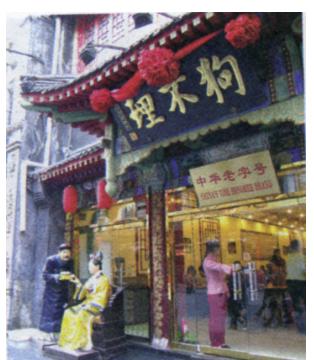
Image 3-15, Image 3-16, Image 3-17 (from left to right)
Signboards for commercial advertising in Qing Dynasty
2-15 & 2-17, photo: Zhao C, 2-16, part of *Illustration Of Prosperous Gusu* in Qing Dynasty, Source: Zhao C. 2005

3.1.3 Sound

Zhao suggests that over 2,000 years ago, tradesmen started using sound
to attract business. Sound advertising was recorded in the history book *Xi
Jin Zhi* in the Yuan Dynasty. Bakeries made sound by knocking gongs
before they started baking to let people know that fresh bread and cakes
would soon be ready for sale. Musical instruments used for advertising
purposes included gongs, *Bolanggu*, and 'wooden fish', a sound
instrument normally used by monks (images 3-18, 3-19, 3-20).

Image 3-18 (left) A gong
Image 3-19 (middle) A pair of Bolanggu
Image 3-20 (right) A 'wooden fish'

In the Ming Dynasty, sound advertising was popularly used by mobile
businessmen, small retailers, knife/scissors sharpening service providers
and circus players, to attract business (images 3-21, 3-22).

**Image 3-21 (left) A one-man-and-a-monkey circus attracting children by using a
gong. Part of the history illustration *Qingming Shanghe Tu* drawn in the Qing
Dynasty. Source: Zhao C. 2005**

**Image 3-22 (right) A retailer on the move attracting buyers by using a *Bolanggu*.
Also part of *Qingming Shanghe Tu* of the Qing Dynasty. Source: Zhao C. 2005**

Sound advertising had its unique role in traditional China to attract children and women who were not allowed to go to the markets freely for reasons of safety and moral restrictions, and by itinerant merchants to persuade those who lived far away from the main markets to buy at their own doorsteps.

3.1.4 Samples And *Zhao Huang*

Displaying sample goods in a promotional way has always been one of the effective methods of advertising in Chinese history, and it is well documented in the Song and Ming Dynasties. For more effective visual results, some shops and salesmen developed another type of informative advertising - *Zhao Huang*. It was normally a direct visual image of the business with bright colours and traditional lucky patterns (Zhao C. 2005). It could be either a large-scale demonstration of the goods or a selection of the goods arranged and displayed in an artistic way to enhance the promotional image. For instance, a sock seller hung a sample sock with designs outside his store; a comb shop hung a few combs on strings outside; a glove seller used an oversized glove; a chemist's shop used a sample of medical plaster; and a bank used a huge coin-shaped object for advertising (image 3-23). If real goods were used as *Zhao Huang*, advertisers would add a piece of red cloth underneath in order to differentiate them from those for sale. It was a very popular and widespread practice in the Qing Dynasty.

| A Tea Shop | A Sauce & Seasoning Shop | A Restaurant | A Chemist's Shop |

| A Comb Shop | A Glove Shop | A Comb Shop | A Sock Shop |

Image 3-23 A group of *Zhao Huang* used in the Qing Dynasty.
Source: Zhao. C, 2005

3.1.5 Text

The Chinese history books *Gou Zi, Han Fei Zi, and Lv Shi Chun Qiu* all recorded the story of Cang Jie, Qin's history officer, inventing written characters inspired by birds' footprints. Chinese characters were developed from those early bird's footprint-style symbols (image 3-24) (Zhao C. 2005). The earliest developed Chinese characters are believed to be *Jia Gu Wen*, which means characters engraved on turtle shells and animal shoulder blade bones. Many of them were found in the *Yinxu* Tomb*, dating back to 3,500 years ago. *Jia Gu Wen* were used by royal necromancers to record royal births and deaths, fetes, harvests and annual rainfall; and to advertise announcements, orders, and new policies. *Jia Gu Wen* became the earliest text advertising in Chinese history (Zhao C. 2005).
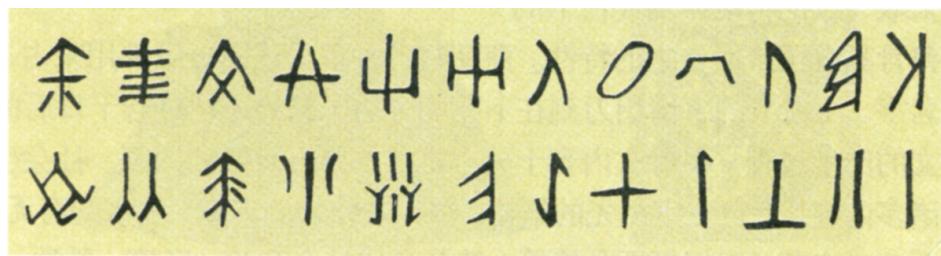
Image 3-24 Bird's footprint-style symbols, engraved on ceramic pots excavated from *Erlitou* historic site in Henan Province in 1959. Age: 3,700-4,100 years. Source: Chinese Academy of Science, Archaeology Research Institute. Source: Zhao. C. 2005

With the invention and discovery of new materials such as bronze, jade, iron, ceramic, china and so on, texts were engraved onto all kinds of objects that are much harder and more durable than turtle shells and animal shoulder blade bones. Analysis shows that those engraved texts are often the names of the owners, the names and purpose of the objects and the names of the makers or the person in charge of production, places of the workshops, dates of production from the Qin Dynasty (images 3-25) (Zhao C. 2005). The engraved texts were in some way used in the same way as trademarks in modern times. They helped buyers to identify the brand names, which were indications of quality and place of origin.

Image 3-25 Makers' names engraved on ceramic products in the Qin Dynasty, image: Zhao C.

Text advertising extended to walls in the Qing Dynasty as a straightforward, simple, yet impressive and economic way of advertising. Text advertising on walls was widely used by all kinds of shops and stores. The contents also extended to slogans and details of the business (image 3-26).

Image 3-26 Text advertising on walls in Shanghai, late Qing Dynasty. Image: Zhao C.

3.1.6 Printing

In the tenth year of the Tang Dynasty, following the order from the then emperor Tai Zong, a guide book of women's social behaviour, *Nv Ze*, was printed by using engraved wood boards. *Nv Ze* is the earliest proof of printing technique in China. In the Tang Dynasty, Buddhism became very popular and temples commissioned printing craftsmen to print a large number of *Jin Gang Jing, or the Bible of Jin Gang,* for its followers. Woodcut printing methods already facilitated the printing of very fine details, the only disadvantage being that letters on each block could not be reused after that page was printed. Wood blocks were either destroyed or shaved to make new engravings which was very time-consuming (Zhao C. 2005).

Later in the Song Dynasty, *Bi Sheng* invented movable letter printing. His letters were all carved onto a type of clay that became very hard and strong after firing. Workers placed letters in order on an iron board,

covered by a thin layer of a mixture of rosin, wax and paper ash to hold the letters after firing. After one page was done, all the letters could be removed from the iron board and placed back in storage for reuse. *Bi Sheng's* printing technique is acknowledged as one of the four greatest ancient Chinese inventions in the history of human civilisation[3].

Following the development of printing techniques, printed text or images were used in advertising by traders to attract customers. Zhao describes in detail a printing plate for advertising purposes, which it is thought was made in, if not before, the year 1,127. It advertised Liu's fine needles (images 3-27, 3-28). It has an image of a rabbit pounding a mortar in the middle, and text around it. The text along the top reads: "Jinan Liu's fine needles workshop." The text on each of the rabbit's sides means: "Please remember our sign is a white rabbit in front of the door." The text below reads: "We purchase top-class steel bars, make efforts to produce durable fine needles that will not delay your in-house use. Special discounts are also available for wholesalers or retailers who are going to sell elsewhere. Please remember the white (rabbit)." According to Zhao, this is the earliest printing plate for advertising purposes to have been discovered so far.

Image 3-27, Image 3-28 The Bronze printing plate for Liu's needles and its contents (reconstructed and improved). It is now in the collection of the Chinese National Museum of History, Beijing.
Source: Zhao C. 2005

---

[3] The other three are gunpowder, the compass and paper-making.

The overall improvement in printing techniques facilitated the growth of printing advertising in the Yuan Dynasty and more importantly it led to the first appearance of bank notes a hundred years later in the Ming Dynasty. The bank notes bore the order from the government and acted as advertisements of the government's financial policy. For example, on a Ming Dynasty bank note (image 3-29), the text in the bottom box reads: "This bank note was printed by permission of *Hu Bu* [Government authority, in charge of finance]. It may be used in the same way as brass coins. Counterfeiters will receive the death penalty. Informants will be awarded 250 *liang*[4] and all the counterfeiter's property."

**Image 3-29 A Ming Dynasty bank note bearing the government's financial policy.
Source: Zhao C. 2005**

3.2 1840-1949 - Commercial Poster Advertising

It is appropriate at this stage to explore in broad terms the development of the commercial advertising centre during the period 1840-1949. The purpose is to identify its developmental stages, influences, and its impact on the commercial and visual culture in the historical development of China's commercial awareness. This section will identify clearly the introduction of Western approaches to advertising and the use of visual

---

[4] *Liang*, unit of weight in China, equivalent to a pound (UK).

language for commercial use. The focus will be on the Shanghai region, with particular emphasis on the development of calendar posters. In the early 20th century, China witnessed major changes on many fronts. Following the Opium War (1840-1842), overseas businesses and companies made Shanghai their central base, using this position to promote imported products in China. In addition, they produced some of the products in China and sold them in the same market. China had a commercial advertising history but had never experienced such an exposure to Western methodologies and concepts in advertising, particularly in poster art. How external influences made their way into the Chinese commercial world is also explored.

Commercial art in China was a significant contribution to Chinese visual culture, society and politics. From the early 20th century, artists or commercial advertising produced visual communication including posters, hanging signs, labels, calendars and black and white advertisements in periodicals and newspapers. This continued until 1949 when the Communist Party came into power. The period covering 1949-1976 will be explored in a separate section at a later stage. During that period, this activity shifted and went through a period of rapid and complete change: mostly to serve the newly adopted ideology of Communism.

It would be useful at this juncture to investigate further the period from the late 19th century to the 20th century in order to establish an overview of how the new commercial art developed. For this purpose it is appropriate to consider more closely the Shanghai phenomenon, as it was the most developed region at that time; Shanghai was, and is, still the commercial centre of China. The focus on Shanghai has an historical significance. In 1842, following the victory of the Opium war, the British demanded through the Nanjing Treaty that five Chinese cities, including Shanghai, should open to international trade. In 1880 Shanghai became the main centre of commerce, finance, trade and industry. With the commercial opportunities that this provided, France and the US joined Britain in moving in and establishing a physical base in Shanghai. Britain and the

US established the international settlement on the outskirts of Shanghai and France chose to stay in the centre. Both built new buildings in Western styles including hotels, churches and multi-storey housing and offices. By the 1930s a skyline of towering commercial buildings dominated the waterfront of the Huangpu River running around the city for the first time in Chinese history. It is now called the Waitan area and is a tourist attraction as well as the centre for foreign banks in modern Shanghai (image 3-30).

Image 3-30 Shanghai in 1930s. The picture shows the Goddess of Peace monument for the end of War World I, built in 1924. Unfortunately, the monument was destroyed during the Japanese occupation.
Source: available from
http://www.robinzhang.com/shanghai/jpserver/view/LightboxBlack.view/cover.php?name=The_Bund (accessed 17 May 2009)

The way Shanghai was governed was not the same as other cities. It was in fact operated in a similar way to city councils in the West and did not accord with the norms of Chinese local government. This newly introduced influence brought with it a significant cultural impact, particularly in the introduction of cinema and dance halls as well as traditional theatre for Chinese performance. This lively nightlife was accompanied by other amenities, such as running water, gaslights, electricity and public gardens. This enrichment and a relative

independence attracted many businesses and trading companies, and by the late 19th century, trade was booming. People in Shanghai became familiar with Western merchandise and technology. In the first half of the 20th century, Shanghai became the most modern city in China, particularly through the introduction of trains, trams and cars.

Laing E.J. (2004) argues that technological advancement was not limited to manufacturing and improvement in lifestyle in certain corners of Shanghai; the commercial world needed marketing and advertising in order to promote the new technology, new products and new facilities. Lithography printing was introduced via the unlikely source of missionary Christians in the mid 19th century, and later in the 20th century this became the industry standard method of producing images, novels, popular magazines, newspapers and posters. Most publishing houses or presses moved to Shanghai, making it the centre for publishing in China, and artists from around the country moved to Shanghai to practice in the new commercial environment. In addition artists and calligraphers formed crafts guilds to protect the value of their work. For that purpose they published price lists in magazines and started working as teachers in the newly established art schools. After 1905, artists began to earn a living from the boom in the printing industry, in particular working as illustrators and graphic designers for newspapers, book covers and calendar posters.

Shanghai rapidly developed into an international commercial centre. Companies around the world and in China saw print advertising as the most effective means of promotion (Laing E.J., 2004). The most popular of all was the calendar poster, with its most popular image being that of a beautiful woman in the most fashionable clothes and hairstyle, posing and smiling elegantly. Although there was not always a direct connection between the glamorous female images and the products they were supposed to be promoting (images 3-31, 3-32, 3-33), calendar posters and other print advertising became fundamental to the success or failure of a company. Calendar posters were popular for two reasons: for the

calendar feature and so that women could use them to obtain the latest fashion information. The companies used calendar posters as their promotional tool because people were likely to display the calendar with their product information until the calendar ran out. Companies usually printed monthly or annual calendar posters and distributed them to customers before the Chinese New Year or as free gifts to encourage purchases.

Many of the posters were of durable quality, colourful, and decorative compared to other print materials; some people chose to keep the posters as decorative art despite the expiry of their calendars. Their popularity also maintained because of their varied content, suitable for a wide range of social groups. Companies noticed this and gradually produced posters without calendars to extend the period of display, although these posters were still called calendar posters (images 3-34, 3-35, 3-36, 3-37, 3-38 & 3-39). The duration of this type of advertising was much longer than the majority of other advertising media such as cinema screens and newspapers. The effectiveness of the calendar posters contributed to their success and popularity in the 1930s.
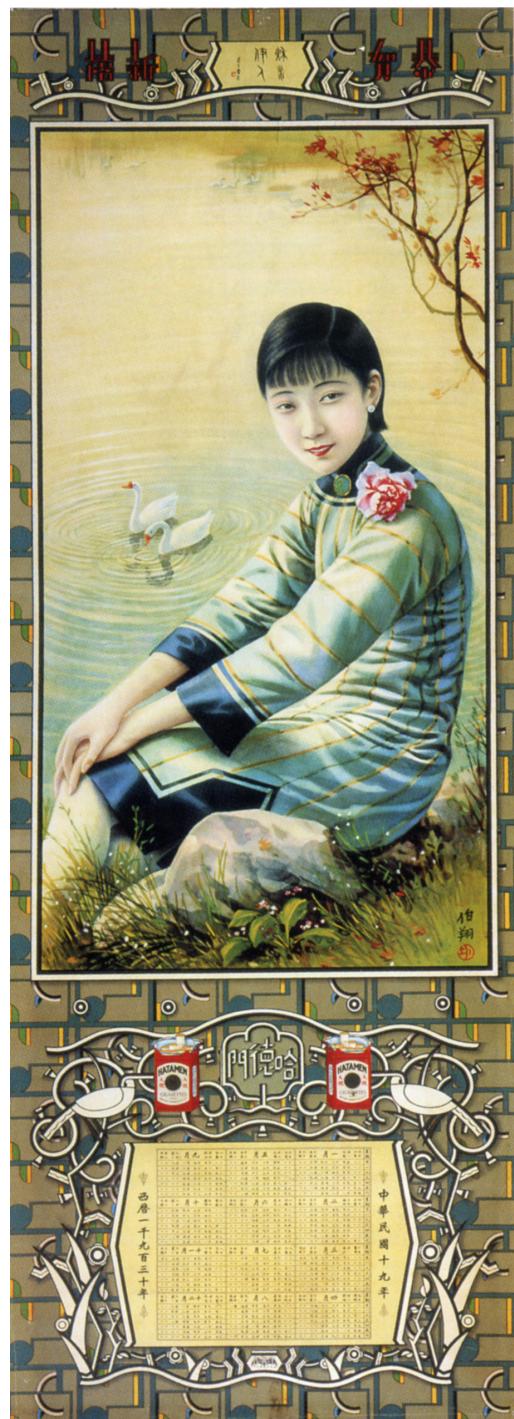
Image 3-31 (left above), a calendar poster for Lobowl Medical Co. (advertisement for cough medicine),1918, 77x51cm.

Image 3-32 (left below), a calendar poster for Xiehe Trading Company (advertisement for cigarettes),1914, 75x35cm.

Image 3-33 (right), a calendar poster for Hatamen cigarettes, 1930, 105x37.5cm.

Source: Laing E.J. (2004)

Image 3-34, 3-35, 3-36, 3-37 (left to right): four calendar posters for Qidong Tobacco Company (advertisement for cigarettes), 1930s, 79x26.8cm each.
Source: Laing E.J. (2004)
The flowers behind the models represent four seasons (from left to right): peach for Spring, lotus for Summer, chrysanthemum for Autumn and plum for Winter. They suggest the fashion for each season.

Image 3-38 (left): a calendar poster for International Dispensary, 1930s, size unknown. Image 3-39 (right): a calendar poster for Hwong Sang Hong Toiletries Company (advertisement for a collection of products from toothpaste to perfume. 1930s, size unknown).
Source: 2-38, Laing E.J. (2004), 2-39, 1930 Shanghai Advertising Posters online catalogue, available from http://www.zitantique.com/poster.html (accessed 16 May 2009)

It is arguable whether the Chinese advertisement calendar poster was based in many ways on Western advertising practices, adopted and redesigned to suit Chinese taste. Laing argues that the Chinese calendar poster was rooted in the long history of advertising in the West. His argument is strongly supported by two important surveys of advertising: Presbrey's *The History of the Development of Advertising,* published in New York in 1929; and Wood's *The Story of Advertising*, also published in New York in 1958. In support of his theoretical arguments, Laing provides comparable images showing the connections between the Chinese calendar poster and Western practice (images 3-40 and 3-41, 3-42 and 3-43).

Image 3-40 (left): advertisement poster for Lucky Strike cigarettes, 1934, size unknown.
Image 3-41 (right): a calendar poster for My Dear (or Beautiful in Chinese) cigarettes, 1937, size unknown.
Source: Laing E.J. (2004)
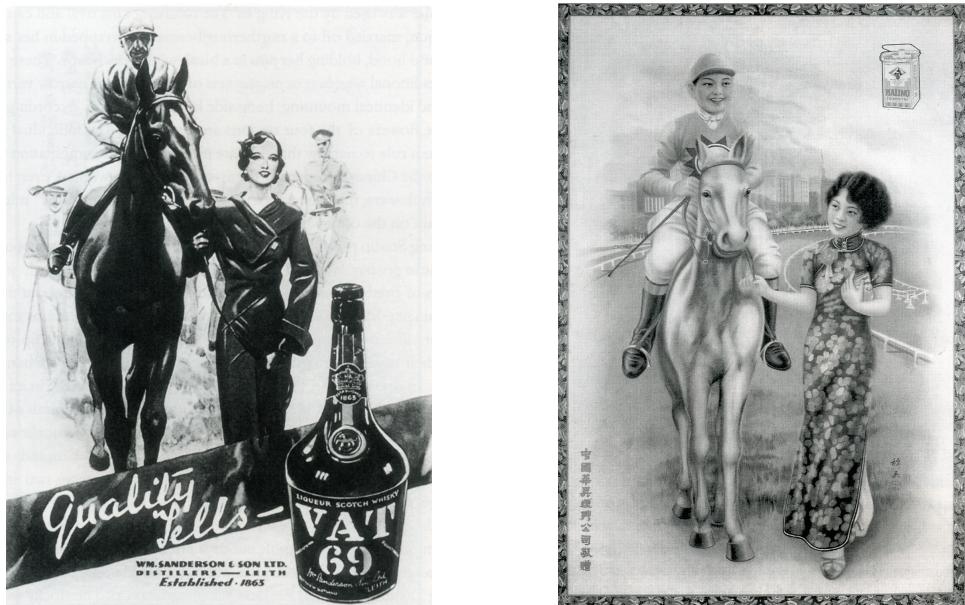
Image 3-42 (left): advertisement poster for Vat 69 Whisky, 1933, size unknown.
Image 3-43 (right): a calendar poster for China Huasheng Tobacco Company
(advertisement for cigarettes),78x51cm.
Source: Laing E.J. (2004)

Apart from direct imitations, the influence of Western advertising or
Western culture can also be traced in the notion of sexual appeal in some
poster advertisements, which was rarely found in traditional Chinese
advertising (images 3-44, 3-45).

Image 3-44 (left): a calendar poster Great Eastern Dispensary, 1930s, size unknown. Image 3-45 (right): a calendar poster for Pairbelles cigarettes, 1930s, size unknown.
Source: 1930 Shanghai Advertising Posters online catalogue,
available from http://www.zitantique.com/poster.html (accessed 16 May 2009)

Zhao (2005) suggests that although Western companies first used pictorial posters that they brought from their countries as promotional gifts, they were not popular and sometimes offensive. This is because Western culture was not familiar to Chinese people. Western companies began to hire Chinese artists to create promotional posters by adopting popular Chinese images, stories or scenes (images 3-46, 3-47). In addition to the use of Chinese faces for familiarity, the posters became extremely popular for two other major reasons: sexual symbols and fashion statements. The fact that the calendar poster adopted the function of Chinese traditional New Year (lunar) Calendar *Nian Hua* (image 3-48) seems to support the view that the calendar poster was just a modernised and commercialised Chinese advertising. However, Laing argues that although Chinese artists dominated the poster business, most if not all of them were inevitably influenced by Western culture and advertising from a variety of sources including The Ladies Home Journal,

Illustrated London News, popular Western films and other visual materials from the West.

Image 3-46 A calendar poster for E. Meyer & Co., size 51.1x32.9cm.
Source: Zhao C. (2005), Zhao's private collection.

Image 3-47 (left): a calendar poster for East Asia Single Step cloth company, size 68.6x51.7cm.
Image 3-48 (right): a traditional Chinese New Year (lunar) calendar poster The Stove God and His Wife, 1910, 30.4x19cm.
Source: 2-46, Zhao C. (2005); 2-47, Laing E.J. (2004)

It is however undisputed that the development of the calendar into a promotional device has mostly been triggered by Western commercial companies. Continuous investment in poster advertising not only provided job opportunities for artists and encouraged the growth of Chinese painting art during that period, but also and most importantly fuelled the first industrialisation of commercial advertising in China.

Analysing the significant success of calendar posters in the 1930s, Wen Hua (1958) concluded four key facts and also pointed out one major defect.

> First, the individuals in the paintings were clear and beautiful; second, the choice of subjects and the presentation satisfied public taste; and third, the colours were clear and bright. In addition, the pictures usually had fewer figures in them, so that the main characters were large and directly in the foreground of the picture. Painted with such accuracy that details of facial features can be clearly seen gives them the effect of being 'enjoyable both from a distance and close up'. The defect was stereotyped figures: all babies look as if they had the same mother and all the women look like sisters.
> (Laing E. J. 2004)

As will be explored in the next section, some of the advertising techniques developed in the 1930s calendar posters continued to be used in the early period of Communist China, though the themes changed to serve the new ideology.

3.3 1949-1976 - Political And Social Advertising And Propaganda Leading Up To And During The Cultural Revolution

This section introduces the way image is deployed for propaganda purposes by the Chinese Communist Party. It explores strong and bold visual impact as a direct communication and tool of persuasion. This section also defines the transition in terms of style between calendar

posters to propaganda images. In addition, it provides a clear connection between Soviet propaganda images and those of the Chinese Communist Party visual manifestation.

3.3.1 1949-1965, Advertising in the newly established Communist country

After two civil wars and a war to oppose foreign aggression between 1921-1949, the Chinese Communist Party finally took power and announced the establishment of the People's Republic of China on 1 October 1949. Mao Zedong was the first Chairman of the new country. In the same year, the All-China Art Workers Association was established and started institutionalising art and art production to suit the new demands under Communism. As Laing records, Mao set out a clear guide at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art in 1942:

> The new demands… were that art must be subservient to politics, and art must communicate political and social messages about Communist ideology and goals in clear, unequivocal images that ordinary people-workers, peasants, and soldiers-could easily grasp.
> (Laing E.J. 2004)

The calendar poster was adopted by the Communist Party as a way of promoting its political and social values and broadcasting its achievements. The theme of the Communist calendar posters, however, displayed significant differences from those in the 1930s. Red, the colour of Communism, became the dominant colour in these posters. By adopting the Western calendar, many calendar posters started to use dual-calendar systems. And images of fashionable women were replaced by Mao, ordinary people (workers, peasants and soldiers), and scenes of industrialisation. (images 3-49, 3-50, 3-51, 3-52)
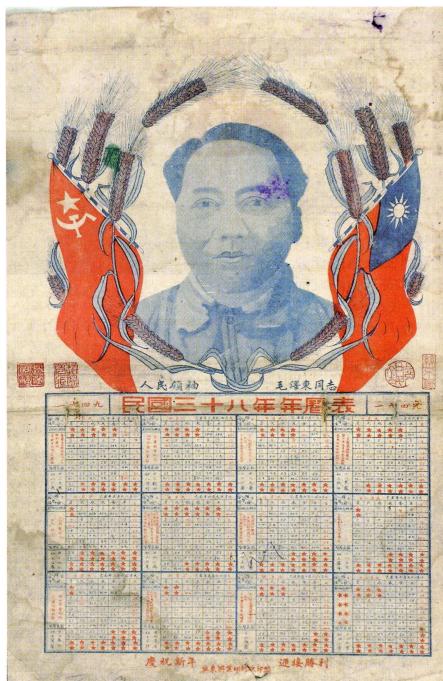
(From top left, clockwise)
Image 3-49: New Year calendar, 1949, 38.7x53.5cm.
Image 3-50: Medical doctor for peasants, 1955, 38.2x53.5.
Image 3-51: New Year calendar, 1961, 20.1x28.5cm.
Image 3-52: New Year calendar, 1952, 26.3x38.5cm.
Source: Zhao C.'s private collection.

According to Laing, some of the 1930s calendar poster artists continued their careers under the new regime by promoting socialist ideology. In this way, the type of advertising technique was retained and developed into the dominant style for brightly coloured posters promoting optimistic socialist and political themes. A few calendar poster artists successfully adapted to the new regime and produced popular New Year's posters that were accepted and highly praised by the people. Jin Mensheng and Xie Zhiguang were amongst the most successful artists in the transition (images 3-53 and 3-54, 3-55 and 3-56). However, the influence of others was not as far reaching to the masses; their absence from the records indicates their lesser popularity.
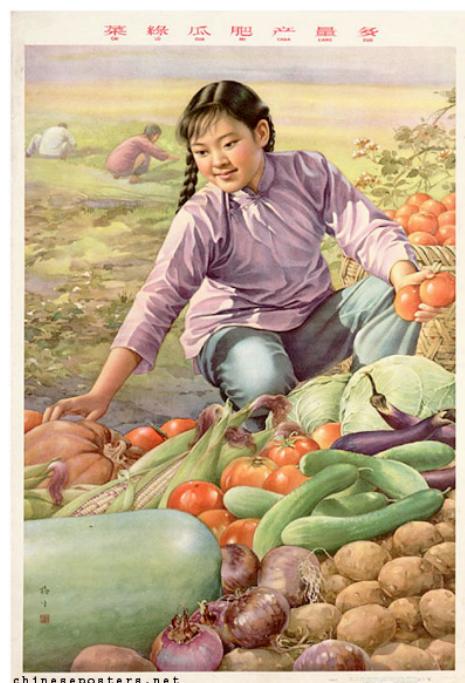
Image 3-53 (left): a calendar poster by Jin Meisheng in the 1930s, size unknown.
Image 3-54 (right): a poster by Jin Meisheng in1955, size unknown.
Source: Laing E.J. (2004)

Image 3-55 (left): a calendar poster by Xie Zhiguang in the 1930s, 75x52cm.
Image 3-56 (right): a poster by Xie Zhiguang in 1956, size unknown.
Source: Laing E.J. (2004)

3.3.2 1966-1976, Propaganda In The Cultural Revolution

The Cultural Revolution occupied approximately 10 years, from 1966 to
1976, with intense events and rapid changes in Chinese history. This
period is best typified as the struggle between the Communist Party and
Chinese history and an internal conflict within the Communist Party itself.
It was initially intended to "overturn established structures of bureaucratic
power and challenge conventional social and political hierarchies."
(Evans H. and Donald S., 1999). However, this new ideology led the new
future of China. The Chinese Communist Party gathered momentum and
secured the support of the masses. Its main aims were to bring progress
to an enormous country with a poor and rural population that had only just
shaken off feudalism, civil wars, foreign invasions and occupations.
Millions of Chinese people were mobilised to address diverse aspects of
their lives and instigate progress through resolving problems in

institutional legislation, eliminating corruption, reducing bureaucracy, improving health, spreading education; and above all disseminating Marxist theory and teaching. They also encouraged the development of cooperatives, communities and nationalisation of farms and manufacturers. Fundamentally, the masses were in control and determining the future of a huge country. This relatively young movement completely changed Chinese society and shook Chinese culture to the core.

It is acknowledged that this period and its events generated a highly controversial history, and this is not the core subject of this study. However, the research aims to address the visual aspects of this period, and particularly the posters produced to serve the Cultural Revolution.

The posters produced in the period of the Cultural Revolution were created under the leadership of the authorities, and aimed to serve the Communist Party by promoting its policies and obtaining acceptance and support from its population. The posters, alongside other visual texts, were used as "a major vehicle for the transmission of political messages." (Evans H. and Donald S., 1999). All of the posters produced during this period for political purposes were described as 'propaganda pictures' (*xuanchuanhua*) or 'placard pictures' (*zhaotiehua*) (Evans H. and Donald S., 1999). The propaganda artists were a mixture of rural artists, art students and those specially trained to mimic Soviet poster design and output after 1949 (Soviet influence can therefore be clearly identified). In order to guarantee the delivery speed and coverage of political messages across the country, "every village, factory and street committee had its own propaganda artist or group (Evans H. and Donald S., 1999)". These artists were full time and responsible for all visual propaganda from simple slogans to large billboard works. The posters were produced in the forms of sketches, cartoons, woodcuts, oil painting and traditional Chinese painting. Woodcuts were widely used for producing multiple copies due to the limitation of other printing processes. However foreign visitors were more interested in Huxian peasant painting (image 3-69, 3-

70 and 3-71), which was almost entirely developed during the Cultural Revolution and praised by Mao's wife Jiang Qing.

The Cultural Revolution posters projected various aspects of society, such as great achievements in agriculture and industrialisation, amiable relationships between soldiers, workers and peasants, an equal society, and international communist alliance. Most of them aimed to establish a positive image of the country, although the widely accepted description of the period today is a social and humanitarian catastrophe.

The following images with their accompanying descriptions illustrate powerfully the way the Communist Party utilised visual language in its communication campaign to persuade the masses of its legitimacy and supremacy. Each image tells a specific slogan that embraces the core values of the ruling ideology of Communism.

Propaganda posters during the Cultural Revolution
--Revolutionary events

Image 3-57 Bombard the capitalist headquarters, 1976, 54x78cm
Source: available from http://chineseposters.net/gallery/ (accessed 17 May 2009)

Propaganda posters during the Cultural Revolution

--Establishment of Regional Revolution Committees and events
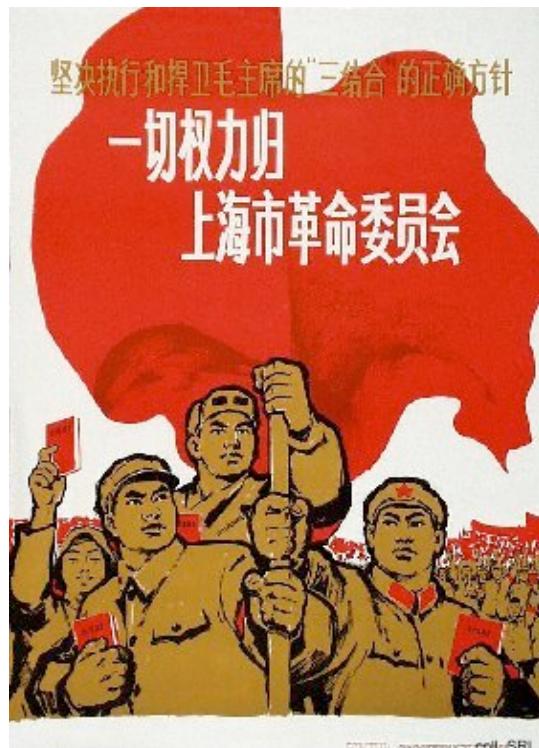
(From top left, clockwise)
Image 3-58, Enthusiastically welcome the creation of the Peking Revolutionary Committee, 1967.
Image 3-59, Revolutionary committees are good, 1976.
Image 3-60, Warmly celebrate the formation of the Revolutionary Committee of the Hangzhou School of Foreign Languages, Zhejiang Province, 1967.
Image 3-61, All power belongs to the Shanghai Revolutionary Committee, 1967.
Source: Cultural Revolution Campaigns, available from
http://www.iisg.nl/landsberger/crc.html (accessed 17 May 2009)

Propaganda posters during the Cultural Revolution

-- Soldiers, workers and peasants fighting side by side

(From top left, clockwise)
Image 3-62, Hold high the great red banner of Mao Zedong Thought - thoroughly smash the rotting counterrevolutionary revisionist line in literature and art, 1967.
Image 3-63, Fight the people's battle of criticizing Lin Biao and Confucius well, 1974.
Image 3-64, Wage the struggle against the right deviationist wind of reversing verdicts to the end, 1976.
Image 3-65, The criticism of Lin Biao and Confucius is a matter of prime importance for the whole party, the whole army and the people of the whole country, 1974.
Source: Cultural Revolution Campaigns, available from http://www.iisg.nl/landsberger/crc.html (accessed 17 May 2009)

Propaganda posters during the Cultural Revolution

--Great achievements in industrialisation
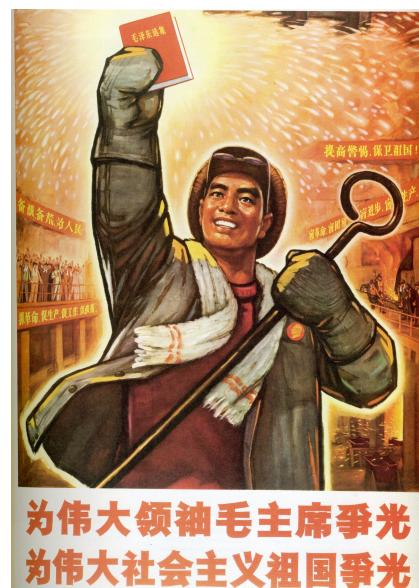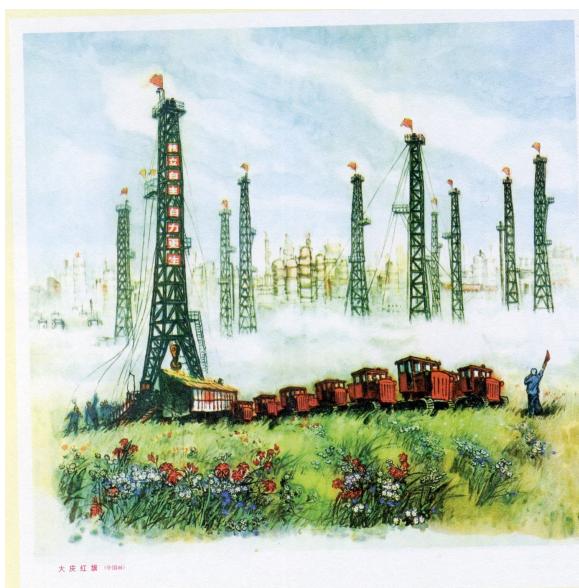
(From top, clockwise)
Image 3-66, Firetree silver flower. 1973, 38x53cm.
Image 3-67, Make the great leader Chair Mao proud, make the great socialist
motherland proud. 1970, 106x77cm.
Image 3-68, Red flags at Daqing, 1977, 38x53cm.
Source: Chinese Posters, Cushing L. and Tompkins A. 2007.

Propaganda posters during the Cultural Revolution

--Great achievements in agriculture (Huxian peasant posters)
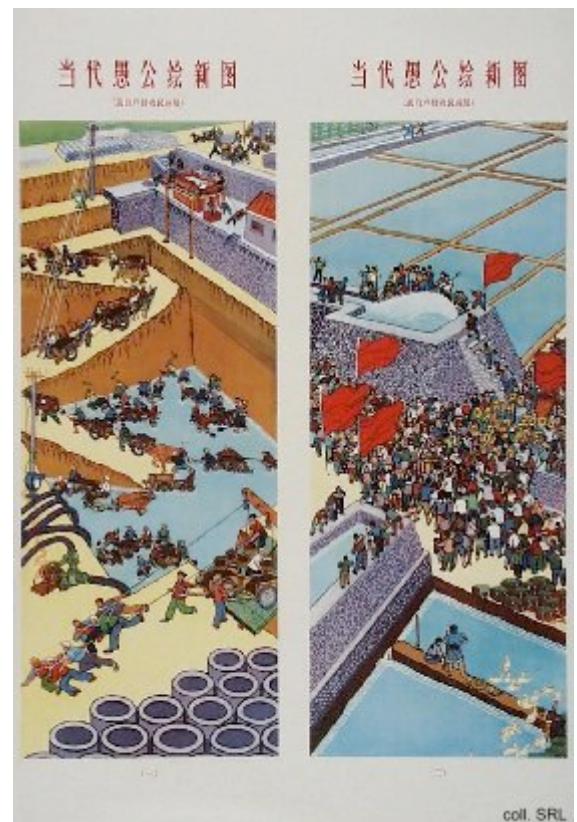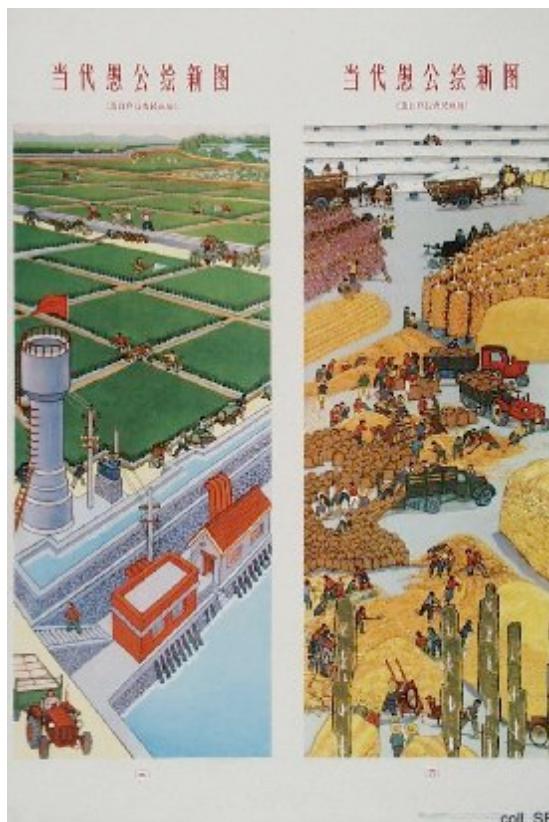
Image 3-69 (top left), The Commune's fishpond, c. 1973.
Image 3-70 (top right), The Brigade's ducks, c. 1973.
Image 3-71, Image 3-72 (bottom), Contemporary Yu Gongs draws a new picture, 1975.
Source: Cultural Revolution Campaigns, available from
http://www.iisg.nl/landsberger/crc.html (accessed 17 May 2009)

Propaganda posters during the Cultural Revolution
-- A new countryside (Huxian peasant posters)
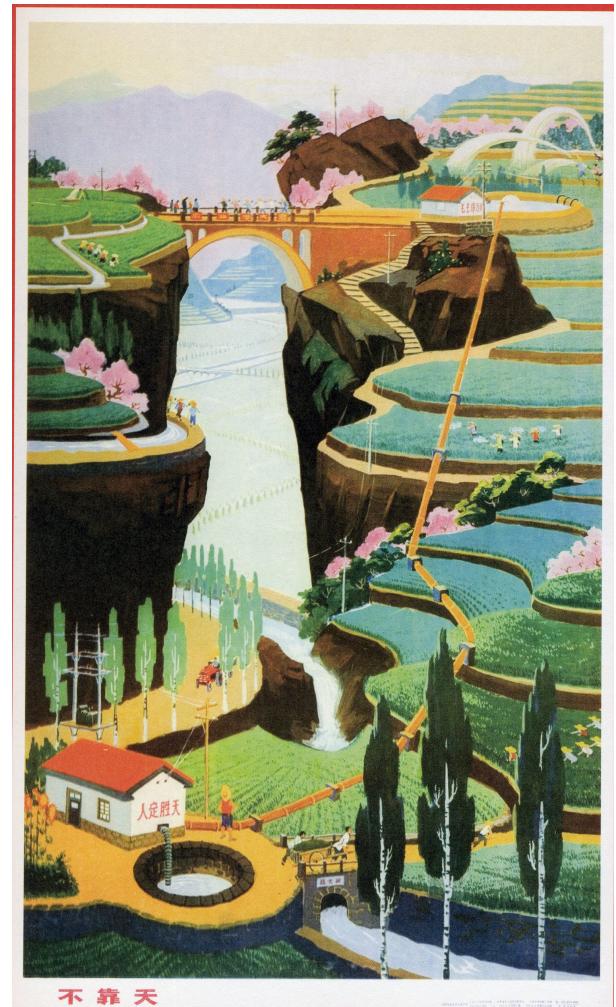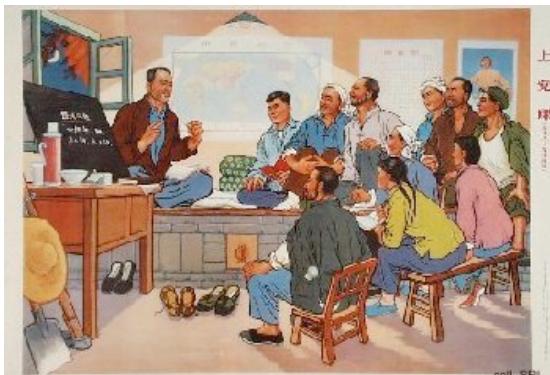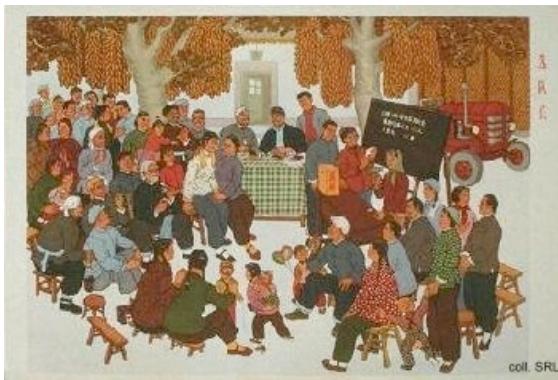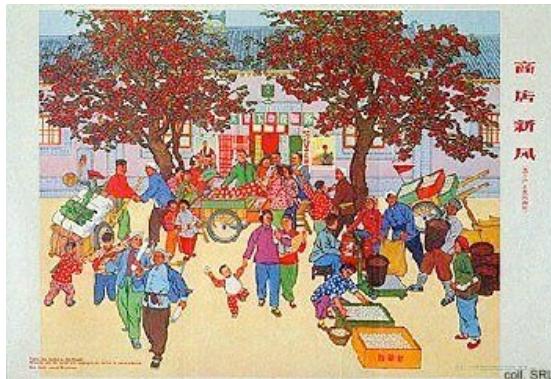
(From left to right)
Image 3-73, New wind in the shop, 1975.
Image 3-74, Electing a team leader, early 1970s.
Image 3-75, Attending party class, 1975.
Source: Cultural Revolution Campaigns, available from
http://www.iisg.nl/landsberger/crc.html (accessed 17 May 2009)
Image 3-76, Don't depend on the heavens (weather), 1975, 77x53cm.
Source: Chinese Posters, Cushing L. and Tompkins A. (2007)

Propaganda posters during the Cultural Revolution

-- Cha Dui is glorious (students from the city joining the peasants)

(From top left, clockwise)
Image 3-77, Educated youth must go to the countryside to receive re-education
from the peasants, 1969
Image 3-78, Going up the mountains and down to the villages is glorious, 1974.
Image 3-79, Making a collective report to our university, 1965.
Source: Cultural Revolution Campaigns, available from
http://www.iisg.nl/landsberger/crc.html (accessed 17 May 2009)
Image 3-80, Intellectuals participate in labour, 1965.
Source: Chinese Posters, Cushing L. and Tompkins A. 2007.

Propaganda posters during the Cultural Revolution

-- Soviet influence

The Chinese language is regarded one of the most ancient tools of human communication: its fundamental visual manifestation is based on pictorial representation that translates speech into script. The Chinese characters have rarely been absent from advertising or branding communication whether it is visual or otherwise, direct or indirect. Because of its distinctive representation of China and the language its

people use, Chinese characters should be featured in all China's visual communications with the rest of the world.

This chapter has introduced three distinct yet linked periods of advertising in China. In the first period, the key advertising characteristics emerged from animal symbols linked strongly to the totem, especially the dragon, the phoenix and Taiji, flags, samples and text. This section reveals that the strongest motifs that people recognise today and which are most used are the Chinese text in the form of language, and the dragon and the phoenix as long lasting symbols of the Chinese people. The second period, the 1930s, saw the introduction of commercial poster advertising. It drew a strong connection between Chinese heritage and western influences, particularly commercial advertising. This combination resulted in unique and distinctive characteristics such as the dominant use of women images, a modern and fashionable approach, feminine and soft representation, the calendar format, and often the disconnection between the image and the main advertising message. It is possible to argue that the majority of the posters produced during this period have a strong commercial orientation and function which hints a distance from the real social and political struggle during Western partial colonization in China. This section also argued that the calendar part of these posters is of Chinese origin. Its familiarity to the Chinese people is what lies beneath the reason for its strong following. The third period represents the Cultural Revolution, which lasted for about 10 years (1966-1976). During this period, China witnessed a complete change of the way visual images were used. Most imagery became the servant of the propaganda machine of the Cultural Revolution. The main visual characteristics of the period have a strong connection with Soviet posters. These include the combination of red and yellow colours related both to the red Communism and red Chinese heritage as well as the yellow representing the Chinese royal colour. Another visual characteristic is the typographies used in these posters, portraying powerful and official messages with hard-looking assertive slogans. Unlike the calendar posters where the connection between image and text is often absent, Cultural Revolution

posters present a coherent and illustrative link between the slogan and the imagery. The content of these posters also reveals that there is a great deal of exaggeration, futuristic and fantasy-like approach which is far from reality. In addition almost all posters produced during this period have a strong political orientation and function.

The visual characteristics identified in this chapter will be a point of reference for the practice that the researcher will embark upon in Chapter 7. For instance, if the Cultural Revolution is regarded as a failure, then contemporary brand China should aim to establish a new position, based on serious consideration of a complete disconnection from its Cultural Revolution past. In visual practice, this is reflected in avoiding the use of visual characteristics that have strong political associations to the Cultural Revolution or identified as an unrealistic and misleading approach.

The next chapter will introduce a theoretical overview of the concept of nation branding and its impact. At a later stage, the research will further explore how China's image and vocabulary are largely formed by its visual cultural heritage and the key visual characteristics identified above.

4   NATION BRANDING, AN INTRODUCTION

Nation Branding is a relatively new area of study, and many people are unfamiliar with its concept. This lack of awareness raises questions such as: what is nation branding; what is being branded; is it at all possible to brand a nation; what are the tools and measures necessary for nation branding; does a nation actually need branding, given that a nation in most cases has already got an image; and what effect would it have, if any, on a nation or country. This chapter will introduce the concept of Nation Branding by establishing a working definition for the purpose of this research. A study of the two key factors underpinning nation branding, country of origin and culture, will be explored. The study extends to central aspects related to stakeholders and positioning. The role of government in the nation branding process will also be addressed. This chapter will also identify the most suitable model for measurement of nation brands.

4.1   Definitions And Key Factors

Nation branding is relatively a new field of theory and practice that deals with 'nations' rather than commercial products or services. It has evolved from the widely researched and practised branding in the business world, and it first emerged in Philip Kotler's *Marketing Places: Attracting Investment, Industry, and Tourism to Cities, States And Nations (1993).* He outlines how places, encompassing cities, regions and nations, through strategic marketing, are able to attract investment, trade and tourism and therefore gain competitive economic advantage. This concept has since been further developed by scholars and practitioners, such as Simon Anholt and Keith Dinnie. Since Anholt coined the term 'nation branding' in 1996, the emerging yet rapidly expanding area has

inspired an increasing number of researchers as well as countries that are seeking success in the global marketplace.

4.1.1 Country Or Nation, A Definition

Before nation branding can be fully articulated and defined, the difference between nation and country must be addressed. Although these two terms often overlap and are interchangeable, it is important in the context of the research to identify the subtle variation that they offer. Fan Y. (2006) argues that

> A nation generally refers to a large group of people of the same race and language (Longman, 1995) while a country means an area of land occupied by a nation.

The following are the beginnings of the entries under 'nation' and 'country' in the OED (Oxford English Dictionary).

Nation
1. A people or group of peoples; a political state.
2. a. A large aggregate of communities and individuals united by factors such as common descent, language, culture, history, or occupation of the same territory, so as to form a distinct people. Now also: such a people forming a political state; a political state.
b. *of* (also *by*) *nation*: by nationality. *of nation*: of the nationality specified. *Obs*
c. A group of people having a single ethnic, tribal, or religious affiliation, but without a separate or politically independent territory.

Country
1. a. A tract or expanse of land of undefined extent; a region, district.
2. a. A tract or district having more or less definite limits in relation to human occupation. *e.g.* owned by the same lord or proprietor, or inhabited by people of the same race, dialect, occupation, etc.; *spec.* preceded by a personal name: the region associated with a particular person or his works; also *fig.*
b. *God's* (*own*) *country*, the United States, or some particular part of the United States; also applied to other countries, and, more generally, an 'earthly paradise'. orig. *U.S.*
3. The territory or land of a nation; usually an independent state, or a region once independent and still distinct in race, language,

institutions, or historical memories, as England, Scotland, and Ireland, in the United Kingdom, etc.

Fan's view and the dictionary definitions both defined the term 'country' from the perspective of land and area, which means in most cases a clear boundary line can be drawn between countries. The term 'nation', however, can be defined from people perspective beyond physical boundaries. People sharing certain attributes such as race, language, traditions and history, even living at different areas, are regarded as a unit, i.e. the nation. It is interesting to note that it is not until the third definition of 'country' in the OED that the concept of nation is mentioned. It should be clear from this that the term nation is much more precise in terms of the scope of this study but there are other conceptual arguments for its use.

To an extent it can be argued that 'nation' is a conceptual construction and 'country', although often used interchangeably with 'nation', is a territorial construction. Therefore 'country branding' would be more aptly applied to the marketing and promotion of a place more than an idea. There are overlaps for example in an area where the term 'country branding' would be more applicable such as tourism where the properties of a specific location are more important, nation branding would still be essential in the formation of the ideas behind the country brand. No matter how appealing the country as a place may be its promotion would be hampered by a negative or week nation brand. Because the idea of a nation is not necessarily bound to geographic locations it is not only more precise but more flexible a concept than 'country' and is better suited to global concepts of the market.

It could also be argued that the notion of national identity is analogous to a domestic nation brand inasmuch as it is dependent upon abstract notions of ones relationship with ones cultural and historical inheritance. National identities can even be compared to identification with brands as an assertion of collective and individual identity. When pressed we find

that it is just as difficult to articulate ones national identity as it is to explain a preference for a particular brand. Of course, the relationship to a nation is far more complex and runs much deeper than relationships with consumer brands but there is a conceptual relationship that further reinforces the appropriateness of 'nation branding' over 'country branding'. It is interesting to note that the modern notion of branding has evolved alongside modern notions of nationalism and the formation of modern nation states. However national identity and nationalism tend to be inwardly directed ideas that are less relevant to the outward presentation and promotion of a nation towards global markets, which is the main focus of the present study.

As we will explore further later in this chapter as well as in Chapter 6, the diaspora is regarded as a very important stakeholder in the process of nation branding. For instance, in the context of China, overseas Chinese are inevitably influencing other people's perception of China through their communications, presentations and behaviour in those countries. This perception contributes to the general image of China. Therefore, although in practice country branding and nation branding both exist, nation in this context is a more appropriate concept than country. The phrases 'nation brand' and 'nation branding' will be used consistently in this research.

Dinnie (2008) clearly defines 'nation brand' as

> the unique, multi-dimensional blend of elements that provide the
> nation with culturally grounded differentiation and relevance for all
> of its target audiences.

J. F. Torres, the chief executive officer of Bloom Consulting, a Spanish branding consultancy, defines 'nation brand' in a more practical way: "an asset and a tool for a country to establish a strategic development in the areas of trade, tourism, and talent" (www.nation-branding.info).

There is, however, no widely accepted definition for 'nation branding'. Fan Y. (2006) argued the lack of a single definition of nation branding and

suggested a working definition, that is, "nation branding concerns applying branding and marketing communications techniques to promote a nation's image".

Lee K.M. in her recent research pointed out an arguable definition of nation branding:

> Nation branding is a managed process of building the brand identity, image and reputation. Nations put efforts into nation branding with the help of various branding techniques. (www.nation-branding.info)

By carefully considering the above definitions and being informed by the definition of 'branding' given in chapter 2, for the purpose of this research, the definition of 'nation branding' is proposed to be *a strategically managed process of applying branding techniques to nations in order to gain competitive advantages by improving the perceived image and promoting the principal values of a nation.*

From this point, the term nation branding will carry this meaning in this research.

4.1.2 Key Factors In Nation Branding

Globalisation is the driving force of the development of nation branding. It has brought all products, services as well as nations into one marketplace. While products and services are competing for consumers and market share, nations also found themselves in increasing competition for tourists, investments and aid, international events, political influence, as well as international media attention. Anholt (2007) outlined the following situation to describe why nations need to take an active approach in order to gain a competitive edge over others on the world stage.

in such a busy and crowded marketplace, most of those people and organisations do not have time to learn about what other places are really like. We all navigate through the complexity of the modern world armed with a few simple clichés, and they form the background of our opinions, even if we are not fully aware of this and do not always admit it to ourselves: Paris is about style, Japan about technology, Switzerland about wealth and precision, Rio de Janeiro about carnival and football, Tuscany about the good life, and most African nations about poverty, corruption, war, famine and disease. Most of us are much too busy worrying about ourselves and our own countries to spend too long trying to form complete, balanced and informed views about six billion other people and nearly 200 other countries. We make do with summaries for the vast majority of people and places - the ones we will probably never know or visit - and only start to expand and refine these impressions when for some reason we acquire a particular interest in them.

He pointed out two influential factors. One is the natural limitation of the human life span, which means it is almost impossible for anybody to obtain a full knowledge of each nation in all aspects before a completely informed decision can be made. Decisions made on limited knowledge about a nation can only be partly correct. The other is the pragmatism that the majority of the population demonstrate. People often learn about a nation for the purpose of interest, visiting, making a choice, seeking a unique experience or research. This prevents people from improving their knowledge about other nations unless it serves a particular purpose.

These two reasons contribute to the complexity of judging other nations correctly and ensuring that judgement occurs in the best light. It is clear that nations are unable to control clichés and stereotypes of themselves, or whether they are perceived in a positive or a negative way. This affects behaviour and views towards a product, people or a place associated with a particular nation. Those clichés may seem unfair but it is out of many countries' control that any change to those views can take place. However, following the emergence of the concept of nation branding, some countries were able to address some of the identified weaknesses, and gradually improve the way they are perceived by others. With

extensive experience and observation in advising many nations on nation branding strategies, Anholt (2007) proposes that

> all responsible governments, on behalf of their people, their institutions and their companies, need to discover what the world's perception of their country is, and to develop a strategy for managing it. It is a key part of their job to try to build a reputation that is fair, true, powerful, attractive, genuinely useful to their economic, political and social aims, and which honestly reflects the spirit, the genius and the will of the people. This huge task has become one of the primary skills of government in the twenty-first century.

A positive reputation or a popular nation brand helps a nation to distinguish itself from other competitors, and stand a better chance to "attract tourists, stimulate inward investment, boost exports, and contribute to international credibility, political influence, currency stability and talent attraction", Dinnie (2008). This is similar to how brands and reputation work in the commercial world, and many nations realise the strategic value of a successful nation brand. Dinnie (2008) argues that it is one of the very few assets that a nation, just like companies, can have to provide a sustainable competitive advantage, not only financially but also strategically.

With the increasing awareness of the synergy of a strong and positive nation brand, more and more developing countries become engaged in nation branding and some have already tasted the benefits. Brazil has successfully attracted recognition for its IT industry by carefully planned nation branding campaign named 'Brazil IT' (Dinnie, 2008).

The new discovery of the strategic value of nation brands also attracted researchers to investigate the key factors that influence the form of a nation brand. Dinnie (2008) identifies two major sources of people's perception about a nation: its companies and commercial brands or country of origin, and national identity which includes four key features: an historic homeland, common myths, historical memories and a common, mass public culture. He further argues that amongst the four

key features of national identity, culture with its distinctions can be regarded as "constituting the true essence of the nation brand and will form the basis for some of the nation's brand values" (Dinnie 2008). Anholt (2007) shares this view that country of origin (exports) and culture (culture and heritage) are two key factors in nation brand development, but his nation brand hexagon also includes other four factors that in his view apply equivalent influence to a nation brand: people, tourism, immigration and investment and governance. Anholt's nation brand hexagon will be explored at a later stage in this chapter.

The following section will attempt to investigate and illustrate the relationship between nation brand and its two key factors acknowledged by both Anholt and Dinnie: country of origin and culture. Although the four other factors Anholt identified can require more attention and improvements in some specific nations, such as China which will be investigated in detail in Chapter 6, it is appropriate at this stage to examine the two key factors.

4.2 Country Of Origin

Country of origin is an important and influential component of nation brand. It is associated with the products or services one country provides worldwide. As companies of products and services must register their base with, and follow certain laws and regulations of, a particular government, country is usually used in this context. As we have explored through definitions, country often refers to a smaller area than nation, which extends beyond a strict geographical boundary and includes diasporas. For clarity and consistency, country is used in this section, but it is important to note that country of origin forms an important part of a nation brand and the nation brand primarily influences the popularity of products and services of their associated country. As Dinnie (2008) defines

> Country of origin is the country of manufacture, production, or growth where an article or product comes from…In marketing studies, it is also referred to as the 'Made In…' label. Country of origin effect refers to the effect that a product or service's origin has on consumer attitudes and behaviour towards that product or service.

Country of origin effect is sometimes so powerful that it rules over people's rational thinking. People judge certain products and services simply by the country they are from, instead of their real performance. In China, the world's factory, many people still believe imported products are of much better quality. The same happened elsewhere. Anholt (2007) offers a powerful example of the country of origin effect on products in America.

> …in the early 1990s, Americans bought lots of Toyota Corollas and not many Geo Prizms (which were cheaper), even though they were exactly the same car, made in the same factory. American consumers believed that Japanese cars offered greater value than American cars, so they bought the Toyota.

In this example, many consumers' choice of Toyota was simply based on its home country, not on any of the rational facts such as technical performance, safety, reliability, price and so on. It sounds incongruous, but in fact many people have had experiences to echo the buying behaviour in Toyota's case. They admire French perfume (Dior, Chanel, Givenchy), Italian fashion (Gucci, Armani, Prada), Swiss watches (Rolex, Omega, TAG Heuer), Japanese electrical products (Sony, Panasonic, Nintendo), German motors (BMW, Mercedes, Audi), American food and drinks (McDonalds, Coca-Cola, Pizza Hut), Scottish Whisky (Glenfiddich, Famous Grouse) and are more likely to choose a new brand in the same category from these countries rather than from any other countries such as BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China). A positive country image always plays such an important role in people's buying decisions, because they believe, it offers the reassurance of the value and quality of its products. As Anholt suggests that

> …it is for this reason that a powerful and appealing nation brand is the most valuable gift that any government can give to its exporters: it is their 'unfair advantage' in the global marketplace. (Clifton R. and Simmons J., 2003)

In services sector, country of origin effect also exists and largely influences people's choices. Take international airlines as an example, almost without exception, international airlines which are also national carriers of their own country, all intend to keep a tight association with their home countries, reflected in their corporate names (often in the logos as well).

Image 4-1 airline logos bearing home country names
Source: airlines websites

What would happen if they disconnect from their country of origin? The answer can be illustrated through British Airways' attempt to lose its "britishness" in 1997. With the fast development of the airlines in the 90s from a national to international carrier, the then Chief Executive Bob

Ayling decided it was the time to move away from the connection with its country of origin, or as he put it in British Airways News on 10 June 1997 "to lose some of our old-fashioned Britishness", for a better and wider perspective, by shortening the airlines' name to BA and replacing the Union flag on the tail fins with world images "based on Chinese calligraphy, Polish tower blocks, the Kalahari desert and Delft pottery" (BBC, 20 September, 2001).

Image 4-2British Airways "world image" tail fins
Source: http://paulrobertlloyd.com/articles/britain_rebranded/, accessed 15 May 2009

Although the airlines successfully demonstrated its innovative attitude, it was deemed by the BBC "a public relations disaster". Visual designer Paul R. Lloyd called the campaign "a tremendous fiasco" because dropping the Union Flag simply suggests that "being British was bad for business". According to Dinnie (2008), "the then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher publicly berated the company for its apparent slight against Britishness".

Anholt (2007) commented on this unpopular exercise, that

> British Airways would never have become the world's favourite airline if it hadn't been, first and foremost, British Airways: the age-old popular perception of 'brand Britain' (methodical, punctual, predictable, efficient, traditional, heritage-obsessed, class-ridden,

status-driven, ceremonious, perhaps a bit boring) makes Britain the ultimate, the supremely logical company of origin for any brand in the business of air travel, hospitality and tourism. It's easy to be wise after the event, but by cutting off its connection with its homebrand, British Airways simply pulled the plug on its principal values.

With an undeniable contribution to the airlines' 40% underperformance, this disastrous 'rebranding' exercise was eventually corrected by its new chief executive in 2001, by reintroducing the Union Flag on each tailfin. In 2006, British Airways was rated the No.1 airlines in the world, as reported by travel writer Kim Wildman. In 2009, British Airways is selected as one of the World Airline Award Winners (http://www.worldairlineawards.com/).

Image 4-3British Airways with Union Flag tail fins
Source: http://static.howstuffworks.com/gif/airline-british-lineup.jpg, accessed 15 May 2009

However, some sectors that adopt the same strategy to minimise their connection to their country of origin prove to be successful. Typically in the international service sector, many companies tend to use acronyms as their brand names, such as HSBC (Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation), KFC (Kentucky Fried Chicken) and BP (British Petroleum). Dinnie (2008) suggests that the reason might be that these companies

seek to position themselves as global rather than parochial, and another possible reason is that they try to avoid any potential negative impact caused by political or military events beyond their control in their country of origin. The difference between these service companies and international airlines as discussed earlier is that, as Interbrand argues, the main factors influencing customers choosing an airline are still price, route, schedule, corporate policy or frequent flyer points, while brand only plays a marginal role (Dinnie, 2008). However, the low marginal difference in other service areas is not sufficient enough to stop customers moving from HSBC to Barclays, from KFC to a local fried chicken shop or McDonald's, and from BP to Shell.

The relationship between a country's image and its products and services is not a one way stream. While benefiting from positive nation brands, internationally recognised and admired brands also contribute to a positive nation brand of its own country. For instance, France, without the big brands registered under its name, would undoubtedly be less glamorous and attractive to consumers as well as other people globally. Japan established and successfully maintained world-class brands such as Sony, Panasonic and Nintendo that largely contributed to the improvement of its country image from a war failure to a top five nation brand (ANBI 2008). It is possible to suggest that these world brands arguably may reflect negatively on the Japanese people in terms of their robotic tendencies, and a lack of human sensory approach.

However, country of origin effect is not always a positive factor. Poor or developing countries often suffer from country of origin bias, which might be forged by many negative perceptions, correct or incorrect, on poor quality products or services; unpleasant experiences with people from or in that country; unflattering portrayals in the media; or a multitude of other political, social, economic or historical issues (Dinnie, 2008). China is a very good example. With the ability to become the world's factory and produce for top brands such as Nike and Panasonic, its image remains a source of cheap products in many people's perception. As Interbrand

research 'Made in China 2008' shows, bad experience with Chinese products was reflected in a mere 6 percent of respondents in the survey expressing their willingness to purchase Chinese products. Distrust in Chinese products more or less leads to people's doubts in honesty and trustworthiness of the Chinese people and their government. If this can not be corrected by certain regulations and a changed attitude, China inevitably will continue to suffer from a country of origin bias which in turn hinders the acceptance and popularity of its products. In a continuous attempt to detect country of origin bias, the Edelman Trust Barometer did their ninth survey on trust and credibility of certain countries in 2008. One of the criteria was to measure the level of trust in global companies headquartered in 18 countries amongst people aged 35-64 in these countries. The result shows that companies from Sweden, Germany and Canada are most trusted while those from China, Mexico and Russia are least trusted[5]. It is therefore crucial for these disadvantaged or biased countries to recognise the situation and to develop appropriate nation branding campaigns accordingly: to overcome or soften wrongly perceived nation images which inevitably will hinder their trajectory towards a desired position in the world's marketplace.

In some countries, a strong country of origin effect in one category may disadvantage products/services in other categories. A very good example is Scotland, which has a powerful positive nation image in tourism (for its well-preserved natural landscape) and whisky. Investors looking for locations for an IT plant or fashion company may automatically eliminate it from the candidate list for the same reasons.

In conclusion, country of origin effect is a very important component in nation branding especially in today's trade and exchange dominant world, for its potential influence, effect and magical results. Any government which is planning or coordinating its nation branding strategy must

---

[5] The 35-to-64-year-olds were surveyed as follows: 400 in the United States; 300 in China; 150 each in the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Sweden, Poland, Russia, Ireland, Mexico, Brazil, Canada, Japan, South Korea and India. The 30-minute interviews were conducted in October-November 2007. The report was conducted by Nancy Turett, Global President of Health at Edelman and chair of Edelman in Canada and Latin America.

research and evaluate the country of origin effect it has on different categories of its products and services, and concentrate its resources on the category which benefits the most from its nation brand. It should also understand that country of origin is not static, but may well change constantly, either improving or deteriorating because of the performance and reputation of new product/service brands introduced to the global market, or the impact of particular political, social or economic events. An effective and well-positioned nation branding strategy will provide governments with a measurable, conscious and consistent guide for their decisions to establish and enhance positive country of origin effect for their exports in the global market. This in return will contribute to an improved nation image that all sections of the nation will benefit from in the future.

4.3 Culture

Culture is another important contribute that should not be overlooked in nation branding. Kotler and Gertner (2002) argue that a country image is perceived not only from its products and services, but also from its "geography, history, proclamations, art and music famous citizens and other features" that form a large part of its culture. In fact many place (city and nation) branding researchers set their focus on culture, such as Hornskov S. (2007) in *On the Management of Authenticity: Culture In The Place Branding of Oresund* and Bianchini F. and Ghilardi L. (2007) in *Thinking Culturally About Place*.

The definition of culture given by Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary is "the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time". Researchers' definitions include

- A way of life based on a signifying order (Danesi and Perron)
- A set of beliefs or standards shared by a group of people (Goodenough)

- Patterns of thought and manners that are widely shared (Child and Kieser)
(Dinnie 2008)

Culture is described as an "intangible yet distinguishable" element of a nation (Dinnie 2008). Because of its intangibility, it is difficult to draw a complete list of cultural elements, however, Bianchini (2007) suggested the following key features:

- Arts and media activities and institutions;
- The cultures of youth, ethnic minorities and other 'communities of interest' including local festivals and other celebratory events;
- The tangible and intangible heritage, including archaeology, gastronomy, local history, dialects and rituals;
- the local 'image bank'
- the natural and built environment, including public and open spaces;
- the diversity and quality of places where people socialise;
- local milieux and institutions for intellectual and scientific innovation, including universities and private sector research centres;
- the repertoire of local products and skills in the crafts, manufacturing and services.

It is worth pointing out that local products do not generate country of origin effect unless they are compared with products of the same category from other countries in overseas markets or by international visitors. If a product uniquely belongs to one nation, such as tequila in Mexico and sushi in Japan, it is often regarded as part of the nation's cultural identity.

Compared to Japan and South Korea whose nation brands are rooted deeply in their premium product brands, Britain is a good example of a country whose nation brands are formed largely on rich culture. After selling world famous car brands such as Rolls-Royce, Bentley, Land Rover and Jaguar to German and Indian competitors BMW, Volkswagen and Tata, Britain's nation image has hardly been affected. Although it is still enjoying positive country of origin effect from the service sector, such as British Airways, Vodafone, HSBC, BBC and Harrods, it is strongly

admired for its arts (Tate and Damien Hurst), music (The Beatles, John Lennon, Elton John), language, heritage (Stonehenge), architecture (Tower Bridge), literature (Shakespeare and Jane Austen), sports (football) and education (Oxford and Cambridge). This further proves that nation brands are not only about commercial brands and products or country of origin effect as explored in the previous section, but also the country's literature, philosophy, music, heritage, sport, language, religion and architecture, or widely the nation's culture. It is beyond the scope of this research to conduct an exhaustive study of all the cultural elements. The following exploration of a few cultural aspects merely serves to obtain a taste of the rich cultural world. National cultural difference is now frequently mentioned and carefully managed in international communications and its uniqueness and exclusiveness strongly differentiates a nation from other similar nations. Therefore it is prudent that an in-depth study of a nation's culture should be conducted in any nation branding exercise.

Literature is seen as the living record of history and culture, and philosophy the essence of human intelligence and wisdom. A nation which contributes to human civilisation in this form often wins reputation and respect from its citizens. There are some significant examples:

America Mark Twain, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Walt Whitman, Nathaniel Hawthorne, James Fenimore Cooper, O. Henry, Jack London and Ernest Hemingway.
France Dumas père, Dumas fils, Victor Hugo, Gustave Flaubert, Émile Zola, Guy de Maupassant, Honoré de Balzac, Marie-Henri Beyle (Stendhal), Voltaire, George Sand, René Descartes and Albert Camus.
Germany Christian Johann Heinrich Heine, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Grimm Brothers, Hermann Hesse, Karl Heinrich Marx, Friedrich Engels, Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel.
Greece Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and Archimedes.

One nation which has great literary writers and philosophers, but has not

enabled their legacy to contribute much to the positive nation brand that it desires, is China. In Chinese history, many great writers and philosophers left treasures of wisdom, such as the greatest Chinese classics - *A Dream of Red Mansions, Journey to the West (or the Monkey King), Romance of the Three Kingdoms, One hundred and eight men; The Analects of Confucius, The Great Learning, The Mencius, The Doctrine of the Mean, History as Mirror, Spring and Autumn Annals* and *The Book of Odes.* Japan, Korea, and many other far-eastern countries have been largely influenced by Chinese wisdom and even now in the 21st century, theories and practices guided by this wisdom are still able to be traced in each country. However, Chinese or Eastern Culture is unfortunately hindered by its language, which is seen as one of the most difficult languages to learn, and by poor levels of communication in promoting its culture in other languages in writing or through the media. Although China has been broadcasting a significant number of cultural programmes through its national overseas channel, CCTV-9, and publishing a national newspaper in English, China Daily, it still has a long way to go before the World is able to access and understand the essence of Chinese culture. Gladly Chinese government started sponsoring the establishment of Confucius Institutes within universities in over 100 countries since 2004 in order to promote its culture and language, operating in similar ways to the British Council and Goethe Institute. Certainly a lot more can be done to promote the Chinese culture and language.

With the recent introduction of electronic devices for entertainment and communication, such as iPod, Wii, Nintendo, MTV and internet mobile phones, there is a much wider platform for nation branding through music, film and electronic games. The vast entertainment industry is constantly attempting to portray different nation images in consumers' minds consciously and subconsciously. To establish a character or a venue in a limited time, film/MTV/music/game producers often highlight the most significant or known landmarks, people, events, and so on in order to send out the desired message, which inevitably creates a nation

stereotype. America is signified by the Golden Gate Bridge, the Statue of Liberty and the White House; Britain is perhaps represented by the Tower Bridge, the Big Ben and the Queen; China is often portrayed either by the Great Wall and Tiananmen Square, or by an underdeveloped fishing village situated between beautiful mountains where everybody seems to be a martial art expert.[6]

Food (including drinks), architecture and sports also form an important part of a nation's culture. They not only attract consumption and generate direct income to the owner countries, but also add significant credits to each country's nation image. Japan is known for its healthy sushi, Italy is famous for pizza and pasta, France for its wine, cheese and French cuisine, India for its curry, China for Chinese cuisine and eating with chopsticks. Italy is also proud of the Leaning Tower of Pisa, France the Eiffel Tower, Australia Sydney Opera House, Egypt the Pyramids, Greece the Parthenon Temple, China the Great Wall and now perhaps the Bird's Nest. In sports, Italy, Germany, and France are respected for their national teams' outstanding performance in football, Germany is respected in Formula-1 races, America, Russia and China in gymnastics. Also Athens, Sydney, Barcelona and Beijing attracted a great deal of attention as the hosting cities for the Olympics Games, and the 2006 FIFA World Cup put Germany as the hosting country and Italy the final winner under the spotlight.

Culture, presented in various ways including the above, is the root or spirit of a nation developed through a significant period, and should not be removed, altered or ignored in any nation branding strategy. Positive elements should be highlighted and carefully presented to other nations and their people, if a nation wishes to establish a fair and distinctive image of itself.

---

[6] In films such as *Mission Impossible 3, Around the World in 80 Days, and The House of Flying Daggers.*

4.4 Stakeholders And Positioning In Nation Branding Process

4.4.1 Stakeholders

As mentioned in the previous section, the major objectives of nation branding include attracting tourists, investors and talents, and boosting exports. This helps to identify the key stakeholders interested in establishing and determining the nation brand. As Dinnie (2008) quoted, De Chernatony suggested in his article *Adapting Brand Theory To The Context Of Nation Branding*, that "The…key stakeholders…might include representatives from government, commerce, not-for-profit organisations, tourism and the media". As each nation is not the same, it is almost certain that the combination of sectors involved in decision making largely varies. In some countries, passionate leaders are able to bring forward a strategy that they believe serves the best interests of the country, whereas in other countries, an objective can only be met by getting commitment and endorsement from all the different stakeholders involved in the process. Following the principle of inclusiveness which holds all the relevant stakeholders in shaping and implementing nation brand strategy, Dinnie developed the fully-inclusive stakeholder (FIST) framework (Figure 4-1) to suggest a useful map of diverse stakeholders that need to be considered and consulted in the development of nation brand.
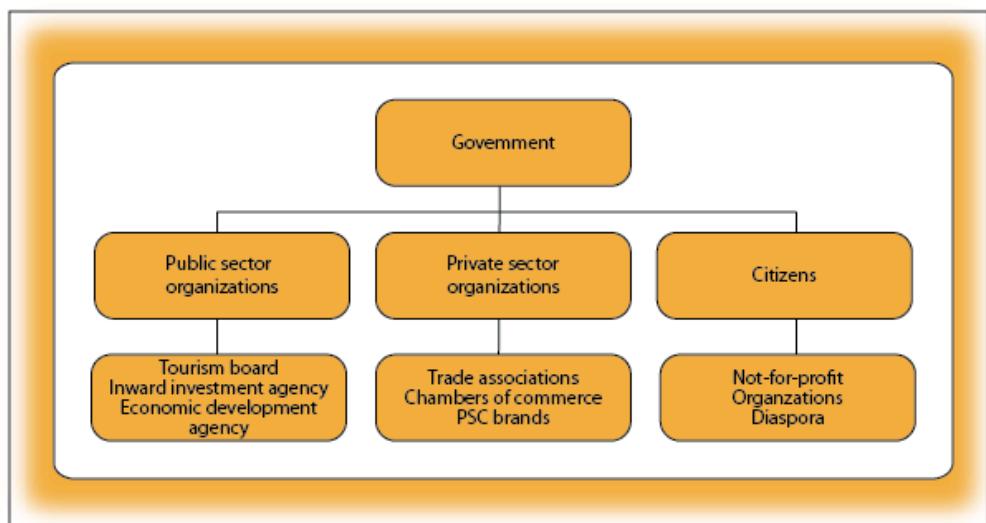
Figure 4-1 The fully-inclusive stakeholder (FIST) framework
Source: Dinnie, 2008

Dinnie (2008) explains that the FIST framework shows that

> the government is the only one of the nation's key actors that can
> realistically aspire to coordinate nation brand activities
> encompassing the full range of stakeholders.

He suggests that it is essential for government to set up a coordinating
body to undertake the long-term nation brand strategy and to avoid
fragmentation and duplication of activity by various stakeholders. The
coordinating body needs to be granted a degree of political independence
to minimize disruption from changes of government leaders and
administration.

Public sector organisations, such as tourist boards, inward investment
agencies and economic development agencies, are a key player in the
FIST framework. Although they have their own objectives and interests, it
is possible that they work together with each other, as well as with private
sectors, to achieve a national goal that eventually each sector will benefit
from economically, socially or politically. It is almost unrealistic to consult

each citizen on the nation brand and the benefit of nation branding cannot be apparent for each individual, so citizens are often not represented in the development of nation branding. However, citizens as a whole should be included and informed in the nation branding process, as their behaviour and attitude may become the direct source of a nation image formed by visitors, tourists, investors or people around them in a foreign nation. If they are not aware of, and in agreement with, the nation brand, the nation image they help to create in the non-national's mind might be completely contradictory; therefore the outcome of nation branding could be partly depleted or diluted. Dinnie (2008) argues that the coordination amongst all sectors is easier to achieve in less developed, transitional or emerging nations as they have to face poverty, under-development and/or other national disadvantages together and an upturn is a shared interest. In peaceful and relatively developed nations, most stakeholders are more likely to stay within their comfort zone and do not share the urge to seek advantages through nation branding.

Dinnie (2008) further argues that, given the different stage each nation is at and their largely varied national desire, the FIST framework provides an inclusive base for nations emerging onto the international stage or needing a radical change or shift. A programme-specific inclusive approach is more realistic and suitable for nations which are looking for improvements in certain sectors on the world stage or for nations which are not in a position for a fully inclusive approach due to political restraints, budget limits or a lack of strategic vision from the nation's ruling elites. For example, Brazil launched a 'Brazil IT' nation branding campaign to specifically improve global awareness of Brazil's IT services and products; France adopted a nation branding campaign to attract investment by improving its nation image in major investors' minds. In order to differentiate it from an existing nation brand strongly associated with fashion, cosmetics and wine, the nation branding campaign came under the name of 'The New France'. These examples show that nation-branding campaigns have no rigid blueprint or set formula. The selection of stakeholders participating in the nation branding process will vary

according to the specific objectives of each campaign. Government, however, is an essential participant in all campaigns in order to sustain the participation, and to coordinate the functions, of all the necessary stakeholders, though its degree of involvement may vary according to the need and the nature of each campaign. Central to any campaign in this context is the strategy designed to influence perception in the form of brand positioning. The next section will explore the types of positioning used that intend to influence people's behaviour based on functional benefits and emotional benefits.

4.4.2 Nation Brand Positioning

Brand positioning is clearly defined by Tybout A. M. and Sternthal. B. (2005) as

> the specific, intended meaning for a brand in consumers' minds. More precisely, a brand's positioning articulates the goal that a consumer will achieve by using the brand and explains why it is superior to other means of accomplishing this goal.

Having defined brand positioning, it is appropriate to note that any brand positioning should embrace clarity, consistency, competitiveness and credibility (Jobber D., 2004). Tybout and Sternthal (2005) suggest the key components in brand positioning: targeted consumers, frame of reference, point of difference and reasons to believe. They further explain that targeted consumers have some typical characteristics, identified and selected on the basis of category and brand usage, such as demographics and psychographics or opinions. Frame of reference is a statement of the target's goal that will be served by consuming the brand. Point of difference indicates why the brand is superior to alternatives in the frame of reference. Reasons to believe are the supporting evidence for claims related to the frame of reference and point of difference.

Frame of reference can be divided into two categories, "…frames that are depicted in terms of product features and frames that are represented by more abstract consumers' goals' (Tybout and Sternthal, 2005). The first category of frame of reference can be established by claiming membership in a product category, for example, Pimm's uses alcoholic drinks as a frame of reference. It can also be established by associating, or comparing, with a major competitor, for example, Wickes compared to B&Q. The second category of frame of reference is based on abstract consumers' goals. It is often used by established brands, to claim that the product meets a particular consumer's goal which other products in the same or a similar category might not be able to meet.

In the context of nation brand positioning, a nation's frame of reference on the basis of product features could be a holiday destination, a religious venue, a business/investment hub, a production base, or a combination of several elements. Based on consumers' goals, when competing in the holiday destination category, France may attract some European holidaymakers by meeting their desire for a luxurious, romantic and familiar experience, while Thailand may attract the same consumers for an exotic, adventurous and mysterious experience.

Point of difference indicates why the brand is superior to alternatives in the frame of reference, based on functional benefits: for example in batteries, Duracell is superior to Tesco Value by virtue of longer life; or based on emotional benefits: for example, in cars, Mercedes is superior to Vauxhall by its presentation of a successful, respectable and financially comfortable image of the owner. Point of difference can easily be adopted in the process of nation brand positioning to indicate how one nation is more attractive than others in the frame of reference. For example, in the competition between holiday destinations in Europe, based on functional benefits, Spain may be seen as more attractive than Britain for the fair weather, the sun, beaches, food and wine, while Britain is probably more attractive for its heritage, literature, royal family, music and language; and based on emotional benefits, France (typically Paris) can be more

appealing to couples for a memorable romantic experience than Romania. The promotion of emotional benefits is essentially a strategic direction for some countries trying to compete with well-established countries in the same frame of reference, such as skiing or beach holiday destinations, that is, to "promote higher-end cultural tourism, where it is indeed possible for countries to stake a claim to utterly distinctive and unique points of difference" (Dinne, 2008).

However, the strategy of highlighting a nation's distinctiveness and uniqueness could be a double-edged sword in nation branding, because while it attracts one consumer segment, it is likely to put off other consumer segments. Unlike product brands, nation brands have to give extra consideration to avoid offending or alienating a potential consumer segment during their establishment and development, as their ultimate goal is to achieve agreement, support and acceptance from as many sectors as possible, if not all, within and outside the nation. Therefore, Dinnie (2008) argues that

> the potential pitfall for nation brands is that they select bland, inoffensive positioning platforms that offend nobody but at the same time are relatively meaningless and thus inspire nobody either.

In order to avoid losing their distinctiveness and uniqueness, as well as to accommodate their diversity and political sensitivity, some nations adopted the 'sub-brand' strategy. Scotland, for example, has identified its strong and internationally recognised brand values, such as integrity, inventiveness, quality and independence of spirit, that are distinct from the United Kingdom brand, so it established the organisation Scotland the Brand in 1994 to promote Scottish tourism, culture and trade (Dinnie, 2008). Benefitting from the strategy, Scotch whisky, as distinct from British whisky, is able to maintain the same level of recognition as Swiss watches, French perfume, Russian vodka and German cars.

4.5 Measurements Of Nation Brands

Several measurements have been developed to inform the performance
and value of selected nation brands, such as Anholt Nation Brands Index,
Future Brand Country Brand Index and East West Nation Brands Index.
The Anholt Index is most often used and regarded as the most reliable
measurement while East West Index less so. This section introduces the
Anholt and East West indexes in order to compare the different methods
used to conduct each index, informing the consequence in reliability.
Future Brand Index will be examined in Chapter 6.

4.5.1 Anholt Nation Brands Index (ANBI)

Anholt started his research and practice in the new field of knowledge,
Nation Branding, in 1996. With the accumulation of nearly 10 years'
experience as a practitioner advising different governments and cities, he
introduced the first Nation Brands Index in April 2005, as an explicit way
of measuring the perceived image and reputation of each nation. ANBI is
the first analytical ranking of nation brands in the world, extending from
11 countries in the first index to 50 major-player countries in the latest
index published in 2008. ANBI was supported by Global Market Insite,
Inc. (GMI) between 2005-2007 and by GfK Roper from 2008. Each year
approximately 20,000 adults ages 18 and above are interviewed in 20
core panel countries namely USA, Canada, UK, Germany, France, Italy,
Sweden, Russia, Poland, Turkey, Japan, China, India, South Korea,
Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Egypt, South Africa. It is released on
a quarterly, then annual, basis to reflect the changes in each nation's
reputation or brand based on evaluations in six major areas: tourism;
culture (or culture and heritage); people; exports (or brands and
products); governance (or policy); and investment and immigration:

> **Exports:** This is what marketers call the 'county-of-origin effect' -
> whether knowing where the product is made increases or

decreases people's likelihood of purchasing it, and whether a country has particular strengths in science and technology, and has creative energy. A perceived association with particular industries rounds out the country's image in this area.

Governance: This aspect incorporates perceived competency and honesty of government, respect for citizens' rights and fair treatment, as well as global behavior in the areas of international peace and security, environmental protection, and world poverty reduction. Respondents also select one adjective that best describes the government in each country.

Culture: Cultural aspects measured are perceptions of a country's heritage, its contemporary cultural 'vibes' from music, films, art and literature, as well as the country's excellence in sports. Various cultural activities are presented to respondents to gauge their strongest image of a country's cultural 'product'.

People: The general assessment of a people's friendliness is measured by whether respondents would feel welcome when visiting the country. Additionally, the appeal of the people on a personal level is measured - whether respondents want to have a close friend from that country - as well as human resources on a professional level, that is, how willing respondents would be to hire a well-qualified person from that country. Respondents are also asked to select one adjective out of a list to describe the predominant image they have of the people in each country.

Tourism: Respondents rate a country's tourism appeal in three major areas: natural beauty, historic buildings and monuments, and vibrant city life and urban attractions. Tourism potential is also quantified: how likely they would be to visit a country if money were no object and the likely experience represented by adjectives such as romantic, stressful, spiritual, etc.

Investment and Immigration: Lastly, a country's power to attract talent and capital is measured not only by whether people would consider studying, working and living in that country but also by the country's economic prosperity, equal opportunities, and ultimately the perception that it is a place with a high quality of life. The country's economic and business conditions - whether stagnant, declining, developing or forward-thinking - complete the measure in this space.

(Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index Report, 2008)

Each country's scores in the six areas are presented in the hexagon below (image 4-4). The bigger the total shaded area is, the higher the nation brand is in terms of value or reputation. In the 50 nations, no

country is perfect or has scored zero in all six areas, so all the countries are represented in large or small shades of different shapes. For instance, Brand Spain was represented in the following shape (image 4-5) in the ANBI (Q1 2005).

Image 4-4 Anholt Nation Brand Hexagon
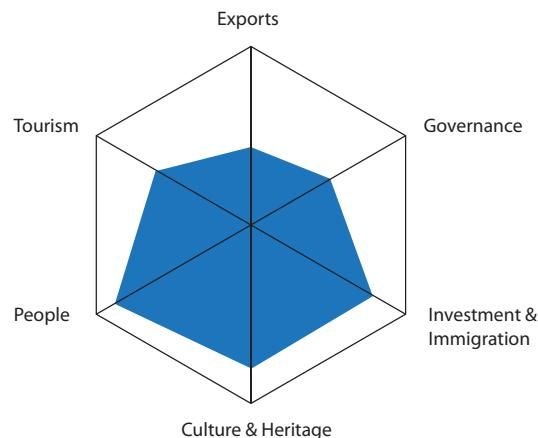
Image 4-5 Nation brand hexagon-Spain

The latest ANBI (2008) listed the following counties as the top 10 nation brands.

1. Germany
2. France
3. United Kingdom
4. Canada
5. Japan
6. Italy

7. United States
8. Switzerland
9. Australia
10. Sweden

4.5.2 East West Nation Brands Index

As has been identified in Chapter 1, other nation branding indexes are conducted by different organisations, such as East West Communications, whose indexes are similarly generated through collected data and analysed with the support of information technology. East West Communications' Nation Brands Index looks at only four major areas: tourism, government, culture and business, and their rankings are based on how countries are described in major media. Unlike ANBI, which is limited to 50 countries, their rankings are able to include 200 countries around the world. In their latest report, 2008 Q3, to make it more comparable to ANBI, the top 10 nation brands are listed below.

1. Singapore
2. Hong Kong
3. Greece
4. Australia
5. Malaysia
6. Brazil
7. China
8. Jamaica
9. Italy
10. United Kingdom

The major disadvantage of this measurement, and which may distort the result, is that its reliance on major world media. As the majority of the most influential media, such as Sky, Fox, BBC, The Guardian, and The Times, are operated and controlled by western countries, so the result cannot be balanced between the west and the east, developed and developing countries. In addition, indirect expressions such as hints and irony may cause difficulties in consistently differentiating positive and negative messages, which inevitably affects the accuracy of the results.

Although there are many aspects to nation branding, this chapter has concentrated initially on defining 'nation branding' by differentiating nation and country. The most suitable definition was proposed by the researcher as *a strategically managed process of applying branding techniques to nations in order to gain competitive advantage by improving the perceived image and promoting the principal values of a nation.* This was followed by establishing the country of origin and culture as the key factors underpinning nation branding. It has also revealed that the nation branding exercise should involve all stakeholders associated with the nation, and the significant role that government holds in this process. In order to measure the success and failure of a nation brand, two measurements have been introduced: Anholt Nation Brands Index (ANBI) and East West Nation Brands Index. The ANBI Model is chosen as the more accurate and reliable system.

5 NATION BRANDING, PRACTICES AND GLOBAL CONTEXT

As outlined in Chapter 4, nation branding is a relatively new phenomenon, but this in no way suggests that before the awareness of this concept, nations did not make efforts to establish desirable images of themselves. Before the recent spread of the nation branding concept and its management, nations communicated consciously or unconsciously their political, social, cultural and economic aspects in various forms. These included political propaganda, commercial advertising, government-led promotional activities, cultural events and through their people. Some of these practices are still widely deployed, and many have been minimised or altered under the guidance of the nation branding strategy of respective nations. This chapter examines two nation brands: America and Japan, both of which are rated highly in Anholt's Nation Brands Index. These two nations have deployed very different forms of communications to reach a high level of international reputation prior to the establishment of a nation branding concept: America through cultural influence and Japan through country of origin, the essence of which is the spirit and unity of its people. This chapter also identifies the threats facing these two major nation brands, and suggests a potential solution through conscious nation branding exercises.

5.1 Global Context

Fuelled by the thriving development of modern technology in recent decades, a wide range of communication tools have emerged and been replaced on a daily basis. A growing number of TV and radio channels and the spread of the world-wide-web, especially Web 2.0, mean that far too much information has been generated and poured into the marketplace of information. The overwhelming information explosion

presents new challenges as to how countries, just like companies, are able to distinguish themselves from others in order to have a competitive edge in various ways.

Brand management has proven to be the most important tool for devising a strategy which ultimately helps to increase profit in the commercial sector. The application of branding techniques in the context of nations may also generate significant and far-reaching impact on a nation's image and consequently its economy, politics and society. For that reason, many nations are aware that in order to develop a competitive advantage, they must comprehend how they are viewed from the outside, i.e. by a public from around the globe with particular emphasis on identified characteristics and dimensions.

Anholt, as mentioned in Chapter 4, has developed the Anholt Nation Brand Index (ANBI) to examine the quarterly performance of each nation brand in an analytical ranking manner, dating from 2005. In his 4th quarter 2005 report, with the help of Brand Finance, he generated a financial valuation of the nation brand and put a dollar value on the reputations of the 32 nations in the index. As he explained, the aim is to give a sense of the real contribution of the brand to the nation's economy. The result showed a staggering difference between the top-brand USA ($17,893 billion) and the bottom-brand Poland ($43 billion). In the commercial sector, Interbrand's Best Global Brands 2008 shows that the top brand in the world, Coca-Cola, was valued at nearly $67 billion. Comparing the commercial brands and nation brands, it is obvious that in terms of value, the top nation brand is 267 times of the top commercial brand, and even the least valuable nation brand in Anholt's 2005 list, Brand Poland, is just between GE (the forth place at $53 billion) and NOKIA (the fifth place at $36 billion). Looking at the millions of dollars and years each top commercial brand has invested in to achieve the current position, it does not need much persuasion to agree with Anholt's view (Q4, 2005) that "protecting and enhancing the nation brand, this most valuable of assets,

is surely one of the primary responsibilities of governments in the 21st century."

Many governments understand this significance and have developed tailored nation branding strategies to increase their competitive advantages in the world. Countries like Ireland, Scotland, Spain, New Zealand and South Africa have already tasted the joy of success and many other countries are undertaking similar steps to tackle their own problems identified during nation branding exercise. It is appropriate at this stage to provide an in-depth overview of two carefully selected nations which are not only the top leaders in brand valuation, but also represent two significant yet different patterns of nation branding development from which China could learn the most.

One is America, which has established the strongest nation brand, unequalled anywhere else in the world. According to Anholt (2007), America is known and mentioned in almost every country of the planet, and the 'Made in USA' label is widely admired and demanded in products and service sectors around the world. Nike, Coca-Cola, McDonalds, Hollywood, Disney, Madonna and many others are seen as the top labels in their respective category and people around the world continuously talk about them, consume them and analyse their influences. In annual reports on the world's top 100 brands jointly published by Interbrand and Business Week, America has been undoubtedly the dominant country that contributes over half of the mega brands to the world. American culture, lifestyle and values have been so popular that the 'American dream' has inspired generations since the Declaration of Independence. However, in recent years, America's nation image has declined partly due to the military actions in the Middle East and partly due to the growth of 'anti-globalisation'. The economic downturn that led to a world storm of recession has further damaged its image as the sole world superpower after the Cold War. America's success and treats are certainly highly valuable for China in its desire to be a new world power.

The other is Japan. If America, from people's values to its location, is vastly different from China, Japan on the other hand has much in common with it. Being China's neighbour and in the shadow of the 'Heaven Empire' for centuries until the past 200 years, Japan is deeply rooted in Chinese culture. As early as the fifth century, Chinese culture was extensively adopted by the Japanese through their embassies, visiting scholars and tradesmen, the influence of which still can be traced in modern Japan. Apart from the written characters and the kimono, one significant example of Chinese influence is the application of "Confucianism" in their social system and recently in their business society (Gibney, 1982). Confucianism prioritises harmonious relationships between people in the community over the cult of the individual (Gibney, 1982).

After the Second World War, Japan was on the edge of collapse. As Gibney (1982) describes, "its cities were in ruins, its industry smashed, its people hungry and ill-clothed." American occupation turned Japan into a military production base, maintaining and supplying for its army. With the technology, skills and money received through this occupation, Japan was able to feed its population and more importantly offset its economic recovery. Blessed by the great unity in the country fostered by the shared desire to leave behind its postwar predicament, Japan commenced its process of becoming an economic miracle. In the 21st century, Japan is the second largest world economy and its brand value was estimated in Anholt's 2005 financial valuation of the nation brand at $6,205 billion: the second most valuable nation brand after the USA. 'Made in Japan' has managed to win the hearts of the people around the world, and has become one of the most favourite countries of origin in steel, cars, TV sets, ships, cameras, chemicals, semiconductor chips, computers and many other products (Gibney, 1982).

In a similar manner, China has been through abject poverty, political turbulence, Cold War and foreign export restrictions since its independence in 1949. Only 30 years ago, China started its economic

reform and has experienced "one of the most dramatic explosions of wealth accumulation in human history" (Okonkwo U., 2007). Being one of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, the most-mentioned emerging world power, the proud host country of the 29th Olympic Games, it seems only logical to expect China to enjoy an equivalent level of reputation to that of Japan. Disappointingly, in the same 2005 financial valuation of nation brands, China was rated number 12 behind Denmark at an estimated $712 billion, just over 11% of Japan's brand value. Sharing similar cultural values and experiencing similarly speedy economic growth, China could take note from its neighbour's experience what needs to be done to improve its nation brand.

5.2 Brand America

America is a country as well as the most valuable brand in the world. As Anholt (2004) calls it, brand America is "the mother of all brands". One way of evaluating the power of a brand is by evaluating its product and service brands. In America's case, a long list of sub-brands can be drawn in seconds (Anholt, 2004).

- Food, drinks and cigarettes
  Coca-Cola, Pepsi, McDonalds, KFC, Pizza Hut, Burger King, Starbucks, Kellogg's, Mars, Heinz, Weight Watchers, Kraft, Marlboro, Camel, Zippo, Budweiser, Jack Daniel's …
- Sports and travel
  Nike, Reebok, NBA, Hilton, Marriott, Holiday Inn, Sheraton, FedEx, UPS…
- Fashion and beauty
  Calvin Klein, Tommy Hilfiger, Ralph Lauren, Gap, Tiffany, Elizabeth Arden, Revlon, Max Factor, Avon, Clinique, Head & Shoulders, Estee Lauder, Olay, Colgate-Palmolive, Johnson & Johnson, Gillette…
- Technology
  IBM, Compaq, Oracle, Dell, Hewlett-Packard, AT&T, CISCO, Apple, Motorola, Microsoft, Intel, DuPont, Lycra, Dolby, Xerox, Whirlpool, GE, Ford, Chevrolet, General Motors, Chrysler, Boeing…
- Retail and money

Wal-Mart (ASDA in the UK), Amazon, Safeway, American Express, JP Morgan, Citibank, Diners Club, Morgan Stanley, VISA…
- Leisure and information
Disney, Kodak, MTV, Sesame Street, Warner Bros., Dreamworks, The Simpsons, Universal, Hollywood, eBay, AOL, Google, Yahoo!, Xbox, Fox, CNN, Time, Discovery, National Geographic…

52 of the above brands are listed in the Interbrand's Best Global Brands 2008, with Coca-Cola, IBM, Microsoft and GE at the top. As discussed in Chapter 4, a successful brand is a significant contributor to the positive image of its country of origin. The joint force of the above individually powerful brands evident in all aspects of people's lives creates an unbeatable, mega brand-America.

However, brand America is not only formed by the country of origin effect of its commercial brands, but also via many other aspects, which can be categorised in five main areas according to Anholt's nation brand hexagon: Culture, People, Tourism, Investment and Immigration, and Governance. In his 2005 Q4 NBI report, Anholt described the performance of brand America in the following shape:
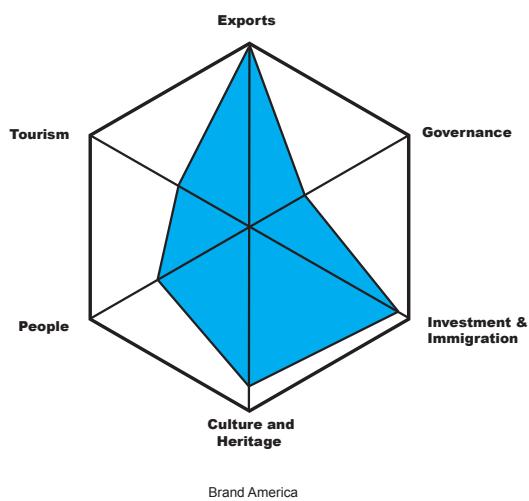
Brand America

Image 5-1Brand America Hexagon
(Source: ANBI Q4 2005 report)

Anholt even conducted a special survey to examine how America is viewed by countries with majority Muslim populations, the result of which featured in his Q3 2007 report. The result is surprising similar to the overall brand image of America.

Brand America viewed by countries with majority Muslim populations
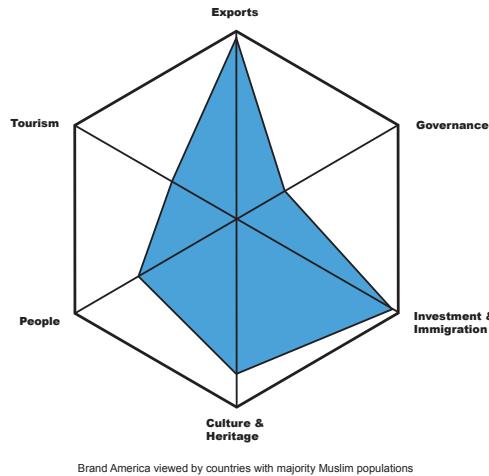
Image 5-2 Brand America in Muslim's eyes
(Source: ANBI Q3 2007 report)

It can be interpreted that America's brand image is enhanced by its exports (country of origin effect), culture, and investment and immigration, while people, tourism and governance still have some space for improvement. It is revealing to look into another significant part of America's nation image, culture, as a way of understanding what has been done to achieve the current status in America's nation branding exercise long before others gained awareness of it.

5.2.1 Culture

Governments of many countries, especially those with a rich and distinctive cultural heritage, understand the importance of culture in promoting their countries to people around the world, and it is common to have a government-level Ministry of Culture. However, they also

recognise that the investment in promoting culture does not generate the same return as inward investment, trade or tourism. So naturally promoting culture is often seen as a charitable task to bring awareness and hopefully encourage tourism, rather than an effective and profitable way of building a nation's brand value and achieving a competitive edge.

America, however, identified the important role of culture as early as immediately after the Civil War. United under one flag, America was focussing on the world. Instead of launching wars and trying to conquer by force, America adopted a new strategy - soft power. Joseph Nye, dean of Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, best defines 'soft power', and its opposite, 'hard power'.

> Hard power, is the coercion a government pursues to achieve certain aims and this is often reflected in its military power and activities. Soft power is the persuasion a government applies to achieve goals and it often refers to cultural, intellectual or spiritual influence.
>
> a country may obtain the outcomes it wants in world politics because other countries want to follow it, admiring its values, emulating its example, aspiring to its level of prosperity and openness.
> (Anholt, 2004)

With this understanding and the view that culture is one of the key techniques for building its competitive advantage, America has committed continuous investments to promote its culture and to a certain extent its culture has been established as a highly marketable commodity.

According to Anholt (2004), American government started supporting cultural projects including art exhibitions between the two World Wars. When the Soviet Union relentlessly distorted America's image and portrayed it as a cultural wasteland, the American government responded to this by a smoke-free cultural war in Europe. It was mainly led by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), who pumped tens of millions of dollars into the promotion of American culture through the Congress for Cultural Freedom. One major project was to sponsor publication of more than a

thousand books and to make them widely available. Many writers of these books were employed by the CIA and gained cover from them to travel around Europe for inspiration. However, in order to present these books as highly professional and therefore credible rather than as obvious propaganda, the CIA did not allow policies to be mentioned in the books.

Anholt (2004) argues that the other two remarkable achievements during this operation were the success of promoting American art in the style of Abstract Expressionism, and Jazz music through Voice of America (VOA) radio programme. Seen as the opposite of the style of art favoured by the Soviet Union, separate from the prevalent European influence, politically neutral, and a perfect representation of the American spirit and character, the new American art was welcomed by the American government. Frances Stonor Saunders suggests in her book *Who Paid the Piper*? that the CIA made generous donations to the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and the Congress for Cultural Freedom sponsored modern art exhibitions around Europe, to showcase art works by Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Georgia O'Keefe, Alexander Calder and Frank Stella, who were the leading artists of Abstract Expressionism (Anholt, 2004, p99). Jazz originated at the beginning of the 20th century in African American communities in the Southern United States. In 1954 the CIA started a Jazz programme, namely Music America, broadcasting Jazz music to Europe and other areas through the radio station Voice of America (VOA). Through more than 10,000 broadcasts in over 30 years, Jazz became one of the most popular music streams in the world and its long-term programme host Willis Conover was called by Reader's Digest "the World's favourite American". His influence was described thus: "…you are the music, you are the light, you are America" (Anholt, 2004). Apart from Jazz, other music forms such as Rock & Roll and Pop also made significant contributions to the wide coverage of Brand America. The worldwide broadcasting of memorial service for American musician Michael Jackson, King of Pop, following his death on 25 June 2009, is a good example.

Lacking the grounding of long history and heritage, American culture adopted a 'borrowing' strategy to enrich its substance. Americans have utilised fragments of other cultures like myths, literature and religious stories, reshaped them with some American spices and sold them back to their original countries. Disney is a master of this approach and has sold the world stories from other cultures, such as: Germany's *Snow White, Beauty and Beast, Sleeping Beauty*; Italy's *Pinocchio*; Denmark's *The Little Mermaid*; Arabia's *Aladdin*; Britain's *Winnie the Pooh* and *Alice in Wonderland*; and China's *Mulan* and *Kungfu Panda.* In 2006, America's Warner Bros. even reproduced a popular Hong Kong movie *Internal Affairs* (2002) by featuring all Western actors and placing it in an American context. The new movie, namely *The Departed* won four Academy Awards at the 79th Academy Awards in 2007.

What must be mentioned here are the key vehicles that facilitate effective cultural spread. VOA was established in 1942 by the American government and played a significant role in fighting the Cultural Cold War. It now broadcasts about 1,500 hours of news, information, educational and cultural programming every week to an estimated worldwide audience of 134 million people in 45 languages. Cable News Network (CNN), an American news channel, was launched in 1980 and soon became hugely influential following its outstanding news coverage of the 1991 Gulf War. It is available on cable and satellite systems in most countries in Asia, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Middle East, Africa and America. Its broadcasting language is English. MTV is a popular music channel and has much more influence on a young audience than CNN has on adults. The American media itself is constantly making a contribution to its nation image.

The advantage of building a nation brand through culture is that popular culture is considered as art or entertainment, different from propaganda, so people easily relax their vigilance and do not have to worry about being bewitched and manipulated. Films, music, art and literature enrich

people's leisure time as well as help them get to know the places they have little knowledge about in a colourful and vivid way that the commercial brands can hardly deliver.

In addition to its strengths in popular culture and exports, America's strong nation image is also enhanced by its people such as celebrities (Madonna, and Michael Jordan) and politicians (Kennedy and Obama), tourism attractions (such as Los Angeles, New York, Las Vegas and the Yellowstone Park), science and democracy and other aspects appealing to immigrants and investors.

However, in recent years, the brand America is declining. The Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the tolerance of its ally's ruthless bombing in Gaza stripe in 2007 all contributed to America's tarnished image. Anti-globalisation, as discussed in details in Naomi Klein's book *No Logo*, also does America no favours. Internationalisation fuelled more people to visit, study in and work in America, but some are disappointed with the beautifully presented dreamland when they see it with their own eyes. Current recession has made the situation even worse when the American's proud financial status, strong stock market and wealth have shrunk in a shockingly short period of time. The American dream has started to fade. In the past,

> …the United States has always been the country to which the world's best and brightest (people)… have flocked in pursuit of education and to seek their fortunes, …and dream the American dream.
> (Anholt, 2004)

Now, some of the expatriate 'brains' have chosen to leave the economically hit United States and launch companies in their home countries where they are welcomed and supported. "America's loss will be the world's gain" (Wadhwa V., 2009).

When the new president Barack Obama took office on 20 January 2009, he promised American people that he would help to "transform a nation and usher in a new birth of freedom on this Earth" (Times, 6 March 2009). Although his ambitious stimulus package has caused concern that he is gambling and may cost the whole country, the world is yet waiting to see whether he can save brand America from decline and save America from recession.

5.3 Brand Japan

Unlike American's government (CIA-led) nation branding campaign, Japan gained its reputation as well as wealth mainly through industrial successes. From a 'warrior nation' between the 1890s and the1940s, Japan developed itself into a respected 'merchant nation' in a few decades. Its economic achievement is described as 'a modern miracle' (Gibney F. 1982), through his ten-years of working experiences and observation, revealed the secret behind Japan's success - human capital. If America created a mega brand largely based on commerce and culture, Japan's brand is hinged on commerce and its people.

Japan, alongside Germany, produces the most precise and reliable electronic and engineering products; from transport (Toyota, Honda and Yamaha), through watches (Seiko, Casio and Citizen), domestic electrics (Sony, Panasonic and Toshiba), and music and sound instruments (Yamaha, Kenwood and Pioneer), to cameras (Canon and Olympus and many others). Japanese products during and after the Second World War were not welcomed in overseas markets due to people's hostile feelings towards Japan's membership in the Axis and their more patriotic preference for European and American makes. As Gibney argues, it was the short American occupation after the Second World War that helped Japan establish its industry. In addition to the technology, skills and money brought into Japan to supply its occupational army, the American government even funded the founding of the Japan Productivity Centre to

make Japan self-sufficient. The Korean War (1950-1953) presented Japan with a $3 billion golden opportunity of supplying arms, military equipment and supplies for the American and U.N. war efforts, which fundamentally rationalised the Japanese economy (Gibney, 1982). Partially distracted by the war, the American occupation ended in 1952 and Japan was again an independent country. Japan soon turned all military production facilities and expertise into civil production. Fuelled by constantly improved quality, good design, low prices and targeted marketing strategies, Japanese products started entering America and other overseas markets in the 1960s. Taking motorbikes as an example, in 1959 the Japanese make Honda seized the biggest market share in American market. Their unit price was $250, compared to $1,000-1,500 of American and British makes like Harley Davidson and BSA. The competitive prices of Japanese products were a consequence of low wages. In the same year, the average annual income per person in Japan was $299, compared to $1019 in Britain and $2232 in America. Japanese companies also kept investing in innovation and design to maintain their products' competitiveness in the market. In 1960, Honda employed over 700 designers and engineers while the British motorbike manufacture NVT had only about 100 (www.gxes.com.cn). With the whole nation's unity and persistence, Japan once again emerged as a world power, economically instead of militarily or politically.

It sounds a perfect story about an industrious nation and its people. But what is special about its people? What united them to turn their country from defeat to victory? And what encouraged them to persistently produce high-quality high-technology products which contributed to a great nation brand? This has to go back to the philosophy deeply embedded in the Japanese mind, Confucianism.

Confucianism was formed during the Eastern Zhou Dynasty (770-256 BC) by the Chinese educator and philosopher Confucius (551-479 BC) and his followers. The Chunqiu Period during the Eastern Zhou Dynasty was a time of chaos and disorder. Confucius travelled from one kingdom

to another to spread his political ideas and influence, hoping to stop the violence. His view was that "what made a government good was the power of moral virtues rather than the power of cruel and punitive laws. Moral virtues could produce trust and faith in the people, while punitive measures might stop wrongdoing only for a moment" (Yao X., 2000). Confucianism is also seen as an ethical system which stresses "the primary emphasis on fulfilling responsibilities to each other with a sincere and conscientious heart" in the five basic relationships: father and son, ruler and official, elder and younger brothers, husband and wife, and friend and friend. The five Confucian virtues are "humaneness (*ren*), righteousness (*yi*), ritual/propriety (*li*), wisdom (*zhi*) and faithfulness (*xin*), which are believed to be as constant and unchanging as natural laws." Confucius believed that if people follow the five virtues in all relationships, especially the five basic relationships, society will be harmonious and peaceful (Yao X., 2000).

Confucianism was adopted as the official orthodoxy by Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty (206 BC-220) and became the dominant governing philosophy in most of Chinese feudal history. Confucianism also gradually spread to some East Asian countries including Japan, Korea, Singapore and Vietnam. Confucianism was first adopted by Tokugawa shoguns (a feudal regime of Japan which ruled the nation between 1603-1868) as their governing philosophy, and they believed that it contributed to "stabilising the nation and solidifying their feudal hegemony." (Gibney, 1982)

Confucianism stresses the relationships and harmony among people, so, as Professor Morishima Michio argues, it discourages individualism. This is a major difference between Confucianism and Christianity. The latter highlights the fate-determining power of the individual, modelled on God. It is best reflected in American disaster movies and the British 007 film series, that the responsibility of saving the country or even the earth from evil forces often lies on the shoulders of one man (or woman or child). The Japanese, under the influence of Confucianism, believe in group

efforts and the minimisation of individual interests. This reflects in their work ethic. Joining a company is like joining a big family, so people share a sense of belonging and feel satisfied to help the greater family to grow and prosper through everybody's hard work. They seldom leave their company simply for a better salary, position or personal satisfaction. Learning, growing and achieving amongst family members and maintaining the right relationships in the family gives them the ultimate satisfaction of fulfilling virtues and duties, or in their words "what makes life worth living." (Gibney, 1982). Shibusawa Eiichi, the founder of Dai Ichi Bank (today Dai Ichi Kangyo, Japan's largest) always emphasised, in his long-range planning, his organisation's corporate community spirit. He gave the perfect explanation of the importance of Confucian virtue in business:

> "Morality and economy were meant to walk hand in hand. But as humanity has been prone to seek gain, often forgetting righteousness. The ancient sage, anxious to remedy this abuse, zealously advocated morality on the one hand and on the other, warned people of profit unlawfully obtained. Later scholars misunderstood [Confucius's] true idea…they forgot that productivity is a way of practising virtue."
> (Gibney, 1982)

Successful and rapid economic growth is changing Japan's industrial structure from basic heavy goods production to the more knowledge-intensive industries. Japan recently started looking into other areas which contribute to a nation brand, eager to upgrade their image of 'economic animals' to a more sophisticated, intellectual and respectful one. Following a speech on improving Japan's competitiveness through the creation, protection, and strategic utilisation of intellectual property, by the Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi in 2002, the Japan Brand Working Group was set up by the Intellectual Property Policy Headquarters (IPPH) in 2004. Through thorough discussions with various stakeholders, the IPPH set the vision of a desired Japan brand, which is built strategically by strengthening key business, nurturing unique and attractive lifestyles as reflected in the food culture, local brands, and fashion, and

assimilating the brand image in collaboration with the tourism industry, as well as through cultural diplomacy. A key premise here is that Japan aims to become an intellectual property-based nation, attractive and influential in entertainment, lifestyle and culture in general (Dinnie, 2008).

As this campaign is ongoing and will be a long-term project, the final result is hard to estimate at this stage. Even if the vision is established correctly and practically, how the branding process is analysed, monitored and managed may all affect final result.

The one weakness or fragility Japan did not attempt to address in the branding vision, as Gibney (1982) pointed out, is internationalisation. Perhaps they have not realised it, but it is thought to be a significant barrier to Japan's march to a new world superpower. What is internationalisation? Reading translated foreign books, eating foreign cuisines, buying foreign fashion, watching foreign movies with subtitles and travelling abroad from time to time, is only the surface of internationalisation. As discussed in Chapter 4, incorrect perceptions are largely caused by unfamiliarity and ignorance. The Japanese people are still enjoying their largely improved lives through the economic miracle, and Japan is still widely respected as a hard working, serious and persistent country that provides the world with amazing technologies for a better life. However, how long this can last when developing countries come into competition? What else can Japan count on to sustain its reputation? Gibney (1982) warns Japan that "an internal unity of thinking that expresses itself so poorly to outsiders is a national weakness." The ability to communicate with the outside world can be improved through language training; however, to communicate effectively and efficiently requires more than education. It requires the nation's openness, a good understanding of other cultures and the demonstration of good character. The government has had a poor record on the last point. As a nation, Japan has successfully reshaped its identity from aggressive samurai to peaceful businessman. However, as a wealthy developed country, it has done little to help those in need. Its direct development assistance to

developing countries only counts to 0.002% of its GNP, compared to 0.006% for France and 0.004% for the Federal Republic of Germany. Japan's parsimonious contribution was even accused of being a form of sales promotion rather than aid (Gibney, 1982). When refugees from Vietnam and Cambodia reached Japanese shores, Japanese government and its public were shockingly lacking in humanism and international responsibility. Finally, under pressure from other democratic countries, Japan opened its door to the refugees and agreed to put $300 million on their resettlement, two thirds of which was eventually balanced by America due to the Japanese government's reluctance. Japan is also regarded by its neighbours the Chinese and the Koreans as cowardly and untruthful, because of its denial of its military invasions in these two countries in the early 20th century and the ruthless massacres it conducted during the Sino-Japanese War. This explains why in several of Anholt's nation brand surveys, China and Korea gave Japan the lowest marks in all the hexagon areas except exports. Anholt quoted Edward R. Murrow's [7] words, "truth is the best propaganda and lies are the worst." (Anholt, 2004)

The Japanese government has recognised this problem and one of the three major goals of the Ministry of International Trade is "contributing positively to the international community" (Gibney, 1982). Whether it is only a gesture or a true objective remains to be tested. Japan also took other attempts to improve its nation brand. In 2002, the Prime Minister of Japan Junichiro Koizumi declared that Japan had set the new goal of becoming more competitive through the creation, protection, and strategic utilisation of intellectual property. Following the speech, policy headquarters were established in order to facilitate this new initiative and in 2003, a new law on intellectual property was introduced. This measure has stimulated a broad range of innovative activities in science and technology, art and design, as well as the brand and media management. Initially the focus of the task concentrated on music, movies, game

---

[7] Edward R. Murrow was a legendary newsman and later an outstanding figure of American Public Democracy.

software and animation. Later it expanded to include other sources of Japan branding such as intellectual and cultural assets related to food, culture, local brands and fashion (Dinnie, 2008).

This chapter has reviewed two major nation brands: America and Japan. It has established that America is a strong nation brand that has evolved through years of engagement with a strong country of origin effect from its products and services. It has presented a strong case that culture is a key factor in determining nation brand. Although American culture initially was internationalised for commercial as well as political purposes, it remains fundamentally crucial to its image and popularity. In the recent years, Brand America has suffered a negative impact as a result of its involvement in occupying other countries and engaging in regional wars. In addition America's image has been tarnished as it is believed that the failure in the American economy is the primary reason behind the world recession. Japan on the other hand presents a different and complex profile. It has emerged defeated following the Second World War. It concentrated its efforts and resources on recovery through manufacturing, which gradually developed a strong country of origin effect. This was largely facilitated and realised through strong cultural ties to Confucian philosophy. Japan later became aware of the value of the nation brand and invested strategically in promoting its culture internationally with a focus on intellectual property, fashion and food. The next chapter will explore how brand China is perceived and will examine its strengths and weaknesses.

6   BRANDING CHINA IN CONTEXT

This chapter is intended to explore the current perceived image of China in 2008 and to identify the 'gap' between this image and its reality. The framework that will be used is that based broadly on the Anholt Nation Brands Index. This has been qualified in Chapter 1. A study of the key weaknesses will be conducted, in an attempt to shed light on the possible ways of addressing these problems for an improved Brand China. However, as discussed in Chapter 4, a sustainable and successful nation branding strategy must involve and seek agreement of as many stakeholders as possible. China's recent totalitarian regime left little room for opposition and in turn it supported the creation of a stereotypical image of China. When outsiders refer to China they often refer to a perceived image rather than to its actual attributes. Although the stereotypical image of China may be out of date, inaccurate and simplistic, it affects the way many others see China; this may be attributed to China's insular strategy in its recent political history. It is almost impossible to carry out such an operation in China without the central government's lead, given the vast population, the complex governing system and limited media to reach all aspects of the country. Therefore, this research relies heavily upon publicly available information, including publications, media reports and other sources. In respect of such information, the conclusions of this research are inevitably determined by the accuracy of the published information.

The first part of this chapter will examine several aspects of China's current image, broadly within the framework presented by the Anholt model. This includes finding out how the rest of the world sees China by testing it against the Anholt model, the Future Brand model as well as the East West model. It will also examine how specific countries such as America and France perceive China. The second part of this chapter will

aim to identify key weaknesses and uncover the omissions recognised by nation branding indexes, with specific focus on people and governance. The third part addresses how China can position itself in relation to others in a contemporary context. It attempts to identify what China wants its brand to be and what China may avoid in its nation branding exercise. This is achieved contrasting a whitewash strategy and truth and credibility, nation branding against propaganda, a sustainable nation branding strategy against a quick fix solution. This part will also address possible improvements in China's brand image by examining issues such as investing in people by improving the educational ethos, a national insurance system including health care and improving the governing system. The latter is perceived to be fundamental in the drive for an improved brand China. This part also explores how China operates on the international stage by examining its international relations through contrasting internationalization and being in opposition. In addition it explores the debate surrounding democratic developments and international relations by testing the rule of law against the rule of man. This section will also look at possible improvements in a variety of different areas but more specifically in culture, tourism and country of origin effect through exports. This section will conclude by offering some solutions to priorities discussed in the weakness category including the setup of a coordinating body for carrying out the nation branding exercise for China.

6.1 China's Current Image

It is appropriate at this stage to explore how China's identity is formed and perceived by others. An image of a person, group or nation is determined not only by how the person, group or nation sees themselves, but is contingent upon how others see or portray them. From this viewpoint, this section will address several aspects of China's image primarily based on the Anholt model. Several key weaknesses will be

identified in an attempt to address fundamental aspects for improving China's image.

6.1.1 How The World Sees China

This section explores the application of several nation brand indexes and measurements. This is in order to better understand how China's identity is perceived by outsiders. Indexes including the Anholt Nation Brand Index, Future Brand's Country Brand Index and others will be deployed. This research acknowledges the fact that measuring a nation brand accurately largely depends on how the model operates, so the limitations of the models are pertinent; it is not possible to reach a concrete assessment. How China is perceived by the world is assessed and reported by various organisations, using different criteria. Surveys and interviews are the most common methods deployed for data collection.

6.1.1.1 Anholt Nation Brand Index (ANBI)

As introduced in Chapter 4, ANBI is currently one of the most frequently used measurement systems of nation brands. It is historically the first analytical ranking of nation brands, based on quarterly surveys among worldwide consumers. The sum of consumers' views on a nation's performance in tourism, exports, governance, people, culture and heritage, and investment and immigration, form the nation's current brand. Since 2005, 13 ANBI studies have been conducted and they provide a traceable movement of the main nation brands in the world, including China. In the ANBI Q2 2005 report, China ranked 21 out of 25 countries in the list, and a hexagon of Brand China was produced.
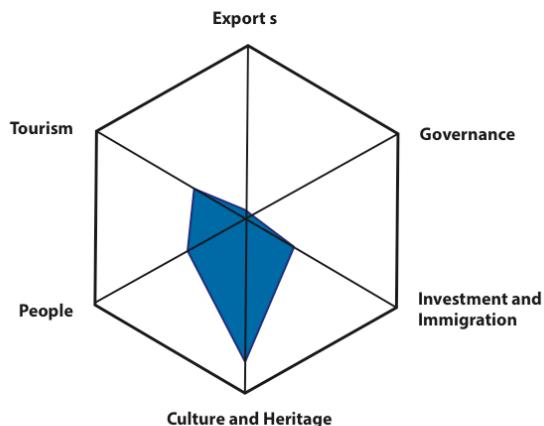
Image 6-1 Brand China in 2005
Source: ANBI Q2 2005, reconstructed

The hexagon shows that the biggest strength in China's brand lies in culture and heritage and the key weaknesses are exports and governance. China's cultural attainments and contributions to human civilisation in its 5,000 years of history are still respected and admired by the world. The four great inventions of ancient China – the compass, gunpowder, paper and printing - have changed the whole world. Without them, the American continent would have been discovered by Europeans much later; the world would not have suffered from numerous wars and crimes, although the ancient Chinese used gunpowder initially for medicine and fireworks; without paper and printing, a huge amount of human wisdom would have been difficult to record and disseminate. However, China's mass production of low cost, and in many cases low quality, products badly tarnished China's brand in the early period of its economic reform since 1978. The Cultural Revolution and the events in Tiananmen Square in 1989 still cause concern about the human rights situation in China; and recent high levels of industrial pollution and government corruption have increased doubts about the governing capability of the Chinese government.

The 2008 ANBI[8] was developed on a worldwide survey in which over 20,000 online interviews were conducted by involving approximately 1,000 adult participants from each of the 20 major developed and developing countries[9]. Appropriate algorithms were applied in order to reflect the key demographic characteristics such as age, gender and education in each country (ANBI, 2008). In the 50 countries measured, China ranked 28 overall and was described as having "some very strong dimensions of (its) brand but lack[ing] an all-around developed brand in all six dimensions." (ANBI, 2008). Its highest ranking remained in Culture (9), for its rich history and ancient civilization. Exports ranked 21, a balance between higher scores for innovation and new ways of thinking and lower scores for the reputation of its products. Tourism also achieved 21. Immigration and Investment ranked 33, with higher scores for business opportunities and lower scores for quality of life and equal opportunity. The two worst rankings were for People (41) and Governance (48). The assessed elements of People include their friendliness, manners, loyalty, attitude, lifestyle, intelligence, competence, and their work ethics. Chinese people were rated at the same level as those from Indonesia and Romania. The score for Governance was diminished by the country's "intense international media scrutiny for its environmental records and human rights policy in the lead up to the 2008 Olympics." (ANBI, 2008). China only outscored Nigeria and Iran in this dimension. A hexagon of Brand China in 2008 can be constructed according to the rankings in the six dimensions.

[8] In 2008, the ANBI changed its name to the Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Branks Index (NBI) following its new partnership with GfK Custom Research North America, the world's fourth largest market research company, with headquarters in New York.
[9] The 20 countries are US, Canada, UK, Germany, France, Italy, Sweden, Russia, Poland, Turkey, Japan, China, South Korea, India, Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Egypt, and South Africa (Anholt, ANBI 2008).
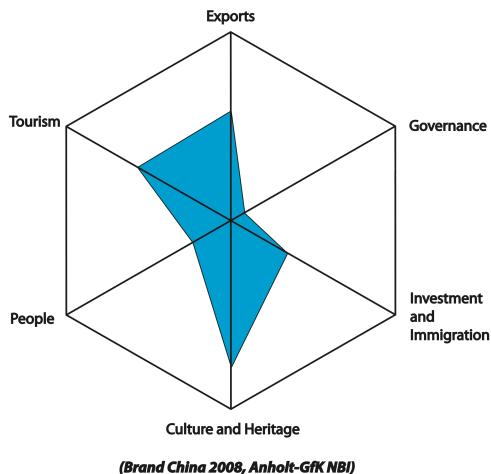
Image 6-2 Brand China in 2008
Source: ANBI 2008, reconstructed

In conclusion, the 2008 ANBI pointed out that Brand China's biggest strength lies in cultural values and the key weaknesses are in People and Governance. It is appropriate to explore different nation brand indexes in order to determine a clearer picture of how China is externally perceived.

6.1.1.2 Future Brand's Country Brand Index (CBI)

Future Brand's CBI is based on the Global Quantitative Survey, which collects views mainly from tourists and business travellers from the Americas, Europe, The Middle East and Asia. In the 2008 issue, the categories that country brands were rated against include Authenticity, Art & culture, History, Resort & lodging options, Ease of travel, Safety, Rest & relaxation, Natural beauty, Beach, Nightlife, Shopping, Fine dining, Outdoor activities & sports, Friendly locals, Families, Value for money, Rising star, Standard of living, Ideal for business, Easiest to do business in, New country for business, Conferences, Extend a business trip, Political freedom, Most like to live in, Quality products, Desire to visit/visit again, Advanced technology, Environmentalism, and Most impressive last year (www.futurebrand.com). The list indicates that although CBI is taking a wide range of aspects of a country brand into

consideration, it largely reflects people's perceptions, preference, motivations and associations for tourism and business destinations.

CBI has provided four annual country rankings reports since 2005. Only the top ten countries in overall ranking as well as each category are listed, which makes annual comparison between particular countries impossible if the one in question fails to make its way to the top ten. In the four CBI reports, China was never in the overall top ten but repeatedly scored well in certain areas such as Art and culture, History, and New businesses. China was also described as the No.1 'rising star' country brand in all four reports, largely because of the increasing world attention on the 2008 Beijing Olympics. The key categories where China featured out of the top ten included Political freedom, Environment, Friendly locals, Advanced technology, Quality products, Most like to live in and Standard of living. With high scores in Art and Culture and history, China was not viewed as a top ten tourism/travel destination due to low performance in travel related areas like Resort & lodging options, Shopping, Fine dining, Ease of travel, Safety, Natural beauty and Desire to visit/visit again.

If the ANBI six hexagon dimensions are used to interpret the CBI results, it is possible to observe that in the CBI system, Brand China's strength lies in Culture and heritage, and Investment; and its weaknesses are in Tourism, Immigration, People, and Exports. As CBI does not provide rankings beyond the top ten countries, it is impossible to find out the level of each weakness. Governance is almost absent in CBI reports.

6.1.1.3 Eastwest Nation Branding Index (ENBI)

ENBI covers 200 countries, including all 192 United Nations members. Its nation brand index is solely based on analysing millions of incidences where countries are mentioned in a vast volume of news articles published in over 30 prominent global media. Positive and negative terms used in relevant articles and frequency of mentions in the four major

sectors - Tourism, Business, Culture and Government - form a perceived country brand. ENBI is very sensitive to the media's interests in each nation. If a nation attracts a high volume of media attention by virtue of a global event or a news headline, its ranking is very likely to be either unnaturally elevated or decreased in the next ENBI. This explains why China was ranked No. 7 in its 2008 Q3 list while the world was talking about the Beijing Olympics (over 208,058 mentions recorded) and No. 43 in the 2008 Q4 when the world game was over and the scandal of toxic milk powder (refer to the following section 'Truth nothing but the truth') hit the headline (142,395 mentions recorded). One of the biggest decreases moved Greece from No. 3 to No. 183 in the last quarter of 2008, according the ENBI. BBC News archives during that period suggest the possible reasons might include the three nationwide strikes that turned into violence and tragedy. These examples show the vulnerability of this measurement system and indicate the rapid fluctuation in the results. ENBI, however, did not give any explanation or indication for any ranking changes. The result - a profile based solely upon raw data, disconnected from history and entirely dependent upon the characteristics of news - makes ENBI more of a thermometer than a weather forecast. In addition, relying solely on media reports leads to a major shortcoming of this measurement: developed countries with control over major communication tools such as the internet, international TV and radio broadcasting, have a greater influence on how the world is perceived. The picture they draw may be limited and used for political aims. They also reveal that ENBI does not indicate the strengths and weaknesses of a nation brand. It is evident therefore that this index is comparatively unreliable and will therefore be excluded from the choice of the indexes utilised for this study.

Having explored the characteristics, suitability and effectiveness of three nation brand indexes, it is revealed from the first two suitable indexes that China's image consistently scores high on culture and heritage and low on the rest. Most importantly, People and Governance score the lowest and therefore represent the key weaknesses of Brand China.

In order to test those assumptions, it is appropriate to analyse a nation-to-nation perception: to explore how a European nation and the United States view China. .

6.1.2 How The Americans And French See China

In the ANBI Q3 2005 report *How the World sees the World*, two special hexagons were produced to demonstrate the American and the French perception of Brand China respectively. The data was collected using the same methodology as for other ANBI reports.

How Americans View Brand China
ANBI Q3 2005, reconstructed

How French View Brand China
ANBI Q3 2005, reconstructed
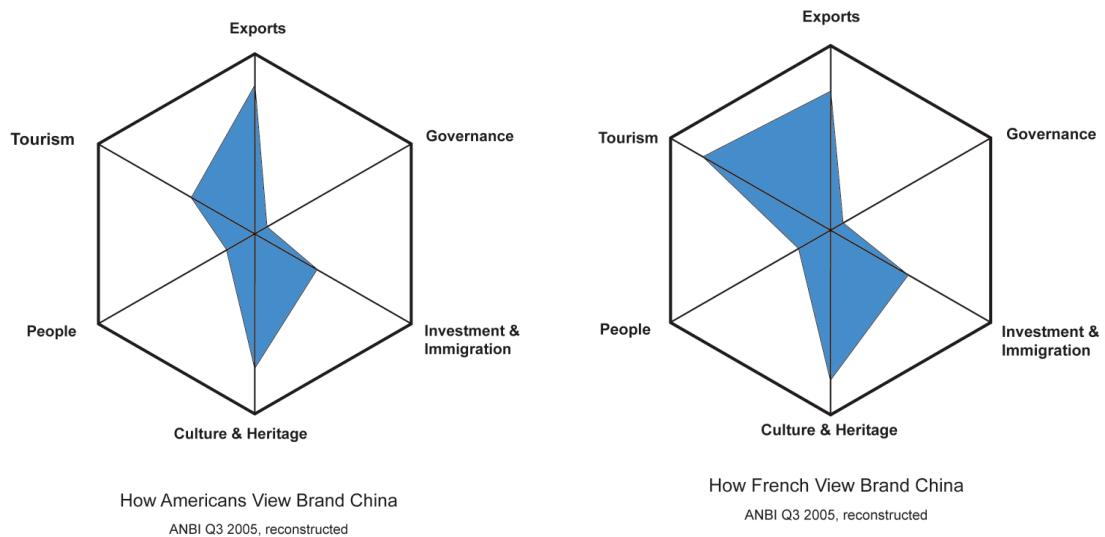
Image 6-3 (left) How Americans view Brand China
Image 6-4 (right) How French view Brand China
Source: ANBI, reconstructed

The above two hexagons share some similarities in the shaded areas. It indicates that the Americans and the French both have a positive perception of China's Exports and Culture & Heritage, and share a very negative view of China's Governance and People. Compared to the 2008 ANBI, Investment & Immigration is viewed slightly negatively by both countries. The division is in Tourism, as the French viewed it one of the

three most positive areas or an asset to China, the Americans however viewed it as a negative aspect or a liability to the country.

This finding indicates that there are consistencies in the way China is perceived, whether by the world index or the nation-to-nation index. Governance and People remain the major challenge to China's image.

6.2 Key Weaknesses Of Brand China

This section will attempt to discover the reasons for the omissions in the China brand.

The above three nation brand indexes drew different pictures of the current Brand China. In spite of the less reliable ENBI, ANBI and CBI both identified the biggest strength in Brand China - Culture & heritage. China is gradually improving in the Exports criterion, according to a comparison between the ANBI Q3 2005 hexagon and the one constructed according to 2008 ANBI results. The hexagons of *How Americans view Brand China* and *How the French view Brand China* do concur with those indications. Although Tourism and Investment & immigration have much room for improvement, they are not the worst areas for the nation brand of China.

The key weaknesses of Brand China, according to the ANBI hexagons, are People and Governance. In order to improve the nation image of China, these two areas must be addressed and improved if China is to enhance its image. An appropriate step to take at this stage is to look into these two areas and understand the main reasons for such negative world perceptions.

6.2.1 People: Why Are They Not Liked?

Often when people talk about identity, they are talking about different things. Identity is essentially about a sense of belonging and it can be broadly divided into two different aspects - inherited identity which one inherits through tradition, language, religion, family ties and so on; and constructed identity which is acquired through experience, interaction, observation and reflection. Identity can comprise multiple aspects, such as cultural identity, national identity, sexual identity, political identity and so on. What matters for this research however is two intertwined notions of identity: cultural identity and national identity (Makhoul B. 1995). It is over-simplistic to view the Chinese identity as a projection of cultural difference. If the Chinese image is associated with cultural identity, it is easily understood as Chinese heritage and therefore it is not negative. But if Chinese national identity is referred to, this is immediately a politicised term that brings with it many negative connotations, for example, for littering, spitting, poor personal hygiene, and an unfashionable appearance. Now with better awareness and deeper pockets, the archetypal Chinese is changing that perception, but this is not necessarily the case in poor areas. ANBI creator Anholt attributed the low ranking for China's People and Governance to ignorance and negative stories in the foreign media. However, a survey organised by the Communication University of China in Beijing before, during and after the Olympics shows that foreigners' general impressions of China were better after the Olympic Games, but with the exception of their impression of Chinese people.

> The interviewees who had travelled more to China gave lower ratings for Chinese people's friendliness, enthusiasm toward work and their ability to keep promises than those who have only limited travel experience.
> (Survey: Foreigners like China better after Olympics, but criticisms remain, 24/11/2008, http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/)

This seems contrary to Anholt's usual argument that if you know them, you will like them. Language and cultural differences can be big obstacles to understanding between the east and the west, but Japan's high

ranking (7) in the same category proves that it is not impossible to overcome. So why are the Chinese people disliked by the world?

It is relevant at this stage to look at the scoring criteria that ANBI uses in this category. They consist of friendliness, manners, fun, loyalty, sharing common interests, intelligence, competence, and work ethics. The majority of these qualities are formed in people's early lives through education and social influence. Therefore, it is perhaps appropriate to trace these problems back to their roots. Friendliness, manners, fun, loyalty and common interests are largely influenced by the publically accepted social regulations and morals demonstrated through people's parents, relatives, friends, shopkeepers, teachers, colleagues and all those they have direct connection with. People's admired idols, pop stars, TV/movie/book characters, and significant names in their areas of interest such as the economy and politics also have a huge impact on their social behaviour. Intelligence, competence and work ethics are mainly developed during education: from primary school to university; from compulsory education to professional training and self-learning.

Since the independence announced in 1949, China has been through 60 years of constant social, economic and political changes. The current social and educational systems have been completely reshaped during this period. Without an understanding of this part of the history and the impact on the Chinese people, physiologically, mentally and socially, the characteristics of the current social structure and education system cannot fully be explained.

After 1949, the Communist Party promised its people a 'new society'. After nine years of postwar class struggle and proletarian politics, the party led by Mao Zedong started The Great Leap Forward (1958-1960) as an attempt to industrialise China with a massive supply of cheap labour. Its key objective was to overtake the leading capitalist economies, primarily the US and the UK, in steel and grain production to prove the superiority of socialism. In order to show their revolutionary zeal and the

great productive force of socialism, tens of thousands of farmers left their land and worked in steel plants. Local governments chose to lie about their annual outputs and reported exaggerated harvests to the central government. However, when famine caused by natural disaster hit China during 1959-1961, it is believed that millions of farmers died from starvation. Criticism within the party was interpreted by Mao as capitalists' attacks, aiming to overthrow the socialist government. This view led him to start another radical movement - The Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), which aimed to uproot the hidden force of capitalism and to "install a strong sense of collectivism and socialism into Chinese society" (Berkowitz et al., 2007). Universities and schools were suspended and students were encouraged to form the 'Red Guards' to fight against capitalist intellectuals such as artists, academics and scholars, and religious groups. The official orthodoxy Confucianism was criticised and Confucian literature was burnt, because of Mao's rejection of the philosophy. The other significant movement during this revolution was *Cha Dui* - students were required to live in villages, working with farmers in the fields. Any "failure to comply was met with torture, imprisonment, and even death" (Berkowitz et al., 2007). In addition to causing a further standstill in industrial and agricultural development, this revolution effectively eliminated the formal educational system and smashed the morals and social virtues established over the course of thousands of years in China. Trust, respect, loyalty, confidence, values and other virtues were all tragically destroyed during the political battles, and a whole generation was bitterly twisted: both the fighters and the fought. This drastic experience made life-long marks on them and influenced the way they behave in the 21st century.

The new generation born after the Cultural Revolution have entered their adulthood and have more opportunities to contact with people from other countries through overseas studies, university/school exchange programmes, employment at foreign companies in China, and via the internet. The impression they make as representatives of the whole population cannot be ignored or underestimated. This generation has

displayed distinctive characteristics that are very different from their parents'. In over two decades since China announced its independence, the Chinese population achieved excessive growth compared to two countries of similar territory size, the US and the Russian Federation, due to the demand for a labour supply for agricultural and industrial development. During 1950-1975, according to the UN World Population Prospectus, the Chinese population increased by 67% to 911 million, while the US increased by 39% to 219 million and Russian Federation increased by 31% to 134 million. In order to control the excessive population growth and accelerate the reduction of poverty, China introduced the one-child policy in 1976. The other main purpose of the one-child policy was to concentrate limited resources on the new generation of smaller numbers in order to "produce a generation of citizens with First World levels of health, consumption and education." (Fong V. L., 2004). The success of this intention of course also relies on the quality of China's national education and health care, which will be discussed in the following section. While the new generation of singletons enjoyed a largely improved standard of living and better education opportunities, they have exhibited distinctive social and psychological problems that worried their parents, teachers and relatives. Research has been conducted to analyse their social behaviour throughout their childhood, by comparing them with those non-singletons of the same age groups in China, as well as with the studies of singletons during the early 20th century in the US when it was a new phenomenon in US society.

Several studies were conducted between 1970s-1990s in large cities like Shanghai, Nanjing, Beijing and Tianjin, comparing tens of thousands of singletons and non-singletons of the same age groups, from toddlers to high-school students. Words used to describe typical negative characteristics of singletons in these studies include timidity, uncooperativeness, carelessness, hostility, disrespect to elders, bossiness, moodiness, temper, self aggrandizement, dishonesty, laziness, selfishness, jealousy, pettiness, aloofness, conceitedness and unscrupulousness (Fong V. L., 2004). Based on a review of the research

reports and study findings, a general view was concluded by Wang Yuru that

> …though better educated, more creative, and more interested in developing their talents than non-singletons, singletons also were more likely than non-singletons to have difficulty getting along with others, dealing with problems in the work place and cultivating a sense of social responsibility.
> (Fong V. L., 2004).

Fong compared this with a similar situation that happened in the early 20th century in the US, when the average size of American families started to shrink. Parents who grew up in big families were alarmed by the different behaviour of their children, who were born to small families. This alarm, however, faded when small families become the norm rather than the exception after several generations. Parents who grew up as singletons seem to be able to handle their singleton children much better and feel less alarmed about their behaviour. While the negative impact of fertility transition was gradually overcome in several generations in the First World, it has been distilled in the Chinese first generation of singletons in a rapid process of modernisation and one-generation fertility transition. In this context, perhaps time is the only cure for a negative image of the Chinese people. Although efforts can be made to improve the behaviour of the first generation of singletons through continuous education, effective results may not be seen until the second or the third generation, given the fact that the first generation has already stepped into their adulthood and the influence from their non-singleton parents and even grandparents still exists.

After the Cultural Revolution, Confucianism was revived slowly once the ban was lifted. In 2005, the Confucian philosophical concept of 'harmony without uniformity' was adopted by the Chinese government and formed its new direction for foreign diplomacy in the new century 'harmonious world.' The new generation of singletons, brought up on American films and Japanese cartoons, however, seem to know more about Star Wars and Dragon Ball than Confucius, and admire heroism and individualism

more than Confucian virtues. They grew up with dramatic economic reform and witnessed how people's lives could be changed overnight. They are heavily influenced by a society in which "getting rich quick has become the only goal of a depoliticized and disoriented people whose spiritual and ideological guideposts have disappeared. (They are caught up) in China's mad years … (and) in the unbridled race for money." (Massonnet P., 1997). Selfish, dishonest, money-oriented, careless of others, disrespectful of elders and short-tempered are just a few terms to describe the social impact on their behaviour. The uniqueness of the time and the society the first generation of singletons experienced undoubtedly has shaped their unusual characteristics that might be difficult to understand by outsiders. Therefore, without an insight into the social, economical and political impact on Chinese youth, it would be very difficult to understand the characteristics they display in modern days.

Anholt also argues that another reason for China's low ranking in the category of People is the language barrier (ANBI, 2008). Similarly, in a recent Financial Times (Chinese version) interview (www.ftchinese.com), *Chinese Overseas Students in their Eyes*, one of the key comments was "language is their biggest barrier."

English is the most popularly studied foreign language in Chinese schools and universities, and plays a significant role in people's lives. Most children start learning English from the age of 12 when they enter middle school and it is one of the key compulsory subjects alongside Chinese and mathematics. A specified level of English is one of the criteria to get a place in universities, to graduate with a degree and to compete for a job that involves the use of English, including some government officers' posts. However, the majority of Chinese media, including newspaper, TV programmes, the internet, and literature, are still in Chinese and the notable media in English are the newspaper China Daily and the TV channel CCTV-9. An internet-based news article *Why are we still unable to speak English after over 10 years learning?* estimated that only 5% of the 300-400 million Chinese who are learning English could use English

147

properly. The difficulty for other countries to learn about China through its media, literature and people inevitably pushes the world to use foreign media and literature. Understanding through a third party alone creates the possibility of misunderstanding, misinterpretation, and deliberate distortions, which contribute to ignorance, incorrect perceptions, negative views and above all, stereotyping.

This situation begs the question of why so many Chinese are unable to speak and write in English. The majority, even after 6-10 years learning English, fails to communicate in English effectively. Li Yang, the educator and the founder of *Crazy English Workshop* and Wang Meng, a renowned writer, pointed out two main reasons according to their own experience. One is shyness, and the other is the test-driven education system. A well-known English language educator from Taiwan, Lai Shixiong, recently delivered a paper on *Why can't the Chinese learn English properly?* in which he clearly stressed the problem of shyness. He argues that the Chinese are frightened to make mistakes in public and to be embarrassed or laughed at by others. To avoid mistakes, many Chinese choose to be silent or pretend that they understand perfectly. Lai continues, "if you are not afraid of mistakes, you will have fewer mistakes, and that is the only way to improve one's English." On 6 March 2009, an article by Xue Puwen published on *people.com.cn*, the online version of the central government's official newspaper Renmin (People in Chinese) News, claimed that the old-fashioned education system hinders English teaching and learning in China. According to Xue, teaching in China follows a set formula, rather than the nature of the subject and the needs of the students. The formula uses nationally or regionally approved textbooks, and prepares students for all sorts of tests based on these textbooks. The tests measure students' vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension, but not their real ability for communication such as speaking and listening. As an example, Wang Meng in his book *My 16 years in Xinjiang* described how he mastered the local Uigurs language in 3 years simply by learning from the local farmers through daily conversations, and by obsessively listening to the radio. Another view is

that it is a mistake to use Chinese teachers to teach the English language, even though they have gained certain qualifications in English. It is logical to assume that if the teachers have learned English from their Chinese teachers and have never lived or trained in an English-speaking country, the whole chain of English teaching and learning could turn out to be 'Chinese whispers'. And this is exactly the main reason why Li Yang founded *Crazy English Workshop* to provide a source of authentic English materials largely from American and British broadcasting to the Chinese public. Extending from English education, Xue argues that the whole education system in China has a similar problem, that is, the failure to establish the education system and philosophy according to the nature of knowledge and the development of talent.

The limitation of textbooks and the lack of motivation to pursue knowledge beyond the requirements of tests also partly explains why Chinese students often have little knowledge of, or interest in, world politics and current issues outside China or without immediate connection with their lives. After all, if education is run on set formulae or programmes, it can perhaps only produce graduates with less creative ability. Their knowledge base is unsurprisingly similar and they can find little competitive advantage over each other in future job markets.

In this section, it has been observed that the teaching methods employed in the Chinese education system limit the progress of ideas and innovation, hinder the development of personalities, and restrict the ability to learn and research independently.

6.2.2 Governance: What Went Wrong?

As introduced in chapter 4, Governance in the ANBI hexagon refers to the perceived competency and honesty of government, respect for citizens' rights and fair treatment, as well as global behavior in the areas

of international peace and security, environmental protection, and world poverty reduction.

The Great Leap Forward and The Cultural Revolution obviously laid the foundation for the world's negative view of the Chinese government. However, it is perhaps more constructive and useful in the context of this research to focus on the current government policies that are ongoing and affecting people's lives. Problems for which the Chinese government is mostly criticised include the non-democratic regime, official corruption, and environmental pollution.

6.2.2.1 The non-democratic regime

After the Communist Party came into power in 1949, there were some democratic attempts in China, as many believed that democracy was the precondition for economic growth. In the 1970s, students built a 'democracy wall' in Beijing, calling for free elections. In the 1980s, debates were heated with regard to which political system China should have: the American presidential system, the British parliament system, or a hybrid system based on the French model. This debate reached its apotheosis when large number of university students demonstrated in Tiananmen Square in 1989, which led to a turbulent summer during the Chinese economic reform (Leonard M., 2008). Chinese intellectuals are aware that China must move to democracy to achieve its goal of becoming a modern developed country. It will be a painful step for the Chinese leaders if their only concern is their personal welfare and fear of loss of power in democratic elections. But if their concern is national welfare, as the Primer Wen Jiabao has demonstrated, democracy may be ahead for China. As Wen said, "We have to move toward democracy. We have many problems, but we know the direction in which we are going. …(we need) peace, friends and time (in order to achieve the goal)." (Mahbubani K., 2008). Surely, if democracy is meant to be in the best interests of the country, the question would be why the Chinese

government do not hold a national election now. Two of the many answers that the Chinese government gave to this question in the 1990s were "the Chinese people aren't ready for democracy" and "many regions are economically underdeveloped and the priority in China is to secure people's right to food, clothing and shelter." (Massonnet P., 1997). It may be that since China has suffered from numerous wars, movements, revolutions and reforms in the past 200 years, the Chinese government is trying to avoid drastic political reform which might put China again in the danger of being colonised or bullied by the West, and to protect the current social stability and economic growth in the interests of the nation as a whole. Opposition arguments were immediately raised by foreign observers like Massonnet P., such as why the right to vote or express opinion freely should be incompatible with the right to eat, and how much schooling is a Chinese person required to have before they can be given voting rights? (Massonnet P., 1997). In a similar struggle to democracy in the Arab world, the general election in Lebanon demonstrated that people had no problem in understanding or participating in the voting as their leaders claimed. It revealed that their leaders have "chosen to prevent, rig or disregard elections, for fear that if Arabs had a say most would vote to throw the rascals out" (The Economist, 25 July 2009). It is arguable that this is the same fear that the Chinese leaders have deeply in their mind which explains the slow development, if not resistance, of democracy in China.

What the Chinese leaders have different views on does not seem to be democracy itself, but a western copy. Premier Wen recently explained the development of democracy in China that "whatever form of democracy that eventually developed in China would not be a simple copy of western models." (Mahbubani K., 2008). This view is shared amongst Chinese intellectuals. Witnessing the tremendous success of economic growth under the Communist Party's leadership, the collapse of the former Soviet Union's political liberalization, and the problems with the Western democratic system, many Chinese intellectuals now oppose the idea of importing a western democracy, and have started looking for a different

model that may suit the country better. According to Leonard, Pan Wei from Beijing University said

> …(democracy is) not a religion which needs to be spread around the world. …elections will not solve any of the problems facing China today ··· political reform should be driven by social imperatives rather than to fulfil universal Western principles.
> (Leonard M., 2008)

Fang Ning, a political scientist at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, was involved in drafting the government's *White Paper on Democracy* in 2005. He argues that elections may even lead the country to fragmentation. He says

> Democracy in the West (is like) a fixed-menu restaurant where consumers can select the identity of their chef, but have no say in what dishes he chooses to cook for them. Chinese democracy, on the other hand, always involves the same chef, the Communist Party, but the policy dishes which are served up can be chosen 'à la carte.'
> (Leonard M., 2008)

Leonard (2008) states that the Chinese government have allowed some experiments to find a suitable model for Chinese democracy as early as 1999. They increased the transparency and democratic elements of policy making by introducing consultations with the public and specialists. Chongqing, a huge city in the Southwest of China, with 30 million citizens, introduced 'freedom of information' and 'regulation on accountability' clauses recently, allowing local heads of government offices to be questioned and investigated if they are accused of making inappropriate decisions (Leonard M., 2008). Democratic elections were also trialled at village level and, as Wen states, if successful, will gradually move up to towns, counties, and even provinces. The question of what happens at national level remains unexplored and perhaps deliberately avoided. Pan describes a possible direction for the Chinese political system as consultative dictatorship, or deliberate dictatorship which does not involve elections, but "all decisions are made by a responsive government, bound by law and in touch with its citizens' aspirations." (Leonard M., 2008). He

believes, however absurdly, that with these improved and more sophisticated techniques for democracy and accountability, the one-party regime may well lead the nation towards stability, following the success of economic reform for a term of time. The unchanged believe is that sooner or later, this type of regime will reach collapse.

What is not taken into consideration by Pan is the influence of the middle class, a product of successful economic reform. According to Financial Times China Confidential, "96% of middle-class Chinese thinks the government should make its financial details public." (http://www.ftchinaconfidential.com/issue/20090319) With the rise of the middle class in Chinese society, it is inevitable that their social and political power will eventually lead to their demand for participation in policy making, and direct the political system towards a conservatism that preserves and protects their wealth and standard of living. Stability is the essence of conservatism and the middle class will demand predictability in both economic and political systems, which should be governed in an open democratic manner and by the rule of law for social economic equality.

It is also worth pointing out that "democracy is more than just elections. It is about education, tolerance and building independent institutions such as a judiciary and free press" (The Economist, 25 July 2009). The call for improved educational ethos and an adequate international TV channel that communicates truly and effectively with the outside world will be explored later in this chapter. What is clear is that the democratic process in China will remain a hot topic in the international community for a long period, at least within the lifetime of the current political regime.

6.2.2.2 Official corruption

Having suffered from material shortages under the central planning economy, Chinese people started a frantic race for money and for a

better life after Deng Xiaoping asserted at the beginning of economic reform that "it is glorious to get rich", as Massonnet P. (1997) described,

> Workers…are deserting state companies for a booming private sector. Underpaid professors cut classes to pursue more profitable activities. Peasants leave the land for towns and cities, eager to conquer the promised land that television promotes ever more enticingly. Even the People's Liberation Army is getting in on the act: not content just to modernize, the army produces condoms and ice cream. As for politicians, they are relishing the dizzying intoxication of taking bribes.

Apart from the nation's enthusiasm for getting rich, official corruption is also facilitated by the underdeveloped legal system and the traditional belief that 'the ruling class is above the law'.

The Cultural Revolution also destroyed the legal system. After the revolution, poorly educated judges were taught to serve the interests of the Communist Party. Once China started its economic reform to establish a market economy, the government gradually realised the need for new laws to regulate economic activities. When China was accepted as a member of the World Trade Organisation, it also made a commitment to establish a judicial review system and implement Western-style rule of law. The National Judges College outside Beijing, a training base for the People's Supreme Court, now emphasizes legal justice based on law and facts rather than political interests (Mahbubani K., 2008). In reality, there is still criticism that China is not short of laws, but the enforcement of laws. The different views of rule of law in some Asian countries - especially China - and the West, partially explains the difficulties of law enforcement in China. The Western rule of law means all human beings are equal in front of the law, and all should be subject to the same laws; whereas in China, throughout over four thousand years of feudal history, it was accepted that ruling classes stand above the law, especially the emperor, whose wishes were regarded as the law itself. The ruling class viewed the primary function of the law as a tool for the government to rule the governed. It is therefore easy to understand why

today many government officials (the majority are also Communist Party members) still believe they are above the law and they can avoid punishment for corruption. Corruption is good news to the rich as they can win bids for projects, investments, flexible taxing policies and so on by bribing the decision makers, instead of demonstrating real competence and the quality of their business. On the other hand, corruption excludes the poor from the opportunities from which they could benefit. Corruption creates social inequality, increases the gap between the rich and the poor, and increases people's distrust of and anger with the government and the Communist Party. Corruption has become such a chronic and tenacious disease in society that the Chinese leaders have made great efforts to overcome it in recent years. In 1994, the State Indemnity Law was enacted, enabling individuals to sue government agencies or their personnel for any unlawful acts. In 1996, Law on Administrative Punishments was introduced to facilitate investigation and punishment for criminal offences committed in state administrative, economic and judicial agencies and also within the leadership organs of the Communist Party itself. Following the introduction of the relevant laws, as above, lawsuits against the government rose to about 27,000 a year in the early 1990s (Mahbubani K., 2008). There is no way to monitor the success rate. The first Bureau for Anti-Corruption and Bribery was set up in Guangdong province in 1989 and the State Bureau for Anti-Corruption and Bribery was set up in 1995. Having been effective in investigating over 170 thousand cases between 1998-2002, the whole situation is still far from satisfactory. As a departmental organisation within the National Inspection Institute, the Anti-Corruption and Bribery Bureau is underfunded and lacking in power. All its employees are administered under the civil service system, which itself is vulnerable and has its limitations. In 2007 China's president Hu Jintao emphasised that corruption is a fundamental problem to the party and it determines the party's survival (news from http://www.sina.com.cn). Until Chinese law is able to challenge Chinese top rulers like the Americans questioned Bill Clinton in the Lewinski scandal and the Taiwanese challenged former president Chen Shuibian for corruption, people are unlikely to be

convinced that the Chinese society is ruled by law not men, no matter whether they are one million or one hundred in number. Corruption can be reduced effectively only if nobody possesses power that is above the law, and if an adequate judicial system and a free press are in place to be able to request the rulers' explanation and justification.

6.2.2.3 Environmental pollution

Environmental pollution is the price China has paid in exchange for rapid economic growth. Since 1978, China has experienced a dramatic average growth rate of over 8%, lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty, and transformed China into the world's third largest economy. Meanwhile, China has suffered severe water and air pollution as a result of its growth.

> By 2002, China had become home to six of the ten most polluted cities in the world. Acid rain now affects about one-third of China's territory, including…farmland. More than 75% of the water in rivers flowing through China's urban areas is unsuitable for drinking or fishing. Desert now covers 25% of China's territory, and deforestation and grassland degradation continue largely unabated.
> (Economy E.C., 2004)

Pollution also becomes a big threat to people's health. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 2889 (2002) states that "Air pollution alone, primarily from coal burning, is responsible for over 300,000 premature deaths per year." Waterborne diseases and long-term illnesses are also on the rise in polluted areas. As Economy argues (2004), although China has started developing formal environmental protection apparatus since the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment, the results are not positive. Environmental protection bureaus remain weak, insignificant and underfunded, and have often had to give way under the national demand of economic growth. Local government officials often compete to bring in investments and factories, despite their pollutant nature, to increase the region's financial income, which is a key measurement for performance

and future promotion. The desire to get rich also drives some officials to invest in local businesses or accept bribes from them. The close ties between officials and business leaders have, unsurprisingly, the power to dismiss any environmental protection concerns. In order to turn the corner, the Chinese government has encouraged public participation in environmental protection through the establishment of nongovernmental organisations (NGO), and has looked abroad for help. The Chinese government receives the largest amount of environmental aid from the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the Global Environmental Facility, and Japan. The Chinese government understands the importance of having a clean environment if it wants to develop a sustainable economy and retain power in China for longer. It is taking numerous steps to improve the situation. It spent $12 billion on environmentally related projects during the Green Olympic initiatives. It is also encouraging the use of geothermal heat and natural gas to reduce its consumption of coal and other fossil fuels. As Daniel Esty, Hillhouse Professor of Environmental Law and Policy at Yale University said, the Chinese government has also set a target of cutting energy use per unit of GDP by 20% by 2010, and has promised to reduce water pollution by 10% by 2020, and to increase industrial solid waste recycling by 60% within the similar time scale (Mahbubani K., 2008).

It seems crucial for the Chinese government to stay in power; however, the record of what has been promised and what has been carried out is an indication of short-termism. It raises the question of the Chinese government's trustworthiness, accountability and indeed its ability to maintain sustainable growth and development in the longer term.

This section identified the reasons behind the two key weaknesses of China's image: people and governance. In-depth study reveals that the unpopularity of the Chinese people is a result of the combined effect of political history associated with the Cultural Revolution, rapid economic growth, one-child policy as well as the underdeveloped educational provision. Governance on the other hand emerged as the most serious

obstacle in improving China's image. Issues such as national and international policies, democracy, institutional corruption, and lack of care to the environment are significant areas of concern and deeply rooted in the governing of China. The next section will offer a direction for branding China based on improving both governance and people, and what China should embrace and avoid in the context of future branding exercise.

6.3 A Contemporary Brand China

This section explores how China positions itself in relation to others. It examines whether China integrates itself into the current Western-style system or whether it provides a contrary position. It attempts to find out whether China should mount a nation branding exercise in order to challenge current negative perceptions. It also points at the value of the government and its people's shared objectives in this process.

6.3.1 Brand China: What Does It Want To Be?

The strengths and key weaknesses of China's current brand image have been identified and analysed above. It is appropriate at this stage to look at what kind of contemporary brand image China is likely to pursue, which then may identify the direction for the improvement of key areas. Strategies for becoming a superpower like America, a culture and tourism destination like France or a high-tech quality manufacturing country like Japan certainly vary one from another and require different levels of commitment and investment from the nation.

What does China want to be? Many countries have had heated debates on this and various speculations have been posited to help their governments decide whether to treat China as an ally or a threat. Although some think China will collapse after the economic bubble eventually bursts, many believe it is more likely that China will continue to

grow and will establish itself as another superpower. While the 2009 recession has plunged the world including Europe and America into deep financial crisis, China is backed up by its trillions of foreign reserves and at least 6.5% annual growth forecasted by the World Bank (Economy E.C., 2004). This seems to be a strong support for the view of China as 'another superpower.' The question is whether it will become another America, manipulating world affairs, or another Soviet Union dragging the world into a second Cold War, or something totally different from already experienced history. The developed countries also have a hidden fear that the largest communist country may one day turn the world red once it has the power and opportunity to do so. This explains why, when China used the term 'The Peaceful Rise of China' in 2004 to respond to a Western 'China Threat Theory,' the West interpreted the message as 'Peaceful Earthquake' which caused even more nervousness. Although subsequently the Chinese government stressed that China's main objective was solely to improve its economic power, the West refused to believe it due to its distrust of China and the contradictory fact of its booming military budgets. The message was seen as a piece of propaganda to cover up China's real intention, a skill mastered by the Communist Party during the Cultural Revolution. Later, Chinese President Hu Jintao had to introduce a more subtle and less offensive idea of 'Harmonious World', and the previous concept was abandoned completely. As Ramo J. C. (2007) concludes, "in the end, what China thought about itself didn't matter so much. What mattered was what the world thought of China."

Recently the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabo acknowledged his country 'a great power' rather than a humble player in world affairs, focusing on its national development (The Economist, 21 March 2009). During the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's first official visit to China in 2009, she invited China to enter a new relationship with America to face the global economic crisis and climate change. In order to develop the China-US relationship, she uncharacteristically downplayed the key issues that China used to be challenged with by previous governments: currency

exchange, Taiwan, Tibet, human rights, etc. But is China, the world third largest economy, ready and willing to lead?

Deng Xiaoping, the father of Chinese economic reform, once told the Chinese leaders, 'Be good at keeping a low profile'. An old Chinese saying still in use today says, 'The first bird to stick its head out gets shot'. Similar philosophical expressions can also be found in Confucianism, 'the philosophy of being in the middle'. In addition to the fear of being attacked as a world leader, China's domestic concerns also seem to hold it back from further engagement with world affairs. The Chinese government understands that it is still decades away from lifting its country out of rural poverty, environmental pollution and many other social problems before it becomes a fully developed country. Holding China together and avoiding any social upheaval is a big enough challenge for the Chinese government in such a period of rapid change and development. Heavily focused on internal affairs, China is criticised for being "cocooned in its self-reliant world" and "lacking a vision of the world" (Mahbubani K., 2008).

The fact that the world needs China's help in dealing with the financial crisis, climate change and nuclear proliferation, has pushed China to the forefront. The term 'G2', frequently used before and after the G20 London summit as a replacement for the previous G7 or G8, has placed China in the position of leader or co-leader. It is an opportunity for China to show the world that it can be a responsible influence and a positive great power. It is a precious opportunity to improve China's brand image that should not be missed by the Chinese government.

What message should China send on its way to be a world leading power, expressing its confidence and willingness to contribute to a better world, yet 'Harmonious World' is a new political catchphrase Chinese President Hu first used at the UN's 60th anniversary summit in 2005 to summarise its new foreign policy in the international arena.

> Thousands of years ago, Chinese carved the character He, which means harmony and peace, on tortoise shells, and Confucius expounded the philosophical concept of 'harmony without uniformity', meaning a world is full of differences and contradictions, but the righteous man should balance them and achieve harmony. In modern terms, harmony means coordination, combination, integration and peace among different elements. (http://www.chinese-embassy.org.uk)

President Hu elaborated the 'Harmonious World' emphasising four points:

> multilateralism should be upheld to realise common security; mutually beneficial cooperation should be upheld to achieve common prosperity; the spirit of inclusiveness must be upheld to build a world where all civilisations coexist harmoniously and accommodate each other; and the UN needs rational and necessary reform to maintain its authority, improve its efficacy and give a better scope to its role in meeting new threats and new challenges.
> (Xihua News Agency, www.china.org.cn, 16 Sep 2005)

'Harmonious World' is the guideline for Chinese foreign policy in the new century, carrying China's hope for a peaceful and tolerant world. Can it be seen as a new world order that China is proposing and expressing an interest in contributing to? It is not clear but it could be interpreted as a suggestion of a possible way of handling conflicts between different civilisations (such as Christianity and Islam, and Capitalism and Communism). Its emphasis on the leading role of the UN in world affairs could be seen as an objection to the idea of superpower(s) ruling the world and being above international law, which in itself is an interesting contrast to its own governing system. To brand itself under this guideline, China may use 'Harmonious China' as the overall brand vision. It brings together the traditional Confucian philosophy and China's internal and external goals. The internal goal is to establish a harmonious society in which conflicting issues are able to strike a balance - mass production and healthy environment, government and democracy, the party in power and other parties/political groups, the Han and the minorities, power and law, economic growth and education and health care and so on. The external goal is to be highly flexible and adaptable in order to cooperate with different countries, civilisations and governing systems, and

ultimately exist in harmony with each other. Although it is arguable whether it is a precondition for all people to be converted to Confucianism to build such a harmonious world, it describes an ideal state that China is aiming for both internally and externally. Most importantly it sends out a message to the world that is positive, responsible, and peaceful. However, is the message Harmonious World clear enough and concrete in its substance?

Although some see it as a positive and constructive message to convey, how many people have heard about it and understood its meaning? And how much of its content indicates 'business as usual' for the Chinese government, with no proposal for real change. There is no coverage of Hu's proposal on BBC or CNN websites or any other major Western media, which perhaps meets this notion with cynicism. China, known for its strong control over its society and economy, has often let others take control of its voice and image. This is one of the reasons why China has been perceived wrongly in some quarters. If China does not actively take control of its own image, through nation branding exercises, the danger is that the longer the incorrect perceptions remain unchallenged, the more difficult it becomes to reverse people's views. An ancient Chinese allegorical story "three people make a real tiger"[10] well explains how easily repeated false messages become unshakable reality.

6.3.2 What China Should Avoid In Its Nation Branding Exercise

This section identifies key positions that China should avoid during its nation branding exercise. It will reveal why a cover-up or whitewash strategy is counterproductive and why being truthful and credible is a more sustainable and long-term strategy. It compares the impact of propaganda-style information with a nation branding exercise that is based on tackling the fundamental issues.

---

[10] Three people make a real tiger, or it must be true what all men say. An ancient Chinese allegorical story recorded in *Zhanguo Ce-Wei Ce 2(战国策：魏策二)*: It is common knowledge that there are no tigers in the territory of Kingdom Wei. When three people reported to King Wei that there was a tiger in town, he believed it without any doubt.

6.3.2.1 The Truth, nothing but the truth

What China must understand and accept for a successful nation branding exercise, is the principle of always telling the truth. Nation branding should not be seen and used as a cover-up strategy or a 'whitewash' attempt. As mentioned in Chapter 5, Edward R. Murrow notes that, "truth is the best propaganda and lies are the worst". He further explains that, "To be persuasive we (the American government) must be believable; to be believable we must be credible; to be credible we must be truthful." (Anholt, 2004). To that end, this section will address the issue of widespread deception in some aspects of Chinese society and examine how this may affect the improvement of Brand China.

The World's distrust of China first arose from the Communist propaganda during the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. For example, images 3-54, 3-66, 3-67, 3-71 and 3-72 clearly present a golden harvest and the success of grand projects in agricultural and industrial development. It is certainly not a truthful reflection of the famine during the Great Leap Forward and of the social tensions during the Cultural Revolution. The Chinese government has always been criticised for the lack of transparency in its policy making. The National Congress, a symbol of people's democratic rights, is held every five years over two weeks. It is called a 'rubber stamp' by the Western media because it is governed by the Communist Party; 80% of the representatives are Communist Party members and government officials. China's annual GDP figures are often questioned in term of their accuracy. Covering up or lying about facts in today's internet-connected world can be a lethal mistake and an outmoded idea. It could be strongly argued that telling the truth, nothing but the truth is the only way forward for the Chinese government.

Distrust in China extends beyond the political sectors. As has been explored above, Chinese people are in an unbridled race for money; and virtues such as honesty, respect, patience and care are all left behind in

favour of financial gain. Pirated DVDs, counterfeit brand products, fake news, forged qualifications, fabricated work experience are just a few examples of corruption and endemic dishonesty. For example Silk Street in the heart of Beiing, Xiangyang Road (now closed) near Shanghai's high streets and Luohu Business Centre in Shenzhen are the three best known market places for counterfeit brand products. Cheap imitations of Gucci bags, Rolex watches, Burberry clothes are publicly displayed and promoted to visitors. Pirated DVDs and electronic game cards are available on almost every corner in the country and even smuggled to other countries for sale. These products are sold at a fraction of the price of authentic products. They not only harm the luxury brand industry and world entertainment industry, but in the process tarnish the image of China, and suggest it is a country which has no respect for others and intellectual property. The trend of 'faking it' becomes more polarised when it extends to higher education. Cases of plagiarism, such as using others' research without referencing and publishing translated foreign articles in Chinese journals, are found at the National Academy and the highest levels in universities, perpetrated by members of the Academy and by professors. A researcher with a PhD qualification at the Chinese Academy of Science (Shanghai) forged research data according to the result she wanted and published it in the Journal of the America Chemistry Society in 2007 (Xinhua News Agency, http://www.news.xinhuanet.com). The most amusing case concerned the 'University of International Economics and Trade of China' in Beijing. It sounds like a prestigious university in the capital city but for 500 Yuan (£50) anybody can get a degree certificate from this university. It was discovered that the university did not exist and that a kindergarten worker was forging degrees, selling them as a business (Xinhua News Agency, http://www.news.xinhuanet.com). Although it is possible to argue that academic plagiarism is culturally acceptable and it is not seen as a major transgression, in fact it fundamentally weakens the integrity and reliability of any research produced in China. Seasoned and respected academics in China fully understand the consequences of such lack of veracity.

Another example of how endemic deception and cheating for the purpose of financial gain is illustrated in the following event. Several weeks after the Beijing Olympics, China was thrown into the 'milk panic' - baby milk powder produced by the largest Chinese dairy company Sanlu was found to contain the toxic chemical melamine. Toxic milk powder caused the death of three children, 160 suffered acute kidney failure and over 6,000 became ill (BBC News, 17 September 2008). Deception effects people in China every day and it is commonly believed that food, such as meat, fish and eggs, treated with harmful chemicals is a norm in China and the people have to consume them despite their suspicions and potential poisoning.

This section has established the wide spread nature of deception in many aspects of the Chinese society including government, industry and education. Although some of the instances mentioned above are likely to be found in other developing countries, it is important to note that this weakness may prove to be one of the major obstacles facing the improvement of Brand China. Unless people have trust in China, nation branding exercises can make very limited improvements to the nation image, no matter how successful they have been proven in other countries or in similar situations. The next section will examine the extent to which the concept of nation branding differs from propaganda campaigns.

6.3.2.2 Nation branding vs. propaganda

Anybody who is familiar with communist propaganda in the 20th Century may immediately draw the connection between nation branding and propaganda and view the former a modern and sophisticated version of the latter. The two terms share the same purpose - to influence people's view or perception about certain things. However, the difference between them is vast. The definition and nature of nation branding was explored in Chapter 4. Nation branding is the application of branding techniques to

nations in order to seek success in the global marketplace and the success should be a balanced achievement in Exports, Tourism, Governance, People, Immigration & investment and Culture & heritage. Branding, as defined in Chapter 2, aims to "differentiate the product, service or corporation (the nation in the context of nation branding) in an attractive, meaningful and compelling way" and a good brand "delivers the message clearly, confirms credibility…" (Brandchannel.com).

According to the dictionary (askoxford.com), propaganda is defined as "information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view." The definitions already point out the fundamental difference between nation branding and propaganda: nation branding relies on a clear and credible message to differentiate a nation for national benefits in all regards; propaganda relies on deliberately manipulated information for political benefits. Anholt explained the difference between nation branding and propaganda in a much clearer way

> …having a new vision for the country and attempting to persuade people that it is already true (is propaganda); going to the trouble and expense of doing things to prove the reality of the vision (is nation branding).
> (Anholt, 2007)

This is best illustrated in Nigeria's recent nation branding attempt. The government launched a nation branding campaign under the recommendation and support from the new Minister of Information, Dora Akunyili. The slogan is 'Nigeria: Good People, Great Nation.' However the following comments from its people and an external organisation have almost determined the failure of this campaign, a propaganda campaign rather than a nation branding campaign.

Olufemi Oyegun, an oil-and-gas man in Lagos said

> They (the government) have been sending texts to my phone, telling us about how to reorganise Nigeria, how to reorganise our

> minds, our heads, but it's our leaders that are our main problem, not the people.
>
> In a recent report, ORC Worldwide, a consultancy, listed Lagos, with its violent crime, bad roads and wretched sanitation, as the world's worst place for expatriates to live in. A spot of rebranding is unlikely to wash away such awkward findings.
> (The Economist, 2 May 2009)

Clearly, telling people how great the nation is while the reality is the opposite is persuading people to believe false information. If the Nigerian government had made an effort to improve social security and infrastructure and tackle corruption, and indeed used the campaign to prove to the audience that it is a much better nation than before, it would be a credible nation branding exercise.

In the modern world, propaganda can easily be detected by well-educated people with the assistance of the internet, media and other sources of information. Anybody who tries to adopt the old propaganda-style strategy as a shortcut to nation branding must realise that losing people's trust is more damaging than doing nothing.

6.3.2.3   Nation branding is no panacea

It would be too easy to exaggerate the power of nation branding. Some people or governments might oversimplify it as a panacea and believe that "once we tell the truth and carry out a nation branding exercise, our nation image will improve and we will gain world popularity." Nation branding does not have magic powers and it is often a long process to reduce the gap between people's wrong perception and the reality. If the reality matches people's perception, there is nothing nation branding can do to improve the image. Problems like corruption, pollution and dictatorship must be tackled before nation branding can step in to inform people of the new improvements and to neutralise the negative image. Trying to convince people that these problems are necessary sacrifices for economic development, social stability or something good for the

nation is just another unwise attempt to fool others, which inevitably leads to distrust and opposition.

In the example of the nation branding attempt in Nigeria, the government seems to believe that the nation branding exercise works wonders. However, many Nigerian people do not share the view. They said "[the] government should tackle the country's fundamental problems - power shortages, crime and corruption - before worrying about its image"(The Economist, 2 May 2009). Nigeria's lessons should be learned by all nations who are pursuing a nation branding exercise. Neither ignorance nor worship should be the right attitude.

6.3.3 Investing In People

Given the dramatic social, political and economic changes that China has gone through in 60 years since its independence, it had little chance of submitting to a nation branding exercise with a systematic and organised approach. This section will address the weaknesses mentioned above by proposing options for an improved brand image of China. These include: investing in people by focusing on education and communication; changes in the educational ethos including teaching and learning methods; as well as resolving issues which are a consequence of the singleton phenomenon. Above all, serious investment in health and social care is paramount. This section will also explore options for governance. These include: international relations and the concept of integration; internal relations; and the introduction of rule of law. The potential for improving culture, tourism and international export are also explored.

6.3.3.1 Improving educational ethos

The principle of investing in people is broadly based on improvement to the way organisations work. It is regarded as an investment that should help the organisation achieve their successes through their people. In the

UK, for example, there are over 30,000 organisations that are recognised as investors in people, covering a wide spectrum of the UK industries. It is essentially a government initiative designed to help and support the direction of the national future and to maximise potential successes and competitiveness. Investing in people is valuable to the extent that it improves vital decisions about talent and how it is utilised. Wide ranging debates currently exist regarding the issues of investing in people both from the government and the private sector, and whether it should be measured in terms of Human Resources (HR) or in terms of the return on that investment. It is not the aim of this research to fully investigate this area; it is appropriate however that this research identifies the importance of investing in people as a vital feature of a highly developed nation. China has a system of developing people through this type of system through HR and government initiatives, but clearly there is more to do in this regard. It should do more than evaluating performance; instead it should identify and enhance talents. Cascio W. and Boudreau J. (2008) argue that investing in people and their talent should be as systematic as investing in any other vital resource. Countries investing in people do so specifically through training and education with the aim that they are able to sustain the population through investment in talent. Therefore, investing in people clearly has a strong association with education. In the past decade, with China's improved economy, a systematic investment in education has been observed. China's recognition of the value of education as an investment is unquestionable. Over the last thirty years, hundreds of new universities have emerged countrywide in China and many of them received government's financial support in investments in modern campuses and advanced facilities. This rise in university education supports the claim that China is investing in its people for the future development of China as a leading nation. Again it is not the subject of this research to identify and analyse the education ethos and principles, but it is useful to indicate that the education of a nation is probably the most useful and important aspect of developing its nation, communication, talent and its ability to see the future and above all, project a positive image of the nation. Chinese education suffers from a

very serious restriction in the way teaching and learning is conducted. The overall quality of education in China compared to that in developed countries is insufficient for a leading nation, notwithstanding the top institutions in China and their contribution to global intellectual and knowledge industries The following example will illustrate how creative subjects are taught in China compared to Britain. The system of teaching creative subjects in China is based on the academy model, whereby students are learning primarily from the master. Their knowledge is expected to exceed the master's knowledge eventually, but in reality, a combination of government enforced non-core subjects such as Marxism and Deng Xiaoping theory, sports and Chinese, and the following of existing teaching material, affect students' learning. This restriction is particularly noticeable in creative subjects, where by Western standards it is necessary to focus on individual students and their requirements in order to develop their unique expression and independence of learning. Issues such as the ability to work independently, research skills, critical analysis, and the exploration of ideas beyond the provision of their teachers are clearly missing from the syllabus. Instead, students are encouraged to fulfil strict exercises that apply to all students, with not much room for genuine and meaningful exploration. As previously mentioned, Chinese students may suffer from diffidence and an inability to express themselves in public. This is due to several reasons, one of which is the fact that students do not want to expose themselves by making mistakes in public for fear of ridicule. Large classrooms lacking opportunity for seminar forum and debate, and the lack of tuition in presentational skills contribute to their lack of self-confidence. Ideas, personal views and questions are not encouraged by tutors as part of their education, instead they are passive recipients in the process of learning. After years of investment in university 'hardware' such as buildings and equipment, it is perhaps the time for China to divert some investment into university 'software' such as syllabus development, curriculum delivery, research ability, and so on.

6.3.3.2 Developing a national insurance system

The Chinese government's one-child policy slowed down the expansion of the population, which has enabled it to reallocate some resources from feeding the nation to modernisation. Families are able to direct their attention and resources to their only child for much improved education and living conditions. The consequent well-educated generation in return are making greater contributions to the country's further development with advanced knowledge and awareness. However, rapid fertility transition also came with negative consequences, such as "diploma inflation, unrealistic expectations for children's success, fear that parents will not have enough support in their old age, and widespread complaints about a rising generation of 'spoiled' singletons" (Fong V. L. 2004). There is a rapid increase in the number of children in education. Their parents hold high expectations of them which applies great pressure on them to be rather competitive in reaching an elite position, such as getting a place at a university, finding a well-paid job and being financially able to support their dependents. It is possible to suggest that given that only a small minority is able to achieve elite status, this situation causes severe social tension. Compared with developed countries, China's social care is underdeveloped, and social tension has resulted in some cautionary social tragedies.[11] These tragic events demand special consideration. The government could divert some of its attention from economic growth towards this type of social concern and provide an adequate national insurance system. This system may offer financial support to those in need: for example, student loans, flexible loans for small businesses, and allowance or discounts for the elderly for their health and social care. This financial support is best viewed as an investment in the nation and its future.

---

[11] Examples include Xia Fei, a primary school student, who was beaten to death by his mother due to his failure in reaching his mother's expected scores in a school test on 21 December 1987 (source: Today in the history, www.nongli.com); and Liu Wei, a university third year student, who committed suicide due to her fear of being unemployed after graduation (source: Southern People Weekly, 11 April 2009, www.nanfangdaily.com.cn).

The Chinese government's one-child policy is intended to generate 'high-quality talent' that takes the country to the next stage of modernisation. The first-generation singletons have entered adulthood and are gradually taking control of the country. An adequate national insurance system would help to reduce the pressure on them to care for their parents and their own singleton children and enable them to make a bigger contribution to the nation's development. Many of the first singleton generation have the opportunity to study or work abroad, which is an important link in China's communication with the world. Apart from their multiple language skills and cultural understanding, they either bring back advanced knowledge or technology that they have learned in developed countries or make links between China and other countries in policy, education, art, culture, business and many other areas. National pride and a strong sense of belonging also turn many of them into free ambassadors in promoting a positive image for the country. In economic terms, China has benefited from an estimated 70% of recent foreign investment from its vast diasporas (Devane R., 2006). The inclusion of successful diaspora groups in China's internationalisation may prove to be a beneficial strategy; excluding and alienating them can only be counterproductive and a missed opportunity. Diaspora personnel who have obtained permanent residence in their host countries are disqualified from the newly published national health insurance policy, despite the fact that some of them have made a financial contribution to the system and may return to China after retirement for family reasons. A policy of investing in people normally includes all people, in order to promote talent and ability. Countries such as the UK and the US make specific efforts to maintain a connection with their expatriates at the same time as attracting foreign talent to settle in their countries. This is an example of a nation building not only on its own citizens, both home and abroad, but also being attractive to other nations.

6.3.4 Governance

As identified above, the system of government in China is one of the most complex yet pressing issues in the drive for an improved Brand China. Without serious changes to its system and style of government, centralised China will have little chance to overcome its negatively perceived image. The Chinese government finds itself in a paradoxical position: on the one hand, it explores the Western democracy then rejecting it; and on the other, it resists any change to the status quo. The Chinese government has achieved rapid economic growth and is currently working with a capitalist system. Given its success to date, it is unlikely that a significant change will be manifest soon. This section explores international relations by examining the concept of integration versus one of isolation. In addition, it examines the central position that the rule of law occupies in the Chinese internal system of government.

6.3.4.1 International relations: integration

Ikenberry G. J. in his paper *The Rise of China: Power, Institutions, and the Western Order* described the cause of power transition and illustrated the major power transitions with varied results between 1500-2000.

> States are continuously in the process of rising and declining in relative power, gaining and losing ground to each other. On occasion a 'power transition' occurs between two or more great powers. There are moments when power disparities between major states shift rapidly…(and) at rare historical moments, a rapidly growing great power rises up and surpasses a lead or hegemonic state in the International system. These most consequential shifts in power turn out to be hegemonic or system-reordering power transitions.
> (Ross R.S. and Zhu F., 2008)

Hapsburg Empire - France	1600-1659	War - hegemonic transition
France - Britain	1660-1815	War - hegemonic transition
Britain - United States	1880-1900	Peaceful hegemonic transition
Britain - France	1919-1933	Peaceful transition
Germany - France	1925-1931	Peaceful transition
Britain - Germany	1870-1945	War - failed hegemonic transition
Russia/USSR - Germany	1900-1945	War - failed transition
USSR - United States	1945-1991	Peaceful transition
United States - China	?	?

Figure 6-1 Power transitions among major states, Year 1500-2000
Source: Ross R.S. and Zhu F., 2008

As the above order shows, great power shifts have occurred regularly in the last 500 years. Rising powers' challenge to the leading power resulted in various endings - peaceful transitions, hegemonic transitions through victorious challenges and failed transitions following failed challenges. Germany's challenge to the power of Britain and Germany's fear of the rise of Russia/USSR were important causes of the two world wars. Other power transitions took place peacefully for different reasons and avoided wars or breaking the old international order. Ikenberry says

> Britain ceded power to a rapidly growing America…without war or a rupture in relations…[The] postwar economic return of Germany and Japan…took place within alliance and institutional frameworks led by the United States…without challenging the existing international order.
> (Ross R.S. and Zhu F., 2008)

He further argues that peaceful transitions may lead to a new global order (America) or an adjusted regional or global system (Japan and Germany). When examining the power shift between America and China, Ikenberry argues that three critical factors will determine the type of Chinese power transition: "…its underlying interests, security dilemma dynamics, and the overall geopolitical balance of power between China and the West." (Ross R.S. and Zhu F., 2008).

China's underlying interests in the foreseeable future will remain economic growth. China achieved rapid economic growth in the current global capitalist system and it is most likely to remain within the same international order from which it has benefited. Both countries are in possession of nuclear technology, which makes overturning the existing international order led by America through wars unlikely - and unthinkable. China has no substantial allies that could join forces to surpass America for a peaceful transition: Europe, Japan, India are all allied to America under the current international order; and Russia is no longer a comrade to China. Without the desire for, and possibility of, changing the existing international order, China's strategy may well be integration. China continuously invests in military power with the interests of strengthening its political position and event controlling ability. However, constraints from its concentrated minority people in vast border regions (Tibet, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia) and large dependence on imported military technology, indicate that China would be more interested in developing a joint security system with America - a G2 in military terms. In the foreseeable future, China's interests lie in reunifying Taiwan or at least preventing its independence and security superiority in East Asia. Finally, although China has the potential to surpass America at some point, it must realise that it is not just America which stands in its way to a new China-centred international order, but the whole capitalist democratic world that America has created and is leading. Replacing the existing order and all the rules and institutions within it in the absence of great power wars is itself a massive challenge. Although the future cannot be accurately predicted, China is most likely to integrate into the existing international order and seek a higher position within its hierarchy. In order to reach the top of the hierarchy, China is trying to establish an image of itself as a responsible international power. Examples include its fast reaction to the economic recession by announcing a $586 billion stimulus plan, placing purchasing orders to key European countries in early spring, and an agreement to supply $40 billion to the IMF to aid poor and emerging countries during the London G20 Summit (in return China

increased its voting share at IMF from 3.66% to a proposed 3.81%) (The Economist, 11 April 2009). In addition to the term G2, British historian Niall Ferguson recently coined the term 'Chimerica' to represent the significant new geopolitical shift: that is, China and America are set to dominate the 21st Century (The Times of India, 19 April 2009). World domination in the 21st Century is hotly contested, and is the subject of lively speculation. Leonard (2005) argues that Europe, despite its public disputes, is poised to be the dominant global influence of the 21st Century, both through its own actions and as a model to the rest of the world. He says

> The new global order is being shaped in the one place where most Americans would least expect to find it: in 'old Europe'. The European Union is leading a revolution in the nature of power that in just 50 years has transformed a continent from total war to perpetual peace. By building a network of power - that binds states together with a market, common institutions, and international law - rather than a hierarchical nation-state, it is increasingly writing the rules for the 21st Century.
> (Leonard M., 2005)

China, on the other hand, although it has made no claim to rule the 21st Century, is in no doubt that its presence and influence have shifted the balance of power around the world. China, through the combination of its culture and history and the most recent economic development, may propose that it prefers to seek a new position in international society in a peaceful manner. Chinese history through over 20 dynasties seems to support the view that China is more interested in co-operation and development with neighbouring countries than occupation or colonisation.

6.3.4.2 Internal relations: rule of law

The debate on the democratic development in China continues between the West and China as well as internally, although the tension has eased now that most countries are battling with gloomy economic recession. Placed with America in G2, China seems to have shown its advantage in

that it can direct all national efforts to pursue its national goal. It has inevitably generated another round of debate in China on whether Western-style democracy is better than centralised governance for economic growth. In the race for wealth, Chinese people may well be satisfied with their benefits from the booming economy, but in the long term, especially when the middle classes are strong, it is questionable whether they will still be happy to accept the lack of rights to vote, restrictions in freedom of expression, official corruption and the rule of men.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, democratic development in China may be hindered by Chinese leaders' personal welfare and fear of loss of power in democratic elections; and both official corruption and environmental pollution are rooted in the current prominence of the 'rule of men' or 'super class' in China. It seems that changing the country to be ruled by law might well overcome some of the chronic governing problems that China is facing today.

In a recent study by The Economist on almost 5,000 politicians listed in *International Who's Who*, the result demonstrates the phenomenon that law is the most common profession for politicians and many countries have shown clear preferences for politicians' backgrounds. It explains,

> Different countries - because of their history, or cultural preference, or stage of development - seem to like particular qualities, and these qualities are provided disproportionately by only a few professions.

> Examples include: military leaders or guerrilla chiefs leading Africa; military generals having significant political influence in Indonesia; and Egypt, South Korea and Brazil preferring academics, civil servants and doctors respectively. In countries like Israel where a European-style democratic position is adopted, their leaders are, perhaps surprisingly, mostly military generals.
> (The Economist, 18 April 2009)

The study highlighted the difference between major democracies such as America, Germany and France, and the non-democratic country, China. The three major democratic countries display a strong dominance by lawyers. American president Barack Obama studied at Harvard Law School (1988-1991) and in his cabinet the secretary of state Hillary Clinton, attorney-general Eric Holder, vice president Joe Biden and director of CIA Leon Panetta are all trained as lawyers.

> In Germany, a third of the Bundestag's members are lawyers. In France nine of Nicolas Sarkozy's first cabinet of 16 were lawyers or law graduates, including the president, the prime minister and the finance minister…
> (The Economist, 18 April 2009)

In China, engineers rule. According to the study, President Hu Jingtao, his predecessor Jiang Zemin, the prime minister Wen Jiabao, his predecessor Zhu Rong Ji, Zhu's predecessor Li Peng, and eight out of nine members of the current Politburo's standing committee, the senior body of China's Communist Party, are all engineers in different fields. The study suggests that it is not surprising that a country like China, with its focus on infrastructure development and dependence on manufacturing exports, is ruled by engineers. The other reason for the prevalence of engineers in China is historical. As the same study points out, "in a country where education was buffeted by the tempests of Maoism, engineering was a safer field of study than most." This preference is also influenced by the former Soviet Union, where engineers (such as Boris Yeltsin) ruled. The former Soviet Union, before the relationship with China broke down in 1960, educated and trained many children of the first-generation Communist Party leaders, some of who (such as Li Peng) later gained a ruling position in China. The prevalent profession in politics inevitably influences the style of thinking of its government. The study reveals that in America, Germany or France, politics deals with similar questions that the law faces, such as "what makes a just society; the balance between liberty and security; and so on." "Lawyerly skills - marshalling evidence, appealing to juries, command of procedure -

transfer well to the political stage." (The Economist, 18 April 2009). For engineers, the priority is to make sure things work and the process comes second. This seems to have some influence on the Chinese government which often values national goals over human value and which ignores or punishes critics. Examples include arguments such as 'to become a developed country, China needs an authoritarian government and democracy may slow down the pace and even cause break-ups' (Leonard M., 2008), and the country's heavy investment in infrastructure (the $586 billion stimulus plan for construction) compared to insufficient financial support for education and health care in underdeveloped areas.

It is therefore possible to suggest that the Chinese government should reduce the high percentage of engineers in its senior administration, and appoint professionals from diverse backgrounds, especially lawyers and economists. This may act as a push for a transfer to a social order ruled by law. When the power of law is restored and applies to every citizen, no matter what position they are in, corruption and irresponsibility may be minimised. With the lawyers' contribution to national policymaking, process should be carefully considered, human value should be respected and a different voice should be heard. The change of the configuration of the government members with reference to their backgrounds may be a small step forward in democratic development, but it could be the stimulus to an improved image of Chinese governance.

It is reasonable to suggest that a professionally diverse government would be able to address the country's problems in a multifaceted and balanced way. Additional representations such as diplomacy, journalism, business, medicine, the creative sector and academia must be considered in order to work towards a shared objective of an improved nation image.

6.3.4.3 Improving culture, tourism and exports

This section will look into possible directions for an improved image of China in Culture, Tourism and Exports.

6.3.4.3.1 Chinese culture understood: the call for Phoenix English TV Channel

To overcome cultural barriers, communication is the key. Effective communication often relies on powerful channels of communication with wide coverage. If there were no BBC, CNN or VOA (including their websites), British and American culture might not be so widely spread and accepted. Although China launched its 24-hour English-speaking international broadcasting television channel, CCTV 9, in 2000 and made it available in nearly 20 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and America, its effectiveness can be regarded as insignificant. There are two major weaknesses. One is the rather wooden image of the nation it projects through unattractive programmes introducing China's food, tourism and entertainment. It rarely offers an insight into Chinese government or holds debates on the current issues for those who are interested in Chinese politics. It does not broadcast live the annual Spring Festival Gala Evening for overseas Chinese who are eager to celebrate the most important event with the country. The other is perhaps to do with its name: CCTV is short for China Central Television, the major state television broadcaster in China. The name can be easily confused with another CCTV that is much more widely accepted by people in other countries - closed-circuit television (which implies a controlling and surveillance device); it is seen as a propaganda machine controlled by the Chinese government, so many people feel hostile toward it and choose to avoid it.

Although it is not the purpose of this research to investigate the power and suitability of the type of the media that China should adopt, it is able

to offer a view of what is currently in place and to recognise possible opportunities that the Chinese government may consider. Phoenix Television is a privately owned broadcasting company based in Hong Kong. It serves Mainland China and other markets with a substantial Chinese population such as Europe and America. It is one of the very few companies that are permitted to broadcast information about events not covered by the government media. It has five channels: Phoenix Chinese Channel, Phoenix Movies Channel, Phoenix InfoNews Channel, Phoenix North America Chinese Channel and Phoenix Chinese News and Entertainment Channel (http://phtv.ifeng.com/). Phoenix offers many lively and popular programmes, such as interviews with influential policy makers, interviews with ordinary people who have a life story to share, free debate on headline news, dialogue with Taiwan, analysis of the military situation and so on. The Movies Channel provides a wide range of Chinese movies, from martial arts to science fiction, from comedy to thriller. The phoenix, as explored in Chapter 3, is one of the two totems of the Chinese nation, and is known for its representation of the Chinese people.

The Middle East was in a similar situation where communication with the world, especially the English-speaking countries, was hindered by the lack of appropriate media. In 2006, Qatar-owned Al Jazeera launched its sister channel Al Jazeera English, a 24-hour English-language news and current affairs TV channel and one of the three largest English-language news channels worldwide (http://english.aljazeera.net/). It played a significant role in reporting the war in Gaza in 2008 while foreign media were kept outside the Strip. A similar movement for the Chinese media to join forces for an improved channel of communication with the external world should be considered at an early stage of the nation branding strategy for China. A possible option is a marriage between CCTV 9 and Phoenix. Combining CCTV 9's experience in English broadcasting and Phoenix's successful broadcasting style and non-state owned status, Phoenix English (or Phoenix International) could be an ideal solution for minimising cultural barriers and improving understanding between China

and the world. To win people's trust and respect, this new international channel must be able to explore the true China, positive or negative, in all directions including the economy, politics, culture and people. This new channel should endeavour to provide a full picture of China to allow the audience to establish an understanding of the country through their own judgement. Criticism based on information and understanding should be addressed in the next stage of the nation branding strategy in order to effect improvements.

MacMurchy C. reported another possibility for an improved international Chinese media in January 2009. China has the plan to invest 45 billion RMB (£4.5 bn) in mainland media companies in order to minimise the gap between China's image among the overseas audience and its own perception. One of the projects under consideration is a new TV channel modelled on Al Jazeera, namely *Xinhua* (New China) *TV*. As the existing Xinhua News Agency (state-owned national official news agency) and Xinhua Daily (formerly China Communist Party Newspaper, now Jiangsu Provincial Government Newspaper) both have strong connection with the Party and the Government, it is possibly seen as another communist propaganda or whitewash machine. Its effectiveness and veracity might be challenged by the targeted audience. Xinhua (pronounced 'Shinhua') is also an awkward word for English pronunciation, which may not contribute to its popularity.

It is important to understand, however, that even the Phoenix English (or Phoenix International) TV channel is set up as described above, it is not the appearance, the name, the programmes or the language it speaks make it successful and accepted, but communicating the truth in its programme. Only if the new international TV channel is believed to be "a free press", it is unlikely to go much further than CCTV-9 or Xinhua TV.

An effective channel of communications makes an understanding of Chinese culture possible and acceptable through lively yet truth-telling programmes. It will also provide a platform for cultural promotion through

Chinese movies. Bruce Lee and his martial arts movies first established the image of the Chinese in America and they have attracted fans of Chinese culture from all over the world. In recent years four Chinese movies have been among the ten highest grossing non-English films worldwide and they are: 'Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon' (2000); 'Hero' (2004); 'House of Flying Daggers' (2004); and 'Kung Fu Hustle' (2005) (Ramo J.C., 2007). Jackie Chan, Jet Li, Li Gong and Ziyi Zhang are among the best known living Chinese movie stars. There are many other distinctive representatives in other areas like art, music and literature. It is definitely worth thinking creatively about how to use these available resources to showcase Chinese culture, both traditional and modern, as part of its nation branding strategy. It is currently certainly not working very well by limiting Chinese culture to traditional opera, Confucian philosophy, tea and martial arts, or introducing them in fragmented TV programmes and in an unattractive lecture-style fashion. It is important that China act quickly on this before the resources fade away or Disney borrows them all to promote American culture.

6.3.4.3.2 new tourism

According to the 2008 World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Barometer, 54.7 million international tourists visited China in 2007. This places China the fourth most visited country after France, Spain and America. When the tourism-oriented FutureBrand's Country Brand Index (CBI) examined the best 10 tourism destinations in 30 categories in 2008, China was named the top for the most noteworthy performance in 2007 in preparation for the Beijing Olympics. China also ranked in the top 10 in other four categories: Authenticity, History, Art & culture and Ideal for business. However, China was excluded in the remaining 25 categories such as Resort & lodging options, Ease of travel, Safety, Natural beauty, Shopping, Fine dining, Activities & sports, Friendly locals, Value for money, Standard of living, Most like to live in, Quality products, Desire to visit / visit again and Environmentalism

(http://www.countrybrandindex.com/country-brand-rankings/). Although the results of the CBI are arguable, it at least reflects the interviewed audience's perception and experience of tourism in China. It points out the areas that China needs to consider and improve to give tourists (national and international) a full and enjoyable experience. China is a vast and vibrant country with much more than history and traditional culture to offer: for example, architecture, music and modern art. China does not have modern art centres such as the Pompidou Centre, Tate Modern Gallery, Guggenheim Museum and Metropolitan Museum of Art, which attract a high volume of visitors. Attracting tourists to revisit, do business and even live, should be the ultimate objective for Chinese tourism, rather than simply pursuing quantity and revenue. A desire to visit or live in a particular country undoubtedly translates into a strong nation brand. The Beijing Olympics has already shed some light on how to be a hospitable hosting country. Taxi drivers' English expressions of places of interest, respect for other cultures and religion, honest pricing, politeness to strangers, being helpful and so on, can be extended to other cities and towns, and continue from the summer event to the long term.

6.3.4.3.3 country of origin effect

It is arguable that China is the undisputed world centre for manufacturing. Although China produces qualities products for Nike, Panasonic, Tommy Hilfiger, H&M and many others, Chinese products are still perceived as cheap, low-quality and unsafe according to Interbrand's research *Made in China 2008*. It is true that it takes time for people to change their perceptions, but the key to understand the seemly unfair perception is the country of origin (COO) effect. As examined in Chapter 4, in the global market, products from different countries compete. Consumers like to make informed choices but they are often short of time and patience to compare all the products available. Country of origin or where the product is made is one of the shortcuts consumers use to make their decisions. For example, consumers are more likely to choose wine and perfume

from France, electronic products from Japan, watches from Switzerland, cars from Germany, than other countries. The mismatch between China's proved ability to produce quality products and its image as a 'country for cheap products' has two main characteristics. One is that the country of origin of those quality products produced in China is not perceived as China, for example, although produced in China, Nike is still regarded as an American brand bearing an American quality standard and American culture; Panasonic is Japanese and manufactured in China according to Japanese standards. The other is that China is lacking world-recognised brands that are able to demonstrate the Chinese quality standard and contribute to a positive country of origin effect for China. China, especially in the early years of the 30-year economic reform, exported a huge amount of cheap products at very low prices to earn foreign exchange reserves, and was accused of 'dumping' by other countries. Bad experience with Chinese products was reflected in a mere 6 percent of respondents in the Interbrand research expressing their willingness to purchase Chinese products.

In 2009, China is the third largest economy with the largest foreign reserves in the world. While America, Europe and many other countries are battling with the worst recession since World War 2, it is time for China to regulate exports, improve products and services, quality and safety, and build world-class brands that will contribute to a better nation image in return. As discussed in Chapter 4, understanding the COO position in each industry and adopting appropriate COO strategy can be extremely important in combating people's negative bias on products and services from particular countries. As revealed in the Interbrand research, Bank of China and Air China are two leading service brands acknowledged in overseas markets. If they are seeking business expansion in these markets, they should consider various COO strategies that vary according to the industry, as explored in Chapter 4. Highlighting its COO-China, 'Air China' meets people's preference for knowing the connection between airlines and its country as a reference for the services they may receive. In the *Official World Airline Star Ranking™* by

SKYTRAX, Air China was rated 3-star, a less impressive score compared to other Asian airlines such as South Korea's Asiana (5-star), India's Kingfisher (5-star), Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific (5-star), Singapore Airlines (5-star), Malaysia Airlines (5-star) and most European and American airlines. In the detailed quality analysis conducted by SKYTRAX, the lowest scores are mostly found in staff service areas such as language skills, interaction with passengers, problem solving skills and personalisation of service. In the global market, national airlines are often the first place where overseas travellers form the initial impression of the host country on their first visit. A warm reception, polite service, reasonable food and drinks, a clean environment, and adequate communication skills will undoubtedly contribute to visitors' positive image of the country that the airlines are associated with and vice versa. A good start is the first step to success and a bad start often initiates the full journey to failure. In a centralised unitary country like China, the government's vision on the nation brand and its leadership are fundamental to improve the current image of Air China, which is an important window into China from the outside world. Other service areas, however, may need to adopt COO minimisation strategy to attract international customers. Bank of China, for example, may consider BOC as its brand name in overseas markets, following HSBC's global successes. COO minimisation strategy helps to reduce the impact that certain social or political events of the country may have on their overseas business.

The picture is not all negative. According to the Interbrand research, the Chinese hi-tech sector is doing well on its way to the global market. Lenovo, having acquired IBM's personal computer division in 2003, is the world's fourth largest PC maker and was the Beijing Olympics' only global sponsor from China. Interbrand recognises its potential to be the first brand ambassador for China. With quality in mind, Haier is now the third largest appliance maker and Galanz produces half of the world's microwave ovens under different trade names. Chinese companies are advancing technologies and this is best reflected in the rising number of

patent applications in China (over 800,000 in 2008) and abroad (1,225 were registered in 2008 in America) (The Economist, 25 April 2009). China is looking for the next growth of its economy. As described in the same article, "Long the workshop of the world, China wants to be the brains as well." The Chinese government and people's understanding on this trend and their agreement and support to the companies on the frontline will inevitably determine how fast and how big the Chinese companies can develop on the world stage. Raising this awareness and seeking national support can be achieved through carefully planned nation branding campaigns. In the long term, world-class brands in product and service sectors will eventually help to lift the country's brand image worldwide.

6.3.5 A Coordinated Strategy

China has put in great efforts to build a positive image and reputation in recent years, and the strongest example are the Beijing Olympics which demonstrated clearly China's hospitality, commitment, wealth, organising ability and rich culture, as well as the swift response to the 5.12 earthquake in Sichuan Province. What is missing is a systematic and sustainable nation branding strategy that pulls all sectors to join forces toward a shared objective. As discussed in Chapter 4, it is essential that all stakeholders are involved in the nation branding process and agree on one nation brand. Dinnie's view, quoted in Chapter 4, was that the government (especially in a totalitarian state like China) is the only stakeholder that can realistically coordinate nation brand activities involving all stakeholders, so it is essential for the government to set up a coordinating body to undertake the long-term nation brand strategy and to avoid fragmentation and duplication of activity by different stakeholders.

The coordinating bodies do not have a set format and vary largely in different countries, such as Invest in France Agency (France), Japan Brand Working Group (Japan), Nation Branding Council (South Korea),

Scotland the Brand (Scotland), and International Marketing Council (South Africa). Since Ramo J. C. (2007) says, "By 2004/05, China was among the most poorly understood countries on earth, " perhaps the coordinating body for branding China could be named 'China Awareness Project' or 'China Branding Council'. As the name of the coordinating body is not a key fact in the nation branding process, the second option (CBC) will be used in the context of this research. As Dinnie suggests, the coordinating body (CBC) needs to be granted certain political independence to minimize disruption from changes of government leaders and administration.

It is then CBC's role to understand the current situation of Brand China, seek stakeholders' agreement on the nation brand of 'Harmonious China' and the branding process, including relevant strategies and campaigns. CBC's main objective is to coordinate all stakeholders to contribute to an improved Brand China, or to establish a Brand China by careful design, no longer by default. As the concept of nation branding is still new and may be unheard of to many in China, CBC should first explain the concept and its importance to the stakeholders. Based on a good understanding of nation branding, stakeholders are likely to join efforts to contribute to an overall national reputation that they all may benefit from in return.

The overriding objective of this chapter is to explore the current perceived image of China and identify the distance between its image and reality. The framework that has been utilised is based on the Anholt Nation Brands Index. This index has revealed certain weaknesses in the China brand, of which governance and people are the most prominent. A study of the key weaknesses has been conducted and revealed that the unpopularity of the Chinese people is a result of the combined effect of political history associated with the Cultural Revolution, rapid economic growth, the one-child policy as well as underdeveloped educational provision. Governance on the other hand emerged as the most serious obstacle in improving China's image. Issues such as national and

international policies, democracy, institutional corruption, and lack of care for the environment are significant areas of concern and are deeply rooted in the governing of China. This was followed by a careful analysis directing the improvement of Brand China in the areas of governance and people as well as culture, tourism and exports (country of origin). Investing in people emerged as a key component in generating a sustained Brand China. This can be achieved through a revised educational system, that carries new values based on independent learning, innovation in thinking, as well as knowledge and accuracy. In addition a national insurance system that provides decent health care, social welfare as well as the development of social communities is necessary to build the nation's confidence in addition to that built through economic growth. Relating people's confidence to the strong history and civilisation is also an attribute that can bring added value to the nation brand. The government, on the other hand, is regarded as the ultimate driver for a successful nation branding strategy and its implementation. In order to succeed, China will need to change its international characteristics to the extent that it will present itself as a responsible member in the international community, modern in its outlook, open in its relationships and confident in its ability to lead. Parallel to this, internally it will need to address fundamental issues by shifting from the rule of men to the rule of law, overcoming institutional corruption and taking control of environmental pollution. Central to addressing these issues is diversifying the professions within the senior politicians/leadership and its administration from engineer dominance to law, academia, medicine and cultural figures. This chapter also identifies what China should embrace and avoid in the context of future branding exercise, including establishing an effective branding body to execute and coordinate the branding strategy for China.

7 CHINA VISUAL IDENTITY, AN EXPERIMENT

This chapter introduces the practice element in the research: the role of the researcher as an art director and a designer, as well as providing a limited example of an experimental brief associated with the creation of a new visual identity for China in the form of logo.

The reason for this visual experiment is to extend the theoretical findings into practical manifestation through providing visual solutions that is informed by theory, but also address some of the weaknesses in visual means. In Chapter 6 we have established the two major weaknesses of brand China, which is primarily in the areas of governance and people. In governance, the weaknesses are magnified in the non-democratic regime, official corruption and environmental issues. In people, the issues lie with the social consequences of the one-child policy, rapid economic growth as well as the educational ethos. Informed by what Chapter 6 has revealed in addressing the weaknesses, a design brief has been developed based on future values such as democracy and the rule of law (clean from corruption), innovation and creativity, quality-oriented products and services, investing in its people (education, social and health care), green (environmentally friendly) and a responsible international player and open to the outside world and welcoming talents.

The visual responses that would be received from the designers who participated in the experiment will be subject to analysis by visual experts and myself. My engagement is because my understanding and engagement with the subject of branding China is theoretically more engaged and better informed. In addition my involvement both as an art director and a designer intends to find out whether design brief can be sufficient in generating a desired visual product. I will be adopting cyclic

action research processes in order to establish a design solution and clarify my role as an art director as well as a designer.

As stated earlier, nation branding cannot be fully achieved by a single branding exercise, or advertising campaign, or brand targeted slogans, or propaganda, or even by diplomatic means. Branding a nation, and China in particular, is far more complex; it demands a whole set of activities over time and involves many organisations, groups of people, agencies and all other stakeholders, both within the country and outside it. In the nation branding process, the creation of a national visual identity is vitally important and it makes a significant contribution to how others view China. It provides the symbol, colours, shapes and other visual elements of its brand signature. According to the Branding Dictionary, brand identity is defined as "the outward manifestation of the essence of a corporate brand, product brand, service brand or branded environment", all of which, in my view, are relevant to the process as well as the outcome of an exercise in visual identity.

The significance of visual identity lies primarily, but not solely, in the value of specific elements of identification to the brand owner: in this case, the Chinese government and its people. It helps to establish the specific niche in which Brand China can define itself in relation to other countries and to the general environment.

If we assume that the China visual identity at its most basic is a signifier, through a graphic system of identification, which supports the application and communication of brand China attributes, then it is useful to test through an experiment in visual identity the issues that may emerge in the process of the creation of a visual identity. This is facilitated by the use of digital media for the creation as well as management of the relationship between the stakeholders, audience and what can be regarded as a China brand.

For that reason, I have conducted an experiment in order to test the complexity of the creation of a nation visual identity. This is a small-scale experimental project aiming to explore the creation of a visual logo/identity. This is relevant to two periods of China's visual history, as a reference point combined with an assumed set of changes that China has undergone through creating new China attributes. This is based on identifications of weaknesses and opportunities of China's brand identified in Chapter 6. This also offers an improved China image and its perception.

This exercise is not intended to create an overall impression of China, but represents only a small part. Within this visual exercise, the visual identity system is closed and relates to familiar images: those of the Cultural Revolution and 1930s calendar posters. In addition, this visual identity exercise and the creation of a logo are not intended to apply consistently to all communications. On the other hand, the exercise supports the argument that communicating an identity cannot be imparted by words. The visual elements and their appearance enshrine symbolic meanings and convey the country's attributes. Essentially what this exercise provides is a visual interpretation and responses by the designers to the brief that I have designed.

7.1 My Role As Art Director And Designer

The practice element of this research requires me to participate both in the planning through preparing the brief, analysing and evaluating, as well as providing a creative solution through my own action as a designer. The action in this context is determined as the act of participation in the design process from inception to realisation. According to O'Brien (2001), action research involves utilising a systematic cyclical method of planning, taking action, observing, evaluating (including self-evaluation) and critical reflection prior to planning the next cycle. Art direction is the main role that I will play in the first cycle of this process while in the

second cycle my position will change to be the designer at the action point. In normal circumstance the cyclic process in action research is supposed to be repeated in order to test challenge and refine the objectives. It is still true in this case where the refinement of the objectives determined that my involvement at the action point is to turn from art director to the designer in the second cycle. The second cycle can be repeated for the purpose of refinement. By combining reflection on other designers' work, my own experience as a designer, experts' view as well as my theoretical understanding of the subject, I am able to synthesise and produce proposals.
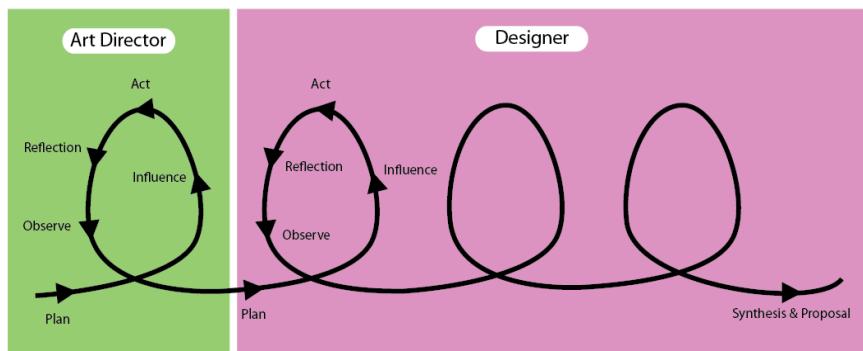
Figure 1-2 Cyclic process of action research in context

The role of art director and that of designer are clearly different. In the context of this research, designer's role is to interpret information and situations and respond to them through visual communications and presentation of ideas and messages. Designer in normal professional situation often works under the direction of an art director. Art direction, on the other hand, in fact is a broad term that is used to describe a variety of similar jobs and tasks. It is possible to identity a variety of functions that fall as within the role of an art director. According to ADG, an art direction online community, the art director's position is the one which is responsible for the visual look of a project. The definition of an art director is undetermined in a clear and precise way. Essentially, and for the purpose of this research, the art director is concerned with directing the art and its production, ensuring that the images, whether moving or still,

are aesthetically resolved, carry the desired meaning and deliver a message in an effective and positive way. At its best, the art director is able to change and influence people's views and emotions. It is essential that the art director is fully conversant with an understanding of how the visual world works. Simple elements such as composition and contrast between light and dark, colour, typography, photographic images, as well as the golden section and other pictorial principles, must constitute an essential part of the art director's visual vocabulary.

7.2 The Creation Of A Visual Identity For China

As mentioned above, the creation of a nation visual identity is a rather complex one; especially given that nations and graphic practices are essentially dynamic by nature. The contemporariness of a visual identity is indeed encompassed in this dynamic relation between being contemporary on one hand and fulfilling the desired aim on the other.

I have designed a brief in order to develop a sample visual experiment that should address and interrogate the creation of a China visual identity logo. The brief indicates that currently China has no unified visual identity in the form of a logo. Apart from the Chinese flag that represents the nation and the country, the only other visual identity is to be found in the Chinese emblem. In a conscious decision to maintain a sense of focus, the participants/designers in the brief are limited to a small number. The brief identifies that the new China aspires to be a leading country embracing the following values—

- Democracy and the rule of law (clean from corruption)
- Innovation and creativity
- Quality-oriented products and services
- Investing in its people (education, social and health care)
- Green (environmentally friendly)
- A responsible international player

- Sustainable economy
- Open to the outside world and welcoming talents

The designers were requested to undertake the task to design a logo to reflect some of the values stated above. The target audience for this project is people from outside China. Main competitors' logos were also provided (appendix 2). There were no restrictions for the use of any visual material that the designers may see fit for this project. However, the production had to be transferable digitally. The design is preferably in colour though black-and-white is also acceptable. The following information was adopted as support material to help the designers to accomplish their mission.

When developing a brand identity to represent a country, the initial challenge is rooted in representing the essence of the brand and its positioning. What the country brand is, distilled from a core idea, should become the focus for the visual representation. Whether the identity is a literal representation or is more abstract is one of many variables that must be carefully considered.

Symbol, colours, arrangement, form and typography are elements that can play a role in defining an ownable and memorable brand identity. This sounds straightforward, but many countries with a variety of destinations or rich cultural or geographic assets can't easily be depicted through one specific icon. Natural characteristics, regional animals or architectural landmarks may not serve as a comprehensive symbolic representation of a nation and all that it offers. Perhaps this is why some countries … default to their national flag or other abstract elements to create a sense of distinction.

Countries with separate brands for investment or business audiences and governmental seals/brands can add to the confusion and challenge of establishing a single asset to represent a country. Some countries choose to let advertising campaigns drive the design of their brand, often combining key message or tagline with logo. Though this may create targeted results, it runs the risk of being cluttered and fragmented.

Campaigns come and go – brands must last. Consistency and a sense of permanence are critical. Designing a country brand is unquestionably a major challenge. Not only does the brand need to represent something broad and diverse, it must work technically well within a wide range of brand endorsements or associations,

channels and devices. Great brands inspire and endure. They are
well considered, expertly crafted and indelible.
(source: http://www.countrybrandindex.com)

7.2.1 Practice Response And Analysis

The following visual practice responses have been produced by the
participant designers. For the purpose of clarity, each designed logo will
be accompanied by a brief description and interpretation of my own. This
will be followed by visual analysis of the logos/posters on their suitability,
appropriateness, visual impact, aesthetic values and practicalities.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, I will deploy a good use of secondary
resources as expert opinion that will support me as the art director in the
process of analytical direction. Robert E. D'Souza and Tim Metcalf are
the two visual experts selected for this task. D'Souza is the Programme
Leader for Graphic Arts at the University of Southampton and an
outstanding graphic designer. With extensive industrial experience as
graphic designer for companies such as Saatchi & Saatchi, he is a well
respected expert on visual arts. Metcalf is also an experienced lecturer in
graphic design at the same university. He is an excellent graphic designer
and owns a design company based in London.

Image 7-1 Logo design by Ni R.

This design makes good use of Latin letters and introduces familiar symbols such as the red star that bears an association with a current perception of China. On the other hand, it presents a playful typography that is also similar to Chinese ink brush calligraphy, particularly in the capital C. The yellow and red colours are derived from the Chinese flag.

D'Souza argued that the colours are a strong combination but that the word 'China' in black doesn't convey a positive meaning. The 'C' with its Chinese brush effect works well and immediately gives the impression of Chinese culture. The letter 'i' highlighted in yellow is a good idea and the red star is very eye catching but may be competing visually and conceptually with the 'C' in the same logo. Considering its potential political implication, the red star could be smaller and softer to eliminate or minimize the connection with Communism. Perhaps green would be a better colour than black for the rest of the logo, so that China may be interpreted as environmentally aware.

Metcalf suggested that the logo looks fun, young and creatively free. The brush mark of the capital 'C' raises the connection with Chinese art and its unique language. It has energy and a sense of creativity. He observed that it almost broke through the traditional China and yet has maintained

a reference to it. It looks simple, free and engaging. It represents the creativity aspect in the brief.

I have asked him whether he thinks that the perception people have of the red star and the association with Communism would portray a negative image of China. He suggested that it is true, and that the red star is arguably the most powerful and eye-catching element here. He liked the subtlety and delicate of the 'C' with its brush strokes but the red star definitely attracts attention first and could present a completely different impression to what it intended. He thought the logo needs adaptation: to transfer the attention to the brush strokes and perhaps somewhat downplay the star, because currently it is definitely prominent and makes a strong reference to Communism.

A close examination and analysis of Ni's logo shows that it is clear that both experts share similar views. The task was to address new values that China wishes to embrace. Many of those have been captured by this design. The impression it gives is forward-thinking, young, colourful, dynamic, energetic, and it has a strong connection to Chinese heritage. However, its visual manifestation is not completely resolved as its emphasis on Communism is visually central to the logo, which in turn suggests that the designer is promoting the notion that a connection with current values (Communism) is not something that should be completely dismissed or erased. This may indicate that the designer does not acknowledge that the governance in China is viewed negatively by others. Instead the designer presents a compromise between references to heritage, politics and a new young dynamic China. In my view the intentions are worthy however the manifestation, as indicated by D'Souza and Metcalf, suggests that the focal point of this design is the red star and its connection to Communism. This is not as positive as the logo's designer intended it to be.

Image 7-2 Logo Design by Cheng Y.

This logo on first impression is not particularly clear, yet it is very strong in terms of its use of colour. It holds certain pictorial values that are associated with abstraction. The cross above the letter 'I' sends out a negative message.

D'Souza suggested that this logo is difficult to read and the last letter is unclear whether it is an 'a' or not. The immediate feeling of this typography is very distressed. If you see it as a human, it looks as if it is shivering, distressed and uncomfortable. There is no feeling of peace, harmony or space but of something like destruction and fear. It has a very negative emotional connotation. D'Souza agreed with me that using a cross to replace the dot on the 'I' of course makes it worse. He suggested that the whole image looks very negative and distressing. The bright colour makes people think of blood.

Metcalf made very similar points that the logo feels very angry and that the cross is a very negative connotation. The fine lines around the letters are like vibrations and like carving: it looks very aggressive. The red colour looks like blood so the whole thing looks very negative.

The designer's attempt to apply the red to his design as a reference to the flag again indicates a strong cultural identity connection to China and its current systems, ignoring new values stated in the brief. Lack of understanding of the brief is rather clear through the visual expression made by the designer. He has failed to address any of the proposed positive values, instead acting emotionally in responding to his own personal perception of the current China. The logo itself has many visual problems and in my view it represents an unsuccessful attempt to respond to the brief. It however helps to convey to other designers what to avoid in such a situation.


Image 7-3 Logo design by Ives D.

This design immediately suggests a positive and rather pleasant feeling with the notion of growth, youth, vigour. It is a graphically strong and confident image.

D'Souza suggested that the colour and the shape of a flower are suitable for a nation logo, and the map in the middle draws a connection with the country and the stamens give it an aspirational and artistic feeling. I questioned the suitability of using a map of China with undefined borders on the east (image 7-4) that may evoke political conflicting views, and the spread of the stamens may mistakenly suggest China's desire for expansion into other neighbouring countries. D'Souza responded that in the case of China, the use of the map is debatable but the stamens should not cause misunderstanding because the audience tends to see the image as a whole and to understand it holistically rather than interpret or question every single detail. He thought the logo works well but the word 'China' can be confusing, because it is difficult to identify whether the second letter is an 'r 'or an 'n' or a lower case 'h'. Obviously the designer tried to create a unique typography for this logo but it doesn't work well. He pointed out that the 'l' is supposed to work as a stem of the flower but it is a missed opportunity that it is not in a green colour to make the connection more noticeable.

Metcalf suggested that the logo is very interesting and the colour and the shape of the flower is almost a perfect reflection of China in many westerners' view. He agreed with me that the logo in general looks very friendly, feminine and welcoming. He appreciated the simplicity of the overall design, and especially the way the map is distorted by adding the stamens. He thought that this logo is brandable and positively loaded. It is practical because it fits onto small objects of the size of a coin and yet won't lose anything in design terms. The typography is very playful; for instance, the lower case 'h' is mixed with other capital letters. When I mentioned the possible political debate on the border issue that the map may cause, Metcalf responded that the logo is strong and correct graphically but not necessarily politically in this sense. He suggested that perhaps the designer could blur the debatable area or create a stamen to mask it to avoid problems. However, he did not suggest a practicable solution to the possibility of misreading China's intension for expansion.
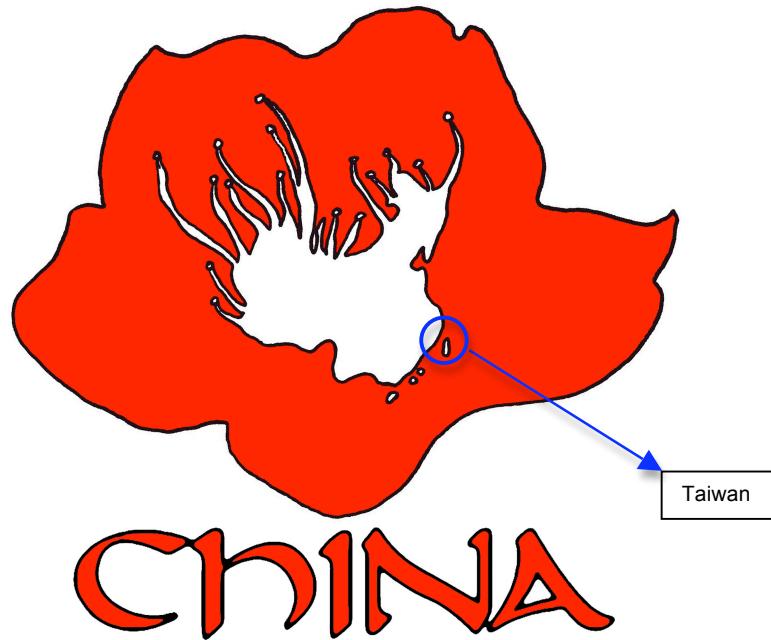
Image 7-4 Problem with using a map

Although this logo is seen as a positive graphic entity, it is not suitable as a nation logo. Political tension in the region will inevitably dictate that there will be attention to detail when it comes to borders and maps. The inappropriate use of the map in this way may indicate political insensitivity in its conception. The widespread fear of a rapidly growing China may be exaggerated by misreading into the expansion of the map, and therefore as an art director, I determined that the use of the map in the nation logo in the context of China should be avoided.

Image 7-5 Logo design by Chen S.

This logo presents a traditional attitude with a strong reference to the national flag, national emblem (image 7-5) and many other national signs. It is important at this stage to indicate that there are many similarities between a national emblem and a nation logo in terms of its function and its content. However, the major difference between them in my view is that the emblem has a strong connection to the nation's tradition and is regulated by national law and is therefore unchangeable, It bears no relation to its contemporary sense; whereas the national logo is a graphic symbol of a nation in its contemporary setting, and therefore flexible and changeable according to the direction and identity of a nation.

Image 7-6 Chinese national emblem

D'Souza felt that the colours are very grey, muted and could be problematic. It doesn't stand out. The strengths of this logo are the essential motifs, the circular coin shape and the hand. They are very strong and immediately draw connection and communicate. But the overall design is too crowded and needs simplification. The actual design suggests harmony, for example, through the circular shape and the joint hand, so the word harmony in Chinese is not necessary. Creating a successful brand is about taking things away, or the reductive philosophy of design, so that people remember the idea, not the details. The logo needs repositioning to give more clarity. The wheat on the left should be in a golden colour or green if they are supposed to be branches. At the moment the overall colour looks very serious and sober, and it needs brightening up. Wrong colours give the wrong emotional feel to the logo; perhaps bright green or bright yellow would work better. A logo or a brand should work at different scales; this one may work on a large scale but not on a small scale. The banner at the top and the ribbon at the bottom are sending out the same message but they are different supporting devices. Even if they remain the current shapes, the ribbon should move away from the coin-shaped image to give some breathing space; at the moment they interfere with each other.

Metcalf commented that the logo is visually very striking and powerful by using the hand with reference to the stars of the national flag. The circle shape and symmetrical position normally are very strong and make an impression. It is good for a logo to adopt this kind of symmetrical shape because it works well in different posters without interfering with the background. The problem of it is the colour palette; it is a bit dull. Normally red and bright yellow or golden colours are associated with China. He argues that the pale green used in this logo looks unhealthy and works against the concept of the 'green environment' in the brief. He recommended bright green to reflect the message in the brief, and suggested that it would look healthier. The other problem with this logo, according to him, is that it works well on screen but could be problematic if it were to be used on a small scale, for instance, on a coin. In this situation sometimes an adapted version is developed to get around this kind of problem, such as using straight lines to replace the many details of the wheat in this logo. The logo is symbolic so the simpler the better. Metcalf argued that he could sense democracy hinted at in this logo, and he regarded this a very intelligent logo. It is not superficial but very loaded with meanings, though the Chinese words may be impossible to read for a non-Chinese audience.

Because of its similarity both in connotation and image to the Chinese national emblem, the design does not respond effectively to the new values indicated in the brief. Many issues associated with it cause difficulties for reproduction. The colours are unattractive. Therefore this does not appear to be contemporary and is largely limited by the emblem. The logo is also relatively complex in its graphic makeup, which makes it difficult to remember. Logos generally are designed to leave a lasting impression in people's minds. As Metcalf suggested, simplifying the logo is one of the criteria for its success.

Image 7-7 Logo design 1 by Yang R.

This logo visually references the working classes in China who are regarded as the major forces behind the development of the new China. The logo embraces familiar symbols, such as the wheat representing the farmer and the gear representing the worker. It has a very strong connection with current Communism in China.

D'Souza pointed out that this is a good design. It is a strong reminder of the communist elements and the whole shape looks very balanced, almost like a medal, representing glory and honour. The logo looks very traditional, not contemporary at all. The only contemporary element in this logo is the two ribbons at the bottom where you can tell that the curves and the pink colour are modern. The whole thing looks positive and bright.

Metcalf declared that it is a very interesting design. Even though it is loaded with meaning, it is very simple and sends out a clear message to the targeted audience. He found it visually strong.

This is another case that shares many similarities with the national emblem. As the experts indicated, it is very traditional and not as contemporary as it should be. It faces similar challenges as the previous design (image 7-5). It draws a strong connection with Communism and the political propaganda posters in China during the Cultural Revolution. Although it is visually powerful, I as the art director decided to avoid many of the design elements used in this logo in order to distance from the negative historic event.

Image 7-8 Logo design 2 by Yang R.

The star occupies the central position in this design. The designer has deliberately chosen the shape of a familiar star within the Chinese national flag and by simply changing the colour of its background he is able successfully to alter its association while maintaining its original relationship to its national identity. The logo as a whole is clear, modern, with reference to Chinese brush strokes. My only difficulty is with the strip line; as a message it is rather confusing.

D'Souza held that this is a clean design and did not draw any connection between the star and the political party. The slogan needs to be changed to something like "Discovering China". The colour is well utilised; it is positive yet has no connection with blood or anything negative.

Metcalf said that he could actually imagine that it was a real proposal. It is not too creatively wild but it is interesting enough to appear as a straightforward solution. The designer used a toned-down version of the brush mark used in Ni's design, but that is what you would expect in a commercial world. If you showed me this as the real thing, I would believe in it. The star here is not red, not massive and not overpowering, and almost completely disconnected from Communism. Metcalf proposed that the strip line needs rewording and it is debatable whether it should be positioned on the right or in the middle.

The 'C' featured in the logo reminded me of the first dragon shape jade piece mentioned in Chapter 3 (image 3-1). This is a balanced logo, visually well considered, and it has positioned itself at the centre of the brief. It has accomplished many of the values mentioned in the brief. Although it is restrained, it might be long lasting and would suit many applications. The strip line is problematic indeed and I agree with both visual experts in that regard.

In the next section, I will reflect visually upon what I have gained both from the designers as well as the visual experts.

7.2.2 Visual Reflection

In this section, I will explore in design terms the visual connotation of a contemporary logo for China in accordance with the brief outlined previously. The design I will produce is not intended to be a proposal for a final design but it offers a sense of direction as to what are the main characteristics of an initiative for a nation logo that may be part of a nation branding exercise for China. As mentioned before, a full nation branding exercise demands the consultation and participation of all stakeholders. I have not taken this into consideration and acknowledge that the brief for a full nation branding exercise would necessitate a separate brief for its logo, consistent with the overall strategy for the nation branding exercise. In any brief for designers, no matter how many times it may be repeated, it is inevitable that the results would be different each time. This project therefore is no different and will not claim that the design I produce is a complete and resolved result.

I will comment as an art director on the logo designs produced and the way the designers responded to the brief. I will produce a logo in response to the brief with the advantage of having acquired expert opinion on the success and failure of other designs already produced. My logo design will be informed by several fundamental aspects born of this enquiry, including:

- Contemporary visual design
- Commercial advertising and identity
- China's art, culture and heritage
- China's culture of advertising
- Examples of nation branding exercised and brand identities by other countries
- Modern China and its new values
- Strength and weaknesses of China brand

In terms of practice, it is not always possible to explain the precise reason for taking a particular artistic decision. Given this limitation, instead I will attempt explicitly to show visually the process of thinking and the steps that led to my final design. However, I am able to explain some aesthetic decisions during the design process, including the conscious selection of the dragon piece taking the place of letter C, and the introduction of Chinese calligraphy elements to form the English letters in the word China. The choices were made in order to convey deeply rooted connection to the Chinese culture and its heritage, the strength of its brand. I also consciously avoided the deployment of any visual elements from the genre of the two periods, 1930s commercialisation and the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) because of their specific connotation with the Western invasion and political propaganda respectively. The choice of the green colour is because of its representation of environmentally friendly and freshness. A commentary by D'Souza and Metcalf was invited in order to critically evaluate the work and help to determine the final design for this purpose.

Image 7-9 Lu's experiment 1

Ancient country, new attitude

Image 7-10 Lu's experiment 2

Ancient country, new attitude

Image 7-11 Lu's experiment 3

一 工 入

Image 7-12 Chinese characters in Kai typeface

CHINA

Image 7-13 Lu's experiment 4

CHINA

Image 7-14 Lu's experiment 5

Image 7-15 Lu's experiment 6

CHINA
ancient nation, new attitude

Image 7-16 Lu's experiment 7

CHINA
ancient nation, new attitude

Image 7-17 Lu's experiment 8

D'Souza pointed out that the early designs (image 7-9, 7-10 and 7-11) are too complex and have too many things going on. The letters are too far from each other and the initial typeface selected is good but too sober. The last design (image 7-17) appears to be the strongest one. It has some calligraphic movements and goes well with the 'C'. He thinks the logo now has a flow, and it is not too serious yet not too lighthearted. It also has a right balance between ancient and new, as mentioned in the strap line. It seems a very solid logo and it came to the designer naturally. He suggested that I should try to add an eye in the C-shaped dragon, and test its suitability visually. He also suggested moving the registered mark next to the foot of the 'A' so it does not catch too much attention or disturb the main design.

Metcalf expressed very similar views on the development of the logo. The early designs, especially the one with a round red flag as the dot, are too busy and have too many colours and focal points, which may cause confusion. He thinks that it is wise to simplify it by removing the round red flag. Although he argues that the one with the yellow star (image 7-11) could work because of its subtlety, he agrees that unifying the colour of the whole logo is a good move. He thinks that the yellow logo on red is not as good as green on white, because red and yellow are familiar colours for China. Using familiar or representative colours in the logo, some people may argue that it is still the same tone and that there is nothing new as claimed in the strap line. It is a very interesting jump from red and yellow to green and white. As to design, the lines of the 'C' need to be smoother and share the same flow as other letters. The strap line should be stretched to the full length of 'China' because currently it looks like the line is highlighting 'HINA' (image 7-17). The typeface of the strap line is too ordinary and doesn't coordinate very well with the design of 'China' itself. A typeface that is not too conventional may work better and make some connection with the main design. Although the green is a good choice, it may be worthwhile trying a few different types of green to decide the most suitable one. Using a white background as part of the logo helps the whole thing to keep its refreshing feeling and to stand out,

but maybe different shapes can be considered. For example, turning one straight angle of the box to a curve may add some design element to it and coordinate with the curving design of 'China'. It is important to make sure that every single detail has been thought about and decided carefully.

The experts' views confirmed that the design I developed could work in reality but many design details need further improvement and fine tuning to meet the expectations of the contemporary advertising world. The following are the improved logos for Brand China, of which the last one is the most mature and successful in my view. The jade green colour looks fresh, young, energetic and visually prominent. It may also suggest the connection with the green bamboos that have appeared distinctively in the movie *The House of Flying Daggers*. I decided to abandon the idea of adding an eye to the dragon as I think overemphasizing the dragon as an animal may dilute its function as a 'C' and distract the attention from other calligraphic letters.

Image 7-18 Lu's experiment 9

Image 7-19 Lu's experiment 10

Image 7-20 Lu's experiment 11

Image 7-21 Lu's experiment 12

Image 7-22 Lu's experiment 13

Image 7-23 Lu's experiment 14

Image 7-24 Lu's experiment 15

Image 7-25 Lu's experiment 16

Image 7-26 Lu's experiment –final logo, style 1

Image 7-27 Lu's experiment –final logo, style 2

Image 7-28 Lu's experiment –final logo, style 3

This chapter set out to investigate through visual means the possible extension of the theoretical results of the research, particularly in addressing the weaknesses identified in Chapter 6: governance and people. I was involved both as an art director as well as a designer. As an art director, in the first stage of the experiment I have developed the design brief based on theoretical findings. Followed by analysis and reflection up on designs produced by other designers in response to the brief. In the second stage I participated in this process adopting the role of the designer.

For this experiment I have deployed an action research method particularly adopting the cyclic process. In the initial cycle I was able to take the role as an art director. Soon after the cycle, I was able to conduct critical reflection that has led me to shift my role to that of a designer. Through this process, I was able to develop a way to extend the possibilities of role play by shifting my position as practitioner and consequently altering the results of the exercise. In other words this development has enabled me to command much greater control over the project and its results.

The visual responses that have been received from the designers who participated in the experiment indicated that their understanding of China's new values in contrast to the old values are rather superficial and not as informed as this study indicates. This limitation is reflected in their response to the values indicated in the brief. My understanding and engagement with the subject of branding China is theoretically more engaged and better informed, and in my view a deep understanding of the theory will generate a better connection with the practice in this context, especially when the practice goes through the process of review, reflection and interrogation by experts in the filed. Those experts have provided professional opinion in the design work both my own as well as other designs produced that led to the final logo design.

This process has resulted in a progressive improvement of the logo design and generated a synthesised logo that responded to the majority of the values indicated in the brief. In fact the real conclusion for this chapter is manifested in the final visual logo.

8   CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

8.1   Conclusion

As shown at the beginning of this study the economic strength of China at the beginning of the 21st century is generally acknowledged and even in the current global recession it is maintaining its position as the main contender for the position of the leading economic nation of the future. The realpolitik at the level of international relations has meant that the unresolved ideological animosities between the west and China have been effectively put aside by both sides. It could be argued that there is little need for China to be overly concerned by western public perceptions of it as a nation or brand as, in the end, it is the realities of the emerging global economies that will determine the relative positions of nations and not how they are perceived. It may be in the not too distant future that it is Indian, Russian or African and not Western perceptions of China that will matter the most. However as has been shown the, so far, unparalleled economic position of the USA has been accompanied by a highly effective nation brand. The USA is the exemplary global capitalist state whose national interests have been relentlessly pursued through pro-active foreign policies through political, military and economic interventions. It has become synonymous with the idea of liberal capitalism in a way that it has almost become a generic brand. However as has also been shown that the economic strength and 'brand recognition' of a nation does not mean it will necessarily score better than smaller or economically weaker nations on perception measurements such as the Anholt Nation Brands Index. The pursuit of national interests through foreign policy can clearly effect international perceptions of a nation and to an extent high visibility of a brand can also make it vulnerable to negative associations. However, this study maintains that China as a brand is yet to emerge. Its low ranking in the NBI relative to its

global economic significance is in part due to negative perceptions particularly in areas such as governance but may also be due to a lack of knowledge and understanding of the nation as a modern state rather than as an ancient civilization. It is particularly these aspects of its brand identity that this study has addressed in the practice of brand logo development.

The study does not claim to have arrived at a definitive brand identity for China but it has arrived at a working definition of nation branding as a strategically managed process of applying branding techniques to a nation in order to gain competitive advantages by improving the perceived image and promoting the principle values of the nation. The study has provided an example, through reflective design practice, of how this definition can be applied in the context of design throughout all the stages of the design process from formulating a brief to finished design. As has been demonstrated in the final chapter of the thesis a full understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of China as a nation brand, through the application of this definition, can be usefully applied in the field of design. This may not necessarily entail the design of a single logo that could alone stand for a contemporary nation brand but an awareness of the concept in the representation of the nation to international markets through design has been shown to be possible and may bring significant economic and political benefits. Of course, the issues that need to be addressed by China to fulfil the promise of the envisaged brand are much bigger and infinitely more complex than the problems presented by the design of a successful logo. However, as a logo is able to condense and convey a vast and complex array of tacit information, subjective impressions and semiotic and symbolic significance so the task of designing one provides a powerful focal point in which to envisage the strengths and future aspirations of China as a brand.

In its investigation of the specificity of China as a nation in relation to branding and advertising together with an analysis of the nation through

the adaptation and application of Anholt's model the research has provided the conceptual framework and theoretical tools with which China can be addressed as a brand through further research and brand design and management practice. An example of how these tools can be used has been given through the presentation of their application in the addressing of specific practical and conceptual problems through a reflective narrative on the process of designing a contemporary nation brand logo for China. The findings of this research into the theory and practice of nation branding provides the tools and conceptual groundwork for ways in which China can envisage itself as not just a leading nation brand but a leading economy. If a brand is a promise then China needs not only to be fully aware of what is being promised but actively take control of the brand in order to fulfill the promise. At the same time as China becomes a fully developed leading global economy it will need to express its cultural, political and economic confidence not only through its presentation but through its actions. As a nation it has already gone through significant political and social change in tandem with its economic development but greater and perhaps more radical change may be necessary in the future but a secure and self-confident nation is one capable of such change and ultimately it is this self-confidence and its ability to adapt to its responsibilities as a leading global economy that will ensure the strength and sustainability of its brand.

Other findings that this research reveals include

- The compatibility of research methods relating to action and reflection has been adopted to become consistent with my art direction and design concepts. This was primarily based on the paradigm of action research with particular emphasis on its cyclic nature. The normal approach to cyclic process in action research is that the same cycle will be repeated and the participant often occupies the same position. This research discovers and has extended this method to enable further flexibility that allows interchangeability between cycles. In other words, in the first cycle I was occupying the role of an art director, and

the process of this cycle has led me, as a participant/practitioner, to take action as a designer. This has enabled better informed results because I am not only reflecting, acting upon and synthesising results but also allowing a shift in the role, according to the need of the research/practice.

The research also reveals that effective action research requires the researcher/practitioner to be fully aware of the different types of knowledge and understand its concepts and origins.

- It reveals that the value of culture in the context of nation branding and the way it is rooted in Chinese history may overcome ideology (governance), particularly because the underlining values of a society are mainly a product of distinctive culture and history. China's strong culture and history has been able to withstand years of change. Its relationship with the West in terms of taking on America's image in the nation branding exercise, may yield a recreation of the shifting image between themselves and America. It is arguable that China's faith in its culture and history may prove to be the ultimate decider in its future destiny. The challenges for the China brand will remain the choice between social relationships and the rule of law, communities and the individual, steadiness and freedom & democracy.

- In addition, China has realised the need to improve its image and reputation on its way to be a world superpower, but its awareness and systematic and coherent understanding of nation branding concept is uncertain. In addition to restless efforts in enhancing its strength such as culture, heritage, tourism and business opportunities, realising and addressing weaknesses is an important component that cannot be ignored in building a successful and sustainable nation brand. A successful nation brand should be improved overall in all six dimensions. China must realise that the weaknesses of its perceived image lie in governance and people, while culture and heritage is the strength. Addressing the key weaknesses should be the priority for an

improved nation image. This includes two aspects: investing in people and improving its governing system and ethos * (see details below). Without addressing these problems, a nation branding exercise could easily slip into the trap of propaganda or an attempted whitewash.

- China should understand that nation-branding strategy cannot be valid or sustainable unless all its stakeholders are involved and agree on the principles of the nation. Accordingly an imposing or oppressive approach and behaviour by the Chinese government will inevitably lead to failure.

- The 2008 Beijing Olympics demonstrated a single event approach to nation branding. China and any nation benefit from the understanding that nation branding is a long-term process. It is wrong to expect rapid improvement or a quick-fix through single events or short term advertising campaigns.

- It is also revealed that the majority of the Chinese governors and decision- makers essentially come from an engineering background, which reflects a results-oriented attitude at the expense of human values in its governing style. This research maintains that a diversification of the backgrounds of the senior leadership that would include law, academia, medicine, the creative sector and entrepreneurship, would contribute to improved governance.

8.2 Directions For Future Research

- Based on the visual identity experiment for China, a larger sample both in terms of design briefs and design works would merit a much greater visually- based study of the possibilities involved in branding China. These briefs will be able to address different aspects of Brand China, including people, governance, exports, culture and heritage, and immigration and investment.

- A study on the possibilities of China modernising in its own shape and competing with the Western powers in all directions, with improved political and cultural influences through carefully managed nation-branding strategy in addition to its growing economic power.

- The concept of Nation Branding emerged in the era of globalisation. In the current climate of world recession, protectionism, flagged out by American President's 'Buy America' campaign, is coming back to life. Developed countries may raise trade barriers to encourage the recovery of their own industries. Some researchers have already alarmed the possible end of the era of globalisation. If protectionism prevails over globalisation, is it still necessary for China and other nations to engage with nation branding? If so, what kind of different characteristics it may display or have to adopt in the context of China?

Appendixes

1. Timeline of Chinese Dynasties

Designation of Dynasty, Subdivisions, and Years	Years of Dynastic Period

Mythical Rulers
    Fu Xi (Tai Hao): 2953 B.C.
    Shen Nong (Yan Di): 2838 B.C.
    Five Emperors*
        1. You Xiong (Huang Di): 2698-2599 B.C.
        2. Jin Tian (Shao Han): 2598-2515 B.C.
        3. Gao Yang (Zhuan Xu): 2514-2437 B.C.
        4. Gao Xin (Di Ku): 2436-2367 B.C.
        5. Gao Xin (Di Zhi): 2366-2357 B.C.
	2953-2357 B.C.

Patriarchs
    Tao Tang (Yao): 2357-2258 B.C.
    You Yu (Shun): 2255-2205 B.C.
	2357-2205 B.C.

Xia Dynasty Dating estimates from archeological sites	2205-1766 [1806] B.C. [~2000-1500 B.C.] [~2100-1600 B.C.]
Shang Dynasty Dating estimates from archeological sites	1766-1121 B.C. [1700-1027 B.C.] [1600-1066 B.C.]

Zhou Dynasty
    Kingdom of Zhou (Eastern Zhou): 1121 [1027/1134]-770 B.C.
    Chun Qiu (Period of the Annals; Spring and Autumn): 770-464 [476] B.C.
    Zhan Guo (Warring States): 464 [475]-221 B.C.
	1121-255 B.C.
	[1066-221 B.C.]
	[770-221 B.C.]

Qin Dynasty Qin Shi Huang Di [first emperor]: 221-210 B.C.	221-206 B.C.

Han Dynasty**
    Western Han: 206 B.C.-25 A.D. [9 A.D.]
    Eastern Han: 25 A.D.-220 A.D.
	206 B.C.-220 A.D.

Three Kingdoms
    Wei (North): 220-265 A.D.
    Shu (West): 221-265 A.D.
    Wu (South): 222 [229]-280 A.D.
	220-280 A.D.

Jin Dynasty
    Western Jin: 265-317 A.D.
    Eastern Jin: 317-420 A.D.
	265-420 A.D.

Song Dynasty	420-479 A.D.

Six Dynasties
  1. Qi Dynasty: 479-502 A.D.
  2. Liang Dynasty: 502-557 A.D.
  3. Chen Dynasty: 557-589 A.D.
  4. Wei Dynasty: 386-557 [533] A.D.
      Northern Wei Dynasty: 386-535 A.D.
      Western Wei Dynasty: 535-557 A.D.
      Eastern Wei Dynasty: 534-550 A.D.
  5. Northern Qi Dynasty: 550-589 [577] A.D.
  6. Northern Zhou Dynasty: 557-589 A.D.
	479-589 A.D.

Sui Dynasty	589 [581]-618 A.D.
Tang Dynasty	618-907 A.D.

Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms ***
  1. Later Liang: 907-923 A.D.
  2. Later Tang: 923-936 A.D.
  3. Later Jin: 936-947 A.D.
  4. Later Han: 947-951 A.D.
  5. Later Zhou: 951-960 A.D.
	907-960 A.D.

Song Dynasty
  Northern Song: 960-1127 A.D.
  Southern Song: 1127-1280 A.D. (Jin)
	960-1280 A.D.

Yuan Dynasty (Mongol)	1280-1368 A.D.
Ming Dynasty	1368-1644 A.D.
Qing Dynasty (Manchu)	1644-1911 A.D.

* Historians have not agreed on who were the Five Kings, as the literature is ambiguous and conflicting. The basic list is Huang Di, Shao Hao, Zhuan Xu, Di Yao [or Di Ku], and Di Shun [or Di Zhi].

** The transition between the Western (or former) and Eastern (or later) Han Dynasties is marked by the rule of the Xin king Wang Mang, from 9 A.D. [6 A.D.] to 23 A.D. and the usurper Xuan for one or two more years; they are often subsumed under the Western Han period. At the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty, Emperor Liu Shan ruled in exile from 224-263 A.D.

*** The Ten Kingdoms were the Wu, Nan Tang (Southern Tang), Wu Yue, Chu, Min, Nan Han (Southern Han), Qian Shu (Former Shu), Hou Shu (Later Shu), Jing Nan (Southern Jing), and Bei Han (Northern Han). There were also two Dynasties that overlapped with this period and the Song Dynasty as follows: Liao 916-1125 A.D.; Western Xia 1038 [1032]-1227 A.D.

(source: http://www.itmonline.org/arts/dynasties.htm accessed 17 July 2009)

2. Sample Logos of other countries included in the design brief

(source: http://www.countrybrandindex.com, accessed 23 July 2009)

Bibliography

1. Aaker D.A. (1996), *Building Strong Brands*, Free Press Business, London.
2. Adcock D., Bradfield R., Halborg A. and Ross C. (1993), *Marketing: Principles and Practice*, Pitman Publishing, USA.
3. Aitchison J. (2002), *How Asia Advertises: the Most Successful Campaigns in Asia-Pacific and the Marketing Strategies Behind Them*, Wiley, Singapore.
4. Anholt S. (2007), *Competitive Identity: The New Brand Mangment for Nations, Cities and Regions*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
5. Anholt S. and Hildreth J. (2004), *Brand America: The Mother of All Brands*, Cyan, London,.
6. Anholt S. (2005), *Brand Beyond Business*, Paper on Earthspeak Conference (n.d.).
7. Anklesaria Aiyar S.S., article The Times of India, *It's goodbye Chindia and hello Chimerica*, The Times of India, 19 Apr 2009.
8. Appelbaum S. (1987), *Traditional Chinese Design*, Dover Publications, New York.
9. Ash T. (2008), *On an Auspicious Anniversary, Here are Four Keys to China's Peaceful Rise*, The Guardian, 18 December 2008, available from www.guardian.co.uk, accessed 23 December 2008.
10. Bartle J. (1999), *The Advertising Contribution*, in L. Butterfield (ed.), *Excellence in Advertising*, Butterworth-Heinemanne, Oxford.
11. Bearden W., Ingram T. and Laforge R. (1995), *Marketing: Principles & Perspectives*, Irwin, USA.
12. Becker and Howard S. (1996), *The Epistemology of Qualitative Research,* University of Chicago Press. [Ethnography and human development: context and meaning in social inquiry / edited by Richard Jessor, Anne Colby, and Richard A. Shweder].

13. Berger J. (2003), *XXX: The Power of Sex in Contemporary Design*, Rockport, Hong Kong.

14. Berkowitz P. et al (2007), *Brand China: Using the 2008 Olympic Games to Enhance China's Image*, Journal *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, Vol. 3, 2, pp164-178, available from www.palgrave-journals.com/pb (accessed 15 May 2009)

15. Bianchini F. et al (2007), *Thinking Culturally About Place*, Journal *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, Vol. 3, 4, 280-286. Available from www.palgrave-journals.com/pb, (accessed 9 November 2008).

16. Bovee C., Thill J., Dovel G. and Wood M. (1995), *Advertising Excellence*, McGraw-Hill, USA.

17. Brown J. (2007), *Public Diplomacy as a Global Phenomenon, 2006: An Internet-based Overview of English-Language World Media Reports on Public Diplomacy-Part 2: Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa*, Journal *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, Vol. 3, 3 252-262. Available from www.palgrave-journals.com/pb, (accessed 11 November 2008).

18. Bristow M. (2008), article *Stories China's Media Could Not Write*, BBC News, 6 January 2008, available from http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/, accessed 23 December 2008.

19. Bristow M. (2008), article *Bitter Taste Over China Baby Milk*, BBC News, 17 September 2008, available from http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/, accessed 23 December 2008.

20. Butterfield L. (1999), *Excellence in Advertising,* Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford.

21. Cahan A. S. (2006)*, Chinese Label Art 1900-1976*, Schiffer Publishing, China.

22. Cascio W. and Boudreau J. (2008), *Investing in People: Financial Impact of Human Resource Initiatives*, Pearson Education, Inc., New Jersey.

23. Chen C., and Feng Y. (2004), *Old Advertisements and Popular Culture: posters, calendars and cigarettes, 1900-1950*, Long River Press, San Francisco.

24. Chen R. L. (2005), *The History of Chinese Contemporary Art and Design*, Hunan Science and Technology Publishing, Hunan.

25. Chen, Y. H. (main editor) (2001), *Views from the West: Collection of 19th Century Pith Paper Watercolours Donated by Mr Ifan Williams to the City of Guangzhou*, Chinese Book Press, Beijing.

26. Chen Z.(2008), *Economic Crisis Could Push Reform in China*, Yale Global Online, 12 November 2008, available from http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/article.print?id=11596, accessed 13 March 2009.

27. Chomsky N. (1997), *Media Control: The Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda,* 2nd edition, Seven Stories Press, New York.

28. Clifton R. and Simmons J. (2003), *Brands and Branding,* The Economist, London.

29. Cohen, L. et al. (2007), *Research Methods in Education* (6th ed.), Routledge Falmer, London.

30. Cook, T.D. and Campbell, D.T. (1979), *Quasi-Experimentation: Design and Analysis for Field Settings,* Rand McNally, Chicago, Illinois.

31. Cushing L. and Tompkins A. (2007), *Chinese Posters: Art from the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution*, Chronicle Books, San Francisco.

32. Darmon R. (2004), *Made in China*, Chronicle Books, California.

33. De Chernatory L. (2006), *From Brand Vision to Brand Evaluation: the strategic process of growing and strengthening brands,* 2nd edition, Elsevier Ltd., Oxford.

34. Devane R. (2006), *They dynamics of diaspora networks: Lessons of experience*. WBI development studies, pp59-67.

35. Dick, B. (2000) *A beginner's guide to action research*. Available at http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/arp/guide.html accessed 6 September 2009.

36. Dinnie K. (2008), *Nation Branding: Concepts, Issues, Practice*, Elsevier Ltd., Oxford.

37. Dollar D. (2009), *Global Crisis Spurs Long-Needed Change in China*, Yale Global Online, 20 February 2009, available from

http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/article.print?id=11995, accessed 13 March 2009.

38. Dollar D. (2008), *Keeping Up With China's Olympic Shine-Part 1*, Yale Global Online, 22 September 2008, available from http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/article.print?id=11358 , accessed 13 March 2009.

39. Doyle, P*. (2000), Value based marketing,* Wiley, Chichester.

40. Drezner D.W. (2009), *Fearing China*, Newsweek/newsweek.com, 20 May 2009.

41. Economy E.C. (2004), *The River Runs Black: The Environmental Challenge to China's Future,* Cornell University Press, USA.

42. Elegant S. (2008), *Will the Financial Crisis Bring Upheaval to China*? 25 December 2008, available from http://www.time.com, accessed 8 January 2009.

43. Evans H. and Donald S. (1999), *Picturing Power in the People's Republic of China: posters of the cultural revolution,* Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., USA.

44. Fan Y. (2006), *Branding The Nation: What Is Being Branded?* Journal of Vocation Marketing, 12:1, 5-14, available from http://bura.brunel.ac.uk/bitstream/2438/1286/3/BrandingNat.pdf, accessed 17 July 2009.

45. Farndon J. (2007), *China Rises: How China's Astonishing Growth Will Change the World,* Virgin Books Ltd, London.

46. Fong V.L. (2004), *Only Hope: Coming of Age Under China's One-Child Policy,* Stanford University Press, California.

47. Farndon J. (2007), *China Rises: How China's Astonishing Growth Will Change the World,* Virgin Books Ltd., London.

48. Gartner D. (2007), *Place Branding: Dilemma or Reconciliation between Political Ideology and Economic Pragmatism?* Journal *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, Vol. 3, 1, 3-7. Available from www.palgrave-journals.com/pb, (accessed 11 November 2008).

49. Gibney F. (1982), *Miracle by Design: the real rasons behind Japan's economic success,* Times Books, New York.

50. Glaser M. and Ilic M. (2005), *The Design of Dissent: Socially and Politically Driven Graphics,* Rockport Publisher Inc., Massachusetts.

51. Halligan L. (2008), *China, Brazil and India Belong In the G8*, 18 July 2008, available from http://www.telegraph.co.uk, accessed 23 December 2008.

52. Harris J. (2008), *Identity Theft: The Cultural Colonization of Contemporary Art,* Liverpool University Press+Tate Liverpool, Liverpool.

53. Heimann E. J. (2006), *The Golden Age of Advertising-the 70s*, Taschen, China.

54. Heller S. (2000), *Sex Appeal: The Art of Allure in Graphic and Advertising Design*, Allworth Press, Canada.

55. Hodgkin, R. (1991), *Michael Polanyi - Prophet of life, the universe and everything*, Times Higher Educational Supplement, 27 September, p15.

56. Holborn M., Nystrom T. and Blix H. (2007), *Propaganda: Photographs from Soviet Archives*, Bonnier Books, UK.

57. Hornskov S.B.(2007), *On the Management of Authenticity: Culture in the Place Branding of Oresund*, Journal *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, Vol. 3,4, 317-331. Available from www.palgrave-journals.com/pb, (accessed 11 November 2008).

58. Ind N. (2003), *Beyond Branding: how the new values of transparency and integrity are changing the world of brands,* Kogan Page, London.

59. Jobber D. (2004), *Principles and Practice of Marketing* (4th ed), McGraw-Hill, UK.

60. Kahn J. and Yardley J. (2008), *As China Rises, Pollution Soars*, The New York Times, 28 April 2008. Available from http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/08/25/asia/26china.php, accessed 23 December 2008 and 17 July 2009.

61. Kennedy P. (2009), *New World Order Will Emerge in 2009, with U.S. Plunging*, The Salt Lake Tribune, 1 May 2009, available from www.sltrib.com, accessed 12 January 2009.

62. Klein N. (2002), *No Logo*, Picador, New York.

63. Klein, P.D. (1998, 2005). Epistemology. In E. Craig (Ed.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. London: Routledge. Retrieved December 26, 2008, from http://www.rep.routledge.com/article/P059

64. Kotler P. and Keller L. (2003), *Marketing Management*, Prentice Hall.

65. Kotler P. and Gertner D. (2002), *Country As Brand, Product, and Beyond: A Place Marketing and Brand Management Perspective, Journal of Brand Management*, 9, 249-261.

66. Parker G. (2009), *Foreign Office Reveals Two-Tier Take on G20*, 13 March 2009, available from http://www.ft.com, accessed 15 March 2009.

67. Prichen M. (2002), *Creative Advertising: Ideas and Techniques from the World's Best Campaigns,* Thames & Hudson, Singapore.

68. Pryor S. and Grossbart S. (2007), *Creating Meaning on Main Street: Towards a Model of Place Branding*, Journal *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, Vol. 3, 4, 291-304. Available from www.palgrave-journals.com/pb, (accessed 9 November 2008).

69. Lafont M. (2007), *Soviet Posters*, Prestel, Slovenia.

70. Laing E. J. (2004), *Selling Happiness*, University of Hawaii Press, USA.

71. Lambert R. (2009), *G20 Must Restore The Stability of the World's Financial System*, 65March 2009, available from http://www.timesonline.co.uk, accessed 7 March 2009.

72. Leonard M. (2008), *What Does China Think?* Forth Estate, London.

73. Leonard M. (2005), *Why Europe Will Run the 21st Century,* Public Affairs, New York.

74. Li S. (2007), *Harmonious World: China's Ancient Philosophy for New International Order,* 27 September 2007, available from http://www.chinese-embassy.org.uk/eng/zt/Features/t367467.htm#, accessed 21 March 2009.

75. Li W. L. and Mu H. (2006), *Cases of Advertising, People University of China Press*, Beijing.

76. Lieberthal K. (2006), *American Perceptions of China*, Barnett-Oksenberg Memorial Lecture, Shanghai, 1 March 2006.

77. Maddox B. (2009), *Clash of Interests and Expectations Will Come to A Head At The G20*, 6 March 2009, available from http://www.timesonline.co.uk, accessed 7 March 2009.

78. Mahbubani K. (2008), *The New Asian Hemisphere: The Irresistible Shift of Global Power to The East,* Public Affairs, New York.

79. Makoul B. (1995), *A Contemporary Palestinian Art: an analysis of cultural and political influences*, PhD thesis, Manchester Metropolitan University, UK.

80. Massonnet P. (1997), *The New China: Money, Sex and Power*, Tuttle Publishing, USA.

81. Minick S. and Jiao P. (1990), *Chinese Graphic Design in the Twentieth Century*, Thams and Hudson, Singapore.

82. Moilanen T. and Rainisto S. (2009), *How to Brand Nations, Cities and Destinations: A Planning Book for Place Branding,* Palgrave Macmillan, UK.

83. Mooij M. (1998), *Global Marketing and Advertising: Understanding Cultural Paradoxes*, Sage Publications, USA.

84. O'Brien, R. (2001), *An Overview Of The Methodological Approach Of Action Research*, In Roberto Richardson (Ed.), Theory and Practice of Action Research. João Pessoa, Brazil: Universidade Federal da Paraíba (English version). Accessed online on 13 July 2009 from http://www.web.ca/~robrien/papers/arfinal.html

85. Oliver G. (1990), *Marketing Today*, third edition, Prentice Hall, Cambridge.

86. Okonkwo U. (2007), *Luxury Fashion Branding*, Palgrave Macmillan Ltd. UK.

87. Pilling D. (2009), When China Rules the World (review), Fiancial Times/FT.com, 13 June 2009.

88. Polanyi M. (1967), *The Tacit Dimension*, Doubleday, (1967, 1983 reprint)

89. Ramo J.C. (2007), *Brand China*, The Foreign Policy Centre, London.

90. Ren W. D. (2006), *The Application of Traditional Chinese Aesthetic Principles to Contemporary Interior Design*, Dissertation (PhD), University of Luton, UK.

91. Ross R.S. and Zhu F. (2008), *China's Ascent: Power, Security, and the Future of International Politics,* Cornell University Press, USA.

92. Schell O. (2009), *China Reluctant to Lead*, Yale Global Online, 11 March 2009, available from http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/article.print?id=12074, accessed 13 March 2009.

93. Sirkin H. (2008), *In the New World Disorder, Loads of Rivals for America,* 16 October 2008, available from http://www.time.com, accessed 23 December 2008.

94. Schnapp J. (2005), *Revolutionary Tides: The Art of the Political Poster 1914-1989*, Skira Editore, Italy.

95. Su Z. G. and Tang D. P. (1998), *Advertising Photography*, Liaoning Art Publishing, Liaoning.

96. Sutherland M. and Sylvester A. K. (1993), *Advertising and the Mind of the Consumer*, Allen & Unwin, South Australia.

97. Trochim W.M.K.(1999), *The Research Methods Knowledge Base*, 2nd ed, paperback, Cornell Custom Publishing, New York.

98. Twitchell J. B. (2000), *Twenty Ads that Shook the World*, Three Rivers Press, New York.

99. Tybout A.M. and Calkins T. (2005), *Kellogg on Branding*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc. New Jersey (USA) and Canada.

100. Wadhwa V. (2009), Article: *They're taking their brains and going home*, the Washington Post, 8 March 2009.

101. Walt V. (2009), *China Goes on a Smart Shopping Spree*, 2 March 2009, available from http://www.time.com , accessed 7 March 2009.

102. Wang, J. (2008), *Band New China: Advertising, Media and Commercial Culture*, Harvard University Press, London.

103. Wen Hua (1958), *Questions about characteristics of calendar posters and new year's pictures*, published in Chinese art magazine *Meishu*, pp 18-20, issue 4.

104. Widler J. (2007), *Nation Branding: With Pride against Prejudice*, Journal Place Branding and Public Diplomacy, vol. 3, 2, 144-150, available from http://www.palgrave-journals.com/pb, accessed 12 March 2009.

105. Yao X. (2000), *An Introduction to Confucianism*, Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp22-34, available from http://assets.cambridge.org (accessed 17 July 2009).

106. Zhang Y. L. and Jin F. T. (1997), *Project Photography*, Liaoning Art Publishing, Liaoning China.

107. Zoellick R. and Lin J. (2009), *Recovery Rides on The 'G-2'*, 6 March 2009, The Washington Post, available from http://www.washingtonpost.com, accessed 7 March 2009.

108. Zhao C. (2005), *The History of Chinese Advertising*, Higher Education Publishing, Beijing.

109. Article: *Branding in China*, China Knowledge Press, Singapore, 2005.

110. Survey: *Made in China 2008: The Challenge for Chinese Brands Going Global,* by Interbrand/interbrand.com, 2008.

111. *The Economist* (weekly), 14 March 2009-25 July 2009, London.

112. *The World in 2009* by The Economist.

113. Article: *Barack Obama bets the farm in $4 trillion poker game*, Times, 6 March 2009.

114. Article: *Will Patients be Rewarded?* The Economist, 16 April 2009, available from http://www.economist.com accessed 27 April 2009.

115. Article: *Interview with the Chairman of Korea's Nation Branding Council,* available from www.nation-branding.info/2009, accessed 29 January 2009.

116. Article: *Hu Makes 4-point Proposal for Building Harmonious World,* available from http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/UN/142408.htm, accessed 21 March 2009.

117. Article: *Busting Trust*, The Economist, 17 July 2008, available from http://www.economist.com, accessed 23 December 2008.

118. Article: *World Still Wary of Modern China*, 4 August 2008, BBC News, available from www.globescan.com/news_archives/bbc_newsnight/ accessed 14 March 2009.

119. Survey: *Foreigners Like China Better After Olympics, but Criticisms Remain*, 24 November 2008, Xinhua News Agency, available from http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90776/90882/6538920.html, accessed 14 March 2009.

120. Article: *China's Brand*, available from http://www.nation-branding.info/2006/02/20/china-brand/, accessed 14 March 2009.

121. Article: *Rapid Response to Quake Enhances Beijing's Image*, The Wall Street Journal, 22 May 2008, available from http://online.wsj.com/article, accessed 14 March 2009.

122. Article: *Wen Voices Concern Over China's U.S. Treasurys*, The Wall Street Journal, 13 March 2009, available from http://online.wsj.com/article, accessed 14 March 2009.

123. Article: *Pros and Cons of Party Membership*, 15 October 2007, BBC News, available from http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk, accessed 23 December 2008.

124. Article: *China's Voices of Dissent*, 9 October 2008, BBC News, available from http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk, accessed 23 December 2008.

125. Article: *China's Thin Skin*, 26 November 2008, available from http://www.ft.com , accessed 23 December 2008.

126. Article: *Protest as Sarkozy Meets Dalai Lama*, 7 December 2008, by Hille and Hall, available from http://www.ft.com , accessed 23 December 2008.

127. Article: *China 'Faces Mass Social Unrest'*, 5 December 2008, BBC News, available from http://news.bbc.co.uk, accessed 23 December 2008.

128. Article: *Britain and China 'to co-operate'*, 22 January 2009, BBC News, available from http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk, accessed 7 March 2009.

129. Article: *Russia and China 'Approval Down'*, 6 February 2009, BBC News, available from http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk, accessed 7 March 2009.

130. Anholt Nation Brands Index reports, available from www.simonanholt.com, (accessed 28 May 2009)

2005 Q3 report 'How the world sees the world.

2005 Q4 report 'How the world sees the world'

2006 Q2 special report

2006 Q3 special report

2006 Q4 Special report

2007 Q1 special report

2007 Q3 report

2008 Anholt-GfK Roper

129. East West Nation Brands Index, 2008 Q3 report, available from
http://www.eastwestcoms.com/global.htm (accessed 28 May 2009)

Web sources

- http://www.zitantique.com/poster.html
- http://www.iisg.nl/
- http://caf.cnadtop.com/work/
- http://www.fansart.com/c2d/20061217154248_7.asp
- http://www.fansart.com/c2d/20061217225332.asp
- http://bbs.tiexue.net/post_1508330_1.html
- http://www.interbrand.com/
- http://www.people.com.cn
- http://www.voanews.com
- http://www.cnn.com
- http://www.gxes.com.cn
- http://www.sina.com.cn
- http://askoxford.com
- http://english.aljazeera.net
- http://phtv.ifeng.com
- http://www.countrybrandindex.com/country-brand-rankings/
- http://www.allaboutbranding.com
- http://www.nation-branding.info
- the Branding Dictionary: http://www.delineate.co.nz (accessed 8 June 2009)

- MacMurchy C. http://www.zhongnanhaiblog.com (accessed 17 July 2009)
- Xihua News Agency, http://www.china.org.cn, 16 Sep 2005)
- http://www.chinese-embassy.org.uk
- http://www.ftchinaconfidential.com/issue/20090319 (assessed 14 May 2009)
- CIM: Available from: http://www.cim.co.uk/home.aspx (accessed 14 May 2009).
- AMA: Available from: http://www.marketingpower.com (accessed 14 May 2009).
- 2008 Edelman Trust Barometer: available from http://www.edelman.co.uk/files/trust-barometer-2008.pdf (accessed 23 May 2009).
- SKYTRAX: available from http://www.airlinequality.com/StarRanking/ranking.htm (accessed 23 May 2009).
- 2008 World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Barometer, available from
- http://www.tourismroi.com/Content_Attachments/27670/File_6335137 50035785076.pdf (accessed 14 May 2009).
- Compact Oxford English Dictionary: available from http://www.askoxford.com:80/concise_oed/brand?view=uk (accessed 15 July 2009)
- http://www.countrybrandindex.com/country-brand-rankings/
- http://www.sina.com.cn, 2 March 2004, first published in magazine Youth References.
- Best Global Brands, available from http://www.businessweek.com/ (accessed 14 May 2009).
- Interbrand, http:// www.interbrand.com/
- http://brandchannel.com/education_glossary.asp#B (accessed 14 May 2009).
- Lake L., available from http://marketing.about.com/ (accessed 14 May 2009).

- Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, available from http://www.merriam-webster.com (accessed 15 July 2009)

- Flag of South Korea, available from http://www.mapsofworld.com/flags/south-korea-flag.html (accessed on 15 July 2009)

- Image of Taiji, available from http://www.baidu.com (accessed 15 July 2009)

- Image Shanghai in 1930s, available from http://www.robinzhang.com/shanghai/jpserver/view/LightboxBlack.view/cover.php?name=The_Bund (accessed 17 May 2009)

- 1930 Shanghai Advertising Posters online catalogue,

- available from http://www.zitantique.com/poster.html (accessed 16 May 2009)

- Images from Cultural Revolution Campaigns, available from http://www.iisg.nl/landsberger/crc.html (accessed 17 May 2009)

- Images of Soviet posters, available from http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Stalin_Lenin_jk.jpg (accessed 17 May 2009)

- MASMI, available from http://www.masmi.com (accessed 15 May 2009)

- East West Communications, available from http://www.eastwestcoms.com/global.htm (accessed 15 May 2009)

- Michael Polanyi and Tacit Knowledge, available from http://www.infed.org/thinkers/polanyi.htm (accessed 17 July 2009)

- Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy: available from http://www.rep.routledge.com/ (accessed 14 May 2009)

- Survey: Foreigners like China better after Olympics, but criticisms remain, 24/11/2008, http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/ (accessed 15 May 2009)

- UN World Population Prospectus, available from http://esa.un.org/unpp/ (accessed 17 July 2009)

- *Chinese Overseas Students in their Eyes*, interview in Financial Times (Chinese version), available from http://www.ftchinese.com (accessed 17 July 2009)

- *Why are we still unable to speak English after over 10 years learning?* (in Chinese language), available from http://www.rr365.com/english/200903/english_20617.html (accessed 17 July 2009)
- 2008 World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Barometer, available from http://www.tourismroi.com/Content_Attachments/27670/File_6335137 50035785076.pdf (accessed 17 July 2009)
- Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, available from http://dictionary.cambridge.org/ accessed 16 July 2009