

**NATION BRANDING AND CONSOLIDATION OF THE NATION  
THROUGH THE EXAMPLE OF KYRGYZSTAN**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Nation branding is a new phenomenon which emphasizes its attention on improving and enhancing country's image and reputation, which is considered to be an important asset in a globalized world. This new concept mistakenly regarded as a process of simply marketing the state on the international stage. On the contrary, it is a process primarily focused on changing country's policies towards its development which would lead to improved or enhanced state's reputation. It is also a process which requires a high participation of country's population and this leads to the idea that nation branding can directly influence them.

This senior thesis aims to research other possible functions of nation branding, by putting it to the framework of nation building process, in particularly in the area of consolidation of the nation. The research will be looked through and applied to the case of Kyrgyzstan which has consolidation problems. Therefore, the research question of this senior thesis is: "Can nation branding help Kyrgyzstan to solve problems in consolidating the nation?" The title of this senior thesis, "Nation branding and consolidation of the nation through the example of Kyrgyzstan", derives from the research question.

**Keywords:** nation branding, consolidation of the nation, Kyrgyzstan, civic nationalism, ethnocentric nationalism, future-oriented nationalism, country's reputation and image.

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## INTRODUCTION

Nation branding is a new phenomenon which emphasizes its attention on improving and enhancing country's image and reputation, which is considered to be an important asset in a globalized world. It suggests that a good reputation would attract inward investments, skilled workforce, tourists and bring economic development to the country<sup>1</sup>. Additionally to that, a good reputation and image of the country will bring international recognition and trust on the international politics arena which means that that country can achieve its national interests easier than one with a negative or unanimous image<sup>2</sup>. This senior thesis aims to research other possible functions of nation branding, by putting it to the framework of nation building process, in particularly in the area of consolidation of the nation. The research will be looked through and applied to the case of Kyrgyzstan which has consolidation problems. Therefore, the research question of this senior thesis is: "Can nation branding help Kyrgyzstan to solve problems in consolidating the nation?" The title of this senior thesis, "Nation branding and consolidation of the nation through the example of Kyrgyzstan", derives from the research question.

Chapter one is a theoretical framework of this senior thesis which describes and analyzes nation branding and the concept of consolidation of the nation. Nationalism is considered to be a traditional and conventional approach to achieve national consolidation. Thus, three types of nationalism as ethnocultural, civic and future-oriented will be described. The importance of considering nationalism is because nation branding will be compared to it and analyzed if it has the same features or traits as nationalism does and this

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<sup>1</sup> Keith Dinnie, *Nation Branding. Concepts, Issues, Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 17-20.

<sup>2</sup> Simon Anholt, *Competitive Identity. The New Brand Management for Nations, Cities and Regions* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 28-30.

will be the basis for answering the research question whether nation branding can help to consolidate the nation.

Chapter two will look at the history of Kyrgyzstan in the process of consolidating the nation which then will be analyzed. After which, existing problems in consolidating the nation will be addressed.

Chapter three is an important one because it will answer the research question which will generate hypothesis of this senior thesis. It will start with analyzing benefits which nation branding can offer to Kyrgyzstan. Then, nation branding will be analyzed through the prism of nationalism and findings will be applied to the case of Kyrgyzstan.

This senior thesis will use qualitative research method; therefore, analysis and research question will be based on primary and secondary sources such as scholarly literature, articles, internet sources and others. Also, this senior thesis is experimental in nature and its content and thesis statement can be changed through further research on this topic.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the main focuses of this senior thesis is nation branding and in order to research this topic, academic literature was used. Main theoretical framework for the concept was taken from two books “*Competitive Identity: The New Brand Management for Nations, Cities and Regions*” (2007) and “*Places: Identity, Image and Reputation*” (2010) by Simon Anholt. Books of this author were chosen because he was the one who invented and developed this concept in 1996. The “*Competitive Identity*” book was used to draw basic concepts and ideas on nation branding and understanding of its nature. The second book “*Places*” is an updated version of the first one but with additional and more comprehensive theory and analysis on nation branding. The main concept and theory on nation branding in this senior thesis was taken from that second book by Simon Anholt. Main research on the question about the possibility of nation branding to influence national consolidation was also based on the context of the “*Places*”.

Additionally, Keith Dinnie’s book “*Nation Branding. Concepts, Issues, Practice*” was helpful to enhance the theoretical framework on nation branding, especially in answering the question about required and possible stakeholders of the process with clarification who is responsible for initiating and implementing nation branding. With the help of this source, it was possible to argue that country’s population is an important stakeholder in nation branding who is required to participate in discussing the future of the country, what it should represent and what goals and developments it should achieve. This suggests that nation branding has a potential to influence country’s population, therefore, this senior thesis will analyze such influence of nation branding in the area of national consolidation.

This possible potential of nation branding to consolidate the nation will be researched and analyzed through the prism of nationalism. For this reason, Andrew Heywood's book "*Political Ideologies. An Introduction*" was used as a main source to define nationalism and its three main types such as civic, ethnocultural and future-oriented. Those three types of nationalism are important for answering the research question because nation branding will be compared to them.

As the country case for this senior thesis is Kyrgyzstan, Erica Marat's article "*National Ideology and State-building in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan*" and Robert Lowe's chapter "*Nation building and identity in the Kyrgyz Republic*" were used as the main sources for analyzes of Kyrgyzstan's history in consolidating the nation and current existing problems in it.

Before writing this senior thesis, additional different sources and articles were read; this helped to form general image where and at what stage the concept of nation branding is in the academic sphere. Critical articles were also read and, interestingly, all the critical arguments were based on destination branding rather than nation branding, the difference of which will be described in the senior thesis. As a result, it can be suggested that all the research and analyzes of this senior thesis were based on primary and secondary sources as the academic literature.



## CHAPTER I

Nation branding is a new phenomenon which emerged during the past two decades and received wide attention in the twenty first century. The term ‘nation branding’ was introduced by Simon Anholt<sup>3</sup> in 1996 and he was also the one who first started to write about this idea. He says, “My original observation was a simple one: that the *reputations* of countries are rather like the brand images of companies and products, and equally important”<sup>4</sup>. The image of the nation has been referred to as a brand and in order to compete in the globalized world, state needs nation branding to attract foreign investments, tourism, political attention, skilled workforce and other. Later, Simon Anholt introduced another term called ‘*Competitive Identity*’ instead of nation branding because “it has more to do with national identity and the politics and economics of competitiveness than with branding as it is usually understood”<sup>5</sup>. But the term nation branding became so widely spread that it is used more frequently in academic literature than the term competitive identity. However, the term nation branding might sound like marketing or branding the state but its true meaning is not and this term is used just as a metaphor<sup>6</sup>. The name of the concept can be both referred to as nation branding or competitive identity because the idea of the concept still remains the one. In this thesis, only the term nation branding will be used to prevent confusion.

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<sup>3</sup> Simon Anholt is recognized as the world’s leading authority on national image and identity. He was Vice-Chair of the UK Government’s Public Diplomacy Board, and works as an independent policy advisor to more than 50 other national, regional, and city governments. Anholt developed the concept of the Nation Brands Index and the City Brands Index in 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Simon Anholt, *Competitive Identity. The New Brand Management for Nations, Cities and Regions* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), xi.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Simon Anholt, *Places. Identity, Image and Reputation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 11.

The idea of nation branding lies in that the image or reputation of the country is important today and can influence positively or negatively state's trade, export, attracting inward investments, international recognition, etc. And in order to fix or introduce a new or updated image of the country, nation branding processes should take place in the country. It should be noted that nation branding processes is "not about communications but about policies"<sup>7</sup> and this argument will be explained in the end of this chapter. The proponents of nation branding such as Simon Anholt, Keith Dinnie and other consider that nation branding is becoming an inevitable process or practice to compete with other states for economic and political resources in the more and more globalized world. It is reflected in Anholt's quote where he refers to nation branding as "nothing less than a new approach to statecraft, to economic development and international relations"<sup>8</sup>.

The academic literature on nation branding is divided into two. The first one is a conventional understanding of nation branding as a practical strategy which uses marketing tools and aims at external audience. For this type of literature, the term *destination branding*<sup>9</sup> is used. This kind of branding focuses basically on building catchy slogans, logos or colorful advertisements for boosting and focusing mainly on tourism industry of the country. The academic background for this type of literature comes from the marketing and brand study areas. The second type of literature is about *nation (country) branding*<sup>10</sup> which concerns with the reputation of the country and aims at "developing a coherent and comprehensive image of the nation to promote economic, commercial and political

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>9</sup> Magdalena Kania-Lundholm, "Re-Branding a Nation Online. Discourses on Polish Nationalism and Patriotism" (PhD diss., Uppsala Universitet, 2012), 63

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

interests at home and abroad”<sup>11</sup>. This makes nation branding a complex approach which is a long term process requiring a lot of hard work and dedication. As a result, there are two types of branding on the level of the country such as *destination* and *nation* (country) branding. This thesis will not focus on *destination* or *practical* branding but will consider only the *nation* (country) branding.

The leading authority on nation branding, Simon Anholt, states that nation branding is not about creating catchy slogans and advertisements as it gets confused with destination branding but about the overall development of the country with the purpose of improving the reputation of the country<sup>12</sup>. He showed that nation branding itself consists of 80% of innovation, 15% of coordination and 5% of communication<sup>13</sup>. Thus, the largest part of nation branding is not communications but innovation which is the development of the country and it can be political, social and economic. For example, one of such developments can be considered when the government of the country achieved transparency in governing or it managed to decrease significantly the poverty thus bringing the country to the new level. The part of innovation or development is the main pillar and without it, nation branding is not possible and will not be effective. Simon Anholt argued that “governments should never do things purely for brand-related reasons; no action should ever be conceived of or dedicated to image management or image change alone. Every initiative and action should first and foremost be done for a real purpose in the real world, or else it runs the risk of being insincere, ineffective, and perceived as

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<sup>11</sup> Szondi cited in Magdalena Kania-Lundholm, “Re-Branding a Nation Online. Discourses on Polish Nationalism and Patriotism” (PhD diss., Uppsala Universitet, 2012).

<sup>12</sup> Simon Anholt, *Competitive Identity. The New Brand Management for Nations, Cities and Regions* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 34-36.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

propaganda”<sup>14</sup>. This statement brings us to the following: “actions speak louder than words” and “don’t talk unless you have something to say”<sup>15</sup>. This shows that nation branding cannot and will not emerge from the empty place. Other part of nation branding as coordination stands for interlinking or connecting opinions of diverse stakeholders from public and private sector for developing consensual vision about country’s image. This part makes nation branding representative and democratic due to consideration of varied interests and opinions of national actors. Representatives from diverse groups should participate in nation branding including government, citizens and private sector. The third part of nation branding as communication stands for, as the name suggests, communicating the developments and policies taking place in the country to the external audience. It does not mean that communication should be delivered through costly advertisements because the actions partly already deliver the information. Also citizens of the country can be ambassadors of the nation brand because they represent the nation itself. Therefore, citizens are one of the main actors in nation branding process which in its own term affects them directly. They are not left behind and are not just watchers of the process but directly the participants of it. Anholt said, “When the entire population is galvanized into becoming the mouthpiece of a country’s values and qualities, *then* you have an advertising medium that is actually equal to the enormous task of communicating something so complex [as nation] to so many”<sup>16</sup>.

The structure or components of the nation branding process is divided into three parts such as *strategy*, *substance* and *symbolic actions*<sup>17</sup>. The *strategy* is about the nation

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>17</sup> Simon Anholt, *Places. Identity, Image and Reputation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 13-14.

itself and it should answer the questions: “who a nation is, where it stands today, where it wants to get to and how it is going to get there”<sup>18</sup>. The *substance* is the way of implementing and executing that strategy effectively through different political, social, economic, cultural, legal means in the forms of innovations, reforms, developments, policies, legislations and etc. The *symbolic actions* are a particular part of the substance which have communicating power and can be in different forms as policies, innovations, reforms and other. Those symbolic actions are representatives of the strategy and “a component of the national story and the means of telling it”<sup>19</sup>. They are the actions which contain and tell about the beliefs and position of the country in the world. But foremost they should be with true meaning and not mere empty communication; secondly there should be continuous symbolic actions from different sectors of the country<sup>20</sup>. All these three components of nation branding should work together without leaving outside any part of it if the country wants to succeed in improving its reputation. Here are examples<sup>21</sup>, if one or two parts would be missed:

<b>Strategy + Substance – Symbolic Actions = Anonymity</b>
<b>Substance – Strategy + Symbolic Actions = Incoherence</b>
<b>Strategy – Substance – Symbolic Actions = Spin</b>
<b>Strategy – Substance + Symbolic Actions = Propaganda</b>
<b>Symbolic Actions – Substance – Strategy = Failure</b>

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 14-15.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 15-17.

Those components also can be indicators showing what nation branding is and once again it can suggest that nation branding is mostly about the development of the country but not marketing branding of the country.

At first it seems that globalization diminishes the transnational borders and it does so but only economical borders. Nations and states remained and did not disappear with the emergence of globalization. Countries are still the major actors and players on the international area. They are even becoming more visible, differentiated and emphasized<sup>22</sup>. The emergence of the new phenomena of nation branding as a part or product of the globalization process directly concerns states. Because nation branding is about the state and “cuts across all areas of national activity”<sup>23</sup>, it can also touch areas of nation-building process due to its relativeness and influence on the development of the state today. One of the areas of nation-building process as a consolidation of the nation can also be looked through the framework of nation branding. Consolidation of the nation<sup>24</sup> is one of the most important issues in nation-building process especially for newly emerged or transitional countries as Kyrgyzstan. The concept of nation-building itself meant “to describe the processes of national integration and consolidation that led up to the establishment of the modern nation-state – as distinct from various form of traditional state”<sup>25</sup>, it can be suggested that integration or consolidation of the nation is one of the final goals to achieve in nation-building processes.

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<sup>22</sup> Magdalena Kania-Lundholm, “Re-Branding a Nation Online. Discourses on Polish Nationalism and Patriotism” (PhD diss., Uppsala Universitet, 2012), 59-60.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>24</sup> In this senior thesis, the word ‘nation’ in the concept of ‘consolidation of the nation’ is used and referred to the citizens and population of the country rather than to one ethnicity.

<sup>25</sup> Pal Kolsto, “Nation-Building and Social Integration Theory,” in *Political construction sites. Nation-building in Russia and the post-Soviet States*, (Colorado: Westview press, 2000).

The consolidation of the nation can be achieved with nationalism. As the idea of nationalism emerged from the French Revolution it started to develop, change and take different forms till the present day. Andrew Heywood<sup>26</sup> says that, “The basic belief of nationalism is that the nation is, or should be, the central principle of political organization”. Throughout the history we can track positive and negative demonstrations of nationalism. At the beginning it was good but then it was used for different purposes and brought to colonialism and two World Wars. Then, the same nationalism brought to decolonization and national independences throughout the world<sup>27</sup>. These suggest that it can serve for the unification or state-building processes as well as for separation (from empires to independent states). Probably, the concept of nationalism has been used by almost every other political ideology, although within itself it has been divided into several types such as liberal, conservative, expansionist nationalism. These shows diverse dimensions of nationalism which still continue to play important role for nations even today, in the world of globalization, where they did not disappear but reinvented and adapted to it.

There are various criteria on which the nation can be based on, but usually, there have been identified two basic types. The first one is traditional understanding of the nation which is based on ethnic and cultural identities. Ethnic nationalism unites people based on the common ethnicity or race as it was during the Nazi Germany<sup>28</sup>. Cultural nationalism is based on common and shared history, traditions, culture and shared values. Because of the interlinked understandings of both ethnicity and culture, they cannot be separated because,

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<sup>26</sup> Andrew Heywood, *Political Ideologies. An Introduction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 159.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 155-157.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

for example, any ethnicity has its own history, traditions and culture. As a result both ethnic and cultural nations can be combined into one and be called *ethnocultural nationalism*<sup>29</sup>. The second one is called a *civic nationalism* which stands on the opposite side from ethnocultural one with different characteristics. Here is the table<sup>30</sup> which includes characteristics of both types of nationalism for comparison.

<b>Civic nationalism</b>	<b>Ethnocultural nationalism</b>
- political nation	- cultural/ historical nation
- inclusive	- exclusive
- universalism	- particularism
- equal nations	- unique nations
- rational/ principled	- mystical/ emotional
- national sovereignty	- national 'spirit'
- voluntaristic	- organic
- based on citizenship	- based on descent
- civic loyalty	- ethnic allegiance
- cultural diversity	- cultural unity

Those two types of nationalism have absolutely different basics and if we compare, we see that the civic nationalism is more liberal and can include various ethnic groups, thus national identity is based on more universal civic values and citizenship while ethnocultural one is exclusive and can bring to negative chauvinistic nationalism. The ethnocultural

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 169.

<sup>30</sup> Table is from Andrew Heywood, *Political Ideologies. An Introduction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 169.



nationalism is also fixed (for example, ethnicity or race is fixed from the birth) and inflexible to include other ethnic groups while the civic nationalism is flexible and can include any ethnic group. The ethnocultural nationalism is based on primordial theory while the civic nationalism is on the “loyalty to a set of political ideas”<sup>31</sup> and relates citizenship to the nationality which can correlate with the values of democratic state<sup>32</sup>. These comparisons suggest that nationalism based on ethnicity does not always and not for every nation-state can result in successful consolidation of the nation because there are only 9% of the states which are considered to be homogeneous<sup>33</sup> in the world, whilst civic nationalism can bring to national consolidation in those non-homogeneous countries and explain the possibility for multiethnic nation-states to exist.

Ethnocultural nationalism uses also common history and traditions of one ethnicity to function as a holding force to keep together the people of the nation-state. But this use of common history and traditions especially of only one ethnicity is unable to be a binding force for other types of nationalism. For example, the nationalism of the USA is not based on shared history of one ethnicity but it rests on “a common commitment to the constitution and the values of liberal capitalism”<sup>34</sup>. As Stephenson says, the case of the USA “was a new type of nation-state, because its people were not all of the same ethnicity, culture, language, as had been thought to be the case in the early defining of the concept of nation-state”<sup>35</sup>. This example indicates that nation can be integrated based not only on the shared

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<sup>31</sup> Carolyn Stephenson, “Nation Building”, January 2005. <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/nation-building> (Accessed March 11, 2014).

<sup>32</sup> Andrew Heywood, *Political Ideologies. An Introduction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 167-170.

<sup>33</sup> Pal Kolsto, “Nation-Building and Social Integration Theory,” in *Political construction sites. Nation-building in Russia and the post-Soviet States*, (Colorado: Westview press, 2000).

<sup>34</sup> Andrew Heywood, *Political Ideologies. An Introduction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 161.

<sup>35</sup> Carolyn Stephenson, “Nation Building”, January 2005. <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/nation-building> (Accessed March 11, 2014).

past history and common memories but also it can be based on the ‘future expectations’ of the people in the country. These future expectations may be in the form of the belief in certain political ideas or achievements like freedom and democratic values, the future development and prosperity of the country, achievement of the social justice and equality, and other. This kind of nationalism can be considered as an independent type of nationalism and on the political spectrum it probably would stand closer to the civic nationalism rather than ethnocultural one because both future oriented and civic nationalisms are not based around the idea of ethnicity but rather around more universal values.

At first it seems that nation branding is focused and aimed only at external audience for attraction of the attention, but this is misleading. Destination branding is the process of that kind which focuses only at the external audience to attract more visitors. But nation branding is something more serious and complicated one because it foremost concerned with whole internal situation in the country including its population while the influence on external audience will come as a result of nation branding process. With understanding that nation branding foremost takes place inside the country, new question arises immediately about the participation of country’s citizens in this new strategy. It was mentioned in the beginning of this chapter that state’s population can be representatives or messengers of nation’s values and beliefs. But the role of the citizens in nation branding does not start and end at that point. Compared with other national strategies which are constructed and implemented from the start till the end by the government or in cooperation with private sector, nation branding requires the participation of the public sector in decision-making process. By saying a participation of citizens, it does not mean just their observation of

decision-making process but their direct negotiation with the government on how they envision their country in the future, what it should represent, what it should stand for with an addition of other important questions concerning the future development of their country<sup>36</sup>. Citizens, as one of the main actors in nation branding, is required to have an equal weight and consideration of their voices and opinions as other actors do such as the government and private sector<sup>37</sup>. Therefore, citizens of the country play a considerable role in nation branding and it suggests that nation branding itself can be considered to include a democratic participation of people in decision-making about their country. These arguments about an important role of population in nation branding provide the research question of the thesis with a legitimacy to consider nation branding as a concept which could have a potential to consolidate the nation. Further, in the third chapter, the concept of nation branding will be looked through the prism of nationalism, which originally brings to the consolidation of the nation, to see if nation branding can contribute to the process and goal.

The globalized world is more like a globally connected market, rather than a battle field, and this allows states to achieve their interests and goals with soft power rather than conventional hard one. One of such soft powers in the modern world, the importance of which only rose with globalization, also can be considered the concept of nation branding. It is also regarded as a beneficial opportunity for small and developing states to compete with developed states for resources, attention, political influence and etc. on the sphere of modern world where reputation is an important and valuable asset on which the country is

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<sup>36</sup> Keith Dinnie, *Nation Branding. Concepts, Issues, Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 188

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

dependent on<sup>38</sup>. Simon Anholt says that “the conventional system of international power depends on economic, political and military strength, which means that most of the world’s countries have lost before the contest begins” and for that reason, he offers nation branding as a ‘*how to achieve*’ strategy<sup>39</sup> for small and developing countries because it results in an improved national reputation which will allow them to break away and step to the next stages of development. But “national reputation cannot be constructed; it can only be earned” which means that “imagining that such a deeply rooted phenomena can be shifted by so weak an instrument as marketing communications is an extravagant delusion”<sup>40</sup>. This means that if country wants to improve its reputation, it should change and develop its policies in almost every field of national activity with the concentration on the development of the country with economic and political progress but not inventing the national reputation through commercials and advertisements which would turn out to be clear propaganda resulted in aggravated reputation. The statement which would reflect this argument would be the following one:

“Creating a better image for a country is often far cheaper and always infinitely harder than people imagine. It’s about creating a viable yet inspirational long-term vision for the development of the country and pursuing that aim through good leadership, economic and social reform, imaginative and effective cultural and political relations, transparency and integrity, infrastructure, education, and so forth: on other words, substance.”<sup>41</sup>

This chapter laid out a theoretical framework and concept of nation branding and approached nationalism with its different types as main and conventional process in achieving consolidation of the nation. A research question on whether nation branding can

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<sup>38</sup> Simon Anholt, *Places. Identity, Image and Reputation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 48-49.

<sup>39</sup> Simon Anholt, *Competitive Identity. The New Brand Management for Nations, Cities and Regions* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 113-114.

<sup>40</sup> Simon Anholt, *Places. Identity, Image and Reputation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 5-6.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 50-51.

be considered as a concept which fosters or brings national consolidation will be analyzed through the prism of nationalism in the third chapter and findings will be applied to the case of Kyrgyzstan while the next chapter is addressed to the history and problems of national consolidation in Kyrgyzstan.

## CHAPTER II

In order to understand the problems of consolidation in Kyrgyzstan, it is important to look at its history regarding this topic because different historical circumstances and political events could be considered as one of the causes which led to those problems. Along with the history, policies of individual political leaders, aimed at solving national consolidation problems, should be also analyzed.

Kyrgyzstan can be considered to be quite 'young' state because it got its independence only two decades ago after the collapse of the USSR. These two decades are a small term for the country to establish well-functioning formal institutions especially if the state had not before any prototype of modern state. Before the Soviet rule, Kyrgyzstan did not have an experience of governing itself. The social organization was based on tribes and the strongest ties and loyalty were to the family and certain tribe but not to the state because of its absence<sup>42</sup>. There were divisions among the tribes themselves which prevented their unification to one state. Under the Soviet Union, modern Kyrgyzstan was given territorial borders but not independent practice of governing its own territory and population due to the central government in Moscow. During the Soviet rule, the sense of national unity for diverse nations in the Soviet territory was suppressed and replaced by the sense of "Soviet Man" or "Sovietness"<sup>43</sup>. Therefore, there was no chance to develop any sense of national unity in Kyrgyzstan during the Soviet period. When the USSR collapsed, Kyrgyzstan rather was pushed and had no choice but to be independent<sup>44</sup>. Thus in 1991, modern state of Kyrgyzstan emerged with the heritage of the Soviet rule in the government

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<sup>42</sup> Robert Lowe, "Nation building and identity in the Kyrgyz Republic," in *Central Asia. Aspects of transition*, ed. Tom Everett-Heath (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 107.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 108-112.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 112-113.

and in every structure of the state but without any experience in ruling itself as an independent state.

After 23 years since independence, it can be analyzed what have been undertaken by different presidents and their governments to consolidate the nation because it is one of the major goals of the modern state to function well and be ‘healthy’. The first president, Askar Akaev, attempted to unite people of Kyrgyzstan with ideological projects such as “Kyrgyzstan is our common home”, “Manas–1000” and “2200 Years of the Kyrgyz Statehood”<sup>45</sup>. The first national concept, “Kyrgyzstan is our common home”, was designed to unite different ethnic groups based on citizenship at the same time without diminishing ethnic identities<sup>46</sup>. The concept was made to make every ethnic group in Kyrgyzstan to feel comfortable in the country. This project was based on the idea that during the Soviet Union, different ethnic groups had a valuable contribution to the development of Kyrgyzstan, and therefore every ethnic group should be treated equally on the basis of civil rights<sup>47</sup>. One of the main purposes of this initiative was the prevention of ethnic minorities from leaving the country, especially skilled Russian minority. And it partially succeeded at this goal but, as Erica Marat points out, despite the liberal ideas of the concept, it faced resistance from nationalistic groups of politicians and people<sup>48</sup>.

Then Akaev saw the epic “Manas” as a national ideology and he formulated seven principles based on the epic. Here is list of seven maxims<sup>49</sup>:

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<sup>45</sup> Erica Marat, “National Ideology and State-building in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan,” *Silk Road Paper* January 2008, accessed March 3, 2014, [http://www.isdp.eu/images/stories/isdp-main-pdf/2008\\_marat\\_national-ideology-and-state-building.pdf](http://www.isdp.eu/images/stories/isdp-main-pdf/2008_marat_national-ideology-and-state-building.pdf).

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 32-36

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Askar Akaev, *Kyrgyz Statehood and the National Epos "Manas"* (New York: Global Scholarly Publications, 2003), 282-285.

1. Unity and mutual support
2. Interethnic consensus, friendship, and cooperation
3. National honor and patriotism
4. Through hard, relentless work and knowledge comes prosperity and well-being
5. Humanism, magnanimity, tolerance
6. Harmony with nature
7. Strengthening and protecting the Kyrgyz statehood

Those principles were put into the official state ideology which gave it a value of country's main ideology<sup>50</sup>. During the Soviet period, epic of Manas was promoted to establish it as a symbol of Kyrgyz identity. As such, Manas epic became to be considered as Kyrgyz people's oral folklore heritage, the core content of which is centered on the idea of the national unity among the Kyrgyz ethnic group and tribes which makes it, in the nature, an exclusive one for other ethnicities, especially if the epic functions as a state ideology. In 1995, Akaev launched a large scale celebration of the 1000<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Manas epic right before presidential elections in the same year to get support among population. Even though Manas epic and its seven principles were put into the official state ideology, the ethnic minorities and urban population did not reproduce nor reflected it. It was perceived as an ethnically discriminating one in comparison with the previous concept "Kyrgyzstan is our common home"<sup>51</sup>.

The third Akaev's project carried out very ambitious name "2200 Years of the Kyrgyz Statehood" which was supposed to reflect the long history of the Kyrgyz statehood but it did not match with the reality. The third in the row, it faced public criticism and

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<sup>50</sup> Михаил Калишевский, "Кыргызстан: Идеология в состоянии «турбулентности»," *Fergana News*, November 25, 2013, accessed March 30, 2014, <http://www.fergananews.com/articles/7958>.

<sup>51</sup> Erica Marat, "National Ideology and State-building in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan," *Silk Road Paper* January 2008, accessed March 3, 2014, [http://www.isdp.eu/images/stories/isdp-main-pdf/2008\\_marat\\_national-ideology-and-state-building.pdf](http://www.isdp.eu/images/stories/isdp-main-pdf/2008_marat_national-ideology-and-state-building.pdf), 39.



became a ‘joke’<sup>52</sup>. As such, this new idea also served to fulfill personal goals of the ex-president to increase his popularity for upcoming 2005 presidential elections before which he was overthrown in March.

There are several reasons why Akaev’s ideological attempts did not succeed to unite all people in the country. One of them is an exclusive nature towards other ethnic minority groups in the country, especially in his last two ideological projects. This kind of ideology, of course, will not lead to the national consolidation especially if the country is not homogeneous. Another feature of Akaev’s ideologies was their imposition from the top-to-bottom which led to little acceptance of those ideas by the public while the public itself did not generate any because that function was automatically given to the government<sup>53</sup>. Also, Saltanat Berdikееva’s article states that Akaev failed because “the ideas were too intangible and generalized, which did not resonate with common people, the majority of who were politically apathetic, suspicious of the government, and were mostly concerned with daily socio-economic problems”<sup>54</sup>. As a result, Akaev’s attempts did not bring any results in uniting the nation.

The successor of the first president, Kurmanbek Bakiyev, was passive in undertaking any attempts to bring the nation together. There was an attempt to create “the commission on ideology, which included a selected number of scholars and politicians” without the “involvement of a larger population” which basically failed to do anything<sup>55</sup>.

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Saltanat Berdikееva, “National Identity in Kyrgyzstan: the Case of Clan Politics” (paper presented at the Association for the Study of Nationalities’ 11<sup>th</sup> Annual World Convention entitled “Nationalism in an Age of Globalization,” Columbia University, New York, March 23-25, 2006), accessed April 5, 2014, <http://equalbeforethelaw.org/library/national-identity-kyrgyzstan-case-clan-politics>, 4.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 5.

Following an overthrow of Bakiev's regime on April 7<sup>th</sup> 2010, an ethnic violent conflict between Kyrgyz and Uzbek took place on 10<sup>th</sup> June in the south of the country. Those events were an indicator that there are very serious problems of national unity in the country on the roots of ethnicity. After June events, a main initiative to bring peace and trust between ethnic groups was an adoption of the document called the Concept of Ethnic Development and Consolidation in the Kyrgyz Republic by the Assembly of the Peoples of Kyrgyzstan on 17 June 2011 under the ex-president of provisional government Roza Otunbayeva. The main principle of this document was to "call for the rule of law, respect for human rights and cultural diversity, preservation of the identity of ethnic groups and non-discrimination, ensuring equal opportunities for political participation and transition from ethnic identity to civil identity"<sup>56</sup>. This document suggests that Kyrgyzstan was directing towards a civic nationalism to solve its' national consolidation problems but at the same time, within the same month, parliament adopted a document with different orienteer proposed by more nationalistic Ata Jurt political party. The second document considered Kyrgyz ethnicity as the "central element of nationhood"<sup>57</sup> which automatically excludes other ethnic groups living in the country and this is ethnocultural nationalism opposite to civic one. As a result, Kyrgyzstan has two differently directed documents on the same issue which shows a division of competing ideas on which approach to take for the consolidation of country's population.

In 2011, Almazbek Atambaev was elected as a president of Kyrgyzstan and his first and main responsibility was to continue working on bringing people together after 2010

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<sup>56</sup> Minority Rights Group International, *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2012 – Kyrgyzstan*, June 28, 2012, accessed April 3, 2014, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4fedb3f83c.html>

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

events. The article of the Minority Rights Group International states that president Atambaev “is likely to follow the principles of the Concept of Ethnic Development and Consolidation in the Kyrgyz Republic”<sup>58</sup> and the same attitude is reflected in his speeches. Several times he says that “Nationalism is main enemy of Kyrgyzstan”<sup>59</sup>. As the word nationalism can hold positive or negative angles, in president’s speeches, it is considered from the negative side. Mostly, Atambaev uses this term to show that some people from the political elite can use nationalism in order “to destabilize some regions by fuelling interregional, tribal, and interethnic issues”<sup>60</sup>. On April 10, 2013, another document was adopted by the Decree of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic. The document is called “The concept of strengthening of the nation unity and inter-ethnic relation in the Kyrgyz Republic”, which aims on “improving of the political and legal framework regulating inter-ethnic relations, including the formation of the authorized responsible state body and system at all levels of the power, improving efficiency of language policy, formation of the civil identity”<sup>61</sup>. It was mentioned, that this initiative aims to form a civil identity which demonstrates that this document is a civic nationalism oriented. So far, Atambaev’s attitude and actions towards the solution of national consolidation problems seemed to be settled around civic nationalism.

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> “Excessive nationalism is the main problem of Kyrgyzstan but not separatism – Almazbek Atambaev”, *Trend*, January 24, 2011, accessed April 3, 2014, <http://en.trend.az/regions/casia/kyrgyzstan/1816778.html> and “PM Atambaev: Nationalism is main enemy of Kyrgyzstan”, *AKIpress*, March 29, 2011, accessed April 3, 2014, <http://www.akipress.com/news:317261/>.

<sup>60</sup> Jamil Payaz, “Kyrgyzstan’s President Announces 2014 as Year of Strengthening Statehood”, *The Central Asia – Caucasus Analyst*, February 19, 2014, accessed April 3, 2014, <http://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/field-reports/item/12915-kyrgyzstans-president-announces-2014-as-year-of-strengthening-statehood.html>.

<sup>61</sup> Tolon Turganbaev and Anuar Abdrakhmanov, “Democratic changes in Kyrgyzstan”, *EP Today*, November 5, 2013, accessed April 6, 2014, <http://eptoday.com/democratic-changes-in-kyrgyzstan-and-strategic-partnership-with-europe/>.

After considering what have been done towards national consolidation in Kyrgyzstan since its independence, several things can be pointed out. Starting from the beginning of its independence, Kyrgyzstan struggled in economic, social and political spheres. It was hard to be suddenly independent without any preparations and especially when the country is forced against its will. In the face of nation building process, the new state supposed to unite and consolidate the population of the country. As Kyrgyzstan had not any experience in this process before, it faced challenges and unsuccessful attempts. The socio-economic situation was one of the factors which highly influenced those attempts. The economic struggle of the population was an obstacle for creation of the civil society which could influence nation building processes. As one of the reasons, Akaev's ideologies did not succeed because of economic hardships in the country. Therefore, economic development can be regarded as a prerequisite, condition or even source for successful consolidation of the nation.

Weak government with weak formal institutions was another obstacle towards the national consolidation because it failed to create and develop the trust and loyalty to the government. This weakness did not stop further development of existing inner social divisions such as tribalism and regionalism; on the contrary, it was highly used by political elite<sup>62</sup>. Saltanat Berdikееva argues that “the part of the reason of the continued importance of clans and regional divisions in Kyrgyzstan is also due to the fact that the nation did not modernize through the evolutionary process of gradual transformation. In fact, it rapidly

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<sup>62</sup> Saltanat Berdikееva, “National Identity in Kyrgyzstan: the Case of Clan Politics” (paper presented at the Association for the Study of Nationalities’ 11<sup>th</sup> Annual World Convention entitled “Nationalism in an Age of Globalization,” Columbia University, New York, March 23-25, 2006), accessed April 5, 2014, <http://equalbeforethelaw.org/library/national-identity-kyrgyzstan-case-clan-politics>, 7-8.

jumped from a feudal structure to Communism within a relatively short period of time”<sup>63</sup>. This argument shows a historic rootedness of both regionalism and tribalism, therefore, a social division created by them makes the national unity a challenging goal to achieve.

From the table <sup>64</sup> (Census 2009) below, it can be said that Kyrgyzstan is a multiethnic country:

Ethnicities	%
Kyrgyz	70.9
Uzbeks	14.3
Russian	7.8
Dungans	1.1
Turks, Uyghur’s and Tajiks	0.8-0.9
Ukrainians, Tatars and Kazakhs	0.4-0.6
Other	1.7

Multiethnic component of Kyrgyzstan requires a very carefully consideration of policies taken towards consolidation of the nation because it has to include all ethnicities living in Kyrgyzstan into the national identity of the country in order to have ‘healthy’ society and national unity. This is a serious and delicate issue with the consideration of 1990 and 2010 interethnic violent conflicts both of which indicate that the state was not very successful at

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, *Population and Housing Census of the Kyrgyz Republic of 2009*, Bishkek 2009, accessed April 12, 2014, [http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/2010\\_phc/Kyrgyzstan/A5-2PopulationAndHousingCensusOfTheKyrgyzRepublicOf2009.pdf](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/2010_phc/Kyrgyzstan/A5-2PopulationAndHousingCensusOfTheKyrgyzRepublicOf2009.pdf), 18.

this point. As it has been observed previously in this chapter, there is a division inside the country between proponents of ethnocultural nationalism and civic nationalism but with a dominance of a former one. If Kyrgyzstan pursues ethnocultural nationalism, there will be growing ethnic tensions which would lead to further conflicts. Therefore, Kyrgyzstan should shift from building ethnocentric nation to civic nation.

After identifying consolidation problems in Kyrgyzstan, the following chapter will be dedicated to answer the research question of this senior thesis whether nation branding can help to solve national consolidation problems in Kyrgyzstan.

### **CHAPTER III**

Nation branding is a strategy for all countries because it aims on improving the reputation or enhancing the image of the country. Some countries have strong positive reputation (ex: Western European states, Canada, Japan, etc.) and others have strong negative reputations (ex: North Korea, Afghanistan, etc.) while the third group of countries mostly are unknown by the international public. Those different reputation statuses are not fixed, even the strong negative ones, so they can be changed and improved and that is the initial purpose and result of nation branding. Kyrgyzstan is probably under the third group of unknown countries. Partly, because country got its independence only two decades ago as a result of the USSR's collapse and the title of a 'post-Soviet' country was automatically attached to it. Among four other Central Asian countries, it does not stand out with particular achievements, except its struggle for democracy which differentiates it in the region. Once, John Anderson named Kyrgyzstan as a Central Asia's 'Island of Democracy' and it was true with the background regimes of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan but this title did not stay for a long time because of Bakiev's regime and his anti-democratic politics. May be this title can be earned again. Probably, Kyrgyzstan is known by its two revolutions which showed it as an unstable country on the eyes of international audience. Other features as corruption, weak rule of law, poor economy, little voice in the world affairs and etc. does not speak in favor of Kyrgyzstan's image. As a result, Kyrgyzstan can be considered to have a weak or anonymous image and reputation in the world. Why country's image is important? Because it serves as a source for national pride and therefore it can help foster the consolidation of the nation. As Robert Cevero states that "The public impression of a country is important as a source of national pride. Invariably, people source

part of their own identity from the image of their country”<sup>65</sup>. Positive or negative image of the state can influence citizens’ perceptions about their country. However, good reputation directly depends on the internal situation in the country and only by improving the ‘internal’ aspect, an improvement of ‘external’ part will follow and it cannot be vice versa (otherwise it will be a propaganda) because country’s reputation can only be *earned*<sup>66</sup>. This kind of source for national pride almost does not exist in Kyrgyzstan, but nation branding can help the country to activate it. Thus, nation branding’s initial purpose and function to improve country’s reputation can be regarded as a source for national consolidation.

Kyrgyzstan is a small developing country and, as it was stated in the first chapter, nation branding provides an opportunity for such countries to find its competitive niche, be an active part of the international community and foster the economic development of the country. As Simon Anholt stated that, “One of the great benefits of globalization, and the rapid transformation of the world from global battleground to global marketplace, is that it enables smaller countries to find a profitable niche, and compete on the basis of their cultural, environmental, imaginative and human qualities rather than on raw power”<sup>67</sup> which means that Kyrgyzstan, despite of its size and level of development, has a chance to compete. Thus, Kyrgyzstan should consider taking that opportunity provided by nation branding.

Another benefit which comes during the process and as a result of nation branding is economic development. It is one of the initial aims of nation branding achieved through attracting inward investments and businesses. This can be very helpful for Kyrgyzstan to

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<sup>65</sup> FutureBrand, *Country Brand Index 2012-2013*, accessed March 2, 2014, [http://www.futurebrand.com/images/uploads/studies/cbi/CBI\\_2012-Final.pdf](http://www.futurebrand.com/images/uploads/studies/cbi/CBI_2012-Final.pdf), 7.

<sup>66</sup> Simon Anholt, *Places. Identity, Image and Reputation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 5-7.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.



improve its economy which is an important prerequisite for country's stability. And, as it was said in the previous chapter, economic development can be also a source for successful consolidation of the nation in Kyrgyzstan.

In the first chapter, it was proved that nation branding requires direct participation of the population which means that nation branding provides close cooperation between government and citizens. If before, in history of modern Kyrgyzstan, the ideas on uniting the nation were imposed from the top to bottom with little engagement with and from the society, the nation branding process allows the population to be directly engaged in constructing the future of the country thus the initiative for consolidation naturally will come from bottom to top. This can also create good conditions for the development of civil society which would increase engagement of the population in nation-building process.

Nationalism is a traditional and conventional approach to achieve national consolidation and in order to answer the research question on nation branding's possible influence on strengthening national consolidation; it should be analyzed through the prism of nationalism. This means that nation branding would be compared to nationalism and analyzed if it has the same traits or features which would help in consolidating the nation. In the first chapter, three types of nationalism were described and those will serve as a framework for comparison.

The first trait which nation branding has is its inclusiveness which does not exclude people by their differences but, on the contrary, it unites them despite their differences. This feature is probably the main important aspect which is highly needed for the consolidation of the diverse population of Kyrgyzstan. Inclusiveness is also a main feature

and principle of civic nationalism which bases nationality not on ethnicity but on citizenship thus relating ethnically different people to the country. At this point, nation branding has the same principle as civic nationalism do which means that it can foster national consolidation. Diverse ethnic groups living in the country can be united only under an inclusive type of nationalism which will provide an equality and equal representation, despite of their differences. Ethnic relations are very fragile and sensitive issue existing in Kyrgyzstan. Since its independence, Kyrgyzstan was giving privileges to the titular ethnic group because political elite perceived the concept of the 'state' as a representation of only one dominated ethnic group which brought to little representation of other ethnic groups. With nation branding, this type of politics can change from exclusive to inclusive means of achieving consolidation of the nation. Nation branding's inclusiveness is liberal and encourages the development of civic values which are inevitable for establishment of democracy in the country. Kyrgyzstan, with its attempts to build more democratic state, should consider the above mentioned aspect of nation branding as an important step towards achieving its goal.

The second trait of nation branding is its future orientation. Following citation directly shows this aspect of nation branding by stating that "it is possible for nations to represent themselves in terms of the places they mean to become, the direction they choose, and the values that this implies about their people: they can tell a story about where they are going, not where they have come from, or where they are now"<sup>68</sup>. This feature of nation branding is similar to the nationalism based on the future expectations which was described in the first chapter. This similarity indicates that nation branding can function and fulfill the same

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 34-35.

purpose as future oriented nationalism does. It can unite people around a common vision about country's future and achievement of that shared vision, the existing example of which can be the USA, whose nationalistic feelings are based on the future expectations<sup>69</sup> and their achievement. For example, aspiration to achieve development, prosperity, social equality, democracy and rule of law in the country is a future oriented nature of nation branding. As it was stated in the first chapter, nation branding requires population's participation in agreeing and negotiating which way country should orienteer and get in the future. This suggests that nation branding unites country's population in the framework of achievement of that shared common dream about country's future.

As it was stated in the second chapter, there are inner societal divisions in Kyrgyzstan and when the society is divided from the inside, the consolidation of the nation becomes a very challenging goal to achieve, therefore, the first problem which should be addressed is this one. Those divisions are based on regionalism and tribalism which also prevent fair and just governing process in the country. Both of those terminologies divide people by their differences based on tribe and region. Nation branding can help to overcome those inner societal divisions because of its inclusive and future oriented nature. Nation branding's inclusiveness diminishes all the existing differences and focuses around common values and it makes those values to stand on the first place rather than their differences. This, in its own term, will allow nation branding to unite people despite their differences whether natural or created as in the case of tribalism and regionalism. The future oriented nature of nation branding will also unite people by focusing their attention around the common idea, goal or dream about where their country should stand and what it

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<sup>69</sup> Andrew Heywood, *Political Ideologies. An Introduction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 161.

should represent in the future which will give them an alternative way in looking at and perceiving their country. This would make the population feel that as citizens they are united and together can contribute in achieving that vision. Both inclusive and future oriented nature of nation branding can help in consolidation of Kyrgyzstan's nation by transforming attention from the differences inside the society based on regions, tribes, or ethnicity to the focus on common ideas and common vision to achieve. Nation branding can also increase feelings of patriotism among the population. Those patriotic feelings can emerge throughout the process or as a result. During the process of nation branding there will be different achievements and developments which can gradually increase and level up such feelings. When nation branding will achieve its goal and will significantly improve country's reputation and image, with bringing the relevance to the country in the globalized world, patriotism can increase even more and spread to the entire population of the country by significantly adding to the consolidation of the nation which can be also in the case of Kyrgyzstan, if it will approach nation branding as the national strategy. But the country should be prepared to work hard and be patient because nation branding process is a long-term process and a lot of dedication is needed.

Today, in the world of globalization, nation branding seems to be a new approach but the one which is getting more and more attention and importance. Globalized world brought its own new rules to the stage of politics, international relations, competition, development, and etc. And nation branding is one of the new tools or strategies to compete on the stage of globalization and which is gradually becoming an inevitable one for success. In this modern world, if the country does not want to be left behind or it wants to be developed and influential on the world stage, nation branding is offering one of the

means for states to achieve those goals and successfully compete on the global stage by making an accent on their reputation and image. It can also be suggested that nation branding is a package which can improve not only the reputation or image of the country and bring economic development but also it has a potential to consolidate the nation. And by applying that potential to the case of Kyrgyzstan, it can be stated that there are several features of nation branding which directly influences and can help to bring national consolidation. The potential consists first and foremost in that that nation branding is an inner oriented process and directly engages with the population of the country, secondly it has an inclusive character which means that it can unite people despite their differences and thirdly it has a feature oriented nature which means that it can unite the population around a common dream, vision and goal about the future of their country. In the case of Kyrgyzstan, the country has also divisions inside the society such as regionalism and tribalism and nation branding can help to diminish those differences based on regions and tribes because of its two above mentioned features. Nation branding can help in uniting the population by bringing the differences like ethnicity, which exist among them, to the second place while putting a common goal, belief about the future of their country for which they should strive to the first place. And during the process of achieving that shared common dream and belief, nation branding will start to consolidate the nation. Also, nation branding can generate and foster patriotic feelings to the country along the process, which is an increased attachment and belonging or loyalty to the country. Because one of the main aims or results of nation branding is the economic development of the country, this allows Kyrgyzstan to benefit from this perspective. By being a developing country, Kyrgyzstan struggles with economic development and nation branding can be a chance for it to achieve the goal to be named as a developed country. Also, nation branding is a modern approach

developed during the globalization and it can be considered as an appropriate path in the world we live today. It is a soft power which can bring Kyrgyzstan not only economic development but also a recognition and influence on the international stage but it should be remembered that it is a long term process and it needs a devotion and hard work both from the government and the population but it is still a chance for the country to be competitive, developed and influential in the globalized world where new approaches and strategies are needed.

## **CONCLUSION**

The research question of this senior thesis was “Can nation branding help to solve problems of consolidation of the nation in Kyrgyzstan?” After analyzing the concept of nation branding and researching it through the prism of nationalism, it can be suggested that it has two main features such as inclusiveness and future orientation. Those two features are also the main characteristics of civic and future-oriented nationalism respectively. This means that if nation branding has the same traits as those two types of nationalism do, then those traits can function in the same way as they do in the framework of nationalism which leads to the national consolidation. Nation branding’s inclusiveness and future orientation can help to consolidate the nation of Kyrgyzstan.

There is also another aspect of nation branding that can serve as a source for national pride, therefore, national consolidation of the country. This is a good image and reputation of the country which will be the result of nation branding’s implementation. Citizens of Kyrgyzstan would be proud if their country would have a good reputation on the international arena which could lead to the national consolidation inside the country.

Additionally to that, nation branding can bring other achievements as economic development, improved reputation of the country, competitive identity, recognition and influence on the international stage. It functions like a package with a lot of goals it can achieve for the country and because it is still developing to the comprehensive theory and concept, the new ideas and features is been discovered in it, for example, as a potential to help to consolidate the nation.

With the consideration of all above mentioned arguments, it can be suggested that the final hypothesis of this senior thesis would consider nation branding as a concept which can help to consolidate the nation and solve national consolidation problems in Kyrgyzstan.

It is a first time when nation branding is analyzed and researched in the framework of influencing to the process of consolidation of the nation which can be considered as a novelty of this senior thesis. But this can be also a limitation of this senior thesis which means that further research and analysis is highly required in this field. The questions suggested for further research would be “To what extent nation branding can consolidate the nation?”, “Should nation branding be a single national strategy of the country or should it be combined with other ones?” and “Can nation branding be another type of nationalism?” Hopefully, answers for these and other questions will generate and provide a new emerging field of nation branding with more theories and concepts.



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