THE EMERGING REPRESENTATION OF "BRAND POLAND" WITHIN THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Ph.D

2012

UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE
The Emerging Representation of “Brand Poland”
within the European Union

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
at the University of Bedfordshire

April 2012
The Emerging Representation of “Brand Poland”

within the European Union

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Abstract

This research study investigates the emerging representation of the brand Poland in the context of implementation of destination branding to the practice of country promotion. The main emphasis is put on the role of meaningful practices undertaken by international and domestic tourism managers and policy makers in constructing and reconstructing the representation of Poland in the broad context of the country’s EU membership. The researcher does this by studying the examples of national and destination branding practices as well as the levels of understanding and appreciation of destination and national branding among people working in key organisations responsible for tourism and destination promotion both on the Polish domestic level and the level of relevant EU institutions. As national and destination branding is a relatively new phenomenon, specific focus is put on the critical analysis of the perceptions held about it among high ranking officials. The researcher pays particular attention to the power held by tourism in mediating identities of nations and destinations and the role that place branding plays or could play in this equation.

The researcher focuses her study on two distinct but nevertheless connected locations: Brussels as a power and knowledge hub of the European Union and Warsaw as the power and knowledge hub of Poland. For reasons of methodological fit this interpretative study relies upon qualitative methods conducted via an emergent research design. Therefore the study is not driven by an up-front hypothesis, but is conducted via qualitative research bricoleurship approach.
The research study concludes that although destination and national branding is universally familiar to the experts in the field of tourism and promotion, power holders and decision makers are lagging behind in understanding, appreciation and implementation of these new tools. This is particularly reflected in the case of Poland where first attempts at devising and implementing a national branding strategy were made but failed to be implemented due to budgetary and decision-making constraints at the level of power-holders. A striking conclusion is that in the case of Poland, the main causes of this lack of implementation of a national branding strategy are the very values and virtues that such a strategy might seem to promote. Nevertheless, the researcher observes a growing understanding and appreciation of the long-term benefits of a well designed and implemented branding strategy and its potentially great impact on tourism among the relevant decision-makers both in Brussels and in Poland.
Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Bedfordshire. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Name of candidate: Małgorzata Nowińska

Signature:

Date: 30.04.2012
This is dedicated to my daughter Hanna and my husband Piotr, who have endured this voyage with me as well as to my parents Grzegorz and Krystyna and my sister Karolina for their continued support and belief in me.
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<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDEN</td>
<td>European Destinations of Excellence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETC</td>
<td>European Travel Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBI</td>
<td>Polish Brand Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTO</td>
<td>National Tourism Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTO</td>
<td>Polish Tourism Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNWTO</td>
<td>United Nations’ World Tourism Organisation</td>
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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Professor Keith Hollinshead for his great inspiration and continued support throughout the process of writing this thesis. His endless patience, tolerance and optimism despite the changes in my life and the difficulties they incurred on our work together made this research study possible. Thanks is also due to Professor Peter Mason and Professor Andrew Holden for their suggestions and support provided for my initial research proposal. I would also like to thank Professor Nigel Morgan and Professor Annette Pritchard for inspiring me to explore the subject of destination branding.

Special thanks goes to Professor Angus Duncan, Joyce Bailey, Michelle Miskelly and Doctor Sara Spencer for their administrative support and help they provided in the organisation of my research process. My colleagues from the research institute Doctor Nazia Ali and Doctor Marcus Haag also have my deepest gratitude for their help, assistance and supportive spirit.

I would also like to thank all of the people that have made my research study possible: my European Travel Commission colleagues for their friendly, welcoming and accommodating approach to me; the staff of the Tourism Unit of the European Commission for their openness and willingness to share their views and opinions with me as well as the director of Polish Brand Institute for his time and enthusiasm towards this study.

Finally I would like to thank my friends: Karlijn Tijink for her unquenchable optimism and interest in my research subject, and Dominic Robinson for helping me in reducing my damage to the English language.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH STUDY

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY.

In this research study, the practice of representation is defined as a process through which concepts concerning specific objects and images are produced in human minds and exchanged between people both verbally and visually. This process enables human beings to give meaning to the world by constructing essential connections between cultures, objects, events and ideas (Urry, 1990; S. Hall, 1997). The question raised in this thesis focuses on the ways in which visual images, language and discourse work together as systems of representation in conceiving and developing national identities within the discourse of international tourism.

The main emphasis of this research study is put on the role of meaningful practices undertaken by international and domestic tourism managers and policy makers in constructing and reconstructing the representation of Poland in the broad context of the country’s EU membership. The emerging idea of symbolic forms of tourism such as production of heritage sites (Hollinshead 1990), promotional and advertising programmes (Urry 1995; Morgan and Pritchard 1998) or constructing the destination image (Selwyn 1996) to create and re-create nation has strongly influenced this current research study.

The attention is drawn to the situations in which different images of the nation and the national identity are created and embedded in the exhibitory forms of
cultural practices of public and private tourism institutions. In particular, focus is put on the practises of national tourism organisations defining and emphasising the uniqueness of the place by encompassing some of the greatest environmental, cultural and historical heritage into a set of representative symbols communicating a positive national image to the world. These practices are embedded in a multidimensional term roughly described before as national and destination branding – a relatively new craft within the tourism public policy field which shapes the main images of places, peoples and pasts. Often, seen merely as one of the marketing techniques, the practice of branding has been inaccurately analysed merely through the positivistic paradigm methods (Morgan and Pritchard 1998, Anholt 2002). As Morgan and Pritchard (1998) indicate, the scientific approaches associated with positivism, however useful as they answer many principal questions (such as the rational background and impacts of branding campaigns) very often end up being superficial and incomplete. As stated by Anholt (2002), branding is a way of bringing values up to the surface and it should be looked upon regardless of its economic discourse. Therefore, the larger, multidisciplinary perspective of social identity is incorporated in the present research study examining the broad, multidimensional concept of destination and national branding. Hence, as stated by Morgan and Pritchard: “the marketing power of branding is undoubted, but what has yet to receive attention is what branding reveals about cultural power” (Morgan and Pritchard, 1998:142).
The main focus of the present research study has been placed upon particular actions undertaken by tourist managers together with local authorities aiming to produce or sometimes re-produce the destination brand. In order to get a better understanding of the practical side of destination branding and to reflect critically on the self position as the researcher, the author of this thesis has been involved in the work of the three most influential organisations in European tourism: the European Travel Commission (hereafter: ETC), United Nations World Tourism Organisation (hereafter: UNWTO) and the Tourism Unit of the European Commission. The researcher’s collaboration with the first two organisations (ETC and UNWTO) included active participation in the process of producing the “Handbook on Tourism Destination Branding” - the manual for the National Tourism Organisations on how to build the destination brand. The Handbook covers the theme of destination branding and combines: an overview of global branding expertise, rigorous academic analysis and current practical experience within the field of country representation. By assisting in the preparation of the Handbook, the researcher had a chance of becoming acquainted with the theme of destination branding and the realities of the practical tasks undertaken by international tourism organisations. The involvement within the second project led by the European Commission has also given the author valuable insight into the professional work within one of the most powerful tourism entities and also into the destination branding practice developed within this organisation. She has been involved in the project “European Destinations of Excellence” whose purpose is supporting
and promoting the sustainable destinations in Europe using the instruments of destination branding.

The aim of participating in these two assignments was to explore the content and structure of tourism authorities’ personal visions, subject-related goals, and circumstances under which particular activities are undertaken within the international tourism’s institutional stage. It is recognised that due to the political character of such activities, those practices are rarely neutral, which routinely leads to some images being privileged and promoted and others to be concealed and neglected (Hollinshead, 1994b; Selwyn, 1993; Morgan and Pritchard, 1998). The researcher’s participatory involvement in this kind of assignment is trusted to result in the identification of different components of policy development process and also (and foremost) in the development of understanding of the relations of power existing within the tourism organisations in Europe. This work is perceived to be a part of the larger discourse on emancipatory, liberatory and transformative practice (C.M. Hall, 1994) facilitated by the development of conceptual constructions and followed by the participants’ ‘lived experiences’ commentary. The broader, more detailed description of the Handbook’s purpose, the participants’ actions and project development in particular, is portrayed in Chapters Four and Five of the present research study.
1.2. THE STUDY PROBLEM: RELATIONS OF POWER.

As Duncan and Ley (1993) points out, representations always function within the discursive fields concentrated around either public or private institutions. Representation in and through discourse of tourism is a politically active process where dominant groups (such as national and international tourism organisations, national governments, regional development organisations, public and private sector tourism organisations) construct not only images of attractive tourism destinations but also of ideologically powerful national identity. As S. Hall (1997) points out, in the projection of national, regional or local identities, discourse works as systems of representation. Thus, the projective practices undertaken by administrative bodies within contemporary tourism are seen as powerful representative agents through whom national images, representations and significations are distributed and consist of one of the most prominent indications of dominance within today’s social communication (Hollinshead, 2000; Morgan and Pritchard, 2006). The discussion revolves around the role of public and private institutions in creating the representation of a place within the normalising discourse of destination branding.

Many branding strategies which intend to promote a country’s culture and identity have been perceived by many authorities, also those working in tourism, as controversial and inappropriate. As Olins, one of the world’s leading brand consultants, points out: “I never cease to be amazed at the violent reactions that the concept of branding the nation provokes” (Olins in Morgan,
Pritchard and Pride, 2002:17). He argues that the objections raised by many professionals and academics are mainly due to the connotation that the word ‘brand’ entails rather than a phenomenon and practice itself. When the subject of national identity or national image is highly respected, the word ‘brand’ causes irritation. The strong and immediate connotation to commercial marketing which rapidly springs to mind after coming across the definition of branding immediately rules out the possibility of viewing the concept of branding from the wider perspective of social sciences. This situation is a central paradox because, as rightly noticed by Anholt (2003), nations are intensely complex and always contradictory and cannot be treated by marketers as they were a soap-powder or soda drink. To him, the brand of a country is not simply a matter of designing an expensive logo or a widespread promotional campaign. The little interest of the more in-depth meaning of national branding followed by the lack of socio-cultural awareness of people customarily working in marketing, cause various controversies and misinterpretations undermining the importance and need for a wisely managed national branding strategy.

In this thesis, the researcher intends to nurture the need for a larger interdisciplinary perspective of social identity, which is considered by the fields of cultural studies and sociology and by many professional as merely ‘branding strategy type’ marketing practice. It explores the emerging links and mutual influences between the national branding strategies and areas of tourism, international politics, culture, entertainment and other national identity
facets helping countries to perform on the global scene. According to Anholt (2003, 2007), cultural relations can play a critical part in helping to restore the richness and dignity to the place’s brand which the rigours of practical international marketing take. Additionally, research focuses on the emerging need of a relationship between culture and branding when academics and practitioners could work together on effective and sustainable national branding and rebranding strategies.

To conclude, the current study explores the field of relations of power based on who represents what and how these activities influence the meaning produced within a particular country – Poland – in the broad context of this country’s recent accession to the European Union. It goes to examine the issues surrounding the construction of a ‘national brand’ as applied in Poland in the context of the EU. It provides insights into how representations of a Poland are produced, who may be dominant in their production and what ideological and political discourse stands behind that production. Additionally, it gives an insider’s overview of the practitioner’s work conducted in the researched tourism organisations. In other words, it scrutinises the raison d’être of why some people or groups within tourism industry have the authority to represent and what are the social consequences of their work.

1.3. THE NEED OF THE STUDY.

This research study is concerned with the national brand development within the discourse of national and international organisations which act to represent
the image of Poland to the world. The attention is drawn to the production of meaning through images of the place displayed by national tourism authorities to represent ‘other cultures’ within the context of country representation. The research study investigates the meaning and role of the cultural exhibition of people, places and pasts in relation to the construction of the destination brand for Poland. The relationship between the development of tourism in Poland and the attempts of promoting the country by the tourism authorities has been investigated. This study research also critically investigates the role of industry sectors such as tourism and public diplomacy in the current transformation in and of Poland.

As the largest and most influential of the new entrants to the European Union, Poland represents a notable example of the country seeking a revival of its representation both at home and abroad. The next few decades will have crucial meaning for the development of the new Polish identity as a European Union member and a new significant competitor on the international tourism market.

Thus, after introducing the state of development of destination branding practices among the international tourism organisations in Europe and the understandings of destination branding practice presented by these international tourism organisation’s representatives, the current research study endeavours to uncover the specific attempts and purposes of national branding strategies in Poland through the practices of national tourism and cultural institutions. Specifically, the research investigation aims to critically examine
the process of representation of symbolic forms of national display in the projection of the identity of place and their role in the construction and reconstruction of Poland.

Therefore, the objectives of this study are:

➢ to critically investigate the ways in which various private and administrative bodies on (A) the EU level such as the Tourism Unit of the European Commission, European Travel Commission and UNWTO and (B) in Poland, such as Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Polish Tourism Organisation, Polish Brand Institute, which are involved in the process of national and destination branding, and branding of Poland in particular, understand, perceive and implement this process;

➢ to examine the contemporary destination and national branding practices in Poland in the context of Poland as a member of a EU and of the work of the most prominent international and European tourism organisations (United Nations World Tourism Organisation, European Travel Commission, Tourism Unit in European Commission).

➢ to analyse the relations of power between the various factors involved in the process of national and destination brand production.

Much of this work will involve the scrutiny of the role and function of institutions responsible for tourism and national heritage and other institutional cultures-of-production involved in the production of the brand Poland.
1.4. DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.

This study is concerned with the relations of power in production of the representation of a place (both in the European and Polish arena) within the found discourse of international tourism. The researcher seeks to investigate the particular / actual interpretations of what key players / involved stakeholders / observing specialists form leading European and Polish tourism authorities, think of the development of the practice of destination branding and its influencing power on the representation of the national image. Therefore this research seeks to capture the understandings of the practices of destination branding held by the key players from the most influential tourism organisations (e.g. UNWTO, ETC, EC, PTO) and other governmental authorities in Brussels and Warsaw. Since the work is constructivist, it is understood that the emergent interpretations can never be ‘right’ or ‘truthful’ in any absolute sense: they can only ever be ‘supportable’ or justifiable’ and therefore not necessarily ‘generalisable’ per se (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Moreover, as this research study follow the constructivist theoretical approach, it does not seek to find answers to such questions as “How should a developing brand of Poland be constructed?”, “What is the most appropriate way of constructing a destination or national branding strategy?”, or “How does the Polish brand compare to other similar brands?”. These questions were not pursued as this research study does not seek to find any “right” solutions but rather aims to study and capture the current state of affairs. The focus is put rather on the national and destination branding processes and the relations
between the players involved. Thus the purpose of this research study is not to define or find the best or most appropriate strategy to brand Poland or any other country nor is it to generate ‘typical’ interpretations of what the larger European population think is happening to the perception of Poland. It is rather meant to study how strategies are being developed, by whom, and in what relation to others. This is not a study of the strength or recognition of the brand Poland nor a guide to place branding. It is rather a study of the perceptions of national and destination branding held by the high ranking officials in the power-holding institutions in Tourism in Europe and in Poland specifically in the context of the emerging national brand Poland. The study aims to investigate the relations of power in the process of national and destination branding and seek to reveal who is and who might not be dominant in the production of the representation of a place.

1.5. STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS.

This thesis is structured into seven chapters. Chapter One sets the general background and the context of the study. Next, it outlines the study problem and the need of the study. Following these introductory parts Chapter One presents the delimitations of the study.

Chapter Two provides theoretical and conceptual foundations of the study research investigation. There, the concepts of national identity, national branding and destination branding are explained and their mutual relations are explored. The political context of the production of national brand through the
international and local tourism authorities practice is also discussed. This is supported by a brief description of tourism and the developing tourism policy in both an EU context and within a post-communist framework.

In Chapter Three the research context in Poland is provided together with a detailed account of tourism in Poland. It sets out the key issues and functional characteristics of tourism in Poland. It also provides an overview of the institutions involved in producing and mediating the images of Poland as well as the development of brand Poland. Next, the Chapter analyses the perceptions that foreigners and Polish people themselves have about Poland. A selection of branding initiatives in and about Poland is also described and criticised. The Chapter is concluded with recommendations for further implementation and improvement of branding efforts provided by external place branding specialists.

Chapter Four presents the methodological approach of this research study and illustrates the relevance of various paradigms to that research study. The Chapter describes the research process and illustrates the particular dual setting of the research location – Brussels and Poland. Further, the process of data collection and the methods used are presented. Together with every method, the Chapter describes the corresponding data population comprising of tourism and branding managers and documents acquired by the researcher for the purpose of this research. Next, the ethical issues in the data collection process are discussed followed by a description of the forthcoming process of data analysis.
Chapter Five contains the interpretative findings of the study based on data collected in the two research locations: Brussels and Poland. The findings derived from these two locations are presented in the two thematic areas: number 1 – The general understanding of destination and national branding, and number 2 – Relations of power within the process of destination and national branding. Findings are grouped into a list of 4 sub-themes and critically analysed throughout the Chapter.

Chapter Six begins with a summary of research findings together with a recollection of study objectives and an overview of how they have been addressed. This is followed by a series of implications for future researchers wishing to further explore the field of national destination branding activities in Poland and the EU.

The Conclusions contain this research study’s summary derived from the research findings and gives some reflections on the methodological choices undertaken throughout this research study.

Finally, the end note is followed by a Reference listing all references cited in the thesis and consulted throughout the study and a list of Appendices containing supporting information referred to throughout the thesis.
CHAPTER TWO: TOURISM AND THE REPRESENTATION OF A PLACE

2.1. INTRODUCTION.

This research study investigates the discursive practices generated by agents of display (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998) from the tourism industry and policy (i.e., from individuals or groups who claim to have a designed or an implicit authority to act for or represent other people or nations) operating within a destination branding practice. Horne (1992) argued that the contemporary tourist is a modern pilgrim and the guidebooks are devotional texts. From the guidebook, a tourist learns what to see, when to see it and how the particular object, phenomenon or exhibitory form of culture should be interpreted. The process of connecting the signification to representation is being made through that powerful communication activity. The powerful role which the guidebook authors, tourist managers, operators or any other relevant actors who have an authority of projecting the images of palaces, people and pasts and therefore educating others, play in creating the representation of a place are at the core of this study.

Secondly, this chapter deals with conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of destination branding as conveyed by leading commentators both in tourism and social science fields. The theoretical context which frames this research study of representation of a place in the discourse of international tourism has been explored by the explanation of two important concepts influencing that representation: national identity and culture. The conceptual foundations of the
term ‘national branding’ are also provided in this chapter as the introduction to
the role and meaning of the practice of destination branding. The strong inter-
relationship between all of these concepts – national identity, culture, national
branding and destination branding – has been exposed throughout this chapter.

Thirdly, this chapter explores the ways in which tourism policies, including
national and destination branding, are shaped by the discourses of power. In a
shifting geopolitical context of the European continent where national and
supranational sovereignty and power continue to evolve it is important to
appreciate the impact that these changes might have on shaping tourism policy
and destination branding.

2.2. THE CONCEPT OF NATIONAL IDENTITY.

The concept of national identity consists of a countless number of assumptions,
theories and contradictory beliefs. Table 2.2-1 (below) provides an outline of
different understandings of the concept analysed from diverse points of view.
The multi-dimensional character of this notion requires a careful analysis of the
origins and the meaning of national identity. As stated by S. Hall (1997), the
question of identity, the way that individuals perceive themselves in relation of
others has assumed an increasingly central role in today’s rapidly changing
cultural times. Smith (1991) claims that the concept of national identity
embodies a historic territory of homeland, common myths, and historical
memories, a common or mass culture, common legal rights and duties for all
members, a common economy and increased territorial mobility for its
members. He argues that these theses states the fundamental features of national identity and people who share some of these characteristics are entitled to form a common identity. However, what can be noticed in today’s world is a fact that despite the increased level of barrier-limiting features and border-transcending organisations such as the European Union or the Internet which make the world a much more interconnected place, national identity prevails and persists with its deep emotional and spiritual power as a source of identity for many people (Dinnie, 2008).

To understand a nation means not only to learn about its historical or geographical features but, more importantly, to open oneself to the aspects of national culture, stories, myths and imaginings. Hence, the identity is not a thing, but a description of the ways of speaking about self and the community and it does not develop in a social void but rather it is a manifestation of many forms of existence. As stated by Billig (1995:69), identity is a form of life. An interrelated pathway of understanding the concept of national identity has also been approached by Anderson (1991) who coined the phrase of “imagined community”. He claims, that the nation is to be imagined as a unique entity in terms of time and space and that all social and cultural groups maintain a sense of their own history and their interpretation (Evans and Boswell, 1999). The main inquiry of Anderson’s (1991) study was to examine the (often) illogical reason of why members of (sometimes) multimillion (in terms of population) countries feel attached to one another only through shared nationality. The concept of nationalism in his view, states a discursive kind of narration which
presents political unity embracing all social classes (Kuligowski, 2008). Nations, developed in this manner, are based (for most communities) on common beliefs and feelings and shared imaginative ways of perceiving the world. Anderson (1991) claims that only if members of a particular social group or community are willing to imagine having a common identity, the nation has a chance to survive (Evans and Boswell, 1999). This theoretical approach brings an overview of a process where national identity is created and what is meant by such a construction.

While studying the process of representation development (and not exclusively relating to Poland), it is very important to take into account the fact that every social group in question continuously seeks to invent and re-invent itself. Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) in their book, *The Invention of Tradition* argue that, often the national traditions, myth and memories which are commonly perceived to be derived from ancient times can often turn out to be invented in a single event or over a short period of time. Additionally, they indicate that the phenomenon of inventing traditions has been practiced for many years in the past but they also admit that in the today’s times of rapid social transformations it has been strongly intensified. Hence, the national identity cannot be perceived as a fixed, unchangeable object, it should be rather analysed as a process, vulnerable to various narratives and influences, which were and constantly are being reconstructed and re-imagined.
## Table 2.2-1 Dimensions of National Identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Dimensions of national identity commonly treated by the listed author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>A historic territory, or homeland; common myths and historical memories; a common, mass public culture; common legal rights and duties for all members; a common economy with territorial mobility for members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anderson</td>
<td>The nation as an imagined community, a deep horizontal comradeship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kearney</td>
<td>To speak of a single ‘national past’ or a single ‘national image’ would be to distort the complexity of the history of multinational states such as the UK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolz</td>
<td>The main problem of nation-building is how to reconcile civic identities based on inclusive citizenship and exclusive ethnic identities based on such common characteristics as culture, religion and language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parekh</td>
<td>Identity is neither fixed and unalterable nor wholly fluid and amenable to unlimited reconstruction. It can be altered, but only within the constraints imposed by inherited constitution and necessarily inadequate self-knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thompson</td>
<td>Contrary to nationalist discourses and commonly held assumptions, the nation is not a unitary entity in which all members think, feel and act as one. Instead, each individual engages in many different ways in making sense of nations and national identities in the course of interactions with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiely et al.</td>
<td>‘Markers’ of national identity can include: place of birth, ancestry, place of residence, length of residence, upbringing and education, name, accent, physical appearance, dress, commitment to place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bond et al.</td>
<td>Attempt to move beyond assumptions that nationalism is essentially cultural and/or narrowly political, primarily past-oriented and defensive. Examine evidence relating to the creative (re)construction of the nation from contemporary economic perspective.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2-1 above presents different concepts of the fundamental features of national identity derived from different perspectives. The next section focuses on the cultural elements of national identity which are regarded in this study as constituting the essence of the nation’s brand.

2.2.1. NATIONAL IDENTITY AND CULTURE.

Culture described as ‘the most intangible yet the most distinguishing element of any population and country’ (Robinson-Pant, 2005) is often said to symbolise the sum of the greatest achievements represented in music, literature, art, design or sport. The word ‘culture’ frequently refers to distinctive features from the way of life of a people, community or nation (S. Hall, 1997). In many published texts on culture there can be found a few fixed cultural entities which are said to help construct the national identity of the place. These are literature, music, food and drink, sport and architecture. However, in the current research study, culture is analysed not only as a set of things (novels, paintings, buildings or beverages) but rather as a set of practices.

By following the pathways of understanding represented by S. Hall (1997), this study explores the concept of culture as a production and exchange of meanings between the members of a society or a group. These meanings are continuously being produced and exchanged, especially today in the era of global media communication (du Gay, 1997). He argues, that culture depends
very much on the interpretations that individuals are producing by sharing their understanding of the world and the ways in which they communicate their perceptions to others. These cultural meanings are being produced and communicated between each other through different symbols, signs and images - through language which can be decoded and understood by others. Different forms of representation are being used in the process of language and mediated throughout the world. Within the discourse of national identity, particular symbolic practices are being used to give meaning to the idea of being part of the national culture. Without these cultural practices of turning signs and symbols into language and communicating them through particular representations to the world, the production and representation of national identity would not be possible.

The representations of the places, countries destinations which often provide the sense of national identification are often created by individuals who claim to have a power to construct the interpretations of what they believe constitutes the essence of national identity. The local and international tourism authorities and governmental bodies concerned with the economic development, engage in the production of meaning and specific understanding of a place are focused on selling this ‘product’ to the potential tourists. As Hollinshead (1999) pointed out in the relation to tourists attractions, the interpretation is ‘a technology of power’ design to produce a meaning that is represented to a ‘specific public’.

For the present study, it is important to understand the significance of these
practices in producing or reproducing the representation of a place, and therefore the role, which they play in the cultural transformation of a country.

2.3. **THE MEANING OF NATIONAL IDENTITY IN THE PROCESS OF NATIONAL BRANDING.**

As explained in the previous chapter, the aim of this thesis is to find a link between the concepts of national identity and national representation and examine its role in the practice of national branding. The research study explores the elements of national culture which call out for a ‘feeling’ of national identity among people in order to identify the essence of a national brand. National branding can be perceived as a form of defining, embracing and communicating the national identity of the country. National identity plays a key role in national branding. As stated by Dinnie (2008:111) “an awareness and understanding of the core features of national identity is a prerequisite for developing nation-branding campaigns, as the essence of any nation-brand derives not only from the country’s companies and brands but also from its culture in the widest sense – language, literature, music, sport, architecture, and so on, all embody the soul of a nation”. The aim of the country branding process is to reveal the unique, multi-dimensional blend of elements that provide a country with culturally grounded differentiation and relevance for its audience (Johnston in Dinnie, 2008). As stated by Anholt (2006), a country brand should be the result of the collective imagery of the country, the system of conscious and unconscious mental evocations of a society that gives meaning to its worldview and to its relationship with its territory. A country
brand, therefore, consists of an identity (history, national character, personality); an image (a system of signs and its code), its communication, its vacation and functions, and the benefits it provides for the society it represents.

The holistic branding of a country relates to the way in which the place (understood as any recognisable geographical entity e.g. city, country, region) presents itself on the national and international stage in terms of business, public diplomacy, culture and tourism (Dinnie, 2008). The purpose of country branding or national branding is to create and control the reputation of a region, city or country as places to visit, invest in, and do business with. National brand is meant to help others to understand what a particular country is, what its main assets are, and how it wants to represent itself to others. Branding aims to make a country more intelligible for diverse audiences. Its attempt is to provide a field of reference for various meditative discourses such as new reports and influences on all sectors of the national economy. It has been argued by many commentators in the field of branding, that a country brand, in order to function needs to correspond to the intrinsic reality of a country together with emotional aspects reaching an audience (Olins 2003; Anholt, 2003,2007).

The concept of national branding has often brought antagonistic reactions and indignation, especially among academics. Many social science thinkers have avoided confronting the country branding discourse arguing that places are too complex to include in branding discussions since they have too many
stakeholders and too little management control, they have underdeveloped identities and are not perceived as brands by the general public (Morgan, Pritchard and Piggot, 2002).

### 2.3.1. THE DEFINITION OF ‘BRAND’ AND ‘NATIONAL BRAND’.

Before exploring the concept of national branding it is important to first look at the term brand itself. While searching for the definition of brand in marketing literature (Doyle, 1992; Macrae, Parkinson and Sheerman, 1995; Keller, 2003; Lynch and Chernatony, 2004) the researcher came across two different approaches. First, where brand is being defined from its solely visual manifestation viewed from the mainly producer perspective as a name, symbol or design. A second approach, where the essence of a brand is being explored more deeply. The American Marketing Association (12-03-2009, the Internet source) defines brand in a very logical and quantitative way, merely as a physical entity:

A name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller’s good or service as distinct from those of others sellers. The legal term of brand trademark. A brand may identify one item, a family of items, or all items of the seller. If used for the firm as a whole, the preferred term is trade name.

The United Kingdom Chartered Institute of Marketing (12-03-2009, the Internet source) presents a slightly more consumer focused approach:
The set of physical attributes of a product or service, together with the beliefs and expectations surrounding it - a unique combination which the name or logo of the product or service should evoke in the mind of the audience.

The second definition includes a notion of brand as a dynamic relationship between the product (or destination) and consumers (or potential visitors). This way of thinking is much closer to the current studies on branding as it is not limiting the meaning of brand to a single product (or logo) etc. but it also involves the crucial concept of the audience.

It is argued in this thesis, that a brand really exists only in people’s minds; that a representation of the particular object (place) is being decoded by people’s minds and therefore a meaning of this particular object (place) is produced (S. Hall, 1997). Marcrae, Parkinson and Sheerman (1995) state that a brand represents a unique combination of characteristics and added values, both functional and non-functional, which have taken on a relevant meaning that is inextricably linked to the brand, awareness of which might be conscious or intuitive. Lury (1998, in: Morgan, Pritchard and Piggot, p.337), argues: “it is in our perception – our believes and our feelings about a brand that are most important”. Also Lynch and Chernatony (2004), define brand from the perspective of the audience by describing it as a cluster of functional and emotional values that promise a unique and welcome experience between a buyer and a seller. Hence, there is an increased focus among marketers on the aspects of loyalty and the emotional appeal of brands. However, it has been also argued that a mere emotion is not enough. As Hallberg (1995) emphasises,
a strong brand needs to combine some unique associations with the consumer, as the emotions without a memorable point of reference may only lead to consumer confusion. According to De Chernatony, and McDonald (2003:20):

A successful brand is an identifiable product, service, person and place, argumented in such a way that the buyer or user perceives relevant, unique, (sustainable) added values which match their needs most closely.

To them, creating a brand, aims to provide a situation where people perceive the product (or the destination) in a valuable way. It does not have to lead to manipulative marketing techniques but rather to a consistent effort of influencing people’s perceptions of the product (or destination) in a way that makes it memorable and distinctive.

The practice of branding in the studies of marketing is defined as a process by which the particular product is being distinguished from those of the competition (Jobber and Fahy 2003; Kotler and Keller 2006). As mentioned before in this thesis, in today’s increasingly globalised world nations have also been challenged with the need of distinguishing their product for both domestic and foreign consumers.

Moreover, it has been argued by marketers, that while researching the branding process it is crucial to acknowledge that it is a consumer who forms a mental vision of a brand (de Chernatony and McDonald, 2003). As mentioned before, the brand is something which exists in the minds of consumers (Kotler and
Keller, 2006). The relevance to the notion of national branding is significant here. The images that one holds in his or her mind about a country, together with the pre-existing stereotypes may be the most important aspects that construct a national brand and therefore, the most difficult to control. This multi-faceted nature of the national brand needs to be acknowledged for the purpose of this study on place branding together with the fact that brand exists in consumer minds and cannot be a totally controllable creation of the marketing function.

2.3.2. NATIONAL BRANDING AND GLOBALISATION.

One of the most common concerns that appear in national branding literature today is the concept of globalisation as a threat to the distinctiveness of the nation state (Morgan and Pritchard 2002, Olins 2003, Anholt 2007, Dinnie 2008). According to Anholt (2007), the world today is becoming one big marketplace. With around 191 independent nation states in the world, the competition within the industries such as tourism, inward investment and exports is immense (Kotler and Gertner, 2002). As Appadurai (1990) emphasises, the disjunctions in current relations between people, places and national identities have never been so intense, and have never affected the world’s economy as powerfully as they appear to do today. Globalisation is perceived to be a force which generates increasing interconnections within the social, economic and cultural areas, that are crossing national boundaries and influence the daily lives of people around the world (Amin and Thrift, 1994).
Therefore, the phenomenon of globalisation is often perceived as a main factor of homogenisation for both cultural and spatial relations across nations. The multiplicity of international corporations often detached from any particular nation state and the rise of the transnational institutions such as the European Union can often give an impression of a decline of in the value of the nation state (Meethan, 2001). The idea of a democratically legitimate ‘European demos’ which from the outset is based upon a collective identity might increase the number of critical voices concerned with the condition of cultural heterogeneity within and between its member nation states (Fuchs and Klingemann, 2000). It has been argued that in the times of increased interconnectivity, increased economic alliances and the extension of commodity relations, the locality of the places might be undermined (Meethan 2001).

These types of concerns were particularly vocal during the recent EU enlargement. One of the most commonly repeated arguments on the anti-accession side of the debate was the perceived threat to national identity of the acceding member states. Interestingly, a similar fear relating to their own national identity (often addressed as ‘absorption capacity’) could be heard among the opponents of EU enlargement in the old member states of the European Union. It is argued by Sedelmeier (2003) that the EU’s eastern enlargement has contributed to the formation of an EU collective identity as a promoter and protector of human rights and democracy. This particular aspect
of EU identity has been concretised and articulated in its policy practice towards the central European accession candidate.

However, many specialists (Robertson 2001; du Gay 2002) argue that today’s processes of transformation and cultural modification (which are strongly associated with globalisation) tend to lead to an increased complexity of global interrelations rather than to the simplification and cultural uniformity across all places. Porter (1998:34) emphasises:

Many contemporary discussions of international competition stress global homogenisation and diminished role for nations. But, in truth, national differences are at the heart of competitive success.

Moreover, the recent eastward enlargement of the EU is perceived to strengthen views of the further diversification of the political, cultural and religious beliefs of its members rather than a homogenization of the continent’s identity. As stated by Meethan (2001), globalisation is not just about the international or transnational connections between places, but rather about a different type of relationship between time and space that is increasingly changing the image of the world. The importance of a place and its culture(s) is not diminished by globalisation but may even be reinforced by it (Lovell, 1998). While at one hand, there is a rise of global forms of economic ordering, on the other hand it seems that the local is being reinforced or even more prominent then before (Amin and Thrift, 1994; Meyer and Gerschiere, 1999; Robertson, 2001).
The global competition forces nations to make increasingly conscious efforts in the struggle for international recognition. Paradoxically, in times of intensified interconnections between peoples and places where access to information has never been easier, people tend to have little or no recognition of countries different then their own. In today’s modern and complicated world everyone is carrying a selected (often not consciously) set of images in their heads on which they build their views of the world. The vast number of these images are derived from myth, rumour and anecdote and provide superficial, biased, and stereotyping opinions. These images might often be very dangerous and destructive and lead to a grotesque caricature rather than to a strong and respectable representation of the place (Olins, 2003). Therefore, countries are seeking various ways of convincing others to step out of their simple, comfortable and uncomplicated ways of thinking and try to understand the richness of their national representation (Anholt, 2001).

It seems to be the case that many local and national politicians have realised that a country with a strong and positive reputation (brand) is wining on every front. Hence, they discovered the urgent need for countries, regions and cities to re-invent their identities and re-define their representations. It has been also recognised that in world today, every country, city and region must compete for their share in the world’s population of consumers, tourists, investors, students, international sports and cultural events, and the interest of world’s media (Vanossi, 2006). Unfortunately, many of the activities undertaken by the political representatives are chaotic, inconsistent and short-sighted. Often,
these efforts boil down to an expensive promotional campaign where a special slogan and logo are designed and distributed through various communication channels. These practices often result in a failure, followed by a large waste of money and also, what is the most destructive for the country, in communicating an incongruent image of the place. As explained by Olins (2007:60):

You don’t change people’s perceptions of a country with advertising. You change people’s perceptions by finding the truth, finding an idea that embraces that truth and putting it through everything they do.

2.3.3. THE PURPOSE OF NATIONAL BRANDING.

It has been argued by many thinkers in national branding (Kotler and Gertner 2002, Morgan and Pritchard 2002, Pride 2004, Anholt 2006, Dinnie 2008), that only through adopting the conscious branding the goals mentioned above can be achieved. Although the practice of national branding might seem simple and superficial at first, it soon transpires that in reality it takes a lot of effort and engagement to create a trustworthy brand. Anholt (2007) describes place branding as a great intellectual, moral and philosophical challenge. Whomever makes the decision to engage in it, will have to answer various philosophical questions about the nature of perception and reality, about the relation between the objects and their representation, or the relations of power between the one who represents and the one who is being represented. The matters of national identity and national image need to be carefully analysed, decoded and deconstructed when the complex idea of a national brand is being developed.
The question of national stereotypes and their origins must be acknowledged together with the aspects which determine them. As emphasised by Higson (1995), a country’s stereotype can be built up in a planned or unplanned way. Stereotypes can be an important discursive narratives through which images of the nation are produced and constructed. For Scollon and Scollon (1995) the expression of stereotyping is just another word for overgeneralization. By stereotyping, the particular group of people, their histories and characteristics are being generalised (often) on the basis of the histories and characteristics of a few individuals belonging to that group. People tend to use stereotypes especially when they are facing a new situation and are unfamiliar or lacking the deeper knowledge of the other. Brewer, Dull and Lui (1981) claim, that stereotypes are very important for the study of place representation as they are a useful tool for the description of not only the tourists but also the host. Moreover, according to Frankowski-Braganza (1983) stereotypes can demonstrate a convenient way of how to interact during the short-term relationships and create a base for deeper understandings. However, as Lustig and Koester (1999) argue, most stereotypes are wrong and exaggerated and, very often, negative attributes are emphasised in them and the positives ignored. Stereotypes from the outset limit the understanding of human behaviour and therefore cannot be treated as a base for future in-depth knowledge (Scollon and Scollon in Reinsinger and Turner, 2002). By stereotyping the perception of a place is distorted from not only the perspective of tourists but also that of the host. While tourists develop their
stereotypes about a place from the tourist literature, media, educational sources, prior travel experience, or other holidaymakers, the people living in a place construct their imaginings about the tourists but also their own place from gossip, government propaganda and observation of the tourists (Reisinger and Turner, 2002).

Additionally, the way in which people perceive their own country is a very important aspect for the nation’s both internal and external image. There is no way in which the country could ignore the citizens auto-perception analysis during the process of national branding. Derived for the corporate world, the expression to ‘live a brand’ has been adopted here as a phenomenon of social responsibility to create the country representation. It has been noticed by Anholt (2005) that countries where the auto-perception of inhabitants is positive are more likely to establish a strong national brand than the countries where the auto-image is negative. He argues, that if people who live in a particular country do not believe in the strength of his or her national assets, they would not be able to convince others to believe in it either. A strong national brand should be solidly rooted in the minds of inhabitants otherwise even the best attempt of creating a positive image of the place will not be successful. Anholt (2007) assumes that the weak auto-perception can be a reason why Poland, despite its spectacular achievements in the social, economical and political arena, still does not have a strong position as a national brand. The notion of auto-perception will be discussed and analysed
further in this thesis, especially in relation to the national branding situation in Poland.

2.3.4. THE PROCESS OF NATIONAL BRANDING.

In the available branding literature we can find that there are many different ways in and through which the representation of the country is being articulated. Anholt (2007) when discussing the sources and origins of a national brand identifies six most prominent channels of communication through which countries, consciously or unconsciously, build their reputation: tourism, brands, policy, investment, culture, and people.
### Table 2.3-1 Anholt's Six Channels of National Brand Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tourism</strong></td>
<td>The loudest voice of the six national branding communication channels. Tourism promotion together with the visitors experience are perceived to be the most powerful forces in the practice of place branding (Morgan and Pritchard 2002, Anholt, 2007). The large sums of money plus the sufficient number of human resources specialised in marketing, create a situation where tourism authorities are the most significant actors in national representation management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brands</strong></td>
<td>The exported products can play a role of very strong national brand ambassadors. When the country of origin is explicit and the relationship between the company and the nation is symbolic and mutually beneficial, the product exported from that country – food, drink, clothes, cars and so on – can be a very powerful weapon mediating values of the country of origin (Kotler and Gertner 2002, Olins 2004, Anholt 2007).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy</strong></td>
<td>The decisions made by the national government, not only in a field of foreign affairs but also within the domestic policy, can often dramatically change the representation of the country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Investment</strong></td>
<td>The ways that a country is managing its national and international investments have a strong impact on the creation of the national brand. The positive business reputation may result in a interest of foreign entrepreneurs, workers or researchers while the negative can create an image of unprofessionalism embracing any area of the national market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Culture</strong></td>
<td>The national cultural artefacts are one of the most influential channels of communication through which the construction of such narratives of nation is developed. Films, museum exhibitions, books, theatrical performances, music - all play a very important, sometimes highly political role in the projection of national identity which ought to be acknowledged during the process of developing the national brand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>People</strong></td>
<td>People from the branded country are very important national identity communicators. The way they feel about their country, the opinions they share, the values they represent and the ways in which they behave both in the country and abroad stimulates to high extent the reputation of the place (Olins, 2004; Anholt, 2007).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Anholt (2007)
The six national brand communication channels listed by Anholt are also formed into what he refers to as the *Hexagon of Competitive Identity* shown in Figure 2.3-1 below.

Figure 2.3-1 The Hexagon of Competitive Identity.

Source: Anholt (2002).
Other national branding specialists (Morgan, Pritchard and Piggot 2002; Ollins 2004; Anholt 2007; Dinnie 2008) also refer to national branding in the context of communication. They provide that countries are communicating various massages every day. The high number of messages are being mediated through political actions, popular culture, people’s behaviour, sport, products and services. As Olins emphasises “collectively, all these millions of messages represent an idea of what the nation as a whole is up to, what it feels, what it wants, what it believes in” (Olins, 2004:169).

The core idea of the practice of national branding, as argued by the abovementioned authors, is to coordinate these voices to create a credible, coherent and realistic vision of a country representation together with a clear strategy for future brand development.

The creation of a strong national brand requires many strategic decisions including the configuration of resources and competences to achieve goals in various areas such as export, promotion, tourism, talent and investment attraction and so on (Dinnie, 2009). The national branding strategy, or as Anholt (2004) calls competitive identity strategy a very complex and time-consuming undertaking. The aim of this demanding effort is to create a clear, simple and differentiating brand, which is built around emotional qualities which can be represented verbally and visually (Olins 2004). Anholt (2007) argues that a good strategy of a country’s competitive identity should be characterised by a list of qualities discussed below.
In the first instance, Anholt (2007) argues that a country’s identity should be 
*creative* – surprising, remarkable, spectacular. He believes that it has to contain many inventive ideas, give a fresh outlook of the country to make it look interesting and distinctive to others. He justifies this claim by arguing that in today’s busy global market the uniqueness of a country can easily get lost in a variety of slogans and promotional images from all other the world. Thus, he continues, the competitive identity strategy needs to focus its efforts at the eye-catching and thought-provoking solutions to stand out of the crowd.

However, it has also been emphasised by many thinkers in the national branding field (Olins, 2007; Morgan and Pritchard, 2004; Dinnie, 2008) that the national brand cannot be entirely invented as there needs to be balance between creative imagining and the real characteristics of a place. In this line of thought, another quality attributable to a good competitive identity strategy by Anholt (2007) is *authenticity* – specific and exclusive to a particular country. He argues that the competitive identity strategy should be based on the real assets of a country. It has to consist of both truthfulness and distinctiveness.

This argument is also brought up by Olins (2004:14) who argues that a national brand:

> Cannot be conjured up out of thin air: it must draw from reality but it has to be focused, recognizable, coherent and attractive. The most successful national brands are not simply invented, they are based upon a mood, upon a current reality which they encapsulate and then promote.
Thus, most authors in the field discussed in this chapter believe that values communicated through the national branding strategy cannot be vague, banal or too general. They need to be equivalent to the true characteristics of a place, the ones with which the people living in a country could instinctively identify with. As Olins (2007) states if there is too much fact in the core idea of the branding programme it would be received as uninteresting and tedious but where overflowing with myth and bearing little resemblance to reality, it will not be credible.

Another important quality that a national competitive identity should possess according to Anholt (2007) is precision – highly concentrated, detailed and focused on a clear vision. He argues that a competitive identity strategy needs to be formulated in a precise and straightforward way so that it can differentiate itself from national promotional strategies written in a vague, bureaucratic manner. In his understanding a strategy which is chaotic and too general often ends up unnoticed. As a result, a strategy with a concrete and clear plan has a chance to not only get noticed but also change peoples’ perception about a representation of a place.

Continuing Anholt’s (2007) list of qualities, he addresses the need to find a motive and a reason for a branding strategy to be implemented. He believes that a competitive identity should be motivating – clearly indicating the changes and the planned actions undertaken by the government, private sector
and the society planned for changing the national image. Thus, a successful strategy needs to be politically attractive so it can motivate people to undertake concrete actions for brand development. He further emphasises that the most significant goal of the branding strategy is to make people rediscover themselves, look at each other from a new perspective and therefore, change the way that others perceive them.

**Practicality** is yet another quality desirable in a branding strategy according to Anholt (2007). By practicality he means the universal and wide usability as he argues that it should be directed to the national audience as well as to the foreign one. He goes on to say that it is very important for a national branding programme to illustrate any tangible benefits that the branding can provide. Instead of concentrating solely on the values of a place, branding strategy should also bring an attractive promise, giving people some real advantage of engaging in a dialog with a particular country brand.

Finally, Anholt argues that a good branding strategy should be *elementary* – simple, practical and versatile. In his mind, the core idea of national branding must be genuine and easy to implement in any single aspect of a country’s image. It also needs to be constructed and formulated in a way, which can be easily operated by a government, tourism industry or the business investment agencies.
Both Anholt (2004, 2007) and Olins (2004) admit in their writing that there are many similarities between commercial branding strategies undertaken by companies and national branding campaigns undertaken by countries. But they also argue that the elements of national branding strategy will differ considerably. To them the process of country branding must be democratic, it must involve many actors from various national industries and organisations and negotiate solutions among many different interests, values and expectations. Olins (2004:167) in his book ‘On brand’ provides a list of a very concrete steps that should be undertaken by government professionals in the process of a national brand creation.

In line with his recommendations a branding programme action plan should include a list of steps provided in Table 2.3-2 below:
<p>| | |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Setting up a working party with representatives of government, industry, the arts, education, sport and media. They should also appoint consultants to provide advice and guidance throughout the branding process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Carrying out research to examine how the nation is perceived both by its own people and by particular target audiences in other nations (by the working party or a small steering group).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Consulting with opinion-leaders focused on the strengths and weaknesses, comparing them with results of the internal and external research studies, looking at a number of opinions for core ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Creating the core idea on which the national brand will be based and from which the entire programme should be developed. A symbol, national icon which would be a visual symbol of a country brand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Developing the brand book illustrating and demonstrating the national mood, personality and style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Modulating and co-ordination of messages for the different but complementary sectors, inward investment, export and tourism so that they are appropriate for each audience and so that they reflect the central idea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Ensuring that everything produced by or representing the nation, from tourism to airlines promotions is co-originated so that anything that comes from the nation is readily recognisable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Influencing the influencers – creating the liaison system through appropriate organisations in commerce, industry, arts, media and so on. Influencing people who themselves have an influence and form opinions in their field.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Saffron, 2004
As we can see from Table 2.3-2, Olins (2004) seems to concentrate on close and personal involvement of the inhabitants of the country subject to the national branding strategy construction. He also emphasises the importance of the internal and external perceptions of the country by particular audiences. The imaginings of the subject country held by others as well as the peoples inhabiting that country seem to form an important part of the construction that a national brand is (Olins, 2004). Another part of his recommended national brand construction process is the involvement of actors from various sectors of both the economy and culture to ensure a level of connection and cooperation between them when communicating and disseminating the brand.

The strongest assertion re-emerging in branding literature is that countries communicate different types of messages all the time - through political actions, popular culture, export services, sports, behaviour, arts and architecture the national images are being represented at the world-wide stage every day. Therefore the role of the governments, according to Olins (2004) and Anholt (2004), is to control those messages and actively participate in the construction of a country representation. As Olins (2004:169) states: “Politicians everywhere in the world now realize that every nation has an identity: they can either seek to manage it or it will manage them”.
The role and involvement of governments and power-holders in national branding such as national tourism organisations and other agents are of particular interest to this research and it will be further investigated in the following chapters.

2.4. TOURISM AND NATIONAL BRANDING.

In a majority of both tourism and place branding literature reviewed in this study, tourism is described as one of the world’s fastest growing economic sectors in recent years. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (2005) by the year 2020 international arrivals are expected to reach over 1.56 billion. Governments around the world are increasingly recognising the power of tourism to boost their nation’s development and prosperity. A value of tourism perceived, not only from economic but also from a social and cultural perspective, can no longer be neglected. Many European countries perceive tourism to be a driving force for socio-economic development. In a world of dynamic change and the increased interconnectivity between information, people and places, one remaining constant is that tourism is an important human activity and an industry that will continue to grow (Marciszewska et al. 2006).

Very few places in the world have escaped from tourist expansion. Countries from previously closed and repressive regimes or developing countries are increasingly investing in tourism. As Robinson and Smith (2006) notice, the global structural realities of tourism are framed by the idea of a nation state and
have their roots in the modern political geographies and nation-building agendas of the late 19th, and the first decade of the 20th century. As more tourism destinations emerge and competition for visitors becomes more intense, the destinations are obliged to continually refresh their appeal. In this busy world, with an ever expanding list of places to visit, a destination’s ability to project itself on the world stage and differentiate itself from others is ever more important. The attention of many social science thinkers, has recently focused on the promotional efforts of tourism authorities and their effects on the national brand of the country (Morgan and Pritchard, 2002).

The role of tourism in constructing national identities has been a focus of a number of commentators (C.M. Hall 1997, Hollinshead 2000, Meethan 2001, Appadurai 2002). Anholt (2007), perceives tourism to be the biggest and the most significant national brand communicator. From the outset, tourism is entitled to the process of constructing the representation of ‘the place’. Often, with the biggest marketing budgets, and the most qualified marketing staff of any sector, tourism is perceived to be ‘the loudest voice’ in communicating the country. The images of a destination communicated through the discourse of tourism have a broad, international reach and are often the only imaginary that one has about the destination. With regard to travel and tourism, consumers are involved in an ongoing search for information (Leemans, 1994). By collecting the information about the different places, the person creates the image or a “mental prototype” that represents the travel experience (Tapachai and Waryszak, 2000:37). These images, also called by Anholt (2007) the ‘mental
snapshots’, very often state a base for the peoples’ views and perceptions of the world even if people are not always aware of it. Thus, a country image can be understood as the sum of beliefs and impressions people hold about places. Images represent a simplification of a large number of associations and pieces of information connected with a place. They are a product of the mind trying to process and pick out essential information from huge amounts of data (Kotler, Haider and Rein, 1993:160).

As mentioned in section 2.3.2. of this thesis, today’s world is marked by an increased interconnectivity and information spread between people and places, images become more important than reality and the destination images projected through the tourism discourse seriously influence the representation of the country (Gallarza, Saura and Garcia, 2002). It has also been argued, that tourism promotion as a part of the image building process does not stand alone – it is interdependent with many other information sources – and that it does not always have a major impact upon the perceptions of travellers (Govers, Go and Kumar, 2007). The role of media such as newspapers, television, and the Internet as the serious agents of national identities display can never be underestimated. Long and Robinson (2009:101) emphasise: “the media are pivotal for the distribution of popular culture and the cumulative construction of touristic mobilities”. The images and representation of people, places and pasts presented in the news, films or in the newspapers are very often incidentally connected with tourism narratives and/or have an indirect influence on the tourists imagination.
Unfortunately, very often the image of the country presented by the tourism authorities appears to be incoherent to the core idea that a country is trying to express through other channels of communication. The image of the country represented solely as a beautiful landscape inhabited by happy, easy-going people will often discourage big financial corporation managers and the investments they could make in that particular place (Anholt 2007). Hence, it is very important for tourism authorities to take into consideration a wide range of meditative forces which are influencing the reputation of the country and understand the complexity of elements which form part of its representation. It is argued in this research study that the representative character of the country brand may only be obtained by a sustained dialogue between tourism authorities and the government, decision makers, cultural, business community, NGO’s and individuals. The outside sources – visitors, investors, foreign consumers – should also been involved to participate in this dialogue of the development of a reliable country representation. Only then, the cultural, social, economic, political, geographical and linguistic aspects of the country can be defined and acknowledged within the discourse of national branding.

2.5. DESTINATION BRANDING.

Destination branding specialists involved in writing the Handbook on Tourism Destination Branding (ETC/UNWTO, 2009) point out that international competition for visitors increases every year and more and more destinations are emerging on to the world stage. With the advent of space tourism, the
known world no longer defines the boundaries of competition for tourism destinations. Specialists working in tourism have realised that a destination has to stand out from its competitors long before potential visitors develop their own perceptions. As stated by Morgan, Pritchard and Piggot (2001) the need for destinations to create a unique identity is more critical than ever. The hitherto existing practice of place marketing carried out by many tourist authorities around the world is no longer enough. The portraits of blue seas, endless golden beaches and welcoming local people have been overused in the discourse of tourism promotion and do not seem to work anymore (Morgan and Pritchard, 2002; Anholt, 2007). Thus, a point frequently repeated by the author throughout this research study is that an image of a place cannot be manufactured like a consumer product brand. It inherits its core assets (i.e. landscape, people, culture and history) and it exists in the way in which these assets are perceived by other people and the emotional value they associate with them.

Today, a destination which aims to differentiate itself needs to possess a social, emotional and identity value. As stated by Morgan and Pritchard (2004:60):

Choice of vacation destination has become a significant lifestyle indicator for today’s consumers and the places they choose to spend their increasingly squeezed vacation time and hard-earned income to be emotionally appealing, with high conventional and celebrity value.

As branding specialists argue, destinations need to build awareness, understanding and loyalty to stand out from the crowd. In an increasingly
hectic world in which most of the travellers live, creating positive associations of a destination or diminishing a negative one is essential if a destination wishes to be alive in both travellers’ minds and hearts. To achieve that, destinations need to satisfy the traveller’s emotional needs as people are increasingly looking to establish an emotional connection with a destination. It is argued in the contemporary national and destination branding literature (Morgan and Pritchard, 2002; Olins, 2003; Anholt, 2004; Dinnie, 2009) that the traditional tourism marketing efforts which focus solely on promoting the destinations physical assets (e.g. sun, sea, sand, attractions etc.) need to be enriched with new insights, with a memorable sense of place. A ‘sense of place’ is what makes a place distinctive and memorable. It builds a personality of a destination. Anholt (2004) claims, that a process of establishing a sense of place is a long-term undertaking which requires understanding of the place’s peoples, culture and heritage, nurturing its natural and built environment, and presenting an image of the place which reflects its true spirit. He argues, that the role of these efforts is to achieve people’s emotional response to the place, rather than just advertising its physical assets. What has been argued by many thinkers in the field of destination branding (Morgan and Pritchard and Piggot, 2002; Anholt, 2004; Olins, 2004; Dinnie, 2009) the ability of a place to inspire an emotional relationship with people is increasingly recognised to be a necessity in the practice of place branding.

This is where a destination branding practice with its core objective of producing a consistent, focused communication strategy (Morgan and
Pritchard, 1998) can make a difference. Destination as a brand can significantly enhance its value and achieve long-term recognition among the other places (Anholt, 2000). Despite earlier scepticism about implementing the concept of a brand to the tourism destinations area (O’Shaughnessy and O’Shaughnessy, 2000), the popularity of a concept and the practice of destination branding has increased significantly during the last decade (Anholt 2000, 2002, 2007; Kotler and Gertner, 2002; Olins, 2002). It has been recognised that a strong destination brand with a distinctive and memorable personality can not only create a positive image of a place but also change the existing negative one. Destinations can be branded from various perspectives, mainly as tourism destinations (Gnoth, 1998, 2002; Curtis, 2001; Cai, 2002; D. Hall, 2002a, 2002b; Morgan and Pritchard, 2002; Morgan, Pritchard and Piggot, 2002; Morgan, Pritchard and Pride, 2002) or as business destinations trying to attract foreign investments (Papadopoulos and Heslop, 2002).

The writing and recommendations of most of abovementioned specialists implies that it has never been more important for a destination to establish and nurture its competitive identity or brand. Competitive identity or a brand (often used synonymously) works for a destination to differentiate it from the others. It helps attract attention and puts the destination on the map for potential visitors. A destination brand is a result of a dynamic interaction between the destination core assets and the way that others perceive them. As argued in the ETC/UNWTO report (2009) brands really only exist in the eyes of others. The report describes destination brand as an essence of the destination from the
perspective of potential visitors. What makes a destination brand is a sum of perceptions by others, feelings and attitudes towards the destination, based on the way in which they have experienced the destination or on how it has been presented to them. Brands incite beliefs, evoke emotions and prompt behaviours. A destination can change the way in which it is presented to different segments. But its core brand characteristics like someone’s personality, are essentially always the same. Hence, one aim of a destination brand is to represent the core essence and enduring characteristics of a destination (Anholt, 2007).

The analysis of the available literature indicates that for the majority of writers in the field the practice of destination branding concentrates on addressing the embedded as well as received emotions and perceptions related to a place rather than on basing promotional campaigns on solely the statistical examination of quantifiable data. This assertion has important implications for this research as it will be intrinsic to understanding the working practices of the actors involved in implementing national branding practices in Poland.

Table 2.5-1 below provides a list of main ideas and desired characteristics of destination branding practice discussed in this Chapter consolidated from the work of Anholt (2007) and ETC/UNWTO (2009) report.
**Table 2.5-1 Differentiating Branding and Marketing Communications.**

- **Marketing communications alone cannot change a country’s image.**
  
  All communication practices must be supported by substance, based on the real assets of the country. People’s perceptions of a country will be formed primarily by personal experience and word-of-mouth communication from trusted stories. Marketing communications can merely highlight the country’s positive features.

- **Destination branding alone cannot change a nation’s image.**
  
  The other factors – sectors, sources of information, and people – contribute to the construction of the national image every day. Destination branding, however, is perceived to play a major part, as tourism is often the ‘loudest’ of all voices that talk about the country externally.

- **No single national stakeholder has control over all of the factors that affect a country’s reputation.**
  
  The need for partnership in national branding is essential. Business, civil society, exports, cultural organisations, central and local government must talk to each other to convey an uniformly positive image of the nation and to do so consistently.

- **A country inherits most of its strong assets.**
  
  The national brand ought to be built on the most significant national assets – e.g. people and their achievements, memorable historical events, culture, landscape etc. It needs to be built on these, refine them where appropriate and predictable, add to them if credibility and authenticity can be retained, and project them positively and consistently in a way that appeals to those who would appreciate them.

- **Changing a country’s image for the better takes many years.**
  
  Change of a country’s image and reputation cannot be done overnight. Sometimes it takes whole generations depending on the strength (both positive and negative) of its current image. Others will only change perception about the place when the credible and consistent evidence of physical, cultural or altitudinal change would be presented to them. Marketing communications can be then used to draw people’s attention to the fact that change is taking place.

- **Marketing communications are a blunt instrument for conveying a country’s image.**
  
  There needs to be a harmony between the destination product and the way how it is being presented, otherwise marketing can lead to many misunderstandings. Different stakeholders must work together across all sectors if a country aims to construct a strong, sustainable brand.

Adapted from: (Anholt, 2007; ETC/UNWTO, 2009).
2.5.1. THE POLITICS OF DESTINATION BRANDING

National branding is without doubt a highly politicised activity. The process of representing the country implies involvement of many actors from government to various sectors such as the arts, business, sports and tourism. All of these players are trying to impose their views about the country and sometimes even unconsciously adding new meanings to the representation of a place. As we shall see further below, the discourses of power between all the forces involved in the debate have strong influence in shaping tourism policies and the national and destination branding efforts both on a national and supranational scale.

The crucial challenge for every nation is to find a way in which these meanings could be negotiated and also to find a common language through which they would communicate and be communicated. As argued by a large number of specialists in national branding (Morgan, Pritchard and Pride 2002; Olins 2004; Anholt 2007; Dinnie 2009), a national branding strategy should be the result of a long-term dialog between the different national sectors controlled and facilitated by the government. As spotted by Dinnie (2009) the governments are responsible for representing people of a nation from the outset, and therefore are entitled to play a key role in a national branding strategy. They have a very difficult task as tourism is vulnerable to a number of pressures, both external and internal, such as political strife, economic downswings, terrorism and environmental disasters. Terrorist attacks, war or political instability often cause a long-term damage to a destination’s image. (Morgan, Pritchard and Pride 2002; Ritcher 2009). This assertion invites questioning as
to what extent national and destination branding campaigns have the capacity and ability to actively and sustainably influence a country’s/destination’s image and perception in the face of (often) overwhelming ‘natural’ factors such as those mentioned above. Perhaps the answer lies in the ability of such branding efforts to cope and accommodate the potential risks involved with the long list of uncontrollable variables.

For the purpose of this thesis where the relations within a tourism policy and the related discourses of power are the core inquiry, the politics behind a creation of not only national but more precisely the destination brand are thoroughly analysed. Of course, the practices of national branding and the destination branding are closely related, and the development of one influences the other. The country with a successful national brand would attract tourists and an enjoyable touristic experience would put a positive light on the entire national image (Kotler, Haider and Rein, 1993). Also the problems associated national branding affects country’s tourism image and the chaos in tourism industry leads to confusions within the country’s brand creation.

Managing a country from the perspective of tourism of a destination is a very complex and demanding exercise. Destinations consist of various different components such as tourism attractions, the arts, entertainment, cultural venues and natural heritage (Richie and Crouch, 2000). Capturing all those components and creating a common idea for a destination are the tasks with which many tourism authorities are struggling. Morgan (2003) argues, that
destination marketers have very little control over the different aspects and components of a destination as many various agencies and companies are participating in the marketing of a place. Thus, public sector tourism authorities have a task of bringing together all of the local and regional interests and finding the common way of expressing their interests and at the same time promoting the destination. This is a very challenging job which requires constant surveillance and long-term negotiations between different views, interests and meanings. The most important goal in national branding according to Anholt (2007) is to create a common idea under which all the players form different national industries would work. The assertion that the various industry players should unite in one common communications and symbolism strategy is shared by many other thinkers in the field but the question of whether this type of unified and concerted action can be expected to be achieved in a pluralistic society with multiple contextual settings is yet to be answered.

This kind of umbrella theme would be the core idea of a national brand and people working in sectors such as tourism, export or investments would make their decisions in line with that mutual subject matter. Unfortunately, in reality, the complex notions of politics and relations of power within the tourism sector often work against that idea. The process of combining all the interests and ideas together is very difficult especially in such a diversified and unpredictable industry as tourism (Smith and Robinson, 2006; Evans, 2009). Scott et al. (2000) points out, destinations are often lacking the strong
leadership and clear goal-driven decisions to which all participants adhere since they can be viewed as conglomerates of attractions, operators and agencies which each have individual interests and objectives.

Destination branding is thus seen as a challenging activity which takes on different levels of complexity and challenges (Kotler, et.al., 1993; Ashworth and Voogd, 1994; Morgan and Pritchard, 1998; Dev et al., 1999). As Garfield (1998) points out, political messages are being smuggled and imposed to the public through destination advertising. Hence on the word of Morgan and Pritchard (2002) successful destinations’ with strong brands are those who manage to resist the political dynamic. To them, successful destination branding is about finding a balance between the marketing solutions and the local, regional and national politics management. In the case of Poland finding this balance should be viewed in the context of the recent EU accession (and the emergent EU tourism policy) as well as the complete overhaul of most of domestic policies (including tourism) following the fall of communism.

In this thesis, the political reality of the discourse of national and destination branding is carefully investigated. The actions of the authorities from both the European and Polish tourism stage are being analysed and their effects on the Polish national brand are exposed. The thesis also discusses the developing tourism policy both in Poland and in the broader EU context and examines how this policy is shaped by the discourses of power at both levels.
2.6. TOURISM IN THE EUROPEAN UNION.

The European Union is often perceived to be the most developed form of supranational organisation in the world today (Held et al., 1999). Tourism is an area of a great economic significance to the European Union and one of the biggest and fastest expanding sectors in the European economy (C. M. Hall, 2008). When considered together with its related activities, tourism can be seen to impact almost every other sector of economy, from transport to construction, from culture to agriculture. According to European Commission Vice-President, Mr. Günter Verheugen (speech, 2008; private source), tourism is one of the most promising sectors of the European economy accounting for 5.5% of the gross domestic product. It involves over two million businesses employing approximately nine million people and it strongly encourages entrepreneurship. In the near future, tourism will represent one of the fastest developing economic sectors with an average annual growth rate of 3.1% between 2006 and 2015 (Eurostat, 2009). The contribution of tourism to employment and regional development as well as to other important EU objectives such as sustainable development, enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage and the shaping of European identity has been recognised by all EU institutions on numerous occasions.

The increasing competition from tourist destinations in other parts of the world is steadily increasing. These destinations’ capacity to compete, both now and in the future, relies on the ability to deliver quality tourism
experiences and to develop a reputation for excellence. It is thus no surprise that the European Commissioner responsible for the area of tourism would point out that Europe needs to focus its efforts on such values as the continent’s vast diversity, the richness of its natural assets and its wealth of cultural heritage. The view of the European Commission presented in Mr. Verheugen’s speech is that only by investing and promoting its wealth and variety of heritage, will Europe maintain its position as the world’s primary destination for international tourism. Europe’s future success will depend on the capacity to reinforce the combination of high quality service, reasonable development of tourist destinations and innovation of tourism products (Verheugen, speech, 2008; EC archive). The European Parliament is running an committee for Tourism and Transport and there is the European Parliament intergroup for tourism which consists of Members of European Parliament who share an interest in tourism matters.

The great importance of tourism recognised by these international authorities is compounded with the fact that Europe is the first most popular destination in the world with 399 million inbound tourist arrivals in the EU 27 countries in 2007, corresponding to 44% of total international arrivals (UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, 2008). The contribution of European tourism to the European gross domestic product accounts for about 4% and becomes almost 11% if one takes the related sectors into consideration. With nearly 2 million companies, tourism employment reached circa 4.4% of the total labour force in the EU 27 countries in 2007 (NACE H55: Hotels
and Restaurants), creating more than 9 million jobs (Eurostat, Tourism Statistics, 2008). Through exchanges between European citizens, in particular, synergies could be established also contributing to the establishment of a European citizenship. In this context, nearly 40% of all trips for more than four nights in 2006 were made in other countries (Eurostat, Tourism Statistics, 2008).

While interviewing EU officials the researcher sought to explore their perception of the role of tourism in the European Union. The importance of the economic, social and employment generating potential of tourism to European Union policymakers was principally confirmed by Director General of European Commission Tourism Unit quoted below.

Focused initiatives in tourism are the proof that economic and employment opportunities, key goals within the Lisbon strategy, can indeed be generated by increasing tourism. To that end, EU actions shall be aimed at encouraging the creation of a favourable environment for the development of undertakings and promoting cooperation between Member States, particularly by the exchange of good practice. Of great importance will therefore be providing, commissioning and organising tourism service to make it of economic interest to the users and providing a high level of quality, safety and affordability. The Tourism Unit (DG Enterprise and Industry) is responsible for tourism policy. However, tourism is taken into account by other Commission services when preparing their own programmes like Interred, Culture Programme, etc. (EC, 2008).

The EU officials also seem to realise that the competition from new destinations in other parts of the world is strong, but Europe has an
advantage, giving it a competitive edge over other world destinations. This advantage lies in its vast diversity, richness of natural resources and wealth of cultural heritage. For centuries, Europe has been at the centre of human development with numerous national, regional, cultural and religious movements competing with one another. The effect is a rich historical and cultural heritage which was further exacerbated by the dominant global position Europe has enjoyed for many centuries. The importance of maintaining and promoting this heritage seems to be fully grasped by the European Union policymakers.

With view of maintaining this richness, right promotion of Europe’s traditions, crafts, history, culinary has to be made. One of the ways of achieving this is giving more attention and value to the cultural tourism and Europe’s intangible heritage (EC, 2008).

Another important context of the developing EU tourism policy is the recent enlargement of the organisation to include a host of predominantly post-communist countries such as Poland. According to C.M. Hall (2006) the enlargement of the European Union through the accession of new member states is an event of global consequence for tourism, even though many of the impacts will likely be indirect and may also take many years to become apparent. Historically, each time a country or group of countries has joined the EU there has been a shift of governance, policy settings and activities across a wide range of policy areas, many of which have directly and indirectly affected tourism not just in Europe but throughout the world. The en masse accession of twelve new countries including ten post-communist
ones (themselves aiming to re-invent their global perception) to the European Union presented a particular challenge to the emerging and evolving tourism policy of the organisation. The differences in per capita incomes between the old and new members have never been so great making integration arguably more difficult than ever before. This applies not only to economic and social policies but also to the perception of the brand Europe itself, both ‘old’ and ‘new’.

The next section of the present research study investigates the role of the Tourism Unit of European Commission and its role in representing the images of European destinations. The purpose of this description is to demonstrate to the reader who is who in tourism policy-making in the European Institutions as well as to show what (and, if) steps are being taken to coordinate or support national branding initiatives of particular EU Member States.

2.6.1. THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION – TOURISM UNIT.

The activities of the Tourism Unit within the destination promotion field are particularly important for the current study on representation of a country through tourism. The purpose of this subchapter is to analyse and understand the mandate, area of activity as well as the understanding of tourism among the policy-makers working in this unit.
The Tourism Unit of the Directorate General Enterprise and Industry of the European Commission is the entity responsible for tourism policy. Despite the limited competences of the European Commission with regard to tourism (regulation of tourism policy is not a ‘direct competence’ of the European Union as regulated by the current treaties, thus the Commission cannot pass regulation in this field, but is rather limited to ‘soft’ policy tools such as coordination and promotion schemes) it continually supports the development of this activity through many direct and indirect initiatives. Thus, the main role of the Tourism Unit is enhancing competitiveness of Europe’s tourism industry in order to create growth and jobs and improve the welfare of European citizens (EC Tourism Unit website: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/index_en.htm).

It has been recognised by the European Commission, that it is essential for the work of the tourism sector to successfully address a number of challenges, including an ageing population, growing external competition, sustainability concerns and evolving demand patterns for specific forms of tourism (EC document, 2009). Moreover, the Tourism Unit is responsible for ensuring the interests and safety of the large number of private and public stakeholders from international, European, national, regional and local level who are involved in the development of tourism. The role of the Tourism Unit is to help develop partnerships between all these stakeholders and to ensure their involvement in various complex activities that the tourism industry consists of.
In 2006 the European Commission presented a Communication on “A renewed EU Tourism Policy: Towards a stronger partnership for European Tourism”. This policy framework takes into account the past experiences and presents a global approach covering all issues related to tourism. It also outlines the European Commission’s future initiatives regarding the principal aspects of European policymaking and the ways in which various tourism stakeholders should get involved and aim to increase the awareness of the economic, social and environmental importance of this industry. This policy is complementary to national policies and seeks to improve the competitiveness of the European Tourism industry by creating more and better jobs through the sustainable growth of tourism in Europe. At the same time the European Commission tries to integrate tourism in all related Community policies and ensure that there is adequate co-ordination between the various policy initiatives that may impact tourism (EC official document, 2009).

Judging from the gathered materials, interviews conducted for this research, as well as the researchers experience in interacting with the EC officials, there is an understanding among the Tourism Unit employees that economic, social and environmental sustainability are key factors for the competitiveness of destinations and the welfare of their populations, as well as for the creation of employment and the preservation and enhancement of the natural and cultural attractions. The work of the Tourism Unit involves ensuring that stakeholders in tourism management in Europe that they deal with meet their responsibilities at all the levels of operation. The Tourism Unit is also using its authority to
encourage the stakeholders and invite them to make use of the opportunities that the sustainability offers which is believed to be a potential driver for innovation and growth. The Tourism Unit’s responsibility is to ensure that relevant stakeholders share the same objectives, unite their efforts and work together. Thus, the sustainable management of destinations, the integration of sustainability and businesses and the sustainability awareness by tourists form the framework of European tourism action in which sustainability principles need to be respected (Tourism Policy Fishe, 2009).

As stated before, what is particularly important for the current study on the representation of a country through tourism are the activities of the Tourism Unit within the destination promotion field. In this context the promotion and visibility of European tourism is yet another important goal that the European Commission expects of the renewed policy, which is to be achieved through the common public and private sector effort and by the enhancement of the commercial and political visibility. The tool chosen by the European Commission to achieve this goal is the European Tourist Destinations Portal launched by the Tourism Unit. The purpose of the portal as seen by its founders is to provide a way to bring European added value to national efforts, to stimulate collaboration and to promote the use of information and communication technologies. The portal is also supposed to open up new opportunities for tourists from new markets (such as China, Russia and India). Attracting them to Europe increases the development potential for the industry.
Another example of visibility and stronger synergies with all stakeholders is the organisation of European Tourism Forums. These bring together more than 300 leading representatives from the tourism industry, civil society, European Institutions, national and regional authorities dealing with tourism, and international organisations to discuss the challenges of the sector focusing on specific themes of interest. One of the biggest initiatives undertaken by the Tourism Unit in terms of destination promotion and branding is the European Destinations of Excellence (hereafter EDEN) programme that the researcher had the opportunity to analyse and follow closely during her placement with the Tourism Unit. It has been recognised by the author of this thesis, that the project needs to be mentioned as it is one of initiatives carried out by the Tourism Unit of European Commission that is closest to destination branding. The detailed description of the programme aims and objectives as described by the European Commission have been introduced in the next section of the present thesis together with a remarks from interviews with key executives from the European Commission engaged in that project. The importance of this project to the current study research on the production of place representation in tourism is significant as it illustrates the attempts and the progress of the European Union within the destination branding field. Moreover, 2009 has been a first year of Polish participation in the EDEN program which has a great importance for the investigation of Polish engagement in promoting Poland at the international tourism arena and therefore transforming the current representation of the country.
2.7. **CHAPTER SUMMARY.**

This chapter provided the theoretical and conceptual underpinning of the practice of national and destination branding preceded by general reflections on the subject of National Identity/Nation Building and the idea of National Branding itself. The focus was placed on the practices of destination branding in constructing and (sometimes) re-constructing the representation of a place. It was illustrated that destination branding has recently become one of the most important topics among place marketing professionals and politicians.

The chapter also discussed how tourism policies together with efforts relating to national branding and national identity are subject to the ongoing discourses of power and how this applies both on the domestic and international level. It has also pointed out the particular challenges related to developing tourism policies in the context of the EU enlargement to include ten formerly communist member states.

The general assumption understood by place branding field thinkers was that in today’s world every country, city and region must compete with each other for their share in the world’s population of consumers, investors and tourists (Morgan and Pritchard, 1998; Dinnie, 2009; Olins, 2009). It has been also realised that a successful destination brand is the most influencing factor in traveller choice. It is a general consensus between the abovementioned branding specialists, that a strong brand helps bridge the gap between the destination’s strengths and potential visitors’ perception.
As the chapter demonstrated, the practice of brand development is mainly focused on defining the essence of the destination by enhancing its personality, culture, history and values. The authors of the revised literature have argued, that it is very important to understand that the process of building a successful and effective destination brand differs from the standard promotional campaign when vast amounts of money are being spent on expensive logos, slogans and TV spots. They have argued that these kinds of actions are not only ineffective in bringing a strong, recognisable and differencing destination brand but often even destroy the established image of the place (Morgan and Pritchard, 2000; Anholt, 2004, 2006).

It has been stated in this chapter, that today, destinations cannot afford to ignore branding. The core objective of the professionals engaging in destination branding is to produce a consistent, focused and sustainable strategy that would provide a clear and coherent representation of the place. According to them, a destination brand needs to be original, recognisable, attractive, and most importantly, based on true assets of the place. To achieve this goal, practitioners are advised to obtain knowledge of a range of tools and techniques to apply in developing the branding strategies for their destination. Thus, this study research investigates the meaning of ‘truth’ in the representation of the national images and imaginaries and the attempts of branding specialists in constructing various ‘realities’ of a place. Therefore, this thesis is focused on the role of public sector bodies both at the European
and Polish level in building and maintaining authority in the construction and projection of the national images.
CHAPTER THREE: THE DEVELOPMENT OF BRAND POLAND

3.1. INTRODUCTION. THE DEVELOPMENT OF BRAND “POLAND”

Poland is not only at the heart of Europe just in a geographical sense. It is a country where Europe’s ideological conflicts are played out in their most form, as recent events have emphasized. By any standards, Poland’s fate is of vital concern to European civilization as a whole (Norman Davies, 1986).

The concept of creating a national brand for Poland has become increasingly important during the last decade (Boruc, 2009). Various, politicians, marketing specialists tourism authorities and branding managers from Poland and abroad have attempted to bring attention to the significance of national branding in the overall success of a country. As previously discussed in Chapter Two, in a crowded space of international development, countries find themselves competing for the attention of foreign investors, tourists and media. A number of practitioners and opinion leaders in Poland have recognised that trend and the need for their country to distinguish itself with a strong, recognisable and competitive brand. They claim to have realised how unpredictable and dangerous uncontrolled mediation of national, often stereotypical, images can be for a country.

Marcinkiewicz (in Anholt 2006), the former Prime Minister of Poland states that the country without a strong brand – unknown, not respected, without a clear identity and reputation – does not count and will undoubtedly end in
market failure. Moreover, Polish politicians and professionals seem also to understand that the Polish image outside of a country is much worse than the real situation inside Poland and that it should be in the interest of all Polish parties to change that situation. Hence, Florek (2005) argues, that unhealthy stereotypes and negative perceptions are still a big challenge for Polish branding. She claims, that while at the one hand Poland is associated with a successful transformation of the political system, thorough ongoing reforms, a developing diplomacy and membership of NATO and the EU, on the other hand many opinions about Poland are still created around negative stereotypes and cameo snapshots such as ignorance, corruption and crime. Foreign national branding specialists are aware of the fact, that post-communist countries such as Poland simply do not have the time to wait for their reputation to catch up with reality and that Polish professionals from various relevant organisations including government, cultural entities and tourism authorities ought to focus on understanding true value of the country’s reputation and therefore on managing that reputation (Anholt 2000, 2004, 2006; Olins, 2009).

Both Anholt (2006) and Olins (2009) suggest that Polish people need to acknowledge a range of great new opportunities and chances which their country did not have for a very long time and it – a possibility of the radical makeover of its national image.
Olins (2009) refers to Poles:

For sure you don’t have to fight for recognition because people all over the world have already heard about Poland. You don’t have to come out of a shadow and make the world to discover you. You need to start be seen in a better way, the way which is bound up with reality.

A number of Polish politicians and opinion leaders have already expressed their awareness of that significant phenomenon which Poland is facing. Marcinkiewicz (in Anholt, 2006, Introduction) states:

Poland has a potential which is unique for every other European country – 10 million young, ambitious and highly educated people eager to work hard on the development of a new representation of the country. They are the one who will make the most significant, long term changes and will be like the fly-wheel for country’s modernity and development. Our new generation is bond up with a strong patriotism, which can be called the modern patriotism as it derives from the knowledge about the world. And from the hunger of that knowledge.

The generation of Poland’s young people is the country’s biggest potential and hope for fast development. Their hard-working attitude and the pro-European approach combined with a strong demand to produce or rather re-produce the brand for Poland, is the main drive for the change in the country. “Young, educated Poles have travelled and they know that Poland is misunderstood. This frustrates them, and flues their desire to help and to do things to bring positive attention to Poland. They are highly sophisticated in their language skills, and very well informed” (Saffron, 2004, p.51).
The main purpose of this section of the research is to investigate the relations of power in the dynamic process of construction, de-construction and re-construction of the brand Poland. To this end the roles and functions of various factors involved in producing and mediating images of Poland have been explored. These were in turn compared in relation with each other in the effort to find and define connections and dependencies in their mutual relations. This would serve the purpose of identifying actors seeking to dominate and to impose their vision and understandings of the imaginaries of Poland and the way they should be represented and circulated in the world. These discursive formations or groups have been examined in relation to the dominant notions of what is significant in and through tourism in Poland that they are trying to project.

In this chapter the researcher looked at a number of identified actors active in the field including public administration institutions, government agencies, private actors, researchers and journalists. The various expressions of opinion and thought regardless of form (articles, documents, speeches, interview data, reports and administrative notes) have been critically examined, analysed and in the purpose of finding and exposing various ways of thinking about Polish brand development.

The researcher has also looked at what she identified to be the most dominant images and understandings associated with Poland in the minds of both foreigners and natives to the country. Then, the various attempts at addressing,
deconstructing as well as the suggested ways of changing and improving these images and understandings were examined and compared. These attempts included various initiatives undertaken by the Polish authorities from the field of tourism and public diplomacy.

These branding initiatives were analysed as a mediation of political claims which have been brought forward in order to create, de-create and re-create the accepted imaginings, myths and traditions of Poland. As a next step the researcher looked at the various critical analyses of these initiatives and approaches provided by specialists and opinion leaders. Their recommendations were listed and analysed in an attempt to compare and contrast them between each other and with the abovementioned initiatives.

3.2. TOURISM IN POLAND.

Tourism in Poland has experienced steady growth since the end of WWII and particularly since the fall of communism as pictured in the table below.
FIGURE 3.2-1 FOREIGN ARRIVALS AND TOURISM INCOME

Source: UNWTO, 2006

Tourism in Poland is an important and growing part of the economy accounting up to 6% of GDP in 2008 (OECD, 2010) although the Polish Ministry of Sport and Tourism gives a more conservative figure of 5.3% of GDP.

Table 3.2-1 TOURISM SHARE IN GDP IN POLAND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tourism share in GDP</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Polish Ministry of Sport and Tourism (2009)

Poland has a vast range of resources and attractions which, if well managed, can provide a serious base for successful and sustainable tourism growth (Marciszewska, et al., 2006). The extensive and diverse topography with the mountains in the south, lake lands in the north and the extensive forests in the east make Poland one of the most complete tourist destinations in Europe.
Dawson (2006:128) distinguished five regions of Polish natural tourist attractions. They are as follows:

- The Baltic coast, an area of sandy beaches and costal lagoons;
- The lowland lake districts of northern Poland (Masuria);
- The three upland regions of central Poland;
- The Sudeten Mountains of the south-west;
- The Carpathian Mountains of the south-east.

Additionally, Poland has a number of interesting towns and cities with strong historical, cultural and religious traditions. Wrocław, Kraków, Gdańsk or Toruń attract a relatively high number of tourists every year. It is important to acknowledge that a country which has had a turbulent history and made dramatic changes is shaping Polish representation today. Poles have vigorously maintained a distinct sense of culture and community. During the communism period 1946-1989 visitors to Poland included mainly tourists from within the former Soviet states which had also been limited. After the fall of communism in 1989 the Polish tourism profile has changed rapidly (Seaton & Bennet, 1996). Post-communist Poland was quickly recognized as ‘a garden of nature and a treasure trove of cultural riches’ that attracts many tourists not only from the economies of the former Soviet bloc but mostly from Western Europe and other parts of the world (PTO, 2008). Today’s Poland is being promoted by the National Tourism Organisation in Poland and abroad as a
country that provides an unforgettable experience to those tourists having the most diverse interests in both education and leisure (Zapalska & Brozik, 2004).
Figure 3.2-2 Physical Map of the Poland

Source: WWW.MAPYKONTUROWE.PL
The result of the fall of communism in Poland is very well reflected in the rapidly growing number of foreign arrivals in Poland post 1989 as presented in the Figure below.

**FIGURE 3.2-3 ARRIVALS TO POLAND IN MILLIONS**


It ought to be noticed here that the accession of Poland to the European Union has had enormous effect on foreign arrivals and tourism flows in Poland and it is particularly apparent from both Figure 3.2-3 above and Table 3.2-2 below. The sharp decline in the number of foreign arrivals following year 2000 can be linked to the introduction of stricter visa requirements for some foreigners. This is particularly true for arrivals from the Russia, Ukraine and Belarus where the number of arrivals has nearly halved from 1997 to 2007 as seen in the table below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>19 410</td>
<td>19 520</td>
<td>18 780</td>
<td>17 950</td>
<td>17 400</td>
<td>15 000</td>
<td>13 980</td>
<td>13 720</td>
<td>14 290</td>
<td>15 200</td>
<td>15 670</td>
<td>14 975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>6 660</td>
<td>6 650</td>
<td>6 700</td>
<td>6 450</td>
<td>5 920</td>
<td>4 400</td>
<td>4 160</td>
<td>4 520</td>
<td>5 230</td>
<td>5 570</td>
<td>5 440</td>
<td>5 270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>1 800</td>
<td>1 600</td>
<td>1 360</td>
<td>1 160</td>
<td>1 140</td>
<td>980</td>
<td>940</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>735</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belarus</td>
<td>2 280</td>
<td>2 335</td>
<td>1 730</td>
<td>2 180</td>
<td>2 370</td>
<td>2 080</td>
<td>1 700</td>
<td>1 620</td>
<td>1 460</td>
<td>1 440</td>
<td>1 490</td>
<td>1 350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>3 200</td>
<td>3 285</td>
<td>3 180</td>
<td>2 920</td>
<td>3 090</td>
<td>3 080</td>
<td>2 930</td>
<td>2 480</td>
<td>2 340</td>
<td>2 535</td>
<td>2 500</td>
<td>2 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>985</td>
<td>1 100</td>
<td>1 140</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>815</td>
<td>830</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU (Germany</td>
<td>2 030</td>
<td>2 135</td>
<td>2 255</td>
<td>2 110</td>
<td>2 050</td>
<td>1 805</td>
<td>1 650</td>
<td>1 645</td>
<td>1 790</td>
<td>2 015</td>
<td>2 365</td>
<td>2 495</td>
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<tr>
<td>excluded)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other overseas</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other CIS</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other countries</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>665</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>735</td>
<td>835</td>
<td>935</td>
<td>1080</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most important source of foreign tourists still remain Poland closest neighbours – Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania and Russia. It should also be noted that most arrivals from a non-neighbouring country come from the United Kingdom surpassing those from the USA, Latvia and Holland (Institute of Tourism, 2008).

Thus, Poland is perceived to be a very fast growing country both in terms of international tourism arrivals and the inbound tourism development. As Wyrzykowski (2006) indicated, after becoming a full member of European Union, Poland has obtained new possibilities and perspectives for tourism development. He continues, that after “opening borders” by former socialist countries, especially in Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, inbound foreign tourism developed very quickly. For an example, in the 1990s, the number of foreign visitors in Poland increased tenfold. Around 25% of them were tourists who stayed more than one day. The majority were from Germany, Austria, Italy, Sweden and Finland (Ministry of Economy, 2005). C.M. Hall (et al., 2006) notes, that the enlargement of the European Union and the accession of new Member States is an event of global consequence for tourism even if many of the impacts were indirect and may take a long time to become apparent. Poland’s accession to the EU opened a new perspective both in terms of a new demand but also to the need of a new quality of tourism products and qualities (D. Hall, 2006). Many regions in Poland have found themselves in a strong need of developing new, enhanced tourism products in order to provide new motivation for the domestic and foreign tourists to visit. The need for the
increase in the quality of the tourism product in Poland has been recognised also at the managerial level of the Polish tourism scene. The call for more complexity and the augmented variety of choice is being stimulated by the more visible preference of the foreign tourists. Also, the appearance of the increased number of social changes generated by the EU accession have been recognised by Marciszewska (et al., 2006). Those changes according to her, are equally important to the economic transformations which the EU accession have brought and put a new light on the management of tourism in Poland.

In the UNWTO (2002) conference report it has been indicated that, the Central and Eastern European countries and Poland in particular, are already doing quite well in the tourism scene and have every reason to be optimistic about their future. Regardless of the economical downturn tourism has been consistently growing in these countries in the past ten years, with international tourist receipts outpacing tourist arrivals. However, as claimed by Kotlinski (et al., 2004) tourism in Poland does not fulfil its potential because of the lack of coordination of its tourist attractions and an integrated system of management in the regions. The development of tourism in Poland faces many challenges which need to be recognised and controlled by both national tourism administration and regional and local authorities.

The EU accession followed by the open borders and lowered barriers for tourism exchange between nations have created new directions for the Polish national policy. A new political approach is required with a long-term policy at
the national, regional and local level which would capture the changing environment nurtured by the intensified interconnections between people and places (Marciszewska et al., 2006).

Tourism policy and tourism industry in Poland should be perceived in the context of Poland’s EU membership on many levels. Poland’s EU membership is changing the country’s economy and its image. Brand Poland is now more strongly related to brand Europe and brand EU. The correlation is even stronger when we consider the fact that European structural funds in Poland are being used directly to finance tourism development on the regional and national level. As we have seen in the previous Chapter in the example of the EDEN Project, Poland is also benefiting from pan-European efforts to brand the EU as a tourism destination and to promote specific destinations within Europe. Although tourism policy is not a direct competence of the European Union, any tourism promotion efforts on the EU level will remain interwoven with efforts on the EU level. This has been exasperated by the European Commission when it clearly stated that any EU tourism policy should be complimentary to the policies of the Member States. The strategy forsees that the Member States on their part will:

- Undertake efforts to implement further cooperation between tourism entities based on the open method of coordination;
- Support research into tourism on the European level and promote cooperation between research entities;
- Promotion of the financial and non-financial instruments of the Communities for the benefit of the tourism sector;
- And the promotion of the sustainable consumption and production patterns; (Ministry of Sport and Tourism, 2008)

Another EU-related factor that strongly influences tourism policy and tourism flows in Poland as well as the perception of the country itself is Poland’s 2007 accession to the Schengen zone effectively lifting border controls within the zone on the one hand while strengthening of the controls outside of the zone. With the accession to the Schengen zone Poland became a frontier country of the zone imposing further restriction on travel from countries such as Ukraine, Belarus and Russia. Thus, on the one hand tourism flows within Schengen have been strengthened, while on the other hand, further hampering of tourism flows from Poland’s Eastern neighbours has been seen. The latter has lead Poland to pursue EU level activities towards the liberalisation of visa requirements (particularly in the case of the so-called ‘Schengen Visa’) towards visitors from these countries (Ministry of Sport and Tourism, 2008).

Regardless of the abovementioned challenges, the outlook of the Polish tourism industry and tourism flows is generally regarded as positive although not without limitations. The Polish Tourism Organisation (2008) provides that the country’s potential lies in its fine scenery, attractive cultural landscapes with historical monuments and picturesque villages. An UNWTO
representative, Shlevkov (2002) stated at the tourism conference in Zakopane (Poland):

Here in Poland, like in many other Central and Eastern European countries, you can be rightfully proud of tangible successes in developing tourism. You will achieve much more by continuing to focus on high quality tourism segments and markets, by ensuring its sustainable development and advancing regional cooperation.

3.2.1. THE STATE AND INSTITUTIONAL CONTROL IN POLISH TOURISM.

According to Nordlinger (1981), the state can be conceptualised as a set of officials with their own interests and capacities to effect public policy or a relatively permanent set of political institutions operating in relation to civil society. The definition of an institution adopted by C.M. Hall and Jenkins (1995) describes it as a “established law, custom, usage, practice, organisation or other element in the political or social life of a people; a regulative principle or convention subservient to the needs of an organised community or the general needs of the civilization” (Scrutton, 1982:225). The main institutions of the state consist of: the elected legislatures, government department and authorities, the judiciary, enforcement agencies, other levels of government, government-business enterprises, regulatory authorities and the range of para-state organisations such as trade unions. The performance of the state will affect tourism and tourism policy to a number of various degrees. However, C.M. Hall (1994a) argues, that the degree to which individual’s functions are
related to particular tourism policies and decisions will depend on the specific objectives of institutions, interests groups and significant individual’s relative to a policy process. These objectives also vary in relation to the level of a state. The scrutiny of public tourism policy is therefore even more complex as the aims of a local state may (and usually are) different of those of the central state (Williams and Shaw, 2002).

Public tourism policy is created and shaped within the political and public institutions (C.M. Hall, 1995). To understand the policy-making process one should first explore the complexities of a machinery of government and the lines of responsibility, roles and functions of individuals, bodies and institutions. Governments are key players due to regulation roles in transport, communications and its influence on tourism estate planning, such as major tourism hubs, infrastructure, credit/financing and destination management/marketing. (UNEP uneptie.org/government, 2002). Edgell (1990:37) states:

the political aspects of tourism are interwoven with its economic consequences... tourism is not only a “continuation of politics” but an integral part of the world’s political economy. In short, tourism is, or can be, a tool used not only for economic but for political means.

Governments have become more aware and interested in the study of a process, outcomes and influences of tourism public polices (C.M. Hall & Jenkins, 1995).
State tourism policy in Poland is created and supervised by the Ministry of Sport and Tourism (MTiS) with the support of the national agency – the Polish Tourism Organisation. The main players at the regional level are the regional authorities and the regional tourism organisations. The role of the Ministry of Sport and Tourism is to make the most important decisions concerning the framework for the institutional collaboration in the process of production and the allocation of tourism goods and services. The second body - The Polish Tourism Organisation (PTO) - was established in 2000 in order to create, together with the Ministry of Economy and Labour (responsible for tourism at that time), a responsible tourism policy and to contribute in the coordination of Polish tourism activities at both national and international scale (Kotliński, 2004).

The urgent need of the new institution to oversee tourism in Poland derived from the growing problems within the tourism sector in the late 1990s (Marciszewska, 2006). The increasing rate of unemployment accompanied by the slowdown in economic growth and the instability of the Polish currency (zloty), have influenced the decisions of politicians who were not convinced of the significant value of tourism in the socio-economic development. Very few attempts to employ effective political instruments which could motivate tourism enterprises to develop national and regional tourism products have been undertaken. Thus, setting up a new tourism institution in Poland which from the outset has adopted the market-oriented approach has been seen as a ‘rescue’ for the declining Polish economy. Soon, the PTO has been seen to not
only fulfil the crucial informational and promotional function but to act as a mediator between the regional and local tourism organisations as a ‘bridge’ between these and the private tourism sector (Marciszewska et al., 2006). Today, the PTO is the governmental agency responsible for promoting Poland as an attractive destination, developing and managing the Polish system of tourism information in Poland and abroad, as well as initiating, consulting and supporting plans of development or reconstruction of the tourism infrastructure (MST, 2008). Marciszewska (et al., 2006:134) summarises the most significant changes in the governmental approach to tourism in Poland as the important branch of national economy and the noteworthy arena of public policy as follows:

- An initial interest (in the early-1990s) in tourism as an access point to the free market service economy, with the social and political reforms;
- An increased interest in the mid-1990s when foreign tour operators entered the Polish tourism market; and
- Active tourism policy created by the Ministry of Economy and the Polish Tourism Organisation at the central level at the beginning of this century when tourism was recognised as a significant contributor to the national economy’.

For the purpose of this thesis, where the production of the destination brand Poland is scrutinised the promotional function of PTO has a great importance. As Kotliński (2004), notices, marketing and promotion of Poland at home and
abroad should be one of the priorities for the government as the “creation of a positive image of Poland as a country with a strong appealing image is a basic duty of those institutions”. Also, the cooperation between the two biggest tourism organisations PTO and the Ministry of Sport and Tourism in constructing the image of Poland as a tourism destination is carefully investigated.
### Table 3.2-3 TOURISM GOVERNANCE INSTITUTIONS IN POLAND. BASIC TASKS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>Ministry of Sport and Tourism</td>
<td>- elaborating, implementing, monitoring and participation in the creation strategic national documents and programs attached to tourism development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Department of Tourism</em></td>
<td>- preparing the tourism development strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional</td>
<td><em>Department of Education, Culture, Sport and Tourism</em></td>
<td>- managing and implementing tourism initiatives,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- preparing project of regional tourism development strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>County Authority</td>
<td>- managing public tasks on tourism on the local level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Local Authority</em></td>
<td>- preparing projects for local tourism development strategy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Defris (2005).
Table 3.2-3 above, presents the main state institutions responsible for managing tourism in Poland and their tasks. It is important to emphasise here that the coordination of tourism development is a very complex task as it involves many interrelated operational duties and it has to combine the work of many various sectors of the economy. Tourism therefore is a not a homogenous sphere of the national economy, it consists of numerous independent sectors of the economy which often leads to complications at the organisational, legal and technical level (C.M. Hall, 1994). And so in Poland, many decisions and activities which have a direct effect on tourism development lay within the competences of various ministries and organisations.

3.2.2. TOURISM POLICY IN POLAND.

C.M. Hall (1994) in his analysis of tourism policy management makes the assertion that every decision influencing tourism policy, the structure of tourism organisations, the nurture of government involvement in tourism or the nature of tourism development is the result of the political process. That process involves a number of actors (individuals, interest groups and public and private organisations) that are continuously fighting for power. Any tourism body, public or private, national or regional has to base its activities on policy, at least to some extent. As Edgell states,

the highest purpose of tourism policy is to integrate the economic, political, cultural, intellectual and economic benefits of tourism cohesively with people, destinations, and countries in order to
improve the global quality of life and provide a foundation for peace and prosperity Edgell (1990:1).

Many factors need to be taken into account in order to properly design policies and to adopt effective measures facilitating the implementation of such policies and strategies which should provide both consumer satisfaction and sustainable development of the country or region (Hall, Smith and Marciszewska, 2006). This way of thinking led to the crucial choice and design of tourism policy which needs to be built on existing tourism resources with the emphasis of the cooperative and competitive advantages within the existing or the potential tourist destination (Handszuch, 2005).

Kotliński (2004) have pointed out that tourism trends in Poland are continuously shifting from domestic tourism to international tourism. Unfortunately, a lack of integrated tourism information for a country as a whole and the lack of the promotional approach focused specifically each of the country’s region, especially abroad, are barriers for international tourism development at all levels. On the other hand, domestic tourism suffers from the inefficient cooperation between the regional authorities and the local administrative units in a field of communication and information exchange. This insufficient information system and lack of cooperation between administrative units and the public sector are seen to be the most significant constraints for the development of tourism in Poland and situating the tourism sector in a competitive position in the world (Kotliński, 2004, Dziedziec, 2005, Marciszewska 2006). Therefore, there is a strong need for tourism policy
makers in Poland to take into consideration the urgent need of implementing horizontal collaboration between local authorities and the private sector or between the administrative units in the public sector itself.

As mentioned in subsection 3.2.1. of this research study, tourism policy from Poland’s perspective is managed by the Ministry of Sport and Tourism and the Polish Tourism Organisation while at the regional level the organs responsible for tourism are established by regional tourism authorities and regional tourism organisations. Several governmental strategies and documents on voivodships’ (forms of the regional government in Poland) development, regard tourism to be one of the sectors that could ensure the dynamic economic development and notably help in the fight against unemployment and overcome the negative impacts of transformation (Marciszewska, 2002; Dziedzic, 2005).

In Table 3.2-4 below, the major Polish tourism institutions from three levels of governance have been illustrated.
**Table 3.2-4** TOURISM INSTITUTIONS SUPPORTING PLANNING PROCESS IN POLAND.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Institution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>- Polish Tourism Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Institute of Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Polish Guild of Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Central Unit of Tourist Information</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Polish Hotels Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- PTTK (Polish Tourism Society)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>- Regional Tourism Organization</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Dep. of Institute of Tourism</td>
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<td>- Dep. of Polish Guild of Tourism</td>
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<td>- Units of Tourist Information</td>
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<td>- Dep. of Polish Hotels Union</td>
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<td>- Dep. of PTTK (Polish Tourism Society)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Agro-tourist societies</td>
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<td>- ecology education centres</td>
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<td>- Municipalities, Communes’ and Counties’ Offices</td>
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<td>- High Schools, Academies, Universities</td>
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<td>- agricultural advisory centres</td>
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<td>- County Offices</td>
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<td>- Municipalities and Commune Offices</td>
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</table>

Source: Defris (2005).
In the Polish government’s policy presented in the most important strategic documents concerning the economic and environmental condition of the state, tourism is perceived to be a tool which can be used essentially to support an implementation of various important governmental programmes (Ministry of Economy, 2007). It has been also perceived that the development of tourism policy in Poland needs also be based on a partnership between tourism policy authorities and other sectors of Polish governance. According to a number of commentators in the field, tourism policies ought to be constructed on the basis of mutual dialogue and understanding among the Ministry of Sport and Tourism and other national governmental authorities whose work may affect or be affected by the development of tourism in Poland. In the current study the matters of policy-making process and particularly national tourism promotion policy state the important problem of an investigation. Various factors taken into account in the policy process, such as tourism resources, goals and tools together with the ways and means by which these policies can be implemented are scrutinised in the Chapters number Four and Five of the present research study.
3.3. ROLE AND FUNCTION OF VARIOUS ACTORS INVOLVED IN PRODUCING AND MEDIATING LOCAL / REGIONAL / NATIONAL / INTERNATIONAL IMAGES OF POLAND.

This subsection explores the role of the institutions and organisations responsible for representing / promoting / branding Poland inside of the country and from abroad. The entities presented are Polish, European and International, governmental and non-governmental organisations which coordinate or to some extent influence the production or reproduction of the Polish representation.

The precise indication of each institutional body which is responsible for creation or re-creation of Polish identity is not an easy task. This is mainly due to the fact that the responsibility for representation of Poland both within the country and aboard is decentralised as various organisations with different scope of responsibilities and activities are involved.

The broad structure of power and responsibility in relation to the creation of the brand Poland has been described by Secretary General in Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Jan Borkowski in his official letter dated 14.05.2008 (Borkowski, 2008) in response to an official inquiry of Jan Kulas (2008), Member of the Polish Parliament (official term: Sejm) from 24.01.2008.
MP Kulas addressed a series of direct questions to the office of Prime Minister asking for a clarification of the national efforts towards branding Poland. The fact that the MP asked the questions (listed in Table 3.3-1) indicates that the issues of national branding and the promotion of Poland are a matter of serious concern both to politicians as well as to their constituents. This was expressed in his statement accompanying the questions:

Poland occupies an important place in Europe and the world. In our country there have been historic changes in the political system in the late 80 and 90 Twentieth century. The heritage of “Solidarity” has become a recognized achievement in the eyes of international public opinion. The rank of our country in the world increased after the Polish accession to NATO and the European Union. However, contemporary Poland desperately needs a modern and professional promotion in Europe and the world (Kulas, 2008).

MP Kulas, clearly concerned about the seriousness and strategic leadership behind the promotion of Poland abroad, went on to ask a series of questions that the researcher could have very well asked herself:
### Table 3.3-1 List of MP Kulas’ Questions about the Promotion of Poland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. How is the system of promotion of Poland formally organised, particularly in terms of political, economic, cultural and tourism promotion?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. What were the main activities in promotion of Poland undertaken by the Polish Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Culture in 2005-2007?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. What were the financial resources devoted to the promotion of Poland abroad in 2005-2007?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. What are the plans and the main tasks of promoting Poland abroad in 2008? What funds have been secured for this purpose?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. To what extent can we talk about a strategy of promoting Poland abroad?</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. What experiences of other European countries could be used towards a more effective promotion of Poland abroad?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. What new initiatives and projects will the government take to make the promotion of Poland abroad more professional and effective? Should not the funding be doubled funding for the promotion of Poland abroad?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Although the questions asked by MP Kulas refer mostly to the issue of external promotion of Poland, they have resulted in an official response provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that forms a good base for understanding the relations of power in the production of brand Poland both domestically and abroad.

The answers to MP Kulas’ questions were laid out by the Secretary General in Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Jan Borkowski (ministry official who wrote the answer to MP Kulas), who started by detailing that according to Polish law, the main and highest responsibility for the promotion of Poland and the Polish language abroad is the office of the Foreign Affairs Minister, but as in many other countries, this responsibility is largely decentralized and rests with various actors including ministries, composed of separate units which perform promotional tasks within their particular area of responsibility, mainly within the departments of international cooperation.

Additionally, there are institutions which are also involved in the process of representing and promoting Poland but not included in the departmental structures and have a high degree of autonomy. To name a few: The Adam Mickiewicz Institute (Institute of Polish Culture under the patronage of one of Poland’s most prominent and praised writers), The Polish Tourism Organisation and the Polish Agency of Information and Foreign Investment.
In conducting the mapping of the institutions the researcher concentrated on those most visible from the perspective of their activity and administrative responsibility in the field of national and destination branding in Poland. The selection of the targeted institutions and the explanation of their roles and powers in relation to national and destination branding in Poland was partially informed by the answers provided by Mr. Borkowski’s to the questions posed by MP Kulas.

3.3.1. MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinates work of all of the other ministries and institutions engaged in the promotional activities of Poland. The Minister of Foreign Affairs is also the head of the Council of Polish Promotion, a consultative and advisory body of Council of Ministers comprising the representatives of key institutions engaged in Polish promotion. As Borkowki (2008) also indicates, the meetings of a Council are meant to serve such purposes as discussions concerning plans for major promotional events and their coordination, issues related to the image of Poland in the world, necessary institutional changes or expected effects of the actions planned.

The Council of Polish Promotion also holds its own working group dealing with specific issues concerning the representation of Poland abroad. The coordinating role of the ministry of Foreign Affairs lies also in the maintenance of a special website – www.poland.gov.pl where Polish economy, culture, tourism, particular regions, universities are promoted in several languages.
According to national law, the main organ responsible for Polish representation and promotion abroad is Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the Department of Public and Cultural Diplomacy as provided at the official Ministry website (http://www.msz.gov.pl/Ministerstwo,Spraw,Zagranicznych,27032.html):

The Department of Public and Cultural Diplomacy creates positive image of Poland that is favourable to Poland’s foreign policy by stimulating public opinion and promoting Polish culture, science, education and tourism. The Department defines the directions of public and cultural diplomacy, oversees the efforts undertaken in that respect by Polish diplomatic missions abroad, negotiates cultural cooperation agreements in the area of education, science and information as well as youth exchanges, cooperates with foreign and domestic institutions and foreign media, manages MFA’s Internet portal and coordinates operation of Internet sites of Polish diplomatic missions abroad.

Any planned promotional actions need to be approved by the Department of Public and Cultural Diplomacy before being carried out by the particular diplomatic missions.

3.3.2. MINISTRY OF SPORT AND TOURISM.

Following the information provided by the website, the state tourism policy in Poland is created and supervised by the Ministry of Sport and Tourism (MST) with the support of the national agency – the Polish Tourism Organisation. As the ministry responsible in the area of tourism in Poland, its competences, unsurprisingly, include:
• promotion of tourism;
• international cooperation in the area of tourism, including the fulfilling the obligations stemming from the Polish membership of the European Union and other international organisations (UNWTO, OECD, CEI);
• training, education and development of human sources for tourism.

The analysis of the ministry’s competences and the hierarchy of power in tourism management in Poland indicates that the main players at the regional level are the regional authorities and the regional tourism organisations. The role of the Ministry of Sport and Tourism, seems to concentrate on taking the most important decisions concerning the framework for the institutional collaboration in the process of production and the allocation of tourism goods and services. Thus, in essence, the legal status indicates that in the area of tourism promotion and national image mediation, the Ministry of Sport and Tourism has oversight and control over PTO, who, as a government agency, has executive powers and responsibilities for which it is accountable to the ministry.

3.3.3. PTO (POLISH TOURISM ORGANISATION).

The Polish Tourism Organisation (Polska Organizacja Turystyczna – PTO) is a government agency that was formed by a legal act on the 25 June 1999 and started operations in early 2000. Although formally independent, it is responsible directly to the Minister in charge of Tourism (currently – the minister for Tourism and Sport).
The main roles and functions of the PTO according to the information provided at PTO’s website (http://www.pot.gov.pl/) on January 2010 are listed as:

- Promoting Poland as an attractive tourist destination in terms of its culture and environmental value;
- Ensuring the functioning and development of the Polish tourist information system both domestically and abroad;
- Initiating, evaluating and supporting plans for development and modernization of tourist infrastructure;
- Development of promotional materials;
- Organisation of trade fairs and seminars;
- Cooperation with local governments, business and associations in the field of tourism;
- Consistent association of tourist promotion on regional and local levels, and stimulating the development of the tourism product;
- Increasing the presence of Poland as an attractive destination in the foreign media: press, audiovisual, electronic;
- Synchronisation of the PTO activities with the general plan of improving the image of Poland in the European Union.

Although it is not clear from the statute of PTO or any other regulation what this “general plan” is, it is safe to assume that it could provide a basis for influencing the autonomy of PTO activities as the main body responsible for the promotion of Poland.
So far the PTO has managed to open fourteen offices around the world (Austria, Belgium, France, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Spain, Japan, Germany, USA, Russia, Sweden, Hungary, Italy and Ukraine). It publishes brochures in various languages and it’s envoys represent the country in various conferences, fairs and seminars around the world. PTO tries to actively engage with its counterparts around the world, exchange experiences and draw from the expertise of external experts.

3.3.4. PBI (THE POLISH BRAND INSTITUTE).

The Polish Brand Institute (Instytut Marki Polskiej – IMP) brands itself on its website (www.imp.org.pl) and documentation as an independent research and development centre devoted to the subject of national and regional branding and is associated with the Foundation for the Promotion of Poland which in turn is associated with the National Chamber of Commerce. A close review of the PBI materials as well as the analysis of its activities and accomplishments allowed the researcher to observe that the institute, in contrast to PTO (Polish Tourism Organisation) concentrates more on the national rather than tourist aspects of branding. It has been active from the early 1990’s and followed a mission of rebranding the Polish economy and reconstruction of its reputation.

As will be shown in further analysis of PBI’s activities, this institution has been active in spearheading various initiatives aimed at the promotion of a distinctive brand for Poland including MARKA-MARKOM (Brand for Brands) and collaborative projects with leading thinkers in national branding. It
was mainly through the cooperation with Wally Olins and his agency that PBI has been able to introduce a new branding strategy with the overriding theme of *Creative Tension*. More attention will be paid to the analysis of this particular strategy later in this research study.

The PBI established itself as a centre for the coordination of the general national branding efforts across the board although the lack of formal coordination, funding and the “decision-making maze” have caused a lot of frustration as expressed on many occasions by Miroslaw Boruc, Managing Director of the Institute. In an interview with the researcher Boruc cited the multi-stakeholder and decentralised nature of branding organisation in Poland as one of the main causes of the lack of consistency in national branding efforts.

3.4. **THE MEDIATION OF POLISH IMAGES AND TRADITIONS.**

In this research study, the practice of representation is regarded to be a social, unpredictable process through which various concepts concerning specific objects and images are produced in human minds and exchanged between people both verbally and visually. It has been also argued in Chapter Two that these produced concepts, sigs and images are being used for representing particular places and their pasts. This part of the research study explores a variety of images, myths and traditions of Poland that Polish people and foreigners carry in their minds and the ways of how they communicate them to the world.
Although it is difficult to quantify something as elusive and ethereal as national perception, various perception rankings are an established tool in measuring and comparing the images and perceptions of various destinations. One such ranking (Anholt-GfK Nation Brands Index) covering 50 countries arrives at a final number from 6 variables. These are opinions on: inhabitants, export goods, politics, tourist value, culture and finally immigration and investment potentials. In the 2008 ranking of national brands Poland found itself in 30th place between China (29th) and the Czech Republic (31st).

Smoczynski (2009) finds this result to be “poor for a country aspiring to be a developed and Western one”. This assertion in itself is an indicative, although not necessarily justified, illustration of Poles’ own dissatisfaction and disappointment when confronted with the foreign view of Poland and its inhabitants, but also of the universal aspiration to improve that image.

After all, the perception of Poland from the perspective of foreigners has been rapidly changing during the last two decades. Olins (in Koziński, 2009) notes that “Everyone, who has visited Poland during the last ten years knows this country has changed dramatically”. Continuing on that thought, Boruc (2009) usefully indicates that although the core of the Polish culture remained unchanged, in many aspects, the country changed beyond recognition. There are many aspects which influence this change. The most significant is the political transition from Communism towards a free-market democracy. After twenty years since the fall of Communism, Poland is one of the fastest growing
members of the European Union. Moreover, as the data research presented in the literature review of this study has shown that Poland’s aims today are: to be considered as not only a good destination for business and investment but also as a regional centre of culture, entertainment and modern art. However, as indicated in Chapter Two, perception of and about countries is dynamic and constantly evolving. It almost never reflects solely the intentions of the people working on and for the representation of the country but is a net result of the interaction of multiple factors such as the individual imaginaries and experience, the perception of the people in and from the country, economic performance of a country, and many other conditioning aspects.

Some of the research of tourism promotion efforts discussed in this and previous chapters shows that Poland is found to be interesting first of all because of historical rather than contemporary reasons. For some tourism promotion bodies this is often associated with the quality of being “boring” and not very attractive as a tourism generating quality, as history on its own is not always a tourist attraction whereas today, it is mostly happenings, events, lifestyle, and the general pulse of a country that matter in brand promotion. To some, history provides only a good context (Perceptions of Poland, BBC World). But this contention does not tell the full story. As much as Poland is largely perceived through the prism of its difficult history, one of the factors conditioning that perception is how the history of Poland is presented in and outside of Poland. Smoczynski (2009) observed that, for years, the predominant projection of Polish history was built around the idea of
martyrdom, tragedy, betrayal and self-pity. Consequently, even though historically rich and potentially interesting, the tendency to portray Poland as the constant victim instead of underlining the successful struggle for freedom does a counter-service to the overall image of the country (Smoczyński, 2009).

In order to address this predominance of historical context in the representation of Poland demonstrated in the texts quoted above, some writers in the field (Boruc 2009, Olins, Anholt) recommended in their analyses a departure from the traditional historically dominated discourse towards a new and modernising outlook concentrating on the contemporary aspects of life in the country, its cultural and human potential, as well as the economic and tourist opportunities.

Boruc (2009) points out that Poland has an obvious preliminary advantage of being one of the top thirty globally recognised countries. He claims, that no person with at least a minimum education and knowledge about the world would place Poland in Africa or Asia. To him, Poland is more and more often associated with Europe, the European Union, the figure of Lech Wałęsa, Solidarity, the Pope, Warsaw, and Cracow.

3.4.1. EXTERNAL PERCEPTIONS OF POLAND

A thorough analysis of the perceptions of Poland and the Poles is provided by Saffron (2004). In the course of their research they have found that Germans are still holding on to the outdated negative stereotypes towards Poland. The older generation of Germans tends to be influenced by history and past events,
whereas the younger generations build their opinions around current social
issues that drive from immigration of Poles into Germany.

In France, the perception of Poland is said to be highly influenced by the
historical ties between the two countries and reinforced by the large number of
people of Polish decent. As indicated in the report (Saffron, 2004) Polish
intelligentsia and romantic perceptions of the 19th century still linger on the
idea of a Polish national identity.

Also in the UK the historic perceptions of Poland where dominating according
to Saffron’s report (2004, p.45):

There is a general perception of the Poles as wartime allies and
here figures and a country somehow related to communism and
Solidarity. Although the country is also perceived as remote and
inaccessible, its people are increasingly visible, and are seen in a
positive light.

Interestingly, this assertion predates the Polish accession to the EU and the
unprecedented influx of Polish migrant workers and migrants to the UK that
followed. The Polish immigration to the UK after the EU enlargement
surpassed many government and academic predictions. This has led to a
serious shift in perceptions of Poles in the UK, mostly in favour (Smoczyński
2009).
In Spain, the image of Poland is influenced by the ignorance and the misinformation according to Saffron’s report (2004). The most common associations with the country leads to the Polish potato production, the reliable construction workers, and the Pope. Spaniards also perceive Poland to be remote and distant and a threat to their investment funding and as a rival in Brussels.

In Brussels, before the accession of Poland to the EU, it was regarded by EU diplomats as difficult to deal with and “something of a nuisance” (Saffron, 2004, p. 12). But at the same time, there is a growing assumption that Poland is with no doubt a big player in European politics.

Accession to the European Union on 1 May was pivotal, and although strongly criticized, Poland’s intransigent attitude and brash behaviour in Brussels have raised its public profile in a short term (Saffron, 2004, p.55).

Among the Eastern neighbours, Poland is perceived to be a ‘window to the West’ and the country that is standing up for itself (Saffron, 2004). However as the Saffron report notifies, in Russia, there is still an assumption of Poles being the part of the traditional Russian sphere of influence and the feeling of proprietary interests in Poland remains.

For the more informed Americans, Poles are seen to be reliable friends and allies and lately they are seen in a media as an American ‘Trojan horse’ in Europe or the leading light of ‘New Europe’ that has the potential to make
waves in ‘Old Europe’ (Saffron, 2004). Also, in the US the strong associations with Poles are connected to the ‘unpronounceable’ family names and the tasty Polish sausages.

As the report summarises:

Foreigners’ understanding of Poland relates most often to where it has come from and not to where it is today. Prejudices, misperceptions and stereotypes have built a distorted image of the country. Outsiders typically associate Poland with primitive agriculture, manual labour, rudimentary traditionalism, a rundown environment and religious bigotry (Saffron, 2004, p.13).

The analyses and the findings of the reports quoted above lead to the conclusion that the perception of Poland abroad is broadly influenced by negative or at least unflattering stereotypes. Despite the successful transformation, economic success and rising presence in Europe, Poland’s image continues to be influenced by the cameo snapshots of ignorance, corruption, crime or bigotry. The common image is far from attractive and allusive, and most importantly very far away from the perception that Poland has of itself. In the next sub-section the researcher will dwell into this internal perception of Poland by Poles themselves.

3.4.2. INTERNAL PERCEPTIONS OF POLAND

In Chapter Two it has been argued that the national identity consists of the ways of speaking about self and the community. The literature review has also shown that national identity, although based on common beliefs and feelings
and shared imaginative ways of perceiving the world, national traditions and myths, every living community constantly seeks to invent and reinvent itself, and the perceived identities are dynamic and constantly evolving (Hobswam and Ranger 1983, Evans and Boswell 1999). Thus it is very difficult to lastingly define a national self-perception, or even provide a snapshot thereof as each attempt will be outdated the moment it is stated. Nevertheless, the researcher will attempt to provide a thorough and representative sample.

The perspective which Polish people have about their own country is very much conditioned by the historical context. Because of the fundamental changes that have occurred in the Polish political situation over the last two decades, the ideological difference between the young and old generation is extreme (Saffron, 2004). The older generation of Poles are often characterised as deeply pessimistic, defensive, protective, resentful and distrusting. They are most of the time preoccupied with the history – the difficulties of war, communism and the difficulties of the transition period are often one of the favourite topics of their conversation.

You cannot talk seriously to anybody in Poland for five minutes without them referring to history. The reason, of course, is that their history has been so appalling. For the past 300 years or so, Polish history is a history of oppression, of invasions – from east to west, from Austria, from Prussia, from Russia, from Germany – and of partitions. In conversation with Poles, one hears about the Soviet invasion, or the Nazis or the communist period, or the revolts of the 19th century. This tragic history is the background from which Polish people talk about Poland (Saffron, 2004, p.41).
However, the younger generation of Poles perceive themselves to be self-confident and proud Europeans. As Saffron report (2004) indicates, the history of Poland is important to them, but not fundamental to the future of the country. Also family is important to them, but religion and nationalism are becoming gradually less so. In fact, according to Saffron report (2004), young Poles seem to find patriotism passé. They hold a more democratic, contemporary and chauvinistic concept of Poland then the older generation does. The antagonism towards the Polish political apparatus has been also spotted during the Saffron research interviews among the young Poles. The new generation is reluctant to get involved in the Polish political life as they perceive it to be ‘out of touch, incompetent or worse’ (Saffron, 2004, p.53).

In line with Hollinshead’s assertion that ‘history’ and ‘heritage’ are social constructs – they are truths that are held to be ‘known’ about the past, by a given population or within a given society or culture – the established and imbedded perception of the ‘known’ history among the Polish population continue to have a serious impact on the self-confidence and understanding of Poland by Poles themselves as well as outsiders.

One of the interesting findings is the assertion given by Bilewicz (2008) who stated that Polish people, in contrast with almost all other nations, perceive their own group as bad, incompetent and immoral. When asked to list the most important qualities of their own nation they usually list negative ones.
Bilewicz (2008) finds this to be in contrast with the basic theory of social psychology that stipulates people to be motivated to defend their own group and community and to defend its positive image. It is even more surprising that the same people, when confronted with the foreign perception of their country and themselves tend to be more defensive and see the need for better representation of their own country abroad.

As argued at the outset of this study research, to understand a nation means not only to learn about its historical or geographical features but mostly to open oneself to the aspects of national culture, stories, myths and imaginings. It also has been pointed out that the representation of a place consists of various manifestations of social forms of existence then just of some historical or geographical facts selected by those who claim to have the right to speak for the other people and normalise their memories and imaginaries. As a next step, in the upcoming subsection the researcher will explore the practical and theoretical aspects of those various initiatives that have been undertaken in Poland in recent years, and that in one way or another, fall within the category of branding exercises.

3.5. THE PACKAGING OF POLISH IDENTITY: BRANDING INITIATIVES

It has been argued in the Literature Review that national identity is a continuous process, vulnerable to various narratives and influences which are
constantly reconstructed and re-imagined. Here, in the light of the conducted research, it will be indicated that the discourse of Polish identity consists of the symbolic, cultural practices by which the signs are turned into symbols and symbols into language so they could be communicated through particular representations to the world. Concurrently, the relations of power based on the decisions of which images of Poland are being displayed and mediated to the world are carefully explored here.

What follows is a dissection and analysis of various national branding and identity communication initiatives undertaken by several different bodies in Poland – the Foreign Affairs Ministry, Polish Tourism Organisation, and the Polish Brand Institute (joint project with Saffron Brand Consultants).

The first example of a branding campaign that the researcher will dwell into is almost a perfect example of a well meant branding effort turned bad by weak preparation and half-willed implementation. The Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs is legally the first institution responsible for the promotion of Poland abroad. Unfortunately, while being burdened with this task, the Ministry is not granted sufficient funds (or competences for that matter) to undertake this particular task. According to Wojciechowski (in Kozinski 2009) although there is some money (approx 100-200 million PLN equivalent of 22 to 44 million in GBP) allocated to the promotion of Poland every year, the money is diluted among different organisations and bodies without any coordination of their mutual competences and duties. What results is a series of perhaps well meant
but uncorrelated and underfunded efforts of which the researcher will now give one example.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was looking for a way to enhance its branding and communications credentials abroad. It was faced with limited expertise on the matter and even more limited funds. What resulted was a plan to design a new, modern and “cool” logo that would represent Poland.

A public procurement procedure was launched leading to an influx of many interesting offers. Unfortunately, the first phase of the procedure had to be cancelled due to the fact that all of the offers exceeded the financial expectations of the ministry. A second call for proposals was put forward and some interesting offers made it through. What the ministry settled for in the end was a logo (Figure 3.4-1) portraying the word “Polska” with an image of a kite sprouting from the letter “K” and with a font loosely resembling that of the famous Solidarity logo.
FIGURE 3.5-1 THE POLISH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS “KITE” LOGO.

Source: http://www.nova-polska.pl/pl/site/fo__logo_latawiec.jpg
Without passing judgment of the logo itself, the process of its implementation popularisation was somewhat half-hearted. Unfortunately, as Flankowska (2005) indicated the logo never appeared anywhere apart from the Ministry’s own website, the Polish embassies websites and the Ministry’s gadgets (pens, key-chains, etc). It was also visible at the ‘Polish days’ – events which promote Poland abroad. The head of the Ministry’s of Foreign Affairs promotion department states:

There was no promotion of the new logo. There were no such plans because the logo itself was supposed to promote other events. Apart from this, the initiative caused to much excitement [the logo itself was broadly criticised in the media and by many politicians]. I think, that in this situation its promotion from the budget sources was just inappropriate (in Flankowska, 2005).

This is not to say that all of the efforts funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are futile and destined to fail. As a contrasting example the national promotion campaign undertaken in 2009 by the Polish Embassy in Berlin was an outstanding success even if by a sheer stroke of luck and favourable circumstances. For decades, the Polish Embassy in Berlin owned a building in the Unter den Linden Alley in downtown Berlin. The Embassy was not using the building and it remained literally abandoned for years, while all of its surroundings grew and prospered. Soon it was realised that the state of the property was doing a serious disservice to the image of Poland, particularly when contrasted with the fresh facades of the nearby US and French embassies.
The Ministry granted the Embassy a relatively tiny amount of 60 000 Euro that was just enough to hide the crumbling building from public sight.

The Embassy settled for a simple but ingenious solution. The building would be completely covered by a series of various symbols of Polish transformation including a New Year’s message “From the neighbours” or a enlarged copy of the Polish election poster from 1989 commemorating the first free elections in Poland. The Berlin press praised the initiative as very innovative, friendly and unpretentious. The initiative was regarded as a big, although unlikely, success.

The Ministry was also found guilty by some researchers (Smoczynski, Boruc, etc.) of being very reactive in its approach while failing to offer any pro-active and positive messaging. The flagship activity of the embassies seems to be tracing any signs of “Polish death-camps”1 in foreign press and funding fact-finding trips to Auschwitz to the misinformed journalists. The focus of the Ministry’s activities seems to remain on countering the painful stereotypes while ignoring the ones that negatively influence the image of Poland, let alone promoting the positives.

Another institution that plays a major role in communicating Poland and one that the researcher has paid some attention to in the previous chapters is the Polish Tourism Organisation. In August 2001 a project bearing the organisation’s credentials was presented under the title “An adventure with a happy end.” The campaign was supposed to hire the services of such

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1 It is generally insisted that the Death-Camps set up by the Nazis during their occupation of Poland are referred to as the ‘Nazi Death-Camps’ and referring to them as ‘Polish’ is regarded as a falsification and slander.
Hollywood stars as David Duchovny, Sigourney Weaver and Sandra Bullock and was expected to deliver impressive results. Story-boards were ready and PTO was gearing up for the implementation of the project in 2002. The project was even included in the “2001-2006 Governmental tourism development strategy”. Unfortunately, due to an unfavourable set of circumstances the project never got off the ground. According to Zmysłony (in Flankowska, 2005) the project was “a stark example of resistance and incompetence of the various bureaucracies involved.”

Olkowicz (in Flankowska, 2005) offers an even more unflattering picture of the situation: “Both the Kite campaign and the Happy End campaign are stark examples that in the case of such initiatives the higher goal ends up to be particular personal interests rather the image of Poland. Instead of putting various initiatives in order we tend to multiply them without an apparent reason or plan. In the meantime the outside world still looks at us through the prism of Auschwitz, vodka and sausage.”

This rather harsh analysis does not perhaps do justice to the amount of goodwill and effort put into the promotional activities by various actors in Poland. One such example is the remarkably successful “Polish Plumber campaign” that was designed and launched by the PTO office in Paris in the wake of the result of the French referendum on the European Constitution in 2005. The opponents of the treaty introduced into the debate an image of a plombier Polonais – a Polish plumber that was supposed to symbolise the
cheap labour flooding the French job-market following the EU enlargement. Without dwelling much into the audacity of this somewhat unfounded claim, the PTO office in Paris decided to take action and launch a humorous promotional campaign. A model was hired and photographed in plumbing attire to the backdrop of Polish landmarks and the words that can be (loosely) translated into “I’m staying in Poland. Come numerously.” (Fig. 3.5-2).
Figure 3.5-2 THE POLISH PLUMBER CAMPAIGN POSTER


Direct translation: “I’m staying in Poland. Visit numerous.”
The costs of this campaign were remarkably low when considering the success it has had with the various audiences. Soon not only Parisian and French newspapers were on the story but national and international news outlets such as the Financial Times, Voyage, Corriere de la Serra, Daily Telegraph and BBC were running stories on the campaign and underlining its ingenious, funny and unassuming tone. Instead of taking a grudge over hurt national pride and playing on national stereotypes the Polish authorities have shown initiative, creativity and ability to think outside-the-box and achieving remarkable success. Unfortunately, the follow-up of the plumber project was not met with the same enthusiasm and positive reception.

PTO wanted to build up on the success of the Polish Plumber campaign and decided to follow-up with the image of a seductive nurse (Figure 3.5-3)
**Figure 3.5-3 The Polish Nurse Campaign Poster**

Direct translation: “Poland: I’m waiting for you”.

Source: [www.jaunted.com/files/1865/nurse.jpg](http://www.jaunted.com/files/1865/nurse.jpg)
This time, the campaign was not met with the same enthusiasm and positive reception in either France and Poland. The ‘Polish Nurse’ did not play a part in the French political debate and in both countries the reaction to the image was that of misunderstanding and misjudgement mainly related to the thinly veiled sexual innuendo of the poster.

Having given an overview of the various national branding and promotional initiatives undertaken over the recent years in Poland, focus must now be drawn towards what is the most comprehensive and fully-fledged branding initiative ever undertaken in the case of Poland – the PBI (Polish Brand Institute) – Saffron Brand Consultants branding strategy. This particular initiative is of key importance to this research as according to Boruc (2009) it is the first fully professional, comprehensive and thorough attempt at providing Poland with a branding strategy in the fullest understanding of the term. The involvement of a broadly and internationally recognised figure in the branding world in the person of Olins is certainly a novelty and a great honour to Poland when considering the way such previous efforts had been undertaken (Boruc, interview text, 2009). The analysis provided by Saffron Brand Consultants served as a basis of this thesis’ research and as mentioned previously in Chapter Three, the author remained in frequent contact with Mr. Olin’s company exchanging documents and study results.

The initiative in focus was brought to life by a decision of the Polish Brand Institute to pursue a project named “A Brand for Poland” whose main goal was
in identifying a flagship idea for the brand “Poland” while using best practices and theories in global branding expertise. For this very reason the PBI decided to employ the services of a globally recognised authority in the field of national branding, a British historian from Oxford University, Wally Olins. After nearly two years of joint Polish-British-and-Spanish research work the team reached a diagnosis summed up in two words – “Creative Tension” – supposedly a dominating motor of Polish-ness, the quintessence of Polish vitality (Smoczyński, 2009).

The diagnosis derived from the research conducted by Olins’s company - Saffron Brand Consultants. The research process started with a question: What is special and attractive about Poland? After long and extensive research they came up with four ideas which that were meant to characterise Poland and the Polish people. First proposition was – ‘Janus’ (or Lanus) - the Roman mythological two-faced deity symbolising Poland as a country looking both East and West at the same time. The second idea arrived by Olins’s team was “individualism” – supposedly standing for the Polish of entrepreneurship and independence of thinking. The third idea was ‘works in progress’ relating to the dynamic changes taking place in Poland and also the state of incompleteness. And the final one was ‘polarity’ standing for the coexistence of extremes which are often contradictory and can result in unpredictability but also the creativity of the Polish people.
All four characteristics lead to one short descriptive term – “Creative Tension” – regarded by Olins (in Smoczyński, 2009) as the quintessential characteristic, an essence of Poland. It is not regarded as a marketing slogan but rather an overarching theme around which a sharp and attractive vision of Poland could be created and translated into the language of politics, economy and social relations.

The purpose of this research study does not lie in providing a critical analysis of the findings of the work undertaken by Saffron Brand Consultants, but it should be noted that the effort received fairly wide praise and recognition both in the institutional and private branding environments. The project was indeed welcomed and embraced by a range of institutions (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economy, Polish Information and Foreign Investment Agency and the Polish Tourism Organisation). It immediately received the patronage of the Speaker of the lower house of Parliament and was established as the first stage in the Polish National Branding Programme. The work undertaken by Saffron Brand Consultants received also professional praise outside the official circles. Branding and communication specialists, journalists and influencers from across the country were quick to recognise the importance, quality and potential of this work (Serafinski 2005; Flankowska 2005; Kozinski, 2009).

The outcome of the work and the final theme at which it arrived (Creative Tension) was generally praised as fairly accurate and potentially appealing to
the Polish population. Serafinski (2005) argued that the campaign based around this theme stood a chance of success as it “tickled the national pride” of the Poles positively influencing their self-regard and making their image more attractive both domestically and abroad – a very important effect in a country marred by low self-esteem. The theme was less applicable in other fields such as diplomacy or trade as it did not inspire confidence. For a country whose main exports consist of low-processed goods usually associated with such desirable features as stability and consistency of quality, it could not play a role as a trade slogan (Serafinski, 2005).

As previously mentioned, the purpose of this research study is not in analysing or judging the usefulness of Saffron’s work but it can be said that Olins’s team handed the Polish authorities a first-ever fully developed, researched, thought-through, modern and professional branding strategy. The ball was then in the proverbial Polish court. The strategy foresaw a series of implementation steps of which all of the preparatory stages have been successfully completed. The research was conducted, the overarching theme was arrived at and the consultation process received positive feedback. The next step was the most challenging – implementation. It was understood that in order to be successful the strategy would require a more robust budget going beyond the 200 Million PLN (equivalent of 44 million in GBP) annually usually budgeted for the promotion of Poland.
At this point it is worthwhile to note what Olins (in Kozinski, 2009, p.2) has stated that “a Polish weakness, as history seems to have shown on many occasions, is that for Poles it is very difficult to work together towards a common goal (...) Working in Poland with Polish institutions can be incredibly frustrating due to constant wastefulness and unnecessary friction”.

It now seems that this assertion proved to be more true than Olins ever imagined. The project, although enthusiastically embraced by various institutions in Poland, managed to get stuck between exactly those decision-making bodies (Boruc, 2009).

For over two years since the publishing of the Saffron report, Wally Olins bounced back and forth between various ministries, institutions and business centres trying to rally support and money for the implementation of the strategy. The irony of the situation is best pointed out by Olins (in Kozinski, 2009, p.2) himself:

Although it seemed that everybody to whom I presented the report seemed to really like it, the difficulty remained in getting everybody to act on it together. Governments and bureaucrats changed while business-people were busy with other priorities. I was often told that although it is a great idea, budget constraints do not allow for much. The paradox, it seems, lies in the Creative Tension itself. You are extreme individualists and that is how you work. Poles are very creative, but also very individual in their work.
The lack of political will was further matched with the destabilising political situation. In 2005 Poland experienced a double election year with both presidential and parliamentary elections held within a very short time. The result of the election saw an unprecedented shift in power that surprised many domestic as well as foreign political analysts. Populist and nationalist forces made significant political gains and soon a coalition between the catholic-conservative Law-and-Justice party, the nationalist Polish Families League and the populist Self-defence party took power. For the first time in history, twin brothers, Lech and Jaroslaw Kaczyński, assumed the most important offices of Prime Minister and President.

The political and communications style assumed by the new coalition led to a spiralling decline in the overall image of Poland. With an astonishing speed, from a position of an aspiring, forward-looking, dynamic and generally inspiring country, Poland turned into a political pariah. The reputation of Poland abroad was in tatters. With every move, the governing coalition inspired astonishment followed by ridicule. All of a sudden Poland was very popular with the foreign press but for all the wrong reasons. Konrad Schuller (in Smoczyński, 2009), a correspondent for the German daily Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, noted that he never wrote as many articles about Poland as in the year following the coming to power of the Kaczyński twins (in Smoczynski, 2009), and none of them flattering. Western media raced to report new scandals and political upheavals coming from Poland – destructive gameplay at the EU stage, extremist affiliations of the coalition members, social
radicalism, ultra-Catholic radio antics, inquisition-like methods of the Public Prosecutor and many others. This was further exacerbated by the misplaced sensitivity of the ruling coalition that regarded any criticism of its methods as a personal attack – when a relatively small German newspaper published an unflattering cartoon about the Kaczynski twins, the government reacted with demands for the arrest and prosecution of the journalists – a reaction more resounding of the middle-eastern governments than an aspiring European democracy.

To summarise, unexpectedly, the new branding strategy for Poland suddenly found itself in a completely changed reality that did not fit the theme of “Creative Tension”. The next part of the present research study will develop the analysis of the specialist recommendations concerning the development of a national brand in Poland.

3.6. EXTERNAL SPECIALISTS’ RECOMMENDATIONS

The development of the Polish national brand raised many voices of opinion leaders from various backgrounds ranging from tourism to public diplomacy and politics both in Poland and abroad. These people are perceived by the researcher to play a role of ‘agents of display’ – of a people who act for or represent another with express or implicit authority (Medlick, 1996). They often use a dominant influence on what ideological or political discourse underpins the production of the national brand of Poland and how such
representational discourse is implicated in individual and collective understandings of the world.

This part of the research study focuses on the voices and opinions of those specialists concerned with the condition of the Polish brand and the possibilities for future development. While analysing the statements of various experts concerned with national branding development in Poland, the researcher has observed many similarities in their approach.

The international branding specialists that have worked or commented on the development of the Polish brand (e.g. Olins, Anholt) have repeatedly stated that in the pursuit of this brand Poles must not try and replicate the desirable qualities found in other nations but rather try and identify their own positive values and particularities that distinguish them from other nations. As has been argued in the Literature Review of this research study the use of the commonly established imaginaries of a place can be harmful for the country’s representation as it often provides fake, generalised impressions which reduces the representation to a narrow perspective (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983; C.M. Hall, 1994; Billig, 1995; S.Hall, 1997, Morgan and Pritchard 2002; Hollinshead, 2002, 2006, 2007). It will be argued here that the representation of a country should be a process where various imaginaries and understandings are being incorporated and exchanged.
Olins (2009), when giving specific examples of this, went as far as to say that Poles should not try to brand the Baltic Sea as particularly warm and touristically attractive as it simply does not compare to other such destinations in Europe. Nor should they overestimate the popularity and attractiveness of their mountains for the very same reasons. Instead, he argues, Poles should try and make the most of the what they inherit and identify other qualities that make them and their country stand out from the crowd in branding terms. For Olins these qualities are creativity and individualism (Olins 2009). He assures that if Poles embrace these qualities as their own their image abroad will positively change and better reflect the reality.

It seems that often in the branding literature, branding specialists themselves do not refrain from using the most imbedded and wide-spread stereotypes. Olins (2009) himself argues that Polish people should not secretly dream of becoming hard-working as Germans, stylish as French, sociable as Italians or social as Swedes. They should rather learn to like and accept themselves as they are and find their own trump-cards and exceptionalities.

At the same time, Saffron Brand Consultants do not seem to escape from the trap of normalising the images and perceptions of Poland by comparing it to the Western world. In Saffron’s report (2004, p.57) we can read that “If you want Italian food you can have that. If you want French food you can have that. It’s a normal country.” Other normal qualities listed in the report
include a working metro, continuous construction, and the presence of international retailers. In a research where all perceptions of people, places and pasts are regarded as relative and dependent on the intrinsic workings of the human mind, these kinds of statements can be found as peculiar.

Another external source of branding recommendations for Poland is the work of Simon Anholt. Although he was never directly employed or actively engaged in designing a branding strategy for Poland, in his many papers and interviews he often commented on the situation. Anholt (2006) in the interview given to the Brief magazine draws attention to the branding and image projection and multiplication potential of the Polish workforce that has so numerously appeared in the countries of Western Europe after the Polish accession to the European Union. Polish workers and the now-proverbial Polish Plumber are recognisable and often positively regarded features of Poland even if that does not strengthen the image that Poles would like to have of Poland and of themselves.

In Anholt’s (2006) view, one of the most important tools in national branding is tourism as it allows people to see and experience a country directly. This should be strengthened by culture, trade and investment. In turn, according to Anholt’s own ranking the two most neglected domains in Poland are specifically tourism and culture.
Smoczynski’s (2009) interpretation of this situation is that it results in misplaced accents and focus areas in both domains. Although being a native Pole and thus qualifying in this internal qualification as an internal contributor to the subject of branding recommendations for Poland, Smoczynski (2009) offers some interesting insight to the recommendations provided by external influencers and his views should be mentioned in this section.

It is his analysis of the situation and of the recommendations from external experts, that the relatively poor positioning in Anholt’s ranking stems from the fact that in cultural promotion Polish authorities tend to push native, ethnic, folk and high culture that hardly sparks any interest abroad instead of focusing on modern and alternative art and music that makes a name for its own outside of Poland. In tourism on the other hand we try to compete on par with tourist destinations in Western Europe (or even farther) that remain and will remain out of competitive reach for most of Polish destinations not only in terms of development but simply in terms of climate. Smoczynski (2009) offers additional analysis of the branding challenges faced by Poland and other countries that the researcher will address in the next section.

Smoczynski (2009) argues that Poland should not try to concentrate on communicating things that are already known (like the Baltic sea or the Tatra mountains) and draw tourists such as the virgin forests of Bialowieza (the oldest unspoiled forest reserve in Europe) or Bieszczady (equally
unspoiled and sparsely populated mountain ranges). Instead of being ashamed of the under-development of these areas Poles should proudly promote the virgin natural qualities of these regions that are so rare in Europe. That idea has been also brought up by Florek (2005, p.209) who points out that Polish nature could be a main characteristic of the Polish national brand. She indicated that “Poland is a country that is relatively little industrialised, with many attractive areas of nature, some of which are exceptional and not encountered in other European countries” (Florek, 2005, p.209).

She expands on this by saying that nature could also form a part of the identity of the Polish people and not only of the geographical and environmental aspects of the country itself. The openness of Polish people towards foreigners, and often simple charm, confirms the opinion that Poles are a hospitable nation, possessing such natural characteristics (Florek, 2005, p.2009).

She sums up that the expression of nature, understood widely, gives excellent opportunities to embrace many fields. In her opinion, the natural identity could create many positive associations for the Polish representation.

Smoczynski (2009) also comments on the social sphere of promotion where he believes Poles should concentrate on promoting Polish dynamism and the ability to adapt so profoundly as proven by the millions of Polish migrants who shape the images of Poles and Poland in the minds of the host communities daily. On the political stage, in turn, Smoczynski (2009)
believes that Poland should try and project the image of competence and reliability as a partner in European politics. Finally, he argues that the image of Poland should strive to be internally consistent and consequent, particularly in the light of the two, big, oncoming promotion opportunities – the Polish Presidency of the EU in 2011 and the UEFA Euro Cup in Poland-Ukraine in 2012. Only this, together with strategic thinking and coordination of the promotion effort will help Poland advance in the Anholt ranking according to Smoczynski (2009).

Coming back to Olins’s Creative Tension idea, in an interview with Kozinski (2009, p.2) he further developed on the practicalities of the implementation of his strategy:

Naturally, the point of the strategy is not in having the Poles repeat to themselves the mantra: We are creatively tense. It is rather that every Polish person or product should have a single recognisable feature in common. Everywhere, wherever it appears. It does not matter whether it is Polish film festival, sporting event, a franchise of a Polish retailer opened abroad or a Polish airline. Every such activity should be easily associated with a single, particular quality. If these imaginings of Poland are strengthened and replicated by the media: television, radio, and internet in particular, then it will be spoken about and discussed. People will automatically and naturally recognise it. Unfortunately, every time we tried to implement this mechanism many contradictory and counterproductive measures appeared. Regardless of how much time, money and resources you devote to this, it will all be futile if not backed by a common goal and will to act.
Thus it can be seen that Olins’s recommendation stemming from his various analyses, papers, reports and interviews (2003-2009) boils down to the following assertions:

- There is a need for the projection of a single, common and universal image for all that is the national brand;
- There is a need for common, concerted and coordinated action by all involved stakeholders;
- There is a need to subordinate all communication and image representation efforts to a common goal and tactic.

These recommendations are in contradiction to the very characteristics of Polish-ness identified by Olins himself, namely: individualism, creativity and tension – all being qualities that if not rule-out, then at least make it very difficult to act in unison towards a common goal. Olins is not completely unaware of this contradiction. In analysing the reasons for the inability of launching and progressing his creative tension campaign (in Kozinski, 2009), apart from the unfavourable political circumstances that he refers to so often, he concedes that he is under the impression that Poles do not value working together towards a common goal as much as he would have hoped and it is all down to the very individualism that he was trying to promote. But nevertheless, he still believes that the key to success for brand Poland lies in government participation and commitment to his idea.
One solution to this seemingly insurmountable contradiction is provided by Anholt (2006). He believes, that one of the wasted or under-exploited opportunities to promote the “Polish brand” are the images of the late Pope John Paul II or Lech Walesa – both internationally recognised personalities and powerful ambassadors of Poland. In his view Lech Walesa was, at one point, equally recognisable and popular as Nelson Mandela. The Republic of South Africa managed to completely re-shape its image using the image of Nelson Mandela, whereas Poland seems to have wasted this chance. Now, continues Anholt (2006, p.4), Poland is “just another ex-Soviet-bloc country that joined the EU.”

One of the solutions offered by Anholt (2006) relies on the involvement of the Polish business sector. It does not arrive as a surprise that some of the most powerful and successful brand ambassadors are commercial brands such as Coca-Cola, Toyota or Siemens. Good brand-ambassadors in the business and trade sectors can have a very powerful impact on the general national brand. Unfortunately, so far, most of the Polish companies, when expanding abroad, usually strive to tone down or even mask the fact that they are Polish. The only companies that actively promote their products as Polish are the producers of stereotypically Polish products such as Vodka. It is even the case that Polish companies that are successful on the domestic market, usually try to brand their products as foreign (examples include Wittchen – the company of exclusive leather accessories, Reserved – the clothing company and Ginno Rossi the shoe chain). Thus it is very hard to
convince businesses to underline their Polish roots and act as Polish brand ambassadors when they do not believe it is not in their best commercial interest.

The intended and unintended effect of the work of any branding advisor is that it shapes the consciousness of people, places and pasts. Both of the advisors quoted above (Anholt and Olins) are trying to impose new ways of thinking about the self. In the Polish case they are trying to deconstruct the embedded understandings of Polish people and replace them with new understandings made and designed in the course of their own work. These new understandings are a reflection of the various mediated imaginings of Poles of themselves/ of Poles by foreigners/ and of the effects of the people-making/ past-making/ and place-making agency of branding that the advisors employ. Thus Olins is trying to project the concept of “Creative Tension” as a new way of perception of Poles by themselves and others. To achieve this Olins proposes to subjugate all resources and efforts of the institutions and actors creating the representation of Poland in a concerted and coordinated effort, while at the same time acknowledging the contradiction of this recommendation with the very nature of the characteristic concept that these institutions and actors are being asked to disseminate. Anholt, in turn, seems to underline the importance of the promotion of the individual, understanding and own-initiative actions of various factors including the business sector. Moreover, he underlines the importance of people that could personify and embody the national myths.
In Chapter Five, the researcher will look into how these same problems are being approached by the internal commentators and experts and how their recommendations can be compared and contrasted with those of the external ones.

3.7. CHAPTER SUMMARY.

The conclusions that the researcher has arrived at as the result of her research and data analysis are as follows:

- The image of Poland (abroad and domestically) changed dramatically over recent years although not without drawbacks and bumps along the way. This improving image is a result of the constantly improving reality in terms of economic prowess, political stability, infrastructural development and international environment. This change continues to have a serious impact on the dynamics of Polish image creation, production and perception. The improving image of Poland translated directly to a better perception of the country abroad but also into higher expectations as well as aspirations.

- A key factors influencing the image of Poland and its tourism (as measured by tourism flows) in the last two decades are the fall of communism and the accession to the European Union together with the subsequent accession to the Schengen zone.
The relations of power in national branding in Poland are complex and uncoordinated. Despite the relatively clearly established legislative and legal relations of power, the proliferation of actors and institutions responsible for national branding and the legal interdependencies between them lead to a situation where efficient and effective cooperation is very difficult. The result is often that of multiple constructions of reality that are inconsistently and randomly projected and communicated to the domestic and foreign audiences. This is further exasperated by the influence of a new, supranational actor in the discourse of power on the image of Poland – the European Union and its emergent tourism and branding related policies.

Various attempts at constructing, de-constructing and reconstructing the national brand of Poland have been undertaken with a varying degree of success. These attempts serve as evidence that reality is a mental construction strongly dependent on the work of human minds. In these works the imaginary worlds of others are being communicated and forced.

It has also been found that some groups working in tourism and in the public sphere (governmental agencies, independent organisations) are using their dominant position to enforce their established imaginaries and understandings on others. Each involved actor (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Polish Tourism Organisation, Polish Brand Institute) uses
various points of influence and continuously seeks to establish their voices and forms of awareness as leading the debate of the representation of Poland.

➢ All of the involved actors share a general consensus that the brand Poland could be improved and better communicated. However the recommended ways of achieving that improvement vary. The idea of collective work provided by Olins and popularised by Boruc has been often neglected in the work of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Polish Tourism Organisation as they are the ones in control of the available budget. The dialogue between those groups is thus strongly dependent on their financial correlations.

➢ Henceforth, the main barriers and challenges towards better communication are defined as inability and/ or lack of will to coordinate and act together shared by the main actors responsible for national brand creation in Poland.

➢ The fact that Poland itself draws interest and attention of such branding prodigies as Olins and Anholt is in itself a clear sign of the growing interests in and importance of Poland.

➢ In relation to the construction of the image of Poland the thinking of insiders seems to be heavily influenced and driven by that of the
outsiders and vice versa. The perception of the national images is constructed in people’s minds within particular social contexts and is vulnerable to the actions and projections of others. The changing media coverage and attention often works as catalysts for these interdependencies by influencing and shaping the images and understandings in human minds.

- When defining new imaginaries of Poland the various actors that have undertaken this effort arrived at similar qualities that can be brought down to two distinctive virtues: individualism and creativity. Paradoxically those two traits are also perceived by the Polish tourism and branding opinion leaders to be the ones that are preventing Poland from communicating its desired brand.
CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN AND CONDUCT OF THE STUDY

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism researchers have used a variety of paradigms and methodologies to study tourism phenomena (Urry, 2002). Many leaders in Tourism Studies claim that tourism is an inherently multidisciplinary, transdisciplinary or interdisciplinary endeavour (Urry, 1990; Morgan and Pritchard, 1998; Hollinshead and Jamal, 2007) and describe Tourism as a complex social phenomenon (Hall, 1994, Hollinshead, 1996, Meethan 2001, Urry, 2002). This research investigation of national and destination branding practices incorporated within tourism realities attempts to capture this complexity of social structures influencing the branding process. The general purpose of this chapter is to address the methodological foundation of this research study and to provide an outline of the research conduct.

For the purpose of this research study the researcher has adopted the qualitative approach as it is perceived by the researcher to be the most suitable in her attempt to collect the rich descriptions and capture the complexity of national and destination branding phenomena. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) define qualitative research as an interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary and sometimes counter-disciplinary field. It draws from the humanities, the social sciences and the physical science. Qualitative research
can be many things at the same time. It can be multi-pragmatic in focus (Urry, 2002). Its practitioners are sensitive to the value of the multi-method approach. Therefore, rather than assuming that alternative paradigms are mutually exclusive, they could be applied to certain domains of phenomena depending on where they prove to be more or less useful. This approach implies that the researcher will move from one research method to another depending on the nature of the research investigation.

Epistemologically and ontologically, this study will be constructivist and predominately following pathways of understanding recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Being constructivist, this investigation will endeavour to find and integrate multiple and contested social constructions of reality within the field of tourism and national branding, and seek to explore particular contextual settings in which those realities (i.e., those found identities and found aspirations) hold (Guba, 1990). For reasons of methodological fit the study will be reliant upon qualitative methods conducted via an emergent research design. This means that the study does not start with any hypothesis or a fixed research strategy plan but will rather unfold during the data collecting process. Moreover, in this study, the researcher is planning to account her methodological decisions during her data gathering / intelligence collection activities. The qualitative methods (in-depth interviews, document analysis, participant observation) will be used to understand multiple constructions held in the minds of the tourism practitioners engaged in the practices of place branding. Within the emergent
research design forms of viewpoint, standpoint, or perspective knowledge tend to be ‘messy’, and will require the researcher to take various embedded and iterative steps to capture the decipher (Hollinshead 1993).

Further, this Chapter presents the process of the study conduct of this emergent interpretative research study together with the sequence of consecutive research steps undertaken in its course. The use of research methods is also laid out together with an overview of the data analysis. This Chapter illustrates the reasons for which the constructivist qualitative research methodology is needed for researching the key tourism authorities’ perceptions of the relatively new phenomenon of national destination branding.

The overview of the institutions responsible for tourism in the European Union is provided as their offices were the setting of the main data conduct. These are the institutions that the researcher has identified and approached in the course of her research and work in Brussels. Secondly, the researcher provides an overview of the institutions responsible for tourism in Poland based on her research and understanding of relations of dominance in tourism policy in Poland.

The institutions described here have been selected on the basis of purposive sampling where the deciding inclusion factor was their power and ability to influence tourism in Europe as described by their mandate and role. The researcher approached these institutions with the intention of identifying and
interviewing the decision-makers responsible for tourism. Purposive sampling proved to be a useful technique that helped identify potential interview subjects and provided an increasingly exhaustive, representative and inclusive population sample.

As a bricoleur the researcher plans to remain open to emergent possibilities of expanding the scope of the research sample in order to gain further insight into the relations of power in destination branding in the European Union and in Poland. To that end the researcher intends to invite interviewees to suggest and point her towards further information sources and areas of interest relevant to my study. With regard to the methods of conducting the study the researcher plans to use in-depth long interviews and analysis of documentation gathered in the course of researching the subject institutions.

In the following Chapter, details of the conduct of the study will be laid out in matters such as target personnel, access to the research settings, selection of and obtaining and the analysis process thereof will be explained.

4.2. FUNDAMENTAL MATTERS OF METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN.

Epistemologically and ontologically this study is being guided by the constructivist paradigm following pathways of understanding recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Being a constructivist, the researcher will endeavour to find and integrate multiple and contested social constructions of the reality in which the tourism authorities and national branding specialists operate, and
will explore particular contextual settings in which those realities (i.e. those found identities and aspirations) hold (Guba, 1990). Thus, constructivism in this research study, by following the perspective introduced by Guba (1990:27), does not intend to predict and control the “real” world or to transform it, but rather to reconstruct the “world” at the only point at which it exists: in the minds of constructors. As stated by Lincoln (et al., 1990):

the constructivist paradigm….had as its central focus not the abstraction (reduction) or the approximation (modeling) of a single reality but the presentation of multiple, holistic, competing and often conflictual realities of multiple stakeholders.

As can be derived from the table presented in the Appendix 6, the constructivists are relativist. Consequently, the ontology which favours this research study is relativist. The researcher of that study believes that reality is humanly constructed, subjective and exists only in human minds and their own conceptualisations. She is aware of the fact that the only way to investigate the phenomenon of national and destination branding is to uncover the understandings about the subject held in the heads of the people who are responsible for creating the representations of places, people and pasts (tourism authorities in Brussels and national branding specialists in Warsaw). The knowledge produced and represented by these practitioners is socially, culturally and historically constructed and therefore inseparable to the reality and can never be separated from the world. For relativists, the world is filled
with various realities, each of which is equally “true” and equally valid (Foster, 1998). Hence, the researcher of this research study will not be judging any views and opinions derived from her research subjects but illustrate them to show the complexity of approaches towards the phenomenon of national and destination branding.

Denzin and Lincoln define the constructivist ontology as follows:

….relativist, in that the constructions are as alterable as the reality, the epistemology as subjective, whereby findings are literal and knowledge is created among the investigator and the respondents. The methodology of the constructivists is dialectic, aimed as reconstruction of previously held constructions (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:111).

Further characteristic of this philosophical orientation together with its comparison to the positivist realist ontology have been outlined in the subsection 4.3. of this research study.

Epistemologically, the constructivist paradigm assumes, that the positivist objectivist approach would be replaced by the highly interactive relationship between the researcher and research object (Lincoln et al., 1990). Following the relativist ontology, this study incorporates the subjectivist epistemological position where the inquirer and inquired are fused into a single (monistic) entity. The researcher believes that the relationship between her and the investigated subjects (tourism authorities or the documents prepared by them) will always influence both sides as well as the subsequent research findings stemming from the interaction. This constructivist research inquiry, in
contrast to positivist research approaches described by Guba (1990), utilises an interactive research process where a researcher begins an evaluation in some special settings by identifying different interest groups in that setting. With the subjectivist epistemology the researcher will intend to explore the realities of her interviewees in the perspective of their individual experience. She will study what each group working in tourism or national branding thinks about a place representation process, and then gradually will try to develop a shared perspective on the problem being evaluated.

For reasons of methodological fit the study will be reliant upon qualitative methods conducted via an emergent research design. According to Denzin and Lincoln:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world…qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or to interpret phenomena in terms of meanings people bring to them (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000:3).

The qualitative approach unlike the quantitative (which is statistically oriented for forecasting and analysing the hard data), seeks to understand actions, problems and processes in their social context. And so this research study is focused on exploring the underpinnings of the actions undertaken by the decision makers in the tourism and national branding field, by indicating their motives, problems, and logics within which they operate. Moreover this qualitative research contrary to the quantitative one does not attempt to result
in quantified findings or have measurement and hypothesis-testing as an integral part of the research process (Phillimore and Goodson, 2004). This constructivist research study is generally, but not exclusively informed by the qualitative methods. As clarified by Hollinshead (1996:68):

The infixedes of culture, of identity, of meaning and of representation do appear (at face value) to demand the kind of slow, exhaustive and ultrasuspicious practices that are generally offered by the qualitative researcher.

At the beginning of this Chapter it was indicated, that methodology can be perceived as a bridge between the epistemology and methods. Those three philosophical orientations are strongly related. The choice of methods and the methodological approach emanate from the given ontology and the epistemology (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2008). The emergent character of this study involves the use of different flexible methodological strategies and techniques which can help the researcher understand the meanings produced within various investigated mental frameworks. The methodology used by constructivists and therefore by the researcher in the current study aims to identify and produce the most informed and sophisticated constructions (or reconstructions) as possible. To achieve that, this research study will be conducted via qualitative research bricoleurship approaches. In this regard, the researcher as a bricoleur, will have a possibility of using the tools of her methodological trade, deployed whenever strategies, methods, or empirical materials are at hand (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).
This thesis uses both primary and secondary data sources. The researcher is also planning to utilise some of the following individual methods: interviewing, participant observation, textual analysis. Also, due to the constructivist methodological approach all of the research channels of communication remain open so that the knowledge generated can always be modified and improved (Guba, 1990). Table in Appendix 6 presents the differences between four paradigms: positivism, post-positivism, critical theory and constructivism. The comparison focuses on the ontological, epistemological and methodological stances represented by each of the particular paradigms followed by the comments of the methodological choices made by the researcher.

Further discussion and explanations about methodological approaches of the current research project are being described in Subsection 4.4. of the present Chapter.

4.2.1. THE QUESTION OF REALITY. TWO PHILOSOPHICAL ORIENTATIONS

While reflecting on the paradigmatic matters concerning this research study, the researcher approached two opposing philosophical orientations which have shaped the development of knowledge: realism and relativism (e.g. Guba, 1990; Collier, 1994; Potter, 1998; Parker, 1998). The differences between these two are widely described throughout the literature of social science (e.g.
Guba and Lincoln, 1989; Guba, 1990; Jennings, 2001; Denzin and Lincoln, 2004). The major ontological difference between these two relates to the position of the reality which in realist view is distant and pre-existent to language and experience while in the view of relativists, reality states a form of mental construction strongly dependent on the human minds as far as they can conceptualise it. Relativists argue that if reality is socially constructed any objectivity is then impossible and therefore unnecessary. As stated by Firestone (et. al. 1990) these two positions (realist and relativist) are completely opposite and there is no middle ground between them. As he summarises, the two philosophical approaches can be described (realist and relativist consecutively):

- “there is a real world out there that one can know more or less well and where one could explain relationships among phenomena and attempt to generalize from one situation to another, or
- it is pointless to worry about whether there is a real world, one should concentrate on reporting and clarifying people’s interpretations about what is happening in a specific setting (Firestone, et al., 1990:107).

In the present research study of national and destination representation, the reality in which the development of the place brand is embedded is perceived to be strongly depended on the imaginings and perceptions of people (tourism authorities, national branding specialists) who have authority or claim to have authority to represent other people, places and pasts. It will be argued that the ways in which places are being represented depends on the minds of those people and on the historical, social and cultural context they are embedded in.
4.2.2. CONCEPTUALISING “TRUTH”

The nature of ‘truth’ is conceptualised differently by the realists and the relativists. For relativists any truth is believed to be socially constructed and should never be judged by the researcher (e.g. Guba, 1990, Denzin & Lincoln 2004). Realists believe that ‘out there’ there is an independent reality which they can approach by using the precise, rigorous methodology leading them to attain the ‘truth’ (Hunt, 1992). Thus, relativists claim that there is not such a thing as objective knowledge and that ‘truth’ is a result of perspective (Goodman 1984, Gergen 1986). Lincoln (et al., 1990) for example, refuses any idea of a single truth which is independent from the knower, as for her all truths are partial. She believes that reality is socially constructed which means that one’s reality is constructed by one’s values and these values can never be avoided (Lincoln et al., 1990). In this study it is assumed that any reality from the multiple range of realities approached by relativists is not more or less ‘true’ in a complete way but may appear simply more or less informed and/or sophisticated. And so it is assumed by the researcher that in a field of place representation there are many specialists who attempt to uncover one truth or one real representation of a place and sell in by using various promotional and communication techniques. Thus, in this research study many different views of the process of representation will be confronted in the purpose of revealing multiple understandings which people working in tourism and national branding hold in their minds.
The dominant need of control, justification and the lack of interest in the issues such as human behaviour, individualism or freedom resulted in that the researcher has never considered applying the positivistic orientation in her research study. Many of its opponents claim that positivism is doing a lot of harm to the construction and production of knowledge by silencing a lot of important debates and neglecting hermeneutic, aesthetic, critical, moral, creative and other forms of awareness. The most important issue for this research study which seems not to be recognised by positivist is the ability of individuals to construct theories about themselves and the world they live in and therefore act on the basis of these theories. As stated by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000:19) positivism “fails to take account of our unique ability to interpret our experiences, and represent them to ourselves”. Moreover, it has been argued by many social science thinkers that positivism is unable to answer many questions about the interesting or important areas of life (Habermas, 1972:300) as it does not involve more open-ended, creative or humanitarian considerations.

Although relativism and subjectivism doctrines have very strong support from a number of social science thinkers and hence it is a very fashionable belief in today’s social science sector it has also raised many voices of critique. The most resonant claim that both relativist and subjectivist cannot present their theories as true and if they do, they contradict themselves (Porter, 2001).
The opponents also argue that the idea of relativism and subjectivity should also be applicable to the idea of subjectivity and relativist itself. Thus, as Porter (2001:81) points out: “…subjectivism can only be true for the subjectivists, and relativism can only be true relative to the relativist’s culture”. There is no objectivity integrated to the relativist beliefs hence all the ideas are subjective or relative to them. Moreover, relativists have been widely criticised for their incapability of committing themselves to one specific system of beliefs (Collier, 1994, 1998). This can lead, according to the critics, to the inability to act consistently or does not allow any concrete judgment of social behaviours. However, relativists have neither the wish nor the ability to fight these critiques as they admit that relativism means understanding for understanding’s sake. Situations are subjective and relative and therefore cannot be improved (Foster, 1998).

Kierkegaard (1974:17) summarises the contrast between positivistic objectivity and interpretative subjectivity in relation to the concept of truth:

When a question of truth is raised in an objective manner, reflection is directed objectively to the truth as an object to which the knower is related. Reflection is not focused on the relationship, however, but upon the question of whether it is the truth to which the knower is related. If only the object to which he is related is the truth, the subject is accounted to be in the truth. When the question of truth is raised subjectively, reflection is directed subjectively to the nature of the individual’s relationship; if only the mode of this relationship is in the truth, the individual is in the truth, even if he should happen to be this related to what is not true.
The concept of ‘truth’ has been essential for the ideas of identity, community or subjectivity which shape the discourse of place representation. These three concepts state very important points of consideration for the current research study. The problem of identity, is assigned here to the problem of nationality and the awareness of self within the national context. The concept of community relates both to the individuals or groups who belong to the same nation but also to the imagined entities described by Anderson (1983), where myths, symbols and cultural practices are shared to construct the common meanings of the place, people and pasts (Smith, 1991). The subjectivity states the epistemological concept which drives this research inquiry. The researcher in this study intends to understand the social world as it is, by means of subjective experiences and views. Following the relativist philosophy the researcher in this study does not attempt to unravel true or right meanings of the representation of a place or the practices influencing the representation process through the discourse of tourism but rather focuses at the various contexts in which representations of peoples, places, and pasts are conceivably created and mediated to the world.

4.2.3. PURPOSIVE SAMPLING

Within this emergent study of the power of national and destination branding acting as a powerful shaper of place representation the purposive sampling procedures is utilised. Purposive sampling is used to identify groups or individuals that are representative of the population, setting or context that is
the object of study (Patton, 2002; Decrop, 2006). In this research study the purposive sampling is used to identify key practitioners responsible for tourism development in Europe and key practitioners responsible both for tourism development and the development of Polish national brand in Poland. In the researcher’s view purposive sampling is perceived to be more adequate than the other forms of sampling (e.g. random or representative) as it allows the researcher to subsequently increase the scope or range of data as well as the likelihood that the vast majority of the multiple realities will be uncovered (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The research population in this study will also extend subsequently with the development of the study. Purposive sampling proved to be most adequate for this research as it provided the interviewer with the liberty of choice of interviewees and the possibility of adjustment of the sampling method in the course of the study. In the following paragraphs the researcher will describe the specific criteria that she applied in selecting the research sites, interviewees and documents.

In identifying the population sample for this study the researcher considered the European Commission and the Polish Ministry of Sport and Tourism as the most important regulatory authorities in tourism in the European Union and Poland. ETC (European Travel Commission) and POT (Polish Tourism Organisation) were subsequently identified as agencies and organisations responsible for tourism promotion both in the EU and Poland whereas the PBI and Saffron were subsequently identified as agencies and consultancies actively engaged in shaping the debate and practice of national and destination
branding of Poland. As much as the researcher did not plan this to be a comparative study of tourism authorities performance in Brussels and Poland, she appreciated the additional insight that the comparison of the levels of understanding of national branding among various players could bring to this research study.

When selecting the research sites the researcher sought to find sites that were important and clearly visible on the tourism policy and decision making stage as hubs of power in tourism. Starting with basic Internet research, the researcher first looked at the World Tourism Organisation. While researching the site of the organisation the researcher identified the European Tourism Commission and decided to further explore this organisation’s work and structure. Subsequently, the researcher’s focus was drawn to the work of the Tourism Unit of the European Commission. The main problem encountered by the researcher was gaining access to the key research and interview subjects. This problem was largely and successfully overcome mainly due to the researcher’s ability to place herself on the ‘inside’ of these organisations.

Simultaneously, the researcher was conducting research into the power relations in tourism management in Poland. Using her own knowledge as well as the Internet the researcher identified the Polish Ministry of Sport and Tourism, the Polish Tourism Organisation as well as the Polish Brand Institute as organisations that are key to the study focus. The main difficulty encountered by the researcher in contacting these organisations was the
geographical distance (as the researcher is currently living in Brussels) and the subsequent inability of applying the same ‘insider’ strategy that proved to be successful with the organisations in Brussels.

Overall, the researcher approached the following institutions and organisations:

- European Commission Directorate General for Enterprise and Industry’s Tourism Unit;
- European Travel Commission;
- Polish Tourism Organisation;
- Polish Brand Institute.

The identification of these institutions was accomplished with the use of the Internet based research. The researcher contacted, approached, researched and engaged with these institutions with the intention of gaining the best possible insight and access to the interview subjects within these organisations. This effort led the researcher to undertake temporary placements within the Tourism Unit of the European Commission and the European Travel Commission. The majority of approaches was made using email and telephone.

In selecting the initial interview sample the researcher sought to identify and approach interviewees that were placed as high as possible within the organisations listed above. In total, the researcher made eight interview approaches and as a result was able to interview the following people:
Four high ranking officials within the Tourism Unit of the European Commission;
Chairman of the Polish Brand Institute.

In relation to the selection document sample, the researcher applied the following criteria: the documents should have been written within the institutions identified in the purposive sampling of the research sites or directly relating to them; the documents should focus on the subject of destination or national branding; and, the documents should be written in either English or Polish (the researcher’s mother tongue). One of the most important lessons learned was that connections are essential in sampling high level authorities. The personal contacts made by the researcher in the early stages proved to be beneficial for future research. Appendix 7 provides broader overview of the Purposive Sampling and the way it has been applied in the present research study.

4.2.4. BRICOLEURSHIP AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE.

Acting as a bricoleur, the researcher of the current study will utilise different methods and theoretical perspectives as it acknowledges the interdisciplinary character of the discourse of international tourism and its meditative powers in constructing and reconstructing the representation of the place. Habermas, 1972:300 notion is that of a bricoleur who:
…recognises the limitations of the single method, the discursive structures of one disciplinary approach, what is missed by traditional practices of validation, the historicity of certified modes of knowledge production, the inseparability of knower and known, and the complexity and heterogeneity of all human experience”

and

is aware of deep social structures, and the complex ways they play out in everyday life, the importance of social, cultural and historical analysis, the ways discursive practices influence both what goes on in the research process and the consciousness of the researcher, the complex dimensions of what we mean when we talk about “understanding” (Kincheloe & Horn, 2008:950).

Bricoleurs appreciate the complexity of the research process and view the research method not as the procedure but rather as the technology of justification. The critical consciousness of a bricoleur understands “the necessity of new forms of rigour in the research process” and therefore “refuses the passive acceptance of externally imposed research methods” (Kincheloe and Horn, 2008:951).

Denzin and Lincoln (1998) strongly opt for the idea of viewing the researcher as a bricoleur. Influenced by the work of those authors, the researcher of a the present study is planning to adopt the bricoleur approach which pieces together sets of practices to make a solution to a puzzle. The researcher, as a bricoleur is working with signs, constructing new arrangements and makes methodological choices throughout the ‘limited possibilities’ (Chandler, 2002). The researcher of the present study will be working with signs being
sent out by those who claim to have an authority to represent places through either the discourse of tourism or other means such as public diplomacy or national branding. There is no set of methods which can provide the complete insight; objectivity is rejected and there is no right answer to the posed research question or questions (Phillimore and Goodson, 2004). Moreover of great importance to the present study is the fact that the choices of the interpretative technique the researcher will employ are not made in advance. The researcher is planning to make the choice of methods in parallel with the progress of her research. The sequence of methods will always depend on the actual need of the researcher and not any predetermined order so that she can use whatever she decides to be the most useful in capturing the richest insights and understandings. She plans to interview the practitioners working in national branding and tourism both in Brussels and Poland, review the documents relevant to those research subjects and to observe them working at the projects she plans to incorporate in her research analysis.

This research will therefore be a messy, non-linear process where the researcher is seeking out the different pieces of puzzle until they reach as complete a picture of the research problem as possible. The researcher will use the aesthetic and material tools and deploy whatever strategies, methods or empirical materials available (Becker, 1998:2). New tools or techniques may also be invented at the need of the researcher. Thus, the researcher as a bricoleur remains open to the new research methodologies or paradigms and
pose a possibility of incorporating them if the new or unexpected research scenarios emerge. As Flick points out:

The combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives, and observers in a single study is best understood then, as a strategy that adds rigour, breadth, complexity, richness and depth to any inquiry (Flick, 2002:229).

Denzin and Lincoln (2004) claim that the interpretative bricoleur constructs a pieced-together set of representations – a bricolage – that is integral with the specifics of a complex situation. The bricolage is a result of the bricoleur’s method and states the emergent construction (Weinstein & Weinstein, 1991) which help the researcher to better interpret, criticise and deconstruct the researched social phenomena (Denzin and Lincoln, 2004). In this research study the bricolage is produced by the researcher who will carefully explore the relationships which link tourism authorities to the relatively new phenomenon of national and destination branding. The purpose of that approach is to construct the most useful picture that her knowledge or research strategies can provide. Hence, it is essential for a bricoleur to realise that production of knowledge means always a process, which is constantly changing, developing and which development dependents on the specific cultural settings. (Kincheloe, 2001). Hollinshead (2007:91) argues:

…in such emancipated zones of soft science thought, interpretation is not just something one does pointedly and clinically at the end of the given investigation (so as to close it off), it is something that one unavoidably does throughout the investigation as the researcher endeavours to put himself/herself gradually more in tune with particular contexts and the particular intersubjectivities that are
found to have significant influence on the matters being investigated at each stage of the study.

The researcher as a bricoleur is planning to use her knowledge to carefully study the subjective meanings that she or the examined people make about the Polish brand and the ways of its representation and constantly analyse the ever-changing dynamics of the knowledge construction. The researcher as a bricoleur will encourage dialogue between diverse mental constructions of the representatives from tourism and national branding fields and constantly monitor and reinterpret them in order to enrich her research with the multivocal perspectives, contexts, and the larger social and cultural outlooks.

To achieve that, she needs to be aware of the multiple research approaches and methods which they could incorporate in their study. As argued by Kincheloe and Horn (2008) such awareness requires from the bricoleur the devotion of large amounts of time to the rigorous study of the various research approaches. As they argue ‘becoming the bricoleur who is knowledgeable of multiple research methodologies and their uses, is a lifetime endeavour’ (2008:951). Unfortunately the researcher will not have enough time to fully explore the variety of the methodologies which social research studies offer. Thus the time constraint is the most significant limitation in the present research study. Two years of data conducting is simply too little to accomplish the task of producing the study which could be described as fully exercised bricolage.
The broad range of problems undertaken within this emergent research study which encourages the researcher to find and integrate the multiple and contested social constructions of reality and explore particular contextual settings in which those realities hold need to be facilitated with a flexible methodological approach. Thus, bricoleurship is recognised to be the most suitable approach for the present research study on the production of place within the discourse of international tourism and national branding. As pointed out by Hollinshead and Jamal (2007), within the extensive, and transdisciplinary field as Tourism Studies there is a strong need for the theoretical and methodological flexibility of a bricoleur.

The next section of the present research study attempts to demonstrate the reflection of the above-mentioned characteristics and the practices of bricoleurship utilised throughout the process of collecting and analysing data for this emergent research study.

4.2.5. EMERGENT RESEARCH DESIGN IN RESEARCHING THE PRODUCTION OF PLACE IN INTERNATIONAL TOURISM.

Tourism researchers are strongly encouraged to reflect on the research process and not just take paradigms and research methodology instruments for granted (Hollinshead, 2004; Hall, 2004; Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). The current research study involves critical investigation of tourism as a
powerful shaper of people, places and pasts in the national branding of Poland and the major mechanism through which people, places and pasts are being represented (Buck 1993; Lidchi 1997). In order to address these complexities, the study will be an interpretative one, based upon transdisciplinary understandings of the production of culture and of the representation repertoires of international tourism both in Brussels and Poland today. The researcher is planning to utilise the range of qualitative methods such as interviews, document analysis, participate observation within her bricoleurship in the aim to achieve the most meaningful and multivocal overview of her research subject. Thus, as pointed out in the previous section of this research study, the bricolage which is the result of the bricoleur’s method is an emergent construction (Weinstein & Weinstein, 1991) which provides the most informed and sophisticated findings as possible (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). It is the view of Nelson, (et al., 1992:4).that:

Qualitative research is an interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary and sometimes counterdisciplinary field. It crosscuts the humanities and the social and physical sciences. Qualitative research is many things at the same time. It is multiparadigmatic in focus. Its practitioners are sensitive to the value of the multimethod approach. They are committed to the naturalistic perspective and to the interpretive understanding of human experience.

In this emergent research design, methods are perceived to be tools of gathering evidence, which means that they will be present in the research process in order to service research questions that advance the understanding of the researcher of the social world or some aspect of it (Hesse-Biber &
Leavy, 2008). The researcher will decide which method she will choose from whether it will be document analysis, discourse analysis, participant observation or interviewing dependently on the state of her knowledge about the subject at the moment. Thus, the emergent methods are flexible and adaptable to the dynamic research design. The interrelation between the emergent methodology (what can be known) and the epistemological position of the research (who can know) is very strong. As pointed out by Hesse-Biber & Leavy (2008:2):

…methodology links epistemology and method, serving as the theoretical (defying the type of research problem) and procedural (defying how the research process should proceed, what methods to select, and how they are employed to get at the research problem) link between the two.

Patton (2002:44) has drawn the attention to the work of the ‘fully emergent and open-ended field study’ of the anthropologist Brackette F. Williams (1991) who conducted the in-depth study of ritual and symbolism of the construction of national identity in Guyana. As claimed by Patton (2002) her study is an example of the ideal of emergence in naturalistic inquiry. Inspired by the research approach presented by Williams (1991, in Patton 2002:45) the researcher of the present study decided to illustrate below some of the William’s reflections upon the open-ended study choice and relate them to the methodological choices made in the present research study:

- I am tracking something that’s moving very rapidly in the culture. Every time I talk to someone, there’s another set of data, another thing to look at.
Relevance to the current research study:

The concept of representation as a driving force for ‘negotiated’ meanings and images which construct the destination brand is a highly dynamic, social phenomenon. Researching such phenomenon requires form the researcher finding and integrating multiple and contested social constructions of reality. The stable set of methods fixed at the onset of the study is perceived to be far to constraining and limiting.

❖ You don’t always know exactly how it’s going to be relevant, but somehow it just strikes you and you say to yourself: I should document the date when I saw this and where it was and what was said because it’s data.

Relevance to the current research study:

When investigating the emerging social constructions of reality, like for example, those influencing the production of a place in international tourism, the researcher needs to remain open to various unexpected data sources which may appear as the study unfolds.

❖ You listen to the radio. You watch television. You pass the billboard with an advertisement on it. There is no such thing as something irrelevant when you are studying something like this or maybe just studying the society that you’re in.
Relevance to the current research study:

The researcher as a bricoleur is willing to be constantly incorporating new methodologies into her study research and chasing new data resources for “new and richer meanings” (Cotty, 2004:51) within the settings which she currently investigates. To capture a variety of data continuously approaching the researcher she is using multiple skills employing new research tools and methods aiming to improve her understanding of the tourism authorities’ practices concerning the destination branding both at the European and the Polish level. However, at some point of the research investigation the openness of the researcher to the diversity of new data sources had to be constrained due to the time limitations of the research process. As her study has been conducted within the period of one and a half years (during 2008 and the first half of 2009), the possibilities of witnessing ‘live’ and ‘fresh’ transformations of cultural production were restricted.

❖ I am following where the data takes me, where my questions take me.

Relevance to the current research study:

The present study does not start upfront with any guiding hypothesis nor with any arranged set of methods. It rather develops unpredictably throughout the research process. The understandings which the researcher uncovered during the data conducting process are leading her every time to develop new questions and look at the new insights from the different contexts.
I do impromptu interviews. I don’t have a target number of interviews in mind or predetermined questions. It depends on the person and the situation.

Relevance to the current research study:
At the beginning of this emergent research study, the individual, informal interviews with the managers, academics and practitioners involved in the destination branding field will state a major source of data. The interviewees were selected on a basis of purposive sampling (Chapter Four, subsection 4.4.1) as the emergent design of procedure ‘increases the scope or range of the data exposed, as well as the likelihood that the full array of multiple realities will be uncovered’ (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:40). Sometimes the spontaneous conversations appeared to provide the critical background information on the important research inquiries (e.g. relations of power taking place within the tourism industry).

I fashion a research as I want to fashion it based on what I think this week as opposed to what I thought last week.

Relevance to the current research study:
The present constructivist research, conducted in the bricoleurship mode will be often modified in terms of its methodological approaches. Since data conducted are constantly being re-visioned (Lévi-Strauss, 1966) and reinterpreted during the development of the process of data collection the new approaches of obtaining fresh insights will emerge.
Despite all its advantages, the emergent study is also not free from significant limitations. Its high tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty makes it difficult to assess the particular study. Moreover, when the researcher needs to be knowledgeable about the various scope of methods, theories and narratives so she can use them when needed. The exercise is very time-consuming and its difficult for the researcher to set her own time limits. The dissertation timeline is perceive to be the main constraint in utilising the emergent study design within the present research study.

4.3. RESEARCH OUTLINE: DATA SOURCES AND DATA COLLECTION

Methodologically this study is reliant upon the qualitative methods conducted via emergent research design. Qualitative research favours certain methods of data collection. They may be either primary (interview, observation, participation) or secondary (textbooks, novels, promotional materials) (Silverman, 1993). According to Patton (2002) the data for qualitative analysis typically come from fieldwork. The researcher spends time in a setting under study (an organisation or a particular community) where he/she can observe participants in their natural settings, conduct interviews and analyse data from the documents. Often, the researcher engages personally in the activities of the particular organisation or a community as a participant observer. He or she talks with people exchanging views and perceptions by
which the researcher may gain deeper insights and understandings of the investigated subject/subjects.

Within this emergent research study which follows the tenets of bricoleurship both primary and secondary data sources are being mixed throughout the data gathering/intelligence collection process. However, the in-depth, individual interviewing method, participant observation and document analysis are being perceived to be leading methods facilitating this study research. The researcher will start her research conduct by using the secondary data methods collection (the investigation of branding materials from Brussels and Poland, documentation of branding initiatives, general recommendations for a national brand development, etc.). Concurrently, the researcher plans to continue her study conduct with a sequence of interviews with the key informants in the field of tourism and place branding. The participant observation method is also proposed to give the researcher an opportunity of witnessing the work of her research objects in their natural work environment. Table presented in the Appendix 8, compares all three methods: interviewing, participant observation and document analysis. It distinguishes strengths and weaknesses of each method and provides the relevance of their utilisation in the present research study.
4.3.1. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE STUDY.

Crystallisation

In the present research study the data will be crystallized rather than triangulated (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, Richardson, 2000a). Triangulation has been perceived as a combination of methodologies for the study of particular phenomenon and is used to test one source against another (Denzin, 1978, Flick, 1992, Decrop, 2004). It has been used by many social science researches as the strategy for establishing research validity. However in this constructivist research study, the researcher is more interested in authenticity rather than validity. Authenticity can be described as giving the honest and balanced account of social life from the perspective of the individual who lives in it every day (Nueman, 2000). Hence, instead of taking term from the quantitative paradigm, the constructivist is trying to offer alternative ways to think of the research descriptive validity.

When making her methodological choices the researcher encountered the work of Richardson (in Elligson, 2008) who has first proposed the idea of crystallization as the alternative method displacing triangulation. To her, crystallization recognizes the multi-layered facets of any given approach to the social world and, in contrast to triangulation, does not attempt to provide a single, or triangulated, truth. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) have adopted the Richardson notion of crystallisation and propose to use it as the technique to incorporate various disciplines as a part of multifaceted qualitative research design. The image of a crystal symbolizes the approach of looking at the
research problem from the various angles and perspectives. The crystal “combines symmetry and substance with an infinitive variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach. Crystals grow, change and alter, but are not amorphous” (Richardson, 2000a:934 in Denzin and Lincoln, 2003).

The limitation of this approach is that the researcher is provided with a deepened, complex but partial understanding of the investigated subject. It is because what we see when we view a crystal “depends upon our angle of repose” (Richardson, 1994:522). Therefore it is difficult for the researcher to decide which parts to crystallise upon and which to overlook. Also, the crystallisation is a very time-consuming process as it requires constant search for the different meanings and approaches and confronting them against each other. The researcher of the present study is limited by time constraints and cannot devote as much time to crystallisation as the process requires and engage in entirely as this would have to be done at the expense of other research activities. To overcome that problem the researcher will utilise the crystallisation process right from the outset of the study with the amount data collected at the time. The researcher believes that this approach will help her enhance the meaning of the interpretative understandings of people working in tourism and national branding in national and destination brand development of Poland.
**Reflexivity**

Crystallisation is also recognised to open research to self-reflexivity, to the personal and biographical aspects that are often hidden in many research projects. Heiddeger (1972) suggested that the researcher needs to approach his/her work from some viewpoint that is also part of his/her being. In reflexivity the researcher discloses his/her historical, cultural and personal situation and relates it to the character of his/her research inquiry. As argued by Guba and Lincoln (1985) reflexivity is a sine qua non of qualitative research writing. It displaces claims to truth and the desire to speak for others (Richardson, 2000a). Reflexivity requires from the researcher to seriously locate oneself in his or her research as it strongly attempts to accommodate subjectivity in the researcher’s pursuit of understanding. Reflexivity used in this research study to make the researcher reflect on her own historical, social and cultural position of the Polish person researching the condition of the national representation of Poland from the perspective of Brussels where she currently lives and Poland where she was born and grew up. The reflexive account of the research study will state a great value for both her research study considerations but even more importantly for the researcher’s personal purposes.

**Multi voicing**

Multiple voicing (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003), is disclaiming validity by removing the single voice of omniscience and relativising it with the multivocal approaches to the research study. Research narratives will reflect
multiple voices of social groups from the tourism authority in Brussels and Poland. It can be achieved by inviting research subjects to speak on their behalf or try to find respondents with conflicting views (Anderson, 1997, Fox, 1996). In other cases, the researcher may locate various conflicting interpretations without reaching a single, generalizing conclusion. The researcher will invite different respondents to speak on their behalf about their understanding of the national and destination branding phenomenon. The limitations of multi voicing and reflexivity, acknowledged also by the researcher of the present study, consist of the uncertainty of how the researcher should treat her own voice. The question arises whether her voice should be treated equally with the others incorporated in the study or should it have a special privilege? These considerations will further be disputed in the following chapters of this research study.

4.3.2. INDIVIDUAL IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS.

Within the current emergent research study based on constructivist philosophical orientation, the methodological decisions can be made or changed during the researcher data gathering process. Moreover, given the aspects of bricoleurship other suitable methods can emerge due to the dynamic character of that methodological approach. However interviews are the dominant form of data collection and carry the brunt of this emergent data gathering. The semi-structured interviews are being used as the study unfolds mostly for research crystallisation purposes. The interviews were conducted in a fully overt way where the interviewees are being informed about the
research purpose prior to the interview process. Additionally, as the philosophical position of the current research study is described as constructivist relativists, the interviewees’ responses were constructed relative to the context of the individual professional and personal experience within theoretical underpinnings of the available knowledge.

The selection of interviewees was made using the purposive sampling method with the intention of identifying, approaching and interviewing the key informants and decision-makers in national and destination branding. Overall, the researcher made eight interview approaches (including requests and timing arrangements which were made particularly difficult by interview target’s busy agendas) by email and telephone. Five interview requests were directed to the Tourism Unit officials, two interview requests were directed to the officials of the Polish Tourism Organisation and one to the Polish Brand Institute. In the end, the researcher was successful in conducting four interviews in Brussels with the officials of the Tourism Unit of the European Commission and one interview in Warsaw with the Chairman of the Polish Brand Institute.

In the course of making the specific interview approaches to the officials of the Tourism Unit of the European Commission the researcher was made aware of the limited time availability of the requested interview subjects and was subsequently forced to resign from conducting in-depth interviews in favour of semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interviews while
being more formal to the open interviews still remain sufficiently open-ended which enable the contents to be re-ordered, expanded with the emerging themes and digressions (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, 2001). Semi-structure interviews are described by Guba (1985) as one where the questions are in the hands of the interviewer and the repose rest with the interviewee. The semi-structured interviews in this research study included a mixture of open-ended and specific questions relevant to the subject of the development of destination and national branding in Poland. Due to the emergent character of the present research study the questions were designed not to elicit the information foreseen but remained opened to the unexpected information and findings. The only in-depth interview that the researcher was successful in conducting was with the Chairman of the Polish Branding Institute.

With the exception of one interview where the researcher was not granted permission to record the interview, all of the interviews conducted with the officials of the Tourism Unit of the European Commission have been recorded and subsequently transcribed. These transcripts were interpreted later using thematic analysis. Where the recording was not possible, the responses were manually noted and later analysed using the interview notes. Also in the case of the interview with the Chairman of the Polish Brand Institute, the responses provided by the interviewee were noted and later analysed in a similar manner to the responses from the European Commission interviewees.
All of the interviews were ‘topic oriented’ and oscillated around the subject of the meaning and importance of national branding in country representation. The interviewees were encouraged to formulate their own theories, views and understandings and the researcher did not expect them to confirm or deny any hypotheses. The questions posed by the interviewer were open-ended and intended to invite the interviewee to freely express their views without leading them into any specific line of thought. This approach aimed at maximising the chances of obtaining the interviewees subjective opinions while maintaining a minimal influence from the researcher.

Due to the abovementioned limited time availability of some of the interviewees the researcher was only given a single opportunity to conduct the interviews. Fortunately, the researcher’s placement within the Tourism Unit of the European Commission allowed her to approach the interviewees informally on other occasions and gain better insight into their views and opinions and clarify their interview responses.

The three interview respondents in the Brussels part of the study all come from the European Commission’s Directorate General for Enterprise and Industry’s Tourism Unit. As the researcher decided to make these interviews non-attributable, due to the small size of the Tourism Unit it is not possible to provide even the basic information about the interviewees as it would
enable undeterred attribution of quotes. For this reason, the researcher
decided to code the respondents from the Tourism Unit as follows:

- **EC Representative. 1** – referring to the European Commission’s
  Tourism Unit representative number one.

- **EC Representative. 2** – referring to the European Commission’s
  Tourism Unit representative number two.

- **EC Representative. 3** – referring to the European Commission’s
  Tourism Unit representative number three.

This coding is maintained throughout this study.

**4.3.3. DOCUMENT ANALYSIS**

The use of document analysis in this qualitative research study is recognised
to be beneficial as it provides researcher with information which may not be
available in spoken form, and over time, documents may provide the
researcher with historical insights (Daymon & Holloway, 1998; Hodder,
2000). The analysis of documents provides the researcher with access to the
evidence and thinking of professional working on the development of tourism
in Europe and on the development of the national brand of Poland. Document
analysis is used to supplement other qualitative methods utilized within this
study research. As the present study is investigating the dynamics taking
place within contemporary history the researcher was able to discuss the
content of some of the documents (e.g. The ECT/UNWTO Handbook on
Tourism Destination Branding, 2009 or PBI Expertise for POT, 2008) with their authors and other commentators selected on the basis of purposive sampling. The documents also allowed the researcher to “flesh-out, cross-check or question a picture” that has emerged from the evidence of data form interviewing and observation (Deacon, et al. 1999:14). The main advantages and disadvantages of using contemporary and retrospective secondary data sources like official documents have been outlined in the Table presented in Appendix 8.

As this study concentrated on the relations of power within the management and development of destination branding in tourism, the official documents on branding published by or for the authorities and organisations that were the focus of the study were recognised by the researcher as a very useful data source. Specifically, two documents were critically analysed and crystallised upon as well as supplemented with views and opinions of the interview respondents and the researcher’s observations from the research sites.

The first document taken into focus was the PBI (the Polish Brand Institute) expertise for the Polish Tourism Organisation. In 2008, the Polish Brand Institute, on request of the Polish Tourism Organisation prepared a document analysing the Polish image and the way in which the Polish brand is perceived worldwide. The document is of great value for that research study as it gives clear evidence of the recognised importance of tourism and its role in creating
the Polish national brand. The researcher received that document from Mr. Boruc as an example of PBI work linking branding and tourism.

The second document that the researcher studied in particular depth was the ETC/UNWTO Handbook on Tourism Destination Branding. The document was a collaborative work of the European Tourism Commission and the United Nations World Tourism Organisation and aimed to provide National Tourism Organisations and National Tourism Administrations and similar destination marketing organisations with inspirations on why and how the destination branding should be adapted. The handbook’s intended role was to initiate the implementation of, or improvement in, the existing methods and uses of effective destination branding in tourism.

The researcher’s relationship with this particular document was exceptional in the sense that she had the unique opportunity to work closely with the authors of the Handbook and take part in the creative process and the thought exchanges that accompanied this effort. The researcher herself, played the role of a project coordinator in writing the handbook and provided advice to the authors regarding the Handbook content. This privileged access to the document gave the researcher the opportunity to read through it several times before it was even published and more importantly, have real and meaningful impact on the content of the final version. It is important at this point to highlight one potentially serious study limitation that this situation brought – although as a bricoleur the researcher strived to maintain a critical outlook on
the subject from multiple perspectives there was a risk that she could have been influenced and therefore driven by the managerial narrative leading to potential biases in approach to branding may have occurred. As could be seen in Chapter Two, the researcher’s managerial role strongly influenced her view of the subject work and, no doubt, influenced the outcome and tone of the literature review as well as her research findings.

In the course of this study, the researcher approached many other official tourism and destination branding documents to gain the in-depth insight in the subject. Two most prominent publications where Saffron’s reports on the possibilities and threats of national branding in Poland (described closely in Chapter Three). In the data conduct the researcher focused on the analysis of the two above mentioned documents due to the limited timeline of that research study and its narrow focus she limited her selection to these two. Both documents were chosen because of the their particular relevance to the research subject. The Handbook on Tourism Destination Branding demonstrates the understandings about the general destination branding theory and practice of the leading European Tourism Institutions – UNWTO and ETC, as well as that of the myriad of the collaborative authors representing some of the key thinkers on national branding. The PBI Expertise on the other hand, illustrates the understandings that the Polish branding specialists possess about the meaning of tourism in the national brand development process in Poland specifically.
In order to simplify the nomenclature of the documentary sources in this study, the researcher adapted the following coding:


**The PBI Expertise** – refers to the “Expertise – An analysis of findings from the research of the image of Poland and Polish national brand in the world. Assumptions and recommendations towards positioning Poland as a tourism destination for the period of 2009-2015” produced by the Polish Brand Institute (2008).

### 4.3.4. PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION.

Participant observation is the most comprehensive method in qualitative research (Decrop, 2006). Guba and Lincoln point out the major advantages of direct observation:

Observation maximizes the inquirer’s ability to grasp motives, believes, concerns, interests, unconscious behaviours, customs and the like; Observation allows the inquirer to see the world as his subjects see it, to live in their time frames, to capture the phenomenon on its own terms, and to grasp the culture in its own natural, ongoing environment; Observation allows the observer to build on tacit knowledge, both his own and that of members of the group (Guba and Lincoln, 1981:93).
Participant observation in this research study was utilised on two occasions – initially during the researcher’s involvement with the European Travel Commission in the process of writing the Handbook on Tourism Destination Branding and later during the researcher’s tenure with the European Commission’s Directorate General for Enterprise and Industry’s Tourism Unit where she took part in the preparation and management of the EDEN project. The observations of the internal group- and organisation- dynamics, as well as the particular practicalities of daily project management gathered from these two cases of active participant observation, were not included in the main corpus of the data analysis. They were rather used only in the researcher’s data crystallisation process to gain wider insight and perspective on the research subject, identify potential interview subjects and documents for analysis. The observation process allowed contextualisation of the relations of power within the process of destination and national branding process in Poland.

European Travel Commission/UNWTO Handbook on Tourism Destination Branding.

In line with the participant observation method used in this research process the researcher was actively participating in the preparation of the Handbook on Tourism Destination Branding, a joint project of the European Travel Commission and the United Nations World Tourism Organisation, by providing the involved stakeholders with advice and the academic support. The practices of destination branding illustrated in the “Handbook on Tourism
Destination Branding”, portrayed within a broad political and socio-cultural context, are subject of deep study and critical analysis in this thesis. The purpose and the background of the project, as well as the researcher’s role in this process is further explained below.

The actors involved in the project of creation of the Handbook were described in order to provide an overview of their organisational structure, history, aims and goals. There were four groups involved in the process the preparation of the “Handbook on Tourism Destination Branding”: the European Travel Commission (ETC), the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) and the ETC’s Market Intelligence Group. They are duly described in Appendix 3.

The Handbook’s was meant to initiate the implementation of, or improvement in, the existing methods and uses of effective destination branding in tourism. The “Handbook on Tourism Destination Branding” project begun in June 2008 at the ETC Market Intelligence Committee meeting in Brussels that the researcher attended. This opening meeting brought together both ETC members and one of the external project consultants (the managing director of Yellow Railroad) who were all given a chance to get to know each other and discuss the core conditions from both sides. It has been agreed that the project will be completed and the Handbook ready for publication within five months of the date of commissioning (5th of June 2009). The launch of the project took place in Stockholm, Sweden at the 18-19 June 2009 as a part of the ETC/UNWTO seminar also attended by the researcher.
The researcher’s role in the project was defined by her relationship with the European Travel Commission who recognised her academic and research oriented approach to the subject of tourism destination branding and trusted her with the role of an academic adviser to the project on the side of ETC. The researcher was introduced to the project group as a PhD candidate with a academic background and interest relevant to the project. It was agreed that the researcher would assume the role of a project manager within the process of the Handbook production allowing her to remain in constant contact with the project group and maintain an ‘eagle’s eye’ view of the process. This not only provided the researcher with the opportunity to observe the process of the Handbook production but also helped to reveal the various constructions and perceptions of reality held by the authors assuming the roles of national and tourism destination branding experts in Europe such as: the understanding of a need of destination branding in tourism; the understandings of the mediative power of tourism in Europe; as well as the relations of power among the European tourism authorities. In line with the emergent design of this research study this active participant observation allowed the researcher to expand her sensitivity to new and previously unidentified information and data sources. This lead the researcher to identify new paths for research and further immersion in the world of tourism policy- and power-making in Europe. It should also be indicated that participant observation in this project lead to one potentially negative effect, notably, the fact of the researcher’s engulfment in
and subconscious submission to the narrative and argumentation brought forth by the authors of the Handbook.

**European Commission, Directorate General for Enterprise and Industry.**

**Tourism Unit – EDEN Project.**

Following her involvement in the process of the preparation of the Handbook on Tourism Destination Branding, the researcher identified the European Commission’s Directorate General for Enterprise and Industry’s Tourism Unit as a relevant and viable subject for another participant observation method application. The Tourism Unit management kindly agreed to include the researcher in the team responsible for the Unit’s flagship project called EDEN (European Destinations of Excellence).

As pointed out before in this research study, the EDEN Project is the most national branding-related project undertaken by the European Commission in the recent years. This made it a natural candidate for closer scrutiny for this study and the subject of this sub-section. Participant observation allowed the researcher to analyse the main features of the project and interact with main project participants.

The EDEN project is based on national competitions that take place every year and result in the selection of a tourist “destination of excellence” for each participating country. Through the selection of destinations, EDEN aims to achieve the objective of drawing attention to the values, diversity
and common features of European tourist destinations. The recipients of the award tend to be emerging, little known European destinations located in the 27 Member States and candidate countries. The EDEN project in its design, is supposed to help spread the sustainable practices used in the chosen destinations across the Union and to turn these places into all-year-round venues.

The researcher’s involvement in the project was defined by her relationship with the Tourism Unit which recognised her as a PhD candidate researching the field and granted her sufficient responsibility and access to gain the best possible overview of the project and involve herself directly with the project partners. This allowed the researcher to identify potential interview subjects, observe the internal dynamics of the organisation as well as to gain a better understanding and overview of this institutions collective comprehension and appreciation of national branding as a phenomenon and a practice. The main limitation that this direct participant observation could have imposed on the researcher was that the Tourism Unit’s accommodative and welcoming approach towards the researcher, as well as the relative responsibility and feeling of ownership of the project granted to the researcher possibly biased her ability to critically analyse the project’s outcomes.

The detailed listing of participant observation’s strengths, limitations and relevance to the present research study as a method is presented in the Appendix 8.
The insight gained through that participant observation are believed to uncover many silences and difficulties related to place representation practices both at the European and the Polish level of operations and also to interpret the conducted data in a ways which are closer to the understanding of the participants (DeWalt, 2002).

4.4. **ETHICAL ISSUES IN DATA COLLECTION PROCESS.**

The ethical issues that emerged in the interview process are outlined in this subsection. All of the interviews were presented with the opportunity to keep their participation anonymous and offered the guarantee that any subsequent use of their responses would be non-attributable. This issue became relevant in the case of the interviewees coming from the European Commission’s Tourism Unit. Although the researcher was not asked specifically to maintain the interview responses anonymous and non-attributable, she decided, that due to her direct and formal involvement in the work of the Tourism Unit as well as the informal nature of some of the responses provided by the interviewees, but most importantly due to the trust and confidence that the interviewees bestowed the researcher with, she decided that the best option would be to grant the interviewees a certain level of anonymity. The issue of anonymity did not apply to the Chairman of the Polish Brand Institute, Mr. Mirosław Boruc, who declined the offer of making his replies non-attributable.

Additionally, in the effort to reserve *a priori* judgement on the interviewees’ knowledge and experience, all of the interviews were asked to comment on the
same thematic areas regardless of their position and work focus. This was of particular importance when interviewing the officials of the European Commission’s Tourism Unit as the researcher was regarded by the interviewees as an insider to their institution and the respondents were aware of the fact that the researcher was actively engaged in the preparation of the UNWTO/ETC Handbook on Destination Branding and thus regarded as something of a “branding enthusiast”. The researcher felt that it would be an ethical prerequisite to inform the interviewees of this fact. The interviewees were also presented with a copy of the Handbook. At the request of the interviewees from the European Commission and the Polish Brand Institute the complete versions of the transcriptions from the interviews will be sent to them.

Another emergent ethical issue relevant to this study is the *degree of overtiness* / *covertness* that signifies the degree to which the respondent is aware of the fact of being interviewed. He or she might be completely unaware that the interview is taking place with him or her playing a role of the interviewee or at the other end he or she may be perfectly aware of the fact of being interviewed and also of the purpose of the particular interview. As Lincoln and Guba (1985:269) warn, the interview should be fully overt to meet the ethical requirement of the research practice. They argue that the covertness should not be used in order of obtain “honest” and “nonreactive” responses. In the course of the interviews conducted for the purpose of this research study the researcher maintained full openness.
4.5. **DATA ANALYSIS.**

At the outset of that study, following her supervisor’s advice the researcher considered the use of discourse analysis as one of the primary methods of research analysis. As the study unfolded it became apparent that due to an array of factors, notably the time constraints and the intellectual rigour required to fully and thoroughly undertake a discourse analysis it will be nearly impossible for the researcher to use this method without significantly extending the writing period. Following further deliberation the researcher decided to apply thematic analysis as the primary method of research analysis for this study.

Thematic analysis was utilised to systematically identify the most important themes and concepts across the multiple studies of international tourism and national branding studies. The interpretative findings of the present study have been thus presented and analysed by themes, sub-themes, and sub-sub-themes presenting the findings from Brussels and Poland. The analysis is organised into two main themes: the general understandings of the phenomenon of destination and national branding, and the relations of power within the process of destination and national branding. The first theme is supplemented by three sub-themes: tourism promotion and the mediation of national images; other sources of place image creation; mediative power of destination and national branding. The second theme is in turn supplemented by one sub-theme: stakeholder’s involvement in the national brand development process. Some of the sub-themes are also supplemented by additional sub-sub-themes. A
systematic overview of the themes, sub-themes, and sub-sub-themes, together with an indication of their position in the text is provided in Table 4.3-1 below.

**TABLE 4.5-1 OVERVIEW OF THE THEMES, SUB-THEMES AND SUB-SUB THEMES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-Theme</th>
<th>Sub-Sub-Theme</th>
<th>Location in Thesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The general understandings of the phenomenon of destination and national branding</td>
<td>Tourism promotion and the mediation of national images</td>
<td>Tourism promotion versus place branding</td>
<td>5.2.1 5.2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other sources of place image creation</td>
<td>Mediation of emotional values</td>
<td>5.2.3 5.3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mediative power of destination and national branding</td>
<td>Mediation of sustainable values</td>
<td>5.2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mediation of national images</td>
<td>5.2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relations of Power within the process of destination and national branding</td>
<td>Stakeholder’s involvement in the national brand development process</td>
<td>Stakeholder’s cooperation level in the process of place representation</td>
<td>5.2.7 5.3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EU official’s perception of the Polish stakeholder’s involvement in the branding process</td>
<td>5.2.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s own work.
As indicated in the figure above, more subthemes have been developed in relation to the findings in Brussels than Poland. It is the result of the greater abundance of data sources and research opportunities in the former location. This imbalance arrived not by design but was rather the result of a mix of conditions described earlier in this chapter such as: greater availability of the Brussels based information sources, greater openness of the Brussels based institutions and the people working within them, time limitations experienced by the researcher during the conduct of the present research study. Due to the emergent research design of the present thesis, the chosen constructivist theoretical approach and the role of a bricoleur pursued by the researcher, the selection of the themes and their application to the two study locations could remain flexible and evolve throughout the research process.

Therefore the researcher took liberty to utilise both the data-driven and the theory-driven thematic analysis. As neither one of these techniques exclude the possibility of using it interchangeably with the other the researcher decided to use a combination of the two. This approach allowed the researcher to maximise findings of the analysis and to balance reliability and validity (Guest, McQueen, 2008). In effect, the researcher switched from one type of analysis to the other as the study progressed.

The main limitation of this method identified by the researcher is the apparent lack of transparency – how and at what stage themes were identified (Pope, Mais and Popay, 2007). Also, the main critique of the thematic analysis relates
to its the demand of fitting the data into specific pre-defined themes. These limitations are somewhat reduced by the emergent research design undertaken by the researcher and her role as a bricoleur that continuously expands her scope of methodological approach.

The research analysis is presented in two separate parts, one referring to the research conducted in Brussels on the research subjects found and located there, and the other conducted in Poland on the research subjects found and located there.

4.6. CHAPTER SUMMARY.

This research study is concerned with tourism as a major mechanism through which people, places, pasts are being represented or de-represented (Buck 1993; Lidchi 1997) and its growing role in the current cultural transformations in and of Poland. Therefore, the meaning oriented research design (as opposed to the measurement oriented) is recognised to be more appropriate to be adopted in the present research study. The constructivist paradigm have been identified in this chapter and the researcher’s preference rationale towards that orientation has been explained.

This chapter has also outlined the differences between the two strongly-contrasting ontological positions: realism and constructivist relativism. The perceptions of truth and reality of those two stances have been highlighted. Epistemologically, the subjectivist position has been explained in terms of its
relevance towards the development of the current research investigation. It has been outlined that epistemologically and ontologically this study follows the constructivist understanding recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985). In terms of methodological fit, the bricoleur approach has been discussed and the number of qualitative methods to be used through the crystallization process has been proposed.

Moreover as a bricoleur, the researcher of the present research study is not being prescriptive about the research strategies or methods utilized in the various stages of the research study. She rather remains open to the new research methodologies or paradigms and uses every possibility of incorporating them if the new or unexpected research scenarios emerge. The “choice of research practices depends upon the questions asked, and their questions depend on their context” (Nelson et al. 1992:2). In that sense, the data guides the researcher towards different respondents or different methods of inquiry to uncover further information and contrasting perspectives on the subject matter (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Further in this Chapter the researcher presented the final conduct of the study as compared with the initial study strategy giving an overview of the objectives that have been achieved and those that proved to be difficult or impossible. Although the researcher, as a bricoleur, remained open to new methods, approaches, and study subjects, significant time constraints did not allow for their full pursuit. The same constraints led the researcher to select thematic
analysis as the preferred analysis method for this study instead of the earlier planned discourse analysis. This Chapter gave an overview of the main research themes that were consecutively discussed.

The Chapter provided a summary of the investigated research population that served as the subject of her study. The selection of particular organisations playing various meaningful roles in tourism and destination branding was based on purposive sampling. The inclusion of these organisations in the scope of research was made on the basis of criteria of significance and relevance in the decision and policy making as well as the power to represent and to impose normalised meanings to particular places including Poland. Due to significant time constraints the researcher was not able to further expand the research population and was forced to replace in-depth long interviews with semi-structured interviews.

In studying the activities of the abovementioned subjects the researcher sought to identify and include projects and events relevant to the scope of the study. This lead to the researcher's involvement in and analysis of the process and content of the Handbook on Tourism Destination Branding and the inclusion and analysis of Project EDEN of the European Commission. The researcher also described the ethical considerations undertaken in regard to the position of the researcher in the abovementioned projects.
CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1. INTRODUCTION.

This Chapter analyses the perceived knowledge, views and opinions of practitioners working in tourism at the highest institutional level – European Commission Tourism Unit and the European Travel Commission in cooperation with the UNWTO – of the theory and practical application of national and destination branding. Secondly, this Chapter illustrates corresponding knowledge, views and opinions of the most relevant persons and institutions dealing with national and destination branding in Poland. Thirdly, the Chapter investigates the relationship between the construction of the image of Poland in the context of the EU membership and the relationship between Poland and the European Union in relation to destination and national branding. This will serve as an introduction to the logic behind the undertaking (or not undertaking) of various initiatives in national branding by both the authorities from Brussels and Poland. The purpose of this analysis is not to compare or contrast these views and understandings but rather to show and deconstruct the knowledge and understandings about the relatively new phenomenon that national and destination branding is for both the tourism authorities in Brussels and in Poland. The analysed material consists mostly of responses of professionals working in tourism answering the researcher’s questions about the concept of national and destination branding as well as
documents prepared in relation to that subject by the targeted institutions. The analysed material also includes the collected branding and promontional activities both on the national and European scale, as well as the researcher’s own insights gathered during her placement with some of the actors involved in the destination branding and identity building discourse (particularly in Brussels).

This chapter will often refer to several documents and sources, most notably: The Handbook on Tourism Destination Branding (ETC/UNWTO) hereafter referred to as ‘Handbook’, and the Expertise conducted by the Polish Brand Institute for the Polish Tourism Organisation hereafter referred to as ‘Expertise’. The citations present in this chapter were selected purposefully to show what the EU and Polish tourism officials think of destination and national branding as well as of what impact and meaning it can have on their actions.

5.2. RESEARCH LOCATION ONE: BRUSSELS

The results presented here are almost exclusively the fruit of the researcher’s primary research conducted in two specific instants of participant observation. In the first instance the researcher obtained a position within a joint project of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation and the European Travel Commission devoted to the development of a Handbook on Tourism Destination Branding. This involved project coordination of the work of various teams and interaction between the branding professionals involved in
the destination branding process. In the second instance the researcher was accepted to the European Commission internship programme in the Tourism Unit where she was charged with the coordination of a project devoted to the promotion of small European destinations and the construction of their own brands. Observations made in both instances helped the researcher to better understand the nature of the discourse in national and destination branding in Europe as well as the dynamics of interactions between various tourism authorities and the politics behind the destination branding process. Day-to-day work and interaction with national and destination branding professionals in Brussels served as an excellent research opportunity that allowed the researcher to better understand the internal mechanisms and gather countless primary research data. This in turn served to inform the understanding and investigation of the same processes on the Polish scale.

The data presented below is a selection of the most important and (in the researcher’s view) relevant research data gathered in Brussels. The presented material gives a balanced and representative overview of the opinions and knowledge of the encountered professionals in the business.

5.2.1. TOURISM PROMOTION AND MEDIATION OF NATIONAL IMAGES.

It has been stated in Chapter Two of the present research study that the process of representing tourist destinations involves a wide range of meaningful practices which attempt to construct the exhibitory forms of the place in terms
of aesthetics and values imposed by the constructors. The conclusion was that
tourism holds an important position in the production of the imaginary
landscapes through communication systems. During her investigation, the
researcher asked her respondents about the meaning and influence of tourism
promotion.

It can be derived from the quotations provided below that for both the authors
of the Handbook as well as for the European Commission representatives, the
images presented by the tourism authorities often tend to be simplistic,
irrelevant and even destructive to the overall representation of the country. It is
argued by both the respondents of this research investigation and the authors of
research documents, that traditional tourism promotion needs to be enriched
with the notions of creativity, and deep understandings about a wide range of
contexts in which the particular place is embedded. This view is shared by the
ETC/UNWTO:

**ETC/UNWTO Handbook:** Ordinary tourism promotion, when it’s carried out with no particular, long term national-strategy in mind apart from growth, is an endless cycle which may or may not lead to real progress in the longer term.

**ETC/UNWTO Handbook:** Whilst it is the tourism and investment agencies that have the budgets to spend on communications, they are probably not the ones who will do the most good for a country’s image in the long term.
By analysing the above excerpts it can be established that the understanding of the ETC/UNWTO is that the long term planning in national branding requires seeking the broad perspective and looking at the promotional activities from many different angles and through many different eyes. The quotation from the Handbook also stresses the fact that tourism managers are perceived to be rarely aware of that need as very little attention is still being paid to the understanding of the complexities behind the practices of destination promotion.

The aim of seeking a broader perspective in capturing the national image and identity is claimed to be one of most important caveats of destination branding practice investigated within this research study. However as noticed during the interviewing process of the governing bodies working in tourism, the term branding does not necessarily make one think uniquely of the long-term focused strategies and practices which incorporate the holistic insights and the contextual underpinnings in the representation of a place. As one of the European Commission respondents argued:

**EC Representative 1:** In principle I am against tourism branding or marketing promotion, whatever, when it is not linked to the destination. I am one of those who say you can brand Brussels, and it has happened already in the past. Brand, is in fact a sum of everything that happened in Brussels, what people know about Brussels, it is not one event, it is whole history, it is a plenty of different events altogether, so it is a story, that’s a story about the past, present and future; that is a story about the Dutch being here, the Spaniards being here, etc.
In summary, the difficulty of how to turn something that is rich and complex like the place or country image into something simple and memorable like a brand without reducing its richness and complexity is perceived by the EC officials to be the most demanding task of social communications. The difficulty lies in conveying the country or a tourist space not as a passive entity which the consumer simply possesses and absorbs the dominant meanings imposed to him or her, but rather as a field in which various meanings are contested not at the abstract level but through the engagement and the active involvement of the consumer as a reflexive agent (Meethan, 2001; Anderson and Miles, 2006). Branding and marketing promotion cannot be used simultaneously as the meaning of these two is completely different. However, as the last quotation of this subsection shows, although the quoted Tourism Unit official does not entirely distinguish the difference between tourism promotion and branding he nevertheless displays a certain level comprehension and instinctive feeling of what should constitute a brand.

5.2.2. DESTINATION BRANDING VERSUS TOURISM PROMOTION.

In the majority of textual sources on tourism marketing promotion examined for the purpose of this thesis, the researcher came across the strategic frameworks based on a sequence of actions such as SWOT analysis, strategic analysis, strategic choice, implementation, evaluation and control. While focused on achieving measurable goals, marketing practitioners working in
tourism organisations follow this rational, positivistic, and prescriptive approach. Hence, it is argued by the destination branding proponents that place marketing and branding is not merely a rational marketing activity but a political act where complex social processes are taking place and various meanings and values are constantly being developed/redeveloped and negotiated. Thus, many countries position themselves as holistic place brands, inclusive of tourism and economic development (Morgan and Pritchard, 2002).

That distinction between destination branding and tourism marketing promotion, repeated constantly by various branding thinkers and specialists, is not always uniformly and equally understood by the practitioners working in tourism. In some cases the understanding of destination branding – although modified from the simplistic approach to tourism promotion – is still articulated within the traditional discourse of marketing. The European Commission representative view is that:

**EC Representative 2:** Promotion is one part of the whole branding strategy, it may be an operational part on a branding strategy but destination branding strategy involves a lot of preparatory actions, involvement, lot of people engagement, important decisions and of course at the end it is not sufficient to finish by making a very nice strategy and but we have to also implement it. Promotion is an important element of the implementation of such a branding strategy. That’s my view at least.
The respondent was also not confident when referring to the level of engagement which countries demonstrate in branding so far:

**EC Representative 2:** There are those who are rather advanced in branding (pause) or there are one’s who are lagging behind or those who are only doing some of the promotional activities but without a comprehensive destination branding strategy, which I agree that should be one covering the whole of the promotional activities. I can’t tell you if it is a developing technique or an established one, I presume that good ones should have adopted it already some [time] ago, I presume and I hope but I can’t tell you if it’s already a very well established one, I am not an expert.

In the following account the representative of the European Commission pointed to the two most successful countries in destination branding (in his view). He also underlined the outstanding work of the Walt Disney company in the process of “dream creation”:

**EC Representative 1:** I think Slovenia has done a great job. The project “I feel Slovenia” was an excellent one. They know how to reach people. Here in Brussels when you land at the airport first thing you see is a huge banner, ‘I feel (I love) Slovenia”. This is about branding. The positive knockout. But you need to work with professionals on campaigns like that. And then you can make something from your assets. Also a good example is Malaysia - Malaysian tourism, ‘truly Asia’ excellent! It all fit - the voices, the music fit, the people fit, the atmosphere created fit, but there are professionals to do that. Like Walt Disney’s people for instance. Walt Disney knew how to invent the creation of dream.

The above quotations show, that in many countries destination branding is perceived to be rather a new phenomenon and an emergent topic among
tourism academics, professionals and politicians. As pointed out by Morgan and Pritchard (2004), many destinations today are adopting branding strategies to differentiate themselves and to emotionally connect with potential tourists. However, the understandings and the level of interest in destination branding differs significantly between countries. The researcher’s overview of the European National Tourism Organisations’ practices utilised during her work on the Handbook document, has shown that although there is an increasing interest in the subject, destination branding is still subject to a lot of scepticism and misconceptions among their employees.

5.2.3. DESTINATION BRANDING AND OTHER SOURCES OF DESTINATION IMAGE CREATION.

It has been argued in the Chapter Three of the present research study that a destination’s brand image is influenced by many factors, most of which are well beyond the destination brand manager’s control – both positive and negative, contemporary and historic – such as news reports, films, books, word-of-mouth, the destination’s history as it has been filtered in the consumer’s country, and iconic individuals from that country, whether political giants, such as John F. Kennedy and Nelson Mandela, movie stars, rock stars, historical figures, inventors or even despots, such as Saddam Hussein.

The responses of the interviewees from the European Commission and the data derived from the ETC/UNWTO document stresses that tourism’s vulnerability
to the problems such as political strife, economic downswings or environmental disasters is one of the most significant constraints in the destination branding process. As one of the staff in the EC’s Tourism Unit pointed out, one wrong political move at the international or national stage, financial crisis or sustained terrorism can cause long-term damage to a destination’s image. However, sometimes the negative press might also be beneficial in terms of the place recognition. This thought is exemplified in the responses below:

**EC Representative 2:** The branding consists of good and bad associations that you can manipulate. You can create the realities with it. But even a war! For some people a war is fascinating, and so are other negative things we talked about can be positive for other people. Now, we have to make a decision about these kinds of things, and I think it’s about civilisation, and about positive development. So we know more or less what has a negative impact because you can talk about a lot of nice things but there are limits. For instance you have extreme sports. For some people it’s fun while for others […] some people don’t even want to look at it.

*And can you please give any memorable example of a country where the bad experience have influenced its representation?*

**EC Representative 2:** The Bali bombing for example, is it positive or negative? Of course, it is negative, people were killed unnecessarily, it was an act of cowards, but the result is that Bali is now “on the map”.

Extreme occurrences such as the Bali bombing are not the only factors capable of immediately influencing and changing the representation of a destination.
Also, the everyday – seemingly – unimportant activities sometimes can strongly influence others’ perception of a places/people/pasts. They may create the dangerous discursive narratives through which images of the nation may be manipulated. ETC/UNTO document presents the following solution:

**UNWTO/ETC Handbook:** [...] the best a destination manager can hope to do is to try to anchor the presentation of the destination around a few core truths that are consistently presented by the NTO and the destination’s stakeholders when they talk to the outside world. This, and the behaviour of the destination’s residents, is the best hope of securing a relatively consistent picture of the destination in the minds of potential visitors. It may be a small gesture in the face of the many sources of information and prejudice about the destination to which outsiders are exposed, but it offers a flag around which all the destination’s stakeholders can rally. And if they all present the destination in a consistent fashion, then the chances of the destination being recognised as distinctive are multiplied.

The respondent from the European Commission adds:

**EC Representative 2:** Nice people, good service, all these things that people want to go back to. It’s not once and never again, you go there, there is a nice atmosphere, you want to go back, you share your experience, and then place gets a power of the word-of-mouth.

In conclusion it can be said that the image of a place is constantly influenced by a variety of both internal and external factors (media, business sectors, people). All of these factors contribute to the holistic representation of a place and to the everyday changes faced by such a representation. All countries are sending millions of messages every day representing the idea of what a nation
is doing, what it feels, what it wants and what it believes in. This everyday communication happens through various mediative forces: political action and inaction, popular culture, products, services, sport, behaviour, arts and architecture. Plus, stereotypes, or overgeneralisations, as Scollon and Scollon (1995) phrase them, can be very harmful to the destination brand and therefore very difficult to overcome. The limited understandings of human behaviour communicated through stereotyping brings constrains to the overall places representations which brand managers and tourist professional are trying to achieve throughout their actions. Brand management cannot control the broad number of these powerful messages constructing or often reconstructing the imaginary about the destination but can help a country bring forth the best of what it has to offer in terms of tourism potential.

5.2.4. DESTINATION BRANDING AND MEDIATING OF EMOTIONAL VALUES.

It has been argued by the authors of the ETC/UNWTO document that the achievement of a strong emotional relationship between the tourist and the destination ought to be one of the most important aims of destination branding managers. This idea is shown in the following statements:

**ETC/UNWTO Handbook:** People are looking to establish an emotional connection with a destination. Whether that is obtained through familiarity, adventure, learning new skills or achieving new insights, they are looking for experiences that lead to a sense of personal fulfilment.
ETC/UNWTO Handbook: This is a change from the traditional approach to deciding on a holiday destination, which was characterised more by a focus on the destination’s physical assets (e.g. scenery, beach, attractions etc.).

The data of the Handbook clearly shows the significant turn in the discourse of destination promotion. This argument is also continued in the response of the European Commission official and further explained by the Handbook:

EC Representative 3: Nowadays it is all about meeting the tourist’s heart and mind. The emotional element of destination branding plays a significant role as travel today expresses ones personality.

ETC/UNWTO Handbook: Fulfilment comes from involvement, understanding and self-improvement – returning home a more knowledgeable, spiritually refreshed, or more experienced person (…). Consequently, the more a destination can engage with potential visitors on an emotional level as somewhere that promises to fulfil this demand for a fulfilling experience, the more chance it has of attracting the growing number of people, particularly in developing countries, who see the type of holiday they take as an expression of their personality. It is therefore becoming increasingly important for destinations to convey the emotional benefits they can offer visitors in terms of feelings and experiences, rather than just present them with a list of things to do. This means telling a story about the destination, which strikes an emotional chord with potential visitors and stays with them.

In summary, a new approach to the tourism destination representation practice is starting to take place. To some, this emerging approach is a result of the new type of economy known as ‘experience economy’ (Pine and Gilmore, 1999).

This new attitude in travel motivation acknowledges the increasing need of
people who are looking more for ‘experiencing’ the destination rather than just receiving a physical product.

5.2.5. DESTINATION BRANDING AND MEDIATING SUSTAINABLE VALUES.

Sustainable development has been a very popular concept for over a decade and its importance in relation to tourism has been widely recognised. This study analysis is not trying to bring the reader’s attention to this issue, nor does it try to prove a theory of a corrosive influence which tourism may have on the environment or cultural authenticity of a place. It rather seeks understanding of the relationship which destination branding can create between sustainable development and tourism and of the actions by which people working in tourism can enhance or damage that relationship. The following response stresses the importance of sustainable values in the practice of destination branding:

**EC Representative 2:** Sustainability should be a part of branding. Branding has a purpose, is to attract people, first attract. Today, tomorrow, after tomorrow, and in a future. If you want to stay healthy you have to train your whole life. The same you have to constantly work on branding. Yes, it’s part of it. At the same time, I see today a devaluation of the work sustainability. The value of the word sustainability is going down because, it is used by anyone. We and my friends are already thinking of a new word. That has to be something new. Branding can be a part of the sustainable development of the country. Of course sustainability in a sense that we talk of this as a balanced economic, social and environmental issues can be strongly supported by destination branding.
In that statement two important pieces of information have to be analysed. Primarily, the long-term planning and coordination involved in implementing destination branding activities. Sustainability in destination branding means patience, persistence, consistency and careful forecasting. It also means developing the core idea of a brand which is coherent and developed from reality. Secondly, destination branding can support the sustainable development of the city, region or country by implementing a branding strategy in a way that acknowledges protection of the environment, cooperation among various stakeholders (e.g. political, commercial, travel businesses and residents) and also helps maintain the economic stability.

**EC Representative 1:** In my view, in any type of an activity related to tourism which we take it in a serious way – any destination, any company, any organisation – cannot be competitive, cannot be first in a high level ranking if it does not integrate fully in a whole sustainability approach, understanding sustainability as not only the concept form environmental point of view which is first which comes to mind but from the more holistic use of interpreting the word sustainability. Sustainability cover more than three, four or five main pillars: the environmental of course but also the social, the cultural and also the economic element on it and all this has to be included.

The understanding of the idea of sustainability in many of its aspects among the Tourism Unit officials is profound. The biggest tourism organisations and governmental bodies such as UNWTO or the Tourism Unit of the European Commission have undertaken many initiatives to incorporate the principles of sustainable development to tourism policy. One of the main initiatives of the latter towards sustainable development was the EDEN project described in this
study. The EDEN project (as also stated before) is perceived to be one of the first European Commission projects combining the idea of sustainability with destination branding. The statement below presents a view of the one of the European Commission’s executives about the current development of the EDEN project towards the idea of destination branding.

**EC Representative 1:** EDEN (European Destinations of Excellence) is still a small part of destination branding. Even though we have devoted a lot of time, money and effort. What is important is the approach to try to integrate excellence in the sense of quality, sustainability, in the comprehensive sense of sustainability criteria for the management of all the destinations and what we wanted to achieve is to give a push to the less well known, what we call the emerging destinations to be a bit helped by the European budget. There are still many small emerging destinations in Europe which are taking a lot of importance and wanting to get on the European tourism stage because everyone is convinced know, I think all the member states are convinced now that tourism is a very important vector of social economic and development and growth and wealth and if it’s well managed in a sustainable way with an importance in the provision of its services at different levels meaning the public authorities, the different branches of an industry itself, tourism is a very important activity for an all member states and in all the regions because within all the regions there is a specific tourism attraction or activity. Approach of EDEN is a very passionate one but also modest one. It could be a very good example of branding as you know we have also been discussing how to improve branding of EDEN, but ok, it goes into good direction.

To conclude, values of sustainability are very important in the Tourism Unit ‘officials’ understanding of the destination branding practice. The majority of the programs and activities they engage in respect the idea of the long term
planning and development. However as one of the EU officials stated before many people who work in tourism just want to gain quick benefits and do not care for the long time impact of their work. Hence, the programmes set up by the big organisations like the European Commission do not always bring the desired results.

5.2.6. DESTINATION BRANDING AND MEDIATING OF NATIONAL IMAGES.

Although the practices of destination branding are strongly associated with destination marketing, most of the debates are continuously embedded in the discourse of national image development. Hall (1999) refers to destination branding by expressions such as “image building” and “image construction” in the sense where images of the places which are created (or recreated) in the human mind state the core element of destination branding. Thus, it can be established that the interpretation which people hold in their heads and mediate through various channels of social communication are crucial for the understanding of the essence of destination branding. The significance of that fact is highlighted in the following statements:

**ETC/UNWTO Handbook:** It is worth remembering when one is creating marketing messages that one isn’t simply engaging in a temporary monologue with a primary audience: one is also building a story which, if it’s good enough, can take on a life of its own and circulate around the marketplace.

**EC Representative 2:** And the question is – what is Europe? If the Europeans do not understand Europe, why would the
Chinese know what Europe is? They don’t know where Europe is. They know Amsterdam, they know Brussels, they know Berlin, they know France, but they also know Paris. But if you ask them where Paris is they will not tell you it’s in France. It has to do with education. So it is very complex.

Therefore in many cases, national images among those employed in the branding field are also constructed by individuals and result from various social interactions. They can only be understood as far as they can be conceptualised by the human mind and then communicated to others. Since reality in this understanding is highly subjective, knowledge about a particular place exists in multiple thoughts and can be discovered only by careful exploration. The superficial nature of forced imaging of national characteristics is also recognised and exemplified in the Handbook as can be seen from the following quotation:

**ETC/UNWTO Handbook:** The ‘stickiness’ of national image is mainly due to the fact that most people don’t think very much or know very much about other countries: those simple, widely-accepted narratives about other countries are so deeply rooted in the culture of the populations which subscribe to them that they become virtually impossible to shift. To imagine that such fundamental beliefs can be affected by so weak an instrument as marketing communications is an extravagant delusion…Marketing communications can be an excellent tool for selling vacations and other products and services, but not for manipulating fundamental cultural precepts like national image.
The nation’s image wasn’t built through communications, and it can’t be changed through communications.

5.2.7. RELATIONS OF POWER IN DESTINATION AND NATIONAL BRANDING. STAKEHOLDERS’ INVOLVEMENT.

What both the European Commission representatives and the Handbook authors admit is the fact that the representative character of the country’s image is believed to be a result of a cumulative dialogue between human perceptions, experiences, expectations or shared values. It is argued in the statements cited below that the cooperation of various social groups, stakeholders and governmental bodies can help define the cultural, social economic, political, geographical and linguistic context of the country in which the representation of a place can be grounded.

ETC/UNWTO Handbook: Managing the nation’s image isn’t an advertising, design or public relations exercise, although of course these techniques are essential for promoting the things that the country makes and does: its tourism and heritage attractions, its companies and their products and services, its music and art and other cultural products, its sport, its people, its investment and employment opportunities. The quality of the marketing done by all of these stakeholders, and the consistency between the different messages they send out about the place, is an important factor in the way the place builds up its reputation – and of course good advertising often plays a major part in creating the positive tourism brands that many countries enjoy today.

EC Representative 1: Tourism is a very complex activity with a lot of inputs, with a lot of outputs. With a lot of stakeholders, anything related to improving the competitive position of destination, of a country, of a region like Europe or European
Union, needs to involve all the stakeholders, so the process if it’s well managed. It is an important process but it is only an element, for me a destination branding is only one element, an important one because it involves a lot of communication internally and externally with a stakeholders on this whole process.

The consistent cooperation between stakeholders is claimed by the tourism specialists from the ETC and the UNWTO and the EC officials essential in creating the representation of a place. The programmes launched by the Tourism Unit in particular (such as EDEN programme mentioned before) are very much focused on mustering people from different sectors of the economy to work together for the development of tourism in Europe. As can be derived from the response of the EC Rep.1 the destination branding is only one but very important element in the complex processes of improving the position of a destination in a competitive environment.

5.2.8. VIEWS ON THE BRANDING SITUATION IN POLAND.

It should be reminded at this point that as the researcher found out during her primary research, the European Treaties regulating the powers of the European Institutions (European Commission or Parliament) do not give them direct competencies to represent or directly promote any of the Member States. Any effort on the side of the EU institutions can only be subsidiary to the activities on the national level. Having said this, the tools given to the European Commission in the Open Method of Coordination allow for the promotion of joint activities and exchange of best practices between various national authorities responsible for the promotion of the national brand. This puts the European Commission in a unique position to observe, compare and evaluate
the activities of these institutions making the EC a particularly interesting research subject and an important insight provider to the subject of this thesis.

The picture appearing from the researcher’s conversations and interviews with EU officials indicates that Polish engagement in national and destination branding activities is not widely recognised by the officials from the Tourism Unit or the European Commission in Brussels. The following responses illustrate that when asked about the branding examples of Poland they cannot recall any and rather provide the researcher with ideas of what Poland should do in the branding field and why the country should engage in that process.

**EC Representative 1:** I have to say, to be frank, that we have not yet got from most of our new member states (12 …..) sufficient knowledge and clear communication of what they do in this field (*national and destination branding*). They (Polish people) should profit of it, because it is a necessity of any type of competitiveness strategy at any level – national, regional and local destination level as well as at the company level in the different branches of tourism activity as such. I think we still miss out, not only from Poland, even that Poland is the biggest one from our new member states. But we have not yet come to sufficient exchange of information, that is one of our weak points.

*Why do you think is that?*

**EC Representative 1:** You see, they (*Polish representatives and other new member states*) are not very much outspoken. As you have seen we had a meeting where we asked them various questions (*pause*) they are not very much outspoken, they do not participate too much in the discussions, they don’t speak too much. The reports they send in a written way are more or less ok, but they are not so active as the other EU member states.
Do you consider communication to be most important?

**EC Representative 1:** Yes and also exchange and openness. I sometimes see people, the experts coming from the governmental institution or tourism organisations for instance, and they ask me: do you know Polish tourism industry? No. (pause) Or a hotel? No. Hotel branch or hotel chain? No. They (Polish people) are not very much active you see…

What would you recommend should be done?

**EC Representative 1:** They should take time and they should get used to this. Maybe in another organisation in which they are members for a much longer period of time like the UNWTO (pause) I presume and I hope by the way that Poland and those all new members states are more active. I don’t know at European Union level we don’t perceive lot of their activity. That is my feeling, my frank feeling.

What clearly came through in the interview with EC Representative 1 was the relative invisibility of the Polish branding and communication efforts to the key European Commission tourism specialists and the lack of involvement of the Polish partners in the Commission-driven programmes. A similar picture is painted by the second interviewee engaged by the researcher.

**EC Representative 2:** Why don’t we all go to Poland. If you put it on the map, indicate different assets of Poland. But there is also something about people, the Polish people forget that there are so many Poles in the world who in general are hardworking, rough but friendly people. The interesting study would be to ask Poles abroad what they think of the perception of a people they guest in, about Poland. I have not yet seen study like that maybe some clever entrepreneur have done it.
Why would you recommend it to Polish People?

**EC Representative 2:** Because branding must go deeper, must go straight to the soul of the people. And would you like to go to the country, where you have a person living which you like? Of course you would like to go there! It’s all about that, respect of these kind of things. But you need to work hard for that. It’s not because it’s there. And you have to be aware that some people are there to make fast money. And they don’t care whether development is sustainable or not. This is the reality.

The comments provided by both EC Representative 1 and EC Representative 2 serve to show that there is relatively little knowledge and appreciation of the national branding efforts made to date in Poland, but nevertheless, both respondents underlined the importance and urgent need for a sustainable, durable and recognisable branding effort for Poland.

During her tenure at the European Commission the researcher engaged in the development, management and execution of the EDEN project which provided her a chance to engage with the European Commission specialists working on this project. One of these officials provided the researcher with insight into his understanding of the importance and potential benefits of the EDEN project to new EU member states, including Poland (the full version of the interview can be found in the Appendix 5).
Do you think that participation in the EDEN project is beneficial for new EU countries like Poland?

**EC Representative 3:** Yes, of course, now I think that the most important development for tourism lays in the new member states. Therefore, I hope that also the EDEN destinations in new member states could benefit of this preparatory action. We are trying to do the maximum with a human resources together with a financial resources, we have. It is not easy because there are lot of small actions and they need a lot of human resources support. And the same problem is in our unit, but we are trying to do our best.

Overall, the responses provided by the European Commission officials engaged by the researcher indicate their appreciation for the need of more and better designed and executed branding efforts for Poland.
5.3. **RESEARCH LOCATION TWO: POLAND**

This part of the chapter illustrates the situation of destination and national branding in Poland. A review of the literature presented in Chapter Three revealed that the need of establishing the national brand of Poland has been recognised among the Polish authorities from the field of tourism as well as in other areas such as public diplomacy and/or foreign affairs.

The process of gathering data presented below begun at the early stage of the research process and has been continued throughout the duration of the writing of the thesis to supplement the emerging analysis of the development of brand Poland using additional data incoming through the direct research in Poland and Brussels. This data has been presented in Chapter Three and constitutes an overview of the branding initiatives (Section 3.4) undertaken in Poland in the recent years and the relations of power behind their creation, implementation and execution.

The analysis below is a commentary to what has been found and described in Chapter Three and a comparison to the opinions and insights offered on the subject by the various interlocutors encountered by the researcher during her study. This offers additional context and verification to the researchers own analysis of the situation of branding in Poland.
One of the chief purposes of this research study is to examine the role of tourism discourse in the construction of the influential images and symbolic meanings in the projection of the representation of a place – in this case Poland. Therefore, this subsection will critically examine views and opinions of the various participants in the discourse on the image of Poland including the Institute of Brand Poland and its director Mr. Miroslaw Boruc, CEO of Saffron Consultants Wally Olins and the analysis of the destination branding efforts represented by the Polish Tourism Organisation. The subsection will also analyze various documents and recommendations of both domestic and foreign experts in relation to the construction of the brand Poland.

5.3.1. TOURISM PROMOTION AND THE MEDIATION OF NATIONAL IMAGES OF POLAND. PROMOTION VERSUS BRANDING.

As the Chapter Three has shown, the Polish Tourism Organisation (PTO) initiated or managed several national promotional initiatives with various degrees of success. Recent examples are the “Polish Plumber” campaign and the “Adventure with a Happy End” campaigns. As the organisation that is ultimately, although not exclusively, in charge of coordinating the national promotional activities, PTO’s activities concentrate on securing as much funding as possible and spreading it among several initiatives whose main focus seems to be in promoting tourism rather than redefining the image of Poland. This in part explains the PTO’s apparent affinity towards typically commercial publicity activities such as TV spots, banners and posters. The
chairman of PTO, Rafał Szmytke (2008) listed, among the recent accomplishments of the organisation, the opening of a new tourism information office in Kyiv, Ukraine, the launch of the “Polish Year” in Israel (consisting mainly of TV spots meant to shift the image of Poland away from solely the Holocaust and towards the image of a modern country), and the CNN International infomercials.

This approach is generally and openly criticised by the chairman of the Polish Brand Institute Mr. Miroslaw Boruc (further M.B) who puts the case of the financial crisis of 2008 and the reaction of the foreign investment and tourist operators as an example of the fragility and instability of Poland as a brand. In his view the crisis has shown that:

**M.B:** ...for the majority of the world and its money (as it is the money that reacts fastest) we are still a part of the unstable and insecure new world that should be abandoned at the slightest sight of trouble. Dwindling of the tourism flows and the general outflow of tourists and investment from Poland during the crisis proved the uselessness of the CNN and BBC infomercial campaigns that are so stubbornly and endlessly procured by the responsible officials [e.g. *Ministry of Sport and Tourism, Polish Tourism Organisation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs*].

However true this assertion may seem in regard to the PTO’s preference of more ‘traditional’ marketing and branding efforts the researcher would like to point out that the dwindling of the tourism flows and foreign direct investment in Poland as a result of the financial crisis in 2007 cannot be attributed solely to
the strength or weakness of the brand Poland. Majority of EU countries have seen similar trends although it would be scientifically interesting to correlate the impact of the financial crisis on tourism flows and FDI together with the strength of the national brands in a number of countries and see whether a direct link can be drawn between the two.

Coming back to the previous quote, the reasoning behind this assertion is probably influenced by Anholt whom Boruc quotes as saying:

**M.B:** The belief that the promotional and marketing campaigns have the capability of changing the international perception of a country is just as naive and baseless as the one that massaging the fat body parts is good for losing weight.

Additionally Boruc (from interview notes) states that:

**M.B:** There is far too much attention devoted to the “ornamental” side of brand creation – strategies, logos, communication. Such efforts do not build the brand but just give it a nice wrapping.

On the daily basis we can observe (and suffer the consequences of) the fact that Poland does not have the awareness of the usefulness of a branding shield. The traditional, magical and completely useless pill that comes to the minds of our politicians is that of promotion. Nobody seems to know how it works or how it works, but it continues to be treated as a fix-all solution brought back again and again, usually by every Prime Minister in his expose.

He believes that the brand should rather be built primarily through the ever-improving reality, the success and entrepreneurship of the population.
**M. B:** Another important factor in constructing a national brand is the relationship between national identity, behaviour and reputation. I would recommend changing the discourse in which national identity is being defined.

*What does it mean?*

**M. B:** It means that Poland should be directed towards common goals and aspirations for the future rather than the common interpretation of the past as it is unattainable.

Furthermore in the PBI expertise for PTO (fragments provided in Appendices 1 and 2), Mr. Boruc and his team provide a methodological analysis of the Polish image within Poland and abroad and develop an extensive list of predictions and recommendations concerning the meaning of tourism in the development of the Polish brand. The most significant remarks concerning the mediative power of tourism in the process of branding Poland are provided below.

**PBI Expertise:** Tourism, while being underappreciated in Poland as a sector of the economy, can become the driving force behind the development and promotion of the country and its regions.

Tourism has a particularly strong power to influence. Intelligent tourism promotion enriches the overall image of the country. Tourism as an industry has a very wide field of influence and is capable of impacting many non-tourist choices made by both consumers and decision-makers.

Tourism is capable of brilliantly presenting the national identity and – through a nice product, marketing and service offer – is the most efficient image creation vehicle.
The PBI (The Polish Brand Institute) recognises and draws attention of the tourism authorities to the strong mediative power of tourism that can be not only a force driving the economy but also an important agent of display and change influencing the image and perception of Poland and its regions, but also influencing non-tourism related choices. The idea and need of intelligent promotion based on a more sustainable approach to tourism is also stressed as stated in the quotation from the PBI Expertise below:

**PBI Expertise:** The overriding idea of the brand Poland: “Creative Tension” is the idea of tourism. The problem lays in how to implement it in tourism. The problem of how to express and use it is a technical one.

The PBI strongly promotes the previously mentioned idea arrived at by Olins in his work. The recommendation quoted above urges PTO to incorporate that idea within the tourism development plans in Poland.

**PBI Expertise:** The research findings unequivocally confirm the tourism attractiveness of Poland and its multidirectional magnetism while simultaneously clearly indicating the weakness of promotion and distortion of the image: Poland needs to be sharply focused and ultimately freed from the post-communist greyness of perception towards its own exceptionality.

The reputation and image of a country can be changed only in one way: you need to improve the reality and then communicate it to the audiences. Tourism is the best area for this. The task of Polish tourism brand promotion should be to communicate.

The recommendations provided by the PBI clearly indicate the need for the communication of the new, modern and attractive image of Poland. An image
that departs from the traditional, history oriented style and promotes Poland as it currently is.

Judging from the analysis of the PBI and the researcher’s own breakdown of existing gaps and weaknesses of the Polish branding community it seems that both the PTO and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs could benefit from implementing comprehensive training programmes for their staff at the relevant levels in order to ensure an sufficient awareness and understanding of the current theory and practice of national and destination branding.

The lack of coordination between various institutions responsible for national and destination branding in Poland has been demonstrated in various parts of this research study. Even the interviewees from these very institutions admit that there is much room for improvement in this case. Developing stronger institutional and personal ties as well as formal partnerships might be a viable solution. Dialog between various actors should result in a more multi-vocal practice allowing the incorporation of diverse understandings and imaginings of Poland.

Research and interviews conducted in this study indicated in several instances to the lack of concrete and readily available financial resources for the implementation of a national branding strategy. In a situation where various institutions compete for a common budgetary allocation for the execution of their regular duties it seems impossible to find ready funds for a significant
branding strategy. A concrete and generous budgetary allocation devoted strictly and specifically to the purpose of developing and implementing a national branding strategy could solve the problem. Whether the financial condition of the Polish economy would allow for such a budgetary allocation remains a different question.

5.3.2. NATIONAL BRANDING IN POLAND AND OTHER SOURCES OF POLISH IMAGE CREATION.

In Chapter Two of the present research study it has been argued that an image of a place is constantly influenced by a variety of both internal and external factors such as media, various business sectors, actions of citizens and so on. In this part of the research study, the researcher is looking for the ways in which the Polish tourism and national branding opinion formers understand and perceive the external factors influencing brand Poland.

Boruc (2009), in providing an exhaustive overview of the various (mostly negative) external factors influencing a national brand, refers to a recent diplomatic spat where a German tabloid printed a cartoon depicting the Kaczynski brothers (then occupying the offices both of President and Prime Minister in Poland) as two potatoes which lead to an official reaction from the office of the Polish President demanding an official apology. The fallout of the situation was that the reaction itself caused more controversy and media coverage than the cartoon itself while providing anecdotal material and inspiration to explore external influences on the national brand.
M.B: The ‘Polish Potatoes’ case is peanuts compared to what could happen if Poland became a target of somebody like Borat (an iconic incarnation by an American actor and comedian Sasha Baron Cohen, who created a comedy personality of a Kazakh reporter exploring the United States). Luckily, Mr. Cohen’s attention turned later to Austria (with a new character called Brüno) but this already seems as too close for comfort. Just consider the amount of damage caused by Borat to the image of Kazakhstan.

To the researcher it seems that Mr. Boruc possesses a very good level of understanding of the image creation/destruction potential that such unsolicited attention a country can get as in the case of the notorious ‘Borat’ (it should be mentioned here, that Borat’s trademark welcome is “Yak shemash” which is a phonetic spelling of the Polish greeting “Jak się masz” – How are you?).

The role of media such as newspapers, television, or the internet as serious agents of national identity’s display has to be acknowledged as well. Promotional discourse of tourism in itself might be – and often is not – enough to change the image of a country on its own as it is also heavily dependent on other variable factors such as the political context, natural and social environment (Meethan 2001, Hollinshead 2006, 2007). Similarly, external actions, or internal blunders have a limited ability to cause long-lasting damage to a sufficiently strong national brand as further exacerbated by Boruc.

M.B: This is why Italy is not damaged by the notorious antics of Mr. Berluscon, an England’s reputation was not damaged by the premiership of the universally ridiculed John Major. This is
mainly due to the shield provided by a strong brand, acting as an insurance policy in case of such blunders.

Although Boruc’s claims about the lack of a damaging effect of the quoted examples can be disputed (and would provide and interesting scientific inquiry from the stand point of the national brand), the abovementioned responses confirm the arguments made by the researcher in Chapter Three which illustrated that it is very important for tourism authorities to take into consideration a wide range of mediative forces which are influencing the reputation of the country and understand the complexity of elements which form part of its representation. This understanding is noticeably reflected in IMP’s recommendations.

Additionally, Mr. Boruc acknowledges:

**M.B:** It is important to realise that national identity and brand are constantly being mediated through multi-vocal/ multi-lingual/ multi-directional/ and multi-polar channels of communication and cannot be shaped through single-directional-communication often used in the promotional sphere.

*Could you elaborate more on that?*

**M.B:** Yes, certainly. This (national branding) requires constant dialogue with the target audience through active participation in public diplomacy, because, images and understandings of nations that are projected through the standard commercial communication channels will not be trusted, let alone accepted.
In conclusion, the Polish national branding experts seem to display a deep understanding of the impact potential of external sources of national image communication. Simultaneously they seek ways of better understanding and developing the national brand idea and strategy and taking it to a different level, beyond the more traditional and simplistic understandings concentrating on simple promotion and marketing.

Whether the same applies to the remainder of the decision makers responsible (directly or indirectly) for the promotion of Poland is an entirely different question. Although it is likely that this is not exclusive to Poland itself, the examples of damage done to the reputation of Poland by single political events and political responses to the external events, can be used to indicate the very lack of understanding of the potential impact of such events on the part of the political scene in Poland.

5.3.3. NATIONAL BRANDING AND THE MEDIATION OF NATIONAL IMAGES OF POLAND.

In the interview with the researcher of the head of The Polish Brand Institute Mr. Boruc emphasised that place branding is not a temporary fashion but a noteworthy strategy of any successful member in the international tourism destination market place and is absolutely necessary for a country to be competitive. He also demonstrates his understanding, that a country’s reputation is more important than its financial situation. Moreover, as Boruc
claims, national branding helps a country to achieve economic prosperity and therefore leads to the sense of pride and self confidence of its citizens.

The Polish Brand Institute (hereafter: PBI) state on their website (www.imp.org.pl) that an attractive and strong Polish Brand is essential for domestic companies and organisations, products, places, ideas and events to compete on the international market.

**M.B:** Until not so long ago, the perspective of a strong brand for Poland was utopian. Nowadays it’s simply a task we need to do. We know how to do it. We have partners, good advisors and inspirational examples, the best place branding professionals work with us…Within the last decade we have created solid fundaments in Poland, on which the strong brand can be now build.

**PBI website:** We understand brand ‘Polska’ as a competitive identity of a country, in a form of processed in many ways the leading idea of Creative Tension - the idea of common values, common narrative, common symbolism and associations which pass to the identity of Polish companies, products, places, events of ideas and then remarkably supports their competitiveness through the magnetic effect of country of origin.

Furthermore, in the expertise prepared for the Polish Tourism Organisation the PBI discusses the existence and the condition of the brand Poland in arguing that the brand exists but is rated as weak in comparison to other countries. This opinion is expressed in the following statement:

**UNWTO/ETC Expertise:** Poland as a brand exists, which is not very common and is a privilege of only a few dozens of countries
(in some of the most important and serious research positions, Poland is considered to be heading the top forty of the list), but this brand is diluted, not very expressive and still weak. The target position should be around the top twenty of national brands.

The PBI sets high expectations of the place, importance and recognition of the brand Poland and pays particular attention to the importance of national indexes and rankings. On the one hand the fact that brand Poland exists is considered as an excellent starting point while on the other, PBI points out that the ambitions for the position of the brand within international rankings should be much higher.

**UNWTO/ETC Expertise:** Poland as a brand is a mix of panache, industriousness and anarchy, and this is confirmed by virtually all diagnoses including the ones within “Creative Tension” exercise. Poles are very industrious and creative – in terms of ingenuity and individual inventiveness, with a well developed entrepreneurial spirit while remaining extremely individualistic.

The PBI continues to promote and replicate the work and recommendations of Olins and Saffron Consultants (see subsection 3.5.). The “Creative Tension” project, together with its main findings in regard to the very characteristics of Poland and ‘Polishness’ finds full support and endorsement in the PBI’s recommendations to the PTO. The same applies to the understanding of Polish individualism and creativity as dominating features in, and of, Poland and intrinsic components of the “Creative Tension” idea.

The fact that PBI agrees with Saffron’s analysis and recommendations should come as no surprise to the keen observer as PBI itself procured Saffron’s
services and is thus naturally positioned to promote these ideas. The problem lies in the fact that it is not the PBI itself that is responsible or has the power to implement such a strategy. As we will see from the following subsections the relations of power in Polish national branding are a problem in itself.

5.3.4. RELATIONS OF POWER IN POLISH NATIONAL BRANDING. STAKEHOLDERS’ INVOLVEMENT

The understanding and appreciation for the value of cooperation and involvement of various national stakeholders in national promotion and national branding creation by Polish branding practitioners is similar to that of their European counterparts mentioned in previous chapters. This comes through both in the PBI documents analysed in this research study and quotes from Boruc himself where the importance of cooperation and a feeling of a common goal are underlined repeatedly.

M.B: Coordination reflects the strength and the method in which the particular elements of national promotion should be associated with the Brand Poland and its overriding message. This overriding message, in order to have sense, has to be in direct and broad correlation in the way in which all of the organizations involved in the effort of national promotion function.

In conjunction with Olins, Boruc repeats that:

M.B: In order to build a national brand a nation needs to have a common overriding goal. If this goal is not to be found or it is not sufficiently inspiring it drives towards a situation of a free drift, frustration and depression. The feeling of common interest should be the catalyst of every activity while economic growth cannot be the goal in itself.
In this quote we seem to be getting closer to the reason behind the failure in implementation of a single, overriding national branding strategy in Poland. When asked why Olins’s “Creative Tension” project did not finally kick off in Poland, Boruc explains that:

**M.B:** The core idea of the national brand was approved by the Poland Promotion Council but still awaits the acceptance by the government, which would mean its practical inclusion in the promotion strategy and securing its financing from the state budget. The concept itself received excellent reviews but that was not enough to implement it in practice because of the internal tensions between the various cabinets and agencies reluctant to let go of parts of their budgets.

Poland has a chance of becoming one of the main European countries. This will not be achieved without an appropriate strategy which cannot be implemented because of the inability of cooperation. The competence clash between various ministries responsible for the promotion of the country shows this to be true.

In fact, Mr. Boruc and PBI’s main critique of the national branding efforts in Poland point to the lack of coordination and cooperation as can be seen in the following quote from PBI’s document:

**UNWTO/ETC PBI Expertise:** The promotion of Poland is now in the hands of various organisations that do not share a common thought and remain uncoordinated. This results in the lack of a common, coherent and wise national promotion strategy. Everybody seems to agree that coordination is key, but the ever-present individualism renders this diagnosis useless. Poles have a tendency towards anarchy and they dislike and resist any concerted teamwork unless faced with unusual circumstances.
As well as from quotes from an interview with Boruc himself:

In reality, the lack of coordination between the various bodies is the biggest problem hindering national promotion, and it seems to be eternal. The Ministries should be either encouraged or forced to act in unison by the Government.

During the interview the researcher further pressed Boruc to characterise these unusual circumstances and he responded as such traumatic (from the point of view of most of Poles) episodes as the death of the (Polish) Pope John Paul II or other tragedies.

**M.B:** Our national trait is the ability to mobilise and unite in critical circumstances such as the shipyard strikes of the eighties as part of the Solidarity movement or spontaneous manifestations of grief in moments of national tragedy. This is counterbalanced by the apparent inability to work hand in hand in ordinary circumstances.

The general conclusion that the researcher seemed to start understand at this point was that in line with the results of Saffron’s study and the resultant theme of ‘Creative Tension’ it were these very inherent national traits that this strategy sought to promote that stood in the way of implementing this strategy on the national scale.

The researcher also tried to find out why the Polish tourism authorities are so weakly engaged in the work and the various programmes organized by the European Commission. The researcher was engaged in the European Commission-led EDEN project herself and thus had an opportunity of meeting participants at the EDEN conference on 7th October 2009 in Brussels. The
only person to reply to the researcher’s requests for information was the deputy director of the Polish Tourism Organisation’s Regional Cooperation Department Mr Cezary Molski. Mr Molski explained that the up-to-date engagement was so low due to limited human resources. He has nevertheless expressed satisfaction that Poland did participate in the project that the PTO introduced to the domestic market for the first time. He also expressed high hopes for the project’s success in Poland saying that it could help to bring out everything that is best in Polish regional tourism.

The same weakness or lack of human resources offered by the Polish tourism authorities seems to lie behind their relatively low involvement in the international branding and tourism policy forums on the international level. In order to gain visibility abroad as well as to learn and observe other practices PTO could try to better and more pro-actively engage in international projects and discussions related to national and destination branding. Interviews with European stakeholders undertaken as part of this research study indicate that there is room and indeed a need for further engagement of Polish decision-makers and staff. In fact - as underlined by several of the interviewees on the European Commission level – Poland’s voice remains absent from a lot of the discussions that should be considered important on the national level in Poland.
5.3.5. CHAPTER SUMMARY.

This Chapter sought to analyse the perceived knowledge, views and opinions of practitioners working in tourism at the highest institutional level – European Commission Tourism Unit and the European Travel Commission in cooperation with UNWTO – of the theory and practical application of national and destination branding. Secondly, this chapter illustrated the corresponding knowledge, views and opinions of the relevant staff members in the institutions dealing with national and destination branding in Poland.

This approach helped to reveal and understand the logic behind the undertaking (or not undertaking) various initiatives in national branding by authorities in both Brussels and Poland. The purpose of this analysis was not to compare or contrast these views and understandings but rather to show and deconstruct the knowledge and understandings about the relatively new phenomenon that national and destination branding is for both the tourism authorities in both Brussels and Poland.

What was revealed in the course of this research is the clear distinction in the levels of understanding of branding theory and practice between what we can broadly call “Branding Specialists” (UNWTO, ETC, PBI, Saffron Consultants) and what are, in essence, tourism decision makers and power holders (the European Commission, Polish Ministries responsible for tourism and national promotion, PTO). It should be noted that in the course of her research the researcher had the opportunity to contact and interview both the branding
specialists and the power holders in Brussels (UNWTO, ETC, European Commission). While contacting the Polish side, the researcher had most contact with the ‘Branding Specialists’ side while the contact with the ‘Power Holders’ was relatively limited and relied mostly on secondary sources, opinions and understandings.

Regardless of the limitations that this situation has imposed on reaching valid findings, the material gathered was sufficient to reach the following conclusions:

**General Conclusions:**

1. Branding specialists both in Brussels (European Travel Commission, UNWTO) and Poland (Polish Brand Institute) display an in-depth understanding and knowledge of national and destination branding. They also have a substantial knowledge base, resources and expertise in this area.

2. The relations of power in national and destination branding are similar both in Brussels and in Poland. ‘Branding specialists’ in both locations (PBI, ETC, UNWTO, Saffron Consultants) can only serve as knowledge hubs capable of providing expertise and advice but ultimately are bereft of power to influence and often opportunity to implement their ideas whereas ‘power holders’ (European Commission in Brussels, Ministries and agencies in Poland) retain the decision-making competency to implement any meaningful branding strategies.
As a bricoleur the researcher appreciates the fact that any summarisation and identification of the abovementioned social practices is highly problematic and that no conclusion can be 100% fixed and undeniably truthful as well as the fact that they are merely an attempt at embracing the complexities of the investigates social practices. The conclusions illustrated here are meant to indicate a critical analysis of the destination and national branding practices both in Brussels and in Poland while remaining open to further questions and contextual contingency.

The most striking conclusion of the abovementioned findings is perhaps the fact that the very traits and characteristics that branding strategy would try to convey in the case of Poland (such as individualism, creativity or spontaneity) are also the main factors hindering the coordinated approach towards national branding in Poland and leading to situations where insufficient financial and human resources are devoted to the project.
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS.

In the process of establishing the findings of this research study the researcher based herself on the understanding that the world is a product of social process where meanings are constructed in human minds and mediated to the world therefore there cannot be any given, determined nature of the world ‘out there’. Therefore the researcher did not strive to quantify, evaluate or judge the practice of national and destination branding itself nor the various attempts at understanding/ re-/ defining/ and communicating the national brand but rather to observe, understand and give account of the various notions and interactions in this multi-stakeholder process.

The objectives of this study were listed in Chapter 1 (see 1.5 The Need of the Study). What follows is the summary of findings that the researcher arrived at as a result of pursuing these objectives:

➢ to critically investigate the ways in which various private and administrative bodies on (A) the EU level such as the Tourism Unit of the European Commission, European Travel Commission and UNWTO and (B) in Poland, such as Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Polish Tourism Organisation, Polish Brand Institute, which are involved in the process of national and destination branding, and branding of Poland in particular, understand, perceive and implement this process;
Having performed this investigation the researcher found that the subject of destination and national branding is new to most, although not all, of the EU officials that were interviewed and engaged. Although majority of them appreciate the importance and added-value of employing modern branding thinking and methodology, the European Commission is yet to fully embrace and engage in the process of branding of European destinations.

On the other hand the European Travel Commission seems to display a far more engaged and pro-active stance on the issue. Its involvement and engagement in the co-production (together with the UNWTO) of the Handbook of Tourism Destination Branding is a case in point that the dissemination of knowledge and best-practice in destination branding among the member tourism organisations lies at the heart of ETC and its board. They have undertaken a monumental effort in coordinating the production of the handbook as well as in ensuring the uptake of the knowledge stemming from this effort among the National Tourism Organisations during a launching conference in Stockholm in June 18-20, 2009.

The investigation of the Polish Tourism Organisation’s understanding of the issue was hampered by the difficulties that the researcher had in contacting some of the officials of this institutions. The unresponsiveness of some these officials did not allow for drawing factual (or in fact – fair) conclusions based on direct contact and interviews. Nevertheless, the contact that was achieved with the vice-president of PTO allowed for the analysis of documents and papers published by the organisation as well as deriving conclusions from their
very activities. This investigation lead the researcher to conclude that as the up-to-date national promotion efforts (TV advertisement, posters campaigns) did not yield the expected or desired results PTO is willing and ready to more closely embrace the practice of national branding. This is reflected in the attention given to the understanding of the recognition of the Polish brand and the following discussion on the subject in the documentation produced by PTO.

A similar conclusion can be drawn in examining and investigating the activities and writing of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Most of these efforts to-date have been uncoordinated and did not reflect the main ideas of national and destination branding (see subsection 2.3). Nevertheless, it can be concluded that the previous relative failures of the various communication and promotion campaigns (Chapter Three, subsection 3.4.) have lead the Ministry to seek and establish a Public Diplomacy Office and constitute a cross-institutional national promotion council whose purpose would be to seek best practices and recommendations.

The Polish Brand Institute in itself is an organisation devoted to the popularisation and implementation of the theory and practice of national branding in Poland. Thus the researcher did not feel to be in a position to judge the organisation’s understanding of the theory and purpose of the process of national and destination branding. Nevertheless, in the examination of the materials produced by PBI as well as from the direct interviews, the researcher arrived at the conclusion that the thinking and understanding of the matter of
national and destination branding by PBI is nurtured and somewhat influenced by the external national branding thinkers such as Olins and Anholt.

➢ to examine the contemporary destination and national branding practices in Poland in the context of Poland as a member of a EU and of the work of the most prominent international and European tourism organisations (United Nations World Tourism Organisation, European Travel Commission, Tourism Unit in European Commission).

In Poland, the researcher analysed the destination and national branding practices of the institutions and actors that display any degree of legal competency and/ or are most active in this field – namely the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Polish Tourism Organisation and the Polish Brand Institute. The main competence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the field of national branding includes the administration of the work of all legal and diplomatic representations of Poland abroad as well as (more importantly for this research study) supervision of how they fulfil the role of national image projection points. In the course of her work, the researcher analysed the recent attempts of the ministry aimed at the creation and promotion of a new, universal branding campaign for Poland. This relates mostly to the “Flying Kite” campaign described in subsection 3.4 of the present study. The key finding of this research is that although there seems to be a general understanding in the ministry of the need for a co-ordinated, broad and sustainable branding campaign, within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the discourse of Polish promotion consists of rather chaotic mediation of representational repertoire of
science, subjects and storylines with no unifying and overarching vision and strategy. The ministry’s efforts in this direction appear to the researcher to be undermined by the chronic lack of funding, lack of involvement on the part of other institutions and government bodies, insufficient communications outreach as well as inadequate planning. The most (albeit arbitrarily) successful national branding campaign that the ministry can own up to in recent years was a chance result of a low-budget, own-initiative campaign launched by one of the embassies (Berlin).

A more structured and methodical approach to the subject of national and destination branding was displayed by the Polish Brand Institute (PBI) who as a subsidiary of the National Chamber of Commerce commissioned Wally Olins and his company to prepare and write a full-fledged and research-based national branding campaign for Poland. Saffron Brand Consultants (Olins’s firm) undertook the task of designing a new brand and core idea for Poland. The result was a first ever so thorough and broad national branding campaign in the history of Poland with an overarching motto – “Creative Tension”.

Unfortunately, the researcher did not have the opportunity to analyse the impact of this campaign as due to the lack of funding, political will and courage as well as the general context of governance in Poland the strategy remains to be implemented. Thus, the main finding resulting from the analysis of the efforts undertaken by PBI and Olins is that every exercise undertaken within the national and destination branding discourse is highly political,
dependant on dominant groups who claim to have power to decide in which narratives will be/ are to be communicated about Poland.

Finally the researcher analysed the national and destination branding practices undertaken by the Polish Tourism Organisation (PTO). The most important finding of this research was that the dominance achieved by this organisation in designing and implementing promotional practices stems from the fact that it is backed by a budget incomparable to other organisations. Most of these practices concentrate on one-directional tourism promotion and hardly involve any characteristics of a typical national or destination branding campaign. There is nevertheless evidence of PTO’s growing interest in exploring and implementing branding practices expressed mostly in the analysis that PTO commissioned PBI to write (see subsection 5.3.1)

The undertaken research of the national and destination branding discourse in Europe, and Poland in particular, allowed the researcher to arrive at a series of conclusions and findings. At the national level, in Poland, the researcher found a general lack of coordination of various national and destination branding initiatives and efforts. This was the situation despite several attempts to address this problem and a growing understanding of the importance of coordinated and concerted action in this area. The researcher also found that the government and other institutions are not neutral and objective in their branding activities but are rather powerful agents in determining ‘the consumptive representation of some people and the consumptive containment of others’ (Hollinshead, 1998b:59).
The analysis of various initiatives undertaken so far by the actors active in national and destination branding in Poland confirms also that there are varying degrees of embracement and understanding of national branding theory and practice among these actors. While there are ones that with all conviction strive to spearhead the uptake of modern methods of national and destination branding (PBI), their efforts stumble upon and are hampered by the un-flexibility and ability to adapt of others (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, PTO).

Nevertheless, overall a growing understanding and appreciation of the long-term sustainability of a well designed and implemented branding strategy can be observed. The need for branding is recognised as important for Polish people working in tourism and in public diplomacy field, even if its implementation is lagging behind.

Further in relation to the work of Saffron in Poland, the most striking conclusion that the researcher has arrived at in her work is that the ‘creative tension’ strategy developed as the result of Saffron’s study could not be implemented in Poland due to the very national traits that it sought to promote. The universal pursuit of the ‘new’ and ‘better mixed with the general inability to systematically work towards the pursuit of common goals or even the difficulty at arriving at such goals seem to be (according to Olins and several other interviewees) at the same time the national characteristics of the Polish people as well as the stumbling blocks hampering the implementation of a national branding strategy.
In the broader context of Poland as new Member of the European Union it must be asserted that the efforts of the European Commission to implement national and destination branding practices are somewhat hampered by the limited mandate that this institution (or in fact any European Institution) has in this area. The subsidiary principle that binds the Commission means that according to the European Treaties it only has soft coordination and persuasion powers in this matter meaning that it cannot legislate, or essentially be very active in the area of national and destination branding beyond coordination between the Member States of the European Union. Nevertheless, the European Commission does try to implement and popularise some branding practices. One example of such an attempt, the Eden project, was closely scrutinised by the researcher both through critical analysis of the project materials, but also – uniquely – through direct involvement in the project management process. The researcher found that in the design and implementation of this project the European Commission does not exactly utilise and popularise national or destination branding techniques as the essence of Eden is rather a mix of promotion and communication activities designed at highlighting the sustainable destinations in Europe (see Appendix 5). The idea behind the project is to find small and underrepresented destinations, usually towns, and help them “get on the map” by providing them with support and recognition of the European Commission. Unfortunately, the project fails to deliver a specific brand (Eden sign is not popularised or recognised), there is no specialist leading the project, there is only a one-off winner every year to whom no serious financial or logistical help is offered.
making the branding impact of the entire exercise futile and non-sustainable in the long term.

On the other hand the European Travel Commission seems to treat the implementation of national and destination branding practices as a priority. To this end, the ETC Handbook on Tourism Destination Branding is in itself standing testimony of the commitment that this organisation to the implementation and dissemination of these practices among the member organisations.

and to analyse the relations of power between the various of actors involved in the process of national and destination brand production.

As far as the relations of power between the various agents active in the national and destination branding discourse in Poland are concerned, they seem to be strongly conditioned by the budget discrepancies, restraints and access. The Polish Tourism Organisation has most control of the budget and – in effect – actual hegemony over the other players in this field.

The analysis undertaken in this study also allowed the researcher to arrive at the conclusion that tourism promotion, destination branding and the process of creation of the national brand are heavily dependent on each other and effectively, cannot function independently of each other in practice.

Another important finding of this research study is that there are some groups that consciously contribute to and influence the national promotion efforts.
More importantly, there are also other groups that amount to the same unwillingly or unconsciously. These are the more unconsciously active agents of display such as the Poles working and travelling abroad, cultural and business representatives as well as others.

6.2. IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.

There is still little research on the influence of destination and national branding in shaping the understandings about the representation of a place, people and pasts. The function which national and destination branding plays in the dynamics of change and transformation of a place should be explored in relation to the

Researchers who are engaged in investigating the development of destination and national branding should take into consideration more interpretive and “politically reasoned” (Hollinshead, 2009) aspects and influences of that activity. To research the future development of destination and national branding.

Research problem 1:

Place branding and the creation of understandings about Other.

- The author of this study advises Researchers of Tourism and other Social Studies to focus on the impact that branding has on the imaginings and understandings of others.

Future researchers are advised to focus on the understanding-creation character of national and destination branding in the sense of its ability to constitute new
meanings about people, places and pasts while silencing or subjugating other imaginaries and representations. Critical inspection of the normalising or mainstreaming discourse of promotional activities undertaken by national tourism and branding authorities is needed in order to identify the processes of meaning-creation and influencing.

Critical analysis of the discourse used by various dominant agents (such as tourism authorities or ministries) should be regularly undertaken in order to examine the ways in which various images and symbolic representations of Poland are articulated to the world and which agents achieve dominance in this production and communication. This should also allow to apprehend the way in which these new projections of images and representations translate into understandings of Poland and Poles by others.

**Research problem 2:**

*Place branding and the creation of understandings about Self.*

- The author of this study advises Researchers of Tourism and other Social Studies to focus on the impact that branding has on the imaginings and understanding of self.

Future researchers are advised to investigate how national and destination branding in Poland influences and changes the understanding of self and the awareness and the domestic perception of the brand “Poland”. This analysis should allow to find agents of influence in this relation and the way in which intended imaginings projected through the practice of national and destination branding are factually interpreted by the target audiences at home.
**Research problem 3:**

**Place branding as a promise of a new experience.**

- The author of this study advises Researchers of Tourism and other Social Studies to focus on the ways in which national and destination branding projects the imaginative promises of new experiences in relation to Poland.

It is argued by Hollinshead and Jamal (2007) that travel and tourism increasingly constitute a neurasthenic drama where certain privileged/wealthy/time-free individuals can insulate themselves against the surrounding of their routine urban life by immersing themselves within encounters of explorations in distant worlds and cultural realms. One way of further exploring the projective power of national and destination branding is to investigate the ways in which this promise of a new experience is being delivered and sustained in the case of Poland. Various patterns of preferred imaginings could be uncovered through the critical analysis of communicated messages carrying a promise of a new experience in and of Poland.

**Research problem 4:**

**Place branding and the creation of cultural understanding.**

- The author of this study advises Researchers of Tourism and other Social Studies to investigate the relationship between the practice of destination and national branding with the understandings of other cultures and national identities.

Future researchers are advised to explore the subject of production of cultural meanings through the practices of exchange of particular symbols, signs and images. In Chapter One, it has been indicated that within the discourse of national identity, particular symbolic practices are being used to give meaning
to the idea of being part of national culture. Thus, the implications for future research in that matter are to scrutinise these cultural practices and the role which national and destination branding discourse plays in their production and mediation. The significance of these practices in producing and reproducing the representation of a place and their role in cultural transformation in Poland could be subject of further investigation.

**Research problem 5:**

*Place branding and knowledge production.*

- The author of this study advises Researchers of Tourism and other Social Studies to examine the impact, sustainability and accuracy that the national and place branding practices have on the knowledge building process in understanding and perception of Poland.

Future researchers are recommended to explore the process through which national and destination branding practices influence human knowing by deconstructing, expanding or creating new intelligences about place, people and pasts. The politically negotiated images, histories and understandings projected through the practices of national and destination branding need also to be examined in relation to the influence they might exert on the various (intended and unintended) audiences and their ways of perception, understanding and thinking of and about Poland.

6.3. CONCLUSIONS

This research studied the role and power of public institutions in creating the representation of Poland within the normalising discourse of national and destination branding. The researcher looked at the projective practices
undertaken by administrative bodies responsible for producing and re-
producing the representation of Poland. This was done in the context of 
contemporary thinking and established practices in the field of national and 
destination branding and the context of the voices of this field’s practitioners, 
academics and national and international authorities. To this end the researcher 
reviewed the available literature examining the emergent phenomenon that 
national and destination branding is as well as its relationship with the concept 
of national identity and culture. This included the study of this emergent 
phenomenon’s purpose, of the actors involved in its development, the politics 
and relations of power between these actors as well as the relation of national 
and destination branding with tourism itself. The researcher also looked at the 
available examples of this practice. Finally, attention was paid to the current 
state and recognition of the national brand of Poland.

This was followed by the review of the current situation of national and 
destination branding in Poland and the relations of power within the Polish 
brand production process. Apart from examining the role and power of public 
institutions and private organisations in creating the representation of Poland 
within the normalising discourse of national and destination branding this 
research study focused on the process of production and reproduction of the 
representation of Poland through the discourse of national and destination 
branding. It has been argued in Chapter One that the practice of representation 
is regarded as a process through which concepts of specific objects and images 
are produced in human minds and exchanged between people both verbally and
visually. Influenced by the work of Urry (1990) and S. Hall (1997) the researcher stated that in this process of representation there are human beings who give meaning to the world by constructing essential connections between cultures, objects, events and ideas.

Thus, one of the challenges undertaken by the researcher was defining, identification, finding and examining those individuals active or present in the meaning-creation and dissemination process. These individuals included members of the European Commission working in the units and directorates responsible for tourism, members of the European Travel Commission, as well as the responsible bodies in Poland – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, National Brand Institute and the Polish Tourism Organisation. As the next step the researcher went on to examine the relations of power between these various bodies and actors in order to understand their mutual relations, dependencies and rules of interactions as well as to establish the ways in which they understand and enter into practice the idea of national brand creation and communication.

The findings of this research study suggest that in Poland as in Brussels there is a similar disparity between the levels of understanding, embracing and implementation of national and destination branding theory and practice between specialised agencies such as the European Travel Commission or the Polish Brand Institute and the public institutions such as the European Commission or the Polish Tourism Organisation. Although the public
institutions studied in this research study display certain openness and readiness to learn and improve in this respect, there are some objective as well as subjective obstacles to overcome. Some of these obstacles are of financial and budgetary nature, others of cultural and organisational. Finally, the study of the relations of power in national and destination branding in Brussels and Poland leads to the conclusion that branding specialists (PBI, ETC, UNWTO, Saffron Consultants) in both locations can only serve as knowledge hubs capable of providing expertise and advice but ultimately are bereft of power to influence. The decision-making power to implement any meaningful branding strategies remains with the ‘power holders’ – European Commission in Brussels and Ministries and other governmental agencies in Poland. As this research has shown, although the key decision-makers knowledge and appreciation of national and destination branding is relatively limited the future representation of Poland and the making of a difference between short-sighted marketing promotional campaign and a thorough national branding strategy will depend on their willingness to learn and overcome the organisational / financial / and legalistic obstacles.

6.3.1. CONCLUSIONS ON RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES.

The constructivist paradigm has been chosen to uncover the widely variable viewpoints of the people engaged in the discursive practices of national and destination branding in the context of particular historical and cultural settings in which they operate. The researcher was aware of the fact that the constructivist approach applies a multiple holistic view of reality and regards a
research subject in a wide contextual setting. Having this in mind, objectivist epistemology’s unilateral thinking should be avoided throughout this study and the researcher had to remain alert to any temptations of using it. This proved to be a challenging point for the researcher as her study subjects were management personnel that is driven by objectivist thinking by default. The researcher also tried to avoid the generalising claims in regard to the relationship between national and destination branding and the tourism authorities and rather focused on the driving factors of this relationship and its social and power-sharing underpinning.

By following the tenets of bricoleurship and the emergent character of the research design the researcher gathered various opinions, viewpoints, and standpoints of theory and practice of place branding both in Brussels and Poland. In order to capture the ideological and political discourse standing behind the production of images and meanings within the national and destination branding practices the researcher performed various actions within her bricoleurship. She has mixed both primary and secondary data sources in her data collection process (semi-structured interviewing, document analysis and participant observation). The researcher gathered various opinions from the international experts about their understandings of the meaning and theory of national and destination branding.

The data collection resulted in a wide scope of findings which appeared to be messy and chaotic. This also led to several problems in data analysis and in
order to structuralise the presentation of findings the researcher applied a data driven thematic analysis. Also, a frustrating factor for the researcher was the role of an insider observer, as she had to accommodate herself within the recipient organisations as well as to constantly remind herself of her role as a researcher. Although the insider networking made many interviews possible, some of the interviewees remained nevertheless elusive and unavailable. The researcher also had to manoeuvre between the pragmatic attitudes that drove the study locations that the high-ranking authorities (such as the European Commission or national ministries) tend to be and the relatively flexible rules of the emergent research design applied in her research. The strict and official atmosphere of these bureaucratic research sites made it difficult to fully explore the contextual settings in which the interview subjects hold. The emergent research design required constant expansion of the acquired knowledge (in this case about the relations of power within the national and destination branding world) and made it increasingly difficult for the researcher to define an end-point to this expansion and decide that the data and knowledge gathered is sufficient. To a certain level, the researcher will always feel that she has not fulfilled all the possible paths but that was impossible to the strict time constraints of this thesis.
References


Daymon, C. and Holloway, I. (2002) *Qualitative research methods in public relations and marketing communications.* Routledge. USA


Ministry of Sport and Tourism, *Directions of Tourism Development towards 2015* (Kierunki Rozwoju Turystyki do 2015 roku), 26 September 2008


**Documents included in the research analysis:**

IMP(2008): Expertise – An analysis of findings from the research of the image of Poland and Polish national brand in the world. Assumptions and recommendations towards positioning Poland as a tourism destination for the period of 2009-2015.


Appendices
### APPENDIX 1: REMARKS ON PERCEPTIONS OF POLAND.

#### Introductory remarks on the Polish brand from the PBI analysis for PTO

- Poland as a brand exists, which is not very common and is a privilege of only a few dozens of countries (in some of the most important and serious research positions, Poland is considered to be heading the top forty of the list), but this brand is diluted, not very expressive and still weak. The target position should be around the top twenty of national brands.

- Poland as a brand is a mix of panache, industriousness and anarchy, and this is confirmed by virtually all diagnoses including the ones within “Creative Tension” exercise.

- Poland is a large, well positioned country, it has been richly experienced in its 1000 year history, for centuries it has been multinational and a home to many creeds. It was diverse in all ways and still maintained to be a normal and a relatively wealthy European country.

- Poles are very industrious and creative – in terms of ingenuity and individual inventiveness, with a well developed entrepreneurial spirit while remaining extremely individualistic.

- Poles are hardy and often marked by a balky way of being, they have their own distinctive and individualistic views on pretty much anything.

- Poles have a tendency towards anarchy and they dislike and resist any concerted teamwork unless faced with unusual circumstances.

- Poles are people of honour and values expressed in the phenomenon of the Polish solidarity with wronged and underprivileged, and particularly in the phenomenon of the Solidarity movement itself.

- Complicated, convoluted, and for the most part dramatic history of the country and the simultaneously shaped individualism bear fruit up to this day in various divides that cut across the matter of Polishness into a myriad of paradoxical feuds that often escape logic.

- Only two people are commonly associated with Poland (Lech Walesa – 59%, and John Paul II – 53,3 %) followed by a vast gap ending with Frederic Chopin (13,3%), Copernicus (9,5%) and Marie Sklodowska-Curie (6,7%).

- What was most beautiful in Poland is the women. The myth of a Beautiful Polish Woman is very magnetic and necessary to the promotional narrative, as it gives it undeniable virtue.

- The strength of the brand Poland is the people including the Diaspora. They should be invested in and transformed in to a great collection of Polish brand ambassadors.

- Research shows that the more positive image of Poland and Poles is shared by the foreigners living in Poland or have at least visited. It seems that our reality surpasses the embedded images.

- The main advantages are the inhabitants and the atmosphere of the destination. Polish cuisine is distinctive and acceptable (PBI, 2008).

Adapted from: PBI (2008) : Expertise – An analysis of findings from the research of the image of Poland and Polish national brand in the world. Assumptions and recommendations towards positioning Poland as a tourism destination for the period of 2009-2015.
### APPENDIX 2: REMARKS ON MEANING OF TOURISM IN NATIONAL BRANDING OF POLAND.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tourism in Poland – future perspective.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. It is generally assumed that tourism will become the biggest industry, that there will be no crisis, and that the new and main tourism drivers will be the developing economies including Poland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Poland, as a big, well placed, relatively well developed, complete and attractive country at the heart of Europe can become a tourism power. It has a very big, nearly untapped tourism capital that in the context of the global trends is becoming more and more valuable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The problem seems to lay in the fact that Poland, while learning on the mistakes and experiences of others, should demonstrate imagination and ability to avoid their own, previous mistakes while avoiding the pitfalls of free-range tourism development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Tourism, while being underappreciated in Poland as a sector of the economy, can become the driving force behind the development and promotion of the country and its regions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Tourism possesses the most obvious and undeniable mandate to perform this role: it is connected directly to the obvious qualities of the country (location, beauty, heritage, culture, people) and it is capable of breaking a profit while allowing others to make money as well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Tourism can be an important pillar of the second stage of modernisation of Poland, the driving force behind its renewed image and reputation, an cohesive instrument capable of forming the Polish people into a modern community that knows and takes pride in it while being capable of convincing others to do the same.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. In contrast to the messages put forward by the government, the messages of the tourism sector are generally regarded by the public opinion as credible even if slightly coloured country representation. Everybody knows and accepts that the tasks of tourism lays in showing the brighter side of reality and expect it to be so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Tourism has a particularly strong power to influence. Intelligent tourism promotion enriches the overall image of the country. Tourism as an industry has a very wide field of influence and is capable of impacting many non-tourist choices made by both consumers and decision-makers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Poland should gradually driver towards a strategic alliance between tourism and other national reputation stakeholders and sectors that often are country brand communication channels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Tourism is capable of brilliantly presenting the national identity and – through a nice product, marketing and service offer – is the most efficient image creation vehicle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Poland continues to send out very contradicting messages to the world about itself causing a permanent communication and image chaos. It harms our interests, including the tourist ones, as it discourages the wider audience who end up perceiving Poland as an unpredictable and unstable country.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 12. Paradoxes and contrasts are natural and unavoidable and they have to co-exist. A country has many different images – dimensions of the national brand that have to be synchronized and reconciled. That is the idea of
Competitive Identity.

13. After two decades of transformation Poland finally reached a place where it can address and resolve its own image paradoxes and reconcile the different dimensions of its brand by attributing it with a common idea and tone.

14. The overriding idea of the brand Poland: “Creative Tension” is the tourism idea. The problem lays in how to implement it in tourism. The problem of how to express and use it is a technical one.

15. The National Strategy of Competitive Identity can be initiated in the tourism field by the Polish Tourism Organisation and quickly developed within the dynamic expected in the coming decade. Both for the country and PTO itself it could be a good and prospective investment with a high rate of return.

16. Coordination of messages being sent through the various national brand communications channels around a single common idea of “creative Polishness” would certainly lead to increased tourism incomes.

17. Polish tourism needs a breakthrough in order to be noticed as an important, income generating and very prospective sector of the economy.

18. In tourism we can find bigger competitive advantages than in other sectors based on the great, diverse and attractive tourism capital, natural hospitality and Poland-specific magnetism that draw people in. It means that Poland has a big market potential and is capable of becoming an important tourism brand.

19. The reputation and image of a country can be changed only in one way: you need to improve the reality and then communicate it to the audiences. Tourism is the best area for this. The task of Polish tourism brand promotion should be to communicate.

20. This expertise show that this not only makes sense and that it is necessary, but that it also is possible. It presents a synthesis of various image research findings as well as of various introductory suggestions and recommendations for the Polish tourism brand positioning in the future.

21. The research findings unequivocally confirm the tourism attractiveness of Poland and its multidirectional magnetism while simultaneously clearly indicating the weakness of promotion and distortion of the image: Poland needs to be sharply focused and ultimately freed from the post-communist greyness of perception towards its own exceptionality.

22. The research findings unequivocally confirm the tourism attractiveness of Poland and its multidirectional magnetism while simultaneously clearly indicating the weakness of promotion and distortion of the image: Poland needs to be sharply focused and ultimately freed from the post-communist greyness of perception towards its own exceptionality.

Adapted from: PBI (2008) : Expertise – An analysis of findings from the research of the image of Poland and Polish national brand in the world. Assumptions and recommendations towards positioning Poland as a tourism destination for the period of 2009-2015
APPENDIX 3: LIST OF ACTORS INVOLVED IN THE CREATION OF THE
HANDBOOK ON TOURISM DESTINATION BRANDING

**European Travel Commission (ETC)**
ETC is an organisation established in 1948 with the purpose of creating an entity that would represent and promote Europe as a tourist destination. ETC operates in all major overseas markets consisting on USA, Canada, Latin America and Japan. Initially launched as a part of OEEC (now OECD) ETC has since become a voluntary and autonomous membership organisation comprising of 39 member National Tourism Organisations (NTOs). Each of these NTOs elect a President, three Vice-Presidents, a Board of Directors, a Chairman of the Market Intelligence Group and a Chairman of the Marketing & Technology Network for revolving two-year terms.

ETC, in addition to its promotional activities, serves a forum for National Tourism Organisations’ CEOs and senior managers to meet regularly and exchange ideas and experiences. The organisation often plays a role of a catalyst for various collaborative projects held between its members. One of this projects concerns co-operation in the collection and analysis of tourism data and the related research projects overseen by the ETC’s Market Intelligence Group (ETC archived documents).

**World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)**
A specialised agency of the United Nations and the leading international tourism organisation. UNWTO role is to promote and develop responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism, with the aim of contributing to economic and social development. UNWTO provides a global forum for tourism policy issues and a practical source of tourism know-how. Those activities meant to support international cooperation in world tourism ensuring that member countries, tourist destinations and businesses maximise the positive economic, social and cultural effects of tourism. Of special importance to the purpose of this study research is the work of the UNWTO Market Trends, Competitiveness & Trade in Tourism Services Section. This section assists Member States with methodology and know-how related to marketing and promotion of tourism destinations and products. This section conducts methodological studies and analyses trends, it also provides qualitative and quantitative knowledge on tourism markets on a worldwide basis.

**Destination Branding Project Group**
A Sub-Committee of ETC’s Market Intelligence Group formed for the purpose of developing the “Handbook on Tourism Destination Branding Project” and to oversee the work and collaboration between the two organisations (ETC and WTO) and the appointed consultants. The main role of the Destination Branding Project Group is to coordinate the process of the Handbook preparation and agree on the final report for publication.

**Yellow Railroad**
A destination consultancy from Scotland, specialising in helping countries, regions and cities develop their tourism potential. Its expertise includes areas of country, destination and place branding, marketing strategy, place shaping, eco/pro tourism strategy, tourism policy and business planning. Main clients of Yellow railroad consist of tourism boards, tourism ministries, national and regional development agencies, cities and local authorities.
Dear Sir,

I am currently in the process of writing a PhD on the practice of destination branding and its role in constructing the representation of places. I am researching the process where visual images, language and discourse work together as systems of representation in conceiving and developing national identities within the discourse of international tourism. For the purpose of my study I am conducting a series of interviews with the most important professionals in the tourism sector - policy makers, managers, government representatives and academics. The aim of my interviews is to get qualitative opinions on destination branding as a tool of creating and sometimes recreating the representation of a place. Below there is a list of 10 open-ended questions that I would like to ask you to answer:

1. How would you describe your main professional activities?
2. Are you familiar with the term “destination branding”?
3. When and how have you first encountered destination branding (press, Internet, academic journals, professional work, etc.)?
4. How would you define destination branding?
5. In your opinion, what is the difference between destination branding and a promotional marketing campaign of the destination?
6. Do you think that the practice of destination branding is generally useful for countries that wish to increase their recognition at the tourism arena?
7. Can you provide any particularly good or bad examples of destination branding?
8. In your opinion, is destination branding a developing technique of country promotion or an already established one? How would you see this practice developing in the next years?
9. According to UNWTO / ETC Handbook on Destination Branding (2009), destination branding can support sustainable tourism development. Do you agree with that opinion?
10. Do you think that tourism in the new EU countries such as Poland would benefit from a professional branding?

Thank you very much for your time and help,

Małgorzata Nowińska
How did the idea of the EDEN project emerge first?

The idea was very simple. You know that there is the European Capital for Culture and the idea was why don’t we do something similar for tourism. But the European Capital for Culture includes very heavy, I would say, implementation – you have to go to a council, it’s not easy to manage. Therefore we were thinking of something that would be easy to implement and of course linked to sustainability and linked to emerging destinations. Because, of course Venice, Rome, they don’t need the European support to be well known. One the most important problems for tourism is that tourism is concentrated over time in a particular area. Therefore the problem is how to go about managing tourism in all of the European territory. And this is one idea, the idea was to put in a report done by the member of European Parliament, the Italian lady who is now the mayor of Geneva, that she put this idea of the European Parliament report on tourism. After, another member of the European Parliament, has transformed this idea into a pilot project and therefore the Commission was asked to organise the pilot project, and the pilot project was transformed into the preparatory action.

What is the main purpose of the EDEN project?

The main purpose is, for me, is to give visibility to some emerging destinations that are good destinations, that are the destinations that work in the sustainability area but are not so well known. Normally they are very small destinations if you see the list of the winners, you will see very small destinations, that could have some visibility also at the European level.

How exactly can the EDEN project support sustainable tourism development in EU?

Now, as you know, we are working are working also on indicators for sustainability. For that we have prepared 25 indicators and this 25 indicators would be a tool for destinations to measure their
sustainability. Therefore the indicators are not to aware check, for the Commission point of view the sustainability of Eden destination but this is a tool for EDEN destination in a way that they can control where they are going. If they want to go to the sustainable development or not. They also aware, for example that we are supporting their sustainability development and of course we are trying to give as you know, some visibility at the European level with special action that we will try to implement starting from next month.

What are the main problems EDEN destinations face in promoting themselves on the tourism arena?

EDEN destinations to promote themselves to work all together, for me the most important problem is that there are very small destinations therefore they have not human resources to work on marketing, they are not always speaking other language that national language. Therefore it is very difficult for them to cooperate with other destinations only to brand the EDEN logo.

In your opinion, would a destination branding strategy be helpful for EDEN destinations?

Yes, I hope so that the EDEN branding could be useful for these destinations because there are not other ways to receive a visibility for this small destinations, if they put all together with a only one brand, EDEN brand, maybe they can have visibility, for example in the ETC website, visisteurope.com or other campaign that we can try to organise for them.

Do you agree that an EDEN award can be used as a brand itself for destinations to promote themselves?

Yes, we hope that if that preparatory action will go on, that even could be a brand for this destinations. But of course we need to check that sustainability is still there, because as we found only in third year that we are founding EDEN destinations, if they are changing orientation, we cannot check. This is why this is important to have these indicators.
Can EDEN brand all the destinations as Europe as well, the whole of European tourism?

This is very ambitious, for us, if we are creating already network of EDEN destinations maybe specialised for branch such as rural tourism, or other like aquatic tourism, and so on, it could be already good if we find some kind of integrity, for local destinations, it would be already very interesting. But EDEN and the logo for the European Tourism, I think we are very far from this realisation. There are many very big touristic traditional destinations in Europe.

Is EDEN the only programme which the Commission runs in terms of destination branding?

Yes, for the moment it is the main programme, but as you know we are organising also an action for the youth tourism, senior tourism but it is not linked to destinations but rather to some small, specific category of tourism.

End of the interview
## APPENDIX 6: COMPARISON OF FOUR LEADING PARADIGMS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUES</th>
<th>PARADIGMS</th>
<th>Applied in this research study</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positivism</td>
<td>Post-positivism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontology</td>
<td>Realist– Reality exists “out there” and is driven by immutable natural laws and mechanisms. Knowledge of these entities, laws and mechanisms is conventionally summarized in the form of time-and context-free generalizations.</td>
<td>Critical realist – Reality exists but can never be fully apprehended. It is driven by natural laws that can be only incompletely understood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epistemology</td>
<td>Dualist/objectivist– It is both possible and essential for the inquirer to adopt a distant, non-interactive posture. Values and other biasing and co-founding factors are thereby automatically excluded from influencing the outcomes.</td>
<td>Modified objectivist – Objectivity remains a regulatory ideal, but it can only be approximated, with special emphasis placed on external guardians such as the critical tradition and the critical community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Experimental/manipulative – Questions and/or hypotheses are stated in advance in propositional form and subjected to empirical tests (falsification) under carefully controlled conditions.</td>
<td>Modified experimental/manipulative – Emphasize critical multiplism. Redress imbalances by doing inquiry in more natural settings, using more qualitative methods, depending more on grounded theory, and reintroducing discovery into the inquiry process.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Guba (1990:23-27).
### APPENDIX 7: CHARACTERISTICS OF PURPOSESIVE SAMPLING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purposive sampling characteristics</th>
<th>Applied in this research study</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emergent Sampling design</strong></td>
<td>Without prior specification of the sample, the researcher will expand the target of the available research material (relevant documents, brochures, press releases, interview transcriptions) as the study unfolds.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Serial selection of sample units</strong></td>
<td>The sample of the present research study (e.g. the European tourism officials, the operational documents) will be extended subsequently and the decisions about the next sample will be made after the previous one is examined. The next sample will be chosen to broaden the scope of information revealed to date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Continuous adjustment or ‘focusing’ of the sample</strong></td>
<td>The researcher will make decisions about which sample to analysis in more detail as the study unfolds and decide which data units to focus on the particular moment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Selection of the point of redundancy</strong></td>
<td>The samples in this study will be used in the flexible manner. The size of the sample will adjust to the informational needs so that the overview of subject of the relations of power within the practice of destination branding in Brussels and Poland could be captured in the most profound way.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Lincoln and Guba (1985: 201-202).
# APPENDIX 8: STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE SELECTED METHODS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
<th>Applied in the present research study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviewing</td>
<td>• Good for measuring attitudes and most other content of interest (the participants' own words may be captured);</td>
<td>• In-person interviews expensive and time consuming;</td>
<td>• The attitudes and views of the key representatives working in tourism in governmental institutions will be measured;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can provide in-depth information;</td>
<td>• Transcripts and analysis may be time consuming;</td>
<td>• The main study conduct will take place in Brussels where the researcher currently holds primary residence. This will reduce potential commuting costs;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Allow good interpretative validity;</td>
<td>• The interview format will vary between the participants.</td>
<td>• The researcher will seek for clarification by utilizing other methods (e.g. participant observation and document analysis) within her bricoleurship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Useful for exploration and confirmation (clarification can be sought);</td>
<td>• Reflexive and open interviewing is a complex skill, requiring practice;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Non-verbal behaviors can be noted and recorded;</td>
<td>• The interviewer must be able to reflect on the impact their class, gender and position might have on the interviews process.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• The format of an interview is flexible;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The process draws on existing skills of conversation and communication.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant observation</td>
<td>Document analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Can yield thick and rich data to provide understandings of a social world from the perspective of the members inside that social world.</td>
<td>• May consist on rich source of information about many organizations and programs;</td>
<td>• The researcher will examine documents that treat on the relationship between tourism and destination branding written by the key informants in European tourism management;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Can provide understandings of the lived world of particular social actors;</td>
<td>• Is superior to interviewing in collection retrospective data;</td>
<td>• Other methods of data conduct which are planned to be utilised in this research study such as interviewing or participant observation are perceived to help the researcher to overcome the limitation of the pro-author bias of the analysed documented.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Allow one to directly see what people do without having to rely on what they say they do.</td>
<td>• Documents are non-reactive, non-intrusive and unobtrusive;</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Can give access to contextual factors operating in natural social settings;</td>
<td>• Records save time and money that original data collection requires;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Enables the researcher to capture behaviours, actions, conversations, interpersonal interactions, organizational or community processes or any other aspects of human experience;</td>
<td>• Document may provide a researcher with information difficult to obtain during the interviewing or observation;</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Makes huge demands upon the researcher to learn how to ‘walk the walk’ and ‘talk the talk’ (how to get immersed in the research environment);</td>
<td>• Documents are convenient to use and often available at the little or no cost.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There is a dynamic tension and strain between participation (which implies emotional involvement) and observation (which requires detachment).</td>
<td>• Documents’ content might often be misleading as it is often written to make the program/organization look good;</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The ‘embeddedness’ across participants may vary across observers and social worlds;</td>
<td>• There is a dependency on the memory and knowledge of a person doing the reporting;</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The level of explicit knowledge about the role of the observer varies across members of each social world;</td>
<td>• The needed information might be not provided in detail;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Much time and effort is required of the researcher to become accepted in the group;</td>
<td>• The records may be inaccurate or out of date;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Possible reactive and investigator effects when respondents know they are being observed.</td>
<td>• Documents may provide unrepresentative samples.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from: Guba and Lincoln (1981); Walker (1985); Patton (2002); Tashakkori & Teddlie (2003); Holloway (2005); Decrop (2006).