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*Branding at Nation: The student and
volunteers' perceptions of image/identity in
the Swedish student Nations*

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyze and understand how branding, image and identity play a role for Nations both to attract and maintain student, customers and motivate volunteers. This will be analyzed by means of the following research questions: “how do the Nations brand themselves?” and “how do members and volunteers of nations understand the Nation’s image and how do they respond to it?”

This study strives to contribute to the theoretical area that deals with branding in non-profit organizations. Particularly, this research aspires to analyze how these specific nonprofit organizations brand themselves and how students’ perceive their brand.

An interpretative interview approach was used to conduct this study. It is a qualitative study, which analyzes interviews with participants, who are active members in Nations. In addition to interviews, also observations and documents are utilized for analysis.

The findings suggest that Nations, which consider branding positive, are those which utilize branding activities the most. Moreover, the study points at the dilemma of exclusivity and inclusivity branding. The implication suggests that further research should be elaborated on the matter of inclusivity and branding.

Keywords: branding, image, identity, volunteering, Nations

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1 Introduction

Being a new student in Lund, imagine yourself getting out of the train or bus at the main train station, ready to explore the wonderful extra activities that the city of Lund and its University offer. Most likely, prior to your arrival to Lund, you have spent quite a long time solving the problem of housing. This issue has been quite a puzzle for many students in the past years. However, if you are already comfortably settled, all the opportunities are waiting for you. After a while, you probably realize that joining one of the Nations sounds like a great idea. By collecting some information, you discover a tremendous range of advantages the Nation membership offers. You find out that as a member of one Nation, you are actually authorized to visit all the Nations. You might think that this transferability means that there are no differences between Nations and therefore it does not matter, which one you join. While reading about Nations, visiting their websites and liking their Facebook pages, you realize that there are several differences. Some of the Nations have a particular image, some of them have bigger housing, and some of them have better location and so on. But, why does that matter? Then you read about opportunity about being an active member of the Nation. You can help out at lunches, pubs, clubs and other events. You ask people who are active in Nations and again new information strikes you. By being active for some time, you might get the opportunity to become foreman, responsible active member in charge of various things like lunches, designing, sports, entertainment, radio, newspapers and many other things. And then you start to think, this is something I want to try out, this is something that can be beneficial for my social life, studies, future and personal experience. This is something I have been looking for as an extra feature of my study life...Is that also a story of your own? Maybe it is and maybe not, but this is more less how our involvement and interest in the Nations evolved over the time.

Lund's student life has been characterized since 1666 by Nations, which were created similarly to medieval universities' Nationes. The word Nation comes from the Latin "natio" (birth), a concept that emerged in Europe onward the thirteenth century. The students, called scholars were moving within and across Europe to study in different European cities the teachings imparted by magisters (teachers), coming

also from different countries. Organizations and associations, which were created in their host cities in order to defend each other from the pressures of local governments, tended to be structured differently depending on their geographical origin, specifically landscape, region or city. These Nations were founded based on the country of origin, mother tongue and diversity of costumes (Pini, 2000). Despite the fact that Nations share to some extent similar features with fraternities in United States and other European countries, the concept of Nations is different and should be not confused with other student organizations. For instance, one of the interviewed participants is a student of American origin, who experienced also student life in a fraternity. He stated:

“There are similarities with American fraternities, but here Nations are larger because they take care of social activities while in US the University does, for example Nations creating houses when there’s a building crisis.”

Nowadays, there are thirteen Nations in Lund. Each of them is named after a geographical area of Sweden. However, membership in any of them is open to anyone studying at Lund University, regardless of the geographical origins. For instance, one does not have to be from or live in Malmö to be a member of the Malmö Nation. Due to the government policies, Nations have to be non-profit organization. Their incomes have to be reinvested in student life related matters. Letter of acceptance to Lund University is required in order to obtain membership. Additionally, the student has to pay approximately a fee of 200 Swedish crowns per semester (depending on the Nation). In exchange, the Nations offer different activities and services reserved for their members. Such activities and services range from lunches, pubs, clubs, balls, sports events, scholarships, housing, upscale dinners, to trips and many others.

The services and costs of Nations events are relatively cheap, especially when compared to average Swedish prices. The low cost to students is made possible by a strong volunteer work force that organizes their activities. To give an example of the range of active members, Lunds Nation relies on a workforce of more than 650 volunteers (Studentlund student guide 2011-2012) for different activities.

As mentioned earlier, each of the thirteen Nations has a different brand, through which they seek to share images of themselves - in order to attract customers, members and volunteers. Nations' branding has become a more relevant matter as after 2010 joining a Nation in Lund is not mandatory anymore. This government rules change has had a large impact on the way Nations structure themselves and function. These new different conditions forced the Nations to work harder on how to get and maintain customers and members. Consequently, Nations started considering more the role that branding plays in attracting people. For instance, some of them started creating positions for a PR person and a marketing committee. Their marketing and branding policies are elaborated by their members, who work voluntarily. Thus, branding is made by volunteers and aimed at volunteers.

This situation of Nations branding among others seems to create a paradox. There seems to be a tension between the branding concepts of exclusivity and inclusivity. In other words, a question arises whether Nations should brand themselves as exclusive and for specific group of people or inclusive and open to everybody (Uggla, 2006).

We first started our study by being intrigued by the Nations and the way they work and operate in Lund, but after our preliminary research we started being particularly interested in the way Nations brand themselves and how this relates, if it does, to volunteering. Nations are a peculiarity of Sweden, particularly of Lund and Uppsala. Only few studies have been made on how they operate and even less on how branding and image affect volunteering in Nations.

With the analysis of this specific case we aspire to contribute to scholar research on the relations among branding, nonprofit organizations and volunteering. Branding is a concept that nowadays has become more utilized. Everything has been branded from drinks, Universities, shoes to cars and many other things. Our contemporary society seems to be more receptive to branding. In particular, unlike in the past when branding seemed to be a concept applied only to products, now it is relevant also for different things than products, like experiences, people, institutions and many others (Clifton and Simmons, 2003). Hence, branding is used and applied to more products and concepts. As a consequence, also nonprofit organizations started relying on branding more and the way they brand themselves seems to affect how the volunteers will contribute and engage in a

specific organization (Mort et al., 2007). For example, considering the reputation and image the Red Cross has and how it easily attracts many volunteers. It seems that the large and more well-known organizations simply attract easier the people because of the strong brand and image. Through the analysis and study of Nations we strive to understand branding of non-profit organizations in a bigger picture and contribute to academic area by means of the implications we find.

Studying the way the Nations brand themselves and how it is related to volunteering work allows us to analyze a practical case of nonprofit branding. Specifically, the connection between branding and willingness to volunteer in the Nations seems possibly stronger in the Nations than in the other non-profit organizations. Unlike many of non-profit organizations, which spend their money for charitable or social reasons, most of Nations' profits are reinvested in the parties, housing and generally beneficial things for their members and volunteers. Thus, most of the motivational factors to volunteer for a Nation are not connected to altruism or doing good for the sake of other people. In contrary, motivations behind volunteering in a Nation seem to be related to a specific set of personal and social reasons like networking, personal satisfaction or skills development, in contrast with the exteriorized desire to help others, linked to many nonprofit organizations, as for example previously mentioned the Red Cross. It is of importance to discuss what might be the consequences if all the non-profit organizations would be based solely on not-altruistic motivations, but rather on branding. Thus, the purpose of our study is to analyze how the Nations brand themselves and how members of the Nations perceive the Nations' brands.

If, as we wonder, branding increases the tendency for people to volunteer as means to link to particular "cool" images or identities then branding also evokes the challenge nonprofit organizations might face in the future regarding the exclusivity or inclusivity of branding. If this trend to brand nonprofit organizations would increase, non-profit organizations that are not "cool" might find themselves in a situation, where people will not volunteer for charitable reasons or such reasons would be only collateral. In addition, if nonprofit organizations believe they must brand to attract volunteers, then they may be spending precious resources on branding and advertising and less on the social, environmental, educational, or political subjects they aim to address. The major dilemma regards the fact that branding is by its nature exclusive. It strives to make products or services unique, special and exclusive. But the goal of Universities and organizations like

Nations is to spread the ideas of diversity, equality and other human aspects. Yet said in a different way, they want to be inclusive. Hence, how can Nations brand inclusivity?

We will analyze four Nations out of the thirteen present in Lund due to their accessibility and their characteristics. We interviewed nineteen people volunteering in four different Nations. Our participants have different roles and responsibilities in the Nation, to which they belong. Some of them are board members, others are mainly responsible for specific activities and others workers and helpers.

1.1 Problem formulation

As it was mentioned before, branding has been becoming more frequent and important topic in our society and more entities have started relying on it. Since the Nation membership is not mandatory anymore for students at Lund University, Nations have found themselves in the position, where they have to face more challenges in order to survive, prosper, secure funding, retain current members and attract volunteers. Specifically, some Nations have lost significant number of members due to this new government policy as we will describe more in our analysis part. These Nations seem to have a blurry concept on the importance of branding and marketing, while other Nations that kept their membership number steady rely much more on branding and it plays important role for them. It is argued that in order to compete, marketing and branding play critical roles for the non-profit organizations (Stride and Lee, 2007). As Nations are also non-profit organizations, depending on membership fees to a large extent, branding has become more crucial for them. It is interesting that branding could have always been important for Nations, but it is only now that they got a “wake up call”, as one of our interviewees stated after being asked about branding importance:

“We are working very hard on branding now, in the past it did not matter, but now it is more important since it is not mandatory to join nations anymore. It was a wakeup call for us.”

Due to the new membership policies, Nations realized how much branding can be crucial also for them as nonprofit organization. Analyzing how Nations brand or would like to brand themselves enables us to consider different aspects and issues. Branding seeks to make something distinct and unique from other things. Such issue in nonprofit organization brings up the dilemma created by the apparent concept of exclusivity related to brands. In contrast, the concept of inclusivity, where everybody is welcome to be integrated in a nonprofit organization is also a case of the Nations. We would also like to understand to which extent branding motivates volunteering and what impact it has on members and workers' attraction. To sum up, our research problem is to analyze and understand how branding, image and identity play role for Nations both to attract and maintain student customers and motivate volunteers.

1.2 Research questions

Having set up the walls of our research problem and defined the matters we want to study in our thesis, we developed two main research questions. They are as follows:

- *How do the Nations brand themselves?*
- *How do members and volunteers of nations understand the Nation's image and how do they respond to it?*

These two research questions have been the bases we used when we structured our interviews and determined which question we wanted to ask. Later on, they guided our analysis by setting the limits of our research.

2 Review of literature

This literature review section aims to illustrate the main theories we found relevant in developing our research and analysis, and in relation to our research problems and questions. As such, it first introduces branding and how it is becoming a concept more present in our contemporary society, applicable also to other concepts than solely to products. Nowadays, churches, events, people, universities and also non-profit organizations utilize branding. Sequentially, we will continue our literature review section by considering some of the dilemmas related to the theories we illustrated, including different points of view on advantages and disadvantages of branding. In particular, we will consider three different attitudes towards branding: pro-, anti- and cautious branding. In the following part, we will introduce some theories on volunteering and the motivations behind it, focusing particularly on the tension between the altruistic and branding views on volunteering. Finally, we will end our literature review by considering some of the dilemmas related to branding nonprofit organizations.

2.1 Setting the stage: To brand or not to brand?

In the sixties, due to the increasing importance and use of branding, the American Marketing Association (AMA) defined brand as: “a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors” (Mort et al., 2007, p. 109). However, with time such a conception on branding evolved, switching from tangible assets, as for instance name and logo, to intangible assets, as emotional experiences and benefits (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1998).

Brand image and corporate reputation go beyond traditional marketing understanding of the customers, trying to facilitate the customers’ loyalty. Srivastava (2011) claims that brands have become the key source of differentiation that guides customer’s choice. Already Lehmann & O’Shaughnessy (1974) pointed out that brand and image as intangible assets of company might be extremely important. As Clifton and Simmons state, “Branding has been in existence for hundreds of years and has developed

into a modern concept that can be applied to anything from products and services to companies, not-for-profit concerns and even countries” (2003, p. 227).

Such theories seem now more up to date, as one could simply turn on the television or walk down the street and realize that almost everything can be or is branded. As mentioned before, in our modern society branding started from tangible products to extend now to various different aspects of our society. “The past few years have seen the apparent triumph of the brand concept: everyone from countries to political parties to individuals in organizations is now encouraged to think of themselves as a brand” (Clifton and Simmons, 2003, p. 12).

Notable to mention, the times when only companies branded their products are over. According to Holt (2003), there are four authors of brand. Besides companies, popular culture, customers and influencers are creators of brand. Today, everything can be branded and with the different subjects to brand, also the way the features of the brand are developed has been changing. Indeed, one can notice that now even churches, experiences, people, lifestyles and other aspects have branded themselves. We can examine the branding of Derby University as an example that branding has spread into all levels of life. If you have ever flown with Ryanair airlines, you must have spotted that Derby University has been branding itself even on the seats or compartments in the airplanes.

Although many academics explain branding from a marketing point of view, one of the current streams follow the idea of branding as managing meaning within the organization (Karreman and Rylander, 2008). Branding then does not send the organizational message regarding values in order to reach out to external stakeholders, but it also directs organizational members. Insufficient understanding of branding importance and incomplete utilization of its possibilities by companies might have been the reason of failures in terms of branding in many of such companies. Burmann et al. (2009) suggest that an understanding of the brand consists of a dynamic two dimensional approach towards brands: first, the brand as perceived by the purchaser, so called the ‘outside-in perspective’ and second, the brand as constructed and managed by the owner/manager of the brand, ‘the inside-out perspective’. “The conceptual approach for this perspective builds on the identity based understanding of the brand, which refers to the buyer perceptions of the brand and his related behavior” (Ibid., 2009, p. 212).

As a consequence, branding can be also seen as related to concepts such as image and identity. Concerning these concepts, there is often a misunderstanding regarding to what is image and what is identity. According to Harris and Charlantony (2001), brand identity is made of brand vision, culture, positioning, personality, relationship and presentation altogether. At the same time, brand image is the summary of impressions that customers perceive from many different subjects all of which together form brand personality.

In particular, most of the literature we found about branding seems to perceive branding as something important and that should be used more. For instance, many authors have written how-to-brand manuals and books as for example Clifton and Simmons (2003). Although, most of the scholars and researchers have devoted their studies to themes about different ways of branding, how to brand successfully or how to improve the images and others, there are more stances towards branding than just a positive one. Being more specific, we found that there are 3 significant views, a pro branding stance, a cautious branding stance and anti-branding stance. The presence of different points of views seems to imply that we should consider that branding might not only positive. Moreover, similarly to branding literature, we found supporters of the different branding currents in our interviews. Therefore, we will describe these three streams in the following sections and paragraphs.

2.1.1 Evolution of branding in contemporary society/ pro branding

Pro branding embraces the views, starting from opinion that branding is an important and effective tool, spreading to more extreme points of view. For instance, Tom Peters (2007) argues that everything is branded and that even individuals should start brand themselves regardless of age, position, the business people happen to be in, everybody needs understand the importance of branding (Peters, 2007).

Hence, for various people and companies branding has become more important craft, as the competition is growing every day in all segments of business. It can be said that the traditional resource-based view has been outdated and relational based assets are of greater importance (Cretu et al., 2009). According to Clifton and Simmons (2003), the brand experience has become more relevant in the marketing of a brand, as branding is

often related to promise of an exclusive experience. Thus, we can notice a trend to brand more products and services in contemporary society. For example, even churches are branding themselves. “Today brands are everything, and all kinds of products and services -- from accounting firms to sneaker makers to restaurants -- are figuring out how to transcend the narrow boundaries of their categories and become a brand surrounded by a Tommy Hilfiger-like buzz” (Peters, 2007, p. 2)

Such concepts on the development and relevance of branding are also extended to non-profit organizations. Some of them have been relying on a strong brand and image for quite some time already. Just think of institutions like UNICEF, the Red Cross, WWF or Amnesty International. It is even argued that many socially influential brands are in the nonprofit sector (Clifton and Simmons, 2003).

However, many “smaller” nonprofit organizations seem to neglect the importance of branding in the modern society. Competition in nonprofit segment has been increasing every year. For example, only in England thousands of new organizations join the nonprofit sector each year (Hankinson, 2000). One of the ways, in which nonprofit organizations can react to this incremented competition, is to rely on branding techniques (Tapp, 1996; Ritchie, Swami et al., 1998). For instance, Hankinson (2000) suggests that brand orientation can help to raise awareness amongst target audiences. On the other hand, some scholars have manifested concern that the unquestioned utilization of techniques developed and created in the profit context can contribute to the nonprofit sector to become over-commercialized (Sternberg 1998; Salamon 1999). Thus, we can see that some organizations seem to brand very well, but many others struggle with implementing branding, decision whether brand or not and finding the resources to do so effectively. We will further discuss the branding and its advantages in non-profit organizations later in a separate paragraph.

2.1.2 Anti branding

Apart from pro-branding oriented theories, a strong anti-branding faction of scholars and supporters has emerged. The anti-brand movement represents a confluence of ideas. For instance, according to Hollenbeck and Zinkhan (2006) the matters prominent in the anti-brand movement range from workplace equality and corporate domination to

environmentalism and marketing propaganda. Most of the anti-branding activists are concerned that branding can manipulate society and shape the personalities of individuals. Moreover, some of the anti-branders claim that branding has been abusing human values for branding purposes.

One of the main activists within this stream is Naomi Klein, whose book *No Logo* (2000) has had a large impact on branding discourse. Her essential point is that capitalism today represents the age of the brand, the logo. Logos are disruptive aspects of our personal life and they do not stop from invading all segments of everyday routines. The world is now branded and taste, cultural standards, and even values and virtues are defined by megabrands like Nike and others. For youth generation, it is critical to be cool and conduct a cool lifestyle. Klein sees branding as a parasite, which turned anti-establishment themes into promotional hits for the brands.

At the same time, a strong anti-brand society has been active online. Vast numbers of anti-brand websites have been set up, specifically targeted on some brands. These sites “use visual expression, memorable domain names, and critical language to create a negative online identity for the targeted brand” (Krishnamurthy and Kucuk, 2008, p. 1119). The goal of anti-brand sites is to affect individual consumption through creation of bad identity (Ibid, 2008). Usually they aim at a wider range of issues as cultural, technological, political, legal matters. Such anti branding websites show how some individuals can react in a hostile way to branding and also illustrates the double-edge blade represented by modern media, which can help branding’s communication but also anti-branding’s communication.

In particular, anti-branding attitudes can stem from three specific reasons: experiential, identity and moral brand avoidance. Experiential brand avoidance occurs because of negative first hand experiences that lead to unfulfilled expectations. The identity issue on its side starts when the brand image is incongruent with a person’s identity. The moral resistance on the other hand develops when the consumer's ideological beliefs clash with certain brand values, especially when the consumer is worried about the negative impact of a brand on society (Lee et al., 2009). All these reasons can lead an individual to adopt an anti-branding attitude.

These anti brand stances of both scholars and web communities stress the existence of people, who perceive branding in a negative way and therefore are hostile to branding and its practices. As our analysis will show, also among our interviewed participants some people were reluctant to brand their Nations due to possible loss of certain characteristics of their Nations like diversity, size or change in the general environment. Hence, we can see how pro branding and anti-branding supporters take two contrasting standpoints on branding. However, not everybody sees the branding solely as either positive or negative. Some scholars recognize the positive aspects of branding, but also acknowledge the possible existence of branding's bad impacts on society. They talk about cautious branding.

2.1.3 Cautious branding

Cautious branding is from a scholastic point of view somewhere in the middle between pro branding and anti-branding stances. Imagining cautious branding as an umbrella, it comprises few approaches to branding. In general, this umbrella does not deny the importance of branding. However, it follows the idea that branding should be sensitively utilized and neither pro-, nor anti branding point of view is appropriate.

One of the streams in branding claims that it is not important to promote functional differences in the brand, but the symbolic values that are more sustainable than functional ones (Chernatony et al., 2000). In other words, symbols have been considered of greater importance than actual material. Some of the consumers' loyalty to brand is based not on the actual experience with the product, but as Bhat and Reddy (1998) suggest, more on intangible connection between the product and the personality of the customer. This intangible connection is based on symbolic values as prestige, exclusivity or the feeling of freedom. However, the brand itself can consist of both functional and symbolic values. That makes branding a multidimensional concept. Wee and Ming (2002) consider symbolic values and meanings desirable for consumers' construction of their self. Although marketers should concentrate on associating these values with their brands, this task should be approached carefully since it requires much research and planning. In other words, the branding should be utilized on a cautious level. They should not jeopardize the name of their brands with just any symbolic values or meanings.

Particularly interesting is the idea of conscientious branding among the cautious branding stances. Conscientious branding is a concept that was developed around ten years ago. The main idea behind such concept is, like the name evokes, that organizations should brand themselves conscientiously, and that there are not the only actors, who develop the brand, but in the contrary the brand is developed by the interaction between the organization and the customers (Ind, 2011).

According to Ind (2011), conscientious branding has the following characteristics: it has a visible conscience, it apologizes when things go wrong, it invests time and energy in relationship building, it promotes the value of caring for one another, it acknowledges that we are all fundamentally equal, it is visibly accountable for all its actions and it takes risks in line with its values. Moreover, a brand to be considered conscientious needs to have the following core attributes: a committed and inclusive approach, the ability to think long-term and a willingness to keep promises. Proceeding with topic of exclusivity, inclusivity and values, occupational branding (Ashcraft et al., 2012) claims the worth of both economic (for example profit) and non-economic aspects (for example autonomy, praise for social responsibility. Although branding concept has been stressing the importance of quantitative values, the qualitative measures are becoming more relevant. Moreover, this concept emphasizes the tension and dilemma between exclusivity and inclusivity as a major one. Although exclusivity of companies, organizations, or occupations is exclusive, the contemporary trend is to be inclusive, open for everybody. However, this trend creates a problem. If inclusive image and policy prevail, it might harm the diversity to some extent. We will devote significant part of our analysis and discussion to this issue.

2.2 Branding non-profit organizations

Branding in the non-profit organizations sector is something that has not been studied by scholars frequently. However, due to the strengthening of the competition within the nonprofit segment, these organizations have started to understand that branding is not exclusively important only for profit seeking companies. For instance, Andreasen and Kotler (2003) claim that since nonprofit organizations need to increase their income in order to fulfill their mission, the principles and practices of marketing and branding are increasingly being applied in many nonprofit organizations. Dolnicar and Lazarevski

(2009) proved that a vast majority of nonprofit organizations are still lacking the knowledge of branding and marketing. At the same time, Stride and Lee (2007) and Voeth and Herbst (2008) showed with their studies that the number of nonprofit organizations, which started to use brand techniques has rapidly increased, similarly to what is happening in case of the Nations.

Although many nonprofit organizations do not have elementary branding strategy when setting up the activities, there are also nonprofits organization that have a strong brand heritage, requiring special preservation, renewal and extension strategies. It is a considerably great challenge to adjust the brand politics to current market conditions, yet to preserve the legacy. Also Nations face such a challenge as they have to keep some traditions, while at the same time keep the pace with the evolution of society. According to Nissim (2003), those without strategy in response to changes in commercial and nonprofit world concerning the brand issues have to turn to traditional marketing theories and practices in order to differentiate themselves and compete for scarce resources, as for instance, the members can be.

However, whatever marketing strategy one may use, one thing that seems common to all branding theories is the uniqueness related to it. All branding strategies seek to make their product or service unique and, in some ways, exclusive. The whole process of brand positioning starts with setting the frame that tries to tell customers what they can achieve by being loyal to a particular brand (Keller, 2003). Kotler's (1988) UPS concept (Unique selling proposition) suggests that every brand should build up the uniqueness. Shapiro (1981) claimed that non-profit Organizations should work on their own distinctive competencies and focus on them. Furthermore, the whole categorization of 4P – product, place, promotion, price – should be re-categorized for nonprofit organizations. Within these different claims on branding, we can find a common point relying on the uniqueness, the distinction and differentiation related to branding.

However brand, besides its image of uniqueness and exclusiveness, needs to market and advertise itself through different tools. Concerning the tools of branding, Yorke (2007) proposed that a variety of promotion tools can be used by non-profit organizations, such as phone calls, letters, e-mail, newsletters, reports, signs, press releases, editorials and brochures. In addition, as Lake (2008), mentioned, non-profit organization should develop and maintain a professional internet presence by creating a web site. This web site can display useful information, news, monthly newsletters and events and it can facilitate the

community, share alternatives for donating money or showcase the benefits of the organization. In addition, for developing branding strategies we want also to consider that non-profit organizations should search for alliances with other organizations, commerce, government, advertising media and business because these bring the additional benefits to them (Lake 2008).

However, if not perceived well, this co-operation might harm both non-profit organization and multinational company separately and bring along more damage than profit. Scholars note that there is flipside to this coin and that branding activities must be critically explored as they might affect other values. Brand management in the non-profit context is more than about satisfying donor needs (Stride and Lee, 2007, p. 109). Thus, while trying to sell the image, non-profit organizations should carefully pay attention not to betray their values. As Aiken (2001) argues, values are the *raison d'etre* (reason for being) of nonprofit organizations and legitimate their own existence, while being important both for their sector and for the wider society.

In addition, to the already mentioned concepts branding can play a role also in motivating people to volunteer for a specific non-profit organization. Such relation is particularly relevant in connection to our research problem and questions as it evokes a possible existing contrast between a classical view on altruism and volunteering and a branded and more egoism-driven volunteerism approach.

2.3 Volunteerism and branding: altruistic versus selfish approach

According to Gonzalez (2009), volunteering is an activity performed with the intention to help others and without the expectation of monetary and material compensation. As Gonzalez also points out, volunteers are not paid and their presence is not mandatory. Therefore, it is of great importance for a non-profit organization to attract volunteers and moreover retain them. Nevertheless, there are various reasons behind volunteering as not all volunteers have only altruistic reasons. For instance, Dolnicar and Randle (2007) divide volunteers into several groups including the group, for which helping others is not the main reason for volunteering. Thus, the reasons to volunteer seem to be various and different. We will focus more on volunteering and its motivational reasons in the next section.

2.3.1 Volunteering and its motivational reasons

In order to understand the reasons behind volunteering in Nations and how branding might affect them, we first started by finding different relevant literature on the reasons for which people volunteer. The reasons behind the will to volunteer are many and they differ. Carly and Snyder (1999) developed a volunteer function inventory, through which they have identified six personal and social functions served by volunteering: values, which is related to the will of the volunteer to act on or express important values as for example humanitarianism; understanding, which regards the interest that the volunteer has in learning more about the world and practice skills often unused; enhancement, which allows the volunteer to grow and develop psychologically through his activities; career or the interest of the volunteer to develop career related experience; social which is linked with the strengthening of individual social relationships; and finally protective, which refers to the individual using volunteerism as mean, through which he/she reduces negative feelings such as guilt.

In a similar way, Dolnicar and Randle (2007) used the volunteering function inventory for their research and as a result they divided volunteers according to their motivations into six different psychographic segments: “classic volunteers,” whose purposes include doing something worthwhile, personal satisfaction, and helping others; “dedicated volunteers” on the other hand, perceive each one of the motives for volunteering as relevant; “personally involved volunteers” donate time because of someone they know in the organization. “volunteers for personal satisfaction” and “altruists” mainly wish to help others. Finally, “niche volunteers” typically have fewer and more specific drivers motivating them, as for instance gaining work experience.

These categories of different volunteering reasons are relevant for our study as during our interviews we found similar divisions among our interviewees. For instance, some people worked because of a friend, like the personally involved volunteers, or niche volunteers, who strive to gain work experience. In addition, due to the fact that volunteers in a Nation have specific characteristics as being young and students, we also found relevant Schondel and Boehm (2000) findings, which argue that adolescent and young volunteer may have different reasons to do so in comparison to adults. In particular, these adolescents and young students strive to develop and establish an identity that separates

them from their family and validate it. The socialization, related to a sense of self belonging; the need for affirmation, linked to the research of recognition admiration and respect; and relatedness as young volunteer seem to see themselves as alone or loners and volunteering can give them the feeling of belonging to a social group (Ibid, 2000).

All the concepts we illustrate were considered by us when analyzing our collected data. They allowed us to set a distinction between the reasons, for which people volunteer in a Nation and try to categorize them according to the way they might be related to the concept of branding.

2.4 The dilemmas behind branding and nonprofit organizations

The truly significant dilemma of nonprofit organizations and perhaps of all the brand is whether the entity should brand itself on the basis of exclusivity or inclusivity. Both concepts have several advantages, but at the same time also disadvantages. As Creyton (2004) suggests, it is beneficial but enormously challenging to be truly inclusive. It requires being inclusive regardless of race, gender, social status or class, but also being inclusive in offering opportunities equally for everybody. Naturally, it is very hard to achieve perfect inclusiveness also because it is difficult to assess the inclusiveness objectively as an ambiguous aspect. Nevertheless, the most common barriers for nonprofit organizations to become inclusive are fear and uncertainty, relationship to the resources and client, concerns regarding time and resource investment, organizational culture and norms, a disparity between perceptions, motivations and reality, intensive recruitment with minimal follow-up or management (Phillips, 1996).

On the other side, Lisanti (2011) suggests that exclusiveness is the right concept to get over the sluggish times during the recession for all kinds of organizations, but the branding strategy has to be rethought. Due to the turbulent times and major changes in everyday life, there are several implications for exclusive branding. Particularly, new categories should be branded as today everything can be branded. Moreover, co-branding is important to establish exclusive connection between the brands. Establishing pop-up-stores and revealing new markets is also of great importance. But most importantly, also social networks play crucial role. Facebook, twitter, websites or LinkedIn are crucial for

many people and organizations. They offer the opportunity to build up a strong audience, able to purchase merchandise immediately.

Having our case of Nations, a dilemma occurs. Should Nations brand? Should they brand themselves as exclusive inclusive organizations? These dilemmas will be analyzed in the analyze section later on. In our analysis and subsequently in discussion, we will speak back to the literature as we will examine these dilemmas in terms of branding and what future implications they might have for scholars.

3 Methodology

This study will explore branding, image, identity and volunteerism within the context of Nations in Lund. Nations are student organizations with longstanding traditions and more recently they have begun to brand themselves. These organizations will be described more closely in the next section. For the purposes of conducting research in these organizations, not all Nations have been examined. Access to two Nations was granted through the personal contacts. Then we sent e-mails to the other 11 Nations regarding our request to study their organization. Only two Nations replied to our e-mails. Eventually, by chance we ended up with a sample of Nations which are representatives of how many students group Nations into four loose categories. The categorization of Nations was based on our observations of students' perceptions that were mentioned in interviews and will be introduced later.

As for chosen methodologies for data collection, we conducted 19 interviews in four Nations, we undertook several observations of events taking place in all of the Nations, although to varying extent. And finally, we have collected significant amount of promotional materials such as posters, brochures, leaflets and flyers.

3.1 Theoretical Framework: Qualitative research and Interpretative perspective

The initial idea of this research stems from our personal experience. As new students of international origin, we considered involvement in Nations as a unique opportunity to meet Swedish people and to embrace the Swedish culture. While we were involved in the Nations activities and volunteering, we had the chance to learn a lot about the Nations' background. As the time passed by, we started to be intrigued, whether it is important for Nations to brand themselves or not. We were also interested in volunteering in connection with branding, in terms of how students as volunteers perceive the branding of the Nations.

The theoretical framework is influenced by a commitment to an interpretative interview approach as interviews offer an opportunity to study, observe and analyze aspects beyond the availability of written material. By using an interpretive perspective for our research methodology means that we considered several assumptions underlying the interpretative perspective while shaping and after while analyzing our research. First of all, such assumptions include the concept of life world (Husserl, 1969). According to such concept, the life world is related to how the person subjectively experiences reality but is also objective for person's inner perception (Bengtsson, 1989).

Another assumption of an interpretative perspective according to Sandberg and Targama (2007) is that people act according to their understanding of the world. Moreover, there is our knowledge about reality being socially constructed behind interpretative perspective (Ibid, 2007). We are born in a constructed reality, where our understanding of reality is created by ourselves and others on the basis of our experiences interaction and communication with each other.

By using an interpretative approach in our interviews methods we aspired to consider during all the phases of our research, how its development and later findings depend on the context and the interpretation of the world that both our interviewees and us have. Therefore, a first step of our research procedure was trying to be reflexive to spot and acknowledge our assumptions and biases in order for our thesis to be more open and "honest" (Creswell, 2003), such as being insiders and selecting our research sites based on firsthand knowledge. During the data collection we used an interpretative approach to our gathered data, which lead to trying to understand how people understand (Alvesson and Skodberg, 2000) the branding of the Nations. Such considerations directed our finding that will be explicated in our analysis section.

This study is qualitative. It is based on understanding constructed by individuals through their interaction with their surrounding world (Merriam, 2002). Therefore, our methodology for our research follows what Merriam (2002) considers the "key characteristics that cut across various interpretative qualitative research designs" (Merriam, 2002, p.4). The first characteristic is that scholars want to understand the meaning people have created. In other words, they strive to understand how people make sense of their experiences.

A second characteristic of qualitative research according to Merriam is that the researcher is the primary instrument in the process of data collection and analysis. This includes the possibility of enhancing the process of understanding via communication either verbal or not. We used such possibility of enhancement particularly during the interviews phase. Although our interview guide included prepared questions, as human instruments we were able to be adaptive and add or adjust the questions, during the process of collecting data the order changed depending on the development of the interviews. Some new questions were added due to certain developments of specific interviews. As Kvale (1996) argues, interviews work best when they are a conversation. Hence, we conducted our interviews as conversations. In order to gather as fruitful and useful data as possible, we conducted these interviews in a flexible way, so the flow of the interview was smooth and natural.

It this to mention however that due to the fact that we are the main instrument of both the evolution of our research and its analysis it is important to recognize and acknowledge our previous biases and assumptions in order for our thesis to be more relevant and significant (Merriam, 2002) and to reflect on who we are in the inquiry while considering our personal experiences and how they affect our studies (Creswell, 2003).

As Merriam (2002) suggests, our research relied on an inductive approach, is “emergent” (Creswell, 2003, p. 181), hence we first gathered our material which included interviews and observations in order to supply a lack of theory to explain our studied object, and through our gathered material we then tried to built concepts and theories instead of testing postulates and hypotheses deductively. Instead we based our study on induction, coming to general from particular.

Finally, we strived to elaborate our qualitative research in a way to be “richly descriptive” (Merriam, 2002, p. 5), which means we focused more on words and pictures instead of numbers. This orientation towards being richly descriptive can be seen in our choices of making interviews and observations that allow us to support our findings with quotes and excerpts.

3.2 Data collection

Collection of the data was conducted simultaneously with analyzing the data. Data were analyzed while data collection was in the progress. While interviewing people from four Nations, we were observing various activities organized by the Nations. Moreover, we were collecting the wide range of marketing and promotional material, posters, took notes about facebook events and gathered samples. The interviews offered substantial amount of data for analysis with many fruitful findings, facts and insights. All of the interviews were recorded and transcribed into digital version via express scribe program and then printed for analysis.

3.2.1 Sources of data

The main tool on which we relied upon for our research has been an interpretative interview approach. This means that we interviewed people considering that the human world is never a world itself but always an experienced world (Sandberg and Targama, 2007). Our data collection comprises interviews, observations and promotional materials. The interviews play a critical and most significant role in our study. However, observations and promotional materials are also of great importance as they bring additional details about some of the participants' insight and can be amended with specific detailed information.

3.2.2 About the Nations

Nations have been part of student life in Lund ever since Lund University was founded. Today Lund has thirteen Nations – Wermlands, Kalmar, Helsingkrona, Smalands, Goteborgs, Blekingeska, Sydsvenska, Krischan, Vastgota, Ostgota, Malmo, Lunds, Hallands. In the past, there were also – Skånska Nation (due to its size, it was dissolved into Lunds Nation, Malmö Nation, Helsingkrona Nation, Ystad/Sydsvenska Nation and Kristianstad Nation), Götiska Nation, Norrland Nation and Södermarlands Nation. Nations can be briefly described as nonprofit organizations that take care of different social and practical aspects of student life ranging from lunches to parties to housing and

scholarships. Even if nations present many similarities they also differ from each other for various different reasons.

For our research project we investigated four different Nations, Wermlands, Lunds, Helsingkrona and Smalands. Through our interviews and observations we have been able to draw general pictures of these four Nations, pictures that we are going to explain in this methodology section. They will be helpful later on in the development of our analysis. As it was mentioned, the sample of studied Nations was not purposive. However, after analyzing the answers of participants, we eventually understood that coincidentally we have been studying one Nation per each group of Nations. As it will be discussed, Nations in Lund can be loosely categorized according to our (as members of Lunds Nation) and participants' perceptions into four groups.

As we mentioned, there are 4 kinds of groups according to the perceptions and thoughts of participants and ourselves. Prior to our analysis and data collection, we observed this dividing among many students and also active members of Nations. While interviewing members of studies Nations, we understood that this categorization is perceived the same way by vast majority of students. Lunds is part of the so called group of city Nations (Ostgota, Goteborgs and Malmo Nations). Helsingkrona is part of the Tunavagen Nations (Sydiskanska, Krischan, Vastgota and Hallands Nations), which includes the Nations located on the same street. On the other hand, Wermlands often associates itself with the two other small Nations (Kalmar and Blekingiska Nations). Finally Smaland is a Nation with a very specific set of characteristic that we will mention later in its specific description. City Nations, Tunavagen Nations and "small" Nations, they all collaborate to some extent in order to make their events and image more visible to students.

Lunds

Lunds is the biggest Nation in Lund. According to Studentlund organization (<http://studentlund.se/>) more than four thousands members is registered as members of this Nation. Housing of Lunds Nation is available for approximately 155 students every semester. As in most of the Nations, most of the students living in the building are foremen, responsible for activities, who have been living in the Nation for a longer period. Lunds' organizational model is composed of four board members, who are working full-

time and have to suspend their studies during their period of mandate. In exchange, they are 8000 Swedish crowns per month by the Nation. These board members are in charge of managing the different organizational aspects of the Nation and are elected every semester by Lunds' members. An electing committee, selected group of people composed of Nation members has the right to recommend some people to be elected for positions in the board of directors.

In addition, the Nation counts on more than eighty supervisors, called foremen, who work on volunteer bases and are in charge of organizing the different activities offered by Lunds. Usually this implies having to work once every three week. In order to become a foreman, one must fill a form, including which activities one would like to be responsible for. Consequently, the members in the board decide upon who will be accepted.

The foremen are responsible for finding workers for the activity they will organize. Such workers at Lunds are called tjanstemen, which could be translated as officials. The marketing and branding responsibility is mainly in the hands of one of the members of the board, the Notariet, who is also in charge of other tasks. In addition, three more foremen are in charge of PR responsibilities.

We have collected this promotional material of Lunds Nation: posters – 3 posters for Saturday night club Wonderland (taking place every 3rd week), a poster for sittning bookings at Lunds Nation (sittning is a cultural and social event for students, where a group of friends or classmates can book their places on Thursday or Saturday in the Playground room in Lunds. Purpose of sittning is to have dinner together and join party/disco, which takes place after the sittning. Every group has usually chosen common theme sittning, for example 80's, superheroes, trilogy theme and so on), one poster for Hybris (Saturday night club other nights than Wonderland), 2 posters of the week overview (includes information of activities and events for every day; specifically lunch information for every day during the workweek, breakfast/brunch information for Saturday/Sunday, Sunday dinner, sittnings for Thursday and Saturday, clubs on Thursday and Saturday, pub on Saturday and also the information about sports activities, football practice on Monday and floorball practice on Tuesday), leaflet for Christmas party (Julfest), invitation to 45.th Finnfest (annual ball of Lunds Nation), novischguide for students (guide for new student members of Lunds), internets sources (<http://www.lundsnation.se/>; <http://www.facebook.com/lundsnation>).

Notable to mention, as we know personally the new design foreman in Lunds, we have the contact and access to all posters designed in the previous semester in the digital form. As for interviewing, we have conducted 5 interviews with participants from Lunds Nation.

Wermlands

Wermlands Nation is one of the oldest Nations in Lund. It has a similar structure to Lunds. However, it is one of the smallest Nations with around eight hundred fifty members at the present. According to Wermlands sources, the Nation used to be one of the biggest ones few years ago with more than three thousands members but then its numbers started to quickly decline.

Wermlands organizational structure is comprises three elected board members working full-time, around eighty foremen chosen by the board, and workers who are called jobbare. Wermlands does not have any PR responsible and most of marketing and branding responsibilities for particular events are assigned to foremen, or to the Qurator, the head of the Nation. Wermlands offers extra curricular activities for students, particularly spex (theatre), a well-being and cultural committee, a choir and a web newspaper Samojeden.

We have collected this promotional material of Wermlands Nation: welcome brochure (English edition and Swedish edition), internet sources (<http://www.wermlandsnation.se/>; <http://www.facebook.com/Wermlands>). We have conducted 4 interviews with participants from Wermlands Nation.

Helsingkrona

Helsingkrona has a base of two thousand and two hundred members. According to their sources, they have the best members' retention percentage among all Nations. Helsingkrona's board is composed of five members. Three of them work full-time and are paid. All the board members are elected by members. In addition, some foreman positions are also elected even if some suggestions are made by an election committee. The rest of the foremen are selected by the board members. The total number of foremen is approximately 100. The workers likewise Wermlands are called jobbare.

Helsingkrona recently established a position, in which elected board member is specifically in charge of PR activities of the Nation. Interestingly enough, unlike other board members, he does so on the volunteer basis. In addition, the Nation relies on a marketing committee directed by an elected member and composed of additionally thirty five other volunteers.

The collected promotional material of Helsingkrona consists of general poster of the Nation, welcome brochure in English language, internet sources (<http://www.helsingkrona.se>; <http://www.facebook.com/helsingkrona>). We have conducted 5 interviews with participants from Helsingkrona Nation.

Smalands

As mentioned before, Smalands is neither part of Kurators Kollegiet (further only KK) nor Studentlund. This is due to its political engagement that led its members to vote to become officially socialist organization, which tore apart from the KK back in 1970, as KK requires Nations to be apolitical and areligious. Not being part of these associations has different effects on Smalands. The most remarkable is that membership in Smalands does not grant the right to participate to other Nation activities.

The Nation has currently around four hundred fifty members and this number has been decreasing according to interviews with all Smalands participants. The organizational diagram is composed of two elected board members, who are paid and working full-time, both with equal power and responsibilities. The Nation is also composed of different committees, which are elected and cooperate with the board, even if not submitted to it.

The responsible of the activities, foremen, are elected by members of Smalands and everybody can candidate himself for some activities including proposing new ones. The workers are called jobbare and the foremen have the responsibility to find them. Nobody is particularly in care of marketing and PR responsibilities and most of it is carried either by the foremen responsible for the event or the board members.

We have collected this promotional material of Smalands Nation: welcome brochure, promotional flyer, internet sources (<http://www.smalands.org>; <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Sm%C3%A5lands-Nation-Lund/143163539029261>). We have conducted 5 interviews with participants from Smalands Nation.

Kurators Kollegiet and Studentlund

The Nations described, except Smalands, are all members of the Kurators Kollegiet (KK), an association of the Nations. Its aim is collaboration and interaction among them in order to achieve greater results, both in their relation to public institutions and society.

As mentioned before, every student at Lund University had to be member of a Nation until 2010. Now it is not mandatory anymore, so Nations started to realize more the importance of cooperating, as they also realized that collaboration in more activities can achieve higher degree of retention. This led the creation of Studentlund. Studentlund is comprises members of Nations, Unions and Academic Society (Akademiska föreningen, AF), and membership in Studentlund assures advantages and possibility to participate in activities organized by members of Studentlund. Moreover, Studentlund also takes care of advertising Nations' activities and events by grouping them all together on its website. The cooperation is not just only of its kind, it represents also one of the reasons why tons of students choose Lund as a place to study every year. Out of thirteen Nations twelve are both part of KK and Studentlund. The only exception is Smalands (<http://kuratorskollegiet.se/>; <http://studentlund.se/>).

The promotional material of other Nations comprise promotional leaflet of Blekingska Nation, invitation for Malmo Nation Vårbal, leaflet of Västgöta Nation, Novischguide of Malmo Nation, a Gudrun leaflet (about cooperation between Blekingska, Kalmar and Wermlands Nation), promotional flyer of Sydska's club Heartland,

The promotional material that regards all of the Nations (except Smalands Nation) is composed of Studentlund leaflet issued by Kurators Kollegiet. This leaflet summarizes the weekly overview of all regular activities organized by all Studentlund Nations.

3.2.3 Interviews

Interviews present main body of our data, gathered for the analysis purposes of this study. As we mentioned before, we have conducted 19 interviews throughout the data collection process. We interviewed 5 people per Nation in Smalands, Lunds and Helsingkrona, and 4 persons in Wermlands. However, some of the interviewed people

could be counted as interviewee of more Nations, as they have participated in volunteering activities in more than one Nation belonging to objects of our study. As for choosing the participants, we tried to choose the persons with different positions within the organizations in order to achieve the balanced mix of different views on volunteering within the Nations. The interviewee group of every Nation includes foremen (responsible) for different positions, member(s) of executive board and also a worker, volunteer without responsibilities within the Nation organization. As some of the participants expressed the wish to stay anonymous, we will not specify the real name, gender and age of participants. However, we will mention the position of the participant in the Nation in cases where it will play important role and participants have given us the approval to specify it. The positions of the 19 interview participants are as follows: Kurator (head of the Nation), club foreman, Kokmasteries (kitchen chef), international secretary, IT foreman, PR foreman, marketing foreman, Notariet (responsible for events in the Nation), newspaper foreman, volunteer, café foreman, lunch foreman and pub foreman. Some of the interviewees have same or similar roles in different positions.

The access to Nations foremen and workers was granted through personal contacts and via e-mail connection. Every Nation has been contacted, however only few of them replied to our request. Eventually, the composition of Nations participating in interviews was appropriate as we managed to obtain contacts to Nations that are specific in terms of students' perception. The participants were in the majority of cases recruited through the persons we contacted via e-mails. We relied on contacts and advice of people who sit in the board of directors in particular Nations. For some specific cases, we approached persons we knew in person directly, as we were aware that due to their positions in the Nations they might contribute to our study with a fruitful stories and superior knowledge about Nation's background.

The interviews were conducted mostly in the premises of particular Nations, where we could have observed also differences in the ways we were welcome or hosted. The interviews followed semi-structured method, by having a prepared framework of questions aimed at target issues of this study. However, this method allows the interviewers to have a certain degree of freedom to ask additional questions when interesting information emerges. The interviews are appropriate method for qualitative data collection as opinions, personal feelings and perceptions of interviewees have substantial role in understanding of

branding and volunteering matters from students' point of view. Nevertheless, besides several strengths of this method, there are also some weaknesses and limitations.

Apart from answers of interviewees, one can possibly analyze emotional reactions of interviewees or collect confidential insights, which would interview participants not share with researcher on a different level of communication. The construction of interviews stemmed fundamentally from Kvalle's (1996) technique. It is based on seven stages of interview investigation - *Thematizing, Designing, Interview Situation, Transcription, Analysis, Verification and Reporting*.

On the other side, the drawback of interview draws from the fact that interviewers' judgment and steering of the questions might be influenced by biases and assumptions. It will be further discussed and explained how crucial it is for research to acknowledge these biases and be capable of managing them. Nevertheless, interviews are one of the most powerful in qualitative research (MacCracken, 1996).

The interviews lasted on average around 50 minutes. The shortest interview lasted 24 minutes and the longest one 117 minutes. The interviews were recorded on iPhone device and transcribed into digital document through Express Scribe software. Altogether the interview transcriptions' size was 77 pages single spaced.

3.2.4 Observations

In order to understand thoroughly the functional system of Nations, we have observed several events, occasions, social meetings and casual activities in the Nations for several months. We believe that these firsthand impressions and experiences can enlighten implications of our study and propose fruitful behind-the-scene insights.

As students, we have had an unique chance to participate in various kinds of activities that are not accessible for researchers outside student life in Lund. As members of Studentlund organization we could have observed and actually compare the similar or identical activities in the Nations.

First of all, we observed the Nation's fair in the beginning of two semesters, where we could have seen presence of all Nations. All of them have their regular stands where they presented their activities, handed out leaflets, flyers and brochures, and talked to

students in order to market themselves and attract them. It is of great importance nowadays that Nations attract students to join them, as membership fees and membership itself play big role for Nations' budget and reputation. Particularly in the past few years, as University's mandatory rule to become a member of one Nations is not valid anymore.

Furthermore, we were participants and observers at many cultural activities organized by Nations. We have worked for more Nations, therefore we are eligible to understand deeper the working experience among various Nations. We have also participated in a wide range of cultural activities regarding sports, leisure, education or highly traditional feasts. The observations were quite informal and were conducted also prior to the start of the research study, but also systematically and intentionally during the data collection and analysis. Especially for purpose of our project, we have visited the sites of the Nations and observed events at the Nations. We have visited clubs and pubs in all four studied Nations, one of us volunteered in dinner preparation at Helsingkrona and also participated in Tjanstamannafest of this Nation (feast for foremen of the Nation and their helpers). Regarding Smalands, we have visited people we personally know and live there. At Lunds Nation we observed everyday life as we live in premises of the Nation, volunteered as foremen and participated also in Tjanstamannafest and Finnfest (Lunds' annual ball). The purpose was to observe the people at the Nation, the community, other participants, proximity of international people, traditions and collection of promotional material.

3.2.5 Promotional material

In order to analyze branding activities, we have gathered promotional material that had been issued by Nations. We have collected posters, flyers, brochures, leaflets and other material. Moreover, we have thoroughly studied Nations' websites, facebook pages and other promotional activities. The significant difference that requires also attention is the fact that some of the Nations have recently established their own PR departments or promoted particular persons(s) to be in charge of these activities. It is clearly visible how branding is becoming more crucial activity in order to surpass competitors and maintain organization's position.

3.3 Data analysis

The interpretative interview approach played a particular role in the analysis of the material we gathered during our interviews. Afterwards, we analyzed interviews with a focus on research problem and questions. During the analysis of our gathered data we first looked for some of the themes and categories using Ryan and Bernard (2003) guidelines to do so, which include identifying: repetitions, categories, metaphors, transitions, similarities and differences, and theory related material which refers to the way of thinking of the interviewees. For the purpose of identification we analyzed interviews and set up the important statements, questions, and keywords. The successive step of our analysis has been processing our data.

3.4 Acknowledging biases

Reflexivity is important in order to understand how personal views or experiences might shape the analysis and outcome of the research. In particular, these views are mirrored in the assumptions and biases held by researchers. These personal views should be not neglected, but on the other hand they should be acknowledged so some stances would be comprehensive for the reader.

As Creswell (2003) stated, the aim of qualitative research is not objectivity, nor reliability or making general rules. The outcome of the research should be however valid and legitimate. Hence, this is the reason why acknowledging biases is of great significance. Monitoring biases and continual reflexivity are systematically fruitful for validation of the qualitative research and study.

In our research, biases might occur predominantly due to our deep involvement in the Nation and personal experiences as we are members of Lunds Nation and lunch foremen at the Nation at the same time. We are aware that these factors might have influenced our views and cause disruptively on the distance researchers should hold from their studied subjects. Yet this involvement and experience may on the other hand facilitate our understanding and depth of our study. According to Creswell (2003), personal interpretation is an inevitable outcome of qualitative data analysis. Therefore, it is understandable that assumptions are natural.

We acknowledge we might hold several assumptions. We might tend to conclude some facts prior to finish the analysis of the research. Due to our own personal experience with Nations, we incline to brand the Nations according to our own perception and rumors or talks we have heard. As we mentioned before, our thoughts and perceptions are that there are 4 different groups and types of Nations. Moreover, we may have assumed that mostly students do not volunteer in order to get benefits as we have not participated in volunteering activities because of it, but we have quickly learned it is not like that with all the students and motivations behind the volunteering are various. We also may have initially thought that students follow their inner needs and join and volunteer for the Nation they identify with. However, also in this case we learned that it is not always the case.

We have to be aware of all our biases and assumptions, in order to be capable of managing them. As we have been conducting qualitative research with inductive principles, it is critical to avoid slipping into quantitative methods and deductive process. Thick description of culture, events and the reflection, these all aspects should reinforce the validity of our research. This will facilitate the reader's recognition of the trustworthiness, authenticity and credibility of research, the aspects that Creswell (2003) regards as most important in qualitative research.

4 Analysis

As we mentioned in our introduction, the purpose of our thesis is to analyze the impact branding has on nonprofit organizations. In order to do so, we formulated two research questions that will explore how Nations brand themselves and how people within Nations perceive such branding. Our primary focus is to answer these questions in the analytical part. Hence, our analysis part are be structured in order to answer such questions.

Interviews, observations and documents shed light on topic of branding in relation to the Nations. Our primary findings are connected three problems, which Nations have to take into consideration and they are struggling with. These problems are practical, symbolic and social. The practical problem concerns the fact that membership in Nations is not mandatory anymore and Nations have to rethink their branding strategies or set the strategies up if they have not had any yet. The consequences of decreasing number of members are obvious. In the worst case scenario, they might lead to the closure of the particular Nation or decreasing number of students in Lund, as many of them have chosen Lund as place of their studies because of Nations presence. The symbolic problem regards the dilemma of exclusivity and inclusivity. It is a question of great importance, whether the Nations should brand themselves as exclusive organizations for specific types of people or on the other hand should be inclusive, embracing all kinds of personalities. The last problem is social and to a large extent is a problem of all non-profit organizations in general. With regard to connection between branding and volunteering, there is a dilemma whether branding volunteerism as something cool, where people can express their identity and practice networking might lead to struggling of volunteering based on altruistic reasons.

Our analysis has two main chapters related to our two main research questions. In the first chapter, we will analyze how Nations brand themselves. We first start with studying documents and internet sources of the four particular Nations (Lunds Nation, Smalands Nation, Wermlands Nation and Helsingkrona Nation). Moreover, we will closely look on branding strategies found in interviews of participants responsible for branding and marketing in these Nations. In the first part of the analysis, we deal with the branding and

marketing activities of the Nations. By analyzing these activities we will build up the case and set up the images of the Nations. The second chapter examines the perceptions of Nation's brand by members and non-members of particular Nations. Furthermore, we will also focus on the implications of the perceptions of participants regarding branding. Whether they are pro branding-, cautious branding-, or anti-branding oriented, the concept itself always has some implications.

4.1 How do Nations brand themselves?

Before one can begin to discuss the implications of branding in nonprofits, it is important to study how that branding looks and what it seeks to communicate. Branding is a highly localized and contextual issue and therefore we begin by analyzing the various branding activities our studied Nations put forth. The analyzed material comprises promotional material, interview with people who do branding in the Nations and sometimes personal observations.

Lunds Nation

It is recognizable that the branding and design of Lunds Nation is of bigger importance now. The posters have been changing in the last semester. A new design foreman started to structure the information on the posters of Wonderland Saturday night disco in a unified way. Lunds used to be and still is perceived as mainstream Nation and Wonderland is supposed to play crucial role in order to change the mainstream image. As a board member said when we asked about his/her Nation's branding:

“We were focusing on being mainstream, we even had poster on being mainstream, but now we are trying to change, for example with wonderland. Also with a policy of always being available, open in the summer and so on”

The headlines of the posters of Wonderland are now visibly designed, always on the top, written in the same font. Moreover, there is written on every poster in the same way, which Nation is organizing the event, at what time and which day. What varies one

poster from another is the background photo of the DJ, who is in charge of the music that night and obviously the name of the DJ and his/her startup of the evening.

In comparison with posters from autumn semester 2011, there is a significant improvement in the designing of posters. As interviewed participants suggested, posters are particularly designed in a unified, visible and clear way. A former PR foreman from Lunds said about the posters and their importance:

“I like unified banner, it makes it easier to recognize the event, but the posters content is sometimes really bad. There are some good ones, I can’t really say which ones, I think city Nations, particularly OGS have been good with keeping unified expressions to students. Most of people have griffons. Most of nations have animal insignia, you can easily recognize them.”

One semester before, posters did not imply clearly what Nation is organizing the event. Furthermore, the background of the posters was unclear, without sending out the clear message what it means. Generally, it lacked the information posters of Lunds have these days. However, the former PR foreman is convinced that posters are ineffective, outdated and the money costs are higher than the profit they create. Nevertheless, he admits they *might* be sometimes effective, for special events.

There is an obvious change also regarding posters about week overview. While before they were not that visible and one can find them one week in the elevator, yet another there were not anywhere, nowadays they are regularly to be found in the hallway and elevator of Lunds Nation. These posters have all the important information for upcoming weeks.

What we have noticed is that all the posters and leaflets of Lunds Nation are in Swedish language. We can only speculate whether the aim is to attract mostly Swedish people, or Nation relies on students’ knowledge of Swedish language or its similarity with English language, or there is just lack of awareness that international students attend also the events.

Novisch guide informs new members of Lunds about clubs, sittning, lunches, radio and café activities, housing, sscholarships and most important festivities of the study year (Oktoberfest, Gåsafesten, Christmas Party and Finnfesten).

Looking at the webpage of Lunds Nation, the first thing that strikes the visitor is that there is only Swedish version available. However, according to IT foreman at the Nation, the webpage is under construction and English version will be added soon. If we look on the information, really interesting are the open hours of the office, regarding days, but also in terms of out-of-season. It confirms the words of interview participants that Lunds Nation appears to be the “most” open Nation in terms of activities. As we talked about the connection between non-profit organizations and companies (Lake, 2008), it is also valid statement for this Nation. Lunds co-operates with SEB (Swedish bank), Spendrups (brewery) and Pernod Ricard (producer of distilled beverages). Facebook page focuses on promoting some events, particularly Wonderland, which is a flag-ship of Lunds parties.

Facebook page also informs its fans about everyday lunch during the week, few hours before serving of the lunch starts. Nation would like to improve the facebook communication and branding more, as it was said by one participant that facebook is nowadays about interaction, that is the branding.

Smalands Nation

Smalands Nation is one of the Nations, which are losing their members year by year. There is a strong stereotypical opinion about Smalands Nation – left oriented in the political spectrum, feminist, vegan and green. But mostly people say the Nation is communist and these rumors are deemed harmful. As a foreman from Smalands mentioned when asked about the students’ perception of his/her Nation’s image by non members of Smalands:

“There are some ideas about Smalands that stick around even if they might be not true anymore. People have had a lot of time to get this rumours spread around Smalands about us that we are communists and this has been keeping students from coming to our Nation.”

They have been realizing the importance of branding recently and that the Nation has to be brand in order to eliminate the spreading of harmful image and reputation. However, there is no specific position for branding in the Nation. The so-called marketing activities or responsibilities come under the position of Kurator, the head of the Nation. Although this person is aware of disadvantages of Smalands brings and that the Nation is disconnected to quite a few channels for branding, there is not much this person can change in this sense. This participant notes:

“We are also losing promotion at Studentlund, on the page where is everybody. Since we are not there, it’s a big opportunity lost when people don’t see us. I think we can lose quite much economically. I can understand that people that don’t want us to be part of Studentlund, because then you have to be also part of AF, and AF is really conservative, right from us, and we don’t want to support it. I would rather choose to be part of Studentlund.”

However, for becoming part of Studentlund, the common consent of the members is necessary. The consent can be granted during monthly meetings of the Nation. As we have personally observed when we attended the Nations’ fair, also due to non-membership in Studentlund, Smalands did not have the proper stand there. As we have heard from participants of other Nations, it creates the impression that Nation is an outcast among the Nations.

Yet the branding activities are also utilized to some extent by committees, which use mostly facebook groups, pages and events for self-promotion. The welcome brochure of Smalands Nation clearly demonstrates the fundamental values and interests of the Nation, as they are headlined on the first page. Those words in Swedish say: Music & politics & Love & Revolution. Unlike other Nations, this brochure is clearly aimed also at international students, as information is in English. The brochure informs the reader about the events, activities and facilities. Specifically Cafés, pubs, committees, interest groups and housing. The effort to differentiate is clear, as the words in the brochure stress that Smalands Nation is antiracist, socialistic and feminist. Also names of the committees or cafés imply the nature of Smalands Nation, for example Feministcafé or Environment Committee.

Also the promotional flyer invites students in English language, stressing again the values and features of the Nation, emphasizing that it is not important to be a part of the Studentlund organization by headline “Never mind Studentlund, here’s Smalands Nation!” Flyers and posters are generally considered important, as stated the Kurator of Smalands.

The website of Smalands Nation is available in English and is very well-arranged. The main “home” button will lead the visitor to main information about the weekly overview and most important information about activities. One can find special offers for parties, links to facebook events, information about political and cultural activities (so typical for Smalands), registration info, volunteering information and particularly important information that students of other Nations can visit Smalands clubs and events despite Smalands not being member of Studentlund organization. The facebook page offers only information about the Nation and redirecting link to official webpage. However, active members of Smalands send out individually the invitations for the activities they are responsible for. Smalands activities are also quite often promoted on the facebook via ESN Lund organization and Event Masters.

Helsingkrona Nation

The board of directors in Helsingkrona is aware of branding and quite concerned about the future. They have both marketing and PR positions (note: we interviewed both people). They conducted a poll some time ago and the result was very disappointing for them, as most of the students say they are the Schlager Nation (called after Schlager natt – disco every other Friday, where are played Swedish songs that have been part of Eurovision contest). Hence, they have been working on strategic document called unofficially according to one participant “HT12” (autumn semester 2012 – planned for this period) to change the branding and “*overhaul*” the image of the Nation. It seems that is has been happening because of particular findings the Nation made. As the marketing foreman mentioned:

“People have tacit ideas of what is good for the future, but can’t be put on paper, some ideas are ad hoc. So you sort of take it as it comes.”

According to these words, Nations lack the long-term vision. They do not know which goals to strive for, how to achieve these goals, they have insufficient knowledge how to market the Nation or how to work with different committees.

At the moment, according to interviewed participants, there is a lack of financial resources for branding. However they focus on specific newspaper for students, posters, radio program as part of marketing and they try to meet people outside the student registration at LTH (Technical faculty of Lund University). They also hand out some useful gadgets for students. The posters of Helsingkrona Nation are not special at first sight. However, interestingly enough, one can find bar codes on the lower side of the poster. If the student is an owner of a smartphone device, after using scanning application the internet browser is re-directed to the homepage of Helsingkrona Nation. But still there is a need for something else as the PR foreman in the Nation said:

“It is good only for people who are already looking for what’s going on in the Nation, so you still need to get the word out.”

As members of Helsingkrona Nation mentioned that it is a nerdy Nation, we can speculate that creators of posters relied on “nerdiness” of LTH students, as most of them study technologic subjects. We can possibly accept as a supportive fact the heading on the poster, where it is stated in Swedish language “If you like concrete” and it is aimed at LTH students according to member of Helsingkrona Nation.

The welcome brochure of Helsingkrona Nation describes activities for new students, particularly the registration process and social activities. Furthermore, it also gives a description of housing in the Nation and committees, which can students join in order to become active and improve their skills in music, photography, marketing, IT, theater acting and so on. From the branding perspective, it is interesting that Helsingkrona has marketing committee called Marknadsföringsutskottet. Its goal is to attract students interested in Photoshop program, graphical stuff and establishment of business connections. Nation has also own football team playing Division 7 in Skåne and the only Nation handball team.

Website of the Nation offers besides Swedish also English and Spanish version. Regarding offered information, it is probably most complex webpage out of four analyzed.

The sections are clearly divided and the headlines easily suggest what information you can find under which section. Every section offers more than sufficient amount of information but at the same time reader does not experience information overload. What is different comparing to other websites, is that multimedia section's content offers besides pictures also music and movies. Probably it is again because of lots of LTH and nerdy oriented students. It is apparent that Nation has paid a lot of attention to website's design. It was confirmed by interview participants that it has been improved and the backbone of the website was recorded. But the responsible for the internet activities has still plans to improve it even more, so it will be ready for autumn 2012. The main goal is to make it more user-friendly. The nation is hoping to attract more novisch students this way. The facebook page of Helsingkrona Nation appears to be the most active out of the 4 facebook pages we have analyzed. Many activities are posted on the wall. Apart from informing about activities, one can find also different photos, trivia information and other stuff. Unfortunately, vast majority of information are in Swedish language. Although PR responsible for marketing claimed that facebook page has more like than any of other Nations except Hallands, at the moment of analysis it was not sure. Lunds had for example also more likes (1110 comparing to 1092). However, it was apparent while interviewing participants from this Nation that Helsingkrona would like to be more international-friendly. As we were conducting interviews, an idea was born. The responsible for marketing formed an idea of developing Spex (theatre play) for international students in English language. It is a concept that has not been elaborated yet.

Wermlands Nation

Wermlands Nation likes to brand itself as a small and cozy Nation with a focus on cooking, family atmosphere and friendliness. Despite being aware of branding importance, except with the possible potential of the "frog" certificate that was mentioned before at Helsingkrona Nation, there is not any significant plan for the future. One member of Wermlands said when asked about the branding of Wermlands:

"I would say we are pretty bad in branding ourselves and that is something we are trying to work with. But we don't have right now people to work with it. So, it's hard."

There is not any specific position for marketing, branding or PR within the Nation. The person in charge of the Nations, if we may describe it like that, is also responsible for these activities. It is a similar situation as in Smalands Nation. According to the words of this interviewed participant, there is not enough time or human resources for branding improvements. However, it is questionable whether they actually tried to assign special person for marketing issues or not.

The welcome brochure of Wermlands Nation is in English language and gives a brief overview of regular activities organized throughout the semesters. It stresses on extra activities like bowling or climbing, designed especially for novisch students. Moreover, the brochure in particular emphasize the importance of English speaking audience as it offers the ability to practice English language and also the wide range of articles in this language that is created by editorial staff of the Nation. It also points on the fact that there are many exchange and international students active in the Nation and everybody is welcome and fits in at this Nation. Moreover, we analyzed also leaflet of Gudrun, the triangle cooperation of Wermlands, Blekingska and Kalmar Nations. It deals with activities of all three Nations and beneficial aspects of this cooperation, opportunities to meet many new friends and obtain a card that authorizes the owner to enter the clubs of these Nations for free. The leaflet mentions that this cooperation started in 80's. However it also adds the notion of being nowadays the strongest cooperation ever.

The webpage of Wermlands is very organized at first sight. However after examining the webpage and choosing the English version, one can be disappointed as comparing to Swedish version the English one shrinks only to information available in the brochure for new students. The facebook page focuses similarly as Lunds Nation's facebook page on the promotion of activities and daily menus.

So, now that we have provided an overview of how Nations brand, including the materials they use, how they communicate and, in some instances, how the branders view the process, we see that branding is impactful for several reasons. With this section we have realized first of all that Nations brands themselves through different media like Yorke (2007) suggests, which include posters, flyers, brochures, through internet sources including facebook and many others. Especially facebook and digital tools are very important, as they reach out to masses and also costly effective. In particular, we can see

how some Nations rely more or less on some specific media. This section also shows how some Nations brand themselves in a stronger and more defined way. For instance, Lunds and Helsingkrona utilize branding more than Wermlands and Smalands, which have less defined branding policies and seem to confirm Dolnicar and Lazarevski (2009) concept that a vast majority of nonprofit organizations are still lacking the knowledge of branding and marketing. Interestingly enough, the former ones deal with branding to a large extent and are bigger Nations, while the latter ones acknowledge the importance of branding, yet they do not brand much and do not have special positions for marketing or PR.

4.2 Branding perception

In the second part of the analysis we will deal with the students' perceptions of Nations' branding and images, which is related to our second research question. Particularly, we will strive to understand the how branding of non-profit organizations has impact on students perception. We will particularly focus on the discrepancies between the ways Nations want to brand themselves in order to create a certain impression, and on the ways members and non-member students outside Nations perceive these Nations. In order to do so, we asked our participants to reflect on both their own Nations and others. Participants had a lot to say about the image and identities of Nations they were involved and not involved with. In the second part we will further our study by examining where the interviewed students stand within the theoretical framework of branding, whether they are pro-branding-, cautious branding- or anti-branding-oriented, and how it might affect their attitude towards Nations' branding.

4.2.1 The differences and similarities between how the Nations want to brand themselves and how students perceive their image

While analyzing the data we collected, we found an interesting set of both similarities and differences between the image Nations want to brand and how it is perceived by students. In particular, we found that there is a difference between how people involved in a Nation perceive their Nation's brand and image, and how people

outside of the Nation perceive them. For example, a member of Smalands that used to be a member of another Nation said when asked about images of the Nations:

“Because for example the image I had of Smalands before and now has changed a lot, so maybe the image of other Nations would change as well. When you get involved and you meet people there and you find out what is going on, sometimes the image is not real comparing to the image they give.”

We will focus in this section on the perceptions of all of the four Nations we analyzed by treating them one by one, similarly as we elaborated the analysis in the previous section.

Lunds Nation

Lunds brands itself as the biggest and mainstream Nation, the one that is always open and open to everybody. Such concept seems common to the beliefs of most of the people from Lunds we interviewed as many Lunds members we talked with stressed that they are big and open to everybody. For example one of the interview participants stated when asked about Lunds' image:

“We are very open for everyone. I can see exchange students, different people working here without any problems. But it's not that easy in other Nations, because they have different rules. If you want to work and have fun, come to Lunds and work. It's fun. And people don't get rejected. We have image of a rather open and varied nation, we don't think that people think we are tied to specific group, like Malmo, Goteborgs, Smalands or Blekingska.”

However, not everybody in the Nation agrees on the fact that being the biggest and open to everybody is an effective way of branding Lunds Nation. For instance, a Lunds foreman, said when we interviewed him, that the way Lunds' image is set is not that good as everybody thinks:

“I think it’s quite anonymous. It is too big and they don’t have anything special. It’s open to new people, maybe that’s good, but it has no identity We have image of being mainstream and I don’t think its effective. If you get here from abroad you may think Lunds is Lund so you choose it, because it’s the same name like city. But I don’t think we have any specific image to sell. We are big, but we are not the most popular one.”

This quote brings up a dilemma that might plague nonprofits who seek inclusivity: being ‘open to everyone’ might dilute the brand for everyone. From our interviews we realized that people from Lunds Nation do not perceive their Nation image and brand as extremely strong, good or successful, but rather anonymous and blurry instead. Such statements seem also to be aligned with the concept of branding relying on selling exclusivity which goes in contrast with being open to everybody.

In a similar way people from other Nations seem to consider Lunds to be the default Nation, without anything exceptional. Several foremen from various Nations have mentioned that many students have joined Lunds Nation, because they are studying in Lund. As for example, one foreman from Helsingkrona stated when asked about the reasons, for which people join the Nations:

“The name play a big role in deciding which Nation to chose if you do not know much about it, and I think many people chose Lunds because is the same name as the city.”

However what we found interesting is that while people from Lunds do not consider themselves posh, but instead open to everybody, some members from Nations not belonging to the city Nations (Lunds, Malmo, Goteborg and Ostgota Nations) seem to associate Lunds image to a certain degree as a posh and party Nation and associate it with the city Nations in general. This might be harmful for Lunds to some extent, as for example one foreman from Wermlands said about City Nations:

“City Nations are snobby, Ostgota Nation for example, like the other City Nations, has the image of a meat market.”

But when asked particularly about Lunds Nation, people explained that they do not mean Lunds. In general people liked to put Lunds in the same category with other City Nations. Another foreman from Wermlands mentioned when asked about Lunds' image:

“City nations are more uptight, Lunds has pretty much the same image as Malmo and Gothenburgs, they are in the same building and pretty much the same people.”

Nations might struggle to differentiate themselves from one another. This has branding implications because Nations might have to work harder to be more distinct if they want to attract members. However, when describing in details, the features of image were quite contradictory. Therefore we can notice how Lunds branding strategy is perceived as not extremely successful or even undefined by its member, while some members of other Nations perceive Lunds image as less open than Lunds people believe. Lunds' image is perhaps more driven by the image of whole category of City Nations, which is shaped by Nations with stronger image as Malmo and Gothenburgs. Thus we can see how there might be differences between the way Lunds wants to brand itself and the way its brand is perceived by students. In particular such perceptions may vary according to Nations' belonging.

Wermlands

What first caught our attention the most about Wermlands was the fact how the people we interviewed and were not from Wermlands seemed to know nothing or little about it. Thus, some people may possibly perceive it as a Nation without a brand. For instance some interviewees stated the following about Wermlands image:

“I am not attracted to Wermlands either. They have no image. The clubs I have never heard about them. “; “Wermlands is more off, not many people go there, it's very small and I would say it's one of the least popular Nations. That's like a blank spot within the nations for me. “;”I don't know about any specific persona from Wermlands, Wermlands is dorky and anonymous.”

We suggest that one reason for these statements can be found in the way they brand themselves. We found about Wermlands that it seems to have lack of a specific strategy for advertising and branding itself. Members from Wermlands seem aware to a certain degree of the anonymity of Wermlands, as one of the interviewed participants from this Nation described its image:

“We are kind of invisible so you don’t know anything about us, that’s the sad part. But when we are introduced to people, they like it.”

People from Wermlands seem to relate the anonymity of their Nation to a lack of marketing and branding as well. For example, one foreman from Wermlands stated:

“Sometimes we have image, sometimes we don’t, we are good at some stuff, but we are not good in marketing. We are the smallest Nation because we don’t brand ourselves.”

Hence, by analyzing the way people perceive Wermlands’ branding and image we can rather notice an almost absent perception of such an image, most likely due to a lack of clear and consistent marketing and branding strategies. One could wonder about the relation between the lack of image and branding, and Wermlands situation as the smallest Nation with around 850 members, when few years ago they were many more.

Moreover we can see once more that there are differences between the way people makes sense of Wermlands’ brand, as we have seen some people do not even perceive Wermlands as having any brand, this particularly refers to members of other Nations than Wermlands.

Smalands

Smalands seems to be the Nation, for which the difference between how its members perceive its image and brand and how others do so, is the greatest. For instance, practically all the people we interviewed outside of Smalands perceive it as being

communist and politically engaged. This kind of characteristics was mentioned by the people we interviewed very often and vast majority of participants associated this political orientation with quite a negative image. In particular, we also found an interesting difference between the way Smalands brands itself as socialist and people outside of the Nations framing it as communist. Here is one of the few examples of how a volunteer from Wermlands sees the image of Smalands now:

“Yeah that’s the Nation I also heard before I came here, that is the different Nation, the communist nation, those were all the things I heard before I came. Smalands has this whole alternative, socialist, feminist thing going on.”

Similarly, here is an example of what another participant outside the Nation stated:

“Smalands is officially communist, reputation for good music, they invest to pay live band, they have people who want to be rebels and change society, they don’t want to be in Kuratel Kollegiet.”

Still some people seem to perceive Smalands’ image as unique. For instance, a foreman from Wermlands seems to respect the way Smalands distinguish itself, as he said:

“Smalands is alternative. They have different images to different kind of people, they have this clear image, they are unique, maybe they are not making that much money of it but they do it like they do it.”

On the other hand, people in Smalands see their Nation image in a positive way and stress how it is based on openness and diversity, while being aware that many people outside of Smalands have a bad image about their Nation. As one foreman from Smalands Nation said when asked about the way people perceive the image of his/her Nation:

“People have a very wrong idea about Smalands. There is kind of ghost over Smalands. They are scared even if they don’t know Smalands, they say they are communists even if you are not. You can come here and nobody will say anything.”

What we learnt by analyzing the way people perceive Smalands’ image is that there is a great difference between how people inside the Nation see themselves as very open and varied, and the way people outside the Nation identify Smalands with a very specific kind of people. Members of Smalands perceive their Nation as an organization based on values as feminism, tolerance, socialist orientation and diversity. In contrary, they are perceived by non-members mostly as rebels, radical, communist and outcasts.

In our opinion, such situation is due more to the absence of branding and communication outside the boundaries of Smalands rather than due to wrong branding. As many interviewees showed us, people very often build the image they have about Smalands based on what they heard and not personal experiences. They just heard rumors, and they believe in their minds that Smalands lives up to this image. There is not a trace of trying to experience how Smalands Nation in person is. To such situation also contributes the fact that Smalands does not belong to the KK and Studentlund.

Helsingkrona

The essential finding was that people have bifurcated ideas and opinions on how Helsingkrona’s brand and image strategy for the future should be formulated. While some of the members want to reach out the student masses with the message of being open to everybody, other members seem to go in an opposite direction and want to focus more on the nerdy reputation. As for example one of the foremen said when asked about the importance of branding:

“As far as I’m concerned, it is very important to have sort of niche, where you separate yourself from other Nations and we should focus on being nerdy. I believe we have a pretty good image, but we are more on the nerdy side, we are unofficially the nerdy Nation and I love it, I think we should market more into that, to get more people. Because people who believe we are nerdy are really, really bad as never tried it”

In particular people from Helsingkrona seem to perceive their Nations' image as associated with Schlager Night (a special club playing Swedish kitsch music that Helsingkrona holds every second week), nerds and geeks. However, the way other people perceive Helsingkrona's image is quite various. For instance, only one of the people we interviewed outside of Helsingkrona associated it with Schlager Night, even if people in Helsingkrona are very much convinced to be associated it with it for everybody. Moreover, unlike Helsingkrona members who do not enjoy their "Schlager" reputation, this student reacted in an opposite way:

"Helsingkrona, I have been there many times and I like their music, Schlager."

On the other hand, some of the people volunteering in other Nations we interviewed seemed quite negative about Helsingkrona's image, maybe due to its nerdy reputation. For example, one of them said when asked about Helsingkrona's image:

"Helsingkrona is the same, really nice Nation, also facilities, rewards are decent, but people really lame."

The Helsingkrona case shows us once again how people within the Nation have often a different perception of their Nation's image in comparison with people outside of the Nation. As we have seen often people inside Helsingkrona see themselves as related to certain stereotypes that however, do not seem entirely shared by other people.

What we found the most interesting about analyzing the way people perceive different Nations' images and branding is that it seems to be very relative, both depending on belonging to the Nation and the subjectivity of people. Such situation evokes that reality is socially constructed and every individual makes sense of things according to his understanding and experiences. Moreover, the differences between perceptions of the own

Nation's image seems also to show a possible need to better communicate and brand the image. This implication is valid more for some Nations than for others.

This situation brings up the topic of the subjectivity of branding in general, concept that has to be considered when branding and branding nonprofits. As we have seen so far, there might be differences between the way one brand wants to be perceived and the way it is perceived by different people (Sandberg and Targama, 2007). Moreover, the way people perceive a brand does not depend only on the way they understand it and make sense of it, but also on the attitude persons in general might have towards branding. We will focus on participants' attitudes towards branding in the next sections.

4.2.2 Different students' views on branding

As we mentioned in our literature review, there are different opinions on branding. Considering different people's attitude towards branding seems for us particularly relevant as such attitude might also influence the way people understand branding and in our specific case Nations' branding. Our interview participants hold different attitudes towards branding. The interviews implied that some of them are supporters of pro branding, while others have more anti-branding or cautious-branding points of view. Such difference of opinions on branding within Nations seems particularly relevant as Nations branding and marketing directions are developed by Nations members. Hence, we cannot but wonder how the stance some Nations' members have towards branding might have an impact on both the way they understand Nations branding, but also their Nation's attitude towards branding. During our research we found both people believing that branding is important for Nations and can help attracting people, but also people hostile or skeptical towards branding for different reasons. Considering such difference of opinions allows us to make the transition between Nations' branding which is seen by many people as an important and valuable tool, and the dilemmas connected with branding, for which some people might be reluctant to Nation's branding. The different point of views on Nation branding permits us to make a parallel with branding nonprofit organizations. Thus, we will first start this section by analyzing pro and anti branding stances among our interviewees. Successively we will analyze the tangible and intangible aspects of volunteering and volunteers' attitude towards benefits.

Pro branding

The people we interviewed who have a positive conception of branding see it mainly as a way to attract customers, members and volunteers, and quite some of them think Nations should rely more on branding or develop a better branding strategy. As we mentioned before in our literature review, one of the ways in which nonprofit organizations can react to incremented competition is to rely on branding techniques (Tapp, 1996; Ritchie, Swami et al., 1998). For instance a board member of Helsingkrona stresses the importance for its Nation to focus more on marketing and branding:

“When I came to board and took over the marketing group. I think we need to focus in marketing, we need to do this, just overhaul over marketing image, and how we profile our group to marketing image. It is important to have a full time responsible for pr marketing and branding.”

In particular many of the persons we interviewed recognize the importance branding has in attracting people, also in connection with the new policy that does not make mandatory joining a Nation anymore as one foreman from Lunds says:

“One big problem is that before was mandatory joining a Nation but not anymore, because of the name many joined Lunds cause they din t care but now we lost members we need to change approach branding is more important. Need not to be comfortable being the biggest you’ve to work for it, because you are the biggest it also means you’ve the more to lose, branding is important.”

Similarly regarding the relation between branding and attracting people, a foreman from Wermlands recognizes:

“We are the smallest Nation because we don’t brand ourselves.”

Therefore we can observe that many of the people we interviewed have a positive attitude towards branding, mainly because they acknowledge the connection between Nations branding and attracting people. However not all Nations' member seem to consider branding as something positive for Nations, on the contrary some of our interviewees seem to be hostile to Nations' branding. It is interesting that participants who have a positive attitude towards branding are from the Nations, which utilize branding on a larger scale (Helsingkrona Nation and Lunds Nation).

Anti branding

We have so far discussed about people who are favorable to Nations branding, however among our sample of interviews, we also met people who had a quite skeptical view on branding, and seen it as not really connected with attracting people, for instance one interviewee when asked about it, does not see any connection between branding and getting volunteers:

“No, I don't really think so that it's important (branding). Getting new volunteers is more about convincing people to work. Most people do it in the beginning when they join the Nation, it's important to speak to them.”

While a foreman from Wermlands explains his choice to join his Nation as follows:

“In my case, there wasn't any branding influencing my choice, I'm a little bit aware of over marketing.”

Thus we can see as, not everybody jumps in the “branding is important to get people” boat, and some people do not perceive Nation branding as playing a role in people choosing Nations. Moreover, besides having found skeptical point of views on the effectiveness of branding, we also questioned people having an hostile attitude towards branding their Nation, for instance a foreman from Wermlands when asked about branding his/her Nation, expressed himself as follows:

I'm personally reluctant to branding as it would overcome the flexibility, diversity, people here have, they don't have quite in common. I'm reluctant to start branding Wermlands as an awesome nation.

Such attitude as Lee and al (2009) might be due to an incongruence between the interviewee identity and the development of a specific brand as the one of “awesome Nation”. Within this affirmation we can also see an important theme that we will discuss later on in our analysis, the dilemma between branding relying on exclusiveness and Nations being open to everybody. As we can see this particular foreman is concerned about how branding might impact the diversity of his Nation, diversity that seems to be an important characteristic for him. Similarly as we showed previously in our branding perception part, many people perceive their nation as being open to everybody and embracing diversity, concept that seems to clash with branding a specific image. We will discuss the inclusive exclusive dilemma in the next part.

We showed so far how, within the people we interviewed, the views on Nations' branding differed. Regarding this we would like to mention, that people who are in charge of a Nation and therefore its marketing and branding strategy are members from that Nation that then get elected, as a title of example one of the foreman we interviewed was planning to run for a board member position in his Nation. Hence we cannot but wonder how the people perception of the role branding plays for Nations might influence their Nation branding and marketing strategy. What we found quite peculiar regarding this matter is that the majority of people we interviewed from Helsingkrona and Lunds had a pro branding attitude. These two Nations are also quite healthy Nations, which have a stable base of members and that did not had a relevant drop of members after the new “is not mandatory joining policy”, has been introduced.

At the same time the people we interviewed who had a skeptical or hostile view on branding their Nation, belong to Wermlands or Smalands. These two Nations on the contrary of the other two we are studying, have struggled quite a lot recently and they are nowadays the two smallest ones, when few years ago they were quite prosperous and had

many more members. Such tendency could also be related with our previous findings on Both Wermlands and Smalands not really branding their selves to outsiders.

Thus we cannot but wonder on both how branding might affect membership and Nations size, and also how people attitude toward branding their Nation might influence their Nation branding policy.

Cautious branding

As it was mentioned in the literature review, cautious branding revolves around the idea that branding is important, but should not be connected only with functional values of the product (Chernatony et al., 2000). It holds the beliefs to benefits that they should be both tangible and intangible. While this stance acknowledges that branding has its advantages for creating exclusive “label” for the product, it also calls for diversity, equality and other values. As we examined and analyzed some of the interviews we conducted, we recognized how some participants feel the need to manage the dilemma between exclusivity and inclusivity. It is of great essence for the organization’s strategy and branding to decide whether it is will be more profitable and suitable to be open for everybody or be niche-focused for a specific type(s) of students/people.

There were many mentions regarding the tension, or dilemma between the importance of tangible and intangible measures that volunteering in Nations bring along. Although there is a lot of benefits promotion, most of the participants were claiming that perks are not important to them. In contrary, eventually almost every foreman or helper admitted the satisfaction with their existence. Some of the foremen do not use any of the benefits, but they deem them symbolic appreciation of their effort.

From theoretical perspective, their stance comes under umbrella of cautious branding as they deem intangible benefits very important, but they also do not neglect that also tangible benefits are important for branding and getting volunteers. Even for foremen, who volunteer because of experience and joy from volunteering, it is obvious that these perks play role for them. Either only symbolic or significantly beneficial, every foreman enjoys their existence on some level. Participants recurrently mentioned 5-6 dinners every semester, foreman trip (free trip for all foremen), green card – free entry to all Nation clubs (except Smalands due to the reasons mentioned several times; non member of Studentlund), or getting ahead for the queue for some activities. As volunteer, after

working two-three times you can get to Nation clubs for free until the end of the semester. Although one of the participants stressed that volunteering at the Nation is solely about friends, fun and not about stuff you can get, his/her words suggest that there is always at least minor importance of some things you can profit from. Or maybe better said, there is also a profitable side of knowing the people and networking, besides the values of social aspects. Networking plays particularly crucial role in nowadays' world for students. As some of the participants mentioned:

“It’s always good to have foot in. you never know if you are going to be kicked out of your housing or whatever, it’s good to know people.”

Interestingly enough, we have observed that the more involved and for a longer time the student is, the less important are the benefits. They are mostly important to attract the volunteers in the beginning, but become less and less significant over the time for the person. Volunteers apparently work quite often because of free entrance, free food and various coupons. It is a different story after the person becomes involved more. As one foreman from Helsingkrona mentioned:

“You need at least something to get you started, because if you work first time and they say to you that you work free and you get nothing, it doesn’t sound really good. If they say you get a food ticket and you are going to get free entrance to night club afterwards, so at least something, and if you work for nightclub, you get aftersexa and tacksittning also. But it is important to push the workers, but actually I would work for Helsingkrona for free. Later on they are not that important, once they are involved, they would work free.”

But according to many foremen, the benefits “won’t keep volunteers coming back”. According to them, they might perhaps come again, but for making them more involved, you have to make them foremen in the Nation. Many people stated that becoming foremen is a next “logical step” after you person has done volunteering to some extent. At the point of being foreman, the benefits have only symbolic role. As the marketing foreman in Helsingkrona Nation mentioned, the money he spends in the Nation or for the things in the

Nation are worth more than the benefits he gets from it. But what is important for him, is the opportunity to develop the skills, push himself further and help the Nation to become better than other Nations. It was obvious from most of the interviews that even if foreman does not identify with the Nation in the beginning, he/she starts to identify with the Nation after some time. Sooner or later, but everybody admitted at one point he/she started to identify with the Nation and feel like part of it. The symbolic values have higher value for constructing person's self as Wee and Ming (2002) suggested in the review. With the identification and commitment comes also the need to make good and sacrifice yourself for the sake of the Nation. We examined that after longer time the volunteering in the Nation becomes more a mission. As a foreman in Lunds said:

"I'm dedicated so I want to change, I want to make things better, I want to leave this place in a better way than when it was when I came. So I want to pay something back in a way, but for me it's always making things better than when I came here."

On the other side, branding volunteering might have also beneficial contribution in another aspect. Some of the students who previously volunteered stated that due to their previous experience they understand more the concept of volunteering and that benefits are therefore not that important. For example as one foreman from Wermlands Nation said when asked about the concept of volunteering:

"I have done already volunteering in scouts, I like getting experience so benefits don't matter that much as long as I'm doing something I like."

Exclusive-inclusive

Issue of exclusivity and inclusivity is quite an issue for branding in organizations. As Creyton (2004) suggests, it is beneficial but enormously challenging to be truly inclusive. It is always a matter of fundamental strategy to decide, whether to focus on specific group of people or be open for everybody. For example in Helsingkrona, as it was mentioned, they have been keeping the slogan *"the Nation where you can be yourself"* as official one, although there was quite a discussion about it. There was quite an emphasis on

diversity from the participants, as for example a pub foreman in Helsingkrona replied when asked about people in the Nation:

“They don’t really care if you are a bit dorky. You are allowed to run around in pajama whole day even if you are in the meeting. It’s just laid back, nice people, relaxed people. Loving, loving, loving. It’s like a big family.”

But at the same time most of the people expressed their opinions that snobby people, as from Malmo or Gotheburgs would not fit and the Nations is nerdy and geeky. Therefore, it appears there is a sort of niche. So, while the Nation cares about the importance of values as equality and diversity, as they say that you can be whoever you are, at the same time it focuses sometimes on an exclusive group of people. This was seen also in the analysis of promotional material, where one of the posters mentioned that Helsingkrona fits students who study architecture (the “concrete” poster).

We observed the same contradiction or dilemma in Smalands Nation, where they would like to attract more members and yet the diversity and feminism is quite an issue in the Nation. However, the Nation is narrow-based in terms of being socialistic and vegan. As one of the students from different Nation mentioned:

“Profile of Smalands is, I mean if the profile is exclusive, if your goal is not to have certain amount of people, you focus on narrow base. You can get by with fewer people and do it more for your members.”

It was also an interesting disclosure when we were told by Smalands members that some members in Smalands keep saying that people should be open-minded and ask for respecting their values and ideologies like feminism, vegan cuisine and socialism. Yet at the same time they are sometimes denying and neglecting the people living in Smalands, who eat the meat or even vegetarian food.

Similarly at Wermlands, there is a lot of emphasis on diversity in terms of claiming the openness for everybody. At the same time, there is a fairly strong contradiction. Although they claim to be open, the description of Wermlands in their words implies that is a more closed circle, hidden from the public. One foreman from this Nation stated:

“I think we haven’t reached out many people but we are a small cozy Nation, we just like hanging around and having fun, we are always together, making jokes.”

Finally, it is the same at Lunds Nation, where they emphasize really strong the fact that they are open to everybody, they are Nation for all types of people. However, during analysis we noticed the essential repetition in all interviews of its members. All of them have expressed the openness, but at the same time they explained that people coming to the Nation have to make a good impression and be really social, otherwise it would be really hard for them to get involved and become part of the Nation in a further sense. As a foreman in Lunds said when asked who would not fit in his/her Nation:

“How the person, the new person gets involved, it’s like dating, you have to make a good impression. You should be yourself, but the best kind of yourself.”

As we can see, every Nation has been branding itself as open for everybody. Each Nation strives to create an image of inclusivity that would be embracing all students of Lund. However, at the same time every Nation focuses to some extent on a specific niche of students. As it was analyzed, Lunds Nation is focusing on people, who can socialize. On the other side, Wermlands is more tight community relying on cozy atmosphere and more of a “family” model of the Nation. Smalands is exclusive by its nature as its values are so narrow-based that the inclusivity is almost virtually impossible. Nevertheless, all participants mentioned that everybody would fit in at the Nation as diversity is one of the symbols of the Nation. It is quite contradictory that Nations is focused on specific persons in the Nation, yet they claim that there is a significant diversity. Finally, Helsingkrona has had the idea of inclusivity in the slogan. On the other hand, there is a strong culture of, what members of Helsingkrona call as, “nerdiness”.

5 Discussion

We have discussed and analyzed how people involved in Nations perceive their Nation brand. After we studied the literature about branding and closely examined the case of Nations' branding, we developed a clearer idea of how Nations brand themselves and as a consequence, how branding might work in non-profit organizations. Successively, we tried to understand how our interviewees made sense of Nation's branding. Through this understanding we tried to analyze, which impact branding might have on people and Nation's and on a larger scale on nonprofits.

After our analysis, we will now introduce some of the implications that emerged. Now, as we understand how Nations brand themselves and how students perceive the branding and image of Nation, we aim to discuss three problems related to branding that emerge within analysis of our research questions. These problems are practical, symbolic and social. The practical level is related to economical and membership reasons. The social problem revolves around the branding of volunteering and whether it might change the society in the sense that volunteers would be not driven by altruistic motivations. The symbolic problem deals with tension between exclusivity and inclusivity, and between quantitative and qualitative values of product.

We cannot really say that branding is generally "good" or "bad". Branding in educational settings has always had both advantages and disadvantages. If we look at our study through branding "lens", the good things about branding are that posters, facebook pages, websites and personal communication can facilitate the image of the Nations and make good impression on students. Personal contact for branding purposes has persuaded many students to join the Nation and also to keep volunteers coming back. Facebook is important for keeping the contacts with existing members and also to show that the organization has been following the trends in networking and the same goes with the website. That might lead to good image in the eyes of students, who might feel attracted to the Nations and be prone to join the Nation or just visit its events and consequently contribute to Nation's economy. This can help to solve the practical problem of Nations nowadays. As it was mentioned several times before, membership in Nations is not mandatory anymore. Therefore some Nations strive to utilize branding more.

However, branding has also some tricky features that evolve mainly around social problems (Bhat and Reddy, 1998). In particular, while considering that Nations should be careful of the way they try to brand themselves, we started to realize the possible emergence of a relevant problem. As we mentioned before Nations rely on volunteers to run their activities, and some of the people we interviewed considered branding as a possible way to attract members and volunteers. Hence according to certain point of views people might work for a Nation because of its cool image or likeness with the person. But what would happen if all the non-profit organizations who rely on volunteerism would brand themselves? We might possibly think that in a global context if organizations would stress the cool and identity-based aspect of volunteering and being part of it, the networking opportunity, identity fit for specific people, then the whole volunteering concept might come to the point when volunteers would be keen on helping out only in organizations, where they would be able to gain something tangible, or intangible. At that point, the whole altruistic background of volunteerism would be betrayed and lots of organizations relying on volunteers would perhaps lose the helpers. On the other side, as we examined, branding volunteering might bring more people to volunteering activities. As we analyzed in the previous chapter, by volunteering more often, people are more capable of recognizing the volunteering concept in sense that is supposed to be not beneficial but altruistic. As we have seen in our literature review the reasons for which people might volunteer are various (Clary and Snyder 1999). During the analysis of our data we found often the words *fun*, *socializing*, *getting experience and responsibility*, among the reasons for which people volunteers. In particular, it seems that new volunteers are more influenced by personal benefits in their choice to get involved in a Nation. However what we found during our thesis is that people that get deeply involved in their Nation and volunteer for long time seem to be more sensitive to the sense of freedom and possibility to make a difference that volunteering offers them, instead of the way their Nation brands itself. Interviewed foremen wanted to make things better or to give something back. This evokes the debate we started on our literature review on the different approach between volunteering for personal reasons and altruistic ones.

Therefore, it seems that branding might help attract people including volunteers at the beginning, but does not make people commit to their Nation in the long term or at least not among the people we interviewed. In the contrary, commitment seems to be more related with devotion and identification in the long term. By spending more time at the

Nation as an active member and theoretically saying, moving up on the virtual (virtual because there is no hierarchy) hierarchy of responsibilities (for example: lunch → pub → club → board of directors), the volunteering experience is becoming more essential for people. As the time is passing by, the benefits are losing their values for the volunteers and they deem intangible things like skills or commitment to the Nation much more important. The longer they are foremen, the deeper devotion and inclination to Nation is being developed. We wonder what would happen in a larger nonprofit scale if people would volunteer just because of their personal benefits, image and branding.

Even if the Nation or volunteerism-based organization finds the appropriate channels for branding and sets the rights strategy, there is a dilemma that emerges. What should the organization brand? How should be the image set up for the people to join, to become members and help out with the activities? The main tension lies between the aspect of exclusivity and inclusivity, which is the symbolic problem and the main implication of our thesis.

During our interviews we have noticed that participants from all the Nations have “branded” or positioned their Nation as open for everyone, where you can be yourself and behave any way you want. Can actually be every Nation open for everyone? Can they be inclusive? Moreover, on the other side, while examining the details of personas of the Nations, the branding topic and fitting aspects, it occurred inevitable that at some point everybody started to describe his/her Nation as appropriate for at least, to some extent, kind of niche. What is actually the focal point for some Nations, is whether it is more efficient to brand itself as exclusive, or inclusive. However, we think that there is no answer. There is not right or wrong. Choosing your strategy or image depends on what your goals are.

As branding, by its nature is “exclusive” and makes product unique (Kotler, 1988), special and exclusive, there is a dilemma that arises. As at the same time the purpose of University is to be socially just, open to everybody regardless of gender, race, origin or personal characteristics. University and Nations as student organizations are in the nature inclusive and their role is to maintain the diversity, educate the people, prepare them for professional life, and make them not just trained workers or law-abiding citizens but responsible human beings and members of the culture in general. Some of the people we talked with, claimed the richness and diversity of the people in their Nation as an important attribute, but they were afraid that by branding their Nation they might lose on such

diversity. If the purpose of the Nations is to be diverse, it is quite contradictory to utilize branding, as its nature would be counter-productive, as its purpose is on the other hand to make something exclusive. Yet if inclusivity branding is not a key strategy for the Nations nowadays, then the organization is too narrow-based or exclusive and jeopardizes the organization, which might result in worsening the practical problem, the loss of members as we have examined in cases of Wermlands or Smalands. Thus, to us branding seems like something the Nations need and should rely on to market themselves. But at the same time is essential to be careful about the implication branding may have and thus trying not to sell their values.

We realized that is very hard for us to decide on the pros and cons of branding, as its effects, implications and results can be quite ambiguous. Thus, we would say we are neither pro branding, nor anti-branding. A cautious branding approach seems to correspond to a certain degree more to our beliefs as it recognizes the existence of some benefits related to branding, while at the same time is aware of the importance of some values. Particularly, we find ourselves in the position of being conscientious branding-oriented. As mentioned in our literature review conscientious branding is mainly characterized by three core attributes: a committed and inclusive approach, the ability to think long-term and a willingness to keep promises (Ind, 2011). For these various reasons conscientious branding seems a viable solution to Nation's branding.

Branding has definitely some interesting characteristic and values (Andreasen and Kotler, 2003). To bring it back to our Nations, study could help some Nations like Wermlands and Smalands to get more members and to change the way outsider perceives those Nations. However, branding should be used conscientiously for all the set of reasons we described beforehand, which include the inclusive exclusive dilemma, getting people involved and maintaining certain values.

Conscientious branding through its core characteristics seems to consider all these reasons. First of all, through a committed and inclusive approach, conscientious branding evokes the building of relationships between the organization who is branding, in our case the Nations and the customers. Therefore, the development of the brand is built on a two way relationships, and is the connection of the consumer with the brand that contributes to create the brand (Ind, 2011) In addition, by its inclusive approach conscientious branding stresses the importance of including everyone and treating everybody equally. We would say that such concepts are very important, especially for attracting the people to volunteer

and facilitating their commitment. Moreover, because of its commitment to values, conscientious branding seems a perfect fit for organizations full of traditions and values like the Nations. Finally, conscientious branding is deeply in favor of long term thinking. Thus, it considers the future implications of present actions, for example if using a conscientious branding approach, one would not consider volunteering Nations only as beneficial and cool, but also as self-sacrificing activity that helps students to be open-minded. Long term thinking might even have helped some Nations that found themselves totally unprepared, when the membership in Nations was not mandatory anymore.

Branding should be used, but by paying attention to certain matters as long term thinking, including everybody, and relying on more than just selling a cool image but also considering the values related to an organization. As conscientious branding suggests, it is crucial for the organization to keep the promises in order to make the values real, honest and genuine. Therefore, the ultimate argument of our thesis is that non-profit organizations like Nations must further closely examine how to brand for inclusivity, because inclusivity branding is not typically accomplished through the work of branding.

6 Conclusion

With our thesis we aimed to analyze a specific context of branding in non-profit organizations, represented by the Nations in this particular case, in order to study a practical application of this concept. Guided by our research problem and questions we tried to understand how Nations try to brand themselves and how their branding is perceived by the volunteers we interviewed.

The development of our study allowed us to find a partial answer to such research questions but also to raise a set of different dilemmas. First of all, the main dilemma regards branding nonprofit organization. As we have seen, there are different attitudes towards branding and it is hard to claim that one is better than another. As we showed in our analysis, even among members of Nations there are different opinions on branding their Nation. The skeptical attitude by some of the interviewees towards branding in Nations raised another problem that we tried to discuss, the contrast between branding relying on exclusivity and inclusivity. Examples of such dilemma can be found in the concerns of the foremen, who are hostile to branding their Nation, as they are afraid it might affect diversity and environment in his Nation. Thus, we tried to consider three different standing points on branding and branding nonprofit organizations. And those are pro branding, anti branding and cautious branding. Within these different stances on branding, we have been able to develop our personal standpoint throughout the data collection and analysis. From the analysis of our data, a third stance, conscientious branding emerges as a beneficial way to navigate the benefits of branding with the dilemmas it causes. Overall, conscientious branding still allows Nations to reach out to members and to 'sell' their activities and events while advocating that branding only occur in an ethical and inclusive manner. The former will help Nations attract attention and members, the latter solves the dilemmas of Nations attempting to be too exclusive, which may close more doors than it opens.

Successively, while analyzing the possible connection between branding and volunteering, we came across another issue. What if people volunteered solely because of branding related matters and with the purpose of just serving personal satisfactions and needs? As we discussed in our literature review and consequently showed in our analysis,

people volunteer for various reasons. However, even if we found that at the beginning some people might volunteer because they consider cool to be part of a Nation with a good image, most of the people that got engaged deeper and longer seem to do so more for altruistic reasons. They strive to make their Nation a better organization. Nevertheless, we cannot surely say whether branding affects the type of people who volunteer and get involved in the Nations. We can also only wonder whether branding has long term effects in terms of people. In other words, it is a matter of further discussion and study whether committed and devoted kind of students, who are in the Nations now, would be there regardless of branding. The main dilemma raised by our analysis concerns the tension between inclusivity and exclusivity in terms of branding. As branding is exclusive and Nations' goal is to be inclusive, there is an obvious clash between these aspects. It is of great importance for the Nations to deal with this contradiction.

Raising all these challenges influenced our awareness regarding branding. We learned that perception of branding differs from person to person and is a socially constructed concept. It is subjective and therefore ambiguous both in its perceptions and its outcomes. Besides trying to understand the impact branding might have on people, we have also become familiar with the various ways of views on branding, the implications these views have and contradictions they create. As a consequence, we take a critical approach towards branding and branding nonprofit organizations and we suggest therefore to carefully trying to consider all the implications that branding nonprofit organizations may imply.

Concerning such matter, we would like to stress that during our research for literature related to branding nonprofit organization, we found very few sources studying the relation between branding and branding nonprofit and the impacts it may have on organization and volunteers. Therefore, we hope that with our thesis we raised the interest of future research of such matters. This research should focus particularly on the way to brand inclusivity in terms of non-profit organizations.

7 Bibliography

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8 Appendices

8.1 Interview questions

Background/introduction Questions:

- Why did you start volunteering for the Nation?
- What is it like?

Image/Identity related questions

- Tell me about your Nation's image.
- Is there any particular persona for the Nation you are volunteering for?
- How would you describe the persona?
- How would you describe it to other students?
- Would you explain it differently to your professors? Or your parents?
- How about personas of other Nations?
- How do you perceive the image of the other Nations?
- Have you also worked for another Nation?
- Was it different? How?

Communication and Branding related questions

- How does the Nation communicate with you?
- What do you think about Nation's branding? Is it related to getting volunteers?
- Have you come into the contact with other Nations' advertisement?
- Do you see often advertisement of other Nations?
- What do you think about them?

- Which Nation has the best communication towards students?

Fit & Networks questions

- Why do you fit in at your Nation?
- Have you changed at all since you started volunteering?
- What kind of person you think would not fit in the Nation?
- Would you suggest your friend to volunteer in your Nation?
- How would you explain the concept of volunteering in the Nation to a friend?
- Would you work for other Nations?
- Why/why not?