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The Greater Good Initiatives of Country Branding

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The Greater Good Initiatives of Country Branding

Íris Einarsdóttir, Sandra Marín Gunnarsdóttir, Filippa Kjellberg

Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this research paper is to study the promotion of non-profitable products by exploring the greater good initiatives of country branding in terms of brand identity and brand image.

Design/methodology/approach: The research paper takes a qualitative approach and combines primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected through an interview. The secondary data is based on the cases of Iceland's rebranding of their drinking water (Kranavatn), *The Swedish Number* campaign and the country brand *Essential Costa Rica*.

Findings: The research paper found indications that the identity and image of a country can be affected by implementing the greater good initiatives to the branding strategy. Furthermore, the cases of Iceland, Sweden and Costa Rica point towards the fact that the identity and image of the countries have been strengthened as a result of their campaigns.

Managerial and theoretical implications: This paper contributes to the existing research on country branding but identifies a gap in the research as well, namely the combination of country branding and greater good initiatives. Furthermore, the study showcases the opportunities of implementing greater good initiatives in a country's branding strategy, resulting in benefits not only for the brand's image and identity but also for people living in those countries.

Originality/value: This research paper is the first to combine the concept of country branding and greater good initiatives and will thereby contribute with new knowledge about benefits beyond profit.

Keywords: Country branding, Greater good initiative, Rebranding, Brand image, Brand identity, Inspired by Iceland, Kranavatn, The Swedish Number, Essential Costa Rica.

Paper type: Research paper.

Introduction

“Nations are making increasing efforts to hone their country branding in recognition of the need to fulfil nationally important trade, investment and tourism objectives.” (Dinnie, 2016, p.3).

Dinnie (2016) discusses that countries have been branding themselves for centuries and only the terminology of a nation brand or country brand is new. Moreover, Dinnie (2016) states that countries have been using e.g. names, symbols and anthems for centuries to distinguish themselves from other nations. Going fast forward, the author points out that countries are showing an increased interest in nation branding;

embracing their heritage while also shining a light on present times.

Furthermore, Dinnie (2016) argues that an incentive for nations to emphasize even more on branding is the scope of branding techniques to generate substantial distinction. As an example, he mentions that similar destinations often have identical approaches when promoting the beauty of their destination. Therefore, he states that it is essential for brands to discover what makes them stand out and find their unique identity. The strategy chosen requires a long-term commitment and must not be accomplished ad hoc (Dinnie, 2016).

With focus on country branding, this paper will look deeper into whether the branding of greater good initiatives can have effects on a country's identity and image. The paper includes three different case examples: Iceland, Sweden and Costa Rica to illustrate the implementation of the greater good initiatives in countries' marketing strategies. Additionally, the research questions this paper aims to answer are:

- How can a country's identity and image be affected by implementing the greater good initiatives into the countries brand strategy?
- How have Iceland, Sweden and Costa Rica implemented the greater good initiatives into their country branding?

Literature review

The first question that must be addressed in this paper is the question of why countries should engage in country branding? Firstly, a positive country image can help business (Kapferer, 2012) and secondly, putting

emphasis on country branding can attract talented workers and students, resulting in investments and increased tourism (Dinnie, 2016). Furthermore, country branding can help countries "...embrace both the past heritage and present living culture, so that outdated images do not obscure consumer perceptions from what may be vibrant modern societies" (Dinnie, 2016, p.6).

Country brand

"...the unique, multidimensional blend of elements that provide the nation with culturally grounded differentiation and relevance for all of its target audiences" (Dinnie, 2016, p.5).

This definition of a country brand takes into consideration the complex nature of the brand while also considering dimensions of the national brand identity and that brands exist in consumers' minds, which according to Dinnie (2016) results in that the definition recognizes how crucial the target market and the perceptual attributes are. Applying this definition of a country brand contributes to an understanding of the many aspects considered when studying a country as a brand (Dinnie, 2016). Throughout the paper nation brand and country brand will be used as synonyms.

Brand identity

Melin (2002, p.118) defines brand identity as "...what the brand stands for, what gives it meaning and what makes it unique" and Dinnie (2016, p.34) suggests that brand identity "...refers to what something truly is, its essence". A useful starting point when studying a nation's identity and image is to analyze the different components of brand identity (Dinnie, 2016). The components of brand identity applied in this research paper are the ones recommended by Roll (2006),

namely: brand vision, brand scope, brand positioning, brand personality and brand essence, as presented in Figure 1. The brand vision consists of an internal document that in-depth outlines the brands future direction and Roll (2006) further states that the brand vision should include the brands aspired status. The brand scope is incorporated in the brand vision document and describes the possible market segments and product categories of the brand (Roll, 2006). Brand positioning refers to “...the place that the brand strives to occupy in customers' minds” (Dinnie, 2016, p.34) and Melin (2002) points out the importance of being able to communicate the chosen position.

Roll (2006) states that brand personality is the brand’s way of helping customers connect emotionally to the brand. Lastly, he discusses that the brand essence refers to the core of the brand, what makes the brand different.

Furthermore, the concept of brand identity can be transferred into a nation brand setting, as well with the exception of brand essence, that may require more effort when applied to a nation compared to a product brand (Dinnie, 2016). Gilmore (2001) points out that an important activity to affect a country’s brand identity is to focus on communications equities like logos or a visual language and Melin (2002) states the importance of consistency and staying power in order to develop brand identity.

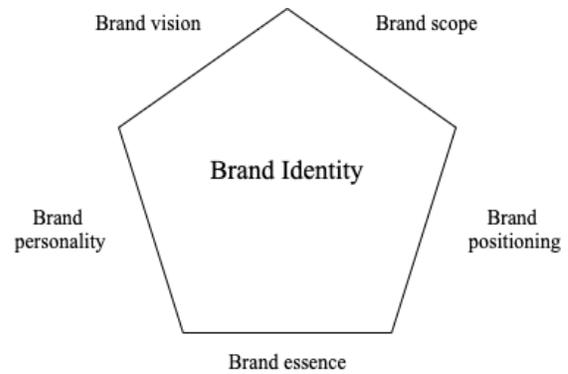


Figure 1. A visualization of the components of the brand identity recommended by Roll (2006).

Brand image

Brand image concerns how the brand is perceived by the audience based on what the brand is communicating (Kapferer, 2012). Kotler (2001, p.273) defines brand image as "...the set of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person holds regarding an object". Dinnie (2016) proposes that, similar to brand identity, the concept of brand image can be applied to nation brands. In order to communicate the brand image to the public the brand identity must be clearly defined (Kapferer, 2012).

Moreover Melin (2002) points out that the brand image has the power to influence consumers preferences and Dinnie (2016) argues that personal experience of a certain country can have crucial influence on an individual's image of a country. Gertner and Kotler (2002, p.251) suggest that “A country’s image results from its geography, history, proclamations, art and music, famous citizens and other features. The entertainment industry and the media play a particularly important role in shaping people’s perceptions of places, especially those viewed negatively”. Same and Solarte-Vasquez (2013, p.141) state that “a country brand is effective when its image matches the identity promoted”, which clearly affirms the importance of a country's engagement in

activities to create consonance between the brand image and brand identity.

Greater good initiatives

The greater good concept is a utilitarian concept meaning that greater good initiatives are initiatives focusing on creating benefit for as many people as possible (Kahane et al., 2014). When referring to the greater good we refer to marketing initiatives that have the purpose to create benefits for as many people as possible while also not having profit as the primary purpose.

Methodology

To be able to conduct an analysis of a country's engagement in branding greater good initiatives and the possible impact on a country's brand identity and image, we completed one semi-structured interview and studied the country branding campaigns: *Inspired by Iceland*, *The Swedish Number* and the country brand *Essential Costa Rica*. The research paper thereby uses both primary and secondary data. We chose to interview Sveinn Birkir Björnsson who is the director of marketing communications at Promote Iceland which is the company responsible for the campaign *Inspired by Iceland*. The interview was conducted in Icelandic in order to get a deeper understanding of the campaign and a more personal connection. This research paper is of qualitative nature and to attain as much useful and in-depth information as possible the interview was of semi-structured character (Bryman & Bell, 2017) and the questions were based on the different dimensions of brand identity and the concept of brand image. Using this method, the interview also made it possible to ask follow-up questions to receive further valuable information (Bryman & Bell, 2017). The questions and the structure of the

interview also made it possible to receive accurate and insightful answers that contribute to the study.

Furthermore, to fully comprehend the different elements of the *Inspired by Iceland* campaign and more specifically the branding of the Icelandic tap water, a case study was completed by studying the published material. The same method was used when studying the cases *The Swedish Number* and *Essential Costa Rica*. Furthermore, the case studies have proven to be a resourceful method when exploring social phenomena (Bryman & Bell, 2017), which in our case is branding for the greater good in the context of country branding.

As a starting point, the analysis was based on the concepts of brand identity and brand image being applied to a country brand. The purpose of this study was to explore if the branding of greater good initiatives can affect a country's image and identity. The cases studied also provide new knowledge on how other countries can use similar methods to affect their brand image and brand identity.

Case study and observation

This section presents three case examples of countries implementing the greater good initiatives in their country branding strategies. Albeit each case is different, all of them reflect on how broad the concept is, but in the end they all have the same purpose; doing good for as many people as possible while also positively affecting the country's identity and image.

Case study – Inspired by Iceland

As presented in Baraniuk (2017) the *Inspired by Iceland* campaign was at first established as a crisis reaction after the volcanic eruption

in *Eyjafjallajökull*, which occurred shortly after the economic crash in 2008 (Sveinn Birkir Björnsson interview, 29 September 2021). According to BBC's case study *Volcanoes and volcanic eruptions* (n.d.) the eruption did not just affect Iceland, e.g. by closed roads, contaminated water and thick ash affecting people's livelihood, the eruption also had enormous influence on the global economy. Air transport was affected resulting in combined revenue loss up to \$178 million per day, there was around \$8 million loss per day in the biggest tourism companies in Europe and it also influenced export of goods from the Caribbean and Africa (BBC, n.d.).

Sveinn Birkir Björnsson (interview, 29 September 2021) discussed that, to rebuild the Icelandic tourist industry after those challenging events, a three-month long marketing campaign was launched. Furthermore, Björnsson stated that because of surplus funding, the campaign ended up being a year-long project. After the first year there was a general contentment among stakeholders, which he said led to the decision to start another marketing campaign under the name of Inspired by Iceland called *Iceland All Year Around*. The goal of this campaign was to attract tourists to Iceland outside the usual high season and thus even out the annual sales. For each Icelandic króna the private sector put into the project the government matched it up to 300.000 million ISK, resulting in a total budget of 600.000 million ISK. According to Björnsson this campaign was also very successful and the number of tourists increased rapidly all year round. Furthermore, as a result of the campaign's success they decided to add other dimensions to the campaign. First, the emphasis was on getting tourists to travel responsibly, i.e. Iceland is not like every other country and the circumstances can be dangerous if travelers are not properly

equipped. Discussing the different approaches, Björnsson declared that they used different types of promotion videos on different topics about how to behave in Iceland, and it covered everything from how to go to the local swimming pools to what you need to know before you go up on a glacier. Secondly, Björnsson mentioned the *Icelandic Pledge*, a pledge that tourists could sign, mainly about traveling safely and taking good care of the country and its nature. This pledge was one of the first of its kind and became a role model for similar pledges all over the world. Later on, the focus shifted to Iceland being a sustainable country and how it would be possible to get tourists to participate in the sustainable behaviour and take good care of nature while traveling. In cooperation with the official Environmental Agency of Iceland and the city of Reykjavík Björnsson describes how they established the campaign of *Kranavatn*, the Icelandic tap water. The primary purpose of the campaign was to get tourists to drink the Icelandic tap water and not buy bottled water. This in turn would reduce the use of plastic and prevent plastic ending up as garbage in nature. Moreover, Björnsson discussed that the tap water was advertised as a free of charge, premium drink with the slogan *Drinks are on us*. The city of Reykjavík provided four water stands around the city promoting *Kranavatn* and the environmental agency put up markings in all of the national parks where it was possible to refill reusable water bottles, as well as distributing reusable bottles marked *Kranavatn* in the parks. Additionally, they had various happenings related to the marketing campaign, e.g. a bar was set up in Keflavík Airport where a bartender was serving *Kranavatn* (Sveinn Birkir Björnsson interview, 29 September 2021).

Sveinn Birkir Björnsson (interview, 29 September 2021) explains that the *Kranavatn* challenge was another part of the campaign,

it was a small concept involving tourists to take the tap water challenge; drink the Icelandic tap water, avoid buying bottled water and use reusable water bottles. If people accepted the challenge, which could be done online, they received coupons from companies that were a part of the project. The campaign received a lot of interest in participation, both with co-operators and tourists, and ended up becoming a Nordic cooperation. Furthermore, Björnsson mentions that the Kranavatn campaign was also promoted in Finland and Norway.

During the interview on September 29 2021, Björnsson was asked if they had any example of marketing a free product when they started this campaign and the answer was that in their field of work they are always marketing free products or experience, they have nothing for sale and cannot connect any sales growth directly to their campaigns. Promote Iceland has a lot of experience in marketing a product that is not for sale and has no direct financial gain. The difference is like was mentioned before that drinking water is also a product which is for sale. There were some parties that expressed their doubts about this approach, but the managers of the campaign thought that the brand awareness, the positioning of Iceland as a sustainable country and the international gain of sustainability was worth more than financial gain in this aspect.

When asked how they measure their campaigns, Björnsson spoke about a few different ways to measure the results since there is no direct sales, they do brand uplift studies, A and B studies, comparison groups and questionnaires in relation to intent to buy. Björnsson addresses in the interview that Inspired by Iceland has had positive results from those measurements but now during the pandemic, they were able to do their first real measurements. Since tourism decreased

tremendously the companies that used to promote Iceland on a global market e.g. airlines, travel agencies and tourist attractions like The Blue Lagoon were not doing any promotion. Inspired by Iceland had an ongoing campaign and they were able to directly connect with numbers from Expedia and Icelandair to increase in search engines. The results were 17% and 25% increase, which he interpreted as good results during unprecedented times (Sveinn Birkir Björnsson interview, 29 September 2021).

Inspired by Iceland is still an ongoing campaign to this day. However, the emphasis has changed through time. In the beginning it was operating as a tourist brand, but it has evolved into operating as a country brand. The Kranavatn campaign is not an ongoing project due to the pandemic, but the material is still being used to encourage tourists to drink tap water, and Inspired by Iceland keeps a sustainable theme in their marketing.

Case study - The Swedish Number

As presented by the Swedish Tourist Association (n.d.), in 2016, Sweden celebrated the 250 year anniversary of the prohibition of censorship and became the first country to have its own phone number. The Swedish Tourist Association wanted to provoke people's interest in Sweden by focusing on the country's heritage (Swedish Tourist Association n.d.). Together with the people of Sweden they initiated the campaign The Swedish Number, where people had the chance to call a resident of Sweden and talk about anything related to the country (Swedish Tourist Association, n.d.). Using a smartphone app made it possible for foreigners to call the number (Cassinger and Pamment, 2018). All of Sweden's residents were able to register as ambassadors and when people outside of Sweden called the number, they were connected randomly to an

ambassador (Swedish Tourist Association, n.d.).

Cassinger and Pamment (2018) present that the advertising agency INGO first brought up this idea to Visit Sweden, a travel and tourism organisation but was rejected on the note of potential risks; namely being where the conversation could possibly lead. Furthermore, Cassinger and Pamment (2018) state that later, INGO pitched the idea to the Swedish Tourist Association supported by a fully developed concept and a case video with the purpose of educating people about Sweden. By calling the Swedish number, people got a better view of Swedish culture and were able to ask the ambassadors anything they thought of (Cassinger and Pamment, 2018). They furthermore state that the purpose of the campaign was mainly to get publicity and make people curious about a Swedish habitant's way of living. The campaign received a great deal of attention and created a snowball effect which could have never been bought. As an example, the campaign was regularly discussed on television talks shows, e.g. CNN and BBC, generating free publicity. (Cassinger and Pamment, 2018).

Case study – Essential Costa Rica

As presented by Bloom Consulting (2020), Costa Rica is different from its surrounding countries in many ways, e.g. being more “stable” than the others. Costa Rica went through demilitarisation more than 70 years ago and chose to rather spend the budget on education and culture than to finance an army. Well-being and quality of life for Costa Rican habitants has been the focus of its government over the last years which has led it to being considered the happiest society of the year 2019. (Bloom Consulting, 2020).

Bloom Consulting (2020) also states that when Costa Rica decided to work towards making their country a more attractive tourist destination, they chose to use the structure of a nation brand strategy. Not only did that make the country more attractive for tourists, but also for talent. It promotes export and increases the country's competitive advantages on a global level (Bloom Consulting, 2020). Costa Rica strives to have sustainability as a core value in its brand, their renewable energy sources produce 99% of their electricity and the government has ambitious policies towards green energy. Their focus is working against climate change and protecting nature. To become free of plastic and carbon and be the first country to do so is their goal for 2021 and also achieve zero emissions by 2050. (Bloom Consulting, 2020).

Bloom Consulting (2020) further presents that the implementation of their renewable energy policy resulted in a large increase in the number of internet searches for Costa Rica. In only two years the average growth was 858%, resulting in increased brand awareness (Bloom Consulting, 2020). As a result of Costa Rica's strategy, the country is now on a list of top 30 countries to attract talent. Being so focused on sustainability, Costa Rica is beginning to attract tourists solely based on that concept. (Bloom Consulting, 2020).

Analysis

Gilmore (2001) states that when branding a country it is important to focus on the country's amplifications and not the country's fabrications. She also discusses that the brand must be in line with the country's foundation, its reality and have the competence to connect people. Gilmore (2001) further states that nevertheless, the

message delivered needs to reflect the nation's true self-image in order to have a powerful influence externally.

A common trend in the case studies indicates that by adding a greater good initiative, the message sent can have an even more compelling influence. The case studies examined do all emphasize the countries' reality, focusing on different aspects of their identity. To give an example sustainability is rooted in Icelandic culture, e.g. being a leader in renewable energy globally (Government of Iceland, n.d.) and having improved waste management (OECD, 2014). Openness and caring are among Sweden's core values when promoting the country (Government Offices of Sweden, 2017) and sustainability has become a part of Costa Rica's core (Essential Costa Rica, n.d.).

Brand identity

Countries as brands tend to focus on communications equities, the positive elements of a brand's identity, and in that sense reflect its brand ideology (Gilmore, 2001). An important part of brand identity is according to Roll (2006) the position of the brand. By implementing greater good initiatives into the branding strategy, the case studies suggest that countries can, through strategic choices, reach the desirable place they wish to have in consumers' minds. For example when Iceland launched the Kranavatn campaign they wanted to claim the position of being a sustainable travel option (Sveinn Birkir Björnsson interview, 29 September 2021). According to Björnsson, the campaign was very successful. It can be argued that the Kranavatn campaign managed to change Iceland's brand position; claiming the position of a sustainable travel destination in people's minds. Björnsson mentioned in the interview conducted on the 29th of

September that they have seen an increased interest in sustainability among the tourists travelling to Iceland which strengthens the argument. The same line of argument can be applied to Costa Rica's campaign Essential Costa Rica since the goal with branding greater good initiatives was to position the country as sustainable and the case study by Bloom Consulting (2020) indicates that Costa Rica managed to do this. The two case examples indicate that it is possible to reach the desired position of the country brand by integrating greater good initiatives in the branding strategy.

Furthermore, the results of the Kravavatn campaign implies that the brand personality, another essential part of the brand identity (Roll, 2006), of Iceland was affected as well. Brand personality refers to the brand's effort in making their customers connect emotionally to the brand (Roll, 2006). Considering that cleanliness and being environmentally friendly became a part of Iceland's personality people were able to connect to Iceland on an emotional level since sustainability and environmental consciousness are important values in today's modern society (Sveinn Birkir Björnsson interview, 29 September 2021). Moreover, it is possible to argue that the campaign The Swedish Number also had an impact on the brand personality of Sweden. Because the campaign involved people interacting with each other (Cassinger and Pamment, 2018) the possibilities of creating an emotional connection arised. This campaign was very unique since each person calling the Swedish number had their own personal experience, which can create opportunities for emotional interactions. This can be seen as the Swedish tourist agency's way of helping people to connect emotionally to the brand Sweden and in result affecting the brand personality. These two examples showcase how the brand identity can change as a result of integrating

greater good initiatives into the branding strategy. The two examples also demonstrate that the initiatives can be very different but still have similar effects.

Brand essence which entails the core values of the brand (Roll 2006) is another important dimension of the brand identity. The campaign Essential Costa Rica demonstrates how it is possible to do just that by implementing greater good initiatives in the branding strategy. Costa Rica's way of incorporating greater good initiatives was a renewable energy policy and as a result, Costa Rica was able to make sustainability a part of their core values (Bloom Consulting, 2020). This further showcases the possible effects of branding greater good initiatives can have on a country's brand identity.

The two final dimensions of brand identity according to Roll (2006) are brand vision and brand scope which both are internal documents instead of activities. The brand vision can be described as the dream of the brand: an almost utopian version of the brand (Roll, 2006). When it comes to the brand scope it is hard to analyze since there was a lack of information about the possible market segments in every case included in this research paper. However, it is to some extent possible to analyze the effects on the brand vision in the case of Iceland. During the interview with Sveinn Birkir Björnsson (interview, 29 September 2021) he pointed out that one goal with the campaign was for Iceland to be associated with values like sustainability and responsible travel. This statement can be interpreted as somewhat of a brand vision and since the campaign was successful and resulted, as mentioned above, in positioning Iceland as a more sustainable travel option it can be argued that the campaign was a steppingstone towards reaching the brand vision. Nonetheless, it is important to note that implementing greater

good initiatives cannot by itself result in fulfilling the brand vision. However, the example of Iceland shows that having a clear vision for the brand can facilitate the process of deciding which activities to engage in, in order to be able to affect the other dimensions of the brand identity presented by Roll (2006): brand positioning, brand personality and brand essence. In other words, the brand vision seems to be able to work as a guiding light for a country's aim to strengthen their brand identity with greater good marketing initiatives.

Building a strong brand identity is an essential activity in order to be able to strengthen the brand image (Kapferer, 2012). It is also of great importance that there is consonance between the country's brand identity and the brand image (Same and Solarte-Vasquez, 2013). The brand image will be analyzed in the next section of the analysis.

Brand image

In relation to country branding, the country's image is what is perceived by the public (Kapferer, 2012). It can be implied that every action that enhances a nation's trait in a positive way can favour the image. One can say when promoting an activity which has a positive global effect and doesn't have a direct solitary benefit, it is an action for the greater good. The greater good initiative can be manifested in different ways as seen in the studies above. When conducting the analysis, it was found that engaging in activities for the greater good can support a brand's image in several ways. Furthermore, to maintain a positive image, it is essential for the brand's identity to stay consistent (Melin, 2002) and for the brand to stay true to its reality (Gilmore, 2001).

First, it must be mentioned that before the Kranavatn promotion was released, Inspired by Iceland conducted a survey, asking 16.000 travelers from the United States and Europe about their habits regarding drinking water when traveling (Sveinn Birkir Björnsson interview, 29 September 2021). The results showed that 70% of all tourists don't trust tap water while traveling and 65% of them claim they buy more bottled water when abroad. Furthermore, 80% of the plastic bottles bought will eventually end up in the ocean or in landfills (Inspired by Iceland, n.d.). When looking further into the promotion of the Icelandic tap water and the benefits the campaign resulted in, there were several influential actions that stood out. The first example is how tap water was promoted not only as a sustainable product but as presented by Inspired by Iceland (2019), as a premium product; the best drink in the world. Giving it a luxury feel and a touch of magic. There was a great setting around the product Kranavatn, e.g. a special logo, slogan and merchandise. Using the slogan *Drinks are on us* indicates that the product is premium and that people should not have to look any further for the best drink possible while staying in Iceland (Inspired by Iceland, 2019). One way of promoting the product was a special Kranavatn bar with a bartender located in Keflavík airport, serving four different types of the water to tourists, without them knowing it was all the same. As Inspired by Iceland (2019) presents, the tourists' reviews were that the water was good and refreshing and they found it exciting and surprising that this drink was available everywhere. The second example is putting up water stands around Reykjavík, having markings in all national parks and distributing reusable bottles which gained awareness and acted as a constant reminder for tourists to drink tap water instead of buying it bottled. The third example is the Kranavatn Challenge, getting tourists to participate in acting sustainably

and using the country's great resources (Sveinn Birkir Björnsson interview, 29 September 2021). It can be argued that this activity is beneficial for the whole world and the participants experienced Iceland's actions in being sustainable right before their eyes. Therefore, it seems like Iceland's image was strengthened. The main benefit is the environmental effect; reducing plastic usage and waste and therefore preventing the plastic from ending up in nature (Sveinn Birkir Björnsson interview, 29 September 2021). The greater good initiative of this campaign was the environmental-friendliness and therefore it can be interpreted as globally beneficial.

The Government Offices of Sweden (2017) present that several studies have shown that Sweden has a good reputation internationally; being one of the top countries for innovation, openness, corporate social responsibility and sustainable development. Moreover, the Government Offices of Sweden (2017) discuss that to continue having the strong image, it is necessary for the citizens of Sweden to help to retain it. The Swedish Number shows a different aspect of the greater good initiative. It was developed by Sweden's Tourist Association, the country's largest non-profit volunteer organization, in collaboration with the communications agency INGO. Cassinger and Pamment (2018) state that Sweden's Tourist Association calculated the value of the campaign, resulting in over 9 billion media impressions and \$135 billions of advertising value with zero money spent on media. The promotion of the country abroad represents Sweden as a development-oriented country with four core values: innovative, open, caring and authentic (Government Offices of Sweden, 2017). The core value is clearly demonstrated in the campaign; using the openness of the Swedish people as the main weapon (Cassinger &

Pamment, 2018). The greater good initiative in this example is manifested by the country offering free service to people who are curious about their way of living and have the intention to educate while promoting their country. The Swedish people's participation in the campaign can also be interpreted as a greater good initiative, unselfishly volunteering and representing Sweden as a friendly nation.

The study of Costa Rica differentiates from the others since they do not include a product or service but more generally their brand image revolving around sustainability. Costa Rica's primary focus was on protecting their nature and fighting climate change. Additionally, one of Costa Rica's main goals is being plastic and carbon free in the year 2021, along with aiming to achieve zero emissions by 2050. (Bloom Consulting, 2020). One can say that being sustainable is doing something for the greater good. As presented by Javaher (2019) Costa Rica has been taking it a step further and strives to become a role model for other countries. By doing so, they want to educate and encourage other nations to make the same effort. As presented in Timperley (2020), with their enthusiastic actions, Costa Rica have become one of the leading countries in long term environmental change. The most influential actions that positively affected the country's image was its tourism policies to the environment, e.g. committing over quarter of its land's capacity to national parks and sanctuaries for wildlife protection. (Timperley, 2020).

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the promotion of non-profitable products and services by exploring the greater good initiatives of country branding and if it

affected the brand's image and identity. To fulfil the purpose, the analysis was based on the theoretical concepts of brand identity and brand image. The research questions *How can a country's identity and image be affected by implementing the greater good initiatives into the countries brand strategy? How have Iceland, Sweden and Costa Rica implemented the greater good initiatives into their country branding?* have been analyzed in the previous section and in this section there will be a further discussion.

The analysis suggests a common thread throughout the case studies. Albeit being different, the cases point towards the same direction, namely; countries using the greater good initiatives as their guiding light in their branding strategy can reap multiple benefits in terms of image and identity. The cases of Iceland, Sweden and Costa Rica differ from each other in many ways but still indicate similar results regarding brand identity and brand image. For example, Iceland's campaign promoting Kranavatn showcases how emphasizing sustainability and making environmentally conscious decisions can contribute to reaching a desired brand position and brand personality. On the other hand, the Swedish campaign The Swedish Number shows how including the residents of a country in a marketing campaign can affect the brand personality by giving people who participated in the campaign and called the Swedish number the opportunity to emotionally connect to the country and thereby the brand Sweden. These initiatives clearly demonstrate how different types of greater good initiatives can result in similar benefits. Albeit the Kranavatn campaign's main focus was on sustainability and the Swedish campaign emphasized personal connections between people they were both able to, to some degree, affect the brand's personality in their own desired direction. Furthermore, the analysis indicates that

Essential Costa Rica managed to position the country as sustainable, which was a desired position (Bloom Consulting, 2020). Even though the Kranavatn campaign and Essential Costa Rica both revolved around sustainability they were very different from each other. While the Kranavatn campaign focused on branding tap water, Costa Rica focused on renewable energy. However, both campaigns still managed to change their position into being a more sustainable country. This illustrates that even the greater good campaigns with similar goals can be executed in very different ways which further states how versatile greater good campaigns can be and still have impact on the brand identity. In terms of brand essence, the analysis indicates that the heart of the brand can be affected when integrating greater good initiatives; if this is something that the country clearly sought to do with the campaign. In the analysis this is illustrated with the case of Costa Rica since they clearly stated that they wanted sustainability to become even more integrated into the core of their brand (Bloom Consulting, 2020) and Essential Costa Rica can be interpreted as a step in the right direction towards this goal.

In the analysis, the brand's vision was brought up in relation to the Kranavatn campaign and the analysis indicated that Iceland was able to take some steps towards fulfilling parts of their brand vision. An interesting discovery was that the brand vision can function as a guiding light for which activities to engage in, in order to be able to influence other parts of the brand identity. Doing something creative, different and unexpected in marketing campaigns appears to generate a good amount of publicity. It also seems to be even more successful when it contributes to the global community, all the while affecting the country brand's identity and image. Observing the alterations of the countries

images, there appears to be a noticeable difference in the perceived image. As a result of the campaign, one could say that Sweden has enhanced their reputation of being open and friendly through the campaign The Swedish Number; empowering their core values and taking advantage of their internal strength resulted in a positive external reflection. Since the brand image revolves around people's perception of a brand it can be argued that by making people interact with each other, people's perception of Sweden was affected. However, it should be pointed out that this campaign involved a certain level of risk since people could have bad experiences when talking to a Swedish person which would affect the image in a negative way.

In the same perspective, both Iceland and Costa Rica seem to have enhanced their image. Both of them have put emphasis on promoting the countries as sustainable, clean and caring for nature and people's well-being. Being associated with these attributes can be beneficial for a country's image since many people in today's modern society value sustainability highly. This can result in people who have these values perceiving countries engaging in greater good initiatives in a more favorable way. More generally one can say that how much, or if, a country's image improves as a result of branding greater good initiatives depends on where people's interests and values lie since values affect how things are perceived.

Conclusion

The research paper suggests that the identity and image can be affected by implementing the greater good initiatives to the country's branding strategy. Furthermore, the cases of Iceland, Sweden and Costa Rica point towards the fact that the identity and image of the countries have been positively affected.

The countries all took different roads but reached the same destination, Iceland and Costa Rica emphasized sustainability while Sweden focused more on creating connections between Swedish people and the rest of the world. Albeit no generalizations can be made based on only these three cases it can be argued that incorporating greater good initiatives into the branding strategy of a country to affect the image and identity can be considered a recipe for success.

Theoretical and managerial implications

This study contributes to the existing research on country branding but a gap in the research has also been identified; the combination of country branding and greater good initiatives. Furthermore, the study showcases the opportunities of implementing greater good initiatives in a country's branding strategy, resulting in benefits not only regarding the brand's image and identity but also for people living in those countries. This can be an eye opener for other countries who wish to engage in greater good activities.

Limitations and Further Research

One of the limitations regarding this study is that it is the first of its kind to study country branding campaigns from an angle of the greater good initiatives. Therefore, the material on the topic was limited. It can be argued that the first two examples, the Kranavattn campaign and The Swedish Number are the first of their kind. On the other hand, the Costa Rica case is more general, enhancing sustainability to make it a part of the core of the Costa Rican brand, which seems to be becoming a trend in country branding. Another limitation for the study is that it is not possible to make any general conclusions since the study is qualitative, and to make generalizations more

cases and interviews have to be included (Bryman & Bell, 2017). Furthermore, the study does not take into account the people living in the countries discussed in the paper, it is therefore possible that their experience of the campaigns does not match the country's idea of the campaigns.

Further studies can execute more in-depth research for the case examples already presented, e.g. by conducting more interviews. Both qualitative and quantitative research are suggested to conduct further research; using qualitative research results for deeper understanding and quantitative research for more precise results (Bryman & Bell, 2017). Studying more cases could also give a broader perspective of the concept of the greater good initiatives. Another suggestion for future research is to include the perspective of the residents of the countries that use greater good initiatives as a part of their branding strategy; what are their thoughts about these kinds of campaigns and has it in some way improved the residents' lives?

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview guide - Sveinn Birgir Björnsson

- Is it okay if we record this interview?
- How did you get involved in the campaign?
- How did the campaign start and who were involved?
- How did you come up with the idea of rebranding Kranavatn?
- What were the benefits of the Kranavatn campaign?
- What was the Kranavatn challenge mainly about?
- Did you have any previous examples of countries marketing/rebranding a product that is free of charge?
- How are you measuring your campaigns?
- Was changing the brand image of Iceland an out sought goal when launching the campaign?
- If yes, what activities were included in the campaign to change people's perception of Iceland?
- Was repositioning the Icelandic brand a primary goal with the campaign?
- Was sustainability a core concept discussed when determining the different parts of the campaign?