

Beyond Mandelamania ?

Imaging, Branding and Marketing South Africa¹

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Small World: Global Trend and Policy Analysis

The reason why nations continue both explicitly and sometimes implicitly to shape and reshape their identities, or if you prefer explicitly and implicitly to rebrand themselves, is because their reality changes and they need to project this real change symbolically to all the audiences, internal and external, with whom they relate.

Olins (2002)

If you are thoroughly familiar with someone else's language and literature, if you know and love his country, its cities, its arts, its people, you will be instinctively disposed, all other things being equal or nearly equal, to buy goods from him rather than from a less well known and well-liked source.

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Abstract: Four analytical components – foreign policy, culture, marketing power and core competencies – help elucidate the aspirational values underlying a brand identity. To assess how these elements inform the interplay between perceptions of foreign policy and the expansion of marketing power, I briefly review the strategy of hosting a number of hallmark events, notably major sports festivals and UN conferences². The overall conclusion is that in as much as South Africa has increasingly become more adept at

¹ Ten Year Review commissioned by the Policy Coordination and Advisory Unit, Presidency of the Republic of South Africa and the Swedish International Development Agency, May 2003. Not to be quoted without prior written consent of the PCAS. I am indebted to Justin van der Merwe for valuable research assistance.

² Hallmark events refer to 'major one time or recurring events of limited duration, developed primarily to enhance awareness, appeal and profitability of a tourism destination in the short or long term. Such events rely for their success on uniqueness, status or timely significance, to create interest and attract attention' (Hall, 1992:2).

using these events as a marketing strategy, some instances remain which suggest that images portrayed through hallmark events are not always consistent with images portrayed through foreign policy. Moreover, it is suggested that policy-makers consider how South Africa can draw on its cultural resources to transmit South African culture globally on a persistent basis and not only through events in order to lay the groundwork for a sophisticated marketing strategy that goes beyond the use of presidential personalities and political symbolism to create a consolidated South African brand³.

National Flags as Trademarks

That states have to participate in what has been called the 'global beauty contest' through sophisticated and strategic marketing strategies in order to develop themselves into a clearly discernible brand is indicative of the profound impact of globalization and the so-called, 'retreat of the state' (Strange, 1996). In reaction, states have re-shaped themselves: some policy sectors and ministries spearheading the state's interaction with the global economy (i.e. finance, trade and industry, tourism,) have become more important, whilst others, bearing less directly upon the state's international economic relations (i.e. social welfare, health care, labour) are having to take a backseat. Philip Cerny (1990) has described this process of state transformation as a shift from states primarily insulating or protecting domestic constituencies from the disruptive impact of a tempestuous and volatile global economy, to one in which globalisation forces states to act more like businesses, subjecting the state's citizens – as if they were employees – to the full force of the competitive global economy. What Cerny describes as the 'competition state' stands in stark contrast to the Keynesian state of the post-World War II era, which took some aspects of economic life out of the market and 'decommodified' them. Stated differently, the state performed a much more social regulatory function in order to buffer domestic society from the disruptive effects of an increasingly international economy. However, as a truly global trend, the competition state seeks to lessen its internal social obligations and privatising certain public goods like medical care, pensions, prisons, road construction and the like. Accordingly states and firms are increasingly facing similar

³ This report does not investigate the crucially important question as to whom benefited economically from the various events and the degree to which such benefits flowed to small businesses, black empowerment groups, women and the like. Such findings require detailed impact assessments for each event.

challenges, though responding to these differently. With the power of the state being eclipsed by the growing salience of transnational forms of power exercised by a host of non-state actors – of which multinationals are the most salient but decidedly not the sole example – firms, for example are increasingly facing greater demands to perform a social responsibility role way beyond their purview two or three decades ago. Corporate social responsibility programs; ethical investments; shareholder activism; ‘triple bottom-line accounting’ (including financial, environmental and social accountability) and public-private partnerships with the state, all bear witness to companies’ changing corporate profile. Similarly states, like firms, have to position themselves as attractive markets for investment, tourism, and reliable exports during an era of the world economy in which investment capital is spoilt for choice. The immediate challenge therefore is two-fold: firstly, to stand out from a crowded world stage of nearly 200-odd states and secondly, to develop a well-regarded reputation. These challenges –to which nearly states are subject – are particularly pressing for the South, where the challenges of development prompt the ill-informed to think of the South in terms of generalizations applied to geographical clusters (i.e. ‘another poverty stricken African state’ or ‘some South American military, crackpot-regime’). Moreover, the developing world, whether seen as part of the periphery or semi-periphery, remains disadvantaged in relation to the OECD world insofar as the latter have been able to develop distinct reputations, largely based on industrial production, over relatively long periods of time. Hence, cognitive associations, even though these might be stereotypes, link Japan with electronic advancement; Britain with institutional heritage; the United States with a massive domestic economy of scale; France with cultural flair and so on. The challenge facing South Africa as a semi-peripheral, late-industrialiser, as for many others in the developing world, is to develop an innovative brand vision that transcends these constraints. Before doing so however, some conceptual clarifications are called for as well as providing a brief overview of the various components that constitute and influence how a nation is projected.

Analytical Overview

Whilst branding and marketing are closely related, the terms need to be set apart. Branding is the result of marketing *consistency*. A successful brand encapsulates an expectation, based on a record of characteristics that reflects, loosely one or more aspirational values. Whereas these characteristics may include beliefs and idiosyncrasies, these need to be expressed consistently. If branding is introverted, focussing on the nature of the brand, marketing is extroverted and is related to way in which branding is achieved (Chevron, 1999). Marketing asks the ‘how’ question, whilst branding relates to the ‘what’ (the product) question. In short, a brand represents the manifestation of a set of aspirational values that are the result of distinct marketing strategies.

Clearly, nation branding is a far more vicarious, complex and unpredictable branding process, quite simply because ‘selling’ a country – especially in the developing world - is subject to a multiplicity of unpredictable events, perceptions and thus outcomes. Unlike a product or service, country branding is an inherently political process given the extent to which various stakeholders, civil society, business, labour, consumers and the like, react to the marketing process, which may in turn re-shape that process, as with any other public policy issue. To evaluate the development of a brand in this context, is to inherently evaluate the impact that perceptions of foreign policy decisions have in either reinforcing or undermining other marketing strategies. Although discrete foreign policy actions are likely to be informed by higher priority considerations and might on occasion overrule marketing considerations, especially during political crises, successful branding would be inconceivable without overall foreign policy goals and strategies being consistent with marketing efforts.

The second analytical component influencing the construction of a brand is the role of culture as an expression of national identity. Culture stands central to the development and acquisition of cognitive and emotional attachments towards countries as brands. Not only is culture the embodiment of the national psyche but is also the only, enduring differentiation marker. Indeed, culture is an irreplaceable projection of national image

...because it is uniquely linked to the country itself; it is reassuring because it links the country’s past with its present; it is enriching because it deals with non-commercial

activities; and it is dignifying because it shows the spiritual and intellectual qualities of a country's people and institutions (Anholt, 2002).

Culture attracts because it sets apart. Moreover, it is, 'the rich, harmonic accompaniment to the simple, accessible, easily memorable melody of commercial competitive advantage' (Anholt, 2002). And unlike commercial marketing, nation branding does not require the slow, pain-staking construction of consumer perceptions and expectations that ultimately emerge in a brand. Not that states are not subject to perceptions, but unlike commercial brands, culture provides an easily accessible base of 'value added' to promote the country's 'net asset value'. However, a rich cultural life does not necessarily translate into creative marketing strategies. In fact, it is often because states with relatively bland cultures or are perceived as dull, that they tend to employ more tactical means not to be merely seen as 'just another country'. After all, 'unless a country can build its culture as a body of understanding – a powerful brand – in the mind of its worldwide audience, then it faces a daunting and costly process of constantly re-establishing its right to be noticed and remembered' (Anholt, 2002).

Both perceptions of foreign policy decisions as well as culture as an expression of national identity shape the third component of brand identity, namely marketing strategies. For these reasons, the concept, 'marketing power' is used to refer to a dual process. Internally, marketing power relates to attempts by state and corporate elites to shore-up legitimacy, reinforce a sense of national identity and at times, placate those constituencies adversely affected by the growing internationalisation of essentially domestic issue-areas due to globalization and resulting political tensions. Marketing power also serves an external purpose as it relates to the way in which the state seeks to heighten its global attraction by drawing on its cultural distinctiveness and creativity. Usually, high-profile events that feed into global circuits of consumption and entertainment, such as sporting events and cultural festivals, appear as the most obvious expressions of international signalling, but are certainly not the only means to do so. More subtle, less 'in your face' examples would invariably include more diffuse projections of cultural distinction both in the form of high-brow culture (the performing and creative arts) but increasingly, given the globalization of consumerism, popular culture (movies, music, publishing and cuisine). Both types of marketing power, events

on the one hand and cultural creativity on the other, involve questions of strategic trade-offs. For while the decision to host an Olympic Games may well generate unprecedented levels of media exposure, costs are often immense with effects being more immediate. Moreover, competition to host sporting events of a first-order, such as a Soccer World Cup or Olympic Games is beyond the reasonable aspirations of most in the developing world. However, through popular culture (i.e. music), international visibility can also be attained, but at a much more incremental pace, as a long-term process with a variety of multiplier effects (although these effects appear much later and are less obvious). The growing popularity of, say, Cuban music and as a result, Cuban restaurants, in South Africa's major cities, since the late 1990s would be a case in point. In short, developing marketing power strategies involves questions about more diffuse, less obvious, but often more long-term approaches versus more direct, highly publicized events but with a relatively short life expectancy.

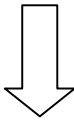
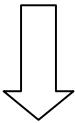
Finally, brand identities need to be aware of the possible incongruence between brand projection and brand perception. That is, positioning the state in order to ensure that perceived weaknesses are addressed whilst emphasising both known, but especially unknown comparative advantages in order to respond strategically to new opportunities as well as threats. In short, being aware of a state's core competencies that can be flexibly deployed in this regard.

In combination these four analytical components – foreign policy, culture, marketing power and core competencies– help elucidate the distillation of a number of aspirational values underlying a brand identity and its translation into a long-term vision for the projection of brand identity. In order for a brand to reverberate globally, aspirational values, drawing upon aspects of national culture should reflect universal values like tolerance, dignity, trust, fairness, happiness, freedom and the like. Yet, the challenge is to be able to draw on the country's core competencies and cultural identity as clear markers of international distinctiveness. In short, for developing countries without an international image associated with a history of industrial production (for example, Switzerland associated with clocks and chocolates; Germany with engineering efficiency and the like) a vivid cultural, national image in combination with aspirational values with universal resonance could easily compensate for developing countries' relative limited

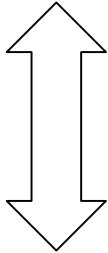
economic achievements as perceived on the world stage. The following diagram illustrates the impact of these components on the development of a states' brand identity .

Marketing
Power
Strategies

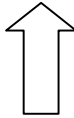
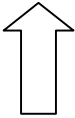
Foreign
Policy Role
Or Images



Nation
Branding



Values



Core
Com-
petencies

Culture as
Expression of
National
Identity

Can Rainbow's Be Exported? Rebranding South Africa

A brief overview of the very stifled attempts and limited scope for branding South Africa before 1994, illustrates both the interaction between the various components described above and serves to contrast the tremendous historical 'rebranding' of the South African state, since the mid-1990s.

South Africa has enjoyed a level of international attention disproportionate to the country's actual development as a middle-upper income developing economy. Yet despite its cultural vibrancy and the potential to use South African culture as a means to expand South Africa's marketing power, apartheid prevented the development of a clear sense of national identity, essential for the consolidation of a clear national brand. These dilemmas are well captured within the realm of popular culture, specifically the music and movie industry. In the case of the former for example, *The Rough Guide to World Music* (1994:373) describes the local industry as marked by 'the most complex musical history, the greatest profusion of styles and the most intensely developed recording industry anywhere in Africa'. Yet, state control of the industry via radio ensured that only music which tended to reinforce tribal identities and lyrics which avoided socio-political issues, township slang or reflections about the depressing aspects of apartheid life, would be given airtime. These restrictions effectively determined which artists and types of music the music industry would be prepared to sign contracts, forcing groups like Ladysmith Black Mambazo – who would in early 1990s team up with Paul Simon to begin infusing South African music back into the US – to perform a great deal of *mbaqanga* with incredibly 'clean' themes, limited to religious themes and tribal customs (Copland, 1985). In addition to these internal constraints, external constraints such as the cultural boycott, was precisely designed to deny South Africa the opportunity to expand its marketing power. And contrary to popular belief, the apartheid state was well-aware of the need to market South Africa as the full extent of state involvement in the Informational Scandal of the 1970s clearly suggests. Moreover, the political furore which erupted with the London staging of *Ipi Tombi* in the 1960s, is but one of many examples testifying to the National Party governments' invocation of popular culture to market apartheid to the world (Van der Westhuizen, 2000:5).

Similarly, generous state subsidies for movie production ensured that South Africa was at the height of the 1980s political crisis, the place to make movies. In August 1988 for example, twenty two feature films were being shot by both South African and foreign directors. Aimed at stimulating exports, tax legislation allowed an exporter to deduct between 50 percent and 100 percent of expenses on top of a generous system of subsidisation which offered investors as much as a 70 percent return on box office takings over R100 000. Not unlike the music industry, the apartheid state insisted upon the bifurcation of cinema into 'black' and 'white' films, with the former also characterised by persistent themes of individual identities tied to an 'ethnic homeland'. Many of these films – like *Maloyi* (1978); *Vuma* (1978) and *Inkunzi* (1976) -would depict how, once back from the 'big, bad city' ex-migrant workers would readapt to their tribal life and truly feel at home (Tomaselli, 1989). Indeed, some of these films were developed by film companies acting as front organizations for the Department of Information which sought to counteract Africans' increasing identification with American films and the portrayal of African-American heroes and anti-heroes therein.

Nowhere in the realm of popular culture was the significance of marketing strategies as visible and pervasive than in the world of sport. Here too, the apartheid state sought to brand 'separate development' with international respectability by insisting upon separate sporting teams, a position only slightly altered by Vorster in 1971 by introducing the concept of 'multinational' versus 'racial' sport with the former applicable in cases where more than two countries were involved as in the Olympics (Barber & Barratt, 1990). Yet again, the level of international opprobrium facing both Western governments and individual sportsmen and women allowing South African teams to participate in sporting events remained the most visible and irrefutable demonstration that Pretoria was, contrary to its self-perception as the bastion of Western civilization on the continent, profoundly out of step with global norms. Hence restrictions against South African expansion of its marketing power through sports were acutely powerful. In fact, to counter Pretoria's increasingly isolation from world class sports events, it decided to organise the South African Games with the (ultimately stymied) intention of attracting participating foreign teams. For as Rob Nixon (1994:135) has noted,

Sport offers the only arena in which nations can redress feelings of marginality and bask, however fleetingly, in the sensation of being a global force...White South Africans' paranoid obsession with the sports boycott was rooted in an ethnic nationalist exasperation at being denied just such opportunities to compensate for the smallness of their population, their geographical marginality, and their political ostracism.

These marketing strategies sought to brand South Africa as a society in which ethnic separation was required to ensure political stability, and most importantly, a bulwark against Communist expansionism. Yet despite such an orchestrated marketing campaign, the absence of a sense of national identity, exacerbated by the bifurcated nature of cultural and sporting prowess failed to overcome hostile perceptions of South African foreign policy and the subsequent transmission of a national brand anchored in aspirational, universal values.

In branding terms, the contrast between the apartheid state and the democratic order post-1994, could not have been greater. Whereas Pretoria had been the polecat of the world, isolated, treated as a pariah if not a rogue state, the 'new' South Africa enjoyed a degree of symbolic power that was unprecedented. Not only in terms of its own history, but even globally, very few states, especially in the developing world, could aspire to the kind of international projection and symbolic power South Africa possessed. Indeed, the Mandela presidency dwarfed the international stature of the only other contender, Jan Smuts, as premier of the South African dominion and co-architect of the post-1945 multilateral world.

Yet, it was exactly because the transition was described as a 'small miracle' with Mandela as its guarantor, that the country enjoyed a level of international exposure, even until 1997-8 that both *evolved* and *revolved* around the personage of Nelson Mandela as the quintessential icon of the South African brand. Indeed, a recent survey found that after Coca-Cola, Nelson Mandela was the world's second most widely recognized 'brand'⁴.

⁴ A clear manifestation of the extent to which Mandela was rapidly becoming 'commodified' as a consumerist icon was reflected in the controversy over Hilton Hotels' unsolicited use of the Mandela persona in its advertising campaign.

Spoilt for choice, marketing strategies often failed to conceptualise the South African brand beyond the 'Mandelamania' of the late 1990s, as reflected for example in the tendency to invoke the widely-claimed 'Mandela magic' to deliver South Africa from all kinds of challenges and difficulties, most evidently during South Africa's bid to host the 2004 Olympic Games. Hence, South Africa often failed to flaunt its objective strengths and obvious economic capabilities: sound infrastructure, in transport, communications, energy and especially finance; a relatively efficient bureaucracy; a democratic constitution; a strong, independent civil society; an outspoken media and freedom of expression and an economy, although performing under par, slowly recovering from the inefficiencies of apartheid-inflicted structural damage.

Nevertheless, South Africa's core competencies provide a number of additional advantages. The first relates to its accessibility as a part of the English-speaking world. As Toronto's *Globe and Mail* remarked in 1996:

South African English has a flavour all of its own. From British nobs in Constantia to Indians in Durban to Afrikaners in Bloemfontein to Pedis on the Zimbabwe border, its many accents are as diverse as a bunch of drawls found in Noo Yawk to Louisiana Cajun to American Samoan...and its vocabulary, mixing words from Dutch, Malay and several African languages, is different from that of any former jewel of the British Empire.

Language however, relates only one aspect about the accessibility of South African culture. Given the country's ethnic diversity and progressive constitutional order provides additional advantages to build our brand identity. Besides the attraction of these aspirational values, the essentially liberal South African social order would make it highly unlikely that the kind of controversy surrounding, say the recent Miss World pageant in Nigeria triggers the kind of fundamentalist rampage that complicated that attempt at marketing Nigeria.

Secondly, by hosting the multiplicity of events analysed below, South African efficiency and tradition of service delivery has improved dramatically, though not across all industries and employment levels. Nonetheless, the success of many, if not most, of these events, at least in operational terms, suggest that South Africa has indeed passed the competency test in terms of its credibility to bid for future and possibly even first-order sports and other events. The third instance that needs to be flaunted, relates to South African lifestyle and quality of life. Given an unrivalled outdoor life, sport alone -

excluding hallmark events - accounted for 2,1 percent of GDP estimated at R795 billion in 1999⁵. In terms of employment, sports provided jobs for 34 325 full time workers, an estimated 6 140 part-time workers and 8 000 volunteers (SISA, 2000:7). Taken together, these core competencies - an accessible culture, service and efficiency and lifestyle - make for a potent marketing mix through which musicians, novelists, playwrights, movie-makers, dancers and artists can brand South Africa by infusing these pursuits into the cultural circuits of production in key foreign markets.

In the halcyon but exciting early 1990s, the magic of the Rainbow Nation needed to be extended beyond Mandela himself, despite the fact that he epitomised the aspirational values of the new nation. In part, South African marketing power thus reflected a foreign policy highly centred around Mandela and with a visible display of 'heroic' policy initiatives (i.e. the Sara-Wiwa controversy of 1995; peacemaking efforts in East Timor, Palestine and Northern Ireland). Nevertheless, South Africa's proclaimed concern with human rights and demonstrated role in a various peacemaking efforts came to be seen as an external projection of the country's own internal reconciliation process, intimately tied to the Mandela persona and therefore consistent with the expansion of South Africa's marketing power (Van der Westhuizen, 1995).

In terms of perceptions of foreign policy, the continuation of a peacemaking role orientation under the Mbeki presidency meant that South Africa became something of a 'norm entrepreneur' particularly in relation to global disarmament issues (i.e. the unilateral termination of its nuclear capabilities; biological weapons; active support for the campaign against landmines, etc.). Indeed, since Pretoria's more unilateral condemnation of the Abacha regime in 1995 (amongst African states) that multilateralism became a decidedly more pronounced feature of South African foreign policy and by extension, brand identity. By sheer leadership in international organizations, it was clear that South Africa was punching well above its weight⁶.

⁵ As in cricket and rugby Australia is South Africa's obvious rival in this context. It is remarkable how Australia has been able to infuse a similar image on multiple products (with multiple effects). During a visit to Amsterdam in February 2003, I discovered to my surprise, that a retail store simply known as 'Australia' did not sell surfboards and related attire as I expected, but premium quality ice cream!

⁶ Since 1994, the most notable include South Africa's chairmanship of the Southern African Development Community (1995-99); United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (1996-99); Non-Aligned Movement (1996-99); the UN Commission on Human Rights (1998-99) and the Commonwealth (1999-2002). Pretoria also acted as Chair on the Oslo Conference on Landmines and accepted election to the

However, the Mbeki presidency, in contrast to its predecessor, also began to display a much more 'routine' foreign policy making style – encapsulated in South Africa's growing stature as an emerging middle power and active participant in multilateral diplomacy (Van der Westhuizen and Nel, 2003). Prudently, the Mbeki presidency continued to mesh the implicit brand that was created under Mandela, as a state which was capable of negotiating its way out of domestic conflict, to one which could do the same internationally. Pretoria therefore explicitly imaged itself as a bridge-builder in terms of the global North and global South, manifested in a reformist orientation in relation to attempts to transform the structural inequalities of the global economy (Nel, Taylor & Van der Westhuizen, 2001). Accordingly, during 1999 South Africa was appointed to the G-20 and began the important preparatory legwork for the African Union at the 35th Summit of the Organization of African Unity to introduce restrictions on the participation of African leaders who achieved power by non-constitutional means and began to reactivate the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Co-operation in Africa (CSSDCA). Simultaneously, Pretoria also became an increasing significant centre in terms of global diplomatic networks. In 1999, the country boasted diplomatic relations with 178 states (only eight states short of all 186 states world-wide); maintained 94 missions abroad, with non-resident representation in 73. South Africa has official relations with 49 of the 53 states in Africa; 13 missions in Asia and diplomatic relations with all countries in the Middle East, Europe and the Americas and non-resident relations with 11 of the 14 members of the Caribbean Community.

If the aspirational values reflected in South African foreign policy were mostly voiced in terms of human rights under Mandela, Mbeki's African Renaissance branded foreign policy at a much more philosophical level. Many critics lament that, 'the idea of an African Renaissance left very little to anchor what was obviously a fine idea' into policy terms (Vale & Maseko, 1998:276). Yet what the idea of an African Renaissance has sought to achieve is to reverse South Africa's historical, cultural and political alienation from the continent as a rebranded identity firmly rooted in the future of Africa.

executive boards of UNESCO, the UNDP, UNFPA (Population Fund), UNICEF and of UNHCR (Nel, Taylor & Van der Westhuizen, 2001:2). This source also provides a detailed chronology of treaties and organizations joined from 1994-1999.

In as much as the notion of an African Renaissance appears ostensibly to be no more than an 'empty vessel', such a view fails to recognize that the notion attempts to punch with ideational rather than material power. For the idea of an African Renaissance is essentially aimed at instilling a clear national (and continental ?) brand: an attempt to counter notions of Afro-pessimism; reaffirm the extent to which South Africa's future is intimately tied to a continent – which is increasingly beckoning as its economic hinterland (Simon 2001; McGowan & Ahwireng-Obeng, 1998) - and insert a marketable image less entangled with the personal identity of its former president.

Yet, Pretoria was constantly trapped by high expectations of its role as the regional, if not continental 'saviour' given both African and Western expectations on the one hand and frequent accusations of it being a 'bully', a proxy of the West or as the Abacha regime in Nigeria once alleged, a white country with a black president. Whereas these concerns continue to complicate – especially African foreign policy – namely grand leadership versus hegemonic control – the country's captains of industry have steered ahead in terms of continental expansion plans, which, in some cases (notably SAB's penetration of the Kenyan beer market, for example) have given rise to perceptions of South Africans as 'the Americans of Africa'. Nevertheless, across the continent, the belief of an El Dorado due south of the Limpopo, continues to persist – much as the same image remains of the United States – and accordingly draws both the wanted (traders, tourists, students, investors) and the unwanted (refugees, criminal syndicates and the unemployed) from as far as Congo and beyond.

To its credit, Pretoria has come to acknowledge that in order to prevent South Africa from becoming 'just another country' sophisticated and creative mechanisms and policy processes need to be put in place, consistent with Mbeki's managerial and institutional leadership style. This awareness is reflected in policy goals across a variety of ministries (tourism and environmental affairs, sport and recreation, arts, culture, science and technology, trade and industry and foreign affairs) and new public-private partnerships like the International Investment Council and, most notably, the International Marketing Council (IMC). One of the first endeavours in this regard was the 1998 policy recommendations following the Government Communicators Consultative

Conference hosted by the GCIS⁷. Under the leadership of Mr. Jacky Selebi as Director-General of Foreign Affairs, propagating South African arts, culture, sport and tourism to enhance South Africa's image abroad was identified as a central plank of Foreign Affairs' 1999 Strategic Plan, a goal re-stated in the 2001-2 strategic review, but somewhat downplayed in the 2003-2005 strategy review (Foreign Affairs, 1999, 2002, 2003).

Created in August 2000, the IMC is the first non-state institution specifically created to deal with marketing and branding South Africa. Tasked to coordinate the various marketing efforts by both state and private sectors, the IMC has strategically embarked on a nationwide campaign on both television and radio to sensitise South Africans to the potentials of the country and to realise – to paraphrase the brand SA slogan – the extent to which 'South Africa is alive with possibility'. Mobilising South Africans behind the campaign as a first priority has prudently been identified as crucial, for as suggested earlier, effective expansion of marketing power is ultimately determined by a strong sense of national identity.

Similarly, the Proudly South Africa campaign initiated during the 1998 Presidential Jobs Summit by the labour movement in order to stimulate local demand and employment through a 'buy South African campaign', also seeks to brand South Africa through well-known retail and corporate brands aimed at enhancing cognitive associations internationally about quality South African goods and services and thus project an image of a high-tech economy beyond mere mineral extraction and agriculture. By the same token, various civil society initiatives have sought to instil a more appreciative and positive perspective on South African life, notably through campaigns⁸, books⁹ and even a National Be Positive Day¹⁰!

Equally important, tourism as a sector has finally come to enjoy the same strategic status as a generator of foreign exchange, once the exclusive preserve of mining or

⁷ It highlighted the need for 'an aggressive and coordinated marketing strategy which incorporates the central components of tourism, trade and investment, foreign and economic policy and political transformation'.

⁸ See for example, the 'Homecoming Revolution' (<http://www.homecomingrevolution.co.za>); South Africans Abroad (<http://members.aol.com/thirdworld>); South African Network of Skills Abroad (www.sansa.nrf.ac.za) and Positively South African (<http://www.positivelysa.co.za>).

⁹ International Marketing Council, Johannesburg: *South Africa: Reasons to Believe; South Africa: The Good News*.

manufacturing especially since Cabinet approved the 1996 White Paper on the development of the tourism industry as governmental policy. Following the document, 'Tourism in GEAR: 1997-2000', the reorganization of an earlier rather moribund Tourism Board and more significant budget allocations to SA Tourism (SAT), unprecedented numbers of foreign tourist arrivals bear witness to the innovation which underlines SA Tourism and the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism's (DEAT) marketing tactics. In this regard, two documents are particularly significant in relation to branding strategy, namely SA Tourism's *Tourism Growth Strategy* (May 2002) and the DEAT's *Towards a National Event Strategy for South Africa* (October 2002).

To maximise return on advertising and marketing expenditure, the former advocates targeting a number of select markets in which South Africa is already a well-established tourist brand (notably the UK and Germany) whilst defending its existing position in the Netherlands. To extend market share in the trailing economies of the US, Japan, China, Sweden, Canada, France, and Australia, SAT suggests a long-term strategy aimed at 'picking off' specific segments within these markets. In terms of regional and continental strategy, the most promising opportunities lie in Egypt, Nigeria, Mauritius, Kenya and Tanzania as high-end leisure air travel. The challenge in regional terms, was not market growth (neighbouring SADC already accounts for 92 percent of African tourism) but 'rather focus on extracting further value by up-selling and cross-selling into other product areas', given that in this particular market, land travellers account for more than 50 percent of provinces' tourism revenue (Tourism Growth Strategy, 2002).

Because the *National Event Strategy* document begins to move efforts towards a holistically integrated approach to tourism, marketing and branding, it is probably one of the most promising plans to develop the South African brand through event-strategising. Besides confirming the significance of 'eventing' as a way of tying other tourism sectors to the MICE market, the document sets out a number of important recommendations. These include the development of more rigorous means to ascertain the real benefits of hosting an event and thus planning the bid process, and provides a useful four-stage, development-orientated approach to eventing by (a) developing a community profile; (b)

¹⁰ <http://www.flyingwithpride.co.za/>

create opportunities for education, training and capacity-building; (c) job creation and (d) ways of maximising social and cultural benefits of event-hosting.

Following similar strategies pursued elsewhere, hosting major world events and cultural creativity have become central means of projecting images of South Africa's cities, people, architecture, culture and food on screens across the globe. In addition, the aim of this strategy has been to undo or at least downplay media images of a country paralysed under growing levels of crime and unemployment. Symbolically however, hosting major sports events has also been seized upon as the primary medium through which the image of a Rainbow Nation has been celebrated, given the extent to which it was through sports that popular opposition against the apartheid order was undeniably demonstrated.

Aiming High: Soccer balls, Rugby balls and Cricket bats

No moment captured the essence and the triumph of the nascent, post-apartheid South African identity as vividly as Nelson Mandela dressed in a no. 9 Springbok rugby shirt holding the Rugby World Cup trophy aloft. Indeed, some have argued that few events have since captured the national imagination as truly and as readily as that particular South African victory ironically 'with a tournament built around the historic sport of the oppressor'. (Black & Nauright 1998:122). As a marketing power strategy, the Rugby World Cup (RWC) also demonstrated domestically that the 'Rainbow Nation' had arrived. Apart from black South Africans' enthusiastic response to the victory of the Amabokoboko as The Sowetan dubbed the mostly white team, the significance of the RWC was that it gave white South Africans, 'a historic opportunity to break with the symbols of the past – to complete the symbolic journey from the old to the new South Africa'(Black & Nauright, 1998:131). By invoking the 'one team, one country slogan' and Shosholozza as its team song, sport powerfully re-inscribed a new image of South African society to an estimated global audience of up to 2.5 billion in 120 countries through what had become the fourth largest event in the world in terms of viewing audience. The event generated an estimated R117 million to upgrade rugby stadiums across the country, but of the expected 35,000 to 50, 000 foreign visitors actual figures only registered approximately 18,000 visitors with total profits estimated at R110 million

(Black and Nauright, 1998:128). Nevertheless, Black & Nauright (1998) found that South Africans only belatedly awoke to the importance of the RWC as a hallmark event, seeing the event as more educative and indirect. Bidding for major international events – especially in sport and conference diplomacy – zealously began. Yet without any established record of hosting first order games – the country immediately bid to host the ‘greatest show on Earth’, the Olympic Games¹¹.

That South Africa was not eliminated in the first voting round of the 2004 Olympic Bid– despite considerable domestic controversy over the bid; accusations of bribery and the country’s sheer infrastructural incapacity to host an event of such magnitude – says a great deal about the degree to which the country punched far above its actual weight. Ironically however, the South African team relied too much on the political/symbolic significance of the bid and underrated the importance of technical requirements (Van der Westhuizen, 1999). In many ways, South Africans’ disappointment reflected a popular, new myth: that South Africa was so exceptional and its potential marketing power so boundless that it could overcome any other competition on the world stage¹². However, this ‘exceptionalism’ mentality –reflected in the way South Africa was branded - was entirely consistent with the ubiquitous persona of Mandela and his foreign policy making style. The strategic failure was to realise that most other developing countries bid for second order games well before tackling first order sports events like the Olympics or Soccer World Cup¹³.

Although it could be argued that this pattern was repeated in terms of South Africa’s bid for the second most important sports festival in the world, the 2006 Soccer World Cup, South Africa’s failure illuminated two very significant aspects about its marketing power strategies. The first is that the bid for the 2004 Olympic Games - made

¹¹ First order sports festivals, such as the Olympic Games or Soccer World Cup are truly global and massive undertakings often used to signal distinctive features or changes to a international audience. Whilst second order events play a slightly less significant signalling role, in size and stature they are considerably smaller or enjoy less global media coverage and prestige.

¹² One disillusioned member of the South African contingent to the Lausanne meeting announcing the winning bid remarked, ‘but they measured us against *their* standards’ (translated, *Die Burger*, 13 September 1997). Another disappointed pub patron remarked, after the German victory for the 2006 World Cup, ‘[T]he world doesn’t have Africa at heart. Couldn’t they have given this to Madiba as a retirement present?’ (*Mail and Guardian*, July 7 to 13, 2000).

¹³ Malaysia for example made considerably more of the 1998 Commonwealth Games nearly giving it first order status.

as it was during the twilight of the apartheid era and the interregnum to the post-1994 era - reflected a great deal of national political insecurities –given the petty political tug-of-war that marked that bid process. For example, besides the politically complicating fact that the Olympic Games would be held in the Western Cape, a province then under National Party control, personality clashes (notably between Ackerman and Ramsamy), the extent to which the bid was initially business driven, all severely politicised the Olympic Bid (Van der Westhuizen, 1999).

However, Pretoria's bid to host the 2006 World Cup mirrored a more consolidated sense of national identity, echoed in the absence of the kind of domestic political wrangling characteristic of the Olympic bid. Whilst some opposition to the soccer bid remained, it was relatively muted and overshadowed by the extent to which disappointment over the lost bid, and particularly the controversial *way* in which the FIFA voting outcome was seen to be rigged. In fact, such was the sense of disillusion over 'uneven playing fields' in terms of international bids by developing countries and Africa in particular, that South Africans' disappointment emboldened and consolidated their still nascent sense of national identity¹⁴. What this instance suggests is that insofar as weak domestic support for a bid could undermine successful international projection, national perceptions of unfair international competition, potentially also create new opportunities for global signalling. This was clearly evident in terms of FIFA's announced commitment to seriously consider hosting the 2010 Soccer World Cup in Africa and the need to 'democratise' a sport that had now become the most popular in Latin America, Africa and growing rapidly in most parts of Asia. In foreign policy terms, Pretoria's failed bid provided an ideal opportunity to 'delegitimise' established bid allocation practices which consistently favoured states in the developed world and helped strengthen both its symbolic role orientation as a spokesman for the South and renewed the legitimacy of its bid for the 2010 Soccer World Cup.

Moreover, once the country began bidding and successfully hosted a growing number of second-order sports festivals, including the African Cup of Nations in 1996,

¹⁴ This was probably best illustrated by the *Mail and Guardian's* irreverent comic front page depicting a German tank overrunning a feebly built African.

the 1998 Athletics World Cup and the 1999 All Africa Games, it began establishing respectable credentials as a society with considerable competency.

Of these second order events, the World Cricket Cup (WCC) is likely to remain as one of the most illustrious ever staged. Whatever prestige South Africa may have lost by the dismal performance of its cricket team, was amply regained by the way in which South Africa infused the World Cup Cricket with a degree of stature and glamour cricket has often been denied. By spending nearly R26 million on the opening ceremony and games alone, South Africa upgraded the WCC to a stature just short of a first order event. The Cup lured approximately 20 000 cricket fans to the country and with a captive international television audience of nearly one billion, Cup organisers strategically inserted three minute promotional vignettes about the country's beaches, wildlife and other attractions, whilst ten venues in disadvantaged areas were chosen to host pre- world cup warm up matches. Moreover, by invoking city names rather than venue names a greater level of geographic detail was added to the process of marketing the country.

In as much as Pretoria has sought to use hallmark events to counter negative perceptions about crime, its capacity to host such mega events like the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and the Cricket World Cup in the aftermath of September 11th has turned the country's geographic disadvantage as a long-haul destination into an unexpected dividend. As *The Economist* (March 22, 2003) noted

Earning a reputation for safety is a remarkable feat for a country where some of 20 000 murders occur each year, and rates of hijacks, rape and car-crash deaths are terribly high.

Indeed, whereas international tourism in the aftermath of the tensions following 9/11 has seen an average 3 percent growth globally, South Africa received 20 percent more foreigners (excluding the continent) in 2002 than the previous year. Nevertheless rising perceptions of terrorist threats did not insulate Pretoria from the political complexities of winning a bid on the basis of its African identity and the difficulties of co-hosting the Games with Kenya and Zimbabwe. For besides terrorist fears in Kenya, which ultimately prompted New Zealand not to play in Kenya, the Zimbabwean crisis posed daunting challenges to South Africa's marketing power. Firstly, the domestic reflection of the

moral dilemmas about a possible boycott of the Zimbabwean-staged games reinforced the extent to which South African society continued to be a microcosm of North-South fractures. Predictably, most whites and the opposition Democratic Alliance in particular deplored any sporting engagements with Harare consistent with similar concerns expressed by both London and Canberra. In an ironic historic twist, it was the ANC-led government that called for an uncoupling of sport and politics, rejecting the notion that the Zimbabwean crisis warranted analogous representations to apartheid South Africa given multiracial Zimbabwean sports teams and the absence of an encompassing global campaign to isolate Harare parallel to that which marked the apartheid state.

Secondly, the WCC provides a ready example of the inconsistencies between marketing strategies and how South Africa would like to be perceived, particularly in Western capitals, and perceptions of its foreign policy. For despite governments' ready use of hallmark events to flaunt NEPAD, neither Nairobi (under Moi) nor Harare were known champions of good governance, the foundation stone of NEPAD. In sport, as in other endeavours, Pretoria frequently confronts the difficulty of being both African follower and leader: to overcome these complexities, multilateralism is usually the diplomatic medium of choice¹⁵. In the case of the WCC, it found expression in the way an African bid was reinforced by co-hosting the Games. Yet, if political challenges dogged the pursuit of marketing power through sports events, these paled in comparison to the political complexities of hosting mega-conferences.

Hot Air or Hot Stuff? Pretoria on the Global Conference Circuit

Beside the multitude of professional, academic and commercial conferences and exhibitions that were being held since the early 1990s, South Africa also began hosting a growing number of diplomatic conferences. Consistent with its increasingly multilateral foreign policy and the consolidation of Pretoria's role orientation as an emerging middle power (Van der Westhuizen, 1998; Nel, Taylor & Van der Westhuizen, 2001), conferences of truly global proportions became a familiar sight. These included hosting

and participating in multiple Commonwealth and SADC conferences, the Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement and most notably, the constituting conference of the African Union.

In the case of the Summit of the African Union, the marketing ducks were in a row: The conference and parallel events generated R500 million for the Durban economy, with total expenditure by nearly 6 000 AU delegates amounting to R60 million over 10 days (*Sunday Times*, 21 July 2002). In addition, multiple other events could 'piggy-back' on AU media exposure, including the Durban July, the Vodacom Beach Festival and the Quicksilver World Surfing Games, the latter generating an estimated R11 372 089 for Durban, with the combined tourism spend – in addition to that spent at the Games and excluding accommodation, amounting to R16 617 004 (Bod & Moodley 2002:6).¹⁶

By 1999 South Africa attracted 110 000 international meeting, incentive, conference and exhibition (MICE) tourists, making the country Africa's premier conference country, contributing an estimated R950 million to GDP (of which R565 million is direct expenditure and R386 million indirect and induced expenditure, About Travel, 2001). MICE arrivals contributed to a annual compound growth rate of 46 percent in tourist arrivals between 1993 and 1998 (compared to a rate of 17 percent in general tourist arrivals)¹⁷.

Hosting a trio of major UN conferences annually, and in rapid succession, namely the 2000 UN AIDS conference in Durban, the 2001 UN World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) also in Durban and the 2002 UN World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg signalled, in terms of branding, South Africa's emergence as a global destination of choice for negotiation and discussion, consistent with its middle power role in foreign policy terms. Moreover, occupying the 22nd position on the world top convention country ranking, provides economic gains to Pretoria's

¹⁵ This may partly explain Mandela's sobering call for participating countries to respect the International Cricket Council's recommendations as a means to help depoliticise the issue.

¹⁶ Bod and Moodley (2002:4) find that 'for every rand spent by the public sector on the event, R24.15 was generated by the private sector'.

¹⁷ Of the 3 percent of the international meetings market which Africa attracts, South Africa accounts for 2,5 percent thereof based on a 10-year comparison of meetings held between 1992-2002. In Cape Town, the conference industry has generated approximately R385 million in business (*Business Day*, February 20, 2003).

symbolic cache as a deeply divided society which succeeded in overcoming historic divides through a negotiated settlement.

With over 10 000 delegates registered for the 13th International Conference on Aids and a cast of 2, 600 involved in the grand opening at Kingsmead stadium, the conference injected an estimated R160 million to the Durban economy. As the first major UN conference to be held in South Africa, and the first UN AIDS conference in Africa and the developing world, the location was significant, given that the country is amongst countries with the fastest growing HIV epidemic (*The Star*, June 27, 2000; *Mercury* July 13, 2000).

From a branding point of view, however, the AIDS conference remains singularly one of the best examples of the dangers of the ‘backfire effects’ that potentially flow from the use of hallmark events to expand marketing power. As suggested by the analytical framework above, state and other elites are drawn to the potential value of events as projections of marketing power to enhance both their legitimacy and international stature. However, the generation of marketing power, as with all forms of power, is not without risk, since civil society groups are tempted to use high-profile events to highlight inconsistencies or tensions in relation to the images, emotional messages and visual displays governments seek to project as part of the nation branding project. In other words, with the hard gained media attention that hallmark events generate, such ‘backfire effects’ may create political embarrassments and diminish rather than enhance the state’s appeal.

For apart from initial threats to boycott the conference to protest Pretoria’s AIDS policy, the conference unambiguously signalled the gulf of difference between civil society both locally and globally as well as government. These tensions were vividly depicted in Nkosi Johnson’s lamentation about governmental inaction and Mbeki’s reported departure from the opening ceremony. Indeed, in an ironic twist, activists seized upon the theme of the conference, ‘Breaking the Silence’ to underline the extent to which governmental policy on AIDS has been seen to reflect a tremendous level of top-down decision making. Such ill-anticipated contradictions have led some activists to argue that, ‘what is at issue is a hollowing out of proper democratic structures: it seems that people are prevented or intimidated from speaking their minds’ (*Mail and Guardian*, 30 June

2000; *The Star*, July 2, 2000). Moreover, protest marches during the conference and a 'Durban Declaration' in which 5000 doctors and scientists condemned so-called 'revisionist' theories on the cause of the disease and the Office of the President calling for the conference not to become a 'Mbeki-bashing bazaar', strongly underline the need for perceptions of foreign policy decisions to be made compatible with branding campaigns.

In the case of the World Conference Against Racism, Xenophobia and Related Discrimination (WCAR) South Africa emerged as the obvious host given both the country's infrastructural capacity to host a 14 000 strong event and its political significance. The WCAR was not only the first UN racism conference to be held in Sub-Saharan Africa, but the first to be held in a democratic South Africa. Indeed, the first two UN racism conferences in 1978 and 1983 were essentially about expending additional pressure on the apartheid order. In many ways, South Africa was therefore to be shown off as a poster boy of what decades of UN intervention had achieved. Moreover, at a time of growing anti-globalization rhetoric and very little progress in terms of a more equitable trade or debt relief regime, what could be less controversial than celebrating the end of apartheid?

However, given the historic analogies between apartheid South Africa and Israel/Palestine, demands to have Zionism acknowledged as a form of racism and reparations for the slave trade and colonialism, rapidly catapulted the conference not only into controversy but to the brink of diplomatic disaster. Moreover, on the domestic front, Cosatu made most of the global spectacle to highlight opposition against privatisation whilst a 3000 strong assembly of rural poor championed the plight of South Africa's landless.

In order to overcome these challenges – the call for reparations and equating racism with Zionism as well as domestic opposition – Pretoria sought to convert calls for individual reparations towards more general demands for a more equitable global trading system. By displaying its solidarity with Cosatu's essential opposition to the unequal neo-liberal order Pretoria also displaced its responsibility to an order to which it is equally subject, thus justifying South Africa's essentially 'reformist' multilateral role. Thus by framing domestic inequalities as a consequence of global apartheid, Pretoria not only

reaffirmed South Africa's continuing global, symbolic significance but used such discursive devices to stymie domestic opposition and demonstrate its attempts to engage world society in order to undo globalisation's socially disruptive effects.

Similarly, Mbeki used the opening ceremony of the WSSD as a moment of symbolic significance to cast a South African shadow on globalization: 'The suffering of billions who are victims of this system calls for the same response that drew the peoples of the world into the struggle for the defeat of apartheid' (*Business Day*, August 26, 2002). By framing the issue of sustainable development in terms of global poverty, South Africa may well have underplayed the environmental and social pillars of sustainable development, a key concern of the developed world. By doing so however, Pretoria created a platform to underscore the significance of NEPAD and emerge as a more vocal proponent of Southern countries' insistence that the WSSD build on the outcomes of the Doha trade round and pledges made at the Monterrey conference covering finance for development. Moreover, the creation of 192 partnerships, between governments, big business and civil society (and loudly condemned by social activists as the usurpation of governance by multinationals) ironically reflect the domestic South African triangulation of social relations between labour, capital and the state. Hence the controversial protest march of August 31 – initially banned by government and ultimately permitted – reminded many of the degree to which post-apartheid and post-Cold War political contestation had irretrievably become amalgamated. Indeed, had the South African government refused the much-published and much-symbolised march from the shacks of Alexandra to the slick of Sandton and risk political violence, Pretoria's potential marketing gain from the WSSD may well have come to naught or at a steep domestic political price.

Contrary to the 'backfire' problems that beset the AIDS conference in Durban, government strategically side-stepped those risks by not only allowing the contentious march but also by having Mbeki describe the eight kilometre march as a symbol of 'global apartheid'. Not unlike the WCAR, similar discursive practices were employed to displace Pretoria's responsibility for the globalised political order to which it is subject. Although critics lamented the lack of any substantial agreements, from an 'imaging' point of view, many are likely to remember Johannesburg as an astonishing assembly of

global civil society and South Africa as the facilitator for such interaction at a time when world politics, after September 11, seem to offer limited scope for such inclusivity, a fact underscored by the absence of the American president. In this sense then, hosting the WSSD and allowing the oft-dangerous and multiple political protests, buttressed other goals of South African foreign policy, notably the reform of international organisations, hopefully, as more democratic institutions of global governance.

That South Africa proved capable of hosting the largest UN Summit on the African continent not only showcased South Africa, but firmly underlined Johannesburg's potential as Africa's emerging 'global city'. As a hallmark event, preliminary findings suggest that the WSSD had a generally positive impact on the South African economy. Government spending of R 449.8 million leveraged additional funding from local and international donors and the private sector to the tune of R474.7 million (excluding parallel events). In addition hereto, delegates spent an estimated R1,6 billion, with a total direct injection estimated at R2,68 billion. Employment opportunities of various kinds amount to approximately 13,870 with the contribution to GDP at less than 1 percent of the national aggregate (Quantifying the Impact, 2002).

On the whole and despite the political complexities of sports events and conferences and the backfire risks facing all governments pursuing nation branding, the overall image which these events help portray is that of an African society capable of accommodating difference, disagreement and contestation. As such, the cliché, but nonetheless useful 'Rainbow Nation' stereotype draws on aspirational values like multiculturalism, tolerance and freedom of expression, values which, in the post 9/11 era, are likely to find increasing resonance in a world where these values are easily perceived to be under threat. As long as South Africa is therefore capable of projecting these values it is likely to find an enduring basis for its brand identity. These values may explain why Pretoria succeeded in using its participation in the Millennium 2000 New Year Global Broadcast - co-produced by BBC and WGBH Boston - to focus on the symbolic significance of Robben Island, Table Mountain and a ceremonial passing of the candle from Mandela to Mbeki. Such global television feed was secured despite the fact that 'no other political leader is allotted time, nor is any other country portrayed with such strong political images as the passing of the flame and the outlined African continent' (Mistry,

2002:12). Whilst the use of political persona to market South Africa remains an obvious strategic asset, the question remains as to the degree to which marketing strategy succeeds in moving beyond personalities and toward the transmission of South African cultural images.

Towards 2004-2014: Policy Recommendations

As the analytical framework suggests, global brand transmission requires traversing the paradoxical interplay between the unique and the universal. Stated differently, a nation brand needs to draw on universal aspirational values to enhance appeal, but also to project it differentially.

- **Use South African Culture to Expand the Brand**

Culture infuses contemporary nation branding with memories of the country's past. After all, it is the attraction of culture - not sport or infrastructural capacities - that set countries apart and stir nationalist passions. Admittedly, cultural festivals do not generate the level of global exposure befitting sporting festivals, nor the same level of popular involvement. Yet, cultural festivals as hallmark events are irreplaceable marketing power strategies, for they offer demonstrations of the extent to which the celebration of cultural life is not a luxury restricted to the middle classes or elite¹⁸. For example, in the case of the Grahamstown National Arts Festival, Snowball & Antrobus (2001) estimated the economic value of the festival at approximately R23,5 million and conclude that if

...the Festival were to die, the people who would lose most would not be the wealthier West residents [of Grahamstown] who do not need the extra earnings from the Festival very much and can afford to travel further afield to attend the arts; rather it will be the poorer, largely black East residents, whose Festival earnings form a vital part of their income and to whom it represents a rare chance to experience both the private and the public good characteristics of the arts.

Similarly, the Klein Karoo National Arts Festival, which has recently eclipsed Grahamstown in terms of size, drew approximately 128 927 attendees in 2000 in

¹⁸ Other festivals regularly hosted include the Mamelang Africa Arts Alive International Arts Festival in Johannesburg; the Oppikoppi, Calabash, Aardklop and Macufe festivals; the Sethengi International Film and Television Market; The North Sea Jazz Festival and various arts exhibitions.

comparison to the 30 314 in 1995. The Oudtshoorn festival injected an estimated R60 million into the region and through the Outreach Project in sixteen communities around Oudtshoorn exposes nearly 40 000 people to the arts (Switch On/Off, 2003).

Currently, cultural events are connected to, or draw from, other hallmark events, most recently, as in the role of the Ubuntu Village at the WSSD or the opening ceremony of the World Cricket Cup. Consistent with South Africa's marketing strategy the emphasis has been placed on the role of events as crucial means to not enhance South Africa's general image, but specifically attract tourists and thereby counter often ubiquitous negative perceptions of paralysing levels of crime. In short, the strategy has been to lure the world to South Africa through hallmark events. At a lack for any other empirical measure, tourist arrivals suggest the relative success of such a strategy. According to World Travel and Tourism Council estimates, tourism accounts for 7,1 percent of GDP, contributing R72, 5 billion in 2002 and providing an estimated 1,5 million jobs. Tourism is expected to grow by an average of 5,2 percent each year between 2002 and 2012 (*Mail & Guardian*, May 2 to 8, 2003). Moreover, analysis by South African Tourism seems to suggest that these events have been instrumental in accounting for the tourist upsurge (in addition to a relatively weak Rand and perceptions of the country being relatively free from terrorist attacks).

- **Don't Wait for the World to Come Here, Go to the World**

To ensure continued growth of the tourist industry and enjoy the benefits of a continued and persistent projection of the South African brand beyond merely hosting hallmark events, South African sights, sounds and tastes as markers of cultural and national life needs consistent global transmission. South Africa cannot indefinitely rely on its political symbolism as its sole marketing resource. Stated differently, if events have succeeded in bringing the world to South Africa, South Africa also needs to go to the world.

By drawing on its cultural creativity to infuse global circuits of entertainment and consumption *via* cultural industries in key economies in North America, Europe and Asia -where South African culture stands to find relative ease of entry and assimilation - global diffusion of South African artistic and cultural prowess as a more diffuse, long

term marketing strategy can be secured. For example, the creativity of artists in China and India have not only powerfully drawn audiences to Chinese and Indian cultural products, but have even begun to, in turn, shape and influence American popular culture (Poncha, 2003). Obviously the powerful role of distinctive diaspora's are vital in this regard and the size of the South African diaspora is beyond comparison to that of India or China.

Nevertheless, the South Africa diaspora can play a strategic role in this regard. For example, in London 2001, *Ukkasie* the first Afrikaans cultural festival to be held outside South Africa was attended by more than 6000 largely under-35 year olds in a country with between 47 000 and a million South Africans (*Mail & Guardian*, Friday, August 3-9, 2001). Similarly, Tourism South Africa launched a concerted marketing drive in India to coincide with the World Cricket Cup. In short, the ethnic diversity of the country allows it to access different cultural markets through its various diasporas. To do so however, it is suggested that in collaboration with the Department of Arts and Culture, Trade and Industry, Tourism and Foreign Affairs as well as the International Marketing Council and International Investment Council practical ways to develop the recommendations suggested in *Creative South Africa: A Strategy for Realising the Potential of the Cultural Industries* (1988) needs further examination. The challenge therefore is to move towards a cultural marketing policy as the basis for projecting South Africa as more than just a tourist destination but as a provider of a host of other goods, services and high-tech industries in wine, mining, equipment, advertising, fruit, financial services and retail opportunities.¹⁹

- **Sell South Africa as a 'Cool Country' for Students**

Given South Africa's historic and continued prominence in the Commonwealth and English as its *lingua franca*, luring foreign students to world-class South African institutions offers a number of benefits. Not only do students from the OECD pay considerably less for often equally good degrees and diplomas (especially in social sciences), thereby generating foreign exchange, but become immersed in South African

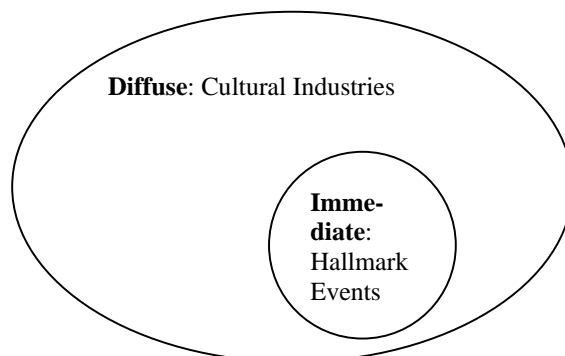
¹⁹ Such an approach would be consistent with recent calls by the International Investment Council to project an image of a more high-tech economy in order to increase direct foreign investment, as people tend to think of the South African economy as solely based on gold and mining (*Sunday Times*, 20 October, 2002).

culture and politics and develop a complexity of understanding that enables them to become very credible ‘ambassadors’ when returning to their home countries. Moreover, given our strong links with the English-speaking world, South Africa needs to be branded as a desirable and very affordable country in which students from China and other parts of East Asia are able to acquire English language skills with a relatively high degree of cultural comfort (i.e. as a tolerant, relatively well-developed multi-linguistic society).

Conclusion

Although the apartheid state explored multiple means to market South Africa, most attempts were foiled by the invariably thwarting difficulty of marketing a state without a sense of national identity. Moreover without a known history of industrial production, most developing states need to rely upon aspirational values to make the attraction of culture resound through universal values, a strategy wholly beyond the capacity of the apartheid order. Unsurprisingly, the South Africa of the 1990s was in contrast nearly overstocked with aspirational values of tolerance, dialogue, freedom and multiculturalism expended through the global iconography of Nelson Mandela. Spoilt for choice, South African marketing strategy tended to overplay political symbolic significance and particularly through personality based projects, a tendency which continued well into the Mbeki administration, regardless of the latter’s supposedly more managerial style. Nevertheless, in operational terms most events were generally successfully hosted, notably the WSSD, the World Cricket Cup and Rugby World Cup. In political terms however, backfire effects were most noticeable with the AIDS conference in 2000.

In as much as South Africa has now acquired the necessary credentials to host various types of hallmark events, policy-makers need to pay attention to the development of a secondary or outer strategy to market South Africa on a more consistent, if more diffuse and long-term process, namely South African culture.



Essentially, consideration needs to be given to the development of a focussed attempt to draw on South African cultural industries to keep South Africa on the world map as part of a long term branding process beyond the current focus on political symbolism and the relatively short-term fixation upon hallmark events. In conclusion, South Africa's marketing strategy should be conceived in terms of a duality of concentric circles, with hallmark events as the primary short-term instrument of choice and the diffusion of South African culture through its cultural industries, the predominant long-term aim.

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