DEFINING THE "NEW" INDIA: ELITES, POVERTY AND REPUTATION MANAGEMENT IN NATION BRANDING

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Abstract

Since the tourism slump to India after 9/11, Incredible India was launched as an attempt to position itself on the global stage as a means of improving India's image and reputation, in order to provide for more nuanced commercial investments and tourism from foreigners. In doing so, India has created a domestic Atithi Devoh Bhavah campaign, alongside its international campaign. This paper critically examines the implications of the Atithi campaign in India, in order to suggest that the underpinnings and ideals of alleviating poverty through branding India is at best, marginalized. Instead, attempts to sell the nation's image are privileged at all costs. Because of the heavy involvement of India's filmmaking industry, India's nation branding campaign takes to the global stage as multi-faceted manner of privileging the voices and "realities" of India's elite, often at the cost marginalizing the groups of individuals it hopes to affect through its efforts- alleviating India's impoverished communities.

Table of Contents

"There is . . . no denying many Indians their conviction that the 21st century will be the Indian Century just as the 20th was American. The exuberant self-confidence of a tiny Indian elite not increasingly infects the news media and foreign policy establishment in the United States." – Pankaj Mashra.[1]

"The Indian economy is doing well. Yet we were becoming the world's back office. Our democracy is robust, yoga is globalized, Bombay Dreams ran on Broadway, Bollywood is hot, spirituality is all the rage."-Ajay Khanna, CEO of India Brand Equity Foundation, at a breakfast meeting in Switzerland to strategize India's entry into Davos (Holmes 2006)[2]

1. Introduction

On a hot, sweltering Saturday afternoon in April 2012, a group of 200 carefully-selected Indian youth between the ages of 22 and 30 gathered at the United States Consulate in Mumbai to attend the 2nd Annual Young Changemakers' Conclave, arranged in conjunction between the U.S. Consulate, the United Nations Information Center, and BinDass. [3] The conference lasted six hours and actors, politicians, fashion designers, journalists, sports celebrities, winemakers, and human rights activists delivered speeches in fifteen-minute increments. 23 of the 26 speakers spoke of how India has reached new levels of confidence, and the future of the country lies with the youth gathered in the Bombay heat, selected from a pool of 5000 applicants.

The "cream of this new India." as several speakers identified the crowd as, were being made to endure the blistering heat of a soccer-field sized lawn in a space which is technically classifiable as U.S. territory on Indian soil, showcases how India has truly triumphed and "arrived." In this UN endorsed event, the attendees displayed shrewd self-awareness of the pitfalls of previous leadership in the Indian government, and how the current wave of youth, the future of the country, are willing to work against trends of

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[1] Pankaj Mishra, "The Myth of the New India" in *The New York Times,* published July 6, 2006. www.nytimes.com/2006/07/06/opinion/06mishra.html?pagewanted=all (accessed 12 January, 2012).
[2] The Confederation of Indian Industry is heavily involved in the Davos initiative. CII is a non-profit, non-government organization which is industry-led and industry-managed. The primary goal of the organization is to promote India's business by playing a key role in facilitating an environment that fosters economic development. More information can be found on www.cii.org.
[3] Bindass is an entertainment television channel for youth, and the UNIC serves India and Bhutan.

corruption. Through the speeches and subsequent conversations, it became clear that this concept of a confident new India was being engaged by youth leaders, activists, politicians, and artists alike, all intent to showcase what they have accomplished for this new India. Amitabh Kant, one of the key architects of India's nation branding suggests that:

> It must be emphasized that the 'Incredible India' campaign was more than just mere advertising, which in fact, played only a marginal role . . . In reality the 'Incredible India' campaign encompassed a new corporate culture, increased accountability, performance measurement with the industry through the Experience India Society . . . and a clear market focus."[4]

In other words, whilst infrastructure, journalism, promotions and advertisements were a core element of Incredible India's advertising activities, the campaign itself does not exist simply to attract foreign tourists, but in fact, through internalizing accountability, creating and improving on a product, a brand identity, a brand new India. Part of the ideology of nation branding is to inspire confidence, and through creating a national narrative, internalize, and execute the potential for change in the country's economy. V. Sunil, the Executive Creative Director of many of Incredible India's campaigns suggested to me during a three-hour interview, "The future of the world is with India, and India's future is now," and "We want everyone to know we're more than a country of snake charmers and the Taj Mahal. We mean business."[5]

1.1 Nation Branding, Incredible India, Atithi Devoh Bhavah

Nadia Kaneva points out that even though *The New York Times* noted in its 2005 "Year in Ideas" issue that nation branding was among the year's most important ideas, research in the field has yet to become more prominent. Sue Jansen adds to this statement with her striking comment, "this is puzzling since nation branding is an applied communications practice that is supported by public policy and funding and encouraged by international development and trade organizations including the United Nations, World

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[4] Amitabh Kant, *Branding India: An Incredible Story*. Delhi: Harper Collins, 2009, 16.
[5] V. Sunil, Interview with author on April 25, 2012.

Bank, World Trade Organization, and others."[6] The linkages between global organizations involved in promoting fair trade, economic development and justice, with campaigns which promote the national identity, indeed, the national brand, of a country's identity, is sufficient grounds to examine what the effects of the nation branding phenomenon actually accomplishes, and critically examine the implications of nation branding, bearing in mind both the target audiences, and the target population being portrayed, and imagined as being constituted by the nation in the campaigns.

India's branding campaign budget is much larger than other BRIC countries, and currently stands at US $ 200 million a year. Furthermore, of other BRIC nations, Brand Brazil only started in 2010, and Russia and China's campaigns, although running since the mid-2000s, focus primarily on city branding.

Just how much business nation branding can mean to a nation as diverse as India is easily understood by seeing the extent to which India's nation branding campaign tries to touch the lives of "all" the people of India. Nation branding involves projecting a *specific* image of a nation, one that is increasingly projected through a combination of public-private partnerships. Globally, branding a nation can operate as a strategic tool to garner attention in a competitive marketplace. Certainly, the belief that reputation management is a crucial factor in promoting international competitiveness is at the heart of branding campaigns, and India is no different. However, the difference is that in the Indian context, the suggestion by Amitabh Kant, and other key architects that the 80% of Indians living in abject poverty can overcome their low income levels through engaging with India's nation-branding has led to some incredibly disturbing side effects, especially at key moments when political, social or cultural events have interrupted the branding process, and taken the control of the brand away from the architects who have been deemed in charge of India's branding project.

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[6] Sue Curry Jansen. "Designer Nations: Neo-liberal nation-branding – Brand Estonia." In *Social Identities,* Vol. 14, No.1, January 2008, 121.

Just how far Indians go to manage their reputation leads to two questions: Is poverty alleviation truly a main goal of the Incredible India campaign? Certainly, the brand architects have suggested so to me in the course of several interviews, and their reasoning links them back to the logic of the UNWTO's claim that "Tourism not only provides material benefits for the poor, but can also bring cultural pride, a sense of ownership and control, reduced vulnerability through diversification and development of skills and entrepreneurial capacity."[7] While the economic benefits may be true, when taking into account the jailing of 65000 beggars at the behest of the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, during the Commonwealth Games in 2010 in a $65 million clean up project, it becomes clear that pride and eradicating poverty is not the focus of the branding campaign, necessarily. It appears that by focusing exclusively on attracting foreign tourists and investors, the Incredible India campaign attempts to change the entire face of India itself, and often against the democratic appeals of its constituents, the extreme poor themselves. Other domestic campaigns, such as those in Ireland and Canada, have attempted a domestic campaign in order to educate locals on how to behave with tourists, and it is this approach that Incredible India endorses.

Branding a place may start out as a tourist initiative, but its effects on national identities are paradoxically interesting. I situate my argument within the context that nations take specific initiatives to align their national interests, with Canadian interests, as expounded upon by Dubrinsky. Canadians, for example, reinvented themselves after World War II, in order to cater to U.S. tourists, in a campaign which focused specifically on creating a distinctive identity for themselves from Americans. The result was a carefully fostered image with the help of Canadian women's magazines inventing recipes, and even Canadian people, who were advised to project themselves as friendly and courteous to create this distinction, to

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[7] UN WTO in Kant, 205.

allow the American consumer to feel they were going elsewhere.[8] As the example displays, the nation's tourism is meant to attract consumers of a very particular kind. Because of the influx of tourists, "the host society 'comes to reflect upon its own traditions and values through the confrontation with otherness signified by the presence of tourists.'"[9]

I examine the facets of the national campaign in order to suggest that whilst international consumers appear to be the focus of India's nation branding efforts, Brand India does not aim to alleviate poverty on the ground, but simply create the façade of a beautified India. In doing this I situate my thesis within Sue Jansen's concept of nation-branding hoping to influence national identity. Instead, commercial pursuits in the "new" India, are focused entirely on retaining existing class structures. Taking steps to shame the poor into accepting how they deter India from progress achieves the effect of reinstating class difference. The heavy involvement of India's film industry- actors, directors, and producers- in the campaign, privileges the perceptions of India that these actors and directors generally have of the nation, and as a result, the poor are marginalized, imprisoned, ridiculed, and when embraced, done so in usually a romanticized manner.

While Volcic, for example, looks at how national identity is shaped by the branding architects in former Yugoslavia, studies have tackled issues of nationalism and the political economy surrounding nation branding campaigns in many of the countries where nation branding exists, the Incredible India campaign, conceptualized in 2002, has not received extensive academic scholarship. Rahela Farooqi, professor at Delhi University, takes a marketing approach to the Incredible India branding, and India's emergence as a "global player" is weakened because the economic growth, FDI in-flows and the tourism sector do

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[8] Dubinsky 2001.
[9] Dubinsky 2001: 334.

not work coherently with each other. [10] Farooqi suggests that "effective differentiation" is a means of successfully campaigning in a global marketplace. Farooqi's approach that nations attempt to increase their "soft power" in international contexts to improve both their competitive advantage and national development over other countries, and India's attempt to attract foreign capital is encouraged mostly, in his view, by the shared vision of the large Indian diaspora of 30 million. Farooqi focuses on a policy recommendation to the Indian government to engage with its "disseminated assets," or Non-Residential Indians, to help articulate India's FDI in a more coherent manner, in the way that Thailand and Malaysia have been involved with. The underlying pinning of Farooqi's claims can hence be seen as one of nationalism itself.

The most prolific piece, and in fact, the only academic piece which speaks of Incredible India is Sheetal Mehta-Karia's thesis. Mehta highlights how governmentality, as is construed by the nation branding project, is crucial in the postcolonial context of India. Using the "Brand India" (Mehta's terms), she explores how the space of influencing Indian politics has been shifted to thinking about the nation as a corporation looking to harness profit. Mehta Karia examines how India's elite conceptualizes and the extremes they engage with to project this image of India is important, particularly in a culture of countries increasingly branding themselves, and at a time where India's FDI and economy continues to grow steadily despite the global financial crisis. [11] Mehta-Karia looks at nation branding in the postcolony as a neo-colonial project, a form of governance she finds is inextricable from its colonial ancestors, and India's progress, is inextricable from its colonial past, because it projects a form of neocolonial governmentality. [12] My thesis has a crucial point of departure from Sheetal-Mehta's in that while India may perform neo-colonial governance through

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[10] Rahela Farooqi. *Nation Branding: A Study of India's Brand Equity and Capabilities in Comparison to Two Other South Asian Countries,* n.p.

[11] http://tourism.gov.in/writereaddata/CMSPagePicture/file/Primary%20Content/MR/pub-OR-statistics/2010Statistics.pdf Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. Retrieved 2012-03-12.

[12] Mehta-Karia 2011: 4.

Incredible India, the ramifications of the actions taken by the domestic project ruin the integrity and accountability of the "new" and improved India. Mehta focuses on governance, whereas I focus on on implicating the role of India's Bollywood elite in the understanding of India's nation branding.

1.2 Data Collection

Amongst the 22 people I interviewed were Bollywood actors and actresses, film directors, the former deputy Ambassador from India to the United States, the current Joint-Secretary for the Ministry of Public Diplomacy, Mumbai-based journalists from the New York Times and the Times of India, a transvestite human rights worker, slum dwellers in Dharavi, and the Creative Directors and heads of two of the main advertising giants in charge of conceptualizing, propagating and disseminating campaigns for Incredible India campaign. This thesis is based on a combination of textual data sources on Incredible India that are accessible online, as well as on specific questions posed during interviews with various proponents of Incredible India or the Bollywood industry during April 2012. I focus on the main Incredible India website (www.incredibleindia.org), the website detailing individual international campaigns (www.incredibleindiacampaign.org), and the website for domestic campaigns (www.atithi.org.in). The Incredible India websites provide detailed information on Incredible India through films, brochures, advice and information on tour operators, endorsed products, and creates a sense of "the successful" India through the visual medium. Additionally, the three websites show the stark contrasts between the messages that are propagated for a domestic versus an international audience. These campaigns were launched in order to provide India with a competitive edge over the world's corporate and political elite and showcase the unique appeal in investing in India, as well as highlight the "ideal" Indians.

Additionally, I also draw extensively on newspaper articles and commentaries on India released on YouTube to help support the "Atithi Devoh Bhavah" campaign, blogs of famous Bollywood personalities, as well as interviews with Bollywood filmmakers, movie stars, advertising executives, prominent youth who herald themselves as the "future ambassadors" of India, politicians, and members of groups marginalized by the campaign- namely, transvestites, beggars, and sex workers.

The purpose of these texts are to grant authoritative roles to advertising executives as well as India's political and economic elite, in order to understand how reputation becomes a crucial element in how the ideal Indian is negotiated. The analysis of these media representations is supplemented by personal interviews in order to answer the question of what is important to project in today's India, through the campaigns. I read these texts, logos, films, interviews, newspaper articles, blogs, YouTube videos, and slogans as crucial clues to identify what the ideal Indian is meant to be, and how domestic politics and international projections shape, and are shaped, by each other as Incredible India continues to gain momentum. My thesis is situated within this cultural approach to nation branding, and situates how Indian policy makers have taken conscientious steps to address India's foreign policy through branding India- not just through the Incredible India campaign, but also through Bollywood films and in promoting particular ideals and images of Indian constituents, in an effort to shape national policies.

1.3 Chapter Organization

This thesis is composed of five chapters that seek to understand and critique how nation branding is manifest in India.

Chapter two lays out the theoretical framework of nation-branding, and situates India within this context. It provides an overview of the practice of nation-branding, and how

nation branding highlights the voice of a privileged few, often at the cost of providing a democratic voice.

Chapter three focuses on constructing the narrow parameters of understanding the reality of India. I suggest that those in charge of the campaign live in metaphorical glass houses, using their own realities shape the realities of the campaign, thus privileging a very elite perception of India, which ridicules, mocks, and romanticizes India's people, as benefits their own perception of India.

Chapter four situates the Atithi Devoh Bhavah domestic campaign within the context of the Izzat economy, highlighting how class distinctions and education is always present in this campaign. This is, I argue, a means of asserting the distinction and status of the brand ambassadors of India's campaign not only as educators, but also as a means of establishing that they themselves are of supernatural status.

"One simple truth is that governments don't want to run things any more- whether it's the railways, the Bank of England or the Health Service. The role of Government today is to inspire rather than to control."-John Williamson

2. Nation Branding: Theoretical Framework and Methodology

Since the end of the Cold War, nation branding has become an increasingly popular marketing tool for nations competing in the global arena. Simon Anholt claims he receives at least one request per week from nations seeking to brand themselves. On the other hand, Wally Olins, British marketing consultant, and a recent apologist for nation branding, has called nation branding "one of the most contentious political concepts of our time."[13] But what is the scope of this branding, and what are some of the issues faced in branding a place that is distinct from branding a nation? Scholars argue that determining the total breadth of nation branding consulting falls into the realm of guesswork, particularly as it is difficult to find concrete numerical data to determine the relationship of governments with their global advertising partners in creating a brand.

The role of nation branding in reputation management is a key element underlying the narratives of the reasons to advocate branding a nation. Nation branding is often used by nations in both reactive and proactive processes, such as joining multilateral organizations such as the European Union and the United Nations, as well as dodging unwanted international media attention.[14] According to a Council of Foreign Relations article in 2007, "If you count tourism advertising, direct investment outreach, or communications as "nation branding," the estimated size of the industry skyrockets."[15] Whilst nations have become increasingly involved joining the "brandwagon," the nation branding projects of various

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[13] Wally Olins, no date, p. 1.
[14] Aronzcyk 2008: 44.
[15] http://www.cfr.org/information-and-communication/nation-branding-explained/p14776

countries have often met with much criticism, with accusations from academics as extreme as calling the methodology behind nation branding "fascist . . . not liberal or even neo-liberal."[16]

Nation branding is often construed as a post-modern, and neoliberal ideology, which has been construed by political scientists as a as soft power and a form of public diplomacy which essentializes and historicizes a country's past by glossing over any uncomfortable realities, often marginalizing groups of individuals in order to achieve a country's goal. Nation branding has been conflated with a country's national identity, but through engaging with the debate on propaganda in nation branding, I seek to highlight that to simplify and conflate nation branding with national identity falls into the same rhetoric that branding analysts hope to explode, as it does not highlight how certain groups live very comfortably outside the realm of affecting, or being affected, by the ideals of nation branding, in any direct manner, in terms of their identity. Self-appointed nation branding guru Simon Anholt says, "Just as brand management has proved to be one of the most potent instruments for devising strategy and creating wealth in the commercial sector, so its application to the development and competitiveness of states, regions and cities could have enormous and far reaching impacts in the years to come.[17]"

2.1 Defining Nation Branding within the Context of Globalization

Nation branding experts justify it as a "necessary corrective to the waning importance of the nation state" in an increasingly global platform of cultural, economic and political exchange. Experts such as Anholt point out that just as is the case with chocolate and shoes, nations also have reputations attached to them.[18] The images and associations we have with a nation can be either positive or negative. For example, when we think of France, we think fine dining, Japan brings forth images of technology, and Rwanda may signify to us famine,

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[16] Jansen 2008: 135.
[17] Anholt 2007: xii
[18] Anholt 2007

and in recent times, Croatia a sunny paradise. These reputations, whilst at times informally articulated, are nonetheless what marketers term the "country of origin" effect, in other words, the brand that the country has with an international audience.[19] Indeed, the price of a product emerging from a country may be valued so precisely because it is from that country of origin, hence causing Italian leather goods to have a higher value than Chinese leather goods, or Belgian beer to be valued more than Indian beer. Fan argues that a nation's brand indeed can exist without "any conscious efforts in nation branding, as each country has a current image to its international audience, be it strong or weak, clear or vague."[20] Brand builders have argued that if water can be branded, then it is simply a matter of time before anything is branded.[21] As a result, nation branding projects continue to highlight and emphasize myths and meanings of a nation in order to repair, or to increase the visibility of what this nation means, in an assemblage of diverse motifs.

Nation branding is the belief expounded upon by its practitioners that a nation can improve the perception others have of it in the international stage, in order to positively affect its economy and foreign direct investment (FDI). Particularly because of an increasing number of nations providing friendly business environments, tax breaks for corporations, a democratic system of governance, and unique cultural artifacts, the need for competition becomes a means of surviving. Kaneva provides a useful definition to nation branding:

> In its most expansive articulations, nation branding refers to much more than slogans, logos, and colorful advertisements. Rather, it seeks to reconstitute nationhood at the levels of both *ideology* and *praxis*, whereby the meaning and experiential reality of national belonging and national governance are transformed in unprecedented ways."[22]

This working definition highlights three things: firstly, the practice of a branding is the realization of a vision, and lies in the aesthetic articulations of this idealization. Secondly, the

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[19] Mehta-Karia 2011: 42.
[20] Fan 2005: 12.
[21] Jansen 2008.
[22] Kaneva 2012: 4.

agenda and aim behind nation branding is to re-think the nation itself. Finally, because of the purpose of branding is to create an "effect" through the product- of higher investments, the architects of nation branding promote an idealized means of communication, in order to affect the economy, and in particular cases, nation-hood itself. The underlying assumption here is that the nation is actually able to change itself, and furthermore, the change which occurs is uncontrollable because the scope of the "global" consumers who are engaging with the nation, and the citizens who are in fact affected by it. Nation branding has been critiqued because the scope of nation branding is crucially different from other branding objectives. Because the product is a nation, the goals and methodologies applied to nation branding are very different from other branding endeavors, and the scope is extended, as is implied by Kaneva's definition. It is different because "you don't have to ask the beans in the can how they feel about the label."[23]

Since nation branding situates itself as a form of political and economic prosperity in the global arena, it is imperative to define what globalization and this global arena comes to mean. Whilst a discourse on globalization is beyond the scope of this chapter, the effects of globalization inform the subject of nation branding in an inalienable manner. The "gifts" of globalization- the freeing of financial capital beyond the constraints of territorial, political or cultural boundaries, has been accompanied by profound ideological and political restructurings, particularly for emerging market economies. With the end of the Cold War, promotional and media culture make material consumption a positive value. This positive value has become a mantra of the "free market" realities and "consumer choice" is the current utopian vision of globalizing countries.[24] Insofar as it may be generalized, Roger Robertson provides a useful definition for how nation branding occurs, when he says it is "the twofold process of the particularization of the universal and the universalization of the

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[23] Oresund 2002, p2 in Aronzcyk 2008: 57.
[24] Kaneva 2012: 10.

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particular."[25] The result of globalization, and the main issue that it has caused to emerge is "the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization." [26] These statements allow for the opening of fresh conceptual spaces, precisely in moving beyond the imagination of cultural imperialism and subjugation and resistance. They allow us to rethink how tourism, the economy and the world exists within a compendium of discourses which automatically, whilst competing to provide a product, simultaneously are in a situation of juxtaposition: providing a "world" class product involves an incorporation of an understanding of "world" class standards, which may be in complete juxtaposition to local values, standards and understandings.

Nation branding provides a solution in that it interprets the nation for the global marketplace in a manner that highlights the attractive elements of a nation, and the strategy, because "the unbranded state has a difficult time attracting economic and political attention. Image and reputation are thus becoming essential parts of the state's strategic equity."[27] The process of creating a nation's brand requires the nation to believe in the image being projected to its clients in order for it to succeed. Within the current geopolitical and post-modern context, branding architects envision the process of creating a nation brand in a very precise and methodical manner, in what Melissa Aronzcyk highlights as a distinct four step process, which is the product of interviews combined with leading British branding consultants. The distinct steps she identifies are as follows:

1. Evaluating domestic and international public opinion as a form of marketing research
2. Training public and private "stakeholders" to deliver a better product, irrespective of political affiliations, in order to ensure the longevity of the brand
3. Identifying the core idea to be disseminated
4. Communicating as implementation of how the brand is meant to be lived[28]

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[25] Jameson 1998: xi.
[26] Appadurai 1996: 32.
[27] Van Ham 2001: 44.
[28] Aronczyk 2008.

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Aronczyk's interviews with leading brand experts highlights how the process of branding falls under cultural policy and privileges the cultural "elite" through a focus on capital and technological intensive areas such as media, design, film, architecture and elite managerial and professional categories. Additionally, supranational organizations such as the World Trade Organization awards and allocates funds to countries based on their ability to perform and garner wealth.[29]

2.2. Imagining Communities in Nation branding

In order to construe what is being affected through branding, it is important to define the parameters of what is even being imagined as needing management. The underlying assumption behind nation branding is that it is a homogenizing mechanism, and imagination plays a crucial aspect in what is mediated as real, for, as Benedict Anderson illustrates, many of the citizens in a nation do not need to even meet each other to believe they are "real" as a nation.[30] Representations of a nation are always mediated, in that they reflect the political and economic systems of a place, its infrastructure, and in short, the ways in which the nation itself "imagines" itself through mediums- be it newspapers, cartoons, televisions shows, political speeches, advertising campaigns, and social media.

Anderson asserts that a homogenous message, which is analogous to the "horizontal comradeship," is crucial in this understanding of a nation, because it establishes a nation's territoriality, customs and traditions within the localities in which it is situated. Within this context, mediation and media becomes a key factor to understanding nation branding, since messages are mediated, and they are often mediated by a selective group of individuals and groups, in order to create a particular power, knowledge and exchange in the nation. However, as Volcic alludes to for the post-socialist context, and as Chatterjee does in his famous critique "Provincializing Europe," the limit in imagining the nation as a product of

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[29] Aronczyk 2008: 44-5.
[30] Anderson 1983: 14.

"enlightened" Europe, privileges understandings of nations simply within the confines of European understandings of the nation, and limits the means through which post-colonial nations can imagine themselves.[31] Chatterjee warns that in understanding the post-colonial nation, "Even our imaginations must remain forever colonized."[32]

Several marketing executives, have, positively advocated branding approaches to public policy, with Simon Anholt defining such an approach as "inherently democratic," because it supposedly "ensures a fair contest between the pubic and private bodies of the state and the domestic and foreign publics." [33] Whilst the involvement of a variety of institutions and public-private partnerships may indeed be at play, studies by Aronzcyk articulate how branding experts themselves find it difficult to imagine countries such as Britain with a long history of colonialism, and a strong legacy of multitudinal approaches and opinions as a successful candidate for re-branding. Hence, there are indeed limitations to what is perceived as manageable, and Aronzcyk makes the astute observation that authority to start afresh, if limited to understandings of those countries with less "baggage," masks the notion of hegemonic intent, but does not diminish it.[34]

Branding a place, if it is managed in expecting heterogeneous expectations through creating a homogenous message, often works in obliterating one of these expectations. There are three approaches to nation branding. Kaneva highlights the marketing approach to branding looks at implementing designs and efforts with the aspect of improving upon techniques. The academic and critical approach, on the other hand, is grouped under political theory and/or cultural approaches to branding, with a focus on the genesis and consequences of branding. The theoretical framework I use for my thesis will highlight the core elements of the critical-cultural approach, in particular the emphasis on the historical construction of

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[31] Chatterjee 1993.
[32] Chatterjee 1993, 5.
[33] Anholt 2007, 40.
[34] Aronzcyk 2008, 58.

nation branding, the interest-driven nature of the process, the analysis of the content of campaign discourses and practices, including omissions and "blind spots" in the campaigns, and the consequences of campaigns to national communities. In doing so, I seek to highlight that, as Jansen and Volcic point out, nation branding privileges an anti-democratic mindset. Nation branding seeks to "transform national identity into intellectual property."[35]

Nation branding has become an increasingly popular strategic tool for nation-states to advance their cultural, economic and political agendas, usually in order to promote economic investment and increase trade in their countries. Nation branding is usually practiced by international and public relations consultants, who work with national government officials to project, create, and distribute particularized images of the nation. A marketing tool to increase visibility for a country in a global marketplace, nation branding mechanisms highlights the "unique" nature of the country for marketing. Countries ranging from Great Britain, Estonia, Poland, Botswana, Croatia, Malaysia, and Brazil are involved in nation branding exercises, and particularly in the first decade of the 21st century, nation branding campaigns have become increasingly common. The portfolios for such campaigns continue are diverse, with a focus on Internet viral campaigns in some countries, to events promoting a country's culture and economy, in others.

Nation branding has been likened by its defenders, such as Peter Van Ham, as a necessary means for statescraft to occur, precisely by trying to assert their "soft power," in order to repair the damage done by the violent historical legacies of "hard power." Joseph Nye introduced the concept of soft power as "the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments . . . soft power arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies." [36] Certainly, nation branding architects would like to assume that their influence in policy is expounded on by culture, but while this

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[35] Van Ham in Jansen, 142.
[36] Nye 2004, 6.

may occur so internally in a nation's branding efforts, it does not necessarily correlate in an external setting. However, Van Ham's understanding of place-branding remains unconvincing in that he likens place-branding as the necessary antidote to warn against reactive measures, in an analogy where he posits place-branding as "intellectual property."[37] The fact that a nation can be compared to a brand already suggests that a nation is limited in its understanding, as simply a product needing management. However, by making it the property of any movement, we can assume that branding falls into an anti-democratic model inculcated by "calculative" space of its engineers.

As Van Ham points out, the film Borat created a huge negative impact on the previously "unknown" country of Kazakhstan in the global arena. If the nation brand is intellectual property, why then is it that when the intellectual property is violated, justice could not have been brought by attempting to either sue the actor Sacha Baron Cohen, or by hiring place branding experts in New York to work on campaigns to repair the image destruction brought on by Borat. The issue at hand here is that, as Van Ham observes, the multitude of processes at hand, such as business, tourism, and art, work in tandem to influence image and reputation, and measuring the reputation of the country is a tricky, if not impossible means of coping with the fact that the nation, just by embodiment, is unlike other products. However, the problem with thinking of nation branding as soft power is that whilst negative place branding does influence the reputation of a country, it does not necessarily mean that the brand itself is compromised beyond repair.

Sue Jansen's discourse on Brand Estonia pinpoints to how the methodology of nation branding is particularly "anti-democratic" because it simplifies and selects only the attractive elements in a nation, in order to create a vision of a "new" reality for the nation. Furthermore, in the creation of the voice and tone of the brand's personality, in this case, the country's

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[37] Van Ham 2008, 127.

personality, the coherence of the brand is precisely in the capacity of the country to realize this vision, and the realization, which Jansen identifies as lying in the hands of the elite few, by Van Ham's example of Borat, can be seen as influenced by those beyond the country's borders. Indeed, the "problem-of-plenty" is the main issue with branding. Because there is a multitude of representations that can be performed, a multitude of images and representations through various medias and forms, the choice in what makes it to the consumer's mind is often immeasurable. The consumer is in the imagination of the branding experts, executives and government officials, for whom a small group of national tour-operators, policy-makers, businesses, and other forms of groupings attempt to harness the narrative. The underlying narrative here is that power is at play on multitudinal levels- in the propagation, promulgation, dissemination, and ultimately, in the choice of what is mediated, projected, and understood as a country's identity. Management and control are manifestations of a form of governance, and it is the grasp of, or the control of, which is crucially understood and projected by nation branding.

Markets and brands provide iterative relationships in the nation branding context. Van Ham suggests this is a post-modern setting whereby nations are trying to create value in a setting where nations have diminished in importance. Yet, even while nations may have a diminished value in a globalized context, a person's citizenship and nationality marks the reception in which we have in the world. The political approach focuses on "public diplomacy," and in particular, Gilboa draws parallels between how there is a form of public, media, and media-broker diplomacy, which is distinct but related to nation branding.[38] The four areas of mass media, intersection with adjacent disciplines, historical perspectives, diplomacy strategy and management are facets of this approach, but in particular, the focus is on the symbols of branding. The cultural approach focuses on discourses around visual and

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[38] Gilboa 2004, 1.

23

media in temporal and spatial elements of these productions. The argument here is that nation branding limits broad participations of citizens; narratives veer between reproductions of familiar stereotypes and provide a form of self-exoticization. The cultural approach studies the implications of branding for the politics of identity and the way in which branding "promotes a particular organization of power, knowledge and exchange in articulation of collective identity."[39]

The gap within nation branding literature, as Kaneva points out, is that there is focus on nation branding mostly as a discourse, but not enough on the practices on constituents, or on cross country approaches, often choosing only single countries as a point of focus.[40] Another issue is that these approaches often examine material in terms of discourse analyses. Kaneva calls for critical scholarship to explain why nation branding has been so appealing to national and transnational elites, and an analysis of the alliances between economic and political elites. At the heart of Kaneva's distinction of the research necessary to differentiate notions of social reproduction present in society is the perpetuation of class distinction through habitual norms, mores and actions. It is through the propagation of particular exoticising forms of media, through the concealed, or ill-concealed propaganda, that countries hope to shape the ideologies and their nations, as has been discussed and demonstrated by the literature at hand. However, it is precisely at the point when nation branding comes into conflict with the ideologies which are expounded on in order to validate it, that we see an emergence of the extreme measures that are taken by nation-branders, as well as the national governments to address this.

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[39] Aronczyk, 2008, 46
[40] Kaneva 2011: 129.

3. Projecting the "Real" Incredible India: Setting A Voice and Tone for Brand India

3.1 Background of the Incredible India campaign

Incredible India was conceptualized in 2002 as a joint venture between a number of key stakeholders. The Indian Ministry of External Affairs, particularly with the help of the Ministry of Tourism, in conjunction with brand architects of global advertising giant Ogilvy and Mather, worked together in creating Incredible India, primarily focusing on high-end tourism. The then Joint-secretary of the Ministry of Tourism, Amitabh Kant, was instrumental in developing the campaign with one of the Creative Directors and Account Manager for the Incredible India campaign, V. Sunil. Once Sunil left Ogilvy to start his own firm called (A), the campaign went with him, and he held the account when (A) merged with W+K (as they call themselves, but it is Weiden and Kennedy, where Sunil currently works as Creative Director. Under Sunil's direction, India's campaign went truly global, with the largest and most extensive campaigns to launch India occurring, including IndiaEverywhere, India@60 in New York City, and the 2007 Davos campaign. In 2009, the advertisement agency Mundra won the Incredible India account for three years, but Ogilvy won back the Incredible India campaign from Mundra in early 2012.[41] In the meantime, Bharat Bala was a videographer whose commercials on India, winning international tourism awards for his efforts. Kant has also moved on and is currently working with the Central Government to build eight new cities in conjunction with private Japanese stakeholders, which will connect Mumbai and Delhi by 2032.[42]

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[41] There are many reasons that an advertisement campaign can change hands. Sunil suggested that the Ministry of Tourism and Culture were unwilling to pay the increased W+K's fees to handle the campaign.

[42] Mehta Karia's thesis attributes what she terms "Brand India" to the CII, and certainly, CII takes the credit for creating the brand campaign through their website. However, this is a myth which must be dispelled, because through conversations both with government ministers, alongside speaking with Sunil, Thapur, and other actors involved in the projection of India's campaign in 2007, as well as numerous articles online, it is clear that the involvement with CII was initiated as a public-private partnership in 2007, to launch the "!ndiaEverywhere"

The leadership of the campaign In other words, the Incredible India campaign has reached a fresh stage in its history, as both the advertising executives and the government liaisons are different parties from the majority of the past ten years of Incredible India's existence. The future of the campaign, Sunil asserted to me in no uncertain terms, is "dismal, with the quality dropping and confidence shifting in the campaign, especially because CII is a bunch of assholes, and they get to have a large say in what is going on currently." On the other hand, Ogilvy's Executive Creative Director for the Incredible India campaign, Sanjay Thapur, is optimistic. Whilst refusing to share any of the details of the future of the campaign, he suggested that the campaign is moving in the direction of creating a "holistic" identity for India, and "helps fight against poverty."[43]

If numbers are telling, India's story is one of incredible success. In just the first year of the Incredible India campaign's inception in 2002, India's tourist numbers increased by 13.9%, and in the second year, the numbers went up by 26.9%.[1] Tourism is India's largest service industry, with a contribution of 6.23% to the national GDP and 8.78% of the total employment in India. In 2010, 25.8 million foreign tourists visited India. India generated about 200 billion US dollars in 2008 and that is expected to increase to US$375.5 billion by 2018 at a 9.4% annual growth rate. Foreign tourist arrivals here also include Non-Residential Indians.

The international campaign of Incredible India, which has 14 offices worldwide including New York and Rome, has since 2009, extended its projects in a US $ 12 million a year domestic campaign aimed at "local tourists." The funds of the Incredible India campaigns are allocated from the annual budgets provided for the Ministry of Tourism by the Government of India. Various campaigns, especially in public-private partnerships, receive their funds from the Federal Reserve Bank of India. A top official working on international

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campaign, and in subsequent campaigns where the involvement of the business sector was appropriate to the campaign messages.

[43] Interview with the author, April 27, 2012.

financing in India's projects abroad, who asked to remain anonymous, and so for our purposes I shall call Mr. Seth, said that the Federal Reserve Bank of India receives funding from India's Federal Reserve Bank's branch offices. Therefore, for example, the Davos campaign received funds from the Swiss branches of the Federal Reserve Bank of India. Mr. Seth suggested that the funding of campaigns must align with India's economic objectives, and "careful evaluation is conducted to ensure that alignment of interests of the campaign correlate with the interests of the campaign-makers." In this regard, the Davos campaign, India@60 in New York and London, have received funding from the campaign.

The scope of this campaign, which I discuss in more detail in the next chapter, is to educate tour operators in how India should be branded. In 2011, this was extended to creating advertisements and videos showcasing the heritage sites of various Indian states, using Bollywood "brand ambassadors" to promote the cultural wealth of each state. Thapur suggested the reason behind promoting India to Indian's was to "to provide Indian's with a consideration set, instead of hopping on a flight to Thailand or other international destinations. It was to encourage them to remember that India is incredible, not just for foreigners, but for them too."[44]

Kant highlights the 6 steps adopted by Incredible India in situating the brand's voice and tone:

1. Clear definition of value proposition
2. Consistency in communication strategy
3. Constant research and innovation
4. Commitment to continuous support of branding
5. Constant interaction with travellers/travel writers and editors
6. Turning tourism officials into brand ambassadors.[45]

The ideal that Aronzcyk provides, of brand ambassadors as being the proponents of creating and sustaining a brand identity is apparent in this narrative, particularly because the process of creating an essence for the brand, and in executing what the core essence of the brand is

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[44] Interview with the author, April 28, 2012.
[45] Kant, 31-33.

27

highlighted, and communicated. The only key distinction is that while tourist operators were targeted as key officials to be educated, every single one of the six branding architects and government officials I interviewed distinctly focused on highlighting that Bollywood actors are the key focus on creating an advertisement campaign's champion, as individuals who "live the brand."

3.2 Hierarchy and Otherness: Whose India is Being Sold?

The brand personality and identity of Brand India was made coherent, in focusing precisely on what William Mazzarella suggests is a marketing discourse setting which "involves, through and through, a massive displacement." [46] Mazzarella departs from traditional advertising narratives in describing this displacement in a global advertising firm in Mumbai, which eventually fails to highlight the irrevocable tension in taking a global brand, and trying to localize it. Mazzarella construes the relationship between the consumer and the brand executives, which is usually imagined as one between the corporation and the consumer, as actually one with advertising and marketing professionals on one side and corporate clients on the other. [47] Nation branding, of course, is not mere advertising, and takes the concept Mazzarella introduces per branding one step further, because the consumer is imaged in light of the branding executives and the ministry officials' understandings of themselves, and because the product is the nation, there is a constant negotiation of negotiating oneself, either in tension, or aligned with the product, but always within an imaginary of what the consumer would want. The effect is an anti-democratic discourse that privileges particular opinions against others.

Nation-branding is, as Kaneva's idea of nation branding as the "affect-economy" suggests, a form of advertising which, although not limited to the idea of propaganda, does attempt to shape the practices of individuals. In this space, the clients were the Ministers of

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[46] Mazzarella 2003: 52.
[47] Ibid 52.

the Ministry of External Affairs, but the stakes were higher in that the advertising professionals were in actuality, just as embroiled in attempting to shape the reality of this India. Sunil highlighted this well when, during the course of his interview with me, he said, "We were certain from the beginning that we were not just selling a product. We were selling a country. My country. Our country. And in order to sell this country, our belief in what this country is, the *reality* of it, matters a lot." The question from Sunil's telling quote then emerges, what is the real India which was being sold, and whose India is it? Sunil contradicted himself at a later point in the conversation, when he said, "We're not selling our country, but we are only selling Indian tourism. We're selling the places we grew up in, because many of us come from rural India."[48] While acknowledging that Anderson's notion of imagined communities provides a backdrop for understanding nation-hood, the process of standardizing time, language, and territorial extent is complex in the post-colonial setting. This is particularly true in the case of India, where the Constitution currently recognizes 22 official languages, and according to the Census of 2001, 29 languages in the country have more than a million native speakers, 60 have more than 100,000 and 122 have more than 10,000 native speakers. Indeed, just the multitude of possibilities of representation, and the choice in what to represent produces what Chatterjee calls "asymmetrical" power relations, as some narratives will be privileged over others, and in creating a homogenous narrative in order to create horizontal comradeship within the nation, only a certain number of narratives can even be privileged.

In understanding this national context, and in creating a meta-narrative that a nation-brand must provide, it is clear that the Indian elites had a daunting task ahead of them in 2002. The "problem-of-plenty," as Sunil echoed repeatedly in my conversation with him, loomed ahead. The underlying dictate of the commercialist ethos which influences nation

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[48] Interview with the author, April 25, 2012.

branding is that by creating and mythologizing the national identity of a country in market terms, the commercial ambitions of a nation can be enhanced.[49] The fact that there is a privileged few that get to produce this "real" narrative in a country of 1.12 billion is, to say the very least, disturbing, as voices inherently get lost, and multiplicity of tonality is managed by an elite perception of the realities on the ground. It is an inherently anti-democratic model.

Jansen's concept of nation branding of nation branding as an anti-democratic model is crucial because the reality of branding is extendable to how the vision and aspirations, indeed an ideological and utopian vision of a nation is one between government agencies, and the advertising executives on the other. This aspirational element is of particular importance to nation branding, setting it apart from other forms of branding, because of the "calculative space" it inculcates, indoctrinates, and ultimately attempts to produce.[50] This is further proved by the question I posed to Sunil about who was consulted in the process of producing the campaign. His description of the stakeholders included air-line personnel, tour operators, government ministers, his own team at W + K, and in general, the tourist industry. Not once was there a mention of the general people of India, who were being "sold," as part of the Indian brand. This further showcases the disconnect between the people who are being projected, and the world occupied by the advertising executives and the government officials.

In order to create a narrative of what India's reality is, in terms of what can be represented, usage of the "Other" is usually employed as a means of distinction from oneself. The Incredible India campaign, within the domestic social framework localizes and uses concepts of the Izzat economy, or the honor economy, in order to further its visions- the country's izzat, one's own izzat, to articulate the vision of the nation. I argue in this chapter that Indianness is understood through the concept of Izzat, which grants elites the

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[49] Jansen 2008: 122.
[50] Jansen 2008: 122.

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supernatural status, of having already established their Izzat, and therefore being able to teach it. In this chapter I will first provide a definition of Izzat, to show that for Indian elites, branders, and Bollywood stars, these two concepts go hand in hand in conceiving the development and poverty alleviation of the locals. Yet, there is more to Izzat than a ritually televised reductionist logic to it. Izzat carries with it a notion of "dignity," "prestige," "respectiability" or "honour ."[51] When I asked Anita Gupta why the community member's input was lacking, she said something very telling, "Well, they would just get defensive. And we already know what is best for them." She suggested an elite person "already at the pinnacle of modernity, because of his/her engagement with politics, education, and progress." Because of this state of modernity of the elite, an elite does not have to try hard to retain their class status. The status is hereditary, and an elite is responsible for the learning and growth of an emergent middle class. Gupta lay down criteria for elites, which provides a useful paradigm to distinguish between elites and those lacking in the izzat of being an elite:

> There are three important criteria for being an elite:
> 1. Being famous. If your are well known and respected, you attain an elitist status.
> 2. Owning property. Anyone who owns at least five acres of land is an elite. There is such a shortage of land in our country that you have to be very rich in order to own land.
> 3. Being educated. Even if you own property and are famous through doing respectable deeds, you cannot be an elite unless you are educated. Without education, you are always poor, and without education, you have no izzat, regardless of what you have done in your life.[52]

Being an elite is hence a discursive conditioning of the parameters of class distinction, and resides on the level of hegemony- understood, without needing to be disclosed, unless specified. Being an elite resides in the power of suggestion made through one's physical appearance- the clothes one wears, the transportation one uses to get from one place to another, and of course, the means in which they engage with those who are in a lower class position than them.

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[51] Liechty 2003: 83.
[52] Interview with the author, April 29, 2012.

During my visit to India in April, I was repeatedly asked how I was planning on talking about Incredible India if I did not experience the "real" India. Both in Mumbai and in Delhi, I was encouraged to visit rural India to understand India's "reality." Once I reached Mussoorie, a remote town in the Indian Himalayas, American-born Bollywood actor Tom Alter told me that if I really wanted to experience the "real" India, I needed to be in the heart of a city, because real India was "in its people." In Chennai, Rohan Gupta, a college friend and emerging actor in director Mira Nair's new film, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, decided to expose me to "real" India. He took me to neighboring Mahaballipuram, an ancient heritage site, to experience what he called "authentic" India. When back at Rohan's meticulously manicured marble beach-front house that evening, his brother Varun, who runs a travel company geared towards high-end tourists, made me promise to go to Kashmir, saying I had "wasted my time in large cities," and even Mussoorie was "dirty and crowded." For him, the "real" India lay in the vast emptiness of the Ladakh and Leh valleys of the North. Rohan and Varun's mother, a highly successful advertising executive who has worked on advertising campaigns with lead global companies *Ralph Lauren* and *Gucci* in promoting their India launches, rolled her eyes, and told me, "My sons and their friends, all of you, have never experienced the real India. You're too privileged, sitting in this house and having this conversation, to know what happens beyond these gated walls."

The key point that becomes clear through the conversations and interviews was that everyone had a different perception of where India's reality lay, and whether, by being perceived as occupying a certain elite class, it was even possible to experience it. The gravity of how certain spaces can exist which do not occupy an Indian reality, or are "imagined" as Indian came home, when over brunch at my American-born Indian host's house in Mumbai, Monica Dogra, singer and lead actress of *Dhobi Ghat,* commented, "This house does not even feel like it is in Bombay." When asked why, she answered, "It's not gritty enough,

everything is marble, we're being served idlis out of a glass kitchen, and there's a swimming pool downstairs. And on top of that, the upstairs neighbor is Preity Zinta."[53] The reference to the Bollywood star living above as being distinct to the "local" Indians, servants cooking breakfast, the opulence signified by marble decor, and a swimming pool in a heavily-guarded apartment complex, outside which lay a fishing village slum, was a testament to how, even within the Mumbai's Bandra suburbs, "India" is imagined to simply not even "exist." These markers of distinction are the symbolic capital which allows certain Indians, such as my ex-pat friend and the Bollywood star living above, be labeled by a fellow elite Indian as incompatible with the "real" Mumbaiite, and by extension, the "real" Indian. In fact, the possibilities of the real India becomes limited in the understandings of the interviews I conducted as always removed to the current context I was in. It was continually being linked to nature, embodied in *specific groups* of people, and in ancient artifacts and monuments.

What is the reality that is projected through the nation branding campaign can be seen by the two images below.
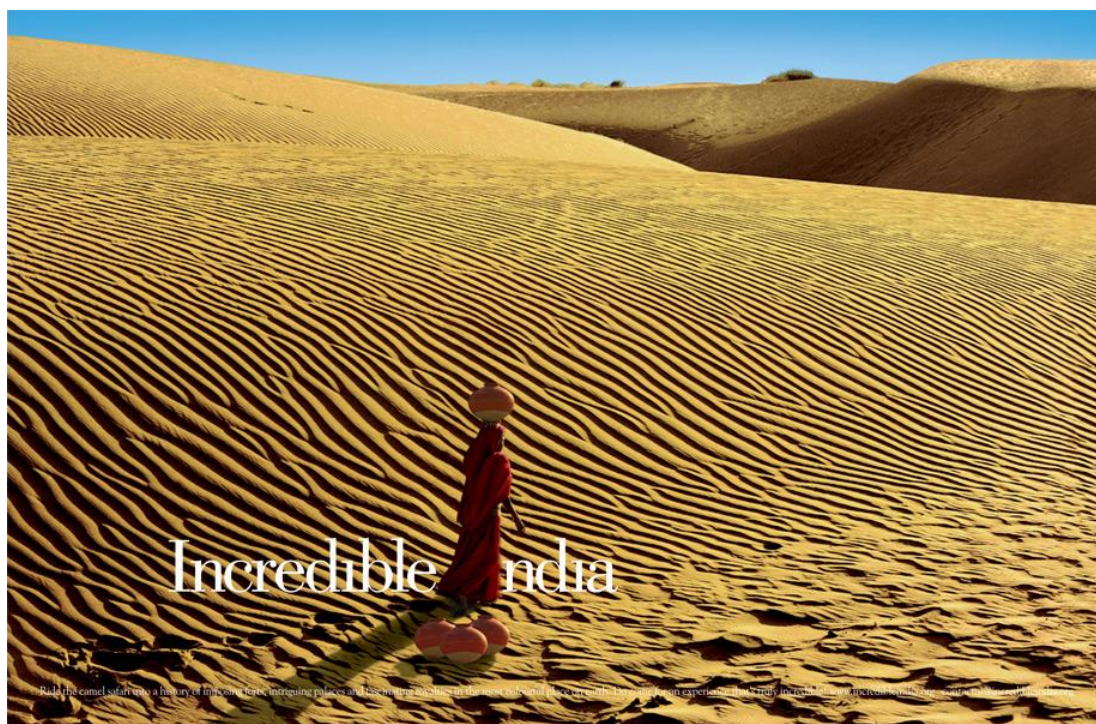
Photograph A: Campaign 2002/3

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[53] Interview with the author, April 14, 2012.

Photograph B: Campaign 2002/2

The first image showcases a dark Indian woman, silhouetted against the sun, barefoot and walking in a desert carrying a water pot on her head, a lone figure in a vast desert landscape. The warm colors of the advertisement are in stark contrast to the second image, which shows a fair complexioned woman practicing yoga. In both of the images, we find that India is being positioned as a place of solitude, peaceful and calming environments, set apart from other spaces particularly with the novelty of the actions being represented: a woman dressed in a sari on one hand, and a woman doing a yoga on the other. The clothes, for the first woman, and the action of yoga, for the second one, are what make the images authentically representations of India, creating the "distinctive" Indian identity the campaign hoped to present.[54] The first woman is dark, the second light. The first is presumably working class, because she needs to carry water in clay pots in order to have access to drinking water. The first woman is turned away from the sun, whilst the second faces the light, and the light

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[54] www.incredibleindiacampaign.com/2002

enshrouds her. The second woman is cool, calm, and invariably, collected, with the luxury of being able to do yoga.

These images are emblematic of the Incredible India campaign, and keep in line with projecting the reality of the "real" Indian, enlightened or enlightening, and cast within a positively empty landscape. Bringing the conversations of "reality" back to the dialogue on nation branding is important because India's elite, as a reflection of their own reality, consciously propagates the "reality" of India. This chapter will highlight how the perception of India is irrevocably limited in elite understandings of how India should actually be projected and hence, inextricably linked with expressing confidence, wealth, and influence as the crucial goals of the campaign. It is precisely when the image of India becomes impaired by movies such as *Slumdog Millionaire*, and highly televised events such as the 26/11 Mumbai terrorist attacks, arguably the haunts of India's elite, and Bollywood's elite, that the branding process became even more crucial for Indian elites to manage and negotiate in manners previously unforeseen, in order to retain their understandings of their space. Through the wide discourse in which this image is managed, we come to see how India's elites and branders will do whatever it takes to protect their image in the world.

3.3 Bollywood and Incredible India

Slumdog's terrible reception in India can be highlighted through the perspective of India's best-known elite and long-time Bollywood legend, Amitabh Bachchan. The Big B, as he is called, wrote in his blog in early 2010, and said "Slumdog Millionaire projects India as [a] Third World dirty underbelly developing nation and causes pain and disgust among nationalists and patriots . . . The story has earned Hollywood recognition only because, although based on a novel by an Indian writer, it has been conceived and cinematically put together by a Westerner." Bachchan's invocation of nationalists and patriots exemplifies that the ideal of a developed nation has no space for poverty. Whilst this may be self-evident fact,

35

that Bachchan seems to be narrating a fantastical projection of the India he occupies is not lost upon his audience. Bachchan's belief of Bollywood is an inference to the legacies of the Bollywood cinema world, which according to him, is in the constant shadow of its western peers. Additionally, in this perspective we find that Bachchan is lamenting the lack of progress by presenting the western view of India, a view that the Indians themselves need to internalize, in order to project, market, and execute, which was subsequently done after the production of this film.

The widespread disapproval of *Slumdog* is not limited to Indian elites. In the eastern state of Bihar in India, slum dwellers objecting to the word "dog" attacked a cinema screening of *Slumdog Millionaire* on January 23, 2009.[55] Slum dwellers, organized by activists like Tapeshwar Vishwakarma in Dharavi, led protests with placards that read, "Don't call us dogs" and "I am not a Slumdog, I am India's future" showcase how various sectors of India's public were incensed, and the criticism did not just lie in India's elite realities. Vishwakarma claims referring to people in slums as dogs violated their human rights. He has filed a lawsuit demanding the title of the film be changed.[56] The telling placard, "I am not a Slumdog, I am the future of India" shows that India's marginalized impoverished felt violated by the projection of themselves as inferiors, just by the title used in the film.

The criticism surrounding the film *Slumdog Millionaire* showcases how the film, which received critical acclaim worldwide, became a point of controversy and national shame in the India. Whilst it is important to note that the film had an effect of the negative place imaginary of India, the shootings of the Taj and Oberoi hotels in Bombay- the hallways of elite tourists in India, were televised extensively in late 2008, creating a second point of negative impact on India's brand image as a safe and high-end tourist destination. Because of

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[55] CBS news, "No Love for SM in India." January 30, 2009
[56] Chitra Divakaruni, "The Real Roots of 'Slumdog' Protests" in The New York Times, February 20, 2009

the high media attention and expected tourist earnings from the Games, India launched one of its most controversial cleanup campaigns: an expensive sweep of "pollutants" of the cityscape, which was allocated $65 million dollar cleanup and grouped together beggars and peddlers with monkeys, rats and snakes, and dislocated these beggars into prisons for the duration of the games. The brand ambassadors of this campaign are invariably Bollywood actors- actors who have been vocal about the damage that other forms of visual media, such as the film *Slumdog Millionaire* has created for India. *Slumdog* has created a negative impact on the Indian brand, particularly because it focuses on class distinction, and shows abject poverty in a way that is absolutely alien to the advertising campaigns produced by Incredible India's international efforts. The backlash, as it is, occurs primarily with India's elite, and some of the most vocal answers to Incredible India are in the hands of the Bollywood industry, who are promoters of the Incredible India brand. The role of Slumdog in sustaining a negative image for India can be further seen by the fact that it disrupts the role of Bollywood as holding the hegemonic role in Indian cinema, and of Indian elites, in this sense, the Bollywood elite, in managing the Indian image in the world. As was apparent in the negative perception of Slovakia evidenced by the film *Hostel*, which projects Slovaks as chain-saw bearing violent freaks, or the negative place-branding of the film *Borat* on Kazakhstan, the message is clear: a country is not always able to manage the perceptions others have of them.

To suggest that all of Bollywood is involved in saving or branding India or in recovering its image is a totalizing term that does not allow for the diverse voices and ideas presented in Bollywood films. "Bollywood" is a diverse term to describe the variety of genres present in over 1200 films produced by an industry which is termed the largest production film industry in the world, with genres ranging from comedy and fantasy, and horror, usually in Hindi, but recently have also been used to describe the Tamil films of the

37

South (which currently vies for the title "Tollywood" to distinguish itself from Bollywood). For the intents of this project, I use Bollywood films in this context to describe the work of India's brand Ambassador Aamir Khan, whose production house produced three A-Rated narratives of India in high grossing films that seem to explode the image of the traditional Indian romantic comedy. While it would be simplistic to suggest that Indian films are reacting to "foreign" made films such as *Slumdog*, a new generation of Indian films has indeed emerged since 2009, with Indian films being screened not only in the dinghy and cramped movie theaters of New York's Jackson Heights, where the majority of working class Indians reside.

The first film, Dhobi Ghat (literally translated as "Laundry Slum," or as it is known in English, "Bombay Diaries"), of which Dogra is a star, depicts the grime and dirt of Bombay's cityscape and the intersecting lives of four people across various strata of Indian society, unable to meet with their dreams. The film situates poverty in terms of class relations, with ample conversations between characters reminding them not to step outside the boundaries depicted in their class, even if it means compromising their dreams. The film, released in 2009, grossed $2.79 million in India, but did much better outside of India, grossing $1.79 million worldwide. Of course, distributive practices are particularly important when looking at a film's longevity, but if popularity is a means of deducing the film's longevity in the Box Office, then it is of note that despite not raking in as much money as the other two films in question, the film was being showed for free on Netflix.com for immediate streaming as early as January 2010. By contrast, one still has to pay to do a live stream of *Delhi Belly* or of *Peepli Live.*

Peepli Live, released in 2010, is a comic take on the farmer's suicides in India, and was written and directed by Anusha Rizvi. According to the Times of India, Peepli Live showcases the "real" India without glossing over the contradictions of our fumbling-

bumbling democracy or getting overtly sentimental about garibi and the attendant grime that goes with it.[57] Garibi is the Hindi word for beggar-like, and it is of note because it is the only word used to specify the distinction between classes in Indian society. It is ironic that the same author of this critique had to remind Indians that instead of declaring Slumdog as poverty porn, Indians should go watch Slumdog because "Forget the Us versus Them debate. Just go for the pure cinema experience."[58] This telling statement symbolizes that the boundaries created by Slumdog's production instilled a notion of India that was unable to cope with this perception. Whether the perception is of us, the Indians, or of them, the foreigners, or us, the rich, versus the poor, who do not know English, and will not read The Times of India.

Delhi Belly, released in 2011, was screened in Times Square theaters, and grossed $ 6.38 million in its first week of screening in India and US$ 1.6 million abroad. *Delhi Belly* grossed $16.3 million worldwide.[59] One of the three A-Rated films produced under Amir Khan Productions, the film depicts the "new" Indian reality of the upper middle class, caught in diamond scams and scavenges, amidst the backdrop of an extravagant India. In contrast to the two other films I mentioned, Delhi Belly is about taking the Scottish moats usually represented as homes in India, and instead showcasing the lives of rich Indians as a corrupt alliance of thieves, where besting each other takes on the style of a Western.

The brand ambassadors for the Incredible India campaign are invariably Bollywood actors, and the projects they finance is indicative of the role they see themselves in promoting the "new" India. In this context, Amir Khan's endorsement of films such as the ones discussed was to showcase the real India, and this India is one where class and hierarchy are valued and cannot be breached. The role between the two industries has recently been

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[57] Nikhat Kazmi, http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/entertainment/movie-reviews/hindi/Peepli-Live/movie-review/6298078.cms, August 12, 2010.
[58] Nikhat Kazmi, http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/entertainment/movie-reviews/english/Slumdog-Millionaire/movie-review/4018046.cms, January 22, 2010.
[59] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delhi_Belly_(film)

solidified. On February 17, 2012, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Culture, suggesting a partnership in promoting Incredible India through film. When I spoke with Anusha Rizvi, director of Peepli Live, she was absolutely unaware of this MoU, and was indignant, because "films are not made by the ministries. They are made by artists and directors, and if film directors are not even told about the film-making opportunity, the art of Indian cinema suffers." This telling statement shows that even within the film industry, for a filmmaker who has been recognized internationally with India's only film to be showcased thus far in the Sundance Film Festival, or the filmmaker behind India's submission to the 83rd Academy Awards, has not even been given the recognition to be told about further opportunities to possibly correlate with the architects behind Incredible India.

3.4 Who is the Consumer?

Given that Bollywood films are a form of entertainment, it is interesting that all the four films are seen in such juxtaposition to each other. The consumer, I would suggest, has shifted in the views of India's elite. Thapur suggested that the early years of the campaign was to incite a shock factor to in the consumer, and to carve recognition for India beyond Silicon Valley. In executing the campaign, the goal was to "deliver" the promised product of Incredible, and the Indian Tourism ministry worked on improving the infrastructure, roads, flights, and hotels that it aimed to provide for the consumer. Krishnan Varma, former Deputy Ambassador to the United States and prior to that, the Deputy Ambassador to China, told me that the Incredible India campaign "focuses on all kinds of travellers, whether they are rich, or poor."[60] This diplomatic answer to the question was dispelled during the course of my interviews with Sunil, who told me the branding architects made a conscious decision from the beginning that they did not want "backpackers, as they are a burden to the system." In

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[60] Interview with author, April 27, 2012.

conjunction with this, one of the first steps taken by the Government of Kerala, whose successful "God's Own Country" branding campaign has incited unparalleled levels of tourism in the state, was to stop charter flights carrying backpackers to the southern state. The class focus is outlined in a stark manner in Amitabh Kant's book, where Kant describes the consumers being targeted:

- Target the age group of forty to sixty-five years belonging to affluent, well-educated, married, white-collar segments for a value-based strategy;
- Convert business travel to business-cum-leisure travel;
- Target Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) in the US and Canadian markets.[61]

Each of the three groups of travelers targeted in the early years of the Incredible India campaign highlight one crucial element, that the ideal traveler is has money and the power to add to the commercial elements of India. Defining the consumer lay in defining who these white-collar individuals are, and what they would want to see. In doing so, the Indians advertising gurus in charge of the advertising campaign do not even need to look too far beyond their doorsteps: these Indians are elites, and they already know what the high-end "foreign" consumer wants, because they are already emulating it in their own houses, in their own personal vacations, and in their own personal interactions with foreigners. They, because of their ability to travel, have already engaged with and understand what the elite is and what they do. Varma met me at his heavily manicured and tastefully decorated house in Central Delhi, Thapur interrupted his commentary of the "new" India by pointing out the beautiful aerial view he now has of the Delhi landscape from the new offices of Ogilvy as testament of this fact, and Sunil insisted that "it is insulting that Indian food is not branded in a high-end manner, and whereas I enjoy $500 Italian meals in Manhattan, I cannot do the same for an Indian meal, and worse, the Bangladeshis pass off their wares as Indian."[62] The references to Bangladeshi food, which is not dissimilar to the wares found in the West

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[61] Kant, 15.
[62] Interview with the author, April 25, 2012.

Bengal state of India showcases that a hierarchy is placed on what is actually "Indian," and competitiveness and symbolic capital such as modern high-rise buildings, as well as pristinely manicured lawns, are artifacts of the reality of the new India.

Coming back to nation-branding's reach, and the consumer it targets, the reality of the Incredible India campaign could be arguably the elite Indians themselves. For the first time since the brand's inception, the campaign focused on the projections of foreign-born Indians, as a means of projecting the "venerable Indian." In doing so, the Indian tourism campaign of 2008/2009 highlights "the people who've truly embraced the culture and assimilated it into their being. As opposed to those who've simply being 'bitten by the India bug'. Staying back is prompted by a decision that will change their lives forever." The campaign claims to have selected these individuals from "a careful process to select the ones who we felt could be ambassadors to our culture. The creative idea employed a simple device that stated their country of birth, followed by text that said 'Motherland: India'."[63]

The campaign highlights settlers, and it does so in complete estrangement and at first look, it seems to do so by completely alienating the initial ethos of the campaign, to move away from the groups of people who stay back. Upon closer inspection, we see these individuals are exemplary in that they have either embraced Indian dance, yoga, or are tourist operators. They occupy, in other words, the same artistic or social realms as elite Indians themselves, and furthermore, it is through their foreignness, that they are able to move beyond being labeled as just any dancer or any yoga instructor. Their foreignness *is* their distinction, and it is this distinction, which when highlighted, also highlights and asserts the distinctiveness of India's brand ambassadors. The fact that this campaign crystallized amidst the global financial crisis, in the wake of the Mumbai terrorist attacks, and at a time when India was bombarded with negative branding because of movies like Slumdog, is further

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[63] www.incredibleindiacampaign.com

proof to how some Indians will project whatever it takes, to retain the status quo of their elitist status, even if it is through embracing the consumers who stay, a group they, even as late as May 2012, told me they wanted to shun from Indian soil.

Photograph C: Bharat Natyam Dancer, "Motherland India campaign" 2008/09

Photograph D: Yoga Instructor, "Motherland India campaign" 2008/09

COUNTRY OF BIRTH ▶ GERMANY/SPAIN
MOTHERLAND ▶ INDIA

Joerg Drechsel fell in love with India as he hitchhiked across the country in 1972. He returned in 1994, with his Spanish wife Txuku. They bought an early 20th century bungalow at Fort Kochi and transformed it into Malabar House, an eclectic hotel. If you are looking for a beautiful journey unlike any other, visit India. Like Joerg and Txuku, you will find that your search ends here.

Incredible India
www.incredibleindia.org

Photograph E: Tour Operators, Incredible India Motherland Campaign 2008/2009

3.5. Conclusion: Representations of the "Real" Indian

When looking at the visual and copy of the early Incredible India advertisements and glossy posters, one thing becomes very clear. The focus is on the beautiful, vast, and empty landscapes of India. Indeed, it is when this image is polluted, whether through movies, or through a violation of what the elite Indian imagines as real, that Indian elites are pushed to create their own narratives of action against the brand. The resulting films and images I highlight show that a comic rendition of Indian realities is warranted, and so is a re-imagining of the consumer, if not in reality, then at least in projection. In this sense, the campaign lies to its consumers about the product it hopes to deliver, and who the target of the campaign is. It is as much for retaining and bolstering the elite's perception of themselves, to align the "confident" new India to support commercial activity, as it is to engender any other possibilities of a narrative as marginal. This marginalization is what allows the meta-narrative of elitism, portrayed throughout the campaign, to retain its flavor, and for Incredible

44

India, to retain its brand personality, as welcoming, whereas other discursive forms of expression such as films, and as my interviews that I highlight is not aligned with the reality on the ground.

4. Attaining Izzat: A Tale of Reputation and Godliness

4.1 The Background

The international campaign of Incredible India, which has 14 offices worldwide including New York and Rome, has since 2005, extended its projects in a domestic campaign aimed at "local tourists." Certainly, while this campaign was in existence in 2005, it received a "new" flavor in 2009, when US $12 million was allocated to it for its yearly activities. This campaign, provocatively titled, "Atithi Devoh Bhavah," (henceforth Atithi) or "The Guest is God," was differentiated from the international campaign, and introduced under the guise of increasing "social awareness."[64] The first and second phases of Atithi campaign ran from January to March 2005, and November 2005 to March 2006 respectively, with approximately 76,000 stakeholders being trained in how to treat tourists. The focus was in creating awareness among "stakeholders and the general public about the need to improve the behavior towards foreign tourists."[65]

The relaunching of the Atithi campaign, in 2009 came at a significant time in India's branding history. It was three months after the Mumbai Taj and Oberoi hotel bombings, sites of primary stakeholders and partners in the foreign Incredible India campaign, and one month after Slumdog Millionaire won 8 Academy Awards despite criticism from several Indian elites. Additionally, it was months until the Commonwealth Games in India. Leela Nandon, the then Joint-Secretary for the Ministry of Tourism wrote, "After the Mumbai terror attack, a conscious decision was taken that the campaign had to make a strong and compelling

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[64] http://tourism.nic.in/writereaddata/Uploaded/Tender/022820111210812.pdf. Government of India, Ministry of Tourism, Publicity, Events and IT Division, p. 2. Retrieved 2012-03-18.
[65] Kant, 56.

46

statement about the entire country."[66] What is ironic is that the advertising campaign is primarily targeted to the Indian population, whereas the terrorists involved in the bombings were not even Indian, but Pakistani. Why then, was poverty suddenly being privileged as something which needed to be addressed, particularly when even today, the focus of the domestic branding campaign's website is in signing pledges to treat the guest well? To answer this, one must link the messages propagated by the campaign, and situate it within the context of Izzat, loosely termed as reputation and honor, and how Izzat is always constituted as a means of bettering one's social competence, and must be taught, in order to be inculcated, internalized, and projected by the locals. I suggest that when Izzat is enlarged to include the notion of a country's Izzat, the concept takes on new and unparalleled direction, in that it provides the space for the Atithi campaign to focus not just on educating locals, but in allowing elites to regain control of the country's honor and reputation in a setting where Izzat is lost.

Reputation management is internalized as a primary objective of the Incredible India campaign. The assumption here is that nation branding can indeed be conceptualized as a form of domestic and foreign policy, and it is intended, at least in the Indian context, to have explicit social awareness agendas. I argue that because of the involvement of key members of the Bollywood industry, as well as the introduction of specific domestic campaigns targeted specifically at normalizing and weaving the Incredible India campaign as integral to understanding Indian national identity, the process of disseminating the domestic campaign is only superficially masked as "market fundamentalism," to borrow from Sue Jansen. Projecting and disseminating the image of India in the global context is located within the perceptions of a very narrow elite population in India whose political ideals essentially focus more widely on promoting a concrete national identity whereby slum-dwellers or poor person

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[66] http://publicdiplomacymagazine.com/incredible-india/ Incredible India by Leela Nandon, Public Diplomacy Magazine, University of Southern California, Department of International Public Policy, retrieved 2012-03-21.

is aberrance to this image. This reputation, in order to be managed, must be internalized by using concepts such as "Izzat," "God" and creating an Indian flavor to the campaign.

Izzat is a concept that is not far from the imagination of the brand architects. The campaign's architects claim that Atithi was conceptualized as a crucial element to be able to "restore the honor of our country in front of the world." [67] Honor is a form of Izzat. Izzat, or family honor, rests on many planes, and usually may connote pollution through a desecration of a woman's body. Izzat is a difficult concept to explain in the least. Izzat is a concept of a moral economy, whereby one's own prestige is measured against the prestige of other classes, hence solidifying the structure of class structure if Izzat is not managed. It is nebulous in that one's Izzat can be attained and negotiated, even if it was not present in the person at the beginning. In India, the movement between groups, as much as it may be constrained by a person's caste, can be negotiated through a country's Izzat. For example, as the Atithi website highlights, a strategic seven point strategy has been outlined to "inculcate the values of respect and cordiality, which "if followed in letter and in spirit," allow for those Indians to appear respectable."

1. Samvedan Sheelta or Sensitisation: Educate various sections of the tourism industry on how each one of them contributes to the growth of the tourism industry.
2. Prashikshan or Training and Induction: Teach people how to approach and interact with a tourist, as this forms the 'moment of truth' in any service industry.
3. Prerna or Motivation: Motivate people to participate in this programme through various measures e.g. awards/recognition for the best worker in the segment.
4. Pramani Karan or Certification: Certification to ensure that standards shall be maintained at all times in the training programme.
5. Pratipushti or Feedback: Obtain feedback from the tourists about the service they have received and the experience they've had.
6. Samanya Bodh or General Awareness: The mass media communication campaign will be undertaken to create general awareness among the public about the necessity and the benefits of the Atithidevo Bhava programme.
7. Swamitwa or Ownership: Adopt the Atithidevo Bhava movement as your own, fellow Indians, for many livelihoods are dependent on tourism.[68]

The language of executing the process described here is either in Hindi or in English. The usage of Hindi establishes an "Indian-izing" of the English concepts, and provides the

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[67] www.atithi.org.
[68] www.atithi.org.

framework for understanding one's own Izzat. Additionally, education, induction, training, and awareness are seen as a means of identifying one's Izzat, and inseparable for the success of a country.

4.2 The Brand Ambassador as God

The name of the Atithi Devoh Bhavah campaign is derived from the Hindu scriptures of the Taittiriya Upanishad. The Sanskritic text of the Upanishad highlights four different groups of people who are god, when it says, "Matru devo bhavah, pitru devo bhavah, acharya devo bhavah, atithi devo bhavah." Literally, this translates as "The mother is god, the father is god, the teacher is god, [and] the guest is god." The stationing of the different entitites in the sentence showcase the sequence of groups which are privileged as god may have a level of priority to it: before the guest, the teacher as well as one's parents come into the picture. The marriage between religious ideals and the generic Indian, on the Atithi website, showcase how in order to inspire, and to educate, nation branding architects turn to India's most prolific elite, its Bollywood stars, to play the key role in branding Incredible India.

The example of the "Guest is God" campaign has racial overtones that situate the poor of India as being devoid of the capability of understanding their own Izzat. Within this context, the residents are given authority precisely because they are able to constrain, sustain and create an environment that is viable.

Bollywood stars have long played a role in India's branding efforts.[69] Izzat has been the divisive factor cited in the India v/s India campaign, which led up to Davos.[70] Bollywood lyricist penned a poem that was read out by Amitabh Bachchan, Bollywood legend, whose age in the movie industry assures a sufficient urbanity to address the nation in advertisements that ran for the whole year of 2005. Walking across the Rajiv Gandhi Sea Link in Mumbai, Bachchan recites:

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[70] Mehta Karia, 8.

> There are two Indias in this country. One India is straining at the leash, eager to spring forth and live up to all the adjectives that the world has recently been showering upon us. The Other India is the leash.
> One India says, 'Give me a chance and I'll prove myself.' The Other India says, 'prove yourself first and then maybe you'll have a chance.'
> One India says, 'Give me a chance and I'll prove myself.' The Other India says, 'prove yourself first and then maybe you'll have a chance.'
> One India lives in the optimism of our hearts. The other India lurks in the skepticism of our minds.
> One India wants. The Other India hopes.
> One India leads. The Other India follows.
> These conversions are on the rise. With each passing day, more and more people from the other side of India are coming over to this side. And quietly, while the world is not looking . . . A pulsating dynamic new India is emerging. An India, whose faith in success is far greater than its fear of failure. An India that no longer boycotts foreign-made goods, but buys out the companies that make them instead.
> History, they say, is a bad motorist. It rarely ever signals its intentions when taking a turn. This is that "rarely ever" moment. History is turning a page. For over half a century, our nation has sprung, stumbled, run, fallen, rolled over, got up and dusted herself, and cantered, sometimes lurched on.
> But now, in our sixtieth year as a free nation, the ride has brought us to the edge of time's great precipice. And one India, a tiny little voice at the back of the head, is looking down at the bottom of the ravine and hesitating. The Other India is looking up at the sky, and saying, it's time to fly.[71]

The juxtaposition provided by Bachchan suggests dissenters to the voice of confidence are suffocating the narrative of the new India. In order to take over the world, this new India needs to embrace the reality carved out for it by its educated classes.

Indian Bollywood actor Amir Khan, who was hired to educate the poor Indian of their role in the media, worked with brand architects to create a series of short YouTube videos in conjunction with several campaigns. This role in bringing in brand ambassadors in Incredible India is not a new phenomenon. Khan's role is that of an elite Bollywood actor, is indistinguishable to that of the native. By situating the guest as separate from the local, and therefore the guest is supposed to be different. The guest is also superior by sheer existence in this context because he/she is likened to the creator of the universe. In other words, there is an ultimate and implicit imagining within the words of this slogan that a hierarchy exists in the imagining of the nation, and because the message is delivered through the eyes of the native, a hierarchy exists even within the natives in understanding in who possesses the knowledge to educate, creating dichotomies and classes between the educated and those being educated.

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[71] Mehta Karia, 8.

The distinctions of classes in the YouTube advertising campaigns have similar themes. On one hand are physically dirty Indians who break laws, try to cheat foreign tourists, piss on the side of the roads, spit betel juice on sidewalks, and deface national monuments. Amir Khan follows these images. Khan's role is the same in all three films: he showcases that defacing buildings is wrong, being rude to women tourists is deplorable, and moreover, that such behavior is un-Indian. The most explicit of these advertisements showcase that the very threat of being Indian is essentially challenged by the troublemaking mischief-makers who are irrevocably different from Khan in the videos: they are darker, wear traditional clothing such as dhotis and saris, and are dressed without shoes if they are the miscreants. The theme of the educated westernizing Indian also emerges in these contexts: if the subject of the film is a "productive Indian," they are portrayed wearing non-traditional clothing, such as pants, speak English with a British lilt in their accents, and are shown to be well-groomed. The text of the most popular of these advertisements is as follows:

> On one side there is someone who is giving up their life for the country's honor, while on the other side someone is selling the country's honor. On one side there is someone who is nurturing our traditions, and another is insulting our traditions. There is someone who is degrading the name of the country, whilst there is someone else who, with hard work and honesty, is helping improve the name of our nation. Which side are you on? Towards shaming your country or towards raising your head with pride? Take pride in being an Indian.[72]

The advertisement is entirely in Hindi- in complete contrast to other advertisements by the Incredible India campaign in its previous years which are almost all exclusively in English. Additionally, the word used to describe honor is Izzat. Improving the name of the nation is a sense of pride, a sense of national identity and comfort, which is bound up in the Izzat economy. We can see a shift here that the universality of the ideal of conditionality is shifted. The possibility to see through God's eyes is in seeing through the eyes of the superstars. The ideal of self-determination is being actively perceived as belonging in the hands of the

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[72] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DfoW01bGJNM&feature=related .

national citizens measuring their success and Izzat among themselves. We see the ordering of identity as being reliant on the hands of the poor Indian themselves. They can "choose" to do the "right" thing, thus placing a value on the agency and the rational choice of identification with the national identity of India.

Furthermore, we see the transformation of a national campaign to the terrain of propaganda, whereby the greater good of the Indians are being fostered by crucial binary distinctions: nurturing/insulting, hard work/degradation, giving up life/selling the honor of a country. The greater good of the Indian is perceived as self evident, and Amir Khan employs the civilizing missions of rational liberal models of colonial practices. This video pinpoints to how Izzat is used to measure oneself against other classes of people. Khan wears western clothes, and is cleaner than the locals, in appearance, in the video. Education is perceived as the mediating ground for reducing the difference between oneself and others. Izzat points to "contradictory hierarchies of value."[73] Liechty's elaboration on Izzat helps to situate how Khan projects it.[74] Liechty states:

> More than any other possession, the middle class is built around an economy of Ijjat; an economy in which honor or prestige is the central form of capital. Through its constant telling and renegotiation, ijjat becomes almost tangible: it can be gained or lost, preserved or squandered. In this social economy, sexual propriety, suitable marriages, ritual observances, TVs, and education are not ijjat in and of itself. Instead, they are the things that *give* ijjat; they *produce* social capital. Staking claims in this ijjat economy is perhaps the key move in an individual's or family's efforts to negotiate membership in the middle class.[75]

In this setting, the Izzat economy, as indicated by Khan, rests on both a moral and material economy. Liecthy identifies the moral/material economy as the principles of how Izzat economy sustains and generates in creating class distinctions. Both the markers of these two ideals produce and signal "modernity."[76] Hence, symbolic capital is not only a category which rests on education, but also to family values, which are, as can be elucidated through

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[73] Liechty 83.
[74] Liechty uses the term as "Ijjat," which is the Nepali way of pronouncing it. Even though he is using it thus, the term is translatable as Izzat in the manner it is used in India.
[75] Liechty 83-4.
[76] Liechty 84.

the example of Khan's video, through a conscious engagement of demarcating others' classes against one's own.

Izzat, as we being to see, can be seen to be an active means of negotiating one's own identity to attain this particular honor. By situating the advertisement in Hindi to a national campaign, Khan, as an ambassador for Incredible India, projects and assures that there is redemption in the current order of the Indian reality of poverty: and that is by changing the self to please the foreigner and through corrective habits, erasing this poverty. Hence, as such, the foreigner IS the person to please, and not just the native, because the foreigner is the one who is God, who has the power to judge the native. Indeed, in bringing the narrative back to the Indian context, the educated and elite Indian also is God. By creating a distinction between the educated Indian and the non-educated Indian, the message becomes more than a didactic reasoning- it establishes that in the current order of Indian national identity, there are groups within the society who have already achieved this Izzat, and this reverence for the foreigner, and therefore validates one's own sense of being civilized. Izzat as a value associated with one's identity, and particularly that of national identity orientation, showcases how the uneducated, but simultaneously, only the Hindi speaking citizen becomes subject to scrutiny, furthering the ideal and scope of Izzat being limited to those who speak Hindi. Furthermore, privileging Hindi speakers establishes these speakers as stecontenders and "modern" subjects who *can* organize an institution for development for the underprivileged, Jatra's project establishes these women as "privileged." They are the modern subjects of a nation haphazardly negotiating a vast variety of different social and economic classes.

As I said before, Bollywood stars perceive it to be their duties as responsible citizens of India to "share" the "finesse" of their social class as a means of exercising and instituting their own power within India. Within this context, it is hence not surprising that other

53

Bollywood stars have also begun to come into the picture. Shahrukh Khan endorsed brand campaigns to tell locals to stop polluting the environment and trashing heritage sites.

4.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, while the impact of nation branding is difficult to expound on, particularly in how it has shaped the country's Izzat, is not far from shaping the agendas, ideologies and understandings of identity. Nation branding as an ideology has become key to understanding nationalism. Social and ethnic marginalizations are perceived to be integral in "dealing" with India's marginalized groups. The perception of nationalism as a shared ideal and goal for increasing "Indian dignity" is one which expands the notion of linguistic marginalization, whereby Hindi and English are used as the language of executing the domestic campaign, and is distinctly separated from the international campaign.

The slogan "The Guest is God" is loaded with a very specific understanding of what the Indian identity actually is, and what the educated Indian's role is. By equating the guest with God, the guest receives a supernatural status, differentiated by their very existence from the body and mindset of the average Indian. In this view, the average Indian is reduced to one who can only be educated on how to behave with foreigners, but by sheer existence, fails to meet with the status of a person with Izzat.

5. Conclusion

Through the course of this thesis, I have shown how the Indian elite perception of themselves as confident Indians, is an identity which they are willing to go to lengths to assert. Once individuals, foreigners, or a narrative, which they are unable to control, challenges this identity they take extreme measures to provide this control. This project was constrained by not being able to conduct a thorough ethnography, which would have revealed the inner-decision making process in brand creation, per the Indian nation-branding context. Future projects would be better informed by looking at how Incredible India focuses on projecting themselves to tourists in their own country, to how it projects itself to tourists in different countries. The Atithi website masks itself as an empowering tool, but further examination is needed to see how local ministers plan to use it as an empowering tool for India's research. My data was limited to the access I could find of certain campaigns in my online searches, and would have been better informed if more information on campaigns were readily available online, after 2009.

During the course of my interviews, I chanced upon an unusual one, with Lakshmi Hijrah, a Brahmin member of India's transvestite community. Lakshmi had been ousted out of her family for her transsexual affiliation, and at the age of ten, found herself moving from a privileged life to one where she was forced to choose between either becoming a beggar or a prostitute. When speaking at the Young Changemakers Conference in Mumbai, she highlighted how the Hijrah community does not receive any funds, for even primary schooling for the children in the community, because whilst India recognizes a third gender in its constitution, the community is completely marginalized from social life. After the Planning Commission's meeting in Delhi earlier this year, to allocate funds for social welfare, Lakshmi highlighted that her intervention resulted with the Planning Commission's

lengthy report included just one line saying, "Something must be done for the Hijrah community in future programming," whilst actually listing budgets for improvement of education for women and for children.

When asked whether the Incredible India campaign has touched upon her life, she told me, "Let's not talk about depressing things, baby. Tonight is about pretending India has arrived at a new age. Fuck all Incredible India bullshit. They treat us like we have no Izzat just because we're different. Such things are just reality of the rich man's India. Let's drink to that." [77] This telling statement highlights how for members and spokespersons of marginalized communities, the anger and frustration at being marginalized is nuanced by the fact that they do not even see any change occurring in their lives, and that they themselves recognize that without an inherent Izzat, or being given the tools to improve their Izzat, they will remain within the paradigms of Izzat-less individuals in Indian society.

The ideal of saving their own reputation causes elite Indians to overlook the damage the brand identity causes to the Indian image, and marginalize those images, or belittle them, if they do not fit the national narrative. Yet, there is hope for the future, with filmmakers being conscious of the image of the impoverished Indian as being crucial to depict. Film director Anusha Rizvi told me, "The biggest asset of India are its own people. As long as you make them feel ashamed into doing your bidding, and continue to assert to them that they ruin your image in the world, they will remain subjugated to you, and your will. Why doesn't the campaign ever try to sell its biggest asset?" Kant said that "a brand is what a brand does," and it is quite feasible that instead of vying for the attention of foreign nations, Incredible India should begin to project these images into the world, and showcase that despite its setbacks as an underdeveloped nation, it continues to garner attention worldwide, for travel, and for investment.

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[77] Interview with the author, April 13, 2012.

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