Nation Branding Communication

A Case Study of the Brand Singapore

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Globalization has significantly reshaped communication trends that influence nation branding practices. Many studies examine the development of a nation and destination branding; however, little has been done to examining the planning processes and the selection of representative messages that nations choose to communicate through their individual brands. Therefore, the aim of this study is to identify the key concepts that are used to build Brand Singapore. Singapore is a small, diverse country that attracts attention both as a tourism destination and political and economic entity. Hence, the study examines its branding materials and messages chosen in order to stand out from the competition, as well as the rationale behind these choices. For those purposes, the process of multimodal critical discourse analysis (MCDA) was used on text and visual based messages present in the “Singapore – Where Passion is Made Possible” nation branding video of Singapore. In order to break down and identify the core messages that Brand Singapore communicates, results were subjected to contexts of safety and diversity in Singapore along with theories of re-orientalism and competitive identity. The examination revealed that Singapore is persistently showcasing itself as a multi-ethnic country, but it is rather understanding and tolerant. The presence of the social and economic hierarchy is present, and the Chinese ethnicity is granted the highest status in the messages. Communication practitioners and marketing organizations will find this study helpful in developing branding strategy planning for the most demanding countries.

Keywords: nation branding, brand Singapore, nation branding communication, multimodal critical discourse analysis, re-orientalism
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1. Introduction

‘New Zealand 100% Pure,’ ‘Amazing Thailand’ and ‘Croatia Full of Life’ are modest proof that the world has become an arena for nation competitiveness. A vast amount of possibilities for travel, living, studying or working abroad has become overwhelming. Countries have had to change their global communication to attract affluent residents and tourists (Yee 2009, 18). In order to achieve the necessary competitive advantage, countries have to “adjust and adapt to stay highly relevant and current due to changes in the global environment” (Kotler et al. 1999 as cited in Yee 2009, 18). Globalization has inevitably provoked a phenomenon known as nation branding.

That same phenomenon can be explained as a long-term thing that involves a comprehensive strategy that includes governments, tourism authorities, private companies and any other force important for digesting who really needs to see the specific country (Aronczyk 2013, 67). In other words, nation branding is the branding of a country that involves governments, nations and organizations that develop, build and promote the brand (Anholt 2007, 2). The importance of nation branding is expressed by Nicolescu (2012) who believes that a country can “profoundly shape its economic, cultural and political destiny, as well as international competitiveness” with a nation brand (Nicolescu 2012 as cited in Andrei 2017, 223). In addition, Kobierecki and Strożek (2017, 697) argue that contemporary states have developed awareness about the importance of shaping their international brands that have a positive impact on their reputation. Moreover, they imply that some of the nation branding activities are directed towards their own societies (Kobierecki and Strożek 2017, 697). One thing is for sure - “nation branding is one of the fastest-growing public relations specialties” (Economist 2006 as cited in Jansen 2008, 132).

As researches argue, a creation of a national identity and its branding is a demanding process. In his research, Özkan (2015) expresses the importance of the power of strategic communication by stating how development of mass media instruments led to the significant changes in ways context and style of messages are communicated towards masses (Özkan 2015, 177). Another study conducted by Henderson (2006, 265) explains how “consistency is desirable in order to avoid abrupt changes and shifts in emphasis which lead to confused images and a lack of credibility”.

However, nation branding communication is still experimental (Huertas and Marine-Roig 2016, 292). This novelty makes nation branding a target of criticism. Some research, for instance Henderson’s (2006, 265) assert that nation branding is often based on selection of information about the culture and society. In other words, nation branding can literally ‘repack’ reality and create a more attractive image of the certain nation while dispensing its problems. Therefore, “reality is [...] obscured and tourists are proffered false and misleading pictures” (Henderson 2006, 265). In accordance with that, some researches argue that nation branding’s concept presents countries through commercialization, commodification and corporatization (Aronczyk 2013, 23).
Therefore, it is inevitably important to research the discourse within nation branding communication.

For the purposes of this study, it was important to choose a specific, unique and a strong nation brand with potential ideology discourse behind its messages. Singapore was chosen since, according to Song (2017, 10-11), it is consciously creating and cultivating its nation brand. Furthermore, the country is geographically small, but its international influence goes way beyond its physical size (Song 2017, 10-11). Singapore has achieved development that has put it on the spot and made it an “Asia's forerunner in the league of the leading countries” (Song 2017, 11). However, some have argued that Singapore is a small country, with mixed races and a short history (Henderson 2007, 270). Also, the country is internationally recognized as a soft-authoritarian regime (Ooi 2008, 294). Regardless the fact that state recognizes its multiracial character and organises its citizenry into three ‘visible’ racial groups that are provided with an equal access to public administration and governance (Huat 2009, 240), such societal construction has its downfalls. For example, Huat (2009, 241) claims that equality suffers along with Singaporean individuals who often face suppression and suspension for the sake of multiracialism and governmental policies.

Hence, there are questions that have to be asked. For instance, how is it possible that a country like Singapore managed to present itself globally as a country of creativity and talent (GTCI 2018) with the lack of democracy (Ooi 2008, 294) and seldom, but present racial intolerance (Velayutham 2017, 458)? Here in this study, a multimodal critical discourse analysis will be conducted on the newest nation branding promotional video of Brand Singapore. Such critical approach will ultimately enable to dissect the messages and see how and why certain content is created in order to promote Singapore and its society internationally. And most importantly, what are the aftermaths of this particular commodification of national identity in the context of various races in Singapore, context of safety and Singaporean connection to the Western culture.

1.1. Singapore in brief

In order to conduct a multimodal critical discourse analysis, it is important to look into the context of the society which means looking 'behind the curtain'. Geographically speaking, the Republic of Singapore, popularly known as ‘the city-state’, is an island in South East Asia, located on the Malay peninsula between the Pacific and Indian ocean (Yee 2009, 1). The republic consists of one main island with 62 islets which make up a total area of 137 kilometers. Even though Singapore cannot compete with the size of its territory, this country does have a turbulent history that ultimately put it in the spotlight.

Colonial Singapore was founded in 1819 as a trading post of the British East India Company (Huat 2009, 241). In later years, Singapore was ceded to the British Raj as a crown colony (Abshire 2011,
58-59). In turbulent times during Second World War, Singapore was occupied by the Japanese forces (Abshire 2011, 100). Singapore’s post-war period was followed by its emancipation from Great Britain in 1962 (Abshire 2011, 128). Further turbulent history of Singapore is connected to relations with Malays since Singapore was a part of the Malay Federation that ultimately led to riots and clashes between two races (Abshire 2011, 129-131). Finally, Singapore gained its full independence in 1965 (Gomes 2014, 28). Soon after, the Lee dynasty has emerged as the ruling force in Singapore (Barr 2016, 341). The country has remained a soft-authoritarian state ever since (Ooi 2008, 294). Despite the government being recognized as an authoritarian regime, the political system of Singapore was built on the model of the European-styled nation-state which makes Singapore a parliamentary democracy that constitutionally guarantees equalities and rights for its citizens ‘regardless of ethnicity, language or religion’ (Huat 2009, 241). As Barr and Skrbiš (2011, 44) argue, the government combined several ideological foundations for nation-building based on the emphasis on modernity and progress that were to build through multiethnicities and meritocracy. What distinguishes Singapore’s multi-ethnic nation from other countries with diverse communities is that “it extends recognition exclusively through the distinctiveness and fixity of group identities, without official distinction between dominant and marginalized groups” (Barr and Skrbiš 2011, 44). Singaporean population of 4 million people nowadays includes Chinese as a majority, Malays, Indians and other minorities (Henderson 2007, 266). Perhaps the biggest recognition in Singapore is its ethnic quarters since the country’s society is based on diversity and multi-ethnicism.

Despite the country’s limited supply of natural resources and lack of the hinterland, the Singaporean nation experienced rapid development due to its external trade and workforce, especially in tourism (Henderson 2007, 261). On the global scale, the trade expansion between Asia and the West has enabled Singapore to become a transportation hub and a center for international finance (Austin 2009, 298). Singaporean commitment to hard work, followed by the product development, investment in infrastructure and branding transformed small Singapore into a leading Asian country (Henderson 2007, 261).

1.2. Brand Singapore
As most countries in the information era, Singapore has actively started to develop its own nation brand. The complex nature of Singapore’s society has made cultivating a cohesive Brand Singapore challenging. Singapore has relied on public relations ever since its independence in 1965 (Ooi 2008, 290) to actively shape its image. With the help of Tourism in Singapore (STB) that is the official agency responsible for the development and maintaining the brand (Henderson 2007, 266),

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1 Multiracialism is a term used by some scholars due to the race being a conscious ideological construction and representation of Singapore (Chua 2009 as cited in Velayutham 2017, 458). However, in this study, a term ‘race’ will be replaced with the term ‘ethnicity’
the country has undergone several branding campaigns and the government has put a lot of resources in various re-imaging campaigns (Ooi 2008, 290). The list of Singapore’s branding campaigns is long, starting with ‘Instant Asia’ in the 1970s. Later branding attempts include ‘Surprising Singapore’ from the 1980s. Perhaps the groundbreaking campaign was the one from the late 1990s named ‘New Asia-Singapore’. It was designed to narrate a story of a young, bold nation that had a vision and has become what it is today (Henderson 2007, 267). Following campaigns were ‘Uniquely Singapore’ from 2004 (Yee 2009, 2), ‘Creative Singapore’ from 2005 (Henderson 2007, 267-268) and ‘Your Singapore’ from 2010 (Song 2017, 56). The latest endeavor in Singapore’s branding is the ‘Passion Made Possible’ campaign from 2017 (Marketing 2017) that will be in focus of this study.

Singapore does have a remarkable number of branding campaigns behind it that many researches touched upon in their studies (Henderson 2007, Ooi 2008, Yee 2009, Song 2017, etc.). There are various established opinions about Singapore circulating around the world. On the one hand, “Brand Singapore embodies […] something ‘exceptional’, extraordinary levels of professionalism, seamless planning, and service delivery and incorruptibility” (Barr 2014, 342). Those qualities presented in Brand Singapore were researched by scholars such as Henderson (2007), Ooi (2008) and Yee (2009). All of them concluded that Singapore has a positive image on the global scene. Singapore undoubtedly invested a lot of effort in rebuilding its small postcolonial country image to an Asian economic force. The country made efforts to develop the skyline by building the Marina Bay Sands and the Gardens by the Bay, along with its iconic structure Merlion and botanical gardens. Such investments have surely impacted the country’s image by making it a “vibrant and exciting city” (Ooi 2008, 292). That image attracts millions of tourists every year. In addition, it is important to mention the so-called Asian model, which is based on a “stable social and political situation, a transparent and efficient legal system, effectiveness in protecting intellectual property rights, business-friendly policies and a disciplined workforce” (Ooi 2008, 288). Singapore can be seen as a country that, by having all of the above, as well as strong connections with Western culture, is an East-West combination (Ooi 2008, 291-292). Singapore’s effort and investment had been fruitful considering enviable position this country takes on various global rankings. One example that comes to mind is the Global Talent Competitiveness Index (2018), that ranked Singapore as the second country in the world with regards to its ability to attract, develop and retain talent.

On the other hand, Singapore is still seen through the prism of the dynasty-based country. As mentioned earlier, Singapore was established by one ‘ruling family’ who is still present. Among other weaknesses, a memorable aspect of Singapore are its numerous fines, for example for chewing gum in public. Such restrictions ultimately give the impression of Singapore as a boring and conservative country (Henderson 2007, 267). Scholars have also mentioned its soft-authoritarian regime intertwined with repressed freedom of speech. Despite various government’s
intentions to mitigate such impressions with campaigns (Ooi 2008, 297 - 298), these attempts have failed. For example, according to the annual World Press Freedom Index, Singapore was ranked number 151 on the scale of 180 countries in 2017 (Reporters without borders 2018). Obviously, the brand that aimed to tell the story about a changed Singapore cannot compete against specific numbers which prove that, despite holding a high place in some country rankings, Singapore’s discourse should be looked into, especially since scholars point out the recent loosening in regulations as a sign of government’s will to become a more open country (Ooi 2008 and Henderson 2007).
2. **Aim and research questions**

The aim of this study is to contribute to more knowledge and deeper understanding of nation branding. Also, the aim is to gain a better understanding of Brand Singapore’s communication practices. Singapore has faced several shifts within its nation brand communication. The country invests in branding campaigns and the media. However, terms such as nation branding and soft power were given the spot in academic discourse while little has been done regarding the evaluation of those activities (Pamment 2014, 50). Also, considering the influence of the short but significant history Singapore has faced, Ooi (2008, 288) explains that there are two very inconsistent perceptions of Singapore nowadays: “it being a well-functioning modern economy and also a ‘soft-authoritarian’ state” (Chua, 1995 as stated in Ooi 2008, 288).

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyze nation branding in the case of Singapore and its discourse practices in societal context. In order to fulfill the purpose, this study proposes several research questions that will dissect messages created by Brand Singapore in its latest ‘Singapore – Where Passion is Made Possible’ promotional video.

1. How is Singapore including its society represented within its nation branding, in terms of:
   a) textual messages
   b) visual based messages
   c) their interplay/combinations

2. What social representations are implemented within the Brand Singapore´s communication practices?

Thus, ideologies I will focus in this study on are the social representations of the Singaporean society and the present issues regarding inclusion and exclusion of certain ethnic groups in this multi-ethnical state. Furthermore, proposed research questions are going to help examine the context of safety in Singaporean nation branding discourse. Also, these research questions will allow observing the colonial context in Singapore since will help break down the potential Western elements that influenced the construction of the Singaporean nation branding discourse.
3. Previous research

As mentioned in the introduction, many studies have touched on the topics of nation branding and national identity, while other studies have directly focused on the ‘construction’ process in one nation’s portraying. Besides, nation branding is a new field that should be understood as interdisciplinary since it takes to account competitive tourism market along with communication of national priorities and stakeholder’s requirements (Kotsi et al. 2016, 1). Considering its complexity, the review of this section will be divided into three parts. First, studies about nation branding practices done so far will be reviewed. Secondly, facts gained through media studies about nation branding will be presented. Thirdly, previous studies on Brand Singapore will be mentioned in order to present that research gap that will be examined in this study. Lastly, previous acknowledgments regarding the Singaporean society will be presented.

3.1. Nation branding communication

Nation branding has been the subject of a number of scientific studies. Although there are various approaches to this topic, for the purposes of CDA analysis the ones with a critical approach will be reviewed. More and more scholars discuss the commodification of nations since countries nowadays are becoming brands (Henderson 2007, 263). Commodification can be explained as “The action or process of treating something as a mere commodity” (Oxford University Press 2018). In the case of nation branding, commodification can be seen as a transformation since nations are being subjected to branding practices whose goal is to shape them in a product to be sold (Fan 2005, 8). Henderson (2007) stresses the complexity of nation branding since nations are “communities with a past and a contemporary society which is never static” (Henderson 2007, 264). Capturing such diversity and constant change is not easy and is often ignored in nation branding. In the light of this, scholars such as Kaneva and Popescu (2014, 511) discuss the development of commercialization that is intertwined with nation branding. Same authors see nation branding practice as a “tool for constructing and managing national identity” (Kaneva and Popescu 2014, 509). Since various organizations are responsible for the development of a nation’s brand identity, a common problem is that the nation has no control of its image, which means that third parties can use these identities for their own agenda or completely reshape the images to fit all audiences (Fan 2005, 8). Therefore, scholars such as Fan (2005) question whether nation branding is forcing nations to abandon their traditional, unique and instinctive image in order to sell themselves as brands (Fan 2005, 10). Taking everything into account, nation branding communication could seem as a practice that might, in some cases, highlight certain images of a nation, while putting others behind the curtain. Perhaps the broadest study on this topic is the one conducted by Kaneva (2011, 120-129) who divided studies into three sections - technical economic, political and cultural approach. To position this study, a cultural approach is the most suitable one since the articles in that section are examining governance, culture and national identity (Kaneva
2011, 127-128). In other words, this approach will allow the examination of external factors, such as political and social situation, that might stand behind Singapore’s nation branding discourse.

3.2. Media studies on nation branding

As nation branding practices become more relevant, the academic field is getting a wider scope of research. Several scholars have studied the role of the media in nation branding. For instance, a study conducted by Míquez-González and Fernández-Cavia (2015, 20) examined the frequency and types of the user interactivity on the Spanish destination brand’s official website with results that show the need for more user freedom on country’s website. At the same time, a research done by Zamora Barberá (2016) studied a discourse of the Spanish nation brand posted on the brand’s official website. Her critical discourse analysis revealed that Marca España’s online communication consists of the reduced national identity that was built on the ignorance towards the complicated situation within the Spanish society (Zamora Barberá 2016, 2). Similarly, García (2012) examines strategic communication used in building a national identity for the Basque country in Spain. Again, ‘stateless’ country proved to be successful although certain elements of soft power were contradictory when it comes to communicated image and Basque identity (García 2012, 227).

Another research with a similar outcome is the case study of Romania conducted by Andrei (2017). Here as well the nation itself was not taken into consideration when the government launched several nation branding campaigns. However, results showed that not only the inconsistency with the public opinion in Romania was the problem, but also the lack of the website (Andrei 2017, 231-233). In the meantime, Roque and Raposo (2016) studied the social media as the tool for communication and marketing in tourism. Their analysis of online activities included several countries worldwide and concluded that majority of marketing organizations specializing in nation branding apply similar communication strategies, for example, the usage of “visit” on their social media (Roque and Raposo 2016, 69). However, the results did not reveal what had been communicated, focusing instead on the kinds of tools used in nation branding. Moreover, the study was broader, and it did not study a specific country. On the contrary, Buscemi (2017) looked into the social constructions of Italy in both official and user-generated content posted on YouTube. This study showed a divergence between two images of Italian nation (Buscemi 2017, 138-140).

Despite the vast amount of media research conducted in the field of nation branding, there is a lack of the media research in the field of social media and a specific nation’s discourse. With this in mind, the lack of other studies exploring national identity on social media can be seen as a gap.

3.3. Studies on Brand Singapore

Singapore’s unique case attracted several scholars (Ooi 2008, Henderson 2007, Yee 2009, etc.), however, most of them showed interest in the blooming phase of nation branding. Earlier in this
paper, studies about development and implementation of various Brand Singapore campaigns were presented including Ooi (2008) whose study saw into the branding of Singapore as a creative nation while maintaining the soft-authoritarian regime. It was concluded that Singapore was open for a calculated approach in promoting its rebranded image as long as its content does not ruffle its multicultural society and political status quo (Ooi 2008, 298). However, the study was mainly focused on “Creative Singapore” campaign and has left more room for research. In comparison, a study by Henderson (2007) examined one of the nation brand campaigns launched in 2004 - “Uniquely Singapore”. Despite the study went in deep with the campaign examination, it stayed within the field of destination branding and tourism focusing more on the idea of the campaign and branding of Singapore, not the discourse that was communicating planned content. The same agenda for research showed Yee (2009) in the thesis about nation branding where the case study was Singapore. However, the author focuses on building Singapore’s identity through campaigns. Although related to the field of marketing, this study has given important insight into Singapore branding and the “Uniquely Singapore” campaign. The study concluded that Singapore’s identity is still indistinct (Yee 2009, 53). Perhaps the latest study on Brand Singapore was written by Song (2017) who examined branding of Singapore in the previous campaign from 2010 named “Your Singapore”. Although author provided a detailed insight on Brand Singapore such as its development and achievements over time, it did not critically examine its discourse. Thus, lacking critical research on Singapore leaves the space for future research.

3.4. Studies on Singaporean society

There has been a vast amount of research conducted on the unique case of Singaporean multi-ethnic society. Most scholars discuss the problematic case of multi-ethnic Singapore whose nation is based on the ethnicity as a normative category and identity marker that creates a field for ethnic incidents (Velayutham 2017, 455).

According to Huat (2009, 243), Singaporean society is known for its ‘ethnic harmony’. Also, Singapore celebrates its cultural diversity based on peaceful co-existence and a tolerance of differences among various ethnicities in the country (Huat 2009, 243). Regardless, studies conducted by scholars such as Gomes (2014) and Velayutham (2017) argue that the truth is far from ideal. For example, in the research about ethnic relations in Singapore, Velayutham (2017, 459) confirms the existence of multi-ethnic disparity and the socio-economic hierarchy in Singapore. Furthermore, a study conducted by Gomes (2014) acknowledges the existence of racism and xenophobia in the country. Her study examined the online discourse in Singapore that revealed cases of everyday racism towards foreign migrants (Gomes 2014, 24). Similarly, Velayutham (2017, 456) also argues that ethnic incidents often occur on social media in Singapore.

On the contrary, a study conducted by Holman and Arunachalam (2015) focuses on media representations of multiculturalism and ethnicity in Singapore. The research shows that all ethnic
groups were equally represented within the media which shows the notion of government to preserve cultures of all ethnic groups (Holman and Arunachalam 2015, 509). Similarly, Huat (2009, 248-249) discusses that the Huaren (Chinese ethnicity) in Singapore cannot be distinguished from fellow Malay and Indian Singaporeans, therefore, the ethnic equality exists and is not an issue as it seems. Consequently, some scholars argue against the existence of socio-economic hierarchy between ethnicities.

However, most studies done on the matter of ethnic relations within Singapore were examined through the prism of sociology. Equally, discussions about problems within the Singaporean society such as racism are a sign of the system fragility and is often seen as a threat (Velayutham 2017, 471). Therefore, despite the vast amount of research done and opinions gathered, most of the studies did not examine the discourse constructed by governmental agencies nor the discourse that aims to present Singapore globally. Accordingly, the construction of ethnic relations in Singapore’s nation branding discourse can be seen as a gap for future research.

To summarize, most of the research on Brand Singapore was done within the tourism and marketing field and its previous brand campaigns. Nonetheless, there is a lack of media research on Brand Singapore and its newer discourse on Visit Singapore’s official social network accounts. Hence, this can be seen as a gap that will ultimately lead to proposing the research of the newest promotional video from 2017 posted on YouTube named “Singapore – Where Passion is Made Possible”.
4. Theoretical Frame and Concepts

Wodak et al. (2009, 22) argue that nations are constructed through discourse. By all means, national identities are societal constructions and are influenced by social and political involvement (Wodak 2001, 7). Notably, national identities can imply certain conceptions, perceptions and behavioral conventions that were internalized through socialization, in other words, through education, politics, and similar within one society (Wodak et al. 2009, 14). Therefore, national identity is created by residents through discourse and it always contains or implies cultural and political elements present in the society (Wodak et al. 2009, 5).

It is important to remember that CDA and MCDA methods allow uncovering the discursive nature in contemporary social and cultural changes within societies (Wodak 2001, 7). Thus, in order to break down the common elements within the representations of Singapore abroad, the implementation of relevant ideologies is necessary for the understanding of certain constructions and concepts used in the Brand Singapore’s discourse. Therefore, this section will be divided into four parts and will touch upon the subjects of the theory of competitive identity, colonialism and re-orientalism present in the discourse of Brand Singapore along with the contexts of state’s safety and diversity. These theories will ultimately allow a deeper understanding of the certain constructions and communication choices within Singaporean nation branding.

4.1. The Theory of Competitive Identity

The theory of competitive identity relies on six main channels responsible for the development of national reputation. This model starts with the main and usually the most important aspect - tourism promotion since tourism boards usually have the biggest budgets and most competent market specialists (Anholt 2007, 25). Export brands also play a significant role as country ambassadors. There are several good examples of products being ambassadors for their countries since their success gets to be as loud as tourism campaigns (Anholt 2007, 25). Another important channel is country’s politics. The policy decisions of one country severely influence country image, whether it is about foreign policies influencing politics abroad or the domestic policies reported in international media (Anholt 2007, 25). Business climate of a certain country is one of the significant channels where national reputation comes from. Business audiences get attracted with the way one country solicits inward investment, recruitment of foreign talents and students and expansion of foreign companies in the country (Anholt 2007, 25). Cultural exchange and cultural activities and exports take fifth place on this scale. Examples of such activities are famous musicians on international tours, recognized sports teams competing abroad, famous poets, filmmakers, actors, etc. (Anholt 2007, 25). And last but not least, significant players in the national reputation development are citizens themselves - leaders, media and sports stars and population in general - they all help to build an image of the country (Anholt 2007, 25).
Such theory also relies heavily on the aspect of culture. Culture is known to be ‘the next door to tourism’ (Anholt 2007, 101) and it represents the biggest struggle for competitive identity development. Despite it may seem problematic, culture plays an essential role in nation branding (Anholt 2007, 97). Hence, this particular theoretical approach will enable to distinguish the marketing approach in nation branding from society issues related to particular constructions of the Singaporean nation and reasoning behind certain choices.

4.2. Colonialism and re-orientalism in Singapore
When it comes to Singapore, “the nation takes pride in its affiliation with Western colonial history” (Ooi 2008 as cited in Lee 2012, 216). According to Ooi, Singapore’s brand messages are constructed in a way that the rest of the world can understand (Ooi 2008, 299). Such notion can be connected to post-colonial cultural production, also known as orientalism. Edward Said introduced Orient as European invention, and it represents the East as places of exotic beings, landscapes and remarkable experiences (Said 1978, 1). Orient also represents Europe’s greatest, richest and oldest colonies on the West (Said 1978, 1). When it comes to the concept of orientalism, Lau and Mendes (2011, 1) use Said’s definition in which the West has the positive image, while the East is represented as its negative alter ego. In other words, the East is usually presented as ‘exotic’, ‘mysterious’ and ‘alluring’ (Lau and Mendes 2011,1). The relationship between Orient — the East, and the West is based on domination, power and varying degrees of a complex hegemony (Said 1978, 5). Despite the Said’s orientalism has been evident in the literature about South Asia for a long time, a new concept about the relationship between the East and the West has been introduced. Even Said (1978, 332) himself stated that “each age and society recreate its ‘Others’”. Therefore, Lau and Mendes (2011) present newer theory-re-orientalism, which argues that post-colonial nations tend to comply to certain expectations of the West, especially when it comes to discourse practices (Lau and Mendes 2011,1). In other words, former colonies tend to embrace, even promote images about themselves created by the West. Singapore is already recognized as a former colony (Gomes 2014, 31). In that, a country that is a mixture between East and West serves as a good case for examination on how its discourse is created to see the possibility of using re-orientalistic approach in its messages. For the purposes of this research, postcolonial theory will be of crucial importance since it “represents an attempt to investigate the complex and deeply fraught dynamics of modern Western colonialism and anti-colonial resistance, and the ongoing significance of the colonial encounter for people’s lives” (Prasad 2003, 5). The usage of this theory can be significant in this critical examination of discourse since it extends to power relations and social practices as well (Prasad 2003, 8).

4.3. The context of Singaporean safety
When it comes to Singapore, “the nation takes pride in its affiliation with Western colonial history and Anglicized education system” (Ooi 2008 as cited in Lee 2012, 216). According to Ooi, its brand messages are constructed in a way that the rest of the world can understand (Ooi 2008, 299). Regardless, Singapore and its culture still differ from the Western one, despite its efforts to communicate something different. For start, Singapore does share common Asian values as a sign of a collectivistic society that is not represented in the Western society, such as social hierarchy, ancestors, traditions, social harmony, a sense of obligation, group consensus and cooperation, etc. (Reisinger 2009, 350). Further researchers, such as Lee (2012) provide examples on East-Asian countries and their public diplomacy. She stressed that “[...] while the idea of equal and universal suffrage may be deeply rooted in Western societies, [Singapore’s] political culture is that of deference and dependence on one’s betters” (Lee Kuan Yew, cited in Bell, 2000 as cited in Lee 2012, 218). Perhaps the biggest evidence of their dependent culture is the national service. In Singapore, the rhetoric behind the compulsory military service is closely tied to perceived national safety. That leads to the biggest country themes - safety and security, that can be understood as the unique selling points of Singapore. However, it is evident that these attributes come with a price since Singapore is often related to limited freedom for its citizens. For instance, Henderson (2007, 266) mentions how the country’s distinct political system, along with the regime’s interventions in lives of their residents are noticed abroad. That is contradictory with the planned branding image that labels Singapore as ‘funky’ (Henderson 2007, 267) or ‘vibrant’ (Ooi 2008, 292). Furthermore, Singaporean government was often described as ‘wary’ when it comes to public expressions (Ooi 2008, 298). In addition, journalistic freedom has its limits, although the media industry is vastly promoted (Ooi 2008, 292). With that in mind, it was stressed that it is of the highest importance that the image of Singaporean government is not tarnished or that their leadership is not undermined which proves the existence of a soft-authoritarian regime (Ooi 2008, 296-298).

Another important aspect of Singaporean society regarding safety are the Singaporean and Malaysian relations. It is known that both countries, despite being allies once upon a time, went their separate ways when Singapore declared independence in 1965 (Omar 2014, 83). Since then, numerous conflicts occurred between these two nations (Omar 2014, 83). Among many issues, their long-standing conflict over water supplies has been in focus the most (Omar 2014, 84-100). Considering various conflicts over territory (Omar 2014, 101-132), this brings us to the subject of Singapore’s famous national service. Occasional tensions between Malaysia and Singapore resulted with compulsory military service in Singapore for boys at the age of 18 (Omar 2014, 134). It is known that Singapore is very cautious when it comes to potential outcry from Indonesia or Malaysia since both countries share the same religion (Velayutham 2017, 458-459). But what is even more surprising is the fact that the Malays have been denied being in charge of the crucial military appointments due to their ethnicity (Velayutham 2017, 459). This mutual distrust within the multi-ethnic country should be looked into considering the influence it has both on Singaporean nation and its identity communicated abroad.
4.4. The context of Singaporean diversity

Among other attributes that might seem problematic in Singapore is its diverse nature. Velayutham (2017, 455) describes Singaporeans as an immigrant society that consists of Chinese majority (74.1%), Malays (13.4%), Indians (9.2%) and ‘others’ (3.3%). This heterogeneous society (Song 2017, 51) is subjected to constant governmental surveillance (Song 2017, 51). As Yeo and Pang (2016, 113) argue, multiculturalism in Singapore is state-sanctioned to preserve harmony. Singapore’s national identity consists of this 4 ethnicities and ethnicity is a normative category and identity marker in the country (Velayutham 2017, 455). Under those circumstances, ethnicity in Singapore “appears in official representations, religious and national festivities, public campaigns, social policy, the media and tourism” (Velayutham 2017, 456).

Despite Brand Singapore’s endeavors to communicate an image that is multicultural and reasonably tolerant, Ooi (2008, 298) argues how Singaporean authorities are very careful that ethnic and religious conflicts do not get stirred up. With a diverse community which consists of several ethnic groups, it is questionable how Singapore manages to establish such harmonic society. With Chinese as a majority and Malays as a significant minority, including Indians and other ethnicities, it is hard not to reassess the true nature of this apparently harmonious society (Yeo and Pang 2016, 113). Not to mention that several scholars, including Henderson (2007) and Yeo and Pang (2016) leave room for questions about such harmonious society, describing it as “young and diverse” with potential problems (Lai 1995 as cited in Yeo and Pang 2016, 113). Indeed, does such tolerance comes simply within people, or was it encouraged, perhaps even forced by ruling forces? The Singaporean nation branding revolves around the idea of multiculturalism, which presents Singapore as a nation that adapts to other cultures and appreciates them peacefully (Yeo and Pang 2016, 113).

Some scholars argue that Singaporean ruling forces inculcated the sense of commitment within various ethnic groups when adopting the policy of multi-ethnicism (Velayutham 2017, 458). However, despite the state accords equality among all the ethnicities present in Singapore, it seems that the mutual acceptance between them is still an on-going process. The first thing to remember is that Singaporean ancestor roots come from the era of colonialism (Gomes 2014, 31). Likewise, Abshire (2011, 3) argues that Singaporean population was formed by globalization. Colonial Singapore was a segregated society; therefore, the cases of racism nowadays seem to have a historical basis since back then the Chinese and the British administrators had certain prejudices towards other ethnicities (Velayutham 2017, 457-463). Not to mention that Singaporean history marks violent clashes between Malay and Chinese ethnicities before the state declared independence as discussed by Velayutham (2017, 458). Therefore, mutual acceptance and social harmony seem as hard and long processes for population based on cultural differences that Singaporeans are today.
Postcolonial Singapore can be described as a nation-building project (Velayutham 2017, 458). Gomes (2014, 24) also argues that “since independence, the Singaporean government has spared no expense in making sure that there is [ethnic] harmony amongst its multiethnic population”. Strict laws against racial incitement along with governmental endeavors in building a sense of nationalism resulted with the harmonious society that has not faced communal riots since independence in 1965 (Gomes 2014, 24-28).

On the contrary, scholars give examples about the presence of ethnic issues put behind the curtain. For instance, Velayutham (2017, 459) asserts the existence of discrimination towards the Malay - Muslims in Singapore. There are cases of Malay community suffering marginalization, stereotyping as well as institutional and socio-economic discrimination (Velayutham 2017, 458). Apparently, the Malay community is labeled as lazy, unproductive, unambitious and of low socio-economic standing (Barr and Skrbiš 2011, 44). Another example of Malay discrimination is them being excluded from the military service since they cannot be assigned crucial military positions because of the troubled past between Chinese and Malays (Velayutham 2017, 459).

Similarly, Indians as another minority that was granted equality suffer discrimination as well. Despite they are considered as socially and economically advanced ethnicity in comparison with the Malays (Velayutham 2017, 459), they still face racism. For instance, Lee (2004) discusses the verbal abuse of the Indian ethnicity because of their physical looks such as skin color and facial features (Velayutham 2017, 460). Present ethnic insults are accompanied by exclusions of both Indians and Malays from Singapore’s top schools (Barr and Skrbiš 2011, 59-60).

The social advantage is not equally divided among ethnicities in Singapore. This can be attributed to the elitism present within the Singaporean society (Barr and Skrbiš 2011, 58). As Loong (2005) explains, it is commonly known that elitist groups enjoy key positions of power and influence, as well as set directions for the country and its society (Loong 2005 as cited in Barr and Skrbiš 2011, 58). As Barr and Skrbiš (2011, 59-60) assert, Chinese are granted ethnic privilege and the endorsement for the development unlike the other ethnicities in Singapore. They are considered to be the culturally superior ethnic group provided with opportunities (Velayutham 2017, 464). Furthermore, there is also a question of the presence of the economic and social hierarchy.

According to scholars, Chinese population occupy commanding positions and is always at the top of the socio-economic system, while the Malays and Indians are considered being below (Velayutham 2017, 464). Moreover, Chinese in Singapore enjoy portrayals of the hardworking, intelligent and economically forward ethnic group (Velayutham 2017, 464).

Further suspicion regarding the emphasized ethnic harmony in Singapore has been expressed by scholars who believe the state is embracing the rhetoric of multiculturalism in order to sustain its sovereignty (Ortiga, 2014 as cited in Yeo and Pang 2016, 114). Therefore, the true nature of harmonious multi-ethnic society is questionable. A constant need for vigilance over potential
ethnic conflicts and the governmental surveillance along with the preventive interventions for any ethnic conflicts are also not in favor to the state’s claims about tolerance (Gomes 2014, 244). Furthermore, despite being a state of ethnic harmony, some scholars have discussed the presence of strong tensions towards the new migrants in Singapore, however, it seems that the intolerance was present long before their arrival (Gomes 2014, 24-25).

Taking everything into account, one must ask if harmonious symbiosis often presented by the government is a reality, or do Singaporean ethnicities really just tolerate one other? And moreover, how is ethnicity portrayed in Brand Singapore?
5. Method and Material

This chapter clarifies the methodological aspects of the analysis conducted for the purposes of this thesis. The analysis has been structured with a focus on discursive and visual constructions of national identity in nation branding campaign. In the first section, the study explains the importance of CDA and MCDA analyses and it states the reasons for these methods to be the chosen ones in this research. In the second section, analytical categories that this study will be based on are presented. The third section lists the analytical tools that are going to be used for dissecting and examining both textual and visual discourse in the material. The fourth section presents the material and asserts the reasons for choosing that specific video along with the selection criteria regarding samples from the video that will be observed in the analysis. A final section discusses quality and limitations of the study.

5.1. The relevance of CDA and MCDA

Endeavors of Singaporean government are to include all ethnicities, but at the same time, the state does not guarantee that discrimination or exclusion will never occur (Velayutham 2017, 471). This raises interest in the topic of Singaporean nation. A point often overlooked is that nations are created through discourse (Wodak et al. 2009, 22). Therefore, their identities are constructions of society influenced by social and political involvement (Wodak 2001, 7). Forthwith, identity portraits are often subjected to commercialization and commodification (Aronczyk 2013, 23). To put it differently, nations identities get re-shaped for political or marketing purposes. Given that Singapore has been recognized as a state with problems such as institutional discrimination, marginalization, stereotyping and socio-economic discrimination of certain ethnicities (Velayutham 2017, 458) while the state is eager to promote its harmonious society based on equality, its nation identity constructions should be studied.

As Wodak (2001, 7) argues, critical discourse analysis can uncover the discursive nature in contemporary social and cultural changes. Since this method unveils ideologies and interests behind nation’’s endeavors to present themselves the way they do in their nation branding campaigns, it is a method relevant to the research of Singapore’s national identity. However, for the purposes of the analysis of the video material, this study will rather use a multimodal critical discourse analysis for examination of moving images (Machin and Mayr 2012, 7). Similarly, to CDA, MCDA examines the way chosen visual semiotic choices play a role in the communication of power relations (Machin and Mayr 2012, 10). This method has different approaches, but in this study, the method will rely on the toolkit for the analysis presented by Machin and Mayr (2012). Such toolkit will ultimately enable to have a look at what semiotic resources have been used in textual and visual materials and what meaning potential these have (Machin and Mayr 2012, 10).
Also, the importance of sociopolitical context has to be taken into account (Carvalho 2008, 163). For example, Fairclough (1995) proposed an examination of contexts surrounding the media discourse, such as ‘situational’, ‘institutional’ and ‘socio-cultural’ context’ (Carvalho 2008, 163). Therefore, this analysis will focus on what Singapore Tourism Board decided to highlight and leave out when it comes to Singaporean society. Several analytical categories will be examined regarding Brand Singapore’s promotional video, and those are going to be explained below.

5.2. Analytical categories

Analytical categories chosen for this study are:

1. **Objects**

One of the many important dimensions when examining the construction of meaning are objects. According to Carvalho (2008, 167), objects can be understood as topics or themes. When examining the created discourse, it is necessary to unveil which objects does the text conduct since topics and themes are not always presented in an obvious way for the public (Carvalho 2008, 167). In the case of nation branding communication, the broader objects constructed in the discourse is the construction of the national identity.

However, Carvalho (2008, 167) explains the importance of further questions for gaining a deeper understanding of the issue, such as: what specific issues can be associated to the broader issue that is examined?

Therefore, for the purposes of this research, I will focus on the portrayals of the Chinese, Malay and Indian ethnicities in the Brand Singapore and their inclusion. Further focus will be on Singapore’s national identity representations in the case of its multi-ethnical context. Also, the study will touch upon the Western themes can be seen in the construction of Brand Singapore’s identity.

2. **Social actors**

Another important dimension for the successful conduction of the CDA is to examine the social actors, which are the individuals or institutions present in the discourse (Carvalho 2008, 168). Wodak et al. (2009, 8) offer a broader definition of social actors in the discourse by stating that social actors “constitute objects of knowledge, situations and social roles as well as identities and interpersonal relations between different social groups and those who interact with them”.

An examination of the social level in discourse is inevitably important since through linguistic representations, discourse is allowed to influence the formation of groups and it can affect the relations of power and dominance among social groups and classes, genders, national, ethnic, religious, sexual, political, cultural and subcultural majorities and minorities (Wodak et al. 2009, 8).
To put it differently, examination of representations of social actors can unveil ideologically pervaded or sometimes obscured structures of power, dominance, political control along with the strategies of discriminatory inclusion and exclusion in the created discourse (Wodak et al. 2009, 8).

Therefore, in order to unmask the relations of power, dominance, along with the strategies of inclusion or exclusion in the portrayal of Singaporean society, following examination in the analysis will focus on which ethnicities are included in the video, how are the actors presented in the nation branding video as well as which ethnic groups tend to dominate the portrayal of the society?

3. Style and rhetoric
The purpose of CDA is to reveal hidden ideologies in the text (Carvalho 2008, 168), and those can be unveiled by examining the style and rhetoric of the text.

In the matter of style and rhetoric in the researched discourse, Carvalho (2008, 168) claims that the vocabulary chosen to present a certain reality, such as verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, is an important dimension for the meaning constitution. Another significant dimension of importance for the CDA is the writing/verbal style, for example, formal or informal tone (Carvalho 2008, 168).

Further discourse exploration will focus on metaphors, rhetorical figures and other devices used in the text (Carvalho 2008, 168), and those will be presented in the analytical tools category.

4. Iconography
Iconography is an important part of the visual discourse analysis and is tied to the popular semiotic theory developed by Roland Barthes (1973, 1977) based on how images can denote and connote (Machin and Mayr 2012, 49). On the one hand, images can present certain events, people, places or things, which means they denote. On the other hand, images can also depict certain events, people, places or things get ideas. In other words, they are used to connote ideas and meanings (Machin and Mayr 2012, 50).
5.3. Analytical tools

In this multimodal critical discourse analysis, the focus will be on the following elements in both text and visuals, explained by Machin and Mayr (2012).

5.3.1. Textual choices

a) Lexical choices

Lexical choices “indicate levels of authority and co-membership with the audience (Fairclough 1992a as cited in Machin and Mayr 2012, 42). Their aim is to influence the public through the carefully chosen lexical choices that tell how to understand the world or the particular issue (Machin and Mayr 2012, 42).

There are many ways to influence the public through the text, and the one of importance for this research are the usage of language and claims common to the readers/listeners in order to achieve the impressions of being like them (Leitner 1980 as cited in Machin and Mayr 2012, 42).

b) Overlexicalisation

Overlexicalization stands for a “surfeit repetitious, quasi synonymous terms [...] giving rise to a sense of over-completeness” (Teo 2000 as cited in Machin and Mayr 2012, 37). It is normally an evidence of over-persuasion, something problematic or ideology in a text (Machin and Mayr 2012, 37).

c) Metaphors

Metaphor stands for transporting “processes of understanding from one realm of or conceptual domain to another” (Lakoff 1993; Lakoff and Nunez 1997 as cited in Machin and Mayr 2012, 165). To put it differently, it is the means for understanding one concept through another (Machin and Mayr 2012, 167).

The metaphor also represents the thought itself and the embodiment of human experience that does not have to be necessarily connected to the textual or visual communication (Machin and Mayr 2012, 165). The importance of the metaphors in texts is in fact that it is used to make sense of things, therefore it can be a powerful strategic tool for abstracting processes and glossing over certain details while creating the idea of the society (Machin and Mayr 2012, 185).
d) Personification

Personification is assigning of the human abilities or qualities to abstractions or objects (Machin and Mayr 2012, 171). Personification is significant for the CDA since it is often used for obscuring of the actual agents, causes or processes (Machin and Mayr 2012, 171).

5.3.2. Visual choices

a) Attributes

Attributes are oriented towards ideas and values communicated through objects and ways those objects are represented (Machin and Mayr 2012, 51). In fact, objects are specifically chosen and therefore special attention should be granted to see the meaning behind such choices (Machin and Mayr 2012, 52). This study will pay attention to the attributes such as clothing and accessories.

b) Salience

Salience, as explained by Machin and Mayr (2012, 54) is where some features in compositions are created to stand out and draw the attention to certain meanings. Moreover, those features usually have the central symbolic value in the composition and can be achieved through several ways (Machin and Mayr 2012, 54). Therefore, this tool will enable to understand what has been highlighted in the portrayal of Singaporean society.

c) Generic and specific depictions

These depictions mean that the images can be depicted as individuals or specific people in regard to their stereotypical physical look or ethnicity (Machin and Mayr 2012, 101). Such depictions will allow to understand what kind of individuals were chosen to present the nation of Singapore.

d) Exclusion

Exclusion is a way of purposely not including someone in discourse as stated by Machin and Mayr (2012, 102). Same authors argue that “certain categories of people are not represented in pictures of settings where they are in fact present, or in events in which they participate” (Machin and Mayr 2012, 102). Also, both authors argue that exclusions suggest ideological notions to present something in some way or hide something (Machin and Mayr 2012, 102). Hence, exclusions are carriers of important messages about constructions of identities, ideas, values, and actions that ultimately affect societies (Machin and Mayr 2012, 102).
e) Collectivism versus individualism

In visual portrayals of society, people can be represented as groups or individuals. Machin and Mayr (2012, 100-101) argue that there is a reasoning behind depicted groups presented as homogenized ones. Such constructions of groups create impressions about being ‘all the same’ (Machin and Mayr 2012, 101). Therefore, collectivistic representations of people who are most likely very different have an object to present them as a stable group. On the contrary, individualism serves as a more intimate representation that helps the public/reader to align with the event (Machin and Mayr 2012, 101). Also, individualism is often used to promote the ideology of individualism whose roots come from the Western culture based on consumerism and capitalism (Machin and Mayr 2012, 101). Hence, this tool will enable to understand Brand’s Singapore approach on many levels.

5.4. Material

The specific empirical material that is going to be examined in this study is the latest Brand Singapore’s promotional video from 2017 called “Singapore – Where Passion is Made Possible” (Visit Singapore 2017). The video launched a new brand identity for Singapore (Marketing, 2017) and it had been created in collaboration with Singapore Tourism Brand (STB), a leading agency for tourism development and Singapore Economic Development Board (EDB), a governmental agency for positioning Singapore as a global business center (Singapore Tourism Board, 2017).

On the official website of the Singapore Tourism Board, it was stated that with “Singapore – Where Passion is Made Possible”, STB’s goal was to present the country beyond tourism, focusing on the story of the destination and its people (Singapore Tourism Board, 2017). In order to create a unified brand in the video, STB and EDB conducted both qualitative and quantitative research with close to 4,500 respondents both in Singapore and abroad with the question what Singapore stands for (Singapore Tourism Board, 2017).

Therefore, this campaign does not solely focus on tourism, but moreover, it communicates one nation’s identity which makes it a convenient material for this research.

The length of the video is 2:01 minutes and it can be explored through three dimensions that focus on presentations of different aspects of Singapore. The first part of the video consists of flashes of Singaporean nature along with recognized Singaporean artists and athletes who give an intro about Singapore. The idea of such constructions is to show what Singapore has and what makes it proud. These projections show characters in environments such as the jungle, football arena, the local playground, Singaporean MRT (Mass Rapid Transit) along with other Singaporean gems and popular architectural spots. All characters present various ethnicities such as Malay, Indian and
Chinese and have ambassador roles. Video moves on screenings that involve local groups exploring Singaporean quarters where. Here, the role of the locals and ambassadors is to enrich the whole societal image. Talents of Singaporean locals involving all ethnicities are present. These portrayals are based on showcasing the Treetop walk touring, Gardens by the Bay and locals portraying Singapore as the business hub, Chinese quarter as the portrayal of traditional Singapore, Arab street with popular features such as the barber shop, etc. Screenings move to the traditional Singaporean dishes, again including ethnicities in the culinary environment. The video representations continue with scenes that construct the Singaporean art scene and the youth whose actions represent the unified community. Again, screenings of festivals, concerts, and other gatherings are visible, as well as the available activities for the locals. The video ends with projections of the typical Singaporean weather and its famous downtown.

The second part of the video is socially oriented. It consists of various society representations that highlight Singaporean ethnic quarters, locals and their passions. Such approach presents the country as the place of possibilities and its local community based on diversity. A third part of the video can be observed as the part made for the international scene. It is composed of flashes of representations of local communities that approach tourists with their gestures, extraordinary acts, and sports such as storm chasing and indoor skydiving.

The material was not chosen to grant a broad generalization about Singapore and its society. The chosen data from the video rather serve as examples of the governmental portrayals of Singapore, its ethnicities, and culture. As such, selected data samples allow dissecting and revelations of discursive constructions in Brand Singapore’s campaign as well as the approaches used, for example, contexts of the state’s diversity and safety along with the application of re-orientalism and competitive identity theory.

5.5. Quality and limitations of the study
After addressing the analytical procedures in this study, it is necessary to discuss the quality and limitations of the research. Since this study aims to contribute to the scientific knowledge, it is inevitably important to consider the concepts for the quality evaluation. With this intention, Wodak and Meyer (2008, 31) assert classical concepts of validity and reliability to be suitable quality criteria in discourse research.

In order to dissect brand messages and break down the contexts behind these choices, I have analyzed both textual and visual discourse in the video. A relatively small sample was chosen, which in discourse analysis helps to gain a deeper understanding of the material (Barker 2008 as cited in Zamora Barberá 2017, 35).
Another often issue in the qualitative research is addressing the object interpretation due to subjectivity (Berglez 2006, 79) since images are open to multiple interpretations (Barthes 1977 as cited in Hansen and Machin 2013, 158). In order to avoid this issue, my aim is to be clear when it comes to the analytical tools chosen for this study as well as how will those be used in order to achieve conclusions. At the same time, complete transparency will allow capturing different or contradictory interpretations that the analysis might result with.

Hansen and Machin (2013, 160) claim that the visual analysis needs to focus on three major contexts that are cultural, communicative and historical contexts. In order to answer the study purpose, I have chosen several theoretical concepts that will prevent drifting from the reality and will allow proper interpretations of the data collected.

As for reliability, Berglez (2006, 79) argues that a common problem occurs when the researcher comes to the conclusion that the discourse should be interpreted with the usage of the particular theory, but the problem is often the lack of ‘data’ that will allow understanding of the interpretative process in the analysis. The material of this study was chosen in regard to its purpose and is portraying the Singaporean society (Singapore Tourism Board 2017). Therefore, the portrayals taken from the video serve as a good data for the examination of the societal discursive portrayals.

In regard to the correctness of the analysis (Berglez 2006, 77), the language use and the examination of the word connotations might seem problematic since the discourse analysis was based on South-East Asian national traditions while my origin is from the West. However, all cultural interpretations in the analysis were subjected to carefully chosen theoretical acknowledgments about the Asian and Singaporean culture so I am confident that this study will deliver some concrete results with minimum deviations from the societal reality.

To conclude, I am confident that the application of theoretical assumptions and methodological instruments when examining the data samples captured the results that followed the study purpose.

However, the limitations of the study are subjected to the small sample that should not be understood as a general societal reality in Singapore. Also, it is important to realize that different theoretical approaches would perhaps have resulted in different conclusions. Therefore, in order to diminish the limitations of the study, a broader scope of the theory, as well as more data samples regarding Brand Singapore, should be analyzed in the future.
6. Analysis

This chapter presents the insights gathered from the empirical analysis. The analysis examines the way Singapore, its society and lifestyle are portrayed by the governmental institutions in Singapore’s nation branding communication by applying the CDA and MCDA method. The analysis explores the discourse of the latest “Passion Made Possible” promotional video with a focus on representations of Singaporean society in both textual and visual discourse, therefore the society will be the macro category in this analysis.

MCDA method applied both on textual and visual discourse reveals that the video has the notion to present the unique aspects of Singapore. A common branding approach with applied themes such as sports, famous people, science and technology can be spotted. Which, at the first glance, can be seen as a pure marketing approach in the field of nation branding.

Also, an interesting approach to the newest branding video is visible with first observations since the highlighted visuals revolve around Singaporeans and the specifics of their multi-ethnic society. Societal portrayals seem to be more represented than the Singaporean architecture, technology and other touristic attractions mostly promoted so far, as discussed in the work by Ooi (2008) and Henderson (2007). These observations can be attributed to the Singapore Tourism Board’s claims that the idea of the newest branding campaign was to develop a unified brand of Singapore with its culture as the focus of the campaign (Singapore Tourism Board, 2017).

Another key point of this analysis is the presence of the ambassadors. First observations show that the campaign video relies on the local ambassadors whose individual stories create the Singaporean national identity. The usage of ambassadors in branding is a common approach and it serves to present the country both domestically and internationally through chosen ambassadors, so the others get a sense of what makes the country unique (Anholt 2007, 25). The specifics of the STB ambassador usage are that the locals were chosen in regards with the campaign slogan “Passion Made Possible” since each one of them has the passion turned to success that is shown in the video.

Equally important is the fact that no names were given in the video, therefore the public cannot understand who exactly the ambassadors and locals are and why exactly were they chosen for the societal constructions in the nation branding video. Information regarding this matter was gathered on the official site of the Singapore Tourism Board. This exclusion of names is important since it can be perceived as a message about constructions of ideas or actions (Machin and Mayr 2012, 102). In this case, ambassadors and locals are Singaporeans and it is expected that they are known in Singapore. However, that might not be the case with the Westerners. Thus, this exclusion can be seen as the ideological notion to present Singapore in a certain way (Machin and Mayr 2012,
102), that will ultimately target Singaporean citizens and awake a sense of a national pride in order to decrease a recent emigration problem that the country is facing (Fetzer and Millan 2015, 463).

The first thing to remember when starting this analysis is the discourse order that can be spotted in the video. It is important to realize that the video can be divided into three parts that are:

a) visual and textual representations of Singapore as the place like no other
b) visual and textual representations and descriptions of the unique aspects of the country with society in focus
c) visual and textual discourse that aims to present Singapore as the stage for global citizens

In order to properly dissect the nation branding discourse of the “Singapore - Where Passion is Made Possible” video, it is important to understand that the material in this study is the video. Thus, the material is based on the number of moving visuals that contain various contexts and therefore it is the complicated sample for CDA and MCDA research. For the purposes of this research, I have decided to separate textual samples from the visual ones. However, in some cases, visual elements will be integrated with the text and vice versa. Therefore, the flexible analysis based on both separation and combination will allow a more detailed analysis and will help avoid confusion. With this intention, the analysis will be presented in the following order:

1. Textual analysis
2. Visual analysis
   2.1. Individual representation in Brand Singapore
   2.2. Collectivistic representations in Brand Singapore

6.1. Discourse analysis of the Singaporean society (text)

The promotional video starts with an exotic introduction and announcement that “there is no place like this”. Such sentence gives an intro to specifics of Singaporean society with an accent on exclusively Singapore. The sentence, repeated twice in the intro, stresses the term of “home” stating that Singapore is a very exotic, unique and almost unexplored, new place. Overlexicalization can be spotted in the repetition of this sentence as well as in the repetition of the word ‘this’. The role of overlexicalisation can be seen as an attempt to connotate a sense of a vibrant activity and place along with evoking the interest among tourist to really see and understand what makes Singapore a country like no other (Machin and Mayr 2012, 37). The last sentence of the introduction, “our home”, shows the specific lexical choices selected to present the unified image that STB and EDB planned to create (Singapore Tourism Board, 2017). The word ‘our’ connotes collectivism. Machin and Mayr (2012, 101) explain collectivism as a tool for group presentations in the light of sameness and togetherness. Thus, this discourse can be seen as a textual creation of the unified nation. Moreover, the lexical choices might be understood as a synecdoche where the
speaker, in this case, aims to represent the whole nation in a video and does not want to be specified (Machin and Mayr 2012, 172).

The second part of the video contains creative, almost unusual descriptions of the society. However, a spotted flaw is that some of the textual discourse cannot make sense without the visual content. This is why this part of the analysis will, in some cases, be accompanied by descriptions of images that followed certain textual discourses in the video. To start with, this ‘combination’ content is based on sentences like “this is where we live amongst trees, carve them out of metal and make them electric” referring to TreeTop Walk and Gardens by the Bay, two famous attractions in Singapore that were visually shown in the video.

In terms of the connotation of this lexis, an exotic reference can be spotted by stating that a nation lives in an unusual way and is able to use its technological potential to the maximum (Machin and Mayr 2012, 42). Besides word games, another synecdoche can be seen in the word ‘we’ that aims to speak on behalf of the Singaporean nation (Machin and Mayr 2012, 172). Again, we can spot the collectivistic mindset behind the chosen word ‘we’ (Machin and Mayr 2012, 101).

Other descriptive content can be easily understood and at first, it seems as it strives to explain Singaporean traditional and old diverse society, for instance, with the sentence “where our backstreets live on as galleries and museums”. In this example, a metaphor in the form of personification can be seen, as backstreets were given life since ‘they live’. A purpose of personification, as it assigns human qualities or abilities to abstractions or objects, is to obscure actual agents or processes (Machin and Mayr 2012, 171). This kind of description can be understood as a tendency to present Singapore and its attractions, but in this case, to also put its society aside at the same time. Of course, the notion of such sentence is to highlight how Singaporeans cherish their backstreets almost as their famous downtown. Thus, this particular description clearly has an aim to attract visitors to other parts of Singapore that are not strictly the city center by introducing them as places of rich culture and not, for example, ghettos. Therefore, despite the textual discourse, in this case, highlighted the architecture, it still paints an image of the diverse and unique Singaporean society that created the exotic scenery.

Consequently, further discourse again revolves around the country descriptions by saying “this is where old school, new school, and what no school can teach come together”. Such discourse can be interpreted as a description of diverse Singaporean society with mixed backgrounds (old, new or no school) and as a formation of the unity with the word ‘together’.

Again, the implementation of collectivism can be spotted since it connotes togetherness and people presented as ‘the same’ (Machin and Mayr 2012, 101). The same discourse was followed by short screenings of various Singaporean ethnicities to complete the discourse that is highlighting
diversity. In her work, Reisinger (2009, 350) argues about the strong presence of collectivism in the South East Asian countries. Therefore, this chosen discourse can be perceived as a description of Singapore as a multi-ethnical state that includes everyone and is tolerant towards differences within its society. Thus, a commodification of the social reality can be spotted, as well as the competitive identity implementations whose aim is to shape the country to be more appealing to tourists (Aronczyk 2012, 23; Anholt 2007, 25).

Furthermore, in regard to the Singaporean societal reality, this sentence can be also identified as a metaphor. Machin and Mayr (2012, 165) explain metaphor as an idea about society and a tool used for abstracting processes. Therefore, this example can be perceived as a tool for helping understand the case of a diverse society of Singapore. At the same time, metaphors can be used to gloss over micro details (Machin and Mayr 2012, 185). For this reason, the recipients receive a message about Singaporean diverse society with certain social problems left out, such as marginalization, stereotyping and socio-economical discrimination (Velayutham 2017, 458-459). Moreover, in combination with the visual constructions of the society that follow this particular discourse in the video, STB manages to portray a multi-ethnic society that is unarguably rich in culture, but also politically stable.

Further discourse content in this analysis is the sentence “the ‘old school’ cool” that can be observed through few lenses. It can be interpreted as a notion to underscore the nurturing of the Singaporean traditions while opening the doors for something new, modern, even bold. Also, this sentence can be analyzed through the prism of re-orientalism since this discourse could mean that Singapore is ready to embrace changes as concluded by Ooi (2008, 298). Additionally, a question of tradition rises when examining the discourse in this sentence. A term ‘old school’ is closely tied to tradition. Coupled with the earlier statements about Singapore sharing specific Asian values based on traditions (Reisinger 2009, 350), we can conclude that STB and EDB wanted to highlight the presence of Asian values when presenting their country to the world. Yet again, both Henderson (2007) and Ooi (2008) write about the recent tendency of the Singaporean government to loosen up certain laws and to embrace a new branding approach based on openness. Thus, the combination of tradition and openness can be spotted in this sentence. So, this discourse can be perceived as endeavors to showcase Singaporean society taking pride in its traditions, but also as being progressive with the implementation of changes as announced in previous research.

Following discourse, the sentence “here, every day is a new canvas” can be understood as a start of breaking out the very point of the campaign that portrays Singapore as the place where everyone can fulfill their passions. It is obviously a place where days are never the same and opportunities are endless. In addition, this sentence can be related to the slogan of the campaign “Passion Made Possible”. Such discourse can be recognized as positioning the country to be the one providing
everything for its society, therefore Singaporeans, no matter their ethnicity, seem to enjoy equal opportunities and are able to lead the lives they want.

Similarly, next sentence in the analysis, “this is where rhymes, chimes and daily grimes meet” can be related to the former campaigns that strived for to promote Singapore as a vibrant city (Ooi 2008, 292). This campaign is, with constructed discourse, no different and it represents Singapore as the city/country that is thrilling. The word “grimes” can be examined through the prism of collectivism since researchers tend to see Singapore as a collectivistic society based on consensus, cooperation and social harmony (Reisinger 2009, 350). It is important to realize that the word “chimes” supports the former branding that presented Singapore as a ‘vibrant’ and ‘exciting’ city (Ooi 2008, 292). Therefore, textual messages represent Singapore as an entertaining country to live in or to visit. In addition, the text connotes the portrayal of the society as diverse and fun to be the part of which goes in favor to Singapore’s character that is known to be multi-ethnical and based on tolerance and equality (Huat 2009, 243).

Lastly, the third part of the textual discourse analysis in this study is the part that seems to be created exclusively for foreigners. Such discourse, although still referring to the possibilities Singapore creates for people, also has the objective to attract the attention of the foreigners and to influence their imagination. Such notions can be found in the sentence “this is where who you were...will not be who you will become”. This message literally alludes that Singapore has the ability to change people after a visit.

With creating such imagination, the branding discourse continues with the sentence “this is where all that you are passionate about, all that drives you, is made possible”. This can be perceived as an endeavor to highlight Singapore as the unique destination where dreams come true. Furthermore, it is being stressed that just anyone can enjoy it with a neutral discourse “drives you” or “you are passionate about”. Passions are, in this case, not specific, thus this discourse construction provides the space for further imagination among message recipients. A metaphor is used in both of those sentences since it derives the embodiment of human experience (Machin and Mayr 2012, 165).

The branding video ends with a meaningful, memorable sentence “this is where passion is made possible” and “this is your stage”. Perhaps the most interesting discovery in this textual discourse analysis is the way the last sentence is created in comparison with the one at the very beginning where Singaporeans say, “this is our home”, stating that Singapore is firstly a home to Singaporeans. However, an interesting word game can be spotted with further observations. In the very last sentence that says, “this is your stage”, it is important to highlight the visible line between “our” at the beginning and “your” for foreigners at the very end. Moreover, the word ‘home’ is not used twice, like in some other parts of the video, but it was replaced with the word ‘stage’ where one can perform, but not live or influence the country. Thus, a discourse that was constructed this
way can draw the conclusion that Singapore, no matter the efforts put in its openness, is still, perhaps unconsciously, a bit closed? Through textual analysis it can be seen that some efforts in rebranding were made, however, there is still an invisible, thin line between Singapore and the global scene that could be connected to orientalism and the concept of othering, but this time - Singapore created the borders itself.

However, it is important to spot that social issues such as the possibility of stirring up the social stability considering the diverse nation or political notions such as restricted freedom of speech or protest (Ooi 2008, 298) are absent from the descriptive discourse. Also, constant political conflicts with Malaysia over various issues described by Omar (2014, 83) seem to be consciously left out from the textual constructions in the branding video as well. Despite issues that are purposely left absent, one must understand that the nation branding communication indeed is a mixture of chosen content for tourism purposes, therefore social and political problems along with conflicts are usually left out since governments try to create reputations that will be positive (Anholt 2007, 40).

6.2. Discourse analysis of the Singaporean society (visu als)

6.2.1. Individual and ambassador representations in Brand Singapore
Singaporean ambassadors were shown through several categories such as sports, culture, science and technology, etc. After all, nation brands nowadays get developed through channels of the competitive identity created by Anholt (2007, 25). Reputation can be or is already built and it can be maintained by the people of the country, such as media and sports stars (Anholt 2007, 25). At first, it might seem that the approach taken to nation branding of Singapore was based on marketing and promotion of successful Singaporeans. However, there is a meaning behind chosen individuals that construct the country’s identity.

Notably, Fandi Ahmad (figure 1), a Singaporean former football player and a current coach of the Young Lions in S. League was, among others, chosen to portray the Singaporean society (Singapore Tourism Board 2018). The portrayal of Fandi, who seems to be entering the football court full of fans, aims to present Singapore as the nation with great accomplishments. The noise combined with cheering scenery, along with Singaporean football star create the feeling of euphoria at the very beginning.
Ahmad Fandi is a Malay-Muslim, which can be understood considering the attributes such as skin color and physical look, along with his name. So far, marginalization and stereotyping of Malay Muslims in Singapore proved to be often (Velayutham 2017, 458). However, Fandi was given the role of the person who presents Singapore in a popular way in the global and sports arena since he was given the opportunity to play for Groningen in the Netherlands (Anonymous source, an e-mail to the author, June 7, 2018). Still, a point often overlooked is that ambassadors are chosen to represent the country in the best way possible, therefore this example solely does not exclude ethnic problems within Singaporean society or discrimination of the Malay community. However, football in the Singaporean society is facing certain issues. Some argue that the football players in Singapore are generally Malays who are considered a community that is unwilling to strive further. Such situation apparently reshaped an image of Singaporean football that is not considered to be a serious sport anymore (Anonymous source, an e-mail to the author, June 7, 2018).

Another interesting element in this portrayal according to the above - mentioned facts (figure 1) is the choice of football as appropriate sport for the ‘grand opening’ of Brand Singapore’s promotional video. Football has been a national sport for decades in Singapore, however, its perception of football over the years has changed. Nowadays, football is seen as a ‘recreational sport’ and not as a professional career that the citizen can pursue (Anonymous source, an e-mail to the author, June 7, 2018). Thus, in this example, football is recognized as a Western element (Teo and Neo 2017, 1108). Hence, such portrayal aimed to attract the foreign attention as well as build a sense of national pride regarding Singapore’s achievement.

Further sports star involvement can be spotted with Nabilah Razak (figure 2), a Muay-thai professional who was also chosen to represent the society as a successful and capable Singaporean
(Singapore Tourism Board 2018). Considering the question of ethnical inclusion and the positions of Malay Muslim in Singapore as it was the case above, the beginning of the branding video, Malays are portrayed as locals with passions for sports.

Figure 2. Screenshot from the ‘Passion Made Possible’ campaign: Nabilah Razak (0:21)

Following visual representations of famous Singaporeans are displays of Stefanie Sun and Nathan Hartono, popular Asian songwriters, singers and actors (Singapore Tourism Board 2018). The usage of famous people is not new in nation branding practice, but the way STB presents Singaporean ‘stars’ can be tied to the presentation of Singaporean unified society since both ambassadors describe Singapore as “this is our home”. ‘Our’ is highlighted in the discourse, making it clear to the public that Singapore is the home of famous people and therefore the place that creates talented people. However, it is important to notice that the roles of artists in this branding video were given to Chinese.
Comparatively, national reputation can be built through cultural exchange and cultural activities (Anholt 2007, 25). With regards to that, STB has chosen to build Singapore’s identity with visual representations of its society rich in history. For that reason, Tan Wei Tian (figure 4) is another ambassador because of her involvement with the local Teochew opera (Singapore Tourism Board, 2018). Teochew is one of the common dialects of The Huaren nation that represents the Chinese ethnicity in Singapore since they are not Chinese by a nation but by ethnicity (Huat 2009, 240). In the light of this, the Chinese can be seen as the ethnic group that was given roles that construct traditions and culture in Singapore.
Other diversity portrayals in Singapore’s nation branding video are shown through short displays of Singaporean ethnic quarters that alternate and create a complete, diverse image of Singapore. Ethnic quarters shown in the video are Arab quarter, Chinatown and Little India and all of them represent ethnic and religious majorities in Singapore (Henderson 2007, 266). Other than visual representations of Singaporean quarters, flashing images of the attractions in downtown Singapore - Gardens by the Bay, Marina Bay Sands and the statue Merlion are all visible in the video from 0:35 until 0:37. Hence, Singaporean architectural attractions are still included in the branding video however they were not given the spotlight in this campaign.

![Screenshot from the ‘Passion Made Possible’ campaign: Subaraj Rajathurai (0:37)](image)

**Figure 5.** Screenshot from the ‘Passion Made Possible’ campaign: Subaraj Rajathurai (0:37)

As a result, Subaraj Rajathurai (figure 5), the eco-tour guide was one of the ambassadors present in the nation branding video (Singapore Tourism Board 2018). He is an Indian expert on indigenous flora and fauna and is guiding tourists and biodiversity enthusiasts (Singapore Tourism Board 2018). Attributes such as clothing, skin color and the physical characteristics, particularly the long beard, reveal his ethnicity. Considering that the role of attributes always has a meaning (Machin and Mayr 2012, 51), the aim was to portray a stereotypical Singaporean with Indian background.

However, among other elements, the element of salience is present. Salience can be explained as a notion to present something that stands out, the features that have the central symbolic value in the composition (Machin and Mayr 2012, 54). Here, the leadership role the main character was given is salient since he is portrayed as the educated leader of the group.

Another example of constructions of the Indian ethnicity is the portrayal of the Indian Yugnes Susela (figure 6) who works as a bartender and a cocktail artist posted below (Singapore Tourism
Board 2018). His ethnicity is revealed by attributes such as physical look and the skin color common for the Indian ethnicity. Despite the attributes on the image suggest the sophisticated workplace with Marina Bay Sands in the scene, further suggestions such as the waiter uniform clarify that he is a bartender. Thus, his character was not granted status nor sophistication in comparison to other ethnicities examined so far despite the popular workplace. As argued by scholars so far, Indians such as Malays, tend to be downgraded by the Chinese privilege in the Singaporean society (Velayutham 2017, 471). Still, despite such arguments, this character seems to be granted a higher place on the socio-economic hierarchy in Singapore since his workplace does seem sophisticated and his character was constructed to present a talented professional.

![Figure 6](image-url)  
*Figure 6. Screenshot from the ‘Passion Made Possible’ campaign: Yugnes Susela (0:59)*

Next visual presents another ambassador. Peter Ho, the chief executive officer of HOPE Technik is a technical innovator whose innovations help disabled to walk again (Singapore Tourism Board 2018). Attributes such as skin tone and physical look reveal his Chinese ethnicity. Unlike representations of individuals from other ethnicities so far, this character is wearing a suit and glasses. This look labels him as an intellectual and sophisticated man. Two images from this scene were chosen since the main character in the first figure is shown alone and he seems humble towards his society which is in accordance with Asian values such as a sense of obligation as discussed by Reisinger (2009, 350).
Figure 7. Screenshot from the ‘Passion Made Possible’ campaign: Peter Ho (0:43)

Furthermore, second visual following the scene with Peter Ho reveals another Asian value - the social hierarchy (Reisinger 2009, 350). On the visual below (figure 8) we can see the interaction between two ethnicities - Chinese and Malay. What is interesting is the construction of the relation between the Chinese and Malay characters. Chinese character on the right is wearing a suit and is represented as the innovator helping the Malay character on the left to walk. Moreover, the Malay character was portrayed as a helper in a working overall which is a sign of hierarchy in which Chinese ethnicity seems to rank higher. However, this visual construction also attempts to address Singapore as an innovative country, as it is already globally recognized as the country of talent (GTCI 2018). Thus, we can also interpret this visual as an attempt to label Singapore as a business hub which is an important aspect of nation branding (Anholt 2007, 25).
Despite Huat (2009, 248-249) argues that the Huaren (Chinese ethnicity) in Singapore cannot be distinguished from fellow Malay and Indian Singaporeans, these representations of the Chinese race do seem to differentiate from the ethnic representations so far. These observations go in favor to Velayutham’s (2017, 459) statement about Chinese population occupying the commanding positions in socio-economic hierarchy in Singapore. In fact, Chinese characters observed so far were assigned roles of educated, sophisticated and talented individuals whose abilities seem to stand out from the rest. Such conclusion can be driven by a comparison of the ethnicity and ambassador portrayals studied so far. These visual constructions can be perceived as elitism that discussed by Barr and Skrbiš (2011, 58). The roles of power and influence are granted to the Chinese ethnicity in this portrayal (Barr and Skrbiš 2011, 58).

With further observations of Singaporean nation constructions based on its citizens, it is obvious that diversity portrayals do not solely include the ambassadors such as artists, athletes or scenes of the Singaporean quarters, but also the locals who present their individual stories and passions through short clips of their everyday lives. At first glance, it might seem like a different approach was taken when including ambassadors who are not famous, but the locals who were allowed to visually present their lives. As Anholt (2007, 25) asserts, the inclusion of citizens in social construction of the nation’s identity that is a common approach in nation branding nowadays.

Although this may be true, we can still distinguish that Singaporean story is told by locals coming from ethnic majorities and minorities that Singaporean society is based on - Chinese, Malays and Indians, in order to create an authentic identity of Singapore (Velayutham 2017, 458). Regardless, one must bear in mind that portrayals of society in nation branding are still a commodification as discussed by Fan (2005, 8-10). Therefore, despite the inclusion of all three dominant ethnicities in Singapore, observations show that the locals were assigned different roles in nation portrayal of Singapore. Such differences address the conscious constructions of ethnicities in specific ways which will be shown in further sections.

For example, different constructions of the locals can be seen on the following portrayals of the Chinese locals below (e.g. figure 9; figure 10). Notably, the first shot of the constructions of the Chinese ethnicity (figure 9) has the left character in focus. The character is sitting on the chair, is wearing glasses and is reading the newspaper. The ambient seems to be the old quarter in Singapore – Chinatown. The attributes such as glasses and the newspaper allow interpretations of this character as an intellectual and educated individual. This details in his character construction obviously granted him status.
Following discourse is the second portrayal of the Chinese local (figure 10) that was put in focus clarifies that Chinese portrayals differ from the portrayals of Indian or Malay characters examined before. In the first visual below we can see a Chinese man playing traditional Chinese chess. This character’s clothing seems to be ordinary and humble. Other noticeable attributes are the men’s glasses and the Chinese chess he is playing. These attributes assert that Chinese ethnicity, in this case, is constructed as intelligent, progressive and well-behaved individuals who are respectful towards Singaporean traditions. However, constructions in this portrayal also connote the age of the characters. This representation alludes to the middle-aged men which can be understood as alluding the tradition and perhaps showcase the Chinese as the true ancestors of Singapore.
Another important visual is again the construction of the Chinese ethnicity visible below (figure 11). Again, the attributes such as physical look, facial expression and skin colour reveal the Chinese ethnicity. Here, the talent for cooking and specific dish are made salient. As Machin and Mayr argue (2012, 54), salience is used to have a symbolic value in discourse. Therefore, such knowledge and talent and significant in the video. Another important attribute is the working environment. It seems as the Chinese character is working in a sophisticated restaurant since she is not making an ordinary meal unlike other examples (e.g. figure 6; figure 12) but rather the artistic dish. Such construction also connotes possible Michelin star restaurant. Again, Chinese ethnicity is portrayed as more talented and were put in the more sophisticated context. Similar conclusions are given by Velayutham 2017, 459). However, visual can also be examined through the prism of marketing and competitive identity approach. For example, Anholt (2007, 25) argues about the importance of cultural exchange. In this case, that would be the exotic dish portrayal to attract the foreigners. Another important detail is the construction that includes a Chinese woman. Women, especially in individual portrayals were rare in the video, if not completely reserved for men. Therefore, this choice can be understood through the tool of attributes. As Machin and Mayr (2012, 51) explain, ideas and values are communicated with choices. Therefore, the choice of women for this construction can be seen as addressing the Chinese as more open, since the individual portrayal of women can be connected to that ethnicity. When it comes to the religious context, Chinese ethnicity is religiously fragmented and can be found in all religions in Singapore (Huat 2009, 242). Thus, this visual construction can be perceived as a portrayal of Chinese women as free, talented and successful.
Further society constructions include the Malay ethnicity. This is visible with the representation of the Malay local following in the video (figure 12). The character’s ethnicity is evident due to the skin color and physical look. The Malay character seems to be working as a chef and the environment connotes a working place to be the local food court. Spotted details are the cooling fan and the character’s every-day, almost ordinary clothing. Such attributes label the Malay as a worker in a perhaps poor quarter. The representation with such attributes seems to be downgrading the character. As argued in Velayutham’s (2017, 458-459) study, Malays are often suffering institutional discrimination. This visual goes in favor to the claims about the Malay community facing marginalization in Singapore when compared to other ethnicities, for example, Chinese who enjoy commanding positions and status (Velayutham 2017, 458-459). Also, this portrayal can be related to claims about Malay stereotyping that labels them as lazy, unambitious and unproductive which ultimately results as them being considered of low socio-economic standing (Barr and Skrbiš 2011, 44).

Perhaps the more positive portrayal of the Malay community can be visible in the next visual that is going to be analyzed below. The visual (figure 13) suggest Malay as the local with a talent for barbering in the company with customers. Again, the physical look addresses the ethnicity of the present characters. This conclusion can be drawn since the visuals were filmed in the barber shop where Malay barber is showcasing his talent. Again, unlike the previous observations on both ambassadors and locals, a similar case the Malay community downgrading seems to be the case here as well since nor status or an intellectual role were granted to this character. However, the actor is still portrayed as a talented local whose knowledge is shown in the artistic light.
Another important detail is the presence of people in this scene. It appears that exclusively Malays are both in the scene and in the shop, which can be a sign of segregation. As a reminder, scholars have discussed the past existence of segregation in Singapore in the time of the colonialism (Gomes 2014, 24) however, STB is still portraying Singapore as multi-ethnic and tolerant. This representation does not go in favour to governmental representations since portrayals are not in accordance with state’s claims about Malay inclusion in the society. Researchers discuss the separations on Chinese and Malay groups for the games at street courts (Teo and Neo 2017, 1117). Also, Lai (1996) asserts that Malay, Indian and Chinese youth take turns to play games among themselves on the playground (Velayutham 2017, 459). Therefore, it can be noticed how encounters are often based on segregation, similarly to the visual below.

6.2.2. Collectivistic representations in Brand Singapore

As aforementioned earlier in the research, Singapore does share certain Asian values that make it a collectivistic society (Reisinger 2009, 350). Thereupon, its national identity is based on collectivistic connotations where portrayals of individuals are seldom and are based on chosen ambassadors only. Most of the collectivistic representations of the Singaporean society are based on groups of people or crowds doing things together (e.g. figure 14; figure 15; figure 16). Even on some individual portrayals, the scene was enriched with groups in the background (e.g. figure 5; figure 13). Such portrayals do create an image of a harmonious, unified society as discussed by author such as Ooi (2008). Also, Machin and Mayr (2012, 101) assert that usage of collectivistic
portrayals aims to present people as ‘the same’. Collectivistic portrayals can be spotted in few screenings of the society, however, were not reserved for ambassadors’ portrayals.

On the screenshot below, a construction of the Malay youth can be spotted. Their physical look and skin color relevel their Malay ethnicity. Unlike the previous representations of the Malay community, the group on this screenshot (figure 14) is portrayed with elements that connote sophistication. All men in the scene are wearing suits and eyewear that constructs an image of the fashionable and modern men. However, in this collectivistic portrayal, no women can be seen. Perhaps such exclusion of women can be connected to the Malays being recognized as the Muslim ethnicity, therefore the religious context can be recognized (Huat 2009, 242). In addition, despite the sophisticated clothing, the motorbike present as another element still reflects the downgrading of the community since the characters were not granted intellectual roles as certain portrayals of the Chinese studied before (e.g. figure 7; figure 9) but rather fun and exciting roles.

![Figure 14. Screenshot from the ‘Passion Made Possible’ campaign: Malay community (1:30)](image)

For this portrayal, equally important is the context of safety. One must take into account that Singaporean unified identity is protected by laws and maintained with limited freedom for Singaporean citizens (Henderson 2007, 267). However, this delicate aspect has been either ignored or suppressed in Brand Singapore’s communication strategy. We can understand this portrayal as very peaceful and playful. The actors’ gestures connote the relaxed atmosphere. Such constructions reveal the suppression of issues such as limited freedom and public expression in Singapore as discussed by Ooi (2014, 134). Furthermore, the image of freedom that was constructed with these characters can also be seen as the suppression of true Singaporean reality that is the presence of the authoritarian regime (Ooi 2008, 296-298).
Further questions regarding the contexts of safety and harmonious multi-ethnic community of Singapore are problematic relations with Malaysia as discussed by Omar (2014, 83-100). It is known that Singapore and Malaysia have had a problematic past (Velayutham 2017, 458) that seems to create issues that are still present. Therefore, a country where the Malay ethnic group makes a second majority right after the Chinese had to take measures such as mandatory national service for boys at the age of 18 in case conflict (Omar 2014, 134). However, the analysis so far reveals the salience of harmony. Collectivistic constructions of the society do not include issues with Malaysia nor they present the reality of the male youth that is the compulsory national service in Singapore (Omar 2014, 134).

Similar key points relevant for this visual are the on-going cases of segregation within the Singaporean society where the youth tends to be divided regarding their ethnic group (Teo and Neo 2017, 1117; Lai 1996 as cited in Velayutham 2017, 459). Again, segregation again seems to be implemented on this visual since it portraits exclusively Malays.

Unlike the example analyzed above (figure 14), segregation is not present on the next visual (figure 15) that is going to be examined. Rather, a concept of collectivism was used since the group is constructed in a way where everyone has the same moves and create an image of the unified group. Such collectivistic construction alludes to various groups, in this case, ethnicities, being all the same despite their cultural differences (Machin and Mayr 2012, 101). Therefore, this visual construction aims to highlight the element of togetherness in Singapore despite the multiple ethnicities that, according to some, often cause problems within the society (Velayutham 2017; Huat 2009; etc.).

Figure 15. Screenshot from the ‘Passion Made Possible’ campaign: Portrayal of the society (1:20)
In Singapore’s nation branding video, the youth was portrayed as playful, which alludes to the idea of freedom and the possibilities. It can be understood that harmony was presented as the salient theme in the nation branding campaign while the on-going issues with Malaysia and ethnical discrimination against Malays for that reasoning seem to be left out from this visual as well (Velayutham 2017, 471). Also, observations from the study conducted by Yeo and Pang (2016, 114) that addressed Singapore as the country that is constantly surveilled by its government should be taken into account. Such important fact does not fit the constructed images of freedom in the branding video created for the global market. Similarly, Velayutham (2017, 471) argues about the fragile ethnic relations in Singapore since speaking out against racism and issues within the society are seen as a threat. However, these issues were not discussed or portrayed in the nation branding video of Singapore. Rather, Singaporean nation identity was constructed with the salient elements of freedom, harmony, possibilities, various ‘free time’ activities and curiosity. This specific portrayal includes the collectivistic connotations as well as the youth as the highlighted feature to change negative perceptions of Singapore abroad, for example, conservativism (Henderson 2007, 266). What differs it from other is the fact that the portrayal is not reserved for one specific ethnicity as we could see so far on several visuals (e.g. figure 13; figure 14). It was rather constructed to highlight the inclusion of all ethnicities in Singapore. The reasoning for such choice must be the aim to showcase the ethnic richness of the country as well as to follow the marketing approach by sharing its cultural richness as the unique selling point to attract tourist (Anholt 2007, 25).

**Figure 16.** Screenshot from the ‘Passion Made Possible’ campaign: Indians (1:01)
In continuation, a different portrayal is going to be examined. Again, a common collectivistic mindset in portrayals of locals can be spotted. Collectivism when used has an aim to present people with differences as the same and united (Machin and Mayr 2012, 101). For instance, such constructions of society clearly divide ethnicities in Singapore. On the screenshot above (figure 16), we can see the attributes such as the skin color, traditional Indian clothing and vermillion mark on foreheads of women that clarify their Indian ethnicity. Specific depictions can be spotted here as Indians were shown through their stereotypical physical look (Machin and Mayr 2012, 101). However, the most compelling detail is the fact that locals sit on the floor and eat with their hands. For those who are not familiar with such culture, this might seem like an inappropriate behavior. Also, this portrayal might label Indians as uneducated or of low socio-economic standing. Therefore, one way to understanding this visual is to relate it to marginalization that is often criticized in Singapore (Velayutham 2017, 458-459). However, perhaps the most compelling evidence is the segregation present within this portrayal. So far, scholars discussed the presence of segregation in the past (Velayutham 2017, 457-463). Others argue about its existence nowadays as ethnic groups tend to spend time among themselves respectively (Teo and Neo 2017, 1117; Lai 1996 as cited in Velayutham 2017, 459). Similar connotations were given through this visual since it looks reserved for the portrayal of the Indian ethnicity. Nevertheless, perhaps the positive connotation can be spotted through the prism of marketing since the common approach in the creation of the national identity is the usage of cultural exchange and cultural activities (Anholt 2007, 25).
6.2.3. Re-orientalistic elements in Brand Singapore’s discourse

When it comes to orientalism in Singapore’s nation branding discourse, it can be examined through the prism of re-orientalism that was explained as a tendency of post-colonial countries to adopt images of themselves created by the Westerners or even create images of the East that will be appealing to the Western public (Lau and Mendes 2011, 1). So far, the Singaporean national identity was constructed through the prism of the highlighted diversity as the macro theme in Brand Singapore’s promotional video. Portrayals of ethnicities in Singapore are salient features in this branding story, however, the adoption of several Western aspects of life is visible. That can be seen in few scenes played in the branding video such as concerts, music festivals and football. Interestingly, all of those features have roots in the Western culture.

Adoption of re-orientalism in the construction of Singaporean identity can be seen in several parts of the “Singapore – Where Passion is Made Possible” video with a promotion of Fandi Ahmad (figure 1; figure 17) who is the face of the football culture in Singapore (Singapore Tourism Board 2018).

According to scholars, football can be understood through Anglo-American context and as their invention (Teo and Neo 2017, 1108). Beginnings of football can be found in the history of British society in the nineteenth century (FIFA 2018). Therefore, the possible reasoning behind this choice for the construction of Singaporean society might be the ties with the British culture left despite Singaporean independence. After all, Singapore was founded as the British trading post (Huat 2009, 241) and was later a part of the British crown colony (Abshire 2011, 58-59). Furthermore,
this choice can be seen as the notion of STB to present Singapore as the country of football in Asia since the football seems to be the highlighted sport because of the scenes of Fandi Ahmad (e.g. figure 1; figure 17). An important attribute in the scene with the team players are the national dresses in red. Attributes chosen for societal representations usually have meanings behind their choices (Machin and Mayr 2012, 51). Thus, this choice alludes to the promotion of national identity through colors and it aims to show the national pride. Moreover, the multitude of those scenes with the same character and other players reveal salience of football, therefore this feature of the Western culture was meant to stand out. In reality, as aforementioned earlier, football is not considered as a serious sport and pursuing a career in football does not fit the image of the ‘proper job’ in Singapore (Anonymous source, an e-mail to the author, June 7, 2018). Hence, this can be seen as the evidence in support of an idea of re-orientalism in nation branding.

Another re-orientalistic element used in Brand Singapore’s constructions of the national identity are several scenes filmed on the music festivals, rock concerts and similar gatherings. Many argue that music festivals are Western products and were unofficially established in England in 1960 (PR Newswire 2013). The visual representation of the Western element can be seen on the screenshot below. Apparently, Singapore consciously highlighted gatherings and fun in order to present itself as a country with a progressive music and festival scene. With that in mind, salience of certain compositions is made to stand out and create certain meanings (Machin and Mayr 2012, 54). Notably, Singapore obviously aims to present itself as a progressive and modern country with the inclusion of such features. Similarly, Ooi (2008, 292) discusses Singapore’s endeavors to brand itself as an exciting city as it can be seen in this branding constructions. In conclusion, the promotion of music festivals and concerts that mainly have roots in the Western culture possibly aims to be more appealing to tourists.

**Figure 18.** Screenshot from the ‘Passion Made Possible’ campaign: music festival/concert (1:23)
At the same time, it is important to notice another element of re-orientalism and the colonial history that influenced constructions of the Singaporean society. In many of the images analyzed so far, we find important exclusions of the Caucasian race. Exclusion is, as already explained, a way of purposely not including someone in discourse (Machin and Mayr 2012, 102). The meanings of exclusions are to communicate important messages about constructions of identities, ideas, values and actions (Machin and Mayr 2012, 102). Therefore, we can argue that STB’s portrayal of the Singaporean society was consciously created to promote Chinese, Indians and Malays exclusively. The observations show that no Caucasians were given any crucial role in the video - nor the role of the ambassadors nor the locals. This revelation understood as exclusions of the certain race leads to the conclusion that Caucasian representations were consciously left out. Perhaps the closest constructions of the Caucasian ethnicity are present on collectivistic portrayals and were mostly portrayed as mixtures of Asians and Caucasians (figure 19) or were suppressed with the dominance of Asians in the scene (e.g. in the video, 1:39).

Figure 19. Screenshot from the ‘Passion Made Possible’ campaign: Diversity (0:20)

As a result, visual constructions in Singapore’s nation branding examined above can be ultimately understood as being subjected to re-orientalism when created. We can conclude that at least one of the aims of those visuals was to construct Singapore to be more appealing or similar to the Western culture as the country takes pride to be recognized as the mixture between the East and the West (Ooi 2008, 291-292). Regardless, constructions that evidently have an aim to be more appealing can be seen as subjected to marketing in order to be sold. Scholars often criticize nation branding for commodification and commercialization of nation brands (Aronczyk 2013, 23). Thus, we can spot cases with of commodification since Western elements were added in some scenes. However,
exclusion of Caucasian can still be seen as the notion to preserve the Asian identity of Singapore that was aimed to be one of the key features of this branding campaign.
7. Discussion and conclusion

This thesis explored the constructions of Singaporean national identity as represented in the Brand Singapore official promotional video. The study was conducted as a qualitative content analysis of textual and visual discourse samples taken from the “Singapore – Where Passion is Made Possible” branding video. As the nation branding of Singapore and its society represents the country internationally, the discourses present in Brand Singapore materials are important to examine to understand the current state of the Singaporean society along with its future direction.

The analysis showed that Singapore Tourism Board is showcasing Singapore as a multi-ethnic state. Nonetheless, its society is more understanding and tolerating than fully committed to equality for all the ethnicities present. Scholars such as Velayutham (2017, 458-459) spotted that institutional and socio-economical discrimination as well as ethnic stereotyping, are the reality despite equalities between ethnicities assigned by the government. Similar conclusions can be drawn considering the results of this analysis.

To begin with, a lexical analysis of the text reveals a predominance of words such as “we” and “our”. This predominance reveals the salience of togetherness and nationhood that was emphasized within the branding discourse. It is known that the government has put a lot of effort in cultivating a strong sense of nationalism in Singaporean multi-ethnic society (Gomes 2014, 28). However, emphasizing of the multi-ethnic society has not been continued but moreover, a metaphorical description of the unique aspects of Singapore have been put in the focus.

Equally important is the analysis of the visual discourse present in the branding material as well as the material that was based on the combination of the text and the visuals. Unlike the textual discourse that revolved around metaphorical descriptions of the state, visuals and combined visuals focused on the diverse nature of Singaporean society. Despite Singapore is consciously representing itself as a state of multi-ethnicism with equality granted to all ethnic groups (Huat 2009, 240), this analysis revealed traces of exclusion, discrimination, and racial dominance. Also, the first thing to remember is that representations of nations are constructions and are subjected to commodification (Fan 2005, 8-10; Aronczyk 2013, 23). Hence, there are reasons behind choices in the portrayal of Singaporean society.

Previous research on Brand Singapore showed the intense will and endeavors to position Singapore as a multi-ethnic and harmonious society. The material analyzed in this study resulted with similar conclusions when it comes to the promotional aim. Brand Singapore continues to follow the previous strategies whose idea was to open Singapore to the world and position the country as the state that has the unique societal context. The usage of the multi-ethnicism as the attractive
attribute in Brand Singapore does appear in this latest nation branding campaign whose focus is on the Singaporean diversity (Singapore Tourism Board 2017).

7.1. Brand Singapore

Many studies have touched upon the subject of Brand Singapore and its development throughout the years. Singapore is known to suffer prejudices such as being known as a boring and conservative island state (Henderson 2007, 267). However, scholars so far discuss the visible will to change the nation branding of Singapore and its perception on the international scene. Studies reveal the government’s will to loosen up regulations in order to rebuild the image of the country and to become a more open state (Ooi 2008; Henderson 2007). In this study, I argue that such direction has been continued with the latest promotional video. STB did include certain elements that connote the openness, freedom and possibilities in the country, which can be seen with the application of certain features from the Western culture.

Furthermore, some scholars argue about Singaporean identity being indistinct despite the efforts to communicate about the country globally (Yee 2009, 53). However, the latest branding attempts prove the change of the course in Brand Singapore’s strategic communication. Nowadays, the strategy is rather focused on the portrayal of the Singaporean multi-ethnic society as the main theme of the campaign. Brand Singapore and STB definitely have an aim to globally position Singapore as an exotic and exciting country with the presence of various ethnicities within the society that is the unique feature of Singapore. To do so, Singapore Tourism Board in collaboration with the Economic Development Board consciously followed the common marketing approach presented in chapter 4.1. The implementation of competitive identity concept can be seen through the usage of the ambassadors and citizens (Anholt 2007, 25). The approach relying on ambassadors and locals showcasing their lifestyle, passions and talents presents Singapore in a more intimate and open light. Thus, STB aims to bring closer the Singaporean culture to foreigners. Also, through successful ambassadors and locals, Singapore manages to present itself as a business hub which is another important feature of the competitive marketing approach (Anholt 2007, 25).

Similarly, strategic change can be seen in the communication approach with the chosen focus on the society. Scholars argue that main features in branding so far were Singaporean touristic attractions such as Gardens by the Bay, Marina Bay Sands and other architectural gems of Singapore mostly promoted (Ooi 2008; Henderson 2007). Significantly, the examination reveals a conscious development of the unified national identity with the variety of ethnicities and cultures in focus (Singapore Tourism Board, 2017).
All in all, the unveiled results prove strong endeavors to popularize Singapore in the global arena. Brand Singapore continues to mitigate bad impressions of Singapore abroad with nation branding campaigns (Ooi 2008, 297-298). Other revelations prove the country is becoming more open (Ooi 2008; Henderson 2007). To conclude, Singapore started to showcase its national identity that does not rely on architecture and technology to succeed in tourism, but on its society that is rich in culture.

7.2. Constructions of the national identity
The societal constructions of the Singaporean society articulate the presence of many ethnicities. Such portrayals connote the diversity that the country is recognized globally for. It is important to state that no ethnicity granted constitutional equality was excluded from the society portrayals, therefore all ethnicities were presented as being part of the Singaporean national identity (Velayutham 2017, 471). However, despite portrayals that showcase a unified and equal society, I suggest that certain constructions rather reveal the existence of the socio-economic hierarchy that was often problematized by various scholars (Velayutham 2017; Huat 2009).

In this case, Singaporean nation branding is consciously and decisively communicating an image of the ‘ethnic harmony’. At the same time, examination proves cases of exclusion as well as socio-economic discrimination and downgrading of certain ethnicities. Exclusion, as known to be an act of purposely leaving someone out of the portrayal can be shown through salience of the Asian race while completely excluding the Caucasian race. Similarly, the textual discourse analysis reveals a clear distinction between “our home” alluding to Singaporeans and “your stage” alluding to foreigners. These clear distinctions between ‘us’ and ‘them’ connote the creation of borders for foreigners. Therefore, despite the government’s and STB’s endeavors to position Singapore as an open and vibrant state, cases showcasing Singapore as closed or reserved towards the world is still present.

Furthermore, Singapore is recognized as a country with on-going ethnic issues as discussed by various scholars (Velayutham 2017; Barr and Skrbiš 2011; Huat 2009; Gomes 2004; etc.). Both textual and visual analysis in this study reveal traces of discrimination and conscious creation of the hierarchy on societal portrayals. For example, downgrading can be spotted on several portrayals of Malay-Muslims (e.g. figure 10, figure 13). It is obvious that Malay characters were mainly granted roles of workers, helpers or artists, however, most of them appear to be downgraded on the socio-economic hierarchy. These revelations support claims about cases of socio-economic discrimination and marginalization of the Malay community (Velayutham 2017, 458).
In continuation, further societal constructions show a tendency to portray the Indian ethnicity in a stereotypical way. As argued by Velayutham (2017, 456), ethnic and religious elements always appear in official representations in Singapore. Same acknowledgment can be drawn in this study. Various conclusions can be drawn in regard to the Indian ethnicity. Firstly, their characters are almost always constructed with the usage of the stereotypical elements, such as clothing, physical look (e.g. mean wear beards, women have a vermilion mark), habits such as dining with the hands, etc. Secondly, the portrayals of men are either individualistic or collectivistic, however women are never shown alone. Last but not least, despite the efforts to present the Indian ethnicity along with their culture as very much included and cherished in Singapore, elements of marginalization can still be spotted. The characters were not granted nor status not intellectual roles. Their roles usually include bartending or touring, however, despite the sophisticated workplace or granted knowledge, they still seem to be downgraded in comparison with the Chinese.

At the same time, Chinese ethnicity is always portrayed with an intellectual note. On the visual constructions of the society, Chinese characters were mostly constructed to connote tradition or status and were presented as the ethnicity that ranks high on the Singaporean social hierarchy in comparison with Indian and Malay ethnicity. Similarly, studies argue that Chinese ethnicity in Singapore constantly enjoys commanding positions in the socio-economic hierarchy (Velayutham 2017, 459).

One of the revelations is the strong sense of collectivism present in Singapore. Scholars argue that collectivism and respect for traditions are Asian core values (Reisinger 2009, 350). Observations show the strong implementation of those values on several visuals examined in the analysis as well as in the textual discourse. Therefore, I suggest that such values connote that Singapore, as other Asian countries, has a strong respect for its traditions and when it comes to national identity, takes pride in its Asian values that do differ from the Western individualistic ones.

Another inevitably important fact is that ethnic harmony seems to be the key feature in the campaign. However, Singaporean reality seems to be facing fragile ethnic relationships that demand constant surveillance (Velayutham 2017, 458; Song 2017, 51). Life in such circumstances withdraws problems such as suppression and suspension of individuals (Huat 2009, 241). All in all, Singapore is globally recognized as a soft-authoritarian regime (Ooi 2008, 296-298). Regardless, when portraying a Singaporean society, nation branding campaign does not show any of these issues. Only with the implementation of theoretical frameworks and previous research acknowledgments certain ethical issues can be addressed.

7.3. Last words
All in all, the nation branding discourse of Brand Singapore is seen as a mechanism that strongly articulates the multi-ethnic character of Singapore as its unique selling point. We can see in this case, STB did use a strictly competitive identity approach for constructions of its national identity. In fact, I argue that societal issues were not purposely left out or ignore, but the branding endeavors rather follow the common marketing approach to present Singapore.

Also, the heart of the problem in Singapore seems to be its multi-ethnic character. Gomes (2014, 33) argues how the government is facing challenges to maintain a unique Singaporean identity. Therefore, I argue that the “Passion Made Possible” campaign does not solely target tourists. Scholars discuss the emigration problem in Singapore due to its political situation (Fetzer and Millan 2015, 463). The notion of STB to target Singaporean citizens can be recognized in the example of the inclusion of ambassadors who are well known to Singaporeans but not necessarily to the Westerners. Equally, an important exclusion of the Caucasian race is also evident in the analysis which serves as a proof that the idea of the campaign was to reflect the Singaporean culture and perhaps, even help preserve it. Henceforth, I argue that one of the campaign goals is to target Singaporean citizens as well.

Another key point is that, despite revealed downgrading on some portrayals, there were no cases of serious ethnical exclusions in Brand Singapore. No ethnicity was quantitatively dominant which proves equality to some extent. However, scholars argue that Singapore tends to present all ethnic groups within the media (Holman and Arunachalam 2015, 509).

Scholars see the nation branding practice as a commodification of nations (Henderson 2007, 263; Aronczyk 2013, 23). In this case, STB and the government definitely influenced the creation of societal portrayals. Despite Fan (2005, 8) asserts that nation identities tend to be reshaped to be more appealing abroad which results with nations abandoning their traditional and unique characteristics, results of this study prove different. Here I argue that abandonment of traditional aspects was not so strong in the case of Brand Singapore’s practices. The commodification of the national identity can be spotted in the implementation of the Western elements. The salience of the harmonious society while ignoring the social issues is rather the problem in the campaign. The constructed image of the society is contradictory with the problematic reality of this multi-ethnic state.

All in all, the culture is known to be the ‘next door to tourism’ (Anholt 2007, 101). Here, we can argue that Brand Singapore managed to construct a unique national identity with its diverse society and numerous cultures in focus. Still, Singaporean national identity was subjected to commodification and commercialization to some extent since certain societal problems were left out in the storytelling.
8. References


