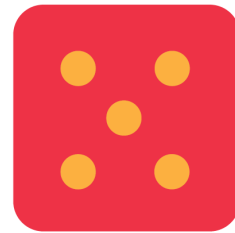


IMPROVING GREECE'S CRISIS IMAGE IN EUROPE: ALL FUN AND GAMES?

BY

Cleo Sardelis
1588356



GRADUATION ASSIGNMENT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF
COMMUNICATIONSYSTEMS OF THE INSTITUTE OF COMMUNICATION AT THE
UTRECHT UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

UTRECHT, 10 June 2014

Management summary

Greece has been facing serious image problems since the start of the economic crisis a few years ago, particularly relating to issues of untrustworthiness and corruption. It is a matter that has affected the country in many ways and the improvement of the image would lead to major benefits, especially economic and political ones. It is this crisis-related image this research chooses to focus on, and particularly on whether the resulting negative attitudes towards Greece among European citizens could be altered with a gamified approach.

An extensive literature review helps define the main concepts involved and provides a deep understanding of the two as well as all the details surrounding them. This knowledge is then used in the analysis to create links between country branding and gamification to see whether and how they could tie in together. Further conclusions are drawn with the support of case studies and interviews with eight experts from the field of gamification.

The overall conclusions from all three research methods are separated into opportunities and risks, as well as further considerations. It is important to stress that the conclusions are theoretical, as this research is of an exploratory and abstract nature and contains no implementation details. Some of the key takeaways are that gamification can change attitudes and a gamified approach in country branding could grab the audience's attention, engage them successfully if well-designed and create a more empathetic and positive attitude towards a place.

Some of the risks involved are creating an incoherent image by focusing on one aspect of the image, losing political credibility by using a gamified approach and not succeeding in engaging audiences with a negative attitude towards the country due to their negative predisposition.

Since the opportunities seem to outweigh the risks, the final recommendation is that Greece should use a gamified approach in its new branding endeavour to improve Europeans' attitudes towards the country. A strong social character in this effort, as well as story-telling elements and humour are likely to create empathy, which would significantly bring the country closer to its objective.

Acknowledgements

Much like Frodo's journey to Mount Doom in Mordor, completing this assignment has been a rocky and lengthy process. The topic was pinned down about a year before its completion, just like the hobbit's 13-month adventure, and my mission at times felt equally uncertain. Orcs and evil wizards had to be fought off on the way, even if in my case they only took the form of doubtfulness and confusion.

Besides the challenges, I did also cherish moments of excitement, discovery and the feeling of breakthrough, or the awakening of a new idea and fascinating learning opportunities. Yet, I'm very happy and relieved to have finally made it to my destination, or thrown the ring into the pit of lava.

Thankfully, I had my Sam along with me, my supervisor Theo Bors (it's not a belittling parallel, I promise). He was there to guide and support me every step of the way, and encouraged me when I was losing hope.

A huge thanks to my Fellowship, my family and friends, who cheered me on and believed in my work. Your kind and warm words as well as the good times kept me going in the past months. An extra special shout-out to my dear friend Christina who made the illustration for my cover while busy with her own journey.

Finally, I'd like to thank the Gandalfs involved – the experts who made time in their busy schedules for my interviews. We had great conversations and they gave me many new ideas. I hugely appreciate the valuable input, as well as their enthusiasm about my idea – that was a real reward.

Table of contents

Management summary	3
Acknowledgements	4
1. Introduction	7
1.1 Problem situation	7
1.2 Problem definition	9
1.3 Advisory question	10
1.4 Research question	10
1.5 Sub-questions	10
1.6 Restrictions to the research	11
1.7 General structure of the report	12
2. Theoretical framework	13
2.1 Country branding	14
2.1.1 Image	14
2.1.2 Country branding defined	25
2.2 Attitude	38
2.2.1 Definition of attitude	38
2.2.2 Changing attitude	39
2.2.3 Measuring attitude	40
2.2.4 Final notes on attitude	41
2.3 Gamification	43
2.3.1 What are games?	43
2.3.2 Who plays	44
2.3.3 Why we play games	45
2.3.4 Gamification defined	46
3. Methodology	56
3.1 Communication research	56
3.2 Literature review	57
3.3 Case studies	57
3.4 Interviews	58
3.5 Target group	60
4. Analysis, results and conclusions	62
4.1 Literature review	62
4.1.1 Summary	62
4.1.2 Analysis	63
4.2 Case studies	66
4.2.1 Foursquare	66
4.2.2 Study of attitudes towards Palestinians and Israelis after game play	67
4.3 Results from interviews	69
4.3.1 Gamification's potential to change attitude	69
4.3.2 Gamification's potential in country branding	71
4.3.3 Further comments	73
4.4 Overall conclusions	75
4.5 Limitations of this research	79
4.5.1 Questions that still need to be answered	79
5. Recommendations	81
References	83
Appendix	85

List of figures

Figure 1: Cover of Focus magazine.....	8
Figure 2: Division of sections and sub-sections in theoretical framework chapter....	13
Figure 3: Image is a reflection of identity.....	15
Figure 4: Why country reputation is important.....	19
Figure 5: What Europeans think of each other.....	20
Figure 6: Associations with Greece.....	21
Figure 7: Covers of various influential media outlets.....	22
Figure 8: International press' stance towards Greece, 2009-2010.....	23
Figure 9: Greece's reputation score over the course of five years, out of 100.....	24
Figure 10: Greece's image improved in 2013.....	25
Figure 11: What is country branding.....	28
Figure 12: Examples of media in country branding.....	34
Figure 13: Werbach's game design framework.....	49
Figure 14: Csikszentmihalyi's state of flow.....	53

1. Introduction

1.1 Problem situation

In 2008, the world stood in awe of what was the beginning of a series of events that was going to mark our lives for years to come. Reckless lending of the US banking system in the real estate market for over a decade had created a financial bubble, giving rise to international financial turmoil once burst. As a result, Lehman Brothers, one of the most powerful financial institutions worldwide, declared bankruptcy. It was a moment of harsh realisation and panic in financial markets across the globe.

In this climate of turbulence, anxiety and insecurity, governments and monetary authorities worldwide started pouring money into banks in order to support them and save them from collapsing. Despite this, what quickly started to unravel itself next was what we now all see, talk and hear about daily: 'the crisis'. Its start was marked by the incident mentioned above and the economic downfall shortly made its way over to Europe.

If there is one country it hit with particularly brutal force, it was Greece. Severe political mishaps, such as the claim that the country's deficit forecast was false, set in motion a thorough revision of the economic figures put forward by the Greek government in past years. It was revealed that numbers had been manipulated in the country's favour. This led to an outrage in the European Union and a huge campaign led mainly by Germany was set forth to punish and make an example out of Greece. The EU made a loan facility available to the country in order to avoid default. However, by setting 'punitive interest rates', it made it virtually impossible for Greece to pull itself out of its state of demise.

Amidst the aforementioned climate of panic in financial markets worldwide, Greece, whose economic size is insignificant compared to the European economy, was put in the spotlight instead of the US, whose enormous banking sector actually initiated this domino effect. There was no ethical second-guessing of the banking systems' actions, they were almost 'acceptable'. However, Greece's situation blew up into a huge moral scandal scrutinised on international media outlets day in and day out for several years. Banks' mistakes were easily forgiven, but Greece's were not, which might get one to wonder about the legitimacy of this outburst.

The point is that, for Greece, the crisis was not only financial but it was also a huge blow to its reputation, credibility and, ultimately, its value as a nation as perceived by a large portion of the rest of the world. Ask anyone what their first thoughts are at the mentioning of Greece and most respondents will convey a message related to economic, political and social hardships and untrustworthiness. Ask them what they think of the Greeks, and 'lazy', 'corrupted', 'poor' are some of the terms that are likely to come up.

Unfortunately, the actual cover of German magazine Focus below, titled 'Fraudsters in the Euro-family', featuring a famous statue and symbol of Ancient Greek civilisation, depicts what some currently associate Greece with.



Figure 1: Cover of Focus magazine

The consequences on the country's image have yet to be shaken off, unfortunately due to reasons that are still morally debateable and justifiable only to a certain extent. As it will be shown later on in this research, the reporting in the international media on the Greek crisis was phenomenal.

1.2 Problem definition

***‘This might be an economic crisis,
but the way out of it will be to solve the image crisis.’***

– Peter Economides, brand strategist ‘Rebranding Greece’

The quote above captures the very essence of this research. It succinctly communicates both the context of the problem and its solution, as well as its tremendous significance. The economic situation shattered Greece’s image, pushing it further into the crisis and making it unbelievably hard to recover, both financially but also socially. The very future of the nation rests on how this issue will be dealt with.

It is needless to say that claims such as those on the cover of Focus magazine are not the desirable type of associations with Greece. They are not only economically damaging to a colossal extent, as Greece loses all legitimacy as a potential trading partner, holiday destination, market to invest in, etc., but these remarks have also had an unprecedented impact on Greeks. Their country, as well as their nationality, has publicly and internationally been subject to severe scrutiny, mockery and offensiveness for the past five to six years.

It is imperative that Greece solves this problem in order for the country to regain credibility and bloom financially again, but also politically and socially, and the current brand ‘Greece’ needs to be rebranded for these things to take effect. In essence, the image and eventually the reputation of Greece need to be improved in Europe and, ultimately, worldwide.

On a different note, the concept and application of ‘gamification’ across industries and organisations everywhere has been on the rise in the past few years. Depending on the context, as it can be used in various fields from marketing to education, gamification generally involves the use of game elements in order to boost customer loyalty, employee engagement, innovation, etc. Simply put, it has proven to be a hugely successful tool of which the purpose is to heighten awareness, motivation and engagement through game mechanics. For this reason, this exploratory research will aim to draw some conclusions on whether gamification can be part of the solution of the problem at hand, as opposed to more traditional country branding efforts.

While tackling Greece's immense rebranding challenge, some of the important and unavoidable questions to arise will be: How will Greece be rebranded? How will this brand then be presented and/or communicated to its target audience? The purpose of this graduation assignment is, thus, to link gamification as an innovative and effective engagement tool to this ambitious undertaking on a theoretical and exploratory level. In other words, the problem at hand is Greece's current image in Europe, and this assignment sets off to establish whether gamification can be, at least part of, its solution

1.3 Advisory question

Drawing from the above, my advisory question goes as follows:

Should Greece use gamification as part of a strategy to improve its current crisis-related image in Europe?

The specifics of what 'crisis-related' implicates will be discussed in the following chapter.

1.4 Research question

Can gamification be a successful tool for country branding?

Put differently, this project aims to find out whether gamification can be successful in country branding. What is meant by 'successful' is whether it reaches the goal, which is to turn negative attitudes towards Greece into positive ones among European citizens, as previously discussed.

1.5 Sub-questions

In order to answer my research question, and ultimately my advisory question, the following issues will first need to be addressed:

1. What is the current image of Greece in Europe?
2. What are the principles of successful country branding?
3. What is gamification and how does it work?
4. Can gamification change people's attitude towards a given object (e.g. Greece)?
5. What potential does gamification have in the country branding context?

These five sub-questions encompass the major issues to be explored, but this research will involve many more details. For an overview of these details and sub-queries, you can refer to figure 2 in the following chapter.

1.6 Restrictions to the research

The topic will be explored on a theoretical level, as no examples of the combination of the two concepts currently exist. It is important to highlight that the results will be aimed at European citizens, not governments (foreign affairs) or corporations (foreign direct investment strategy). Additionally, the purpose of the research is not to use gamification as a tool to advertise Greece as a holiday destination. It is purely and entirely a matter of altering people's negative attitude towards Greece and, hence, eventually improving the overall image and reputation for the long run.

What will not be looked into are the following issues:

1. What is Greece to be rebranded as? This is to be decided upon by the Greek government, national institutions and businesses, etc., as will be pointed out through country branding theory in chapter two.
2. How will gamification be implemented? What will the exact shape of the campaign or process be? This would be an entirely separate project on its own which cannot be materialised before the actual strategic part of the rebranding has been decided upon. Omitting the implementation aspect automatically cancels out questions such as costs involved, specific media tools involved, specific measurement methods involved, etc.

1.7 General structure of the report

The next chapter, chapter two, goes into the theoretical framework of this research. The most important concepts are disclosed and the most prominent theories and definitions of country branding, attitudes and gamification are addressed in order to get a deep understanding of these notions before they can be analysed.

After building this frame of reference, chapter three will explain methodology of this research – which tools were used to yield results to build conclusions upon.

Chapter four presents the analysis of and research results from the literature review, case studies and interviews. Conclusions are then be drawn in the same chapter, which will aim to answer the research question.

Finally, based on the conclusions in the previous chapter, chapter five delivers the final advice, answering the advisory question - should Greece use gamification as part of a strategy to improve its current crisis-related image in Europe, or not?

2. Theoretical framework

This chapter aims to clarify the most important terms and concepts discussed in this research. Relevant theories and definitions will be laid out to acquire a profound understanding of the concepts and to facilitate the analysis that will follow in chapter four. For this reason, also, the overviews of country branding and gamification will be detailed. The ultimate goal is to compare and look for compatibility between the concepts to see where and if they can be combined in practice in order to, indeed, see if gamification can be used as a tool in country branding.

Due to the strongly theoretical and fairly abstract nature of this assignment, the relevant terms, theories and literature mentioned stem from various fields such as communication, marketing, branding and psychology. Part of the literature does in fact relate to organisations, but the goal is to retrieve the essence of the concepts and then work with these extracted notions on a country level.

In order to provide some clarity and guidance to the reader, the structure of this lengthy and complex chapter has been illustrated below.

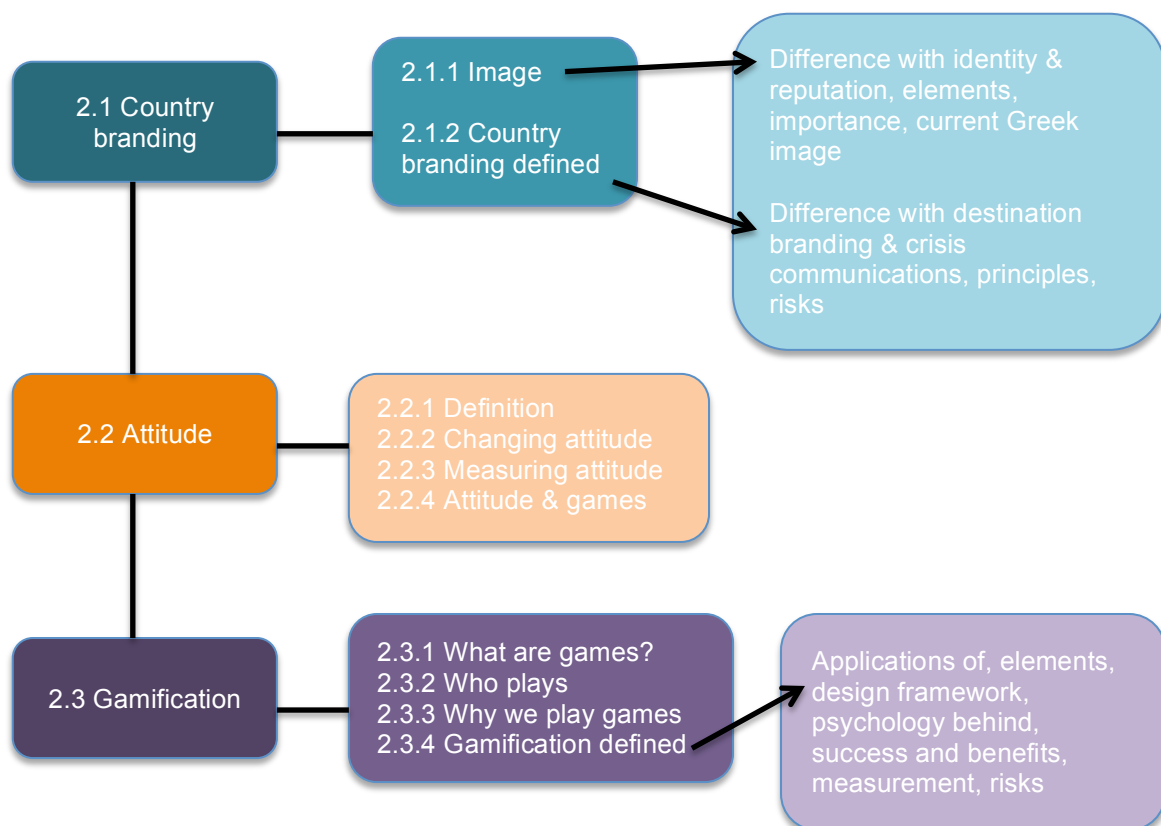


Figure 2: Division of sections and sub-sections in theoretical framework chapter

2.1 Country branding

This section is broken down into various sub-sections that sequentially build up the core of what 'country branding' is all about. The first sub-section deals with the notion of 'image': what it is (and what it is not, i.e. identity and reputation), what it is made up of, why it is important and what the current Greek image is in Europe. The second sub-section is concerned with country branding: why it is relevant to this research, what its principles are and what the risks involved are.

It is necessary to point out the difference between *image* and *branding* and how they are related, as to avoid confusion. Put succinctly, in this case, image is the result of branding; branding is the process and image is the outcome. Being able to thoroughly understand both notions will help make connections with the concept of gamification in the analysis to follow (chapter four).

2.1.1 Image

Before a discussion on changing it can even take place, a definition of 'image' first needs to be provided. The definition of (corporate) 'image' by Cornelissen (2008, p. 9) goes as follows:

The immediate set of associations of an individual in response to one or more signals or messages from or about a particular organisation at a single point in time.

In order to come up with a more general way to explain the notion of image and apply it on a country level, we can extract the following two key parts from the definitions above: 1. image is a set of associations in people's mind, 2. an image is held at a specific point in time. Consequently, a country's image is what people associate with the place at a certain time. However, in order to rephrase it in a way that is more relevant to this assignment, the following definition will be kept in mind:

A country's image is what people associate with, hence what attitude people have towards, a place at a certain point in time.

Less emphasis will be put on the part of the definition concerning 'one or more signals or messages'. This part is more relevant in an organisational context rather than a country one. The factors a country's image depends on are different and will

be looked at in another section later on.

a. Image vs. identity

Tightly intertwined with the notion of image is that of 'identity'. In corporate communication, it is defined as '*the profile and values communicated by an organisation*' (Cornelissen, 2008, p. 9). On a national level, we could say identity is 'the profile and values as communicated by a country'. Let it be noted that this is a simplistic definition of identity that works for this research. Certainly, sociologists and anthropologists would have different and much more elaborate views on the matter. For this study, what is mainly important is the distinction between image and identity and how they relate.

The way identity and image are interconnected in country branding is suggested in the following simple principle: image is a reflection of identity. Simon Anholt (2010, p. 47) infers that '*who you are determines how you behave, how you behave determines how you are perceived*'. Hence, identity is part of building the image.

Peter Economides, brand strategist and leading figure in the effort to change Greece's current image, seems to agree with the interconnectedness of the two. At a conference regarding Greece's image problem named 'Rebranding Greece' in 2011, he presented the following powerful slide (see figure 3).



Figure 3: Image is a reflection of identity (Economides, 2011)

This illustration indicates that the tip of the iceberg ('what the world thinks and feels') is based on what the rest of the iceberg, underneath the water surface, stands for ('what a nation thinks and feels'). In branding terms, this could be translated into the famous mantra 'living the brand'.

Thus, it becomes clear that in order to change the image, significant changes to the identity need to take place. To support this, another remarkable quote by Peter Economides (2011) must be noted. He pondered on whether the issue at hand 'is *rebranding Greece, or is it rebranding Greeks?*'.

Anholt, too, underlines this notion. In his study of Nation Brand Indices in 2005 – a ranking of the countries with the strongest brands (in other words, best images) – Anholt found that every single one of the top 15 countries ranked themselves as number one when asked about themselves (identity) (2007, p. 56-57). '*If you don't believe in your own brand, it's unlikely that anybody else will*' (p. 58) – henceforth, 'living the brand'.

b. Image vs. reputation

Although nation branding expert Simon Anholt (2007, p. 5) states that '*brand image [...] is virtually the same as reputation*', this study will insist on making the distinction.

Image and reputation might be two terms that are often used interchangeably but there is a very clear difference between them in the communication field. Reputation is defined as follows:

(Corporate reputation): *An individual's collective representation of past images of an organisation (induced through either communication or past experiences) established over time* (Cornelissen, 2008, p. 9).

Again, only the essence of this definition will be taken into consideration and applied on a country level. We can, hence, say that a country's reputation is the collection of past images established over time in an individual's mind.

The aforementioned disparity is, hence, largely time-related: image is concerned with a single point in time whereas reputation relates to a much larger timeframe.

Reputation is built slowly, while image can change very rapidly. Hereinafter, in order to achieve a positive country reputation people need to first accumulate several

positive country images in their minds. Country branding is also a lengthy process, but its short-term results will most likely be an image and its effects in the long-run will probably contribute towards reputation.

c. Elements that form country image

According to nation branding expert Simon Anholt (2007, p. 25-26), national image, thus eventually reputation, is rooted in six different elements:

1. Tourism promotion and first-hand experience, both in a holiday and a business context. This is usually the strongest element.
2. Export brands, when the country of origin is known.
3. A country's government and its policy decisions, whether domestic or foreign. This element is what is mostly reported on in international media.
4. In business terms, the way the nation attracts foreign investment or talent.
5. Cultural components: from music, to movies and authors or cultural events.
6. The actual people of the country: both high-profiled individuals and the general population.

Aspects such as history and geography seem to be missing from Anholt's list, but perhaps they go hand in hand with culture as part of the heritage, for example.

If those ingredients form what country image consists of, an important issue to address is how perceptions of the country image are formed. Anholt (2007, p. 30) suggest four ways:

- by what is done in the country and how it is done
- by what is made in the country and how it is made
- by what others say about the place
- by what the place says about itself.

What forms image can also be different at different points in time, according to general societal trends. For instance, in 2010, Anholt's research came up with the following three themes that influenced how people perceived a place (p. 54-55):

- A country's stance on issues concerning the environment.
- A country's 'modernity': how competent it appears in matters of technology.
- The attractiveness of the country as a place of learning or a place that allows for

economic and cultural growth.

Taking the above into account, the same place might be perceived very differently at various points in time, even if it has not changed significantly.

d. The importance of a positive country image

As straightforward as this may seem, highlighting the benefits of a positive country image and reputation is noteworthy. How people think of a place determines how they behave towards it, including how they behave towards what is made or done there and who comes from there. Image and reputation have everything to do with economic, political, social and cultural progress and growth (Anholt, 2007, p. 8-9).

For instance, a positive country image may well be a pivotal factor in a consumer's decision-making process of whether to buy a certain product or not, what is called the 'country-of-origin' effect. For instance, when faced with the decision of whether to buy cheese from France or cheese from Armenia, most western consumers will probably go for the first as they are more familiar with that country and probably have a better image of it (even if Armenian cheese turns out to be a great product, and cheaper). The country-of-origin effect plays an even bigger role when the consumer is not familiar with the product or its brand and will therefore, consciously or subconsciously, use whatever information they may have about where it was made (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007, p. 458). This simple principle demonstrates what a colossal effect a place's image can have on its economy.

Apart from everyday consumer decisions concerning what to purchase or where to visit, country image and reputation also have an enormous impact on all of the following matters:

- companies deciding where to set up or outsource operations, expand their business and market their products
- governments deciding where to spend foreign aid budgets or even picking allies
- where international sports and/or entertainment events will be held in the future, etc. (Anholt, 2007, p. 10).

The list could go on but the economic and political benefits of a positive image are apparent. With a good image, more companies will establish themselves in the country. More governments will engage in a dialogue with the country or rush to

assist it if necessary. More cultural events will take place, which will also bring in countless visitors.

Certainly, it is not all economics and politics. It should also be added that having a positive image would also affect the confidence of the population. As humans, we are inherently social beings and we do not enjoy others having a negative attitude towards us.

When a country has a strong, positive image, people will more easily dismiss 'bad news' coming from that country – this means that the impact on the general image or reputation of the place will not change significantly. This is, of course, unless bad news occur regularly (Anholt, 2007, p.55). On the other hand, if a country already has a bad image, this will only be reinforced by the bad news

Finally, as discussed earlier, reputation is the accumulation of several images. In the long run, positive images will lead to a positive reputation, of which the advantages are depicted in figure 4 below.



Figure 4: Why country reputation is important (*The world's view*, 2013)

e. Greece's current image in Europe

Before the issue of improving Greece's image can be analysed, the current image needs to be established in order to clarify in what direction the rebranding effort needs to go.

Who is trustworthy, arrogant or compassionate?
EU nation most frequently cited as top choice by other country

Viewed by:	TRUSTWORTHY		ARROGANT		COMPASSIONATE	
	most	least	most	least	most	least
Britain	Germany	France	France	Britain	Britain	Germany
France	Germany	Greece	France	France	France	Britain
Germany	Germany	Greece/Italy	France	Germany	Germany	Britain
Italy	Germany	Italy	Germany	Spain	Italy	Germany
Spain	Germany	Italy	Germany	Spain	Spain	Germany
Greece	Greece	Germany	Germany	Greece	Greece	Germany
Poland	Germany	Germany	Germany	Poland	Poland	Germany
Czech Republic	Germany	Greece	Germany	Slovakia	Czech Republic	Germany

Source: Pew

Figure 5: What Europeans think of each other (What Europeans think, 2013, May 15)

Putting aside Greece's slightly inflated image of itself, which clearly suggests an issue with identity, what we can deduct from this figure is that the country mainly has an issue of trustworthiness, as three fellow EU-countries seem to vote it as the least trustworthy EU nation. The problem of trustworthiness makes a lot of sense considering that what distorted the country's image in the first place were issues of economic transparency, or the lack thereof. Positively enough, Greece does at least not seem to come off as the most arrogant or least compassionate member state.

At the aforementioned conference, Peter Economides made the following fairly simple yet extremely interesting point in his speech.

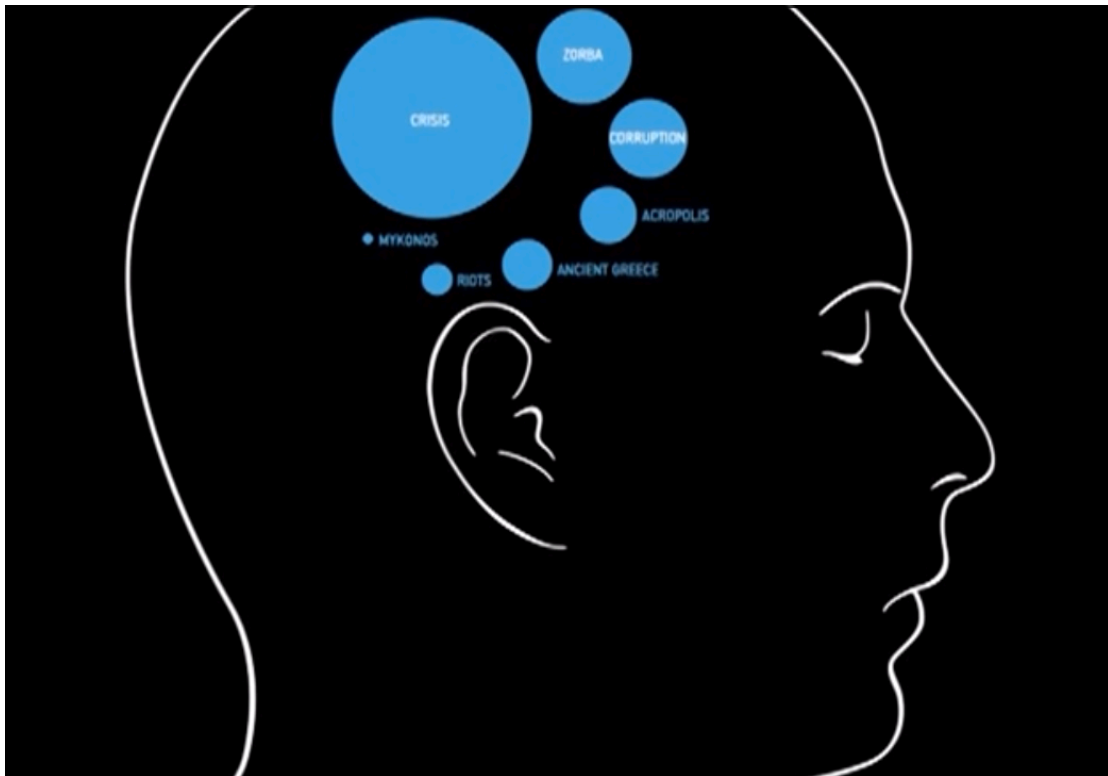


Figure 6: Associations with Greece (Economides, 2011)

After using Google's search engine as a 'brand barometer', as he referred to it, he searched for various terms in relation to the country. The results are astonishing.

When he entered the term 'Acropolis', the search engine yielded 17.6 million results in 0.24 seconds. For the following terms, the results were:

- 'Ancient Greece': 15.7 million results in 0.19 seconds.
- 'Mykonos': 3.4 million results in 0.19 seconds.
- 'Zorba': 29.5 million results in 0.24 seconds.
- 'Greece crisis': 62.1 million results in 0.19 seconds.
- 'Greece corruption': 24.4 million results in 0.19 seconds.
- 'Greece riots': 9.7 million results in 0.25 seconds.

Admittedly, as Economides himself makes clear, this is hardly scientific research. However, it is a very good indication of what associations people make with the place, in other words what they think of Greece (image). It is also apparent that the issue of trust persists, since 'corruption' is one of the strongest associations.

After presenting some of the strongest associations individuals have in connection to Greece, one might wonder – where do these associations come from? In other words, how were these attitudes formed?



Figure 7: Covers of various influential media outlets

The international media have undeniably played a dramatic role in forming public opinion about Greece, and as we shall see in section 2.2 concerning attitude, this is entirely possible since the media can indeed have a strong influence on attitude. Antoniadou's (2012) study of Greece's portrayal in international media¹ in the years 2009-2010, right in the middle of the crisis, reveals several important facts.

Whenever Greece was mentioned in the publications researched in the study, 53% of total articles maintained a neutral stance, 36% of articles conveyed negative/diminishing messages and 10% had some form of positive references. The remaining 4% had 'unclear' or 'other' associations. On this note, the author comments '*this negative media blitz cannot but have had substantial damaging*

¹ Antoniadou's study is concerned with the following eleven countries: Britain, Germany, France, Spain, Poland, the USA, China, India, Japan, Korea and Singapore.

*impact on the international image of Greece, [...] it not only reflected but also generated entrenched negative **attitudes** and connotations not only in the foreign political elites but also in wider publics and populations across the globe'* (2012, p. 7).

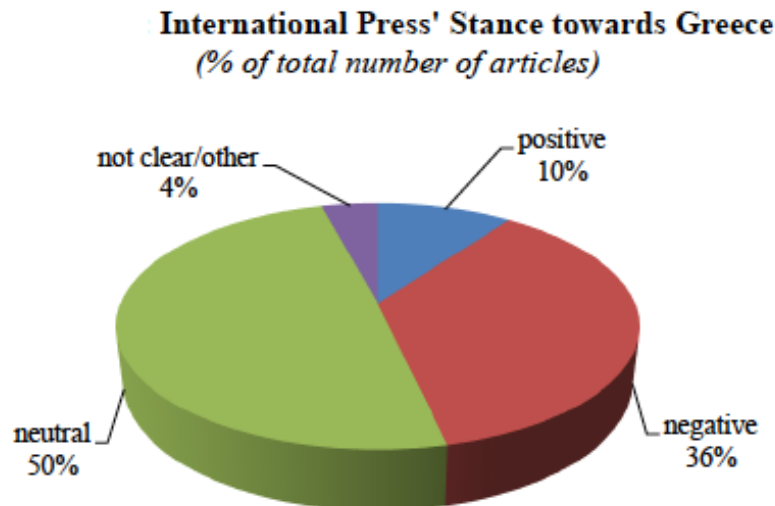


Figure 8: International press' stance towards Greece, 2009-2010 (Antoniades, 2012, p.8)

Even more importantly for this research, due to its focus on the continent, Antoniades points out that the negative reporting in Europe alone was 40%, higher than the international average.

Besides the quantitative findings, Antoniades' qualitative analysis highlights the three biggest themes in the international coverage in terms of negative associations.

- **Corruption:** This is the strongest, most present theme and is related to tax evasion. It came up so often that it became 'a given', comments the author. It was allegedly a part of Greek culture that is widely known and it was presented as fact. Essentially, corruption became a Greek stereotype (Tzogopoulos, 2011, p. 15).

- **Lack of credibility:** Greece is presented as 'unreliable' and 'untrustworthy'.

- **Irresponsibility:** This theme has an ethical and moral tone to it, since Greece is baptised as the 'problem child' of Europe, according to Anoniades (2012, p. 13).

Based on the above, there is no wonder why Greece was voted by some as ‘least trustworthy’ and its image/reputation scores dropped in the years 2009-2012 (see figure 9). It is this problematic post-economic crisis image in relation to trust that forms the focus of this study. On that note, Anholt states that trust is naturally established towards a country with a good image and reputation (2010, p.20-30). Hence, by solving the image problem, trust should, theoretically at least, be restored

Country RepTrak™ in recent years (26-50)



Country	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Taiwan	47,1	51,3	51,3	51,1	52,7
Puerto Rico	.	.	47,4	49,2	51,5
Chile	45,3	45,9	49,7	47,6	51,0
India	50,4	51,8	50,3	51,9	50,7
Argentina	.	.	52,0	51,4	50,2
UAE	.	.	50,0	50,6	49,3
Greece	62,5	64,8	55,8	43,3	47,4
Turkey	44,8	47,1	46,0	44,4	47,2
South Korea	42,2	45,4	46,6	47,8	47,2
Mexico	48,4	47,9	46,0	45,5	47,0
South Africa	44,3	44,6	46,7	47,5	46,8
Israel	.	43,7	41,9	43,0	46,1
Haiti	.	.	41,8	44,8	45,8
Venezuela	.	43,4	45,4	44,5	45,5
Egypt	.	.	45,9	43,2	43,9
Bolivia	.	.	42,4	42,0	43,7
Ukraine	39,0	41,6	42,2	41,8	43,3
Saudi Arabia	.	.	38,8	36,7	40,1
China	38,1	38,4	40,7	39,7	37,8
Colombia	32,5	35,8	37,1	37,5	37,8
Russia	36,1	39,6	38,6	36,8	36,7
Nigeria	.	.	30,9	31,5	34,0
Pakistan	.	.	27,2	26,6	28,8
Iran	.	20,3	22,7	21,3	22,6
Iraq	.	.	21,8	20,3	21,2

Scoring scale: 0-100
All score differences > 1.6 are significant at 95% confidence interval



Figure 9: Greece's reputation score over the course of five years, out of 100 (The world's view, 2013)

The good news is that Greece's image/reputation seems to have started improving in 2013. According to the Reputation Institute (*The world's view, 2013*), it went up by 8.5% (see figure 9 and 10). This might present a good opportunity, as people might be becoming more open to changing their attitude towards the country. However, this point will be further discussed in chapter four.

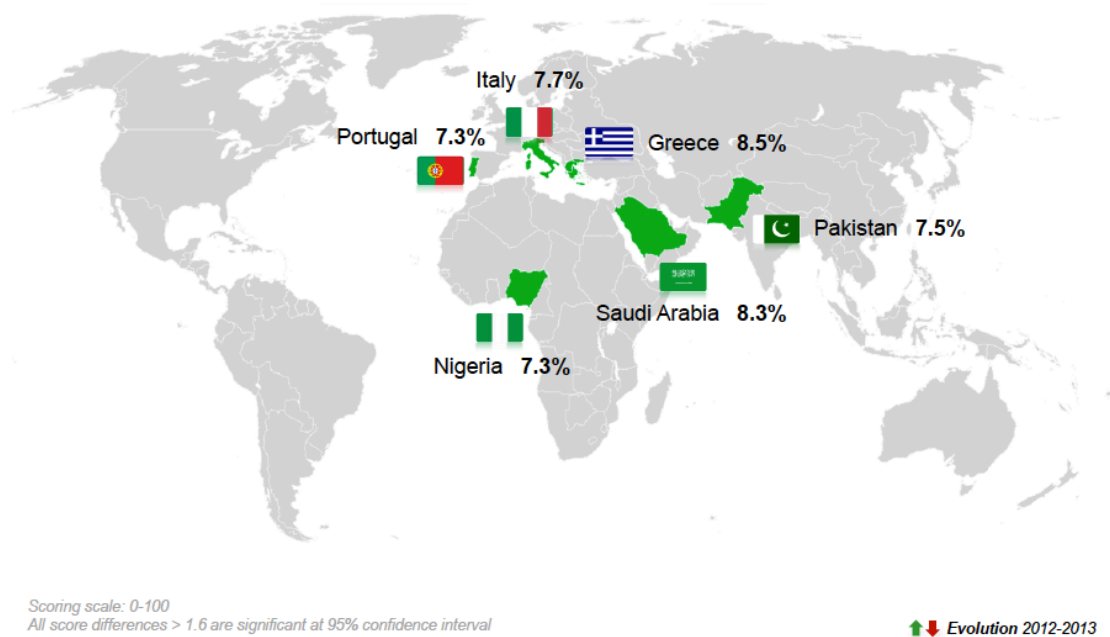


Figure 10: Greece's image improved in 2013 (The world's view, 2013)

2.1.2 Country branding defined

Equally critical to defining the relevant terms of this research is also defining terms that could be misinterpreted as relevant but are, in fact, not. For instance, one might ask 'why are the principles of regular product branding not applied, since it is just another branding effort'? Or, 'since we speak of the effects of a crisis, why is this not a case of crisis communication'? Some of these issues are cleared out below and country branding is presented as the distinct, separate field that it is.

Simone Anholt, who actually coined the term 'nation branding', strongly stresses the fact that is different from product branding. He explains that simply because he referred to the idea as a type of 'branding', this should not infer that it is in any way another type of product branding 'where the product happens to be a country rather than a bank or a running shoe' (2007, p. xii). Therefore, it is imperative to ascertain this discrepancy in order to avoid any misinterpretation of this study.

a. Country branding vs. destination branding

Greece is a highly touristic country and a popular holiday destination, so why not 'destination branding'?

A destination brand is the totality or perceptions, thoughts, and feelings that customers hold about a place (Baker, 2007, p. 26).

Destination branding is an organising principle that involves orchestrating the messages and experiences associated with the place to ensure that they are distinctive, compelling, memorable and rewarding as possible.

The research at hand is not a question of destination branding as the goal is not to promote Greece as a tourist destination, but perhaps a destination branding campaign launched around that time of the re-branding would be a good idea. As mentioned earlier, people stick more closely to first-hand impressions, so they should be encouraged to visit Greece in order to see for themselves what it is like and perhaps, by doing so, lessening the effect of the negative associations imprinted among Europeans.

b. Country branding vs. crisis communication

Regester and Larkin (2008, p. 165) define a crisis as:

“an event which causes the company (country in this case) to become the subject of widespread, potentially unfavourable, attention from the international and national media and other groups such as customer, shareholders, employees and their families, politicians, trade unionists and environmental pressure groups who, for one reason or another, have a vested interest in the activities of the organisation (country)”.

Although the above definition seems to fit with the situation in Greece, the authors also note that a time of crisis is the time for a leader to emerge and solve the situation swiftly, as opposed to reaching a more careful, consensual decision among a group, which may take more time (Regester & Larkin, 2008, p. 152). This does not quite seem as the most viable solution in Greece's current situation, since as mentioned in the definition of country branding, in the case of a country there is a multitude of factors to take into account concerning image and several national institutions need to be consulted. This is a considerably time-consuming process and does not compare to a corporation's one-time scandal or crisis. Additionally, crisis management is an activity that takes places as quickly as possible after the crisis has manifested itself, while the Greek crisis is by now several years old, hence by default

does not qualify as a crisis management situation anymore.

The effort, at this point, does therefore not involve the recovery from a current crisis and the prevention of any damage to the image or quick restoration of the image, but forms an attempt to rebuild an image in a much more elaborate manner.

c. Principles of country branding

After establishing the significant difference between country branding and other types of branding or communication, an outline of the principles of the former follows.

'A brand is nothing more than a set of impressions that lives in people's head. Branding is the management of those impressions' (Economides, 2011). Based on this, country branding involves managing what a country projects and, as a result, what attitudes people have towards it.

There is no 'one-fits-all' country branding recipe for improving image and it is a highly strategic, perhaps even abstract, task. However, Anholt's (2007, p. 37) general guiding principles suggest the following four points:

- deciding on a identity strategy and getting as many stakeholders behind it as possible
- creating a climate of innovation among the stakeholders
- showing stakeholders how these innovations can help their business goals as well as the country's identity/image strategy
- encourage stakeholders to reflect the identity in their actions and communication.

Certainly, these are fairly generic guidelines but they do highlight two important points:

Country branding is the work of several national stakeholders, not one person's or a small team's, and real change and innovation needs to take place to improve the image over time. Both of these points will be further discussed below.

Looking into the matter in more detail, the process involves several considerations to make and is divided into various stages, which go as follow (Anholt, 2007, p.63-86).

Setting up the team to build the strategy

As mentioned above, country branding requires the participation of numerous stakeholders. Anholt (2007, p. 28) points out that the parties that need to get involved in the country branding effort are the government, the public and private sector as well as the community. Economides seems to be in complete accordance with this, considering his slide below.



Figure 11: What is country branding (Economides, 2011)

As opposed to commercial branding, where one or a few people might be responsible for the effort, country branding is a collective activity: governments, institutions, companies and the community need to come together and build a strategy for managing the world's impressions of them. The collective part is crucial; if each of those bodies go off on their own individual track the image will fail to be coherent as each will be projecting different messages (Anholt, 2007, p. 2-3). This goes back to the matter of image and identity discussed above (2.1.1.a.) – if the identity is unified and strong, the image will also be strong as it is but a projection of it. The starting point of developing the new image hence lies within the nation's history, culture, geography and society as these components form the identity (Anholt, 2007, p. 75).

Image problem analysis

In order to come up with the best strategy to tackle the country branding effort, a very careful analysis of whether there is a problem, to start with, and what kind of problem there is needs to take place (Anholt, 2007, p. 64). Simon Anholt suggests the three following types of image problems and how to solve them (2007, p. 67-68):

1. The place is unknown to the public and should, hence, be *introduced*.
2. The place is known to the 'wrong public', as in a public that cannot help the country achieve the goals it wants to reach with a positive image. In this case, the image should be *targeted* more accurately.
- 3. The place is known but for the wrong reasons, therefore the image needs to be *corrected*.**

Under the third point, he suggests four different scenarios for images that need to be corrected. The first three will be touched upon very briefly, as it is the fourth one that best applies in the case of Greece.

- (a) Associations are positive but limited or unhelpful – image needs to be *expanded*.
- (b) Awareness is vague or generic – image needs to be *enhanced*.
- (c) Associations are out of date – image needs to be *revitalised*.
- (d) Associations are negative – image needs to be *improved*.**

Yet another two sub-points after (d) are:

- i. Negative perceptions are entirely groundless – they need to be *refuted*, *suppressed* or *ignored*.
- ii. Negative perceptions are founded in truth: the problems must be addressed immediately and it must be communicated that action is being taken to fix them. By doing this, the image is *contextualised* (the public understands the situation better and is not as greatly influenced towards a bad image) or *de-emphasised* (occupies less space in the mind of the public).

The highlighted options (3. d.) are the ones that apply to Greece's case. As for sub-points i. and ii., the situation could be considered mixed. The negative perceptions were indeed rooted in actual problems and matters Greece handled wrongly, yet the phenomenal intensity of the slur in the media is neither fully justifiable nor morally right.

As part of this step, an important question a country needs to ask itself is: is the poor image in place for legitimate reason? If so, new policies and behaviours need to be implemented straight away. In the remote case, however, that the bad image is not fully justifiable, it could be that the issue is mainly a communication one, in which case communication could also play a big role in fixing it (Anholt, 2007, p. 64).

Once the nature of the problem has been identified, the second step is to analyse the country's different audiences separately: trading partners, tourists, political allies, etc. These must also undergo a demographic analysis (Anholt, 2007, p. 68) as different cultures and age groups, for instance, might hold radically different beliefs about the very same nation.

Developing the strategy

Based on the results of the image analysis, a strategy can begin to materialise. The strategy needs to aim high. A bland plan will not make an impact for the reason that it will not get anyone's attention or commitment, both internally and externally. The strategy needs to build on and improve current perceptions since starting all over is a much more daunting task, practically impossible.

A certain number of criteria need to be put in place objectively in order to ensure that the strategy is captivating and motivating for the public to find out about it. Anholt suggests six crucial characteristics for a compelling strategy:

1. **Creative:** the strategy needs to be surprising and memorable to increase its chances of being noticed.
2. **Ownable:** the strategy needs to be unique to the place, as well as truthful, credible and distinct. Only then will people accept it, not just notice it. The strategy also needs to relate to the current image, as a new image from scratch is harder to accept.
3. **Sharp:** the strategy needs to be focused and needs to tell a specific, coherent story. As mentioned earlier, several different messages are only more confusing than one strong message.
4. **Motivating:** the strategy needs to make clear that actual differences in the behaviours of the government, the private sector and society are in place, not just communicated as such.
5. **Relevant:** the strategy needs to be a meaningful promise to the public and show how it will benefit them.

6. **Elemental:** the strategy needs to be implementable within all stakeholders' day-to-day lives and objectives.

The most significant point about the strategy is that it will not have a huge impact if it is not based on actual substance: actual changes and reforms as a result of the strategy. Once the root of the problem has been detected, it must first be fixed before any action to promote a better image can be taken because a new image must be based on truth in order to eventually change people's attitudes. People will not be convinced that the situation is different if, in their experience, it is not. This will be further discussed further down.

Strategically speaking, Anholt further suggests coupling the new branding strategy with 'symbolic actions' (2010, p. 13). Symbolic actions can take countless forms, from foreign aid, to legalising gay marriage, even to a particularly symbolic building. These actions are inherently communicative, they speak for themselves, they speak for the country and they can get a lot of attention. One symbolic action on its own might not make a big difference, but if they reoccur every so often they will eventually enhance a country's image and reputation.

Simon Anholt (2007, p. 32) seems to suggest that one of the pillars of country branding is innovation. 'New things', new art, new businesses, new science and intellectual property etc., create a 'buzz' around a place as these success stories are published about in the media. In turn, the above will set a mood for people to open up towards the place and, if applicable, change their minds about it. In other words, real change in image is earned slowly through real change rather than created instantly through superficial and unsubstantial marketing and PR campaign.

Getting attention

The next challenge is then to get the audiences' attention. There simply is no recipe for this – different techniques will work for different audiences. One thing to keep in mind, however, is that the world does not need more information being passively fed to it – there is too much of it already and therefore it is difficult to catch the public's attention. To simply tell the world that things are improving in the relevant sectors of the Greek economy, for instance, would not be very compelling. The world needs something powerful and stimulating (Anholt, 2007, p. 65). As will be discussed in the analysis, this is perhaps one of the aspects with which gamification can help: as an attention-grabbing and engaging tool.

Communicating the strategy (image)

It is crucial to highlight once more that marketing and communication efforts alone are futile if they do not have any real substance to bring across. Country branding, although it contains the word 'branding', is not a matter of communication but of policies and strategy. Those policies and strategy need to be in place before anyone can be convinced to change their attitude.

As mentioned previously, providing more information is not the way to solve an image problem. People will not be interested in being stuffed with more facts than they already are. The public needs to be stimulated to learn about the place, if there is going to be any hope of changing its image. This is where marketing (and other communication disciplines) come into play: *'marketing is a kind of adult education; it's the way in which people continue to be persuaded to acquire new information after they have reached adulthood and can no longer be stuffed with it against their will'* (Anholt, 2007, p. 65).

This effort requires energy, imagination and commitment. Documents and fancy multi-media means might provide support but fall short in building the new image by themselves. Anholt (2007, p. 85) suggests that an unbeatable method to spread the good word is to pick a *'small team of champions'*, driven individuals with passion, and send them out to disperse their enthusiasm about the country.

Anholt adds that a country's marketing/communication campaign will have to be followed up with some sort of behaviour, perhaps a symbolic action to reinforce the campaign and to start convincing the audience that it is based on truth, hence is legitimate.

Finally, it is important to keep measuring the effects of the branding effort. Again, this is where a tool like gamification might come in handy, but more about this in chapter four.

After seeing what the steps and processes are involved in country branding, it might be useful to get an idea of what successful country brands are like. Simon Anholt, who developed the Nation Brands Index (2007, p. 43-62), comes to the conclusion that the countries with the most powerful brands generally have the following characteristics: they are a *'stable, liberal democratic Western state with a tendency*

to neutrality, often producing several well-known branded products and a strong international presence in the media (either through entertainment and culture or through attractive tourist promotion)'.

He goes on to add that countries in the mainstream of global politics have a harder time achieving better Nation Brand Indices as they are subject to more scrutiny, usually the result of unpopular foreign policies highlighted in the media. That is the situation Greece needs to leave behind and focus more towards reaching a better, more desired image.

e. Tools of country branding

It has been repeated several times that country branding is primarily a strategic activity. The strategy is the most crucial part and the most time-consuming part. What tools will be used to communicate it is a more insignificant, secondary issue. As mentioned above, no effort to improve image can be superficial – change is a precondition for any marketing, branding and PR activity involved. This statement lies at the very core of the graduation assignment: none of the recommendations to be yielded from this research are aimed at being applied without being based on a certain truth. For the sake of making the matter more concrete, however, a few examples of how a country can promote a new image will be pointed out below.

Media-wise, a quick look on the Internet will clearly indicate that countries have visual identities, websites, videos, advertisements, posters, social media pages of all kinds, and so on, much like commercial brands. There is definitely a lot of visual and audio-visual material countries can create to promote themselves, as can be seen in the example in figure 12 using Peru.



Figure 12: Examples of media in country branding (Country brand Peru, 2012)

The creation of a new logo, video and slogan are hardly tools for effective country branding, however, as opposed to product branding. Anholt (2007, p. 15-18) suggests that disciplines such as marketing and branding on an abstract level be used on an abstract level in this context: using principles of psychology, culture and society and harness the power of that knowledge to 'sell the truth' (the new identity and the desired image) and to '*persuade large numbers of people to change their*

minds about things'. Hence, let's take a look at some slightly more abstract tools to promote a country image.

Tourism promotion goes hand-in-hand with communicating an image: it is a legitimate way of showing people what a place looks like, who lives there, what its population does and produces, the culture, etc. A favourable impression of these things are already a good step towards the improvement as people then become more inclined to visit (as mentioned earlier first-hand experience is extremely effective in changing perception), buy the country's products, be interested in its cultural production, recommend it to others, even invest in the place, etc. (Anholt, 2007, p. 88-89).

Commercial brands are another important channel of communication. The ways in which they present themselves in foreign markets reflect on the country too, products are in a way country 'ambassadors'. If successful brands abroad acknowledge their country of origin openly, this could have a tremendous effect on the nation's image (Anholt, 2007, p. 91-95).

Culture itself speaks volumes when it comes to a country's image and is an element completely unique to its origin. What a place is all about is directly projected in its cinema, literature, music and art, culture can be seen as 'the personality' of a place. More importantly, culture works greatly in communicating image because people react to cultural messages with less suspicion than they do to commercial ones (Anholt, 2007, p. 100). Communicating through culture does, however, take much longer time. Yet like tourism promotion, culture can attract an audience to the place.

Sports events are a powerful communicator (Anholt, 2007, p. 103). The world-wide anticipation of the event, such as the Olympic Games, creates a hype around the host country. This is an excellent opportunity for the host country to show what it stands for in more than sports.

'People are the only efficient and cost-effective advertising medium for reach large numbers of other people' (p. 103). Besides the team of champions mentioned previously, the population itself needs to 'sell' the country – this truly is the most powerful form of marketing, and perhaps a medium Greece should aim for.

f. Potential problems of country branding

Branding a country is a vast project, with several potential issues. Changing people's existing attitudes towards the place, especially people in other countries, is no easy task. More specifically, people like to hold on to stereotypes they have about a certain place and its people, whether they are close to reality or not. Why should they change their current attitudes and stereotypes? That is the issue of 'relevance'. If it does not affect their lives directly, individuals might not be open to the change. This leads to the fact that it could take a very long time to change a place's image (Anholt, 2007, p. 27).

On the issue of time, it is hard to know when the image in people's minds will have changed. Even if the strategy, the substance and the symbolic actions are in place and are being communicated creatively and effectively, images, reputations and attitudes need time to shift. People need time to see/experience the changes before they can truly be convinced of their existence (Anholt, 2010, p. 33), which also makes it hard to know at what point it is wise to measure the effects of the campaign.

Closely related to how long it will take for a new image to be widely established, is the question of timing the campaign itself: when are people ready to accept a new image? Through what means can they be persuaded? Another communication issue is that of control: a country does not have as much control over its image through the media as a company does, for example (Anholt, 2010, p.5).

On the potential internal problems side, we have established that coming up with and implementing a new strategy for a country's image is a collaborative process. What happens if the parties involved simply cannot come to an agreement, or if there is tension amongst the group? For instance, the government and the public sector mostly run very differently: decisions are made differently, working styles are different, etc. This is bound to stir up a little upheaval (Anholt, 2010, p. 118).

Besides the way they run, the different sectors also have different goals. The private sector, for instance, is primarily driven by profit, not the country's image. So, perhaps, if they do not feel that their profit margins have something to gain from the project, they might not be motivated enough to get involved. In other words, it might be difficult to establish a 'shared purpose' between all internal stakeholders (Anholt, 2007, p. 81-83).

On the point of motivation, country branding is a colossal effort and requires commitment and enthusiasm. Enthusiasm cannot be imposed and if it is not present the project might fail. Stakeholders need to want to participate, stay committed and do a great job.

Finally, in relation to the government's involvement in the process: what happens if a newly elected government has a completely different idea for the image? Constantly altering an image also creates a bad image.

2.2 Attitude

This section will serve as a linking pin between the two main concepts of this assignment, namely country branding and gamification. Its purpose is to demonstrate that what we in communication refer to as 'country image' – which is what needs to change – essentially translates into a matter of 'attitude' in psychology. Once this has been established, it is possible to carry on with a discussion on whether this type of attitude can be changed with gamification, which is the purpose of this research.

2.2.1 Definition of attitude

Oskamp and Shultz (2005, p. 9) define attitude as '*a predisposition to respond in a favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to a given attitude object*'. They elaborate by explaining that an 'attitude object' could be anything from people, things, places, ideas, etc. To complicate matters, attitudes can be explicit or implicit: the first is an attitude which is '*open to introspection and under conscious control*' and can be expressed, whereas the second is '*not necessarily available for introspection or control*' and an individual might not even be aware of it (p. 44, 67). Implicit attitude might be equally important to explicit, if not more important, due to being more deeply rooted in a person's natural predispositions. However, this research is concerned with 'explicit attitude' which people are aware of and can express, due to the fact that the second type is much harder, if not impossible, to measure as will mentioned in sub-section 2.2.3.

It is important to make the distinction between 'attitude' and 'behaviour', as it can happen that the discrepancy is unclear. Behaviour involves an action, it is something a person does. Attitude, on the other hand, is simply the predisposition for behaving a certain way, it is what a person thinks/feels about a given object. For instance, if someone has a positive attitude towards a person or place, they will behave positively towards it (be friendly towards the person or visit the place). The inverse might not always be true (negative attitude would lead to negative behaviour), as we are not always unfriendly towards people we do not like for instance. This goes to show that there is a peculiar dynamic between the two notions and there are many factors involved that influence them. Either way, the point is that they are two (interrelated but) separate notions, and this assignment focuses on attitude rather than behaviour because the point is to get people to have a positive image about Greece (attitude) rather than carry out an action (visit, etc. - behaviour).

Oskamp and Schultz discuss a term that is more specific and hence more relevant to this research, that of 'international attitude'. They define it as '*people's attitudes towards different nations and their images of foreign peoples*' (Oskamp & Schultz, 2005, p. 345). This definition in itself consolidates the fact that changing people's image of a place, for instance Greece, is a matter of changing *attitude* as opposed to behaviour.

2.2.2 Changing attitude

This sub-section will not focus on how to change an individual's attitude in general. Oskamp and Schultz (2005, p. 345-374) make reference to 'international attitudes', as mentioned and defined in the previous section. Since this type of attitudes is more relevant to the topic at hand, greater importance lies with the factors influencing international attitudes. The authors reveal five main influencers.

Contact with foreigners and **personal experiences** go hand in hand as the former is a personal experience in itself. Travelling abroad and coming into contact with locals can definitely influence one's attitude towards a country. However, it is important to note that it can influence it in either direction – it can become more positive or more negative depending on the experience.

Events related to international affairs or the economy that receive a lot of media coverage can influence people's international attitude – the Greek economic crisis is an example of this type of event, and the coverage and its tremendous effect were presented in section 2.1 of this chapter.

There are two types of events that can have an impact on attitude: spectacular events, really big events that can have a big influence on their own, or 'cumulative events', which are stretched over a longer period of time.

Education and persuasion can help sway people's international attitudes under certain conditions. By learning about and discussing different countries, cultures and their people, it is likely that individuals will form a certain attitude towards them depending on what they learn and how much of it appeals to them.

Government or media programmes play a major role in forming public opinion and international attitudes. Placing more or less attention on certain policies, developments or events (agenda setting) can make all the difference. For example, if only negative stories about a country are reported on and rarely any positive ones, people will be more inclined to have a negative attitude towards that place.

Oskamp and Schultz do point out that changing international attitudes can be subject to resistance, as attitudes (in general) tend to be fairly stable. How stable they are depends on their 'strength', which can be determined in a variety of ways such as the number of associated beliefs and feelings one holds for the object, how much vested interest one has towards it, its relevance to the holder, etc. (Oskamp & Schultz, 2005, p. 99). The less important or the newer an attitude is to the holder, the easier it is to fluctuate (p. 9). Hence, altering international attitudes might face some resistance but is not an entirely impossible task considering the five factors above, as well as more factors that will be discussed in chapter four.

2.2.3 Measuring attitude

Generally, most research on attitude is concerned with the measurement of explicit attitude. As mentioned previously, people are often not fully aware of their implicit attitudes and cannot express them, which makes them very challenging to study. Thus, implicit attitudes are seldom measured. Certain methods do exist, for example physiological tests such as the polygraph (Oskamp & Schultz, 2005, p. 67-71), yet they are often unreliable and would certainly not be part of this research on attitudes towards Greece and therefore not further discussed.

Measurements for explicit attitude, on the other hand, are often carried out and mostly involve interview questions and/or various scaling techniques (Oskamp & Schultz, 2005, p. 44-60). The most widely used scale is the Likert scale, whereby respondents are presented with a statement and can answer on a five-point scale, for instance 1. Strongly agree, 2. Agree, 3. Neutral/undecided, 4. Disagree/, 5. Strongly disagree.

At this point, going deeper into the measurement of attitude will be omitted since pinning down the best way to measure attitude for this research would have to go hand in hand with the measurement of the effects of the potential gamified system at hand (more on this issue follows in section 2.3). Also, some essential implementation

details would have to be taken into consideration, such as what platform would be used and how the objective would be broken down into measurable attitude changes, etc. The measurement at this point would, presumably, be mainly concerned with the effects of the gamified system that are relevant to the desired attitude change of the objective, but perhaps also the general economic, social and political consequences of this effort.

2.2.4 Final notes on attitude

One question that remains to be answered on the matter of attitude, in relation to the general topic of this assignment, is whether it can be influenced by games (gamification, more specifically). Since no academic literature or research was found on this particular aspect, as literature focuses more on how gamification can alter behaviour rather than attitude, this query is further developed in the chapter four of this study. Conclusions are drawn from case studies and the interviewees' responses.

However, a few additional related points will be addressed below. The first is concerned with the importance of empathy in attitude change, particularly towards people. Feeling empathy involves taking on a different perspective, particularly that of someone in a difficult situation, and viewing that situation as it might be affecting the person in question (Batson et al, 1997, p. 105).

Batson et al (1997) came to the conclusion that inducing empathy for people of a stigmatised group leads to more positive attitudes towards the entire group. They defined 'stigmatised group' as '*a racial or cultural minority, people with some social stigma, disability or disease*' (2010, p. 105). As established earlier, some of the current associations with Greece, therefore the Greeks, are untrustworthiness, irresponsibility, corruption, etc. These are negative associations, hence could be viewed as a kind of social stigma. They also suggested that an effective way of inducing empathy is role-play or simulation experiences, which is a significant point relating to games and attitude change (Batson et al, 1997, p. 105).

Another powerful way to create feelings of empathy is humour. Hampes' study (2010) suggests a positive correlation between humour and empathy, particularly 'affiliative' and 'self-enhancing' humour. The first type is involves the use of humour (jokes, wittiness, being funny) to entertain and establish a relationship with others.

The second type is a humorous outlook on life overall, even in unusual or stressful situations (Hampes, 2010, p. 35-36). These points will be further discussed in chapter four.

2.3 Gamification

After extensively presenting the first pillar of this research, image and country branding, and after clarifying the notion of ‘attitude’, comes the second pillar: gamification. The section starts with some basics: what are games, why do we play them and who plays them. These first sub-sections serves to gain a better understanding of these notions, as they are strongly related to understanding gamification.

After discussing the more general concepts of games and play, a detailed explanation of gamification follows: what it is, how it works, how we can use it, what its benefits and risks are. Again, the purpose is to fully comprehend the ins and outs of gamification, in order to make more sensible connections and come up with more solid conclusions in the analysis and conclusions chapter and to generate more sensible advice at the end of this research.

2.3.1 What are games?

The terms ‘game’ and ‘gamification’ might not be synonymous, but the latter clearly derives from the first, making it imperative to have a good grasp of both. So what are games?

There are millions of games out there in all shapes and forms, involving various game elements and technologies. The list varies immensely, from online games, multi-player video games, social games, board games, etc. There are even different game genres - adventure, crime, and so forth. However, game designer Jane McGonigal lays out the four common characteristics of all games, or ‘defining traits’ as she puts it (2011, p. 20-21).

Every game has a *goal*, people play to eventually achieve a specific outcome. They do so while following certain *rules* which limit the ways in which they can reach the goal. There is a *feedback system* in place to let players know how they are doing and how close they are to reaching the goal – feedback keeps players motivated and can take various forms, such as levels, a score, points, etc. Finally, *voluntary participation* is another requirement and ensures that players are aware of the goal, the rules and the feedback system.

2.3.2 Who plays

As Aaron Dignan (2011, p. 15) put it, 'everybody's playing'! Games are not limited to certain demographics, as many used to think. There are games out there for everyone. To provide a fairly simplistic example, social game FarmVille has not only attracted youngsters over the years, but also their parents (Dignan, 2011, p. 17). The point is that there are now different types of games for virtually any target group.

To build on the point that there are different types of games, there are also different types of players. In 1996, Richard Bartle divided them into four categories (as found in Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011, p. 21-23). These are:

Explorers: This group of players likes to discover new things: new areas and new possibilities within the game. Their main objective within the game is the experience itself.

Achievers: Achievers like to play in order to succeed and they enjoy the sense of elevated status from it. They are competitive and losing might make them uninterested in a game.

Socialisers: This type enjoys games for mostly social reasons, winning the game is less of a priority than the social interaction itself. Social games are the most enduring type throughout history.

Socialisers is by far the biggest of the four categories, as many as 75% of people are mostly of this type. What we also know about social gamers is that in 2010, only 6% of roughly 100 million social gamers were under 21 (the average age was 43), there were more female social gamers than male and 41% of them had full-time jobs (Dignan, 2011, p. 17).

Killers: This is the smallest of the groups. Like achievers, killers highly enjoy success and status but they are also destructive. They thrive not only on their own success but also on other people's failure and they like to be admired.

It must be added, that in reality these player types are not mutually exclusive – every player is a bit more or a bit less of each type. Zichermann and Cunningham (2011, p. 23) suggest that the average person is about 80% socialiser, 50% explorer, 40% achiever and 20% killer.

Many experts have since added other, more specific player types, so the total could in fact go up to about 16 (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011, p. 21). However, as Zichermann and Cunningham point out, these are the ‘stickiest’ and a good list for the purpose of this research – very detailed descriptions of player types are not essential at this point as this study is not concerned with the implementation of gamification (what specific types of games would suit a very specific type of group/players). For now, what is most important to keep in mind is that the biggest category of players is socialisers, a point that will come up again in the analysis chapter.

As it is clear, we do not all like to play in exactly the same ways. In fact, even culture might have an impact on our preferences. Different regions of the world have varied inclinations when it comes to playing games. Europe, which amounts to 34% of the world market of game consumers, has its own specific traits according to Óliver Pérez Latorre (2013). He found, for instance, that games developed in Europe often have a realistic touch or a provocative humoristic touch and often incorporate social criticism. European designers are particularly strong at developing racing games, strategy games and ‘open world’ games (a type of game where the player is free to roam around and progressively discover and explore a world), which could potentially also reflect the likings of European players.

2.3.3 Why we play games

This sub-section, although still related to ‘games’, starts to shed some light on why gamification has such powerful potential.

Homo ludens, loosely translated as ‘playful man’, is Dutch historian and cultural theorist Johan Huizinga’s (1949) idea that play is in the nature of human beings. He claims that there are many complex reasons why this is the case and clarifies that it consists of more than just physiological and/or psychological factors (1949, p. 1).

‘Play is older than culture’, is Huizinga’s opening line in ‘Homo ludens’ (1949). It has emerged from human nature and is something we have been familiar with since forever. Biologically speaking, play is an innate need – whether that need relates to competition, relaxation, imitation or the release of energy. Play has an aesthetic quality, he says, and play is fun and irrational. Play has an ability to absorb an

individual beyond explanation and serves a very social purpose. It helps bond with peers and helps one establish oneself as part of the community. Psychologically, we enjoy the gratification it can provide us with: a sense of fulfilment, empowerment and achievement. Finally, play is imaginative and, in a way, helps us escape reality (Huizinga, 1949, p. 1-27).

Other authors and experts provide their own lists of factors, but they all essentially come down to the same ones as those Huizinga captured. For instance, we play to achieve a sense of mastery, we can play to destress, to have fun and to socialise (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011, p. 20). Aaron Dignan (2011, p. 41-49) goes deeper into the psychological motives: games provide us with a sense of purpose, control, progress and success. They also offer a safe environment for risk-taking, problem-solving, facing fears and experiencing an ideal world.

Jane McGonigal (2011, p. 28) even goes as far as to suggest that '*gameplay is the direct opposite of depression*'. She defines depression as '*a pessimistic sense of inadequacy and a despondent lack of activity*'. McGonigal then adds that games are, in fact, the exact opposite of this definition since their emotional outcome is essentially '*an optimistic sense of our own capabilities and an invigorating rush of activity*' (2011, p. 28).

Overall, games seem to have a great power over us, offering us as a way to satisfy a multitude of needs.

2.3.4 Gamification defined

Most sources will provide a definition of gamification along the lines of the following: '*the use of game thinking and game mechanics to engage people (and solve problems)*' (Zichermann & Linder, 2013, p. 6). The problem-solving part has been put in brackets as that is not always the purpose gamification, sometimes it can be to drive certain behaviours or, like in this case, to change attitudes. Other definitions of the concept are more narrowed down and better suited for specific purposes or contexts, yet this general definition works well for this research.

To give a more concrete outlook on gamification, regardless of the context it is in or its specific purpose, it often takes the shape of a digital platform such as a website or

a mobile app. This has huge advantages in terms of measurement, as will be brought up later in this section.

Moreover, it is important to spell out another term that will be used in this section.

'Gamified system' will be used to pertain to the, at this point abstract, form of gamification. As mentioned above, if the shape of gamification is a website, 'gamified system' is the more non-concrete way of referring to it since this section is theoretical and does not involve a particular form of gamification.

a. Applications of gamification

Various fields have used gamification to achieve a wide array of goals – from corporate to personal to medical achievements. With just one look at gamification-related websites, such as Gamification Wiki (www.badgeville.org) or websites of gamification consultancies, such as Enterprise Gamification (www.enterprise-gamification.com), one can immediately see examples of gamification used in a myriad of ways: in marketing and branding, in entertainment, in education, in social media, workplace productivity, IT, training, project management, art... The list could go on.

The essence is that gamification is just a tool, there is no context inherently attached to it. Therefore, it can be used in an indefinite number of ways. The challenge is to make it successful, rather than to make it applicable to a certain field. It is this unlimited nature of gamification that resulted in this research setting off to relate it to the field of country branding.

b. Popular gamification elements

Different elements work best to achieve different goals. Hence the right tools can only be pinned down after the aim of a particular gamified system is very clear, as will be illustrated below in the next sub-section. For now, however, pointing out a few popular gamification components will still help provide context in the explanation of the concept of gamification.

The most widely used elements are what Werbach and Hunter (2012, p. 71-77) refer to as PBLs: points, badges and leaderboards. Points can be effective in (extrinsically) motivating people because they like to collect them but also because they can show them off in a competitive game. Points can play several roles, such as

keeping score, determining a win, providing feedback and a sense of progress as well as data for the game designer (measurement).

Badges, on the other hand, are a more visual representation of an achievement. Sometimes badges represent reaching a certain level or completing a particular activity. Badges can provide the player with a goal, hence boosting motivation, they can serve as an illustration of status or reputation and they can offer a sense of identity within a group.

Finally, leaderboards are a demonstration of where one stands in comparison to others in a gamified system, hence they provide a more social context. They can be equally motivating as they can be demotivating, however – if one is close to the top, it might push them to go those steps further and climb the rankings, but if one is close to the bottom they are likely to give up.

As engaging as PBLs can be in some gamified systems, they are definitely not fit for all projects. In fact, despite having the potential to be quite powerful, they are quite limited and perhaps just a rudimentary form of gamification. Also, it is not suggested that PBLs would be effective in the case involved in this assignment, quite the opposite in fact.

c. Gamification design framework

Various experts have outlined different design processes for gamification. However, the one that seems best suited for this case is gamification expert and lecturer Kevin Werbach's framework (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 86-101). Although, as mentioned earlier in this research, the implementation of gamification is outside of its scope it is still useful to keep the relevant steps in mind for potentially gamifying the improvement of Greece's image.

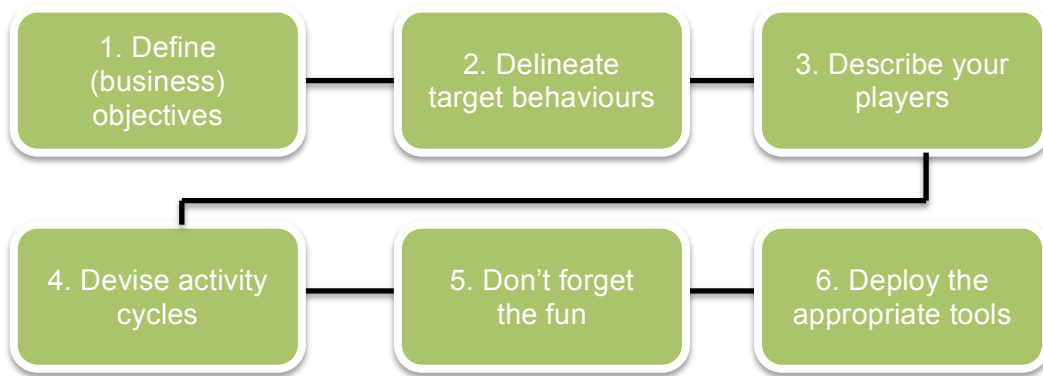


Figure 13: Werbach's game design framework (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 86)

Define (business) objectives: The first step is the most critical step of the process and its main purpose is to answer the question of 'why are we gamifying?'. It is crucial to have a thorough understanding of the goal that is to be achieved with the gamified system. This objective must be concrete, for instance 'increase customer retention' as opposed to 'increase profits'. Setting a clear objective keeps the rest of the design process focused on what is important. Without an objective, a gamified system is moot – who would like to engage with an audience simply for the sake of engaging? Engagement immanently comes with underlying intentions.

Delineate target behaviours: What is it that you want your players to do? What behaviours is your gamified system supposed to encourage and how do these relate to your defined objective (step 1)? The target behaviours, just like the overall objective, should also be specific but not limited to one target behaviour – players should have various options to choose from in how to engage with the gamified system.

At this stage, it is also best to consider how the desired behaviours will be measured. For instance, if the behaviour is 'share information about the campaign on social media', defining the social media metrics that will be used to measure the effectiveness of the gamification effort will go hand in hand.

Describe your players: Who is the gamified system for? In other words, a target group needs to be defined along with the objective (step 1). This target group then translates into 'players' in this step. What kind of players are they? What motivates and demotivates this type to stay engaged with the gamified system?

Segmenting the group will also be important so that the gamification platform appeals to as many sub-groups as possible. 'The best games and gamified systems have something to offer each category', state Werbach and Hunter (2012, p. 93). The authors also suggest that 'player modelling' is a way to guide the design process: devising various personas (or 'avatars' in their virtual form) and test them with members of the target group – which do they relate most to? This will provide a deeper understanding of how to implement the gamified system.

Devise activity cycles: Games are not always linear, 'step 1 → step 2 → step 3 → completion', as Werbach and Hunter put it (2012, p. 94). Each step may involve several activities, off of which more activities branch off. There are two kinds of activity cycles: engagement loops and progression stairs. In principle, the first describes what the players are doing and what the gamified system's feedback on the player's actions so far is (e.g. points – more points mean that you are doing the right thing). Feedback is essential in keeping players motivated to play. However, receiving the same feedback for the same actions is not particularly motivating, which is why progression stairs are also necessary. Progressions stairs essentially mean that the challenges of the games are shifting and the players have to face new or harder tasks, which keep them interested in playing.

Don't forget the fun: Fun is what keeps players coming back to a game, therefore it is a very significant element to consider. Fun might be hard to define, but Werbach and Hunter (2012, p. 98) suggest asking the following questions: Would players participate in the game voluntarily? If there were not any extrinsic rewards, would they still be likely to play? Ultimately, the very best way to determine whether a gamified system is fun or not is by testing it during the design process and refining it if necessary.

As there are different types of games and players, there are also different types of fun. Nicole Lazzaro (2004) proposes the following four:

Hard fun: This type of fun involves solving puzzles or problems, facing challenges or strategic thinking.

Easy fun: This type of fun makes players experience feelings of wonder, mystery, intrigue, curiosity, etc., through an exciting activity or adventure.

Altered states: In this type of fun players try out new experiences or personas and enjoy the excitement or relief from their own thoughts and emotions.

The people factor: This type of fun describes the enjoyment that comes from the social factor of games: competition, bonding, teamwork, interaction, etc.

Deploy the appropriate tools: The final step is the actual implementation stage. It outlines what exactly the gamified system will look like, what the game elements involved are and what platforms the system will be used on (mobile, computer, etc.).

It is clear that a lot needs to be well understood before specific game elements even come into the process. It would not be beneficial to employ the latest technology and game elements if they do not actually serve a purpose: fulfilling the objective of the gamified system.

d. Psychology behind gamification

This is the most crucial sub-section related to gamification, as it will finally illuminate what makes gamification deliver results.

Aaron Dignan, observes that we, as people, are often faced with some of the following issues: lack of interesting or challenging opportunities, problems with motivation or following through with tasks, various other factors that prevent us from fulfilling our potential, or simply boredom (2011, p. 1-2). He makes note of two common symptoms, which he names 'lack of volition' and 'lack of faculty'.

The first describes a state in which an individual does not show the genuine will to do something, lacking the internal drive and motivation, manifesting no sense of being proactive or ambitious. People with this symptom do not understand the value of completing the task at hand, and in fact feel disinterested and disconnected from it.

Lack of faculty, on the other hand, conveys a disbelief in having the skills and/or tools to handle a challenge or pursue a goal. Individuals with this symptom might tell themselves it is too hard to achieve the goal or do not know how to go about reaching it. This causes anxiety and, ultimately, despair.

Dignan (2001, p. 3) adds that the solution to these problems is, in fact, simple. There is one medium that *'makes the process of learning rewarding, enables deep engagement, provides a sense of autonomy and asks us to be heroes in our own stories'*: games.

Games are very powerful and strong at motivating humans and can improve our health as well as the way we learn and live, according to Zichermann and Cunningham (2011, p. 16). Motivation can be either intrinsic or extrinsic. Extrinsic motivation is *'external to the activity and not an inherent part of it'*, and often involves doing something for a reward or compensation, for instance (Lahey, 2009, p.372).

Intrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is apparent when individuals are *'motivated by the inherent nature of the activity, their pleasure of mastering something new, or the natural consequences of the activity'* (Lahey, 2009, p.372). Intrinsic motivation is the driving force when we complete a task or activity because of how it makes us feel about ourselves, for instance gives us a sense of achievement.

Self-determination theory (Rigby & Ryan, 2007, p. 10-15) suggests that there are three main intrinsic motivators that can get players to keep returning to the game and sustaining long-term engagement. The first is competence and involves a sense of achieving mastery within the game and being able to overcome challenges more easily. The second intrinsic motivator is autonomy and relates to having the feeling of being free to make choices and create own experiences within the game. The third component of this theory is relatedness, which is the more social component relating to the love for connecting with other people (players) in an authentic and supportive manner. The idea is that the more and the longer these three motivators are satisfied, the more and the longer players will stay engaged.

Because intrinsic motivation can be exhilarating, many experts say that the best way to keep players interested is by tapping into this type of motivation instead of the extrinsic type. This leads us to 'the flow'.

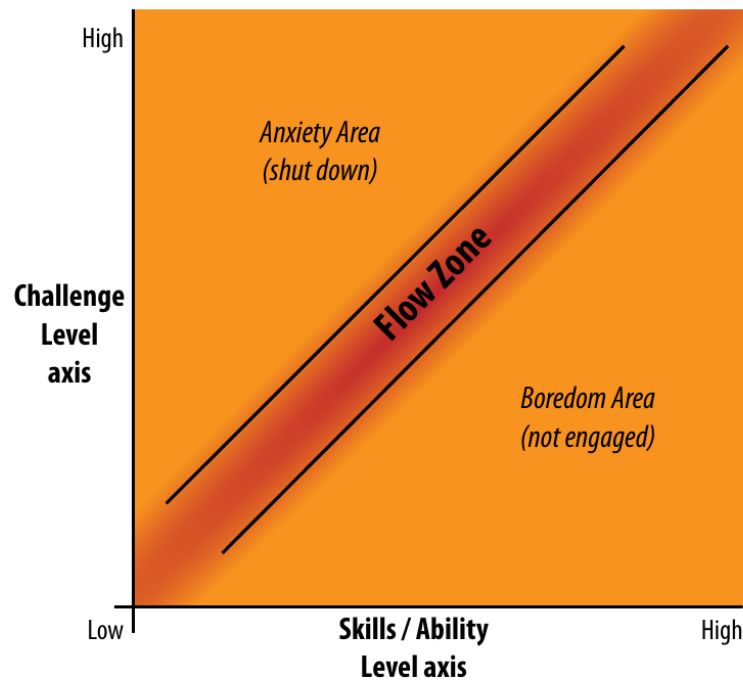


Figure 14: Csikszentmihalyi's state of flow (as found in Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011, p. 18)

Successful games keep us in what psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi called the 'flow zone' – *'the feeling of ultimate intrinsic motivation'* (Werbach & Hunter, 2011, p. 58). Dignan (2011, p. 6-7) defines it as a *'state of optimal experience when our skills are continually in balance with the challenges we face'*. Essentially, what happens in the flow zone is that players are neither too frustrated by not being able to fulfil the task or too bored by the task being too easy, and this leads them to feel enjoyment, loss of time, etc. In other words, they are so engaged with the experience at hand that they may well lose track of what is going on around them and they feel deeply satisfied with themselves. Ultimately, this is the power of games: a deep sense of engagement.

e. Successful gamification and its benefits

There is no magic recipe for successful gamification and success is entirely dependent on the specific goal and design of a gamified system. As mentioned above, however, successful gamification should keep its users in their flow zone. Pushing the challenge further ahead bit by bit will keep users interested and will, hence, more likely contribute towards the entity that created the gamified system to reach its desired objective.

In terms of successful gamification, Werbach and Hunter (2012, p. 64-66) also highlight feedback as a major factor for success, besides motivation. Feedback can make or break the gamified system: players like to know if they are doing well or not, and they will alter their behaviour to play more successfully depending on the feedback. Moreover, giving feedback unexpectedly (e.g. a reward for playing very well) can deeply satisfy a player and increase their intrinsic motivation.

Zichermann and Linder (2013, p.175-189) offer a few more tips for successful gamification, such as keeping the content fresh, making it personal (according to the interests of the player type/ target group) and creating continuous learning opportunities.

The benefits of gamification also depend on each different case and its context. In marketing, for example, some of the major benefits are gamification's ability to:

- engage audiences (whether internal, such as employees, or external, such as customers)
- satisfy audiences (fun)
- 'cut through the noise' (get people's attention)
- drive innovation
- increase revenue (as a result of engaging customers), (Zichermann & Linder, 2013, p. 18).

The common benefit it provides no matter what the context of its use is engagement and its ability to motivate, as analysed in the previous sub-section.

f. Measuring the effects of a gamified system

What specific analytics will measure the success of a gamified system are entirely dependent on the system's particular form and objective. For example, the effects of the gamification of a small website will be measured using different tools than a much larger gamified marketing campaign. Generally, however, most gamification efforts will involve some kind of digital platform, which means that they run on software. You can use software algorithms to yield quantifiable results, hence measure the effect of a gamified system. Online activities can be tracked and measured, and there are companies that specialise in collecting this data and analysing it (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 91).

Bringing up specific tools or analytics in this theoretical framework would be moot since, as discussed several times, implementation is not the concern of this research. Doing so would, in fact, even be impossible as this study also does not aim to set target behaviours either. As a result, what exactly should be measured is unknown, making it impossible to recommend tools.

f. Potential risks involved in gamification

Defining successful gamification might be rather complex, but it is easier to point out some of the pitfalls to avoid. For instance, one of the biggest potential failures is what Werbach and Hunter (2012, p. 105) named 'pointsification', which involves a shallow focus on rewards rather than a meaningful interaction with the player. Simply adding the ability to collect of points by carrying out certain tasks, for example, is highly unlikely to keep people's interest for long and will, therefore, eventually fail as a gamified system. A meaningless reward system can go as far as to demotivate players, in fact, as can making players perform a repetitive or boring tasks several times in order to progress in the game (Dignan, 2011, p. 64-67).

There might also be legal issues to consider, but these will vary depending on the case and the form of the gamified system. For example, there might be intellectual property, labour and/or advertising laws to keep in mind. Some common legal issues to consider relate to social media, such as information about users/players. This brings us to the risk involving privacy – a gamified system has the potential to gather a lot of information. As mentioned earlier, information about the player can be tracked and collected through a gamified system – which is good for measuring the system, but could be risky in terms of privacy. The gamified system should provide players with information on how data will be handled in a privacy policy and should touch upon other legal issues in a terms and conditions agreement (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p. 108-110).

Some risks that might be involved in using gamification as a tool for country branding will be discussed in chapter four, when the two will finally be analysed in unison.

All relevant theories and notions to this research have been laid out in the three sections of this chapter. The point was to gain and provide a thorough understanding of the concepts, as many of them will come up again in the analysis chapter, where they will actually be brought together to answer the research question of this assignment: *can gamification be a successful tool for country branding?*

3. Methodology

The theoretical and exploratory nature of this research as well as the absence of an established link between the two main concepts in the past, gamification and country branding, call for a deep understanding of the two for an interpretation of whether they can be combined to be possible. The best methods to acquire this type of comprehension on a subject are qualitative research methods. Hence all the research methods used and explained below are qualitative ones.

Two important notions that need to be touched upon are those of 'reliability' and 'validity'. The first describes a situation where carrying out the same research several times repeatedly yields consistent data (Gilbert, 2008, p. 512). The second, on the other hand, describes data that accurately measures what the research set out to measure (Gilbert, 2008, p. 515). It is important to keep these two in mind, as they are a risk that every research might run into. In this case, for instance, they could be relevant in the interviewing process, which will be touched upon in the appropriate section below.

3.1 Communication research

Nel Verhoeven suggests a research method she refers to as 'communication research' (2008, p. 126-130). She suggests that communication research involves various data collection approaches and is, thus, quite broad. She explains that 'anything that is researched in the area of communication can be lumped together this way' (2008, p. 127). Examples she brings up as suitable for 'communication research' are, for instance, the study of the image of a company or research into the effectiveness of communication material.

Since this assignment is concerned with the image of a country and research on its current status was carried out through the literature review, it was found to be a research method worth mentioning, perhaps not as a research *method* but as a *type* of research.

It is also noteworthy that, besides the communication issues at hand, this research fundamentally stems from an economic and political problem. Consequently, general effects relating to politics, the economy and society could not be neglected and are part of this study.

3.2 Literature review

The literature review was the most extensive part of this study, which according to Verhoeven can be the main part of a research design (2008, p. 120). It served to find information about the concepts involved in the topic, to see what is already known about them and to get a better grasp of them, which is the very purpose of literature research (Verhoeven, 2008, p. 120).

The literature review, which formed the theoretical framework chapter (chapter two), is the basis of the analysis to follow but also made clear what information was lacking. This knowledge could then be used to look for case studies and to form interview questions to fill in the gaps, as will be expressed again in later sections of this chapter.

The sources used vary greatly: from theoretical text books on marketing, psychology, country branding, gamification, etc., to magazine articles and academic journals or reports, videos of relevant conferences, and so forth. All sources were academic in nature or from trustworthy media publications, such as the Economist, or from professionals in the fields and are hence considered credible.

3.3 Case studies

Examples of the applied use of the concepts of gamification and country branding were reported on as supportive material, serving as 'case studies'. The research necessary to compile them was part of the literature review, so no first-hand empirical research was carried out with organisations in order to create them, as the Verhoeven's definition of a 'case study' might suggest (2008, p. 125). Therefore, however, the cases were carefully chosen in order to ensure that they add value to this research and support the ideas and analysis presented in chapter four.

What the case studies mainly had to offer to this research was filling in gaps from the literature review and making connections that were perhaps not clear in the theory. For example, textbook literature or theories on the relation between gamification and attitude were not found, yet a case study (see chapter four) provided just the right information that was necessary.

The positive side of case studies is that they allow for a lot of detail, which large samples might not easily generate. On the negative side, the results are hard to

generalise (Gilbert, 2008, p. 36). At this point, this is unimportant as the goal is not to generalise but to see what possible connections there are between the two main concepts.

3.4 Interviews

Interviews were carried out with eight gamification experts via Skype whenever possible, as the interviewees are based abroad, or via e-mail when time zone differences and the experts' limited time only allowed for this channel. Eight respondents was a good number, as there were enough varied opinions to work with on some aspects, yet there was enough overlap to draw solid conclusions on other aspects. The respondents were found through online research on influential individuals and companies or consultancies in the gamification field. On one occasion, the interview led to a kind of 'snowball effect', whereby the interviewee recommended and provided the details of another two experts.

The purpose of interviews is to collect information, especially when the perception of respondents is important or when literature is not yet available on a particular topic (Verhoeven, 2008, p. 117-118), which are the two most relevant justifications for interviews in this case.

The interviews were semi-structured, as follow-up questions were asked on occasions, especially over Skype. This makes it possible for the interviewer to probe and go into more depth with some of the input in order to gain a better understanding of some of the ideas discussed (Verhoeven, 2008, p. 119). It also gives the interviewee more room for contribution. The Skype interviews were recorded to guarantee accuracy in the references to the responses and to make sure no details were neglected. Notes were also taken but the interviews were, unfortunately, not fully transcribed due to time constraints. As far as accuracy is concerned, it is automatically in place when it comes to the written responses via e-mail as there is no need to count on memory or potentially subjective or incomplete notes from the interviewer.

Since the essence of this research is not the question of how to improve Greece's image in general but whether gamification has potential as a tool to do so, only gamification experts were consulted. They were all asked the same set of questions, besides the probing questions which were unique to each interview and were asked

in order to keep results comparable. The set was divided into three sections, namely 'Introduction', 'Gamification and attitude' and 'Gamification and changing a country's image'. The full list of questions can be found in the appendix.

The introductory questions served to establish the interviewees' expertise, hence, in a way, their credibility and to gain insight into their experience within the gamification industry. The second section related gamification to attitude and the point was to find out whether the experts believe that gamification can influence not only how people behave, as it's already plentifully proven through the use of the concept in marketing for instance, but also how people think and feel (attitude). Once the experts' opinions on this were determined, the next section looked into whether they were of the belief that gamification can change people's attitude towards a country, and why or why not. They were also asked what their thoughts were on Greece's case in particular.

In a way, the set of questions goes from general queries to increasingly focused ones in order to gradually get closer to the underlying intent of the interviews: do the experts think that gamification can impact how people think of a country, Greece to be precise?

In chapter 4, the analysis and results chapter, the interview results are presented around themes rather than completely separately under the name of each expert. Hence, when referring back to the responses, what was mainly looked for were the points of agreement between the experts but also the points they might have had different views on or provided different information on.

To go back to reliability and validity, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, issues could have come up relating to those concepts. Reliability is less important in this case, as carrying out interviews with different people is bound to yield, at least to some extent, different results. For the results to be reliable, in this sense, would mean that every interviewee would have to give the same answers to all questions. That is not the objective of interviewing, so reliability is insignificant in this case.

Validity, on the other hand, carries a lot more weight. For the results to be invalid, interviewees would have to express answers unrelated to the questions (hence, what was set out to be 'measured' was not measured accurately). On a positive note, due to the semi-structured nature of the interviews, follow up questions could be asked if the interviewer felt that the responses were off target.

3.5 Target group

Establishing a target group for a particular research problem helps narrow down the scope of that particular study and could, hence, be viewed as part of the methodology. Therefore, some points concerning target groups in this research are made below.

The choice of a particular target group for this research has purposely not been narrowed down further than European citizens, mainly in the countries where the press was especially critical of Greece and where the country's image was damaged the most, hence where they have the most negative attitudes towards Greece (UK, Germany, the Netherlands, France, etc). The most important distinction to make at this point, as was also stated in the introduction chapter, is that the research is not concentrated on governments, which would be foreign affairs, or corporations, which would call for a foreign direct investment strategy. Perhaps the results of this research could at some point be adapted to these purposes, but they are not central to this study.

A thorough understanding of a target group would be more firmly related to the actual implementation of a strategy with a gamified system. However, what this study is looking at is mostly related factors of human psychology, which are fairly universal, and general strategy for improving a country's image, which is also an abstract concept. On this level of abstractness, it would be unnatural to suddenly have a very specific group of people in mind. This study is researching compatibility between concepts and provides no concrete plans.

If this assignment was to suggest concrete tools for country branding and/or gamification, or was to do empirical research such as an experiment, focus group or survey, a target group would have been necessary. However, this study is purely theoretically exploratory and abstract – its focus lies with country branding strategy, not country branding tools, and the psychology behind gamification, not the mechanics that should be used.

For instance, we know that the majority of social game players are women, 43 years old on average, who work full time (Dignan, 2011, p. 17). Also, literature shows that the millennial generation is the most technologically literate and game-native generation there is (Zichermann & Linder, 2013, p. 66-67). Thus, ultimately, a choice

could theoretically have been made for this research based on information of this kind, but there would not have been a convincing justification for the choice. The starting point for this project is the country branding objective at hand, not various player demographics.

4. Analysis, results and conclusions

4.1 Literature review

4.1.1 Summary

What follows is not a summary of the entire theoretical framework chapter. Only the main aspects will briefly be brought up again in order to facilitate the theoretical analysis in the next sub-section, especially those aspects which allow for links concerning attitude change towards a country through gamification to be made.

Country branding is a term that indicates the process of forming the image and, ultimately, the reputation of a country – whether that image is an entirely new one or an improved version. It requires the involvement of multiple national stakeholders, particularly the government, the private sector (local businesses) and the community, who need to follow various steps in order to craft a strategy. This team needs to analyse and fully understand the image problem (causes and legitimacy) in order to be as well-equipped as possible to come up with the most suitable approach. The most captivating and motivating for the public (or audience) strategies have the following characteristics: they are creative, ownable, sharp, motivating, relevant and elemental (see p. 30-31 for explanations).

It is crucial that the country branding strategy owns up to these characteristics, as getting an audience's attention in this day and age is a major challenge. Hence, the factor of creativity is particularly important to ensure that people even care to notice the eventual communication of the strategy. Besides an energetic and imaginative communication effort, a small team of individuals with passion for the matter and who are willing to disperse their enthusiasm for the place is an unmatched way to promote the new image. The last step of the branding effort is to measure its effects.

In terms of psychology, changing the image of a country involves changing people's attitude towards that country – so to improve the image, people's attitudes need to become more positive. Achieving this might be subject to resistance but it certainly does not doom such a project. International attitudes can change, particularly through first hand experience with the place and its people, through important events that may take place there, through learning about the place and through government or media campaigns.

Gamification is a tool that can influence people's psychology, as it has a lot of potential to deeply engage and motivate individuals, both intrinsically and extrinsically. When successfully thought out and designed, it can keep people in their 'flow zone', which is their ultimate state of motivation, and this motivation and engagement can drive behaviours and change attitudes (as well be further established in the next sections).

Successful gamification provides players with feedback, keeps players interested and challenged, creates various learning opportunities and is regularly updated with fresh content. Gamification can take all shapes and sizes, yet the vast majority of people enjoy a very strong social element in their games. Gamified efforts are easy to measure as they are usually based on a digital platform.

4.1.2 Analysis

At this point, it is important to explicitly create the link between the three notions: country branding (particularly improving image), attitude and gamification. To improve a country's image among a group of people is the primary objective behind this research and it is the desired result. The question of attitude is the psychological aspect of reaching this objective – what do these people need to change in order to have a better image of the country. Gamification is the suggested tool for reaching the objective – the tool to grab people's attention, engage them, give them a new perspective on the matter and eventually change their attitude. Once again, however, it must be pointed out that several things must be in place before any of this can take effect, such as new policies in the country, etc. The new image cannot be false.

Why use gamification? Theory suggests that it is a very powerful tool for motivation and engagement, which both are things that would greatly help a country branding effort. It has been established that, even if a country has a very strong strategy, its image will not change dramatically if people are not paying attention to the effort. An effective gamified system could circumvent this problem. Once they have paid attention to the effort, they can more easily learn more about the place or view it differently in a fun way, and hopefully coming out with a more positive attitude towards it as a result.

Besides getting the attention and engagement necessary, as well as offering learning opportunities, for people to change attitudes and eventually improve their image of a place, gamification ties in with many of the factors that define a successful country branding strategy (or the communication thereof). For instance:

Creative: *the strategy needs to be surprising and memorable to increase its chances of being noticed.* Games provide infinite room for creativity. As long as they have the ‘defining traits’ of games (see p. 44), anything goes!

Ownable: *the strategy needs to be unique to the place, as well as truthful, credible and distinct.* A gamified approach will definitely be unique and distinct in a country branding context. ‘Credible’ and ‘truthful’ are most likely to depend on other factors.

Sharp: *the strategy needs to be focused and needs to tell a specific, coherent story.* Games are the pinnacle of storytelling, most games do tell a story and many even allow for everyone to make their own story out of the game.

Motivating: *the strategy needs to make clear that actual differences in the behaviours of the government, the private sector and society are in place, not just communicated as such.* Some information about how things are changing can be subtly incorporated into a game – they could even be part of the game itself, since as made clear in the theory, people are not interested in being drily fed information. If it is ‘fun’, they might be more likely to accept it.

Relevant: *the strategy needs to be a meaningful promise to the public and show how it will benefit them.* Gamification is a tool that inherently gives rewards of all kinds, hence showing an audience benefits should be an accomplishable task. Certainly, a country image would have a very different type of ‘reward’, or benefit, so this would be an issue to work out further.

Elemental: *the strategy needs to be implementable within all stakeholders’ day-to-day lives and objectives.* This is an internal factor and does not relate to the (external) audience of a potential gamified campaign, hence gamification is not as relevant for this characteristic.

Furthermore, there is a strong social element involved in country branding, attitude change and gamification. Country branding theory suggests that people who are

enthusiastic about the place are the best way to sway people's attitude, and attitude theory confirms this by clarifying that first hand experience (such as contact with people) are among the most effective methods to change people's international attitudes. We also know that the vast majority of people are of the player type 'socialisers'. All these things can tie in together: a game with a very strong social aspect could help reach the goal of changing people's attitude. The resistance attitude change can face can be lessened by the strong social character of a game. Another major advantage a gamification approach could have in country branding is in terms of measurement. As just mentioned, most players are socialisers, and with a gamified system/campaign with a strong social character, for instance with a lot of involvement with social media, it would be trivial to measure effects on these platforms with their respective analytic tools.

This section aims to give insight into how country branding and gamification could tie in together on a theoretical level. Many more points from the literature review, as well as from the case studies and interviews, are brought up in the 'conclusions' section towards the end of this chapter, which also present the opportunities, risks and other considerations involved in this combination.

4.2 Case studies

Two case studies are looked into in order to answer some of the important questions of which the answers are missing in the literature review, as explained in chapter three.

4.2.1 Foursquare

The purpose of including this case study is to fill in the gap concerning the question 'can gamification change attitude'? Although this example is not country-related, it is still important to establish this fact, as well as to address the point that, in some cases, changing attitude may not be the primary objective of a gamified system yet it might still be a natural side-effect of using it.

Foursquare's purpose is to create more occasions for users to socialise by making it easier and/or providing more opportunities to meet with friends, as well as discover new places to go to (What is Foursquare, 2014). When the user goes out somewhere they can 'check in' to that place (for example, a café). The user's location is sent as an alert to other users (friends) who can see where he/she is, making it possible for them to join spontaneously if they want. Naturally, there are game elements attached to the whole process. For example, if a user has made the most check-ins at a certain place, they become 'mayor' of that particular spot. This often comes with the advantage of enjoying free products from the place, for instance. Foursquare also gives trophies and badges for certain activities, which as noted in chapter 2 people like to collect.

The game elements involved are not the concern of this case study. What is interesting is the attitude change that this game requires, which was pointed out in one of the interviews for this study. The interviewee made the following observation:

'If someone asked me a few years ago whether I'd be telling people online where I'm going, I'd say you're stupid! Yet now everyone does it.'

Something that would a few years ago perhaps considered preposterous, is now an everyday activity for millions of people. This is an indication of a change in attitude, a very subtle one, perhaps even entirely subconscious, but a change nevertheless.

The key takeaway from Foursquare's case is that gamification may very well alter attitudes, even if that is not the primary objective of a particular gamified system.

4.2.2 Study of attitudes towards Palestinians and Israelis after game play

This case study sets out not only to reinforce the fact that games (hence gamification) can change attitude, but that it can have an effect on people's attitude towards a country and its people (international attitude).

Using the video game 'PeaceMaker', Alhabash and Wise (2012) carried out a study to test whether playing could alter 68 college students' attitudes towards Palestinians and/or Israelis. The game is a simulation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and players could either take on the role of the Palestinian president or that of the Israeli prime minister, which the researchers randomly assigned them. PeaceMaker involves decision-making for events in the game and conflict resolution in a peaceful manner. One wins by becoming a 'Nobel prize winner', meaning the player has reached a high level of understanding of both sides of the conflict and has made peaceful strategic decisions while playing.

The attitudes of the sample towards both nationalities were tested before the game play (pre-test) as well as after (post-test). The focus of the study lied with explicit attitudes since, as explained in chapter two as well as in the case, implicit attitudes are much more challenging to measure and results are not always reliable or valid. In between attitude tests, the participants played the game for 20 minutes each.

Initially, the study explains, the participants expressed greater favourability towards Israelis rather than Palestinians. The end results, however, were different. In the overall results of the post-test, (explicit) attitudes towards Palestinians had become significantly more positive and those towards Israelis more negative. More specifically, the participants who played the role of the Palestinian president manifested more positive attitudes towards Palestinians and more negative attitudes towards Israelis. On the other hand, those who took on the Israeli prime-minister role had no significant attitude change towards either group.

Why did the experiment work among the group who played the Palestinian president? The researchers support that there is a link between role-play and attitude change whereby attitude is influenced through what is called 'self-persuasion', which

can take place in role-play situations. Citing various experts, Alhabash and Wise explain that video games might not purposely set out to persuade players but this may very well happen nevertheless. Games offer an environment defined by certain sets of rules and procedures which may lead the player to become a part of the persuasion process by forming arguments (he/she perhaps wouldn't have formed otherwise) in order to progress in the game. Consequently, the player is put in the shoes of others or in situations he/she might not have considered outside the game environment, which can develop new or altered attitudes in real life.

The key takeaway from this case study is that game play, and particularly games with role-play elements, can improve attitudes towards a nationality and a country.

The importance of role-play will be further discussed in following section as it also came up in some of the interviews carried out for this assignment.

4.3 Results from interviews

As mentioned in chapter three, interviews were carried out with gamification experts in order to explore the tool's potential in changing attitudes in general as well as influencing attitudes towards a country. The interviewees' names can be found in the appendix.

4.3.1 Gamification's potential to change attitude

There was a general agreement that there is a deep connection between gamification and attitude and that the first could influence the second. One interviewee (A) was a little more sceptical on this note as he believed that friends and family heavily influence attitudes and that people often just want to follow the norms. Hence, he explained, influencing attitude through gamification might prove challenging because you cannot force people, you can only show them alternative paths through gamification. Interviewee F was equally doubtful. He said it depends on what you gamify and how much the attitude is linked to social predispositions. He explained: *'the less someone is interested in something the more difficult it will be to change their attitude'*. Hence, for him, the challenge would be to get people that are not so interested to engage.

Another interviewee (B), on the other hand, saw no problem in the matter. He expressed that attitude depends on experience. Therefore, if a gamified system helps the user create new (and meaningful) experiences, they are eventually very likely to change their mind about the issue at hand. We also discussed the potential problem of people not getting involved with a gamified system that implicates attitudes they may not agree with, which he referred to as the 'on boarding problem'. He said that, although many gamified systems aim to tap into intrinsic motivation in order to keep users engaged (as mentioned in chapter two), many will use an extrinsic reward as a trigger to cause that first engagement, until the user sees the benefit and gets intrinsically motivated.

Adding on to the deep connection between attitude and gamification, he goes on to point out that adapting to change (whether it is attitude or not), is a matter of learning which our brain always craves for. Games, he said, provide the best environment for people to learn new things and having found the concept of 'flow' (see chapter two), we know we can design these environments. We always feel like we have control in games, even when we fail, and fun is the best way to learn.

Interviewee E was one of the supporters of the idea of attitude change through gamification, yet pointed out the difficulty in measuring the change.

Interviewee G not only thought that attitude change was possible, but important for every gamification effort if it is to be successful in the long run, even if it is behaviour-driven rather than concerned with attitude. He explained that when only behaviour is changed, any improvement will be short-term, but if attitude is transformed then gamification can have long-term benefits. He claimed that if this was achieved, the new improved attitudes and behaviours would still be there when the game mechanics were removed altogether.

When asked about the short-term/long-term aspect of attitude change of gamification, many agreed that it would depend on the system. Effects can be long-term if executed properly, depending on the mechanics. Also, a focus on extrinsic rewards is most likely to yield short-term change, if any. To make the effects longer lasting, it would be helpful to repeat the elements that encourage the new attitudes until they are well-rooted in the player's mind, but it also helps to refresh the gamified system (release new versions) every so often in order to keep up the interest and keep reinforcing the desired attitude.

Fun is a poor predictor of long-term engagement, added interviewee D. Satisfying the three intrinsic motivators of competence, autonomy and relatedness would definitely increase the chances of a long-term effect. Connecting the three dots for people and making people feel empowered and confident as well as competent to solve a problem, and creating a community around that effort brings together all the strongest intrinsic motivators in games. The more players feel this way the longer they will be engaged.

Interviewees E and F suggested that if engaged repeatedly enough, the attitude change could be long-term, putting emphasis on frequency instead of motivation. Interviewee H said that follow-up feedback and education could also make the difference.

Many experts agreed that there are no particular game elements that are best-suited for changing attitude, it all comes down to the specific objective of the gamified system and its implementation. Some did however point out that badges and points,

for instance, will never change attitude (only behaviour perhaps, depending on the system) and that, when the time to choose comes, mechanics should be carefully selected. Game mechanics could backfire on the entire system if they are inappropriate for a certain objective, meaning that they could impend the achievement of the goal by demotivating and frustrating users rather than motivating them.

On the other hand, some experts did have a few suggestions. Interviewees E and F put emphasis on social mechanics because most people are socialisers and because people succumb to social pressure. For this reason, expert F brought up collaborative games, multiplayer games and the mechanic of levelling up as interesting for changing attitude. Interviewee H recommended feedback loops, surprise elements, regular missions or challenges, a journey to a better place as interesting for this purpose.

4.3.2 Gamification's potential in country branding

The interviewees were enthusiastic about the prospect of using gamification for country branding and most believed that it is possible to do so. They thought that the country aspect was just a different context, but that the principles and the psychology behind them are the same. Just as one would do with any gamified system there are, of course, many things to take into consideration and those factors are more important than the context, they explained.

For instance, it is of greater significance to keep in mind the types of people that are targeted, why they would engage or even be interested, what they would get out of the engagement, what the overall story is, what activity and experience they are being offered. Most of all, however, the most important question would be 'why does this gamified system or campaign even exist?'. Interviewee A and H also pointed out that gamification would not help if the country still had too many problems, just as country branding theory practically suggests.

A major point the interviewees brought up was the audience. On a country level, it could be more challenging to fully control the audience, said interviewee C, because you never know who might be following you. Therefore, the gamified system or campaign should be fairly diverse, but at the same time should not target '*everyone in the world*'.

Furthermore, it would be best to only try to tackle one aspect of the country at a time with the gamified system. For example, one system could not address tourism, as well as politics, as well as Greek society, etc. They should be separated and dealt with individually, yet each different system or campaign for each sector could be gamified.

The experts stressed that gamification is just a tool which needs to be harnessed properly otherwise it could even run the risk over boomeranging. It is important to consider the timing, as well as the people creating the system. The audience might be negatively affected by the idea of who is trying to send them the message through the gamified system (for example, if it is very obvious that a government is behind it, people might dismiss it). Interviewee C also put emphasis on the consideration of metrics – what is to be measured and how?

Greece's problems that caused the negative attitude towards it are complex and people mostly know what they get through the media. Building on this, interviewees A, B and D suggested a basic idea of a game for the objective. All three came up with an idea of a game that incorporates a journey of how Greece might have gotten the problem to begin with, a game with the potential to show that what took place in Greece could happen to any country, hence creating more understanding and empathy for the situation. Interviewee B even suggested including elements of economics, etc. Very closely related to this 'journey' approach was interviewee F's suggestion of a story-telling approach through gamification which could move people, just like a books can.

Empathy is key for the problem at hand and games are an ideal environment to create it, as discussed with some of the interviewees. It would be crucial to create empathy and get people to see things from a different perspective. Games provide certain flexibility. For instance, in a game it is acceptable to change the rules and leave our every day role to take on a different one – we can be 'other people', through which we can get different perspectives. This would be a great start to create empathy. In connection to this, the potential of role-play was also discussed with some of the experts, which could indeed have dramatic effects on creating empathy, exactly by putting people in the shoes of others.

Besides empathy, interviewee D also brought up humour. He said it has shown to create relatedness, one of the main intrinsic motivators (see p. 53), which could sustain engagement. He said people appreciate the effort to make them chuckle or smile, instead of strictly delivering some form of functionality or asking something from them. Humour would definitely help create that empathy, he specified.

4.3.3 Further comments

All interviewees put a lot of emphasis on getting the audience to understand why it should engage with the system, how it is going to benefit and why they should change. The only way to change attitude is to show them that there is a meaning behind changing the attitude – the audience needs to see the value. We always want to provide value to ourselves and to the community, commented interviewee B, so we like to do things that provide this value. This could be an angle to keep in mind in the strategy for Greece.

Interviewee D mentioned that the rise of behavioural data makes it easy to know what the audience would find valuable. We have huge amounts of information on what people do and what they like, so finding that out for a specific target audience likes and relating the gamified effort to that information is possible. The information could be aligned with whatever the attitudinal change of the objective is. He did put forward the question, however, the ethical issue of whether it is appropriate to use this information and powerful psychological techniques.

Expert B noted, what to him, are the ‘four laws for gamified activities’ Firstly, the activity must be learnable and the audience needs to draw an experience from it. Secondly, the activity must be measurable, and in this case it is important to think about how attitude could be measured. Thirdly, the user must receive real-time feedback and, lastly, there needs to be ‘information transparency’ – the player needs to have all the information of how he/she can succeed in the game.

Interviewee A noted that Greece already has a lot of positive aspects to play with, especially in terms of tourism and history. This is something that could be used in the gamified system. He closed the interview by saying that a marketing campaign would probably be viewed cynically and with scepticism, which interviewee E also brought up, yet a gamification approach could be very different and could be met with a lot of sympathy if executed properly.

Interviewees G and H both brought up 'internal issues'. The first suggested the Greek population would need to be motivated to the rest of Europe that they are actively trying to change their situation. Expert H went on to add that a better community and one that would understand the purpose of such an effort would be necessary before attempting to change attitudes internationally.

4.4 Overall conclusions

The main conclusions of this assignment can be discussed through answering the research question:

Can gamification be a successful tool for country branding?

Considering that the objective would be to change people's attitudes towards a country, success would mean that enough people were reached and positively influenced by the gamified campaign. What that number of people is would be a consideration to make in the planning of the campaign.

The literature, case studies and interview results seem to suggest that there is indeed a lot of potential in combining the two concepts. The conclusions drawn from all these sources are divided into opportunities and risks below and some additional considerations are pointed out at the end.

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Gamification can 'cut through the noise', meaning it can get people's attention, which a regular country branding campaign might not succeed to do if it is not creative enough.
- Gamification can engage people and, by doing so, teach people new things or give them a new perspective on a place, which would help improve their attitude towards a country.
- Gamification can reinforce and support the characteristics of a captivating country branding strategy (such as 'creative', 'ownable', etc.).
- As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, gamification has strong story-telling potential. A story-telling technique could be used as a means for implicit communication, which is positive considering people are not always open to being bluntly fed information.
- Gamification can change attitude even if it is not the obvious primary objective. This might make a campaign appear less suspicious to a more sceptical audience that does not like to be persuaded.
- Games are an immensely flexible medium – they can be formed in an infinite number of ways to reach a goal. In this case for instance, giving the gamified

system a strong social character would tremendously support the objective and reach a wide audience.

- In relation to the social aspect, some people that are particularly enthusiastic about the country could be part of the game. Perhaps these people could be well-known figures, making the campaign even more attractive to the audience and getting them on board with the game.
- Gamification (games) creates an environment for players to experience a myriad of emotions, including empathy. Empathy helps significantly with changing attitude towards a group of people.
- Role-play is an excellent way to create that opportunity to experience a different perspective, as mentioned in the previous point. Role-play elements could help create that empathy that could contribute towards changing people's attitude.
- Humour is also powerful at creating empathy and influencing attitude. Besides role-play, humoristic elements could strongly support the intent of such an effort and literature suggests that Europeans do enjoy a touch of humour in their games.
- An effective gamified communication strategy can yield significant results in a cost-efficient way, as it would simply involve one gamified system on a digital platform(s) and a communication effort to promote it, rather than millions of Euros thrown into an uninspiring campaign, such as bland videos or other media material, or very expensive television spots.
- Games can be designed to target virtually any audience, so the country could address a very big number of people by using it as a tool.
- Besides a strong strategy and design, perhaps the very act of using a gamified approach could help improve the country's image due to being an intriguing tool in this context.
- As was shown in chapter two, research shows that Greece's image is already improving (figure 9). Attitude change might theoretically be subject to resistance, but clearly the damage is not irreversible in this case and the task at hand is not impossible. This might also be good news in terms of timing: people are already opening up to the idea of a more positive attitude towards and better image of Greece. Launching a campaign after this first step has been taken could only strengthen this change if done right.
- Before hopefully tapping into people's intrinsic motivation to keep them engaged with the gamified system, an extrinsic reward could be used to

attract the audience to get involved. It has been established that first hand experience is one of the most effective ways to change attitude, so perhaps the extrinsic reward could be a free trip to the country for some players. This could have multiple effects, such as reinforcing a more positive attitude among them, giving them a good experience that they are enthusiastic about, and this enthusiasm could in turn be spread among others.

RISKS:

The risks of country branding and gamification separately have already been pointed out in chapter two. A lot of those risks would still be relevant when the two notions are combined, but below are the risks that could be of concern exclusively if the two were combined. Due to lack of empirical research and conclusions on the combinations of the two notions, many of the risks have to be speculated.

- The gamified approach could have a different effect to the desired one: instead of changing attitudes for the better, it could make them worse if not well-designed.
- The issue of timing was brought up under ‘opportunities’, but this issue could go either way. For instance, what if such an effort interfered negatively with the currently improving Greek image?
- It would not be desirable for the approach to become more about the game rather than the attitude and image change. A well-designed gamified system that gets attention but does not reach the goal would not be successful.
- A country’s image has economic and political significance. It would not be desirable for a gamified campaign to have negative political consequences, for instance, such as being taken less seriously as a country.
- Another risk that has already been touched upon is the ‘on boarding issue’. Perhaps only people who are already positively predisposed towards the country would engage with the gamified system/campaign, whereas the desired reach would presumably be much bigger.
- There is also a cultural element to consider. Perhaps a gamified approach would be a success in some countries, yet received very poorly in different ones.

- Perhaps focusing on just one part of the image of the country (related to the crisis) is less helpful than initially considered. For instance, perhaps the overall image becomes less coherent as a result.
- Another risk relates to poor implementation and design. This would not be effective for the country branding objective.

Other conclusions and considerations:

- It is crucial to keep in mind what the objective of a gamified campaign to help improve Greece's image would be. The goal is to alter the 'crisis image', particularly relating to issues of trustworthiness, not to change everything that relates to Greece (e.g. historical factors, etc.).
- The tools that would be used would not be the deciding factor of whether the campaign would be successful. The priority is to build a strong image strategy.
- As has been repeated several times, the country would need to make various changes in order to fix its image problem before it went on to launch a campaign, whether gamified or not.
- A gamified campaign in this case should be subtle, people should not think or get suspicious about whether the campaign is trying to get them to do something, like donate or visit.
- Image and identity are interrelated, as has been discussed previously. The literature review revealed, briefly at least, that Greece has identity issues. The country has work to do internally as well as externally, since identity does influence the image of the country.
- Starting off with a small-scale pilot to get some insight into what extent using gamification as a country branding tool, as well as to test the specific design for Greece, would be a good idea. Feedback could then be used to keep improving the approach and design until it reaches the desired results.

The conclusions that are particularly relevant to Greece's case will be discussed again in the following chapter, along with the final recommendations.

4.5 Limitations of this research

The fact that there is no literature combining country branding and gamification on any level, on the one hand made this research question possible, but also more challenging to explore. Literature is missing on other points as well, such as attitude change and gamification, which then needed to be established through mainly case studies and interviews.

Also, no relevant or significant country branding case studies were found that could support some conclusions or considerations, as the case studies for gamification did. The overall lack of empirical evidence was a setback, besides the Palestinian-Israeli case. More examples of that kind could have given a lot more insight into the subject.

The fact that this research is heavily based on theory can make its practical worth questionable. The combination of the two concepts needs to be further tested to check whether the theoretical conclusions in the previous section are both reliable and valid.

The assignment is concerned with just one aspect of the Greek image, which on the one hand works positively in terms of scope and focus of the research, yet not having an overview of the overall image could be an impediment. Also, the choice of not narrowing down the target audience was justified in the methodology chapter, yet it is still a limitation. Having, for instance, a focus-country for the gamified campaign might have produced much more concrete results and conclusions.

As far as the interviewees are concerned, they were all gamification experts. They did not always have the same opinions, but they still viewed the matter from a similar gamification perspective and may have missed various points experts from other fields might have instantly brought up. Interviewing experts in psychology and country branding would have perhaps added many new angles to the topic.

4.5.1 Questions that still need to be answered

This research is limited by a certain scope, hence not all questions related to the subject can be answered. Referring back to the gamification design framework (see figure 13), this assignment has mainly dealt with step 1: define objective. Therefore, before going on to implement a gamified strategy to improve Greece's crisis image, the following points need to be clarified.

- What is the image Greece wishes to convey?
- This research is concerned with the image problem relating to the crisis and trustworthiness. Can 'trustworthiness' be conveyed through a gamified campaign (if so, how?) or will trust only eventually be earned through the better image and the improved situation in the country?
- Would there be any ethical and legal considerations to take into account?
- Naturally, all the further steps of the design framework would need to be addressed. What would be the target behaviours (attitudes)? What would be the exact target audience, the activity cycles and game elements and tools used? How could it be made to be fun?
- What would be the costs of the gamified system and campaign?
- When would be the best time to measure the effects of the campaign? How long would it take to see significant attitude change among Europeans towards Greece? Perhaps this would have to be measured several times.
- When would the gamified campaign be considered a success? What would be the threshold (i.e. number of European citizens with a positive attitude)?
- If the measurement of the effects of the gamified campaign did indeed show a change in attitude towards Greece - how much of the change would actually be related to the gamified campaign?
- Finally, the timeframe is another essential consideration. Would a gamified approach run short-term or long-term?

5. Recommendations

The previous chapters of this research have explored the notions of country branding, attitude and gamification through a literature review, case studies and interviews. An analysis was done on how they can all tie in together and several conclusions were drawn. This chapter is to provide Greece with the final recommendation generated from all of the above.

Should Greece use gamification as part of a strategy to improve its current crisis-related image in Europe?

Before answering the advisory question, there are a few important points to bring up once more. It has been mentioned before that Greece has to address its identity as well as its image. Image is influenced by identity, hence the problem-solving must begin internally. On that note, Greece has to make necessary changes, for instance in terms of policies, especially on matters that caused the image problem to begin with or trying to establish a new image will be a pointless effort.

The country has to put together a collective, formed by members of the private and public sector and the community, whose task will be to craft a strong strategy to tackle the image problem. In a climate of innovation, they must analyse the image problem. Equipped with a thorough understanding of the situation, the collective has to then choose and analyse the audience the strategy will be aimed at.

The strategy has to be creative, appealing and powerful, and its communication will have to be particularly imaginative as to cut through the noise and get the audience's attention. In order to achieve this, Greece should launch a gamified campaign. This approach can be highly engaging if well-designed and can give people a new perspective, through which it would be possible to make their attitudes towards the place more positive.

Results from the previous chapter show that recommendable elements to include in such an approach would be a strong social character, particularly involving people with great affinity for the place. Role-play elements and humour would also be advantageous, as they allow for the creation of empathy – a good basis for attitude change towards people and a place. Using a digital platform, such as social media (partly at least), would also make the effects of this campaign more easily trackable

and measurable.

Besides a gamified campaign, which would be a first step towards grabbing the audience's attention and swaying their attitude, Greece should couple the effort with symbolic actions, which will enhance the credibility of the new image. The climate of innovation should be kept up and spread across various sectors, from business to art, in order to keep a buzz going and generate more enthusiasm for the place. The promotion of tourism, strong Greek commercial brands, culture (e.g. art and music) as well as (sports) events would also enhance the campaign in terms of rebranding Greece. They could create more buzz around the place, further spreading a positive image, which could drive more visits to the country while positive first hand experience is the ultimate attitude influencer. In terms of timing, Greece is in a good place, since research shows that the country's image is already on the rise.

Once the European audience overall has a more positive attitude towards the country, Greece can lose the negative associations currently made with the place and heavily conveyed through the media in the past few years: irresponsibility, corruption, lack of credibility, etc. Greece will then be able to reap the economic, political and social benefits of having a good country image.

Even if a gamified campaign does not change the entire audience's attitude, even if it only truly touches some people, there might be a snowballing effect. Those with a newly-found positive attitude for the place would hopefully spread their enthusiasm among their friends and family.

On a final note, in times of harsh Euro-scepticism across the continent, we can only hope that some fun and games can bring people closer. Would it not be worth the try?

References

- Alhabash, S. & Wise, K. (2012). *PeaceMaker: Changing students' attitudes toward Palestinians and Israelis through video game play*. International Journal of Communication 6 (2012), 1-20.
- Anholt, S. (2007). *Competitive identity – The new brand management for nations, cities and regions*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Anholt, S. (2010). *Places – Identity, image and reputation*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Antoniades, A. (2012). *At the eye of the cyclone: The Greek crisis in global media*. Athens: ACIPE.
- Baker, B. (2007). *Destination branding for small cities – The essentials for successful place branding*. Portland: Creative Leap Books.
- Batson, C. D., et al. (1997). Empathy and attitudes: Can feelings for a member of a stigmatised group improve feelings toward the group? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 72(1), 105-118.
- Cornelissen, J. (2008). *Corporate communication – A guide to theory and practice*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Country brand Peru case study*. (2012). Retrieved on May 10, 2014, from <http://www.futurebrand.com/images/uploads/clients/casestudies/Peru-Case-Study.pdf>
- Dignan, A. (2011). *Game frame – Using games as a strategy for success*. New York: Free Press.
- Economides, P. (2011). *Rebranding Greece [Videofile]*. Retrieved on April 11, 2013, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=Chhn5oEmITs#
- Gilbert, N. (2008). *Researching social life*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Grunig, J. E., et al. (1992). *Excellence in public relations and communication management*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Hampes, W. (2010). The relation between humour styles and empathy. *Europe's Journal of Psychology* 6(3), 34-45.
- Huizinga, J. (1949). *Homo ludens – A study of the play-element in culture*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.
- Lahey, B. B. (2009). *Psychology: An introduction*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Lazzaro, N. (2004). *Why we play games: Four keys to more emotions without story*. Retrieved on April 20, 2014, from http://xeodesign.com/xeodesign_whyweplaygames.pdf
- McGonigal, J. (2011). *Reality is broken*. London: Random House.

Oskamp, S. & Schultz, P.W. (2005). *Attitudes and opinions*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Pérez Latorre, Ó. (2013). The European videogame: An introduction to its history and creative traits. *European Journal of Communication* 28(2), 131-151.

Regeester, M., & Larkin, J. (2008). *Risk issues and crisis management in public relations*. London: Kogan Page Publishers.

Rigby, S. & Ryan, R. (2007). *The player experience of need satisfaction (PENS)*. Retrieved on May 22, 2014, from <http://www.immersyve.com/downloads/research-and-white-papers/>

Schiffman, L. G., & Kanuk, L. L. (2007). *Consumer behaviour*. New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.

The world's view on countries: An online study of the reputation of 50 countries. (2013). Retrieved March 6, 2014, from <http://www.reputationinstitute.com/thought-leadership/complimentary-reports-2013>

Tzogopoulous, G. (2011). *The Greek crisis in the international mass media*. Athens: ELIAMEP.

Verhoeven, N. (2008). *Doing research: The hows and whys of applied research*. The Hague: Boom Academic.

Werbach, K., & Hunter, D. (2012). *For the win*. Philadelphia: Wharton Digital Press.

What Europeans think of each other. (2013, May 15). Retrieved March 11, 2014, from <http://www.economist.com/blogs/graphicdetail/2013/05/what-europeans-think-each-other>

What is Foursquare. (2014). Retrieved on May 10, 2014, from <https://foursquare.com/about>

Zichermann, G., & Cunningham, C. (2011). *Gamification by design*. Sebastopol: O'Reilly.

Zichermann, G., & Linder, J. (2013). *The gamification revolution*. New York: McGraw-Hill Education.

Appendix

1. Interviewees

Andrzej Marczewski

Internal Web Manager

Capgemini UK

<http://www.gamified.co.uk/>

Roman Rackwitz

Founder & CEO

Engaginglab

<http://engaginglab.com/>

Partner at Enterprise Gamification Consultancy

<http://enterprise-gamification.com/>

Mario Herger

Founder & Partner

Enterprise Gamification Consultancy

<http://enterprise-gamification.com/>

Olivier Mauco

Game Designer & Consultant

<http://www.gameinsociety.com/>

José Carlos Cortizo Pérez

Founder & CMO

BrainSINS

<http://www.josek.net/>

Scott Dodson

Chief Product Owner - Player Lifecycle

Gamesys

<http://www.gamesyscorporate.com/>

Michiel van Eunen

Game Designer

Tempeest

<http://tempeest.nl/>

An Coppens

Chief Game Changer

Gamification Nation Ltd.

<http://www.gamificationnation.com>

2. Interview questions

Introduction

1. Name and current position.
2. How long have you worked in or been involved with the gamification industry?
3. What are some of the biggest gamification successes you've encountered so far (whether you were personally involved or not)?
4. Why do you think this/these example(s) were successful?

Gamification and attitude

1. Literature and multiple examples show that gamification can change behaviour, i.e. it can get people to **DO** certain things (fulfil a task, achieve a goal). However, to what extent can gamification influence how people **THINK**?
2. Do you have examples that support the idea that gamification can change attitude (not only behaviour)?
3. Do you think any influence gamification may have on attitude is short-term or long-term?
4. What game elements or mechanics would be most suitable for influencing attitude?

Gamification and changing the image of a country

There are many successful examples of gamification in an organisational/corporate context, both internally (employee engagement, motivation, etc.) and externally (customer engagement, etc.). Do you think gamification could have the same potential on a country level? (Question 1 below clarifies the intent of this question).

1. If you believe that gamification can indeed influence attitude, do you think it has potential as a tool to influence how people think of a country? I.e. change common negative associations with a country (into positive ones).
2. Why or why not?
3. Do you think certain pre-conditions need to be in place for gamification to work as a tool for changing a country's image? Which? (e.g. social, economic, political conditions, policy changes, etc.)
4. Do you have any further thoughts on the combination of gamification and altering people's attitude towards a country?
5. More specifically, the point of my thesis is to explore whether Greece should use gamification as a tool as part of a strategy to motivate people in Europe to change their 'crisis image' of Greece which has been extensively conveyed in the media. What are your thoughts on this more specific angle?