

**THE ROLE OF DIPLOMACY WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF NATION  
BRANDING - THE CASE OF ANGOLA**

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## **DECLARATION FORM**

I hereby confirm that the work I have submitted for assessment is entirely my own. I certify that the origin and provenance of all the materials in this submission that is not my own work has been identified and acknowledged. No materials are included for which academic credit has been previously conferred upon me.

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## ABSTRACT

This research project (RP) sought to assess the role of diplomacy in branding. Specifically, this RP sought to achieve the following objectives: (1) identify the factors constituting branding; (2) assess the role of Angolan institutions in portraying the brand of Angola; and (3) assess the perceived impact of strategic functions and branding processes on nation building development.

This RP was cross-sectional in nature, and employed the qualitative method. Key informant interviews (KII) were conducted with diplomats, non-diplomats and field experts in public and private institutions. The institutions were selected based on their technical expertise in branding or diplomacy. In total, 15 key informants were purposively selected to be interviewed. Interviews were transcribed verbatim, and the data were analysed using the thematic analysis approach described by (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Key informants agree on branding as constituting of unique characteristics of Angola as well as national symbols. Specifically, the national symbols referred to the country's flag, national anthem, and unique flora and fauna. Additionally, KI recognised that Angola does not formally have an institution explicitly processing the branding mechanisms; however, they identified the Ministry of External Relations (MIREX) as having the crucial role in the branding of Angola, acting in its capacity as the executor of the country's foreign policy.

For some KI, the mechanisms that facilitate both the branding process and the executors of the roles in branding has to do with the level of responsibilities assigned, the quality of the measures to be applied, level of accountability as well as professional principles and values.

For the development of Angola, KI advocate for the practical applicability of strategic measures (primarily by the government) in a multisectoral and collaborative way, with the necessary technical and specialized support from other institutions.

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### **Table 3.1 Key informant interviews conducted.**

#### **Institutions**

Ministry of External Relations (MIREX)

Government institution

Government media

Government institution

Government institution

Civil society institution

Multinational institution

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Foreign Affairs

Foreign Affairs

Diplomatic Mission

Private media

Ministry of External Relations (MIREX)

Private sector

Angola Mission in United Nations

### **Table 3.2 Data analysis steps and outputs**

#### **Process**

Reading and coding of transcripts.

Review of initially generated codes (constant comparison approach)

Reassessment of codes

Linkage of codes.

Review of linkage of codes

### **Table 3.3 Organizing themes and definitions**

#### **Organizing themes**

Nation branding constructs

Processes in nation branding

Roles in nation branding

Enabling mechanisms



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AU – African Union

AGOA – Africa Growth and Opportunity Act

APRM – Africa Peer Review Mechanism

BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation

CIRGL - Conference of the Great Lakes Region

CIFA – Cooperation and Investment Facilitation Agreement

CPLP – Community of the Countries of Portuguese Language

D - Diplomats

ECCAS - Economic Community of Central African States

F – Foreigners

FNLA - The National Front for the Liberation of Angola

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

GGC - Gulf of Guinea Commission

ICT – Information Communication and Technology

KI - Key Informant

KII – Key Information Interviews

MIREX – Ministry of External Relations

MPLA - The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola

ND – Non Diplomats

NBI – Nation Branding Index

NBAR – Nation Brand Architecture

NEPAD – New Partnership for Africa’s Development

PD – Public Development

PALOP - African Countries of Portuguese Official Language

RP – Research Project

SADC – Southern African Development Community

UNITA - The National Front for the Liberation of Angola

UNHRC – UN Human Rights Council

USA – United States of America

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

This research is conducted by taking into consideration the period starting at the end of the first Republic, in 1992, when the first general elections in Angola were held, to today's date. The research project will examine the multidimensional contexts that will identify not only a clear image of the Angolan brand but also, from an institutional perspective, recognise the efforts made by the government through the actions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Angola and other ministerial bodies such as the culture, tourism, and economics. Also, the role of public and private institutions that assist this process through public diplomacy will be analyzed. Thus, the work will evaluate what mechanisms to promote the nation's image (Anholt, 2010) are executed so that the country can have a valuable and propitious asset, which is the country's reputation.

The branding process and the role of diplomacy are the primary focus of analysis for this paper and will be explored through the six areas of competence that compose the nation branding hexagon described by Anholt (2015). For a further understanding of the context of branding in Angola, this researcher paper will explore the link between the areas that compose the nation branding in the context of the diplomacy in Angola and how this leads to nation building or development.

#### 1.1.1 Conceptualization of branding

This research study is developed based on two approaches: the branding process on the one hand, which identifies a brand or brands the country possess and is intrinsically linked to how people identify or describe Angola, through the country's identity, its values, services, and products. On the other hand, the executors of the branding process classified here as diplomats and non-diplomats. These executors include all persons representing the interests of Angola who deal with other people and countries to increase Angola's reputation in the domains of governance, exports, migration, tourism, culture, and people.

It has been suggested that there is no consensus in defining 'brand' (Jones et al., 2013). On the other hand, nation branding has been described as a strategic molding process that promotes the

image and the reputation of countries allowing them political and economic advantages at the international arena. For others, nation branding is not just an emerging theory; it is also an achievable necessity (Merkelsen et al., 2016).

Given the uncertainty about the extent of the country's brand image, this study is relevant as it contributes to branding awareness process in the country by assessing whether or not there are products, factors, concepts or contexts identified as an Angolan brand. This study is essential because branding can be classified as the most valued asset of a nation (Zeineddine et al., 2018) because it leads to an increase in political and economic power.

Based on the assumption that, regardless of whether they carry out a branding process, all nations have a brand (Imran, 2018). The concept presents a significant value in ascertaining the type of image and reputation Angola has, and what has been evaluated in terms of the country's brand(s).

Besides branding enhancing awareness of a country's potential, and also making known the goods and services it can provide (Ståhlberg et al., 2016), another possibility of branding identified is the role played by diplomacy in branding; particularly in the areas of governance, exports, migration, tourism, and culture (Denman, 2012).

### **1.1.2 Diplomacy in Angola**

Angola is located in the Southern part of the African continent and populated by approximately 29 million people (BBC, 2018). The country has been experiencing a period of peace for only 16 years, after nearly 27 years of a civil war (Country Reports, 2017).

Angolan diplomatic actions began during the war for independence (Joaquim, 2017). Angolan diplomacy also applies in the country's capacity as a member of the African Union (AU), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and Conference of the Great Lakes Region (CIRGL), Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC), African Countries of Portuguese Official Language (PALOP), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The Angolan diplomatic field can be structured into four significant political periods with the first linked to the colonization era. The Agreement of Alvor (Angop, 2015) established the conditions for the independence of Angola on November 11, 1975, and allowed the identification

of the model of diplomacy adopted by the Angolan State which, among other vital aspects, defended the interests of the Angolan state as a sovereign nation.

Within this first period that lasted until 1992, stands out the participation of Angola, as an observer, at the summit of the countries of the Central African states, held on October 18, 1983. Angola became a full member in 1999 (Country Reports, 2017).

The Agreements with Brazil's company Odebrecht which partnered with the Angolan government on the area of infrastructure under the scope of the national reconstruction process is another breakthrough of the Angolan diplomacy (Country Reports, 2017).

The second political period that lasted from 1992 to 2002. It relates to the consequences of an extended period of civil war and cold war where both, the pro Marxist-socialist Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the pro-capitalist movement National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) further intensified diplomatic channels (Country Reports, 2017; Country Review, 2016) to reach the country's political and executive power.

Are considered as relevant in this period, all the actions carried out by diplomats for the realization of the final peace agreement after a Civil War of more than 27 years that culminated in April of 2002 (Country Reports, 2017).

Several other achievements to consider are the decisive role played by diplomacy for the realization of the "Pact of Stability" directed to the region of the great lakes (Country Reports, 2017);

The contribution made by Angola to the development of New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) actions based on increasing foreign investment (Country Reports, 2017);

Diplomatic participation in the actions of the African Union, for the development of the continent by democratic means and promotion of human rights (Country Reports, 2017);

Diplomatic activities under the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) (Country Reports, 2017); and the Diplomatic work carried out in the framework of the formation of a "Standby peacekeeping Force" (Country Reports, 2017) of the African Union.

Besides, over this sensitive period, others essential developments were also recorded (Country Reports, 2017) such as the beginning of diplomatic relations with the United States of America

(USA). As a second most important export market in sub-Saharan Africa after South Africa, the bilateral ties with USA Angola has increased after accession to the 'Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) (Country Reports, 2017) opening an excellent opportunity for Angola products in the USA.

In 1993 the accession to the Southern African development community and the diplomatic actions that culminated in Angola joining the republics of Zimbabwe and Namibia on military interventions in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In the same period, also stands also out the diplomatic actions in support of President Sassou-Nguesso of the Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville). Furthermore, the increase in bilateral relations with China, with the Asian power extending credit of seven billion dollars to Angola (Country Reports, 2017).

At the multilateral level, Angola has been increasing its diplomatic relations at the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP) (Country Reports, 2017) to expand its political and cultural influences not just in Africa, but also with Brazil and Portugal that are also members of CPLP.

A negative diplomatic aspect to consider (Country Reports, 2017) is the closure of the United Nations Mission in February 1999 reopened in November of the same year. However, the UN mission had its actions restricted, without any political or diplomatic impact.

The third political period, from 2002 to 2017, recognised as having been of strategic diplomatic actions, involve diplomatic compliance with a three-year mandate in 2007 at the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) re-elected for a similar period in 2010 (Country Reports, 2017).

The signing of a 'Memorandum of understanding establishing the US-Angola Strategic Partnership Dialogue' (Country Reports, 2017) following the visit to Angola, of Hillary Clinton, former secretary of State of America.

Angola, from 1975 to 2002, has been experiencing difficulties in managing its image and reputation as a sovereign nation (Country Reports, 2017; Country Review, 2016). The country has been criticized by the international community for the high rate of corruption, poverty, hunger and glaring economic inequality. In this period, significant deals were made at the United Nations were Angola was for two times, a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.

With Brazil, essential deals were diplomatically considered (Country Reports, 2017), starting with (1) A financing Loan from the Brazilian Development Bank; (2) an agreement of Cooperation and Investment Facilitation Agreement (CIFA); (3) a Defense Cooperation Agreement; (4) and a Navy Technical Memorandum of Understanding.

Also, internally, it is important to highlight a measure designed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Angola, to implement permanent and up-to-date training to central figures of MIREX as representatives of Angola abroad.

The negative diplomatic aspects over this period are the conflicts over the oil fields placed offshore on the North of Angola, and South of DRC, on Rio Congo. Many diplomatic actions have been undertaken to resolve the conflict between Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo in relation to maritime delimitations (Country Reports, 2017).

Another negative aspect to be pointed out is the decision of the Bank of America to stop selling US Dollar to Angola (Country Reports, 2017). The decision resulted in an incisive monetary crisis that affected all country, mostly the rupture of many small and medium-sized companies that found themselves without the financial power for importation.

The fourth period involves the variances in the diplomatic field based on a new political paradigm where non-political actors in diplomacy are included and playing essential roles in the diversification of the economy of Angola.

Over the fourth period, necessary measures were taken by the government to address the economic crisis (situation of the country, inherited by a complexity of factors directly linked to the public administration system adopted by the state). One of these measures is to avoid the dependency on exports, particularly oil (Jornal de Angola, 2018). Besides the political actions, the RP also takes into account other actions carried out to promote culture and diplomacy.

Evidence of these actions is the recent promotion of the Angolan city of Mbanza Congo as world heritage status (Angop, 2017); and the involvement of non-political actors (Altman et al., 2014) influencing the traditional media, the social media and in the sports field.

## **1.2 Objectives of the research project**

Angola is portrayed as a potential country, as it is ranked as the second major oil producer in sub-Saharan Africa and the fourth world producer of diamonds. However, there are negative

assumptions and perceptions of the country's bad policies, high level of corruption, and a lack of adequate measures to address the social and economic sectors; culminating in an elevated standard of instability (Country Review, 2016).

This research paper is therefore designed to explore alternative image branding roles and processes used by Angola, in its capacity as a sovereign nation, and also in the country's position as a member of a regional and international community of countries. Therefore, the main objective of the study is to analyse the role of Angolan diplomacy within the context of branding, and how this process is perceived to have an impact on nation building or development beyond the production of oil; an asset contributing more than 80% of the country's GDP (Country Reports, 2017). The following specific objectives were considered:

- a) To identify the factors that constitute nation branding.
- b) To assess the role of Angolan institutions in portraying the brand of Angola.
- c) To assess the perceived impact of diplomatic roles and branding processes on nation-building or development.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

From the objectives, the following questions were considered:

1. What are the factors that constitute National Branding?
2. What is the role of Angolan institutions in portraying the Brand of Angola?
3. What is the perceived impact of diplomatic roles and branding on the national building of Angola?

### **1.4 Rationale**

The significance of this research project interconnects two essential variants related to the current administration of the Angolan government. The political will (Angop, 2018), which is observed in the concrete actions portrayed by government to diversify the economy (Country Report, 2017); and the change of the political and administrative paradigm implemented since the late 1970s, when President Jose Eduardo dos Santos took office, until 2017 when a new president was elected in Angola.



The research is conducted taking into account the multidimensional contexts to determine not only a clear Angolan brand and the process involved, but also the executors of such process from a multisectoral perspective such as diplomats, non-diplomats and field experts in public and private institutions.

Considering the assumption that branding can be used to enhance awareness of a country's potential, relevance of this research project is the opportunity to assess the association between nation branding and diplomacy.

### **1.5 Structure of the chapters**

The research project is structured into five chapters. Chapter one has presented the introduction which consists of the background, objectives, research questions, and the rationale. Chapter two consists of a review of the literature. Specifically, the chapter reviews relevant concepts on branding and diplomacy. These concepts are evaluated and contextualized.

Chapter three presents information on the methodology used for this. Specifically, the study design, sampling frame and recruit process, and data management and analysis are explained in this chapter. Chapter four presents the findings of the analysis and a discussion of these findings. The final chapter (chapter five) summarises the entire research and also provides information on the conclusions of the study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the literature presented through the adoption of the ‘mind map’ or ‘conceptual map’ (Polonsky et al., 2015). This approach will help place the findings of this study in context. The review on the literature on diplomacy in branding context indicates a level of indetermination and diversity (Cassinger et al., 2016). The review also shows that the several dimensions that diplomacy can be executed, ranging from traditional diplomatic models, that involve a political component, to subtle contemporary models that include economic, cultural and public diplomacy.

#### 2.2. Technical-Economic Approach

##### 2.2.1. Brand versus branding

From the technical-economic view, brand and branding are both purposively to ensure a positive reputation of a nation (Anholt, 2007; Dinnie, 2008). Nonetheless, Zeineddine et al. (2018) identify brand as the most valued asset of a country. Other authors also note branding is a concept that is “concerned with a country’s whole image on the international stage, covering political, economic and cultural dimensions” (Ying, 2010: 98). According to Ståhlberg et al. (2016), branding is a process used to enhance the potential a country has, disclosing the goods and services provided by a nation.

Additionally, Anholt (2015) points out that a brand is embraced by a set of principles and values in the diffusion of the image of a country, while branding is classified based on the intention to identify or change the image of a country. Anholt (2015) elaborates further on the subject and openly disproves the idea of the image of a nation becoming a subject of branding if the methodology applied in the process is not supported by values and principles.

Countries usually take between 5 to 20 years to develop a national brand (Anholt, 2015), depending on the country status, that is, if the nation is on a transitional economic path or if it is starting from a negative prospect. Anholt’s (2015) argues that the use of marketing stratagems

and advertising campaigns in a wrong manner are applied to distort the brand image of a country. Anholt (2015) defends his argument by stating that what is usually displayed is what is intended to be seen rather than what the actual intention or purpose is. It has been argued that branding, particularly in the developing countries, presupposes applying a propagandistic strategy where countries manipulate their brand's image to gain advantages in the international arena (Anholt, 2015)

## **2.3. Economic-Marketing Approach**

### **2.3.1. Nation branding versus nation managed**

Review of the literature, suggests that there are divergent views on what constitutes a national brand and how branding is processed. Ying's (2010) article on 'Branding the Nation', proposes the applicability of a new concept. The new approach proposed is denominated "Nation Image Management" (2010: 97) and the author believes that it allows a better understanding of this multifaceted theme (2010). Also, it helps to overcome the skepticism (2010) of people regarding branding.

For some authors such as Andrei (2016), the image management campaigns have a positive impact on countries by highlighting strategic areas such as tourism and investment. Also, in today's globalized world, where countries are competing with one another to have a "competitive advantage" (Andrei, 2016) the application of 'corporate brand techniques' (Council of Foreign Relations, 2017) through marketing and advertising campaigns may be an advantage.

An example of the positive impact of an image management campaign is the case in Denmark. Denmark developed a well-constructed marketing campaign to address the cartoon crisis (Rasmussen et al., 2012), that occurred after a Danish newspaper had caricatured the leading figure of the Muslim religion, Muhammad.

Another example of image management is the case of the Republic of Malta. They resorted to branding campaigns using the areas of tourism and culture as catalysts to reinforce its public diplomacy and the brand image of the country (Xuereb, 2017).

Furthermore, an example of image management through marketing campaigns is the European Union (European Commission, 2015). The union implemented a campaign dubbed "Building

Confidence Objectives" which had the aim to increase bilateral and multilateral relations with similar organizations (EU Commission, 2014).

However, Cayla and Arnould (2008) point out a negative aspect of today's globalizing world, where regional and continental communities are committing to a universal technical approach. According to the authors, the approach leads researchers to problematic ethnocentric directions so, it is necessary to review the theoretical and methodological foundations of international branding.

While some scholars agree that the corporate branding approach should be adopted in branding a nation (Council on Foreign Relations, 2017; Xuereb, 2017; Andrei, 2016; Rasmussen et al., 2012), there is limited evidence on how individuals (including diplomats and other key actors) identify a national brand (Stumberger-Sauer, 2011). In addition, there is little evidence (Stumberger-Sauer, 2011) of how people create a loyal relationship with an identified national brand. What is implied is that, with a corporate approach, what is observed and managed is the relationship and the strong loyalty between the provider and user in relation to a product.

Additionally, and most important, the user's willingness to go back to the provider and be connected with the product associated to the concept of 'country of origin' (COI) (Suter et al., 2018). This concept refers to a country's advantages concerning locally made products. However, Ying (2010) argues that as far as the interests of a country are concerned, branding a nation goes beyond the moderate branding concept of 'country of origin'. What is implied in going beyond the concept of country of origins is to adopt others approaches to strategically allow the country to grow. In that regard, for a nation to be recognised internationally through its image, besides the economic approach, two others should be considered, the political and the cultural approaches.

## **2.4. Cultural-Critical Approach**

### **2.4.1. Branding and identity**

From a practical or execution point of view, Dinnie (2008) indicates that there should be ethical considerations, particularly, honesty and respect, in applying the nation brand concept. According to him, nations are not mere products or private properties. Nations belong to everyone equally, hence the need to pay particular attention to ethics. This is consistent with Stumberger-Sauer's (2011) point about the importance of fully exploring the relationship

between the assets that are the brand image of the countries with the users and providers of the brands.

Pamment's (2015) work on branding through national identity pays significant attention to the concepts of identity and symbolism, and on the way people react with pride towards the country's flag, national anthem, culture, traditional and historical values, and other assets of a country. Pamment's work also assesses how nationals of a country express their emotions regarding incidents or events that bring pride to a nation (such as desirable results and good performances in sports). In the case of Angola, examples can be drawn from the political arena. Mainly, how citizens reacted following anti-corruption measures taken by the newly elected President of Angola, in a bid to enhance the image of the country.

Also, Kaneva (2011) suggests that the cultural – critical approach of exploring the identity implications and power of social relations should be adopted by nations. There are many identity scenarios that emphasize the creation or development of an Angolan identity at different levels. An example is in sports, where the national football team, during the 2006 World Cup, created an Angolan identity; an identity which proudly portrayed the country as a nation with a unique and attractive football sector.

In addition, culturally, the context of national identity pride was observed when the Angolan city of Mbanza Congo was awarded the status of a world heritage site. The spread of the Angolan dance – *kizomba* is another identity reference. In the area of tourism, the informative action's mechanisms enabling people to know about the beautiful and natural landscape and the unique fauna and flora also falls within Pamment's (2015) arguments on country's enhancing branding through National Identity.

#### **2.4.2. Political perspective**

Volcic et al., (2011) look into the political perspective, heavily influenced by the economic nationalism fundament (2011). He points out the political perspective of nation branding as a strategic mechanism of politics is applied to manage the image of the country to gain positive returns through tourism, investment, and foreign relations (2011).

On the other hand, (a pessimistic view), scholars interested in nation branding within the political perspective do not emphasize the open market and competitiveness (MacDonald, 2011). According to MacDonald (2011) on presenting his work on emotions and expressions within the

cultural diplomacy, branding nations through a narrow political perspective, can present challenges and be ineffective.

Angola is part of the African continent, and its internal politics is greatly influenced by the regional and continental agenda. In this regard, to illustrate the point presented by MacDonald (2011) regarding the challenges and ineffectiveness by applying branding from a narrow political perspective, the researcher presents a non-detailed picture of the brand context in Africa.

Branding Africa has been considered a challenge (Williams et al., 2012, Osei et al., 2011, Versi, 2009; Mbakwe, 2008) in both its definition and levels of applicability. Although there is literature that positions the African continent as an attractive platform for its image and identity (Almeida, 2016), where there is an indication of the developed countries in investing in the Continent due to indications of economic and social improvements for the coming years, there are also studies that contradict such assumptions.

Osei et al. (2011), Mbakwe (2008) and Versi (2009) have explored the branding context in Africa and there is a plausible agreement on the necessity to (re) shape the manner Africa is viewed by both, non-African, especially the countries in sub-Saharan Africa (Anholt, 2010) and by the rest of the world.

On the one hand, Osei et al. (2011) and Versi (2009) argument that Africa is viewed by non-Africans, as a continent with structural problems in several domains. The challenges are most reflected in the political mechanisms, infrastructures, and cases of famine and poverty.

Therefore, Osei et al. (2011) and Versi (2009) claim that a strategic re-brand mechanism would economically benefit the continent by negotiating at the global market with advantages brought by improved levels of responsibility and efficiency.

On the other hand, Ikalafeng (2013) work 'Time to lose the 'African' identity' advocates a proactive measure in favor of the continent and argues that Africans must stop blaming the West for the challenges faced by Africans. For Ikalafeng, the African people need to stop reverting to the past and start paying attention to today's globalized standards. For him, the essence of the African continent does not lie on a map. On the contrary, it is "the collective vision or the dreams of Africans" (2013: 44) that does it. Based on that assumption, Ikalafeng's (2013) proposes Africans' to conduct each country's interests based on a continental agenda. The author's premise is supported by Ståhlberg et al. (2016) that argues that collective identity and agenda should not be a matter of concern in branding a nation (2016).