



Branding the Nation: The Global Business of National Identity

Melissa Aronczyk

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National governments around the world are turning to branding consultants, public relations advisers and strategic communications experts to help them brand their jurisdiction. Using the tools, techniques and expertise of commercial branding is believed to help nations articulate more coherent and cohesive identities, attract foreign capital, and maintain citizen loyalty. In short, the goal of nation branding is to make the nation matter in a world where borders and boundaries appear increasingly obsolete. But what actually happens to the nation when it is reconceived as a brand? How does nation branding change the terms of politics and culture in a globalized world? Through case studies in twelve countries and in-depth interviews with nation branding experts and their national clients, Melissa Aronczyk argues that the social, political and cultural discourses constitutive of the nation have been harnessed in new and problematic ways, with far-reaching consequences for both our concept of the nation and our ideals of national citizenship. Branding the Nation challenges the received wisdom about the power of brands to change the world, and offers a critical perspective on these new ways of conceiving value and identity in the globalized twenty-first century. This book is about how nation branding became a worldwide phenomenon and a professional transnational practice. It is also about how nation branding has become a solution to perceived contemporary problems affecting the space of the nation state: problems of economic development, democratic communication, and especially national visibility and legitimacy amidst the multiple global flows of late modernity. In this book, Melissa Aronczyk charts the political, cultural and economic rationales by which the nation has been made to matter in a twenty-first-century context of global integration.

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