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 a more coherent and cohesive identity, 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.

Chapter Three analyzes the particular strategies and forms of knowledge generation that members of the transnational promotional class deploy...
in order to do their work. The chapter presents the results of interviews conducted with nation-branding consultants, academics, and firms over a four-year period from 2007 to 2011. This interview material is augmented by interviews with additional actors and interlocutors to the process. These actors include representatives from think tanks and research centers, tourism organizations, media editors, marketing professors, federal and regional investment and trade commissioners, diplomatic and consular representatives, deputy ministers, and public relations managers. These interviews help show how certain assumptions about national belonging structure branding decisions. That the bulk of nation-branding consultancies are based in Britain is not a coincidence; these firms strongly reflect a deep-rooted and ongoing paternalism, as well as a very particular idea of the terms and conditions of what Leslie Sklair calls “global nationalism.”

Trading Spaces: The World Tour

in Branding the Nation: The Global Business of National Identity

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Chapter Six examines the exercises carried out under the rubric of nation branding in nine sites on four continents: Botswana, Chile, Estonia, Georgia, Germany, Jamaica, Libya, Sweden, and Uganda. The selection of countries is meant to be illustrative, not exhaustive. It covers a range of geographical settings, political-economic systems, and cultural dimensions in the spirit of demonstrating the global reach of the phenomenon. Through a theoretical lens inspired by Liah Greenfeld and an examination of the visual and textual tropes brought to bear in these brands, the chapter develops a typology that reveals the epistemic framework within which nation-branding strategies are deployed. Contrary to the “level playing field” promised by global capitalism, the typology demonstrates how the logics that underpin the practice maintain and reinforce historical inequalities and reify paternalist and neocolonial assumptions.

Nation and Brand: Keywords for the Twenty-First Century

in Branding the Nation: The Global Business of National Identity

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Chapter One provides the theoretical ground on which to recognize nation branding as an extension of contemporary views on nationalism and national identity. It draws on conceptualizations of the nation by Craig Calhoun, Rogers Brubaker, and Katherine Verdery to argue for a perspective on the nation that is at once ideational and material. The chapter shows how our thinking about the nation has been reorganized by distinct understandings of globalization and neoliberalization. As monolithic, business-based conceptions of globalization and neoliberalism have come to dominate public institutions and forms of governance, national identity has been mobilized as a competitive resource to narrate distinction and difference in global settings. In this context, the brand emerges as a way to manage and control this resource and create distinction and difference. To account for this rise, the chapter charts the progress of corporate brand management as it is incrementally applied to national values and identity.

Creative Tension, Normal Nation: Branding National Identity in Poland

in Branding the Nation: The Global Business of National Identity

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Item type: chapter

Chapter Four presents a case study of Poland’s efforts to brand its jurisdiction and articulate cultural distinction. In December 2003, the Polish Ministry of Commerce, in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, retained the services of a British branding firm called Saffron to create a new Polish national identity on the eve of the country’s accession to the European Union. Polish participants saw the creation of a “brand” identity as part of its drive toward economic, political, and cultural “normalcy” as member of the European Union. But they also saw it as a continuation of a project begun long before: to return to their rightful place in Europe, reclaim their history and cultural memory, and reassert their national spirit in the face of multiple historical antagonisms. These mythopoetic tropes infusing Poland’s national narrative were tightly bound up with the branding project, and the use of a British firm to “facilitate” this project would prove intensely problematic, as revealed by the consultants’ perceptions of Poland’s weaknesses and how they expected the country to overcome them.
This chapter considers three dominant social imaginaries that have taken hold in the contemporary setting. One is built around a particular fantasy of recognition, in which the bases of legitimacy of national space are predicated on the conditions of transnational finance capital. A second builds on an elite understanding of processes of neoliberalization as inherently experimental, uneven, and “variegated”—an understanding designed to admit economic crisis or market failure as an integral part of long-term political-economic transformation rather than an aberration. The third imaginary relies on the magical qualities attributed to brand management by its practitioners, advocates, and the general public. The chapter proposes that the mundane practices of nation branding do perpetuate the nation form, because they perpetuate a conversation about what the nation is for in a global context and about what it means to be a national citizen amid cosmopolitan conceptualizations. However, the form of recognition that nation branding offers is deeply problematic. Although nation branding promotes “wealth” in finance-capital-intensive, attention-intensive, and knowledge- or experience-intensive economies, other forms of collective wealth may be lost in the process.
orientation of what the author calls a transnational promotional class (TPC), a group of diverse actors devoted to maintaining the legitimacy of the national form for a range of profit-generating purposes.

From Bland to Brand: Transforming Canadian Culture
in Branding the Nation: The Global Business of National Identity

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Item type: chapter

In Canada, the specter of globalization casts a long shadow over the conditions of recognition of the nation and the state. What Charles Taylor refers to as the “unstable and constantly evolving amalgamation that we call Canada” is characterized by ongoing and unresolved tension over issues of identity and citizenship in the national discourse. This tension is a recurrent feature of policy debates that seek to establish a working definition of culture to incorporate divergent ideas and ideals of what it means to be Canadian. International relations scholar Jennifer Welsh calls Canada a “model citizen” for the rest of the world. Yet this continued inability to articulate what this model citizen looks like underlines the contingency of Canadian identity. The efforts to brand Canada documented here render cultural contingency into liability, as various actors compete to redefine Canada as an investment-friendly destination. This chapter shows how the concept of “diversity,” long seen as a defining characteristic of the national state, is reframed in political discourse from an asset to a liability within the context of the drive to be competitive on the global stage.

Operation Christmas
Alexander L. Fattal
in Guerrilla Marketing: Counterinsurgency and Capitalism in Colombia

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Item type: chapter

This chapter tells the story a series of advertising campaigns produced by the PAHD–Lowe/SSP3 partnership during five Christmas seasons (2010–2014). Those campaigns urged guerrilla fighters to abandon the armed struggle and return home for the holiday. The chapter focuses on the 2011 campaign, “Operation Rivers of Light,” tracing it from drawing board to presidential launch. The propaganda campaign acts as an atmospheric intervention designed to affect the public’s affective
disposition to the armed forces. The chapter looks at the creative ways that the marketers seek to rebrand the military as a humanitarian actor that is interested in the family life and emotional well being of its mortal enemies. The Christmas campaigns become a way of buttressing the legitimacy of a military that has been beset by human rights abuses. At the same time, Operation Christmas shows how the military seeks to control the narrative surrounding the conflict and how that effort fits within a broader effort to renarrate the nation, conjuring a vision of a peaceful Colombia ready to receive an influx of tourists and investment. The chapter takes place amid the backdrop of then-secret peace negotiations and the assassination of Alfonso Cano, the FARC’s leader.

Rebranding Rwanda’s Peacekeeping Identity during Post-Conflict Transition
Georgina Holmes and Ilaria Buscaglia

in Rwanda Since 1994: Stories of Change

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Drawing on recent theorising of 'nation branding', this article examines how mediatised security narratives are used as part of the current Government of Rwanda's public diplomacy strategy to establish post-conflict Rwanda's peacekeeping identity and brand image as a Troop Contributing Country. It does so by undertaking an analysis of media discourse published by the state-owned English language national newspaper The New Times between 2008 and 2018, and two ‘twitter storms’ that occurred in March 2017 and 2018 in response to the Central African Republic Sexual Exploitation and Abuse scandal involving French military peacekeepers and a second scandal involving Ghanaian police peacekeepers in South Sudan. Specifically, we ask, how does the Government of Rwanda use mediatised security narratives as a nation branding tool after genocide and civil war? We argue that mediatised security narratives are employed to erase Rwanda's negative brand informed by the frameworks of victimology, poverty and violence and reposition Rwanda as an emerging strategic player in international peacekeeping. The RPF achieves this by 'niche building' and mimicking the public diplomacy strategies of middle-powers in order to present Rwanda as a catalyst and facilitator of contemporary peacekeeping policy and practice.
In 2005, Catalan culture was named guest of honor for the Frankfurt Book Fair of 2007. A multi-year public controversy ensued over whether Castilian-language authors should be part of the official delegation. This chapter is based on analysis of a corpus of 200 articles about the dispute from print and digital media. It shows a strategic shift in the public rhetoric away from traditional discourses of linguistic authenticity and toward discourses of the market, branding, and rooted cosmopolitanism. By engaging in branding, the government administration defended its project not as stale exclusionary ethnic nationalism but as the accepted best practices of entrepreneurial contemporary governments globally. Nonetheless, traditional tropes of linguistic authenticity ultimately had a tenacious hold in official representations.

We are a Little Land: Informational Film and Small-nation Cinema
C. Claire Thomson

Et lille land’ - a little land - is a trope of Danish identity which recurs in many of the short informational films about Denmark made from the 1930s to the 1960s. This chapter outlines why the notion of Denmark as a small country has historically been fundamental to the nation’s self-understanding as an imagined community, and how and why it has been employed in informational films made for domestic and foreign consumption. The chapter discusses the role of film in the national imagination, and the importance of medium-specific qualities in that process of imagining: for the purposes of this book, such qualities include the films’ shortness, which impacts on narrative as well as distribution and exhibition. The chapter then discusses recent scholarship on ‘small-nation’ cinema, especially in the Nordic region, and the place of
informational filmmaking within the small-nation context. A final chapter section outlines a further body of scholarship on cultural diplomacy, soft power, and nation-branding in the Nordic region as a framework for understanding how images (including informational films) move across borders and re-negotiate auto- and xenostereotypes.

The Taste of Home
M. Cristina Alcalde

in Peruvian Lives across Borders: Power, Exclusion, and Home

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DOI: 10.5622/illinois/9780252041846.003.0006
Item type: chapter

This chapter invites us to reflect on some of the forms of exclusion and privilege examined in earlier chapters in the more mundane yet increasingly central space of food in constructions of Peruvianess. It discusses how a new, cosmopolitan image of Peruvians that comes out of recent nation-branding projects and culinary representations legitimizes the privileges and high social status middle and upper-class transnational Peruvians seek to maintain abroad. Rather than unite Peruvians across class differences, the gastronomic boom and its manifestations in practice reinforce social hierarchies in which middle and upper-class transnational Peruvians are at the top--therefore also reflecting the sort of exclusionary cosmopolitanism is argued is central to middle and upper-class Peruvian lives.

Constructing a New Music Industry
K. E. Goldschmitt

in Bossa Mundo: Brazilian Music in Transnational Media Industries

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Publisher: Oxford University Press
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Item type: chapter

In place of a large-scale fad, boom, or trend, the Brazilian artists who have found Anglophone publics in the 2010s have done so through a more dispersed approach than the watershed moments that characterized Brazil’s breakthroughs of the past. Brazilian artists utilize new strategies of co-branding and marketing to break through to Anglophone publics, due in part to an explosion of musical diversity over the last few decades. As a result of new mediation and distribution paths, Brazilian artists have upended old expectations for how to find success.
abroad, resulting in the looser iteration of the country’s musical brand. Yet old stereotypes of what counts as Brazilian music have adapted to a new music marketplace, emphasizing Brazil’s links to a new iteration of Afro-diasporic music.

**Speaking the Nation**

Anandita Bajpai

Published in print: 2018 Published Online: March 2019


Item type: book

Untangling the logical, lexical, and semantic patterns of the multiple official speeches of Indian prime ministers, Speaking the Nation gauges how the Indian state has been projected by different governments in different times, in the face of challenges from internal and external actors that put pressure on its leaders to safeguard their status as legitimate elites in power. It analyses how Indian nationhood is consistently reshaped and reaffirmed by invoking its secular ethos and practice, as well as the experience of market liberalization. The book calls for serious engagement with political oratory in India. A close reading of speeches since 1991—from Narasimha Rao to Narendra Modi—it captures how, through these crosscutting topics, the prominent ‘authors of the nation’ and the ‘vanguards of the state’, speak India into being.

**Washoku, Far and Near**

Theodore C. Bestor

in Devouring Japan: Global Perspectives on Japanese Culinary Identity

Published in print: 2018 Published Online: April 2018


Item type: chapter

This chapter analyzes the politics of cultural heritage and gastrodiplomacy, or official efforts at “edible nation branding” designed to increase trade, tourism, and national soft power. It explains how and why most Japanese conceive of washoku as a conceptual category in contrast with yōshoku, or Euro-American cuisine. Tracing Japan's pursuit of a UNESCO designation for washoku as an intangible cultural treasure, the chapter details how officials sought the award for both foreign recognition and to encourage the domestic public to consume more traditional foodstuffs. It also describes how a failed earlier effort to strictly regulate Japanese restaurants abroad, ridiculed as “the sushi
police,” has led state agencies to adopt softer and more inclusive campaigns to promote washoku.