

Nation branding in the foreign policy of Poland and Germany.
Analysis of the commercialization of foreign image policy

Anna Quirin

Summary

The subject of my dissertation is the theory and practice of nation branding. At the theoretical level, the study focuses on the analysis of nation branding as an instrument of soft power, in particular as an instrument of foreign image policy and international communication of states. At the practical level, the aim of the thesis is to analyze and compare the use of nation branding in Poland and Germany in 2004-2014. The analysis covered both the understanding of nation branding in both countries and its position within the foreign image policy, as well as the applied strategies along with their implementation. The main research problem is the exploration of the phenomenon of the commercialization of foreign image policy of countries under the influence of nation branding, including identification of determinants, scope and effects of the commercialization.

The main theoretical category of this dissertation is nation branding - a relatively young concept originating from marketing and assuming that countries can be treated as brands that - on the model of commercial brands - can be created and managed using marketing and branding tools.

The thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the main theoretical category of the work – nation branding. In this chapter I discuss the main theoretical approaches to the subject, review the existing definitions and propose my own definition of nation branding and nation brand. I discuss the benefits and barriers that the theorists and practitioners connect with the use of this concept. The chapter ends with the distinction of nation branding from related categories: public diplomacy and state promotion abroad.

In the second chapter, I pay attention to the theoretical categories and concepts, which are relevant for analyzing the practice of nation branding. Joseph S. Nye's concept of soft power is fundamental to this work. I treat nation branding as means of this power. Nation branding's aim is to manage soft power's resources, especially image and reputation. The second relevant category is foreign image policy. As an integral part of the foreign policy of a state, foreign image policy - and therefore also nation branding as its means - serves to achieve the objectives, functions and tasks set for the foreign policy of a given country. The third part of the chapter deals with the topic of international communication of states and international public relations. I discuss nation branding in the context of strategic international communication of countries by building an appropriate research model and setting out basic principles and criteria for success.

The third chapter is devoted to foreign image politics of Germany and Poland and the role that nation branding takes over as part of these policies. The chapter opens with a historical outline on the image-building activities of states in the past, especially of Poland's and Germany's foreign image policies in the period 1945-2004. In the next two subsections, I describe the political and societal context of nation branding implementation and analyze the understanding of the concept and its position within the framework of foreign image policies in both countries.

The fourth chapter analyzes the practice of nation branding in Poland and Germany in the years 2004-2014. In its structure, the chapter is based on the model of international strategic communication of states, discussing in turn the various phases of creating and implementing strategies. The analysis covered the objectives, interests and central aspects of the nation branding, institutional and organizational structure, situation analysis, the stage of the nation branding strategy development and the implementation with the selection of tools and the specification of the particularly intensive phases.

The last chapter is devoted to the analysis of the commercialization of foreign image policy of Poland and Germany resulting from the inclusion of nation branding into the image instruments used by these countries. The analysis focuses on identifying the determinants of the commercialization, discussing their impact and

their effects. In addition, the relationship between nation branding and the projection and shaping of national identity is deepened.

The work ends with a presentation of the most important findings and conclusions from the conducted research project.

This dissertation is set in a relatively new, dynamically developing research area, which in Poland is currently considered of a low level. The completion of this project allowed to learn about the Polish and German model of nation branding implementation and to understand the impact of this concept on the foreign image policy of these countries. I hope that this dissertation will not only contribute to filling existing research gaps, which are indicated by researchers dealing with the phenomenon of nation branding in the world, but also to the popularization of this research area in Poland. One can also hope that due to high relevance of the subject, the results of the research project will also have a practical dimension, providing politicians and practitioners in image policy with valuable information about changes that the use of nation branding implies in the field of foreign image policy of states.