Chapter 5

Nation and Regional Branding of Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan

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ABSTRACT

Central Asia is defined by its history and geography, by its people and cultures, and by geopolitics and geo-economics. Therefore, analyzing a country in the region, past, present, and future should incorporate all these elements. The purpose of this chapter is to present the development of nation branding in three countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. The chapter starts with the theory of nation branding. The particularity of the Central Asia as a region and three selected countries follow. Global ranking based on different indices is presented. In the fourth section, the nation branding of each country is addressed. The fifth section highlights lessons learned from the Borat case on nation branding in Kazakhstan but relevant for other countries in the region as well. The chapter ends with the section on branding the region as a whole.

INTRODUCTION

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Nation branding entered the big stage in the second half of the 1990s. Initially the focus of the researchers was developed economies. Recently the developing and emerging countries are also being studied. However, there has not been many studies conducted on the countries in the Central Asia. Therefore, this study will help to bridge this gap.

Why study nation branding? What are the components of nation branding? How can we measure the effectiveness of nation branding? How can nation branding help Central Asian countries and their quest for the more favorable global recognition? The goal of nation branding is to create the positive image of a country that is recognizable and respected globally. (Hurn, 2016) In return, this should increase country’s competitiveness and stimulate economic, political and cultural exchanges with the world. Therefore, the country should conduct critical analysis of its internal resources, identify positive and negative challenges in order to create relevant brand image for different market segments. Rojas-Mendez (2013) argues that nation branding can result in a “positive gain for the countries as they obtain a distinctive image in a competitive global market.” Today the question is not whether to design, develop and create nation branding. Instead, it is how to do it in a way that will provide the highest return to the country and all stakeholders in one nation. Successful nation branding can bring economic benefits, increase revenues from tourism, foreign direct investment and export. In addition, it may also improve international relations among countries (Fan, 2006).

NATION BRANDING

Nation branding is an emerging area of studies that requires an interdisciplinary approach. Kaneva (2011) offers her definition on nation branding “as a compendium of discourses and practices aimed at reconstituting nationhood through marketing and branding paradigms.” (p. 118) Anholt, the most prolific writer in the area of nation branding, always emphasizes the difference between what he is doing, consulting governments on what to do to get where they want to be, instead of doing their public relations campaigns. Therefore, he defines nation branding as “a component of national policy, never as a ‘campaign’ that is separate from planning, governance or economic development” (Anholt, 2008, p. 23)

Kaneva (2011) has conducted a comprehensive analysis on published research (186 published sources) on this topic and has divide them in three categories:
The Creative Turn of the Wine Industry  
[www.igi-global.com/article/the-creative-turn-of-the-wine-industry/201105?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/article/the-creative-turn-of-the-wine-industry/201105?camid=4v1a)

The Global Implications of Ecotourism in Emerging Economies  
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/the-global-implications-of-ecotourism-in-emerging-economies/130097?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/the-global-implications-of-ecotourism-in-emerging-economies/130097?camid=4v1a)