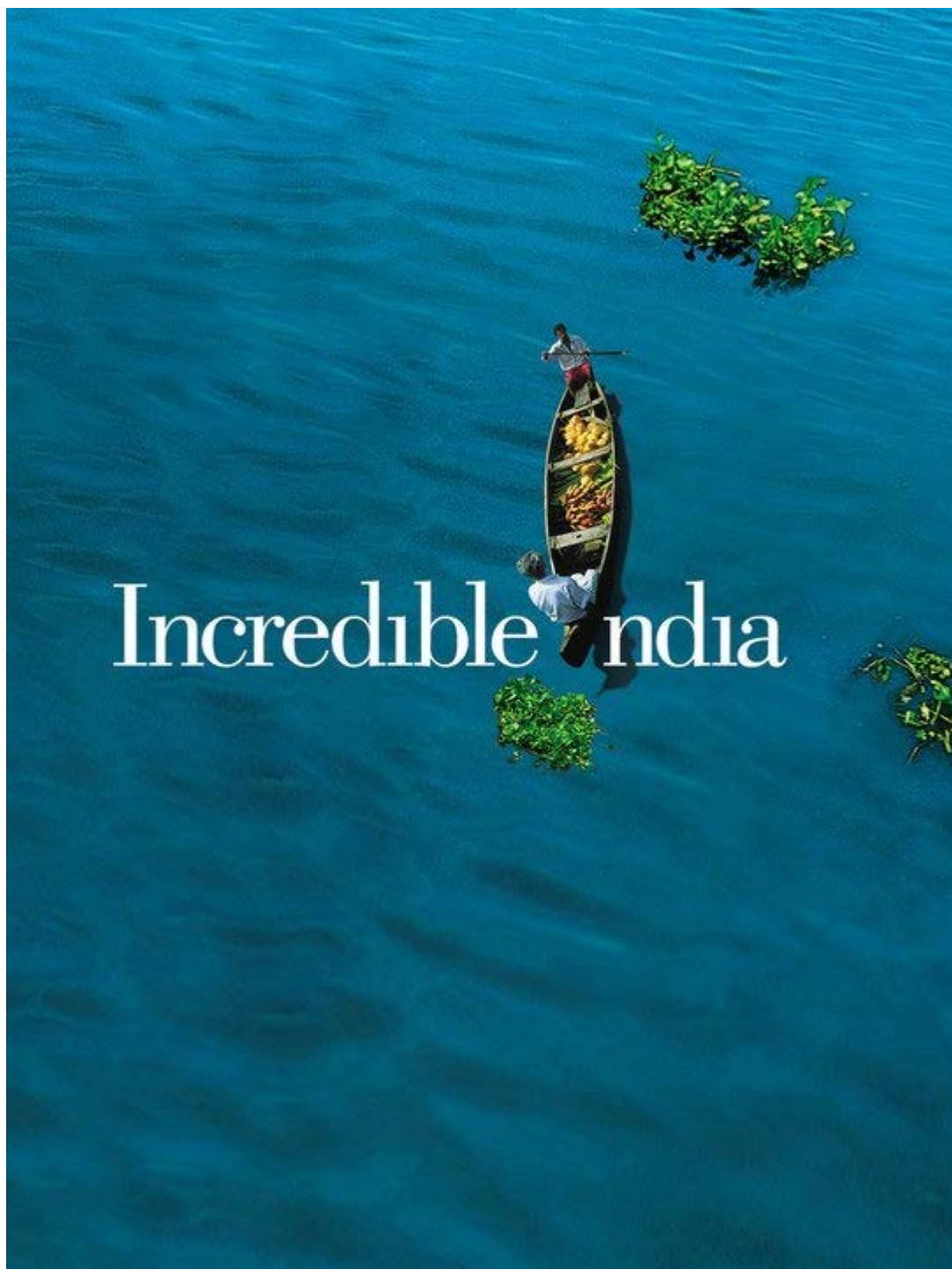


Tourism as Nation Building: India & Mexico

Examining the interconnection between Nation Branding Agents & Brand Ambassadors



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Nation Branding: a compendium of discourses and practices aimed at reconstituting nationhood through marketing and branding paradigms.

Nation branding can range from the creation of national logos and slogans to institutionalizing branding efforts within state structures. Nation branding programs are publicly funded for the most part and intended for national and international audiences. (1)

It can be argued that product branding is not unlike nation branding in that both affect individuals on an emotional and spiritual level and can create a sense of identity and belonging. Brand consultant Wally Olins argues that "when it comes to national identity, people can be 'motivated and inspired and manipulated' with the use of the same techniques that companies use to brand products". Still, this argument ignores the sociological and political implications of nation branding. (2)

Research Questions

- How does nation branding limit the range of possible national identity narratives?
- To what degree individuals are affected by nation branding, how are the effects manifested?
- How does performative national identity develop, by what means?
- What effects does nation branding have on democracy and nationalism?
- Which tools of nation branding are most effective, ineffective and why?
- Do individuals view themselves as a representation of their country, as "Brand Ambassadors"?
- What makes nation branding distinct from product branding or destination branding?

Methods

The bulk of my research will examine the role of tourism as a nation building tool in Mexico and India. By focusing on visual analysis of tourism campaigns, especially "Incredible India" and "Mexico, The Place You Thought You Knew," I hope to learn what makes tourism an effective instrument of nation branding and nation building, particularly on an individual level.

In my search for "Brand Ambassadors," I will conduct individual and group interviews at the Embassy of Mexico and the Embassy of India in Berlin. The object of the interviews is to understand how performative national identity is learned and transferred.

I will use Nadia Kaneva's works on nation branding as a foundation for my research. Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* will also serve as background for my research. Additionally, I will incorporate Joseph Nye's concept of "soft power" and employ Simon Anholt's and Wally Olins' brand consulting perspective.



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1. Kaneva, Nadia . "Nation Branding: Toward an Agenda for Critical Research ." *International Journal of Communication* 5 (2011): 117-41. Accessed June 14, 2017. doi: 1932-8036/20110117 .
 2. Ibid.