

IPBA 2019

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Place Branding and Public Diplomacy: the paradox of Reputational Security

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Abstract

This talk will look at the relationship between place branding and the struggle to secure what the author has termed Reputational Security: the degree of Security in the world that comes from being understood as of value of the wider global community. Cull points out that some elements of place and nation branding assist in such a project but paradoxically others - especially a focus on a unilateral or idiosyncratic role at the national level - work to undermine Reputational Security. He calls for an approach with renewed attention to issues of human rights and culture as areas of emphasis, and foreground cooperation as a virtue.

This presentation will consider the relationship between place branding and public diplomacy: the ways in which an international actor seeks to advance its foreign policy through engagement with a foreign public. More specifically, it will locate that relationship in the context of the ongoing struggle of actors to secure what the author has termed 'Reputational Security': the degree of security in the world that comes from being understood as of value of the wider global community. Implicit in this argument is the idea that the world has shifted in recent years into a more dangerous phase in which boundaries and futures are under threat. The presentation notes that while some elements of place and nation branding can assist in building and preserving Reputational Security, paradoxically others — especially a focus on a unilateral or idiosyncratic role at the national level — can be counterproductive. They work to undermine Reputational Security. The presentation calls for an approach with renewed attention to issues of human rights and culture as areas of emphasis, and foregrounds cooperation as a virtue.