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**Dissertation Title**

Re-imagining Nation as Brand: Globalization and National Identity in Post-Communist Bulgaria

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**Abstract**

This study explores the emerging global phenomenon of nation branding and focuses specifically on its implications for post-communist nations. The study situates its findings in a concrete socio-historical context by looking at the case of nation branding in post-communist Bulgaria. Within this context, this research demonstrates how the discourses and practices associated with nation branding advance particular ideological agendas both at the national and transnational levels.

Following the theoretical work of Pierre Bourdieu, nation branding is conceptualized as a field of struggle where discourses of nationhood and market globalization come into contact and are mutually reconfigured. Methodologically, the study adopts a critical and interpretive approach and draws on qualitative data collected through fieldwork in Bulgaria and the UK between 2003 and 2005. Based on these data, the study describes how a global field of nation branding engenders a homologous local field. The discussion traces the dynamics of the local field for the period between 2002 and 2005, and maps out changes in the composition of post-communist national elites, as well as in state-level discourses and practices implicated in the production of national identity narratives.

The study's findings concern three main areas. First, the significance of nation branding is discussed in relation to Bulgaria's national identity crisis after the collapse of the communist system. Second, the analysis considers how nation branding is implicated in the restructuring of the post-communist field of power and the struggles of national elites for new sources of legitimacy. Finally, the study points out broader implications of nation branding for understanding the dynamics of trans-national networks and discourses of symbolic power in the context of European integration and capitalist globalization.