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Beyond 2010: Assessing South Africa’s Domestic Nation Branding Strategy

Abstract:

Almost two decades after the official end of apartheid, South Africa faces a complicated political and social landscape. Growing social disparity, frequent strikes and accusations of corruption have led to suggestions that South Africa is no longer the continent’s economic core. Within this context, the country’s nation branding body has been tasked with building the South African brand abroad and fostering national pride and unity at home. After providing a review of the current academic critiques of nation branding, this paper analyses the Brand South Africa initiatives in the years since the country hosted the FIFA World Cup. Through discourse analysis of campaigns and annual reports as well as interviews with members of South Africa’s civil society, the paper finds that the campaigns limit opportunities for citizenship and flatten historic narratives in ways likely to have a detrimental effect on national identity formation and nation building.