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## Canada, Nation Branding and Domestic Politics

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**Ibrahim Berrada**

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education and drove medical training and healthcare, progressive societal elements critical to the infrastructure of Montreal, and that helped define and develop the city's cosmopolitan character and economy. He did not act in isolation, nor could he have achieved his aims without the financial clout of an affluent and powerful Anglo-Scottish-Irish merchant class, yet Holmes is without intellectual peer in Canadian history during the era he flourished. Even Montreal's urban archrival, York/Toronto in Upper Canada/Canada West, had, arguably, no one who matched his enduring accomplishments.

J. T. H. Connor

*Faculty of Medicine and Department of History, Memorial University, St John's, NL, Canada*

 [jconnor@mun.ca](mailto:jconnor@mun.ca)

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**Canada, Nation Branding and Domestic Politics**, edited by Richard Nimijean and David Carment, New York, NY, Routledge, 2019, 146 pp., CAN \$160.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-3677-3115-1

Characterizations of Canadian identity and nationhood are often intertwined with political and national branding, helping analysts discern the unclear trajectory of domestic and international policies. Canadian politicians are tasked with creating an image that separates Canada from the tumultuous politics and nationalist economic policies of the United States. Nonetheless, the politicization of branding in Canada carries implications for an assortment of socio-political issues, including pressing concerns related to Indigenous relations, feminism and gender inequality, Arctic sovereignty, northern identity, public diplomacy, foreign aid, and international relations. Richard Nimijean and David Carment argue that the politicization of branding has consequences for political procedures that subsequently impact national identity and nationhood. This edited collection provides a detailed breakdown of the politicization of national branding and its influence on domestic and international policies.

Political rhetoric, along with Canadian consciousness, is directly influenced by the ideations of the party in power. Justin Trudeau's administration has championed such Canadian values as gender equity, racial diversity, Indigenous reconciliation, and global humanitarianism. Despite this, the gap between rhetoric and active policy implementation is demonstrably wide and revealing. The Trudeau Liberals are riding on the coattails of historical Canadian values, rarely achieving the bare minimum in progressiveness demonstrated by the brand that they endorse. Nimijean and Carment point out that the politicization of Canadian identity has become the "essence of domestic brand politics" (136). According to this alternate view of identity, expressing emotive sentiments and foundational Canadian values and principles plays a more critical role than the application of policy. This is partly attributed to politicking aimed at ensuring widespread popularity and success at the polls. Nimijean and Carment posit that the "feel good rhetoric" subsumes all other approaches to public policy. This is notable, for example, in the Liberal government's response to the Syrian refugee crisis (136). In another example, Nimijean and Carment explicate the importance conferred by Liberal messaging on global humanitarianism. However, in realistic terms, Justin Trudeau's administration "is on pace to become the least generous aid donor since Pearson" (136). The rhetoric entrenched in Justin Trudeau's brand does not hold when considering the implementation of policy and

active participation in progressing Canadian values. This argument points to the implicit perils inherent in the politicization of nation branding. The latent consequences are often felt most by marginalized and vulnerable communities.

Nimijean and Carment provide a wonderfully insightful guide that prompts the reader to examine the significant problems exposed by the politicization of nation branding. They contend that “looking at domestic brand politics and their connection to Canada’s brand in the world therefore sheds light on the myriad challenges facing the evolution of Canadian foreign policy and a quest for more substance” (6). Along with other prominent academics and experts in brand politics, Nimijean and Carment assume the challenging role of examining the “Canada’s Back” slogan entrenched in the “Sunny Ways” messaging espoused by the Trudeau government. They demonstrate the difference between Harper-era branding and the Justin Trudeau brand to illustrate the power of persuasion, the allure of attractive rhetoric, and the illusion of action. The “Canada’s Back” analysis aims to scrutinize the “return to values that the government considers to be central to Canada’s role as a global actor” (7).

Canada’s role on the global stage is tied largely to Justin Trudeau’s celebrity status. His popularity boomed globally once his image as a young, stylish, and progressive leader took center stage. In chapter two, Alex Marland provides a detailed exploration of Justin Trudeau’s brand and its relationship with the branding of his father, former Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau. Marland expands on the brand’s narrative, accurately expressing how well it played within Liberal political circles in large Canadian cities and the extent to which it was supported by his online celebrity status. This celebrity appeal broadened Justin Trudeau’s base of support and helped him succeed at the polls. In chapter three, Stephen Brown expands on the success of Liberal Party branding that appealed to its base. Brown demonstrates the enticement emanating from progressive foreign policy initiatives. Notably, he provides a comparative perspective that is necessary to illustrate the differences between the Conservative and Liberal approaches.

In chapter four, Rebecca Tiessen and David Black wonder for “whom is Canada back?” (39), a thought-provoking query that sheds light on the marginalization of vulnerable groups and communities. The notion of being back is often attributed to the return of progressive “liberal values, strengthened humanitarian practices, more socially progressive ethical commitments, and principles of justice and equality” (41), each lending a hand to developing Canada’s national identity. For example, the Liberal brand is known to prioritize feminism and gender equality in foreign policy. A reasonable wariness derived from historical inaction justifies the question posed by Tiessen and Black. Heather Exner-Pirot pursues this line of questioning in chapter five to describe the often-fraught relationship between the Government of Canada and Indigenous communities.

In chapter six, Mark Paradis, Richard D. Parker, and Patrick James look at the role of political branding and its implications on northern policy and Arctic sovereignty. The authors examine the North, using a forecasting model to illuminate current and future concerns, from search and rescue, environmental protection, fishing rights, and seabed resources, to the transit of military, commercial, scientific, and private vessels. The North continues to be a contentious topic for Canada and other circumpolar nations. The implications of branding are consequential in the context of Canadian Arctic sovereignty and northern identity.

In chapter seven (by Kai Ostwald and Julian Dierkes) and in chapter eight (by Evan Potter), the authors delve into the role of public diplomacy and foreign policy in the digital era. For Ostwald and Dierkes, the issue stems from a distinction between Stephen Harper’s and Justin Trudeau’s tactics in engaging in foreign affairs and diplomacy. The authors argue that a substantial policy shift emerged from the ungagging of civil servants after the 2015 election. Trudeau’s official policy liberated civil servants from Harper’s method of centralized control. To

illustrate the differences, Ostwald and Dierkes analyze “400,000 tweets from the 296 major Twitter accounts associated with Global Affairs Canada [which point to] . . . a significant shift in levels of engagement, content of diplomatic outreach, independence of missions . . . [and] user interaction with tweets” (83). On the other hand, Potter interprets the relationship between public diplomacy and nation branding on digital platforms as a phenomenon that has exacerbated already delicate diplomatic relations. He pays particular attention to Canada’s “weibo” diplomacy in China.

In chapter nine, Jocelyn Coulon examines the progression of foreign policy from Harper to Trudeau. He contends that Justin Trudeau’s administration has maintained a path to global diplomacy similar to Harper’s. He points out that the Liberals are plagued by issues not unlike those that emerged under Harper’s tenure. In effect, Coulon maintains that more of the same problems are evident.

Finally, in chapter ten, Daryl Copeland expands on the “Canada’s Back” notion, analyzing the Liberal brand from an international perspective. His examination relies on a historical evolution model incorporating the development of foreign policy from the Cold War to the postwar era. He proposes a five-point plan to develop and transform the very nature of Canadian foreign policy, while emphasizing a renewed and reinforced relationship with China, India, and ASEAN member countries. He proposes that this should be accomplished with a degree of respect for science, research, and technological development.

This edited collection provides unique insight into and analysis on Canada from a critical and infrequently considered point of view. Branding offers an exclusive counterargument for researchers interested in considering the broad differences between political rhetoric and political action.

Ibrahim Berrada

*Department of Human Studies, Laurentian University, Sudbury, ON, Canada*

 [iberrada@laurentian.ca](mailto:iberrada@laurentian.ca)

 <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5410-6850>

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## **Environmental Activism on the Ground: Small Green and Indigenous**

**Organizing**, edited by Jonathan Clapperton and Liza Piper, Calgary, University of Calgary Press, 2019, 364 pp., CAN \$39.99, (paper) ISBN 978-1-77385-004-7

Environmental abuse accelerated tremendously in the 20<sup>th</sup> century because of population growth, economic development, and technological advancement. Historically, the environment has served as source of food, shelter, clothing, and basic needs for humans. During preindustrial time, resource exploitation and consumption were sustainable. As global population increased during and after the industrial revolution, demand for natural resources also increased. This led to excessive environmental destruction and the emergence of environmental activists.

Clapperton and Piper’s book *Environmental Activism on the Ground: Small Green and Indigenous Organizing* focuses on local environmental activism in the Western Hemisphere. According to the editors, the idea of writing the book emerged from a workshop organized in Edmonton, Alberta, in 2014. With strong historical knowledge, they assembled chapters on the