

# Chapter 8

## Branding Peru: Cultural Heritage and Popular Culture in the Marketing Strategy of PromPerú

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### Introduction

When I was a young woman living in Peru my mother used to write to me every time she would see Peru mentioned some place. She was not referring to the news, since I would know about those stories inasmuch I was living them—earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, coup d'états, terrorism, and great archaeological discoveries. Rather, she meant Peru in popular culture. She used to say that whenever a distant place was needed for a story line, it would be Peru. She spotted Peru all over the media. In a *Superman* TV episode. Cary Grant piloting over Barranca in the film *Only Angels Have Wings*. Humphrey Bogart reuniting with Lauren Bacall in Paita in the thriller, *Dark Passage*. Charlton Heston looking for lost treasure in *Secret of the Incas*. Not to mention Frank Sinatra singing about Peru in his great hit, “Come Fly with Me.”

Come fly with me, let's fly down to Peru  
In llama land there's a one-man band  
And he'll toot his flute for you  
Come fly with me, let's take off in the blue

Long after I returned to the USA, Peru was still present in popular culture. Disney, the doyen of popular culture, created an imaginary Inka Empire (albeit with significant borrowings from earlier civilizations) as the setting of its animated movie, *The Emperor's New Groove*, released in 2000<sup>1</sup> (Silverman 2002). *Groove* was followed by *Kronk's New Groove*, a direct-to-video animated movie released in 2005, and a children's TV series, *The Emperor's New School*, which began in 2006 and mentions in a few episodes that the characters are Inkas. A less positive connection between

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<sup>1</sup> However, Peru and the Inkas are never mentioned by name and the setting is identified as “ancient Mesoamerica.”

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Peru and American popular culture is the murdered rapper, Tupac Amaru Shakur, whose Black Panther activist mother named him after a great Peruvian revolutionary of the Colonial Period—although it is unknown how many of his fans were familiar enough with Andean history to grasp the reference and the connotation.

These few examples suffice to demonstrate that Peru has appeared in meaningful ways in the American popular culture consciousness for quite some time. Interestingly, however—and notwithstanding its magnificent scenery, extraordinary archaeological landscapes and fascinating traditional societies—tourism to Peru was slow to develop, both from the USA and from elsewhere. This lag is most attributable to the technological difficulty of air access into the Andes until the late 1960s.<sup>2</sup> More recently, terrorism (early 1980s–mid-1990s) contributed to a setback in tourism.

To redress Peru's negative image and unfulfilled tourism potential the neoliberal government of President Alberto Fujimori (1990–2000) created PromPerú (Commission for the Promotion of Peru for Exports [International Commerce] and Tourism) in 1993, just as Peru was emerging from its decade of civil war. The state agency stepped into the void surrounding tourism promotion that had existed since the demise of its state-run predecessors (EnturPerú and Foptur) during the socialist military dictatorship (1968–1980). PromPerú's creation marked Peru's insertion into the competitive global market for the agency was explicitly charged with creating “an integral, attractive image of Peru abroad and specifically to encourage investment, boost exports and improve tourism levels” (Boza 2000, p. 5). Its goal, thus, was to erase the negative foreign perception of Peru and create a desirable tourism and business destination. This kind of officially orchestrated creation of nation-as-destination (*desti-nation*) today is known as nation-branding (Anholt 1998). PromPerú arose on the cusp of nation-branding worldwide. It was one of many other governmental agencies in countries around the world that, during the late 1990s, were experimenting with corporate business theory and marketing principles so as to enhance their image for the international market.

Simon Anholt's coining of the term “nation-brand” in 1998 (see also Dinnie 2008) arose from his observation of the decisions and policies that were being undertaken in countries concerned with their international reputation, just as they were concerned with their trademark commercial products. Nation-branding scripts the country as a carefully produced, managed, and marketed product, a brand. Anholt characterizes nation-branding as “national identity in the service of enhanced competitiveness” (quoted by Comaroff and Comaroff 2009, p. 122), among other definitions. Nation-branding is a global marketing effort and, indeed, we live in an era that Nezar AlSayyad has called “a global culture supermarket” in which culture “is shaped equally by both the state and the market” (2008, p. 165). Nation-branding has “kicked it up a notch”—appropriating star chef Emeril Lagasse's catch phrase

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<sup>2</sup> In other words, until air travel was improved, the great Inka sites of the south highlands could not be developed as major tourist destinations: Cuzco, Sacred Valley, and Machu Picchu. In this regard, it is interesting that *Secret of the Incas* (released in 1954) accurately depicts the very few number of tourists who arrived by air in Cuzco a few times a week.

(himself a brand and popular culture icon)—in terms of how countries market themselves.

The application of the word “brand” to countries has led to a mutual courtship between states and international private sector brand management and consulting companies such as Future Brand and Interbrand that already were handling goods. This professionalization of nation-branding has made it a high stakes and very expensive enterprise. Nation-brands are a country’s calling card on the world stage and a potent demonstration of soft power (Nye 2004). The study of nation-brands reveals how a country would like to be perceived and what it considers to be its most appealing attributes. Of course, there may be a disconnect between the touted features of a nation-brand and the reality within the country, and both internal and/or external audiences to the branding campaign may perceive that fact. A successful brand is one that can be sustained in the face of examination—domestic and foreign. It can deliver on what it promises. But at what cost? John and Jean Comaroff worry that the logic of corporatism has taken over nations: “Statecraft itself has come to be modeled ever more openly on the rhetoric and rationale of the for-profit corporation ... government actually *becomes* business ... corporate nationhood may be remaking countries ... in the image of the limited liability company ... with astonishing abandon and almost no attention to social costs—or worse yet, in denial of a ‘social’ to which any costs may be ascribed” (2009, p. 126, 127, italics in original).

I focus my study of the Peru brand in two directions: analysis of the discourse (words and images) of PromPerú’s marketing campaign, and the repercussions or costs of those campaigns on the ground—among the Peruvians themselves. Regarding this last point, I am concerned with those social dimensions lamented by the Comaroffs but that are not ethnographically examined by them. I am interested in how a national-branding campaign actually affects citizens, how a democratic government responds by way of its policy decisions, how nation-branding is enacted at the official and popular levels of society, and what the sociological consequences are to the populace. I leave economic assessments of nation-branding to other specialists.

### “Pack Your Six Senses” (2003–2007)

PromPerú’s initial activities in the tourism field were unimpressive but when 1996 was declared “The Year of 600,000 Tourists” a more integrated, comprehensive, and competitive approach began to be taken. Given all the problems that had afflicted Peru in previous years as well as continuing political crises, PromPerú did the best it could at the outset of its mission. But by 2001, it appeared that the government would close the office. The election that year of Stanford-trained economist Alejandro Toledo as president of Peru (2001–2006), however, changed PromPerú’s fortunes because Toledo believed tourism should be an axis for development. So important did Toledo consider tourism that in 2004, he partnered with the USA TV’s Travel Channel in a documentary called “Peru: The Royal Tour” (aired November 16, 2004) whose pitch was “When a president is your tour guide, there’s



**Fig. 8.1** “Land of the Inkas” always appears printed in the logo. The logo is composed of a colorful scarlet macaw (indigenous to the tropical forest) emerging from the beak of a bird that is rendered as one of the famous precolumbian geoglyphs of the desert south coast of Peru and that is traced on an Inka stone block (of the highlands). I doubt that the foreign public (in general) understood this iconography. Nevertheless, the logo is visually appealing. (Photograph of an old T-shirt that belonged to the author, taken in December 2004)

nowhere you can’t go.”<sup>3</sup> A full-color eight-page special advertising section in *The New Yorker*<sup>4</sup> previewed the program and included an ad from PromPerú’s “Pack Your Six Senses. Come to Peru” campaign, which had been created the year before (in 2003) and which promoted the country as “Land of the Inkas” (Fig. 8.1).

That tagline—“Land of the Inkas”—recognized that most potential tourists, if they knew anything about Peru, would have (or could be instructed to have) one principal association with it: the Inkas. The slogan built on Peru’s most iconic image in the public imaginary: Machu Picchu, fabled lost city of the Inkas. As Carlos Canales, then president of the National Tourism Board, said: “The idea was to orient the consumer so that he would identify us and know that we exist” (quoted in Navarro 2003). This issue was quite serious. American Airlines, for instance, in 1998, had a travel campaign for Peru that said “American Airlines Now Offers Service To Places That No Longer Exist!” (Length constraints do not permit me to unpack that statement.)

The phrase “Pack Your Six Senses” was intended to convey Peru as an experience beyond the five of smell, taste, touch, hearing, and sight—that you should be ready for an experience beyond the commonly experienced and exceeding your

<sup>3</sup> In April 2002, The Travel Channel toured Jordan with King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein and later that year New Zealand was presented by its Prime Minister, Helen Clark.

<sup>4</sup> *The New Yorker* is a venerable, literate, upscale magazine. The Travel Channel and Peru were investing where the payback would be the greatest: among a public with the resources to travel and the level of cultural sophistication to want to do so. Carlos Canales, then head of CANATUR (National Chamber of Tourism), said, “the campaign is oriented to an adult group, older than 25 years, with a high level of education and who earn more than \$ 75,000 yearly, with cosmopolitan culture, independent, and who are always looking for enriching life experiences” (quoted in Navarro 2003).



**Fig. 8.2** The lettering for “Pack Your Six Senses” is derived from the colonial manuscript of Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala. (Photograph is cropped from a tourism ad on a wall in Jorge Chavez Airport, Lima, taken by the author in July 2004)

expectations. Words that appear in the ads are what you would expect: “discover,” “unique,” and “wonders.”

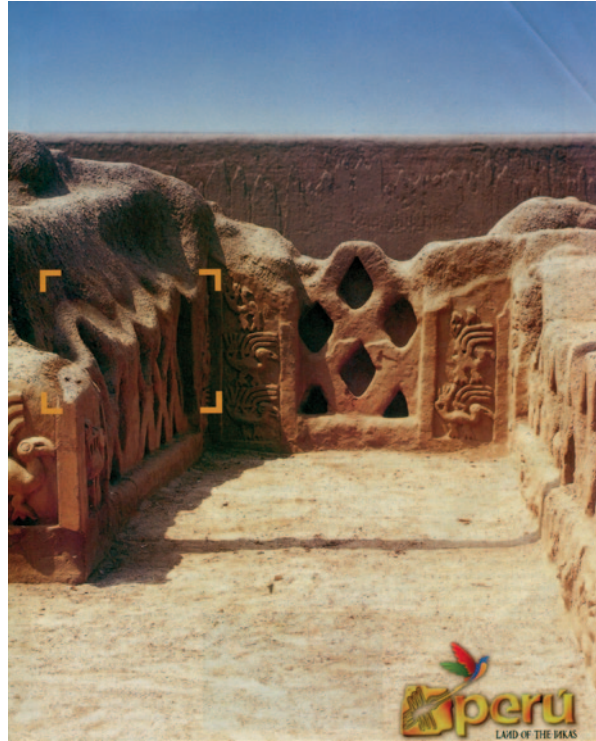
The brilliant “Pack Your Six Senses” campaign was the creation of the renowned advertising firm J Walter Thompson (JWT), contracted by PromPerú. “Pack Your Six Senses” saturated US magazines devoted to travel, leisure, and food. It advertised Peru along three dimensions: history/archaeological monuments, nature/biodiversity, and living traditions/living culture. The archaeological ads provided some necessary textual explanation, whereas the nature ads did not need to do so.

The lettering (Fig. 8.2) of the “Pack Your Six Senses” campaign is distinctive and derived from an early sixteenth century Colonial manuscript (Guaman Poma de Ayala’s *El Primer Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno*). Any educated Peruvian recognizes it from school and because the font has been widely used in publicity in Peru at least since the 1970s. PromPerú chose this lettering for its foreign public because it is unique and eye catching. But PromPerú also chose it for domestic consumption, for at the same time that “Pack Your Six Senses” was launched abroad, PromPerú undertook a national campaign with the slogan “Peru Has Everything. Live It!,” which was intended to promote domestic tourism (*La Industria*, Chiclayo, June 29, 2003). Almost the exact same words would be revived by PromPerú for its full international nation-branding campaign in 2011 (see “Live the Legend” below).

The first “Pack Your Six Senses” print ads were special section magazine inserts with detailed texts explaining the cultural, archaeological and natural wonders of Peru. The amount of text and number of photographs decreased in 2004. In 2005 crisp, single-image ads touting single destinations appeared, accompanied by an enticing caption beginning with the word “Discover.” If you look closely at one such ad (Fig. 8.3) you will see what I call a “Kodak bracket,” a yellow frame around part of the photograph (we might also call it a *National Geographic* bracket), in essence becoming a photograph of the photographic image and putting the viewer in the position of virtual photographer and simulating the visual experience that we will have of the site when we visit. The image invites us to consume the site. Not only will we pack our six senses and take them to Peru, through our cameras we will consume Peru and bring it home with us in the form of visual souvenirs. As Urry writes:

Photography is... intimately bound up with the tourist gaze. Photographic images organize our anticipation or daydreaming about places we might gaze on. When we are away we record images of what we have gazed on. And we partly choose where to go to capture places on film. The obtaining of photographic images in part organizes our experiences as tourists. (1990, p. 140)

**Fig. 8.3** The “Kodak bracket” (or “*National Geographic* bracket”) on a “Pack Your Six Senses” ad, produced by PromPerú



We immediately understand the Kodak bracket because of our positionality as members of a culturally privileged group. We have learned a “visual vocabulary of perception” that has taught us to see in a particular way (Harris and Ruggles 2007, p. 8). The ad most directly addresses a sense of sight among the other senses highlighted by the slogan.

Other iterations of the “Pack Your Six Senses” campaign were created. 2006 was a period of experimentation in PromPerú, but the ads produced had less aesthetic appeal and were short-lived. In 2007, the variations of the previous year were eliminated and the print ads look like those of 2005, but with the addition of a small map at the bottom of the page showing the location of Peru and, importantly, the creation of new tagline: “Country of Experiences and Senses,” a direct emotional appeal to the potential tourist. The emotion evoked in the new addition to the campaign reached fulfillment with three exceptional television ads, released in 2008, that saturated US television in 30-sec TV spots. I analyze them below.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> All youtube videos cited in this chapter with their url were available as of August 21, 2014 when this volume went to press.



## ***Machu Picchu***

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=97IEKrtEIU4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=97IEKrtEIU4)

Machu Picchu is presented in this ad as the embodiment of Peru's history and living Andean traditions. The latter are represented by a traditionally dressed Quechua-speaking father and son channeling their heritage in language and material culture. The use of Quechua authenticates the experience the tourist will have and corresponds to the well-known use of foreign language in advertising (see Jaworski and Thurlow 2013). Machu Picchu—shrouded in mist, ready to be discovered—is a familiar image on postcards and this representation corresponds to its ecological setting. But the environment is not the message. Rather, it is personal discovery and validation of Andean heritage as the young boy asks his father: *Taytay, kaychu kay rimawaskaykita?* /Father, is this what you told me about? And the father replies, “*Qhaway!/Look!*” as the mist disappears, revealing the site in its glory. The promo suggests that the tourist will have this same experience of ethereal discovery at the site.

## ***Semana Santa (Easter Holy Week) in Ayacucho***

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=FK\\_j\\_cryZn0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FK_j_cryZn0)

Semana Santa is deployed as an example of Peru's living traditions, here in the form of mestizo Catholicism rather than the more traditional heritage legacy in the first promo. Semana Santa in Ayacucho is one of the most moving religious celebrations in Peru and a deeply embedded part of the historic city's popular culture. Although the action is staged, it is not far off the mark except for the contrived blowing out of candles so as to heighten the drama of the emerging, candle-lit litter carrying the religious image. Introduced sound effects are placed over actual religious prayer for dramatic effect as well.

## ***Jungle***

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMeynDvNJE4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMeynDvNJE4)

This promo showcases Peru's biodiversity and depicts, in a familiar trope, indigenous people as part of nature. The visuals seem to have been inspired by the 1959 film, “Green Mansions” (based on W. H. Hudson's 1904 novel), starring Audrey Hepburn. The staged sound effects create an experiential soundscape or auditory space (as used by Feld 1996). The promo simulates the immersive experience the tourist supposedly will have in the jungle, bearing in mind, however, that the jungle portrayed is not the far more domesticated one that tourists will visit.

Importantly, “Pack Your Six Senses” was not conceived or executed as nation-branding as the term is used technically today, but rather was described by PromPerú

as a promotional campaign for tourism. This is not to say that PromPerú did not avail itself of business and marketing strategies that characterize nation-branding, or that the campaign was not intended to generate a positive image of Peru. Rather, PromPerú was focused on generating tourism as a source of revenue; it did not imbricate the campaign in a larger, comprehensive strategy or national ideology.

### **“Live the Legend” (2008–2010)**

At the same time that the three “Pack Your Six Senses” videos were running on TV, the “Pack Your Six Senses” print campaign was reformulated by PromPerú in 2008 as “Peru. Live the Legend,” with a greater, more direct emphasis on experience: “This place exists. You can see it. Feel it. Come live the legend.” Each legend had a print ad as well as the innovation of Internet videos: “Where Gods Become Mountains” for Machu Picchu; “Facing Eternal Walls He Emerged from the Sea” for the spectacular ancient sites of the north coast; “Peru’s Gateway to the Gods” for Lake Titicaca; “Land of Snow-Covered Stars” for adventure tourism in the Andes; “Seeing Giants” for adventure tourism in the Amazon; and “Feel Centuries of Faith” for colonial and contemporary Lima.

Consider how different the 58-sec summary “Live the Legend” Internet video ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=RzHDPlkZxx8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RzHDPlkZxx8)) is from the previous three promos (coast, highlands, and jungle) for “Pack Your Six Senses.” In those ads—granted they are beautiful and dramatic—the viewer was not in the action. We were passive observers. In the “Live the Legend” video, we are active. Or, at least, a 20-something traveling generation is. An off-camera young-sounding woman narrates the youthful tourists in the video. They are participating in living Andean culture, which is shown as the continuous descendant of the ancient civilizations preceding it. The young tourists are dancing with villagers in a traditional Quechua fiesta—a backstage encounter tourists would not have. But, it is the possibility of authenticity (MacCannell 1976) that is being sold here. “Live the Legend” feeds tourists’ well-known quest for personal, emotional experience, a topic of great interest in critical tourism studies (e.g., Picard and Robinson 2012; Watson et al. 2012).

That 20-somethings are the new target audience is a conclusion supported by PromPerú’s decision to produce the video explicitly for social media: youtube, twitter, facebook, and flickr, unlike “Pack Your Six Senses,” which was a print-based and TV campaign, and which took advantage of the official PromPerú website only for the presentation of static information.

The “Live the Legend” print ads are noteworthy for having hotel, dining, and transportation icons in the lower left corner that direct the viewer to the [www.peru.info](http://www.peru.info) website. Tourism is still the driving force behind PromPerú’s activities and PromPerú is getting better at organizing it on the web. The advertising logo is still the same as in “Pack Your Six Senses”: the macaw emerging out of the bird glyph on an Inka rock alongside the word Perú. Importantly, though, the phrase “Land of the Inkas” no longer appears below the rock (see Fig. 8.1).



**Fig. 8.4** The brilliant logo of *la marca Perú*. (Screenshot captured on the PromPerú website in January 2014; Source: <http://www.promperu.gob.pe>)



I have no data on the success of the “Live the Legend” campaign, but I conclude that it was not adequate because at the same time that it was appearing a major new initiative was being undertaken at PromPerú, one that resulted in the first true nation-brand for Peru: *la marca Perú*, the Peru brand.

### **La marca Perú (2011-Present [2014])**

Mere months after the launch of “Live the Legend” and even as “Live the Legend” continued to be used, PromPerú conceived a new campaign that would be revolutionary in advancing PromPerú’s mission to promote the country for export, investment, and tourism—a multistranded megaproject to *brand* Peru—a campaign that would simultaneously work abroad while serving other ideological as well as practical purposes at home. That project was developed by PromPerú over the 15 months following July 2009 with the help of 15 members of an interdisciplinary FutureBrand team, the brand strategy and design consultancy of the McCann-Erickson WorldGroup, one of the world’s most prestigious advertising and marketing firms.

*La marca Perú* was launched on March 10, 2011 with a new eye-catching, totally unambiguous country logo (Fig. 8.4; replacing the previous bird-and-rock icon) and an exceptionally appealing 2-min video ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=TNkNg80dk2g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TNkNg80dk2g)) shown at the world’s largest travel trade fair, always held in Berlin. The logo and video went viral on the Internet. The next day (March 11), the first Peru Day was held at the New York Stock Exchange and here, too, *la marca Perú* was literally unfurled with massive publicity (Fig. 8.5).

Two events: one for tourism, one for business—both working together under the new nation-brand and with a single purpose: to promote Perú as a stable country with unlimited economic investment opportunities equal to its unlimited touristic interest. Put succinctly by the Minister of Foreign Trade and Tourism, the government perceived the need to have a brand that would position Peru abroad so as to



**Fig. 8.5** The first Peru Day at the New York Stock Exchange, March 11, 2011. **a** Peru’s nation-brand is unfurled (Source: [http://incakolanews.blogspot.com/2011\\_03\\_06\\_archive.html](http://incakolanews.blogspot.com/2011_03_06_archive.html)). **b** Peru’s Finance Minister, Ismael Benavides, rings the closing bell. (Source: <http://archive.peruthisweek.com/blogs/business/archives/finance-stock-market>)

attract tourists and investment: “The idea was to unify and create a single identity” (quoted in *El Comercio*, March 10, 2011). Peru is that identity, encapsulated in its logo.

At the same time that a single identity for the country was being promoted, the slogan of the Peru brand campaign is “Hay un Perú para cada quien”—“There is a Peru for each and every one,” replacing “Live it, feel it.” Peru is conceived as

“multifaceted, special, and captivating”—a phrase repeated in the campaign ([archive.perthisweek.com/news/14362](http://archive.perthisweek.com/news/14362)). Certainly, if it is nature, traditional culture, or archaeology that you want, Peru has it. But look at the video and you will see an important, clear, and new message: Peru is a modern country ripe for investment. Here is what part of the script says: “This mythical land is today a great and thriving nation with a developing economy that is opening itself to the world... and the countless possibilities of applied techniques and technologies.”

The enthusiastic reception of *la marca Perú* at the Berlin and New York events was matched at home when, in early May 2011, PromPerú introduced *la marca Perú* for domestic consumption by means of a hilarious 15-min television documentary (produced by Young and Rubicam) in which a busload of well-known Peruvian personalities from across the cultural spectrum—ambassadors as they are called—bring the best and most iconic of Peruvian popular culture to their surprised fictive compatriots in Peru, Nebraska, USA ([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r\\_xBZcVEH1I](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_xBZcVEH1I)). The goal of that trip to the US midwest—purportedly to awaken the inner Peruvian in small-town American residents—actually was intended to generate a strong sense of identification with and pride in Peru among the Peruvians back home, to build an expanded national identity and motivate the populace to support PromPerú’s economic and tourism goals and ultimately the imagined community (Anderson 1996) of Peru itself. “Peru, Nebraska” was a sensation in Peru, garnering an immense viewing audience and widespread positive commentary across sectors following its premiere.

However, national identity—an amorphous, fraught idea—is not unproblematically appropriated by a state to improve the country’s prospects for increased foreign investment and tourism. Nation-branding is an actual project requiring support from the populace. *La marca Perú*, although created by PromPerú, is intended to be a coproduction of the Peruvian people and their state. Indeed, the national campaign exhorts Peruvians to be domestic ambassadors of their country to each other.

In Peru, which has been characterized by pervasive negativity toward itself (resonant with Herzfeld’s 2004 concept of cultural intimacy), *la marca Perú* has been wildly successful in generating massive public interest and enthusiasm. Whereas previously the official discourse of national identity was constructed around past glory (to wit, “Peru, Land of the Inkas”), at the heart of this recent *domestic* campaign is the presentation and valorization of *contemporary* Peruvian popular culture—in addition to the more recognized *patrimonio cultural* (cultural patrimony). The new Peru brand integrates the cultural heritage of imposing ancient sites with popular culture (extraordinary cuisine, music and dance, handicrafts, traditional highland people, *criollo* and Afro-Peruvian coastal populations, etc.), all represented by the new country logo (Fig. 8.4) and enfolded into its ideology.

*La marca Perú* has validated a strategic cluster of positive cultural ideas about what Peru and Peruvianess are. The nation-brand has generated a performative and embodied pride of self as a member of this imagined community of Peru. Peruvians of the proverbial “all walks of life” are materializing and embodying the Peru brand campaign. For instance, wearing polos, sweatshirts, and jackets with the brand logo



Fig. 8.6 Wearing the Peru brand logo is the rage among ordinary Peruvians. (Photographs: Helaine Silverman)

has become the rage (Fig. 8.6) and companies officially petition to use the logo of the nation-brand on the many kinds of goods they produce (see <http://www.peru.info/solicitudes/public/reglamento.pdf>).

PromPerú is actively breaking race, class, and gender barriers to enlist the entire nation in its domestic ambassadorial project, validating the popular as could be seen in a Peruvian TV program from July 2011 (unfortunately, no longer available on youtube). In it, the immediately recognizable red PromPerú bus has just returned



from Peru, Nebraska and is now traveling around Lima to promote the same values as it did in Nebraska. The reporter explains to her TV audience that “PromPerú has put the luxurious Mercedes Benz bus at the disposition of the Peruvians because we have the obligation to promote a *marca* that we have in our blood and heart. We’re lucky to be Peruvian and to enjoy this and we have the obligation to share our Peru with everyone so that our country has no limits.” The popular has become the basis of national growth. What is that which is now valued? Food of all the ethnicities, the *yapa* (the extra portion of food that street vendors give their clients), popular music, popular dance, sport, vernacular religious customs, hard work, and many other popular traditions, *as well as* the pre-Columbian heritage and the natural environment. All are Perú, Peruvianness, the national identity mosaic that is deliberately being promoted—most especially popular culture and the ordinary Peruvians who carry it. Popular culture is validated as Peruvian heritage, an inheritance to which all Peruvians have a right, indeed, an obligation, according to the exhortatory script.

### **“Empire of Hidden Treasures” (2012): The Second International Launch of la Marca Perú**

A brilliant 3-min web trailer (a minimovie), “2032,” was created by the McCann Erickson agency for the second international launch of *la marca Perú* ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5we-yas2Ro](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5we-yas2Ro)). It went viral and with good reason. An original story is created in which we see a wealthy businessman in his futuristic office in the year 2032. He receives a package containing a flash drive. Curious, he plays it and sees a video filmed by himself 20 years earlier on his trip to Peru as a young man. The younger him shows all the wonderful experiences he had in Peru, ranging from archaeological discovery, to sport and ecological adventures, to cultural engagements with traditional Peruvian people. The elegant businessman watches and remembers. He then phones his wife, saying, “Darling, have you ever been to Peru?” The video ends with PromPerú’s new tagline: “Whatever you need today is in Peru.” And the country logo.

Also embedded in the middle of the trailer is the pitch to the global business community: “When the whole world said ‘it can’t be done’ and the hopes of a country demonstrated that the world was wrong.” But the overall theme of the trailer is personal experience, learning, and the way life should be lived, which only Peru can provide. The “Peru is a life-altering experience” message of “2032” underwrites the new “Empire of Hidden Treasures” tourism campaign. Although the campaign’s title does not accord with the content of its print ads or the three additional web promos, the print ads are coherent and brilliant in their own right.

The real meaning-bearing tagline for “Empire of Hidden Treasures” is not that misleading title, but rather the subtitle: “Don’t Watch The Movie, Live It For Real.” *You* will have a deeply personal, emotional experience in Peru. And not only will

**Fig. 8.7** Example of the movie theme script of ads for PromPerú’s “Empires of Hidden Treasures” campaign. (Source: <http://veilletourisme.ca/2013/01/07/3-campagnes-marketing-au-pays-du-sep-tieme-art/>)



you have that experience, *you* are totally in charge of your experience, as was the young man in “2032.” The print ads are ingeniously designed like a movie poster and reference this genre, saying: “Produced and Directed by You; Created and Written by You; Costumes Designed by You; Art Direction by You; Edited by You; Soundtrack by You; Casting by You” (Fig. 8.7). Obviously, this is not a print ad campaign for group tours. “Empire of Hidden Treasures” is reminiscent of Julio Cortazar’s 1963 novel, *Rayuela*, in which his characters play with the reader and offer multiple endings to the story. PromPerú offers the armchair tourist the opportunity to be a real tourist and create his or her own drama on the set of Peru with their own individual plot choices.

The three additional tourism promo videos on the Web, to which I referred above, are “The Beginning,” “The Legacy,” and a combination of the two with no logical segue between their abbreviated versions. “The Beginning” is a stunning (think Warner Brothers’ 2004 *Troy*) but error-filled 2:33-min archaeological drama meant to entice the viewer to ancient sites ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=XzMFrRp5pYo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XzMFrRp5pYo)). I showed it to my University of Illinois tourism students and they were completely bewildered by it and unmotivated to go to Peru. Too much background knowledge about ancient Peru is required to appreciate it. (I am an archaeologist and I love it). “The Legacy” (2:24 min) pitches the great civilizations but only as one part of many more attractions ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=7yKBwsN5ZIQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7yKBwsN5ZIQ)). “The Legacy” script invites us to “enjoy Peru on your next vacation” where these attractions are put on display for “entertainment.” “The Legacy” is a direct appeal to upscale tourists who will “enjoy the highest level” of everything in Peru: comfort, cuisine, transportation, and hotels while seeing a “breathtaking landscape filled with magic and fantasy and the entertainment you can only find here—in Peru, Empire of Hid-



den Treasures. Don't watch the movie, live it for real." Affluent tourists can selectively consume the best, as presented by PromPerú. And only in Peru can you have these experiences, which require no knowledge of the country or concern with its structural realities.

## Conclusions

The study of nation-brands engages interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary work on globalization; cultural politics and *realpolitik*; hegemonic and counter-hegemonic discourses of ideology; the creation and representation of national identity; the production of identity at the personal and community level; structural articulations of power; and the tourism, heritage and culture industries. Other important areas of nation-branding pertain to specialists in other fields such as its macro- and microeconomics of development, communication, marketing, and advertising. The academic study of nation-brands should be holistic, contextual, and historically informed. By this I mean that the political, ideological, economic, social, cultural, technological, and environmental milieus in which and with which the nation-brand functions need to be understood. No one work on nation-branding will address all its components. But the anthropological investigation of nation-branding can yield significant insight into a nation.

The task of a nation-brand is to sell a country and nation-branding does not come cheap. It requires a significant investment of financial and other resources. It is still too early to quantify the results of *la marca Perú* in terms of its goals of increased investment, economic development, export, and receptive tourism. But the nation-branding process is readily amenable to qualitative analysis, which is what I have undertaken in this chapter.

The evolution of PromPerú's marketing has been remarkable. Since 2003, PromPerú's sales pitch has moved from an object-oriented campaign focused on history and living culture (de la Flor 2000) to an emphasis on personal experience. PromPerú also has shifted from an exclusively outward-directed (foreign market) campaign to an integrated dual-track campaign that projects a positive image of Peru abroad and at home.

PromPerú deploys tourism as one of the pillars for growing investment in Peru, facilitating export of its products, and generating employment, revenue, and overall development. An increasingly exciting and innovative series of tourism campaigns have been launched. Their form and content respond to a complex array of domestic realities in Peru interlinked with Peru's insertion in the competitive neoliberal global framework and a savvy awareness of the role of social media in promoting tourism. In the most recent iteration of its tourism campaign, PromPerú has deployed its popular culture abroad to build a strong sense of identity with and support for the nation at home. This is intended to form the platform for further development of the country, thereby linking popular practice with public policy.

“Pack Your Six Senses” was object focused on the inert landscape of great ruins and past glory. PromPerú’s trademark tagline, “Land of the Inkas,” suggested an ancient country, not a dynamic one of the present with great potential in the future. “Live the Legend” and “Empire of Hidden Treasures” are emotion focused and premised on sensory experience (see Picard and Robinson 2012; also see Tolia-Kelly 2006). We see a shift in the campaigns from tourism conceived within the traditional parameters of cultural heritage tourism (e.g., Timothy and Boyd 2003) with its focus on that which the state defines as exploitable resources to ads that market an unscripted, preeminently personal experience that was targeted first at backpackers in “Live the Legend” and then upscale consumers in “Empire of Hidden Treasures.”

A country’s touristic self-promotion is the most direct, obvious window into its dominant national narrative of identity. Notwithstanding the changes indicated in this chapter, an unchanging aspect of PromPerú’s advertising is that it conveys Peruvian dominant ideology: the past is alive in the present; cultural heritage provides contemporary Peru with continuity and meaning; history lives on in the Peruvian people; and indigenous people are happy peasants working the land and performing ceremonies as they have for centuries. Living culture is presented as Fabian’s (2002) timeless other. However, the inclusion of popular culture in the nation-brand (*la marca Perú*) is a remarkable development, redressing historic patterns of inequality and disenfranchisement in Peru while being directed at the global market and international tourism, for *la marca Perú* explicitly places tourism in the context of modernization and globalization. Of note, too, is PromPerú’s adoption of new technologies of communication.

Amazing things can happen when a nation’s people are mobilized in support of the brand, when they affiliate themselves with the brand’s message, when there is popular buy-in, when the brand taps into the prevailing zeitgeist, and when the brand becomes iconic. I have seen this in Peru with the popularity of *la marca Perú*. It is not just tourists who buy polos with the Perú logo. Peruvians are proudly wearing their nationality. And companies are eagerly branding their products as well. Nor is this phenomenon restricted to the tangible use of *la marca Perú*. In affluent homes where whiskey usually would be offered to guests, now it is fine pisco (a grape brandy that has been produced in Peru since Colonial times) that is consumed. Peruvian and especially “nouvelle Peruvian” food is now fashionable at upper middle class/upper class dinner parties, as are the restaurants of star chefs who prepare traditional and innovative *comida criolla*. It is now popular in Peru to be Peruvian. But, as I cautioned above, this sense of excitement and pride must be validated by actual tangible progress in the lower and middle classes who have embraced the message of *la marca Perú*. Time will tell if the nation-brand can be sustained domestically, at the popular level. Mere valorization of popular culture is not enough if other promises are not kept.

In the foreign market, popular culture has joined Peru’s spectacular ancient civilizations, traditional peoples, and breathtaking scenery to create a unique, multifaceted and captivating image of the country—as intended. Tourism is booming.

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