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Cultural diplomacy in the strategy of building the national brand of the Republic of Korea

The aim of this dissertation is to show how the Republic of Korea shaped its image through cultural diplomacy, pursuing creation of a national brand. The time frame of this analysis covers years 1988-2017. 1988 was a breakthrough year for the Republic of Korea – on December 16, 1987 the elections were won by Roh Tae-woo. As a result, internal policy of the state was changed – South Korea from an authoritarian country began to transform into genuine democratic republic based on modern constitution.

The year 1988 brought an event that allowed the Republic of Korea to demonstrate its new image on the international scene. On September 17, 1988 took place the opening ceremony of the XXIV Olympic Games in Seoul. Eyes of whole world turned to South Korea which until that time was mainly associated with the conflict with its Northern neighbor.

The authorities of the Republic of Korea have begun the process of shaping a new and more friendly national image. Initially, these activities were non-harmonized, aimed at present moment and quick effect. However, with time it was understood that such process needed specific plan and long-term activities in order to be successful. The program of shaping national image was added to foreign policy of the state. These activities were institutionalized through, among others, creation of the Presidential Council for National Brand. It was understood that the national image was not enough – there was also a need to work out a strategy to build national brand.

What influenced the change of the image of Korea and started the process of national brand building? What was the basis for construction of the national brand strategy? What was the keynote of plans related to the national brand? Has the policy based on cultural diplomacy of the Republic of Korea yield its expected results? To which target group is the message of the Republic of Korea addressed and what does it contain? All above research questions allowed formulating hypotheses which were later verified during the process of analysis. Presentation of the results of surveys on the perception of the Republic of Korea by Poles in years 2016/2017 by two groups: expert and Internet serves as summary of this dissertation.