

Meta trends and implications for Nation and Place Brands

Introduction

The following meta trends and their implications on [Nation and Place Brands](#) are the predictions of [Bloom Consulting](#) after having performed independent research and analysis on future studies. We will uniquely present each meta trend with its corresponding implication for Nation and Place Brands with points of reference as well as recommendations for impact mediation and getting ahead.

Among the sources used to make the following predictions were the [Global Trends to 2030 – Challenges and Choices for Europe](#) by the European Strategy and Policy Analysis System, [Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds](#) a publication of the National Intelligence Council, and reports published by the [National Foresight Network](#) as part of Finland's Prime Minister's Office, and [21 Lessons for the 21st Century](#) by Yuval Noah Harari.

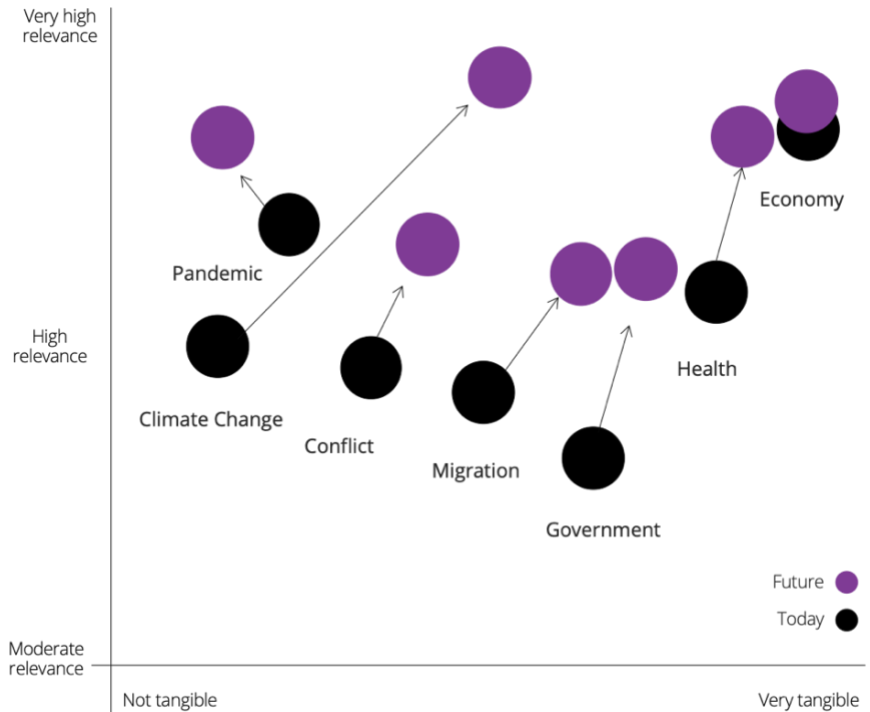
The seven meta trends decided and assessed throughout our research are the following:

- 1) Conflict
- 2) Climate Change
- 3) Health
- 4) Government
- 5) Economy
- 6) Migration
- 7) Pandemic

The eighth and enigmatic meta trend explored is yet to be discovered. It is now, and will be, the next big thing.

In summation, we've concluded the following positions for each meta trend in relation to one another based on two axes, tangibility (X) and relevance (Y).

Graph 1. Meta trends: tangibility and relevance.



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Meta Trend 1 Conflict

As we've seen throughout history, interstate conflict has greatly influenced global development and international relationships. Here we are looking more closely at the rising issue of conflict within states. Digitalization has driven this development as increasing sources of information become available and unregulated social media continues to prompt widespread mistruths and misinformation. Rapid changes and the growth of digitalization paired with shifts in power such as national elections and rising and/or falling economies are driving tensions between groups, pertaining to a range of issues from social acceptance to environmental protection efforts. Rising tensions do not always result in physical violence. As we have seen in the United States for example, the nation underwent one of its greatest divisions in social and political groupings during COVID-19, whether directly or indirectly related, as it corresponded with the presidential election, Black Lives Matter, and of course, [COVID-19](#) response and crisis management.

- *Digitalization and the spread of (mis)information*
- *Increased group tensions*
- *Intrastate conflict*

Implication for Nation and Place Brands

Intra and interstate conflicts alike will affect the appeal and attraction of nations and places whether country, region, or city. In addressing brand

audiences' need states, we can most easily pinpoint safety as an area of focus in this case. Nations and places that enact policy, react quickly, and address conflict in a timely, transparent, and just manner while listening to citizens will help to counter the spread of misinformation and enhance perceptions of a country, region, or city that works with its constituents to find dynamic solutions, creating an environment that enables its people to collaborate and coexist rather than compete or condemn. There is an added responsibility being placed on national, regional, and city government systems to foster a sense of cooperation and promote constructive, open dialogue, with the ultimate objective of mediating intrastate conflict through "domestic diplomacy".

- *Be mindful of brand audiences' perceptions of safety and security*
- *Foster a sense of cooperation and promote constructive, open dialogue*
- *Implement "domestic diplomacy" and solution-oriented platforms*

The dimensions most affected by this meta trend are Nation and Place Brand appeal for:

- *Investment*
- *Talent*



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Meta Trend 2 Climate Change

Climate change affects our nature, livelihoods, settlements, investment, and tourism amongst other direct and indirect points of alarm for international citizens and our environment. That said, the [climate emergency](#) is expected to sharply steepen in terms of tangibility as it will only continue to be more intensely felt by the global civilization. With an increase in tangibility, it will only be more so covered in the media and debated amongst constituents in terms of actionable solutions. In this case, consequences include food

security and prices, disease, land and sea, migration, and an ongoing list of at-risk groups. However, purchasing power and geography will play a major role in level of impact.

- *Business, travel, and lifestyle will be greatly affected as the climate emergency steepens*
- *Tangible consequences will be increasingly felt across global audiences*
- *Climate change will have different levels of intensity for different socio-economic and geographic groups*

Implication for Nation and Place Brands

Global outlook and comprehension are necessary to successfully guide and develop Nation and Place Brand strategies, all while maintaining a local focus, to develop big picture solutions and reverse the harmful effects of climate change. Countries, regions, and cities that prioritize the climate emergency as part of their agenda and strategic objectives will integrate sustainable and thoughtful brand values and actions for the benefit of global and local communities as well as posterity. Costa Rica has curated its Nation Brand, [Essential Costa Rica](#), to accommodate and target objectives geared towards sustainability and the climate emergency, using these platforms as drivers for on-brand touchpoints. Global audiences are demanding change and those who are first to do so will *win*. Denying the climate emergency from a Nation and Place Brand perspective will hurt the country, region, or city and its people, while tackling it will conversely help.

Two nations that took the initiative, and risk, to mitigate environmental impacts and climate change are Palau and the Faroe Islands. The [Palau Pledge](#) requires visitors to sign their passport, declaring they will "...act in an ecologically and culturally responsible way on the island, for the sake of Palau's children and future generations of Palauans...", resulting in 498,110 pledges being taken thus far. Another island nation across the globe declared [closed for maintenance, open for voluntourism](#), an initiative resulting in thousands of applications to be part of the Maintenance Crew in the Faroe Islands. This is an opportunity to lead the conversation and build positive perceptions within those who resonate with the need states being addressed in tackling this meta trend.

- *Keep pace with the demands of global audiences who consider the climate emergency as a factor for Nation and Place Brand appeal and attraction*
- *Get creative, take risks, and join leaders in drumming up positive media attention for actionable measures*
- *Be among the first to act and implement it into your Nation and Place Brand strategy, or else fall behind*

The dimensions most affected by this meta trend are Nation and Place Brand appeal for:

- *Tourism*
- *Talent*
- *Prominence*
- *Exports*



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Meta Trend 3 Health

COVID-19 accelerated this meta trend, giving it a platform to speak from and driving awareness due to extraordinary circumstances such as lockdown. As discussions on the subject continue to rise, there will be a shift in priority, necessitating new and/or updated public policy. To that end, data, digitalization, and personalization of health-related products and services will have a major role to play whether being offered by the private or public sector while need states rise to the surface and civilization demands new solutions with the tools aptly available. To have a chance, mental and physical health will be dependent on education, accessibility of products and services, and personalized solutions through data-driven insights.

- *Individuals and societies are becoming more aware and risk-averse regarding mental and physical health*
- *With a raise in awareness, the public and private sectors are being challenged to step up and make a change*
- *Data, digitalization, and personalization will shift the product and service offer within the health meta trend*

Implication for Nation and Place Brands

Nations and places are perceived to have certain levels of healthcare available. Whether accurate or not, and this affects willingness to visit, live, work and/or study amongst other priorities of brand audiences. Public policy and its efforts to aid local and global citizens in the search for affordable, quality healthcare is beyond a unique value offer and moreover a basic need of nations and places hoping to attract brand audiences with a certain level of mobility and purchasing power.

New Zealand has taken the initiative to approve [bereavement leave](#) after a miscarriage or stillbirth for women and their partners, as well as utilizing the [Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand](#) for policy advisement. These executive decisions are only one example of a nation that is paving the way towards mental and physical health awareness and appreciation from a holistic perspective, truly taking care of its people and workforce. Nations and places must see policy for mental and physical health as an investment rather than an expense. "Healthier" countries, regions, or cities will be perceived as more desirable by global audiences, and thus benefit in one way or another.

- *Prioritize healthcare as it relates to the global and local dimensions being affected*
- *Implement policy to ensure quality and affordable mental and physical health tools and support*
- *Be a leader by enacting innovative and effective policies and institutions to support national health improvement*

The dimensions most affected by this meta trend are Nation and Place Brand appeal for:

- *Tourism*
- *Talent*
- *Prominence*



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Meta Trend 4 Government

One of the most vital variables for governments will be the speed at which they operate and can execute decisions. As a civilization, we've surpassed the capacity at which nations and places can maintain the highest level of law and order over all things accessible to their constituents. Digitalization is moving so fast that democracy is not able to keep pace. This is to say that

tech and other industries have developed more rapidly than most nation states, opening the door to a world of widely misunderstood tools and information bases with the ability to both help and hurt human development.

- *Digitalization is moving faster than democracy*
- *Speed as a variable will play a major role in governments' success in the decision-making process*
- *Understanding the potentially harmful effects of digitalization and social tools being implemented without comprehensive legislation from the public sector*

Implication for Nation and Place Brands

First impressions last and governments are being put in the spotlight. As we have seen through research and country perception analysis, quick and effective government responses to crises such as [COVID-19](#) have a significant impact on Nation Brands.

The flipside, governments that react slowly and ineffectively are equally as negatively impacted. Bloom Consulting has conducted research into the ratio of positive to negative perceptions in accordance with a conclusive [Brand-Nought](#). This is the red line countries, regions, and cities need to be aware of falling below of exceeding and seeing an impact in perceptions, thus it is an opportunity for governments to *win* significant occurrences whether local, regional, or global.

One forward-thinking initiative to highlight would be Finland's practice of producing the [Government Report on the Future](#), published by the Prime Minister's Office. Finland's strategy outstrips the here and now and reaches into the future to create solutions before problems have the chance to arise.

- *Be the first to act, and react*
- *Act decisively and be seen as respectable, trustworthy, and favorable as a Nation and Place Brand*
- *Prepare for the future and establish policy to mitigate impending challenges*

The dimensions most affected by this meta trend are Nation and Place Brand appeal for:

- *Investment*
- *Tourism*
- *Talent*
- *Prominence*
- *Exports*



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Meta Trend 5 Economy

Economy in this case takes into consideration changes in demographic situations as well as quality of life factors such as cost and taxation. We must understand the fundamental shifts being put into place by globalization and digitalization for migration patterns.

International citizens are undergoing changes in demand and purchasing power by country, region, and city, thus impacting where they choose to live and how to spend their money. Individuals who are given the opportunity to relocate whether through financial means, freedom of travel, or remote work flexibility (work from *anywhere*), will seek a *new* quality of life previously inaccessible to most of the global community. Affordability is one critical component for the movement of talent as remote work has become remarkably more feasible. Organizations have adapted to providing their people with the flexibility to perform their day to day at a distance, meaning that at times companies are being run from laptops across the globe.

- *Economy impacts demographic situations as well as quality life factors*
- *Globalization and digitalization affect current and future migration patterns*
- *Work from anywhere will become increasingly important for Nation and Place Brands in terms of talent appeal and attraction*

Implication for Nation and Place Brands

Nations and places have a level of attractiveness based on anticipated quality of life given the expectations and need states of global brand audiences. That said, due to COVID-19, we've seen a shift in offer as well as demand in terms of lifestyle. New York City is competing with Hudson while London now competes with Glasgow, before the two only had to worry about one another in terms of attracting local and international talent to their bustling urban epicenters.

Remote work in the rural setting has become increasingly attractive for various family units seeking a breath of fresh air. That said, countries, regions, and cities are taking this opportunity to develop talent programs geared towards attraction, growth, and retention of local and international talent pools. Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA for example has brought to life the [Tulsa Remote](#) program in the United States, incentivizing workers to spend a year in their city. Here we begin to understand and calculate the return on investment for the talent dimension of Nation and Place Branding, asking ourselves what it costs to attract an individual and for how long do they need to stay and spend to make that investment worthy. Nations and places must pay special attention to policies being developed round the globe and destinations implementing programs to attract talent and improve perceptions.

- *Understand and adapt to remote talent by implementing and/or revamping programs and policies*
- *Look again at your competition because it's changed since the start of COVID-19*
- *Pay special attention to what the world is doing and act/react accordingly*

The dimensions most affected by this meta trend are Nation and Place Brand appeal for:

- *Investment*
- *Talent*



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Meta Trend 6 Migration

Migration in this case addresses the ever-present and growing concern for tensions having to do with the reception of immigrants from countries facing their own political, social, and economic adversities. Countries, regions, and cities that are perceived to offer a better quality of life are being sought after by those emigrating from volatile and perhaps unsafe environments. There

are two primary groups that have a significant role to play in this meta trend, different social classes, and segmentation by age. Social class addresses for example emerging economies being affected by climate with an unequitable role in its contribution. Meanwhile, age takes into consideration the growing discrepancy in certain countries, regions, and cities wherein populations are increasingly elderly trending and there is an exodus of young talent.

- *Migration as a meta trend is only going to increase in tangibility and relevance*
- *Tensions will continue to rise between locals and newcomers while governments fail to cooperate and implement a sound system*
- *Social class and age are key factors to the rising problems of migration*

Implication for Nation and Place Brands

Nation and Place Brands are one major reason immigrants are seeking specific countries, regions, and cities for asylum. Reputations supersede respective places and stretch to the far reaches, becoming internationally known as safe, economically, and politically stable, with sound education and healthcare systems. As was mentioned, tensions have arisen worldwide due to the reception of immigrants with a lackluster system for integration, resulting in poor conditions for newcomers, and negative perceptions from native citizens. An example described by the [World Bank](#) is Turkey and its response to Syrian immigrants. The correspondence notes three key policy questions that should guide the road ahead, one of them being “[how] to maximize the social and economic [benefits] of the refugee presence for host communities and the Turkish economy as a whole”.

As this meta trend is only predicted to increase in terms of tangibility and relevance, it will be crucial for nations and places to adopt a sound model for integration. Those who succeed will not only ameliorate human living conditions but also set precedent for the global community. Understanding one’s own carrying capacity by country, region, and city, and implementing policy for work, education, and accommodation will be crucial.

Integration in this case is a double-sided scenario wherein newcomers and locals alike will undergo a learning curve as to coexisting. Educating both parties on diversity, equity, and inclusion will be vital to setting expectations and mitigating intrastate tensions. Within the realm of age discrepancies and ranging examples of talent exoduses, this is an opportunity for places to invite, integrate, and professionally incorporate young and eager groups into their displaced workforces. From the Nation and Place Brand perspective, targeting a global humanitarian crisis by way of solving a local problem will prompt a shift in audiences’ hearts and minds towards improving perceptions if executed with the proper prioritization of people.

- *Address nations and places that are susceptible to migratory emergencies and in need of assistance*
- *Develop a plan for immigrant integration including precautions normally taken for sustainable practices such as carrying capacity, local reaction to foreigners, and a code of conduct to minimize agitation*

- *Optimize the global movement of people to address local needs, thinking global and acting local, showcasing a strong Nation and/or Place Brand both at home and abroad*

The dimensions most affected by this meta trend are Nation and Place Brand appeal for:

- *Talent*
- *Prominence*



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Meta Trend 7 Pandemic

The final meta trend influencing the world today begins with [COVID-19](#). Different from the other meta trends determined, pandemic as a meta trend is predicted to continue to rise in terms of relevance but decline however in tangibility as the global community collectively learns to better prepare, manage, and recover from impending pandemics and health crises. As we have seen, [health](#) as a meta trend has only been accelerated by COVID-19 and will continue to be at the forefront of audiences' minds. That said, hygiene, lifestyle, and accessibility to healthcare are going to be even more critical in terms of brand audience need state, as well as resounding fear to return to lockdown.

Beyond COVID-19, predictions of an "interconnected viral age" by the [World Economic Forum](#) are equally as pertinent, reminding countries, regions, and cities that COVID-19 was not an isolated situation, to learn from our mistakes, and look to those who have been *winning* this pandemic to prepare for whatever may come next. The psychological repercussions from COVID-19 and future health crises such as new variants, viruses, and diseases projected through the media will have lasting impacts on civilization's mental and physical health. Weighed down by the fear of what is to come next, our

mindset has adopted a defense mechanism to stay prepared, knowing full well what happens under the strike of a pandemic following COVID-19.

- *COVID-19 was the platform for pandemic as a meta trend to take off, but it is only the start to a greater discussion on related subjects and impending health crises*
- *Having entered an "interconnected viral age", COVID-19 was not an isolated incident and should not be taken as such*
- *Pandemic as a meta trend will have lasting impacts on civilization, affecting our mindsets to cope with the fear of what is to come next*

Implication for Nation and Place Brands

Much of the damage incurred by Nation and Place Brands has already taken place with regards to COVID-19. The pandemic has left its mark by way of perceptions towards governance and overall crisis management associated with respective countries, regions, and cities. The way towards on-the-ground recovery and positive perception building will take the form of long-term solutions versus quick fixes for what we've determined to be a lasting impact. COVID-19 may have been the spark for increased hygiene at the city and even state level but as the pandemic comes to a "close" in certain regions, will cleanliness practices stay?

Pandemic as a meta trend calls for nations and places to ingrain society with a mind for cleanliness and a greater understanding of disease propagation. To mitigate further health crises, both the public and private sector are responsible for developing innovative solutions to plan and prevent rather than react as was the case across the world around COVID-19. With precautions now being taken because of the latest pandemic, we would be wise to adopt and implement policy for regimented and long-term systematic behavioral changes, being prepared by staying prepared to break the chain of infection. Nation and Place Brands are going to be judged on new criteria by global audiences. Health and hygiene are intertwined with sustainability and sustainable living, these demands are being made by civilization towards the countries, regions, and cities we choose to engage with.

- *Learn from our mistakes in being unprepared for COVID-19 to plan for impending future pandemics and health crises*
- *Develop and implement lasting policies around systemic behavioral change towards health and hygiene*
- *Leverage sustainable, healthy living being offered by your country, region, or city as a solution to the need states of global audiences*

The dimensions most affected by this meta trend are Nation and Place Brand appeal for:

- *Investment*
- *Tourism*
- *Talent*
- *Prominence*



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Meta Trend ... The next big thing

What's next? Well, no one can be sure. All that we can say for now is that to be prepared, countries, regions, and cities must get planning and stay humble while learning from civilization's mistakes. From a Nation and Place Brand perspective, our recommendation is to act fast and be the first. Those who are first out the gate set the pace for the rest of our global community, establishing an international standard for the world's wellbeing.

Predictions would suggest that the *next big thing* will be felt immediately and there will be little time to prepare. To get around this conundrum, we recommend predicting and furthermore simulating countless scenarios to calculate risk and prepare for the worst. By doing this, countries, regions, and cities will come prepared with *some* sort of action plan whether spot on or at least a guideline, it will reassure the local population as well as build trust in the eyes of the global community.

The dimensions most affected by this meta trend are Nation and Place Brand appeal for:

- *Investment*
- *Tourism*
- *Talent*
- *Prominence*
- *Exports*



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The end of truth

Our note to summarize the above meta trends is a call for vigilance as we face the end of truth. This will be the trend to rule all trends as it is universal in affecting all global audiences, leaving us unsure of what to believe. The preceding meta trends will be in the media, discussed and debated for at least the next 15 years, the question will be how to decipher the truth from fiction. Nation and Place Brands must be proactive in looking out for what is being said about their land, people, and governance as it will impact identity and image.

From time immemorial, we have asked ourselves and others the most hard-hitting questions such as the origins of existence and who to support in leading society. Fake news, media management, and social media platforms have proven capable to erupt in social unrest, resulting in collective mistrust in one another and our leaders. Countries, regions, and cities must be quick to implement tools, regulation, and honest communication to mitigate the impacts of misinformation. Engaging with media outlets for example and enacting brand protection efforts will aid in defending a Nation and Place Brand against deceit. The end of truth will further divide groups and cause friction between friends. Now is the time for Nation and Place Brands to protect not only their reputation, but the local and international community from the end of truth as we know it.

This article can be found on the [Bloom Consulting Journal](#) in a three-part series through the links below:

[Part 1: Health, Conflict & Climate Change](#)

[Part 2: Economy, Migration & Government](#)

[Part 3: Pandemic & the next big thing](#)

Thank you!

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