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Branding From Above: Generic Cultural Branding in Shetland and other Islands Adam Grydehøj The Elphinstone Institute The University of Aberdeen Scotland, United Kingdom - HYPERLINK "mailto:francoi.l@hotmail.com" francoi.l@hotmail.com Abstract This paper considers the development of a generic cultural brand for islands. In 2002, Shetland's local government and the Corporate Edge consultancy developed a modernized, internationally-oriented Shetland brand. This official brand conflicts with Shetlanders' traditional, locally-oriented identity concept, which has impeded the brand's success. With emphasis on printed tourism marketing materials, Shetland's experience is compared with those of other European islands. This comparison highlights a predominance of cultural island brands emphasizing modernity and old-fashioneddness. Finally, this paper looks at problems with top-down place branding and suggests that those involved in centralized place branding processes take local identity into account. Keywords: branding, identity, islands, marketing, Shetland, tourism © 2008 - Institute of Island Studies, University of Prince Edward Island, Canada. Island Studies Journal, Vol. 3, No. 2, 2008, pp. 175-198

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