

in terms of a common Soviet past, we have seen in this book that it is in no way guaranteed that they will confront this past analogously” (p. 338).

To sum up, there is no doubt that *Transitional and Retrospective Justice in the Baltic States* is one of the most important contributions to the historical, social and political study of the Baltic states published in recent years. It is a genuinely comparative analysis, very well balanced, that demonstrates most persuasively the important similarities and differences in the politics of truth and justice in the three Baltic countries. There are not many studies dedicated to the Baltic states that participate in the cutting edge theoretical debate and, at the same time offer some truly novel information about the countries in this region. Published by a leading international publisher, Cambridge University Press, the book will definitely excite new interest in the experience of the Baltic states and integrate the Baltic experience of memory politics into an international framework.

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PAUL JORDAN: *The Modern Fairy Tale: Nation Branding, National Identity and the Eurovision Song Contests in Estonia* (Politics and Society in the Baltic Sea Region, 2). University of Tartu Press 2014. 148 pp. ISBN 9789949325580.

Although the Eurovision Song Contests (ESC) are massive show spectacles, in addition to pure entertainment, these spectacles also have substantial political significance. The voting interestingly reflects European geopolitical groupings: Nordics give their vote to fellow Nordics, Balkans favour other Balkan countries and countries with good political relations with Russia never forget to vote for Russian performers. When these traditional patterns are broken as when Cyprus gave eight points to a Turkish song in 2003, the symbolic meaning of this gesture was recognized and even praised. For many former Eastern European countries, participation in the ESC represented a step towards European normality, whereas for representatives of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1993, it was a desperate cry during the civil war that Bosnians are normal and peaceful people. Furthermore, success at ESC has obviously been a source of national pride particularly among smaller states whereas, on the other hand, organizing the contest after victory has been seen by (semi-)authoritarian powers such as Russia and Azerbaijan as a chance to create a positive image of their countries. The songs, as a rule, don't carry political messages even if some of them

do. Political significance has mainly been created by symbolic gestures, and thus visual expressions are always of great importance.

In *The Modern Fairy Tale*, Paul Jordan writes about the victory of the Estonian song “Everybody” in 2001 and how organising the next ESC in 2002 became part of a broader trend of Estonian foreign policy; namely, nation branding. Actually, the ESC of 2002 was not so much the focus of the study but Jordan, with its help, contextualises broader Estonian policies of nation-branding. In the 2000s nation branding became an important dimension of foreign policies not only in Estonia but also in other smaller post-Communist countries. States and nations have marketed and promoted themselves since the 19<sup>th</sup> century; for instance, the monumental World Exhibitions certainly reflected the aim of states to promote their own excellence. The interwar years witnessed first and foremost state-centred investment in marketing the own country as an ideal destination for holidays. Still, the recent wave of nation branding is in many ways a different and more serious effort from the states’ point of view. Branding is now understood as a significant part of foreign policy since the idea of the state and of international politics has shifted from classical power politics to the dominance of markets. The latter scene is dominated by competitive states, and in this world, not only national success, but also survival is attached to a state’s ability to be attractive for others in the global market. Here, states use strategies copied from private companies and thus branding – image building – becomes an important tool to gain visibility.

However, Jordan does not open up this ideological framework, which would have been interesting since in the early 2000s the branding campaigns in Estonia were closely linked to the broader process of the emergence of a new national success story and a source of national self-esteem. At that point the importance of Russia as an anchor of national narrative gave way to the story of a Tiny Tiger that could challenge old powers because it was more reform-oriented than others. However, as Jordan also notes, during the highpoint of this neoliberal narrative, not even Estonians managed to completely escape the Russian dimension. This contradiction could have been examined more in the book.

What Jordan does is to introduce and analyse the Estonian branding campaign in its whole and how it was linked to the ESC. Furthermore, he grounds his argument on theories of nationalism and elaborates the relationship between branding policies and nation-building in a fresh way. In my reading, the main focus of this study is not simply the ESC, but Estonian policy on nation-branding in general. Here Jordan tells us the highly interesting story of how the Estonian government hired the UK-based branding company “Interbrand” to launch the campaign, and how it simultaneously tried to maintain control of the contest. In a similar way, organizing the ESC was immediately seen as a nationally crucial issue and thus, in addition to financial support, Estonian officials were interested in controlling

the contest, but ultimately failed in this regard. Still, the brand – or the image – introduced by the “Brand Estonia” campaign and at the same time by the plots shown during the ESC is rather identical. According to this branding, Estonia is presented as a Nordic country (or merely “Nordic with a twist”) and technologically advanced modern state “positively transforming” itself. Elements referring to the Soviet legacy including the large Russian-speaking minority were almost completely erased from the narrative.

Jordan argues that nation branding should not be seen as a new form of nationalism, as has been argued, e.g., by one of leading scholars of nation-branding Melissa Aronczyk, but more as a new form of foreign policy in the age of globalized markets.<sup>1</sup> I agree. Branding, on the one hand, does not reflect national identities but, on the other hand, it is not completely separate from the transformation of national narratives. In branding campaigns, it is the political elites that use the power of identification: it is they who introduce a new mega-narrative on Estonia and the Estonians. Still, however, branding campaigns are not primarily meant for transforming self-esteem (a source of national identity) but for transforming esteem (the reputation of a nation among others). These two are interlinked but are not identical and Jordan clearly pinpoints how a static and almost ahistorical new image was challenged by the larger public who, at least partly, considered it quite strange. Still the very same image that was shaped in the campaign sponsored by the government was expressed in the non-governmentally shaped “fairy tale plots” during the ESC in 2002. And more generally, this narrative reflected the rising Tiny Tiger narrative. The national brand is more static, uniform and simplified than dynamic, heterogeneous and contingent national narratives generally are. Hence the question remains as to how the two are related. Does the brand reflect national narrative or vice versa? Can the brand transform national narratives? Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the branding campaigns and the ESC were important milestones in the transformation of Estonia and the change of her national narratives.

Not only is Jordan’s study an important addition to studies on post-Cold War Estonian national discourses, it also has its merits concerning Estonian foreign policy. It manages to focus on Estonia in order to pinpoint how foreign policy, as well as nation-building as such, is being drastically changed during the era of globalization. Estonia is certainly not the only example in this development. In fact, Estonia was a forerunner in its intensive engagement in nation branding as a tool in foreign policy, and thus other countries around the globe follow the Estonian example. If something is missing from Jordan’s story, it is a closer reading of the visual symbolism of the ESC. But he may return to that topic in the near future.

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<sup>1</sup> MELISSA ARONCZYK: *Branding the Nation. The Global Business of National Identity*, Oxford 2013.