

# THE NATION BRAND OF ESTONIA

A Case Study of Estonian Song Celebration



Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Estonian\\_Song\\_Festival](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Estonian_Song_Festival)

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## Executive Summary

This thesis focused on the case of Estonian Song Celebration, a 150-year-old tradition rooted in the national identity of Estonians. The purpose of this case study was to find out how Estonian Song Celebration influences the nation brand of Estonia in the eyes of foreigners.

To answer this question, first, a theoretical review was conducted, exploring the theory of nation brands, nation branding as well as ways to evaluate the strength of a brand. Further, the case of Estonian Song Celebration was introduced, describing its background and explaining why it carries such a value to Estonians.

Guided by the interpretivist philosophical approach, a qualitative methodological choice was made, and 8 semi-structured interviews were conducted. Two of those were conducted with Estonians - with the Communication Manager of Estonian Song Celebration and with representors from Brand Estonia – to get an overview of the current situation and possible outlooks regarding Estonian Song Celebration. The remaining six interviews were with university students from different nationalities, exploring the effect introducing Estonian Song Celebration had on the nation brand.

Among else, based on Aaker's (2010) Brand Equity Model, the strength of the Estonian nation brand was analyzed, exploring the awareness, associations, quality and loyalty of the brand among foreign interviewees. The same aspects were re-evaluated after introducing the Estonian Song Celebration. Followed by the analysis and discussion, it was revealed that Estonian Song Celebration had a moderate effect on the nation brand of Estonia, since observable enhancements were made only in the category of brand associations.

Furthermore, using Anholt's (2006) Competitive Identity Hexagon, it was discovered that foreigners relate Estonia with tourism, people and governance, while no associations emerged regarding culture, brands and investments. According to the Competitive Identity Hexagon, a successful nation brand should coordinate the actions across all areas of the hexagon (Anholt, 2006). Thus, the thesis concluded by discussing possible implications of the findings from the study, to enhance the nation brand of Estonia through the category of culture and Estonian Song Celebration.

More precisely, it was found from the interviews that Estonian Song Celebration plays an important role for Estonians while it also benefits the nation brand. Thus, to boost the nation brand of Estonia in the area of culture, Estonia should consider putting more emphasis on

Estonian Song Celebration in communicating their brand abroad, as it would appeal to various segments. Possible ways to get the message across is encouraging brand ambassadors, such as sports and cultural figures, as well as citizens themselves, to introduce the event abroad. Furthermore, having a strong social media presence could also attract attention to the event among foreign audiences.

While conducting the thesis, some limitations were faced. As the indexes created to evaluate the strength of nation brands focus on quantifying it, Aaker's Brand Equity Model was used instead. However, this model is originally created for commercial brands, and thus, had to be modified to explore the effect Estonian Song Celebration has on the nation brand qualitatively. This created room for potential biases in the interpretation of the model.

Furthermore, due to geographical constraints it was not possible to conduct face-to-face interviews with Estonian participants, which would have potentially led to higher quality data. Additionally, due to time and scope constraints, the sample of the study comprised only students, from who only one had actually been to the celebration. To gather a more wide-ranging insight and richer data, an extended sample could be used. However, the thesis still provides sufficient insight to the topic, serving as a base to future, more detailed studies.

*Keywords: nation brand, nation branding, Estonia, Estonian Song Celebration, Aaker's Brand Equity Model, Competitive Identity Hexagon*

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## Introduction

What comes to your mind when you hear “Estonia”? The chances are, not too much.

Estonia is a small country by the Baltic Sea with an area of around 45 400 km<sup>2</sup> and with population only about 1.3 million people (Visit Estonia, 2019). Estonia is influenced by its versatile history, being a battleground across centuries for Germany, Sweden, Denmark and Russia (Visit Estonia, 2019). Along with Estonian national awakening in the mid-19th century, a tradition of Estonian Song Celebration was born in 1869 (Visit Estonia, 2019). In the aftermath of World War I, the Republic of Estonia was established as an independent state in 1918, which was shortly followed by half a century under the Soviet occupation after the World War II (Visit Estonia, 2019). Inspired by the more than a century-old tradition of Song Celebration, with the spontaneous mass singing demonstrations, later known as Singing Revolution, Estonia is said to “sang themselves free”, gaining re-independence in 1991 (Visit Estonia, 2019).

### 1.1 Problem field

In today’s globalized world, nations are becoming more and more competitive. Every nation needs to compete for the attention of world’s consumers, tourists, investors, companies, students, international events, media, other governments etc. (Anholt, 2006). Anholt (2005b) has described the situation metaphorically: *“It does sometimes seem as if globalization is turning the world into a gigantic supermarket, where nations are nothing more than products on the shelf, frantically trying to attract the attention of each passing consumer.”* (p. 135)

In order to achieve a competitive advantage in this “global supermarket”, an increased effort needs to be made to show a nation in the best light possible (Anholt, 2006). To describe the reputation management countries are increasingly engaging in, the notion of nation branding has been introduced (Anholt, 2006).

The terminology of *branding* has not always been related to nations, making nation branding a relatively new area of study (Dinnie, 2016). It stems from previous studies of country of origin, place country of origin, place or destination branding and more recent ones, public diplomacy and national identity (Fan, 2010). However, while the preceding studies were

focused on promoting the country for economic interests such as tourism, exports or inward investments, nation branding is concerned about the overall image of the country for the international audience (Fan, 2010). Furthermore, the scope of nation branding expands beyond the traditional theory of branding strategy, as in addition to marketing, it increasingly focuses on other fields such as cultural sociology, media studies, public relations, public administration and political geography (Fan, 2010). Hence, nation branding covers political, economic and cultural dimensions (Dinnie, 2016).

Fan (2010) has noted that actively managing nation's brand is particularly important to countries, which have gone through drastic changes in their political, economic and social systems. He explains that as the nation image is almost always in delay, these countries essentially wish to align the nation's image to reality.

It has become evident that many post-Soviet countries face the problem: they need to rebuild their national identity and reputation (Anholt, 2010). By eliminating the free movement of trade, culture, people and communications with the rest of the world, the Soviet rule undermined the images of its satellite states (Anholt, 2010). People who do not have connection with Eastern and Central Europe often do not associate those countries with having their own proud histories, cultures, personalities, products, landscapes, traditions, languages and people (Anholt, 2010).

Estonia was the first country from the former Soviet states to tackle this problem by launching a nation branding campaign in 2002 (Jansen, 2008). However, Anholt (2005b) has argued, that creating expensive global campaigns might not be the best way to brand a country, as people are often skeptical about obviously paid-for messages. He suggests that instead of communicating new messages about a country, at least as much could be achieved by aligning the existing communications. Furthermore, he points out that there is often no need to create new messages but one should focus on what is already there, so the public would adapt them.

Furthermore, Dinnie (2016) has said: *“Nation branding needs to be firmly rooted in the reality and essence of the nation rather than being merely a creation of brand agencies”* (p.127). However, since there can be various messages drawn from the “reality and essence” of a nation, a strategic choice between all the possible options needs to be made, based on what the nation



wants its brand to communicate (Dinnie, 2016). This choice is necessary, as concentrated messages are more likely to reach the audience (Dinnie, 2016).

The Estonian Song Celebration is a 150-year-old tradition which definitely is an integral part of Estonian culture, rooting in the national identity (Veidemann, 2015). A metaphor “breathing together” has been used to describe the magical energy of the joint singing (Veidemann, 2015). Veidemann (2015) brings the event as an example of how through its reoccurrence, an artefact can have the power to shape the identity of a nation.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

Given the information provided above, the thesis investigates the relationship between the 150-year-old tradition of Estonian Song Celebration and the nation brand of Estonia. More precisely, the research question this thesis seeks to answer is defined as follows:

*RQ: How does Song Celebration influence the nation brand of Estonia?*

## 1.3 Research Questions

To answer the research question in the problem statement, four sub-questions have been formulated, as they help to delve deeper into the topic in hand.

To begin with, in order to engage in country’s nation branding, it is essential to monitor and analyze the current state of how a country is perceived. This will be done on the basis of a following sub-question:

*SQ1: How strong is the brand of Estonia? How do foreigners perceive the brand of Estonia? What brand associations do they have about Estonia?*

The answers for the following questions will be sought in order to explore the impact of the Song Celebration regarding foreigners in greater detail:

*SQ2: How do foreigners perceive Estonian Song Celebration? What brand associations do they have about Estonian Song Celebration?*

To understand whether Estonian Song Celebration should be included in the nation branding of Estonia, the following topic is examined:

*SQ3: What value does Estonian Song Celebration provide when branding Estonia?*

Lastly, in order to set the ground for future outlooks, the following question is discussed:

*SQ4: What should be the goal of Estonian Song Celebration regarding foreign audiences?*

## 1.4 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis will further include six main parts, as follows:

- To begin with, the theory used in the thesis is presented and explained. The theory is divided into subcategories, firstly introducing the general branding theory, followed by introducing the concept of nation brand and later, nation branding.
- To better understand the upcoming parts of the thesis, next up is the case description. Here, readers are familiarized with Estonian Song Celebration.
- Further, the methodological choices are explained and justified using The Research Onion by Saunders et. al (2016).
- In the next section, the data gathered will be analyzed. The analysis is divided into three parts: Song Celebration, Nation Branding and Nation Brand.
- Following will be the discussion, where the weight will be put on the learning outcomes from the thesis. Furthermore, implications, limitations and possible future research will be discussed.
- Lastly, a conclusion of the thesis is presented.

## 1.5 Delimitations

Since 1934, Estonian Dance Celebration is held together with Song Celebration. It is a national dance and gymnastic celebration, where over the days, three identical performances are given (Eesti Laulu- ja Tantsupeo SA, 2019). Today, over 9000 dancers get together on Kalev Stadium to tell a story through their performance, while only around 10,000 spectators fit to the stadium to watch the emerging patterns (Eesti Laulu- ja Tantsupeo SA, 2019). The performances of Dance Celebration are built upon a similar theme to the Song Celebration (Eesti Laulu- ja Tantsupeo SA, 2019).

Although it is clear that Dance Celebration also carries a significant importance for Estonians, then this thesis will only focus on Song Celebration, to limit the scope. Song Celebration was chosen over Dance Celebration, as the roots of singing reach further and it is more often associated with important historical events of Estonia.

Due to time and scope constraints, the thesis will focus only on student population, which will be further argued for in the methods section. Furthermore, as nation branding is a complicated and multi-layered concept, this thesis does not seek to give practical suggestions on how to precisely incorporate Song Celebration in branding Estonia. Instead, the thesis seeks to describe the possible influences incorporating Song Celebration to brand Estonia might have.

## Theoretical Background

### 2.1 Branding Theory

To begin with, it is important to comprehend the fundamental concepts this thesis is based upon. Here, understanding the distinction between brand and branding is vital. In a commercial sense, Kotler and Keller (2016) have defined brand based on American Marketing Association as *“a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors”* (p. 323). Branding, however, stands for *“the process of designing, planning and communicating the name and the identity, in order to build or manage the reputation”* (Anholt, 2006, p.4). The importance of this distinction will be discussed later in the thesis.

The two key components associated with the branding theory are identity and image (Dinnie, 2016). These terms are often misused interchangeably, yet they have an underlying difference (Fan, 2010). Aaker (2010, p.38) has explained brand identity as *“a unique set of brand associations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain”*. On the other hand, brand image can be introduced as *“the perception of the brand that exists in the mind of the consumer”* (Anholt, 2006, p.5). Here, it is important to note that the image may not always match with the actual identity (Anholt, 2006).

### 2.2 Nation Brand

As this thesis focuses on a nation instead of a commercial product, we now look at these terms focusing on the nation aspect. Connor (1978) describes nation's identity as *“the essentially irrational psychological bond that binds fellow nationals together, and which is supposed to constitute the essence of national identity.”* In a similar context, image can be explained as *“the sum of all those emotional, and aesthetic qualities such as experience, beliefs, ideas, recollections and impressions, that a person has of a place”* (Kotler et al. 1993). Thus, even though both terms encompass mental associations based on a person's knowledge and past encounters, identity revolves around self-perception while image refers to others' perception about the place (Fan, 2010).

Combining various possible factors perceived, Fan (2010) focuses on the image of the country when defining the nation brand as *“total sum of all perceptions of a nation in the minds of*

*international stakeholders, which may contain some of the following elements: people, place, culture/language, history, food, fashion, famous faces (celebrities), global brands and so on.”* (p. 98).

Fan (2010) argues that each country has a certain image held by foreign people and thus, the distinction between the *nation brand* and *nation branding* is important: nation brand exists in spite of whether a deliberate effort has been put into the branding of the country or not. Foreigner's existing perception about a nation can be derived from different elements, such as one's personal encounter with the country, education or knowledge, prior experience with a product made in that country, appearance of the country in media channels, stereotypes etc. (Fan, 2006).

### *2.2.1 Aaker's Brand Equity Model*

Even though each country has a brand, it can vary in its strength, actuality and clarity (Fan, 2006). Brand equity is a term often used to describe the strength of a brand, since it is defined as *“a set of assets (and liabilities) linked to a brand's name and symbol that adds to (or subtracts from) the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or that firm's customers”* (Aaker, 2010, p.7).

Originally developed focusing on commercial brands, this model can also be applied to nation brands, since it outlines the central issues of marketing planning (Moilanen and Rainisto, 2008). For this, the dimensions introduced in the model have to be modified to match the concept of a nation brand.

Brand equity can offer value to all stakeholders, as a strong brand appeals “customers”, while at the same time, it creates a promise to the “customer” about the offering (Aaker, 2010). Aaker (2010) has developed a brand equity model to clarify the five major possible dimensions through which a brand equity can generate value: brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand associations and other proprietary brand assets (Aaker 2010). All of these dimensions will be discussed subsequently.

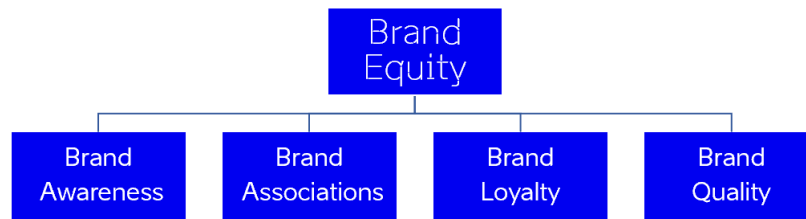


Figure 1: Aaker's Brand Equity Dimensions

Adapted from: Aaker, D. A., Joachimsthaler, E. (2002) *Brand Leadership*. Sydney: Free Press Business.

Brand awareness describes the strength of a brand presence in consumer's mind, often measured by either brand recognition (has a customer been exposed to this brand before) or recall (what products of this product class can the customer recall) (Aaker, 2010). The more customers recognize and recall the brand, the stronger this brand's equity is considered (Aaker, 2010). However, there is an exception of a niche brands, which have only high recall among their loyal "customer" groups and thus, their low recognition is not necessarily an indicator of poor performance (Aaker, 2010).

The term brand associations stands for *"all brand-related thoughts, feelings, perceptions, images, experiences, beliefs, attitudes, and so on, that become linked to the brand node."* (Kotler & Keller, 2016, p.193). According to Aaker (2010), the key is to develop a clear brand identity which drives associations made with the brand. A characteristic of a strong brand equity is that the associations made match the actual identity of a brand (Aaker, 2010).

Brand loyalty is another factor enhancing brand equity (Aaker, 2010). Aaker (2010) has said that a highly loyal customer can create most of the value and a loyal customer base proposes an entry barrier to competitors. He has also noted that although loyalty can be created already by strong brand awareness, perceived quality and positive associations, directly focusing on building customer loyalty is increasingly gaining importance.

Aaker (2010) has mentioned that for commercial products, perceived quality can be considered as the most important factor, since it is often linked to financial results. Furthermore, he claims that brand quality describes the "goodness" of a brand and how the aspects of a brand are perceived. Essentially, quality showcases whether the brand meets its expectations, which in turn, signals a strong brand (Aaker, 2010).

The fifth category of other proprietary brand assets is added to the model for completion and includes assets that are attached to the brand such as patents etc. (Aaker, 2010). For the purpose of this thesis, this category will be disregarded.

## 2.3 Nation Branding

Comparing different definitions proposed by researchers, it is apparent that there is not a common agreement on what *nation branding* is, how exactly is it linked to nation brand and what it should attain (Fan, 2010). This illustrates that nation branding is a complex subject of study.

The main differences in the definitions of nation branding arise when looking at the center of attention for the outcome of branding the nation. Among others, different researchers believe the purpose should be to remold national identities, enhance a nation's competitiveness or to embrace political, cultural, business and sport activities (Fan, 2010). For the purpose of clarity in this thesis, we adopt the definition offered by Fan (2010), stating that nation branding is “*a process by which a nation's images can be created or altered, monitored, evaluated and proactively managed in order to enhance the country's reputation among a target international audience.*” (p. 101).

Indeed, the goal of nation branding is to confront the possible gap between the true identity of a nation, defined by nation's people, and the image perceived by others (Dinnie, 2016; Fan, 2010). Oftentimes, this identity-image gap can be negative due to stereotypes, clichés and racist caricatures (Dinnie, 2016). These misconceptions can significantly affect behavior towards given places, their people and products and thus, countries are interested in eliminating the gap (Anholt, 2013).

According to Anholt (2006), building a strong nation brand should be a collective effort, as it will benefit all stakeholders of the nation brand once the message is clear and consistent. Thus, instead of only pursuing their own interests and merely presenting their own “products”, such as investment opportunities, tourism, cultural events, etc., all of the stakeholders in each country should see promotion, exchange or representation as an opportunity to build country's reputation (Anholt, 2006).

### 2.3.1 Competitive Identity Hexagon

There is no comprehensive strategy for nation branding. As a starting point, just as for a company strategy, the nation has to decide its long-term focus by answering questions like “where are we now?”, “where do we want to go?” and “how could we get there?” (Dinnie, 2016).

Anholt (2006) has created a nation brand hexagon, where he identifies 6 natural channels of national behavior and communication, through which a nation creates their competitive identity and reputation: tourism, exports, people, governance, investment and immigration, culture and heritage. He explains that each government should have a clear overview of what their country is and where it is going. Thus, the key responsibility of all governments should be to monitor people’s perception of their nation and based on that develop a strategy which communicates a precise, attractive and useful brand (Anholt, 2013).

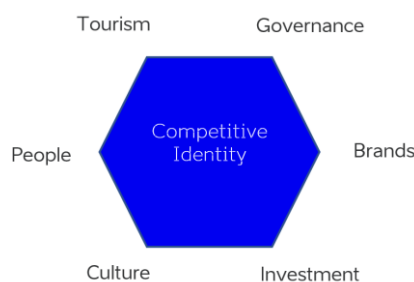


Figure 2: Competitive Identity Hexagon.

*Adapted from: Anholt, S. (2005b). Brand new justice: How branding places and products can help the developing world. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.*

On the other hand, Dinnie (2016) has pointed out that external audiences are not willing to receive immense amount of information about all possible aspects of a nation. Thus, it is not possible to excel in all possible areas and the country must make strategic decisions, determining the nation brand’s direction (Dinnie, 2016). According to Dinnie (2016), here, the nation branding must try to embrace both cultural heritage and present culture. Additionally, she has noted that nation brands rooted in culture heritage tend to be most successful.

Anholt (2010) has also pointed out that even though countries might experience success of the brand in one area, such as tourism, it does not equal to over-all positive reputation around the hexagon, since the stakeholders from various groups are not in control of the messages



communicated. To build and maintain a long-lasting competitive national identity, a country should coordinate actions between all six areas of the hexagon, being guided by the overview of the country's current brand and its future strategic direction (Anholt, 2006).

Creating a long-lasting nation brand is also considered as a slow process. Anholt (2010) argues, that sudden changes, no matter how dramatic, are not likely to shift the perception of a nation for good while both Anholt (2010) and Dinnie (2016) acknowledge, that changes which occur over time will stay present in people's minds for longer.

Based on the Competitive Identity Hexagon, Anholt (2005a) has developed Nation Brand Index (NBI), which measures world's perception of 50 selected nations across the 6 dimensions of a nation brand hexagon. The index is based on online questionnaires with approximately 20 000 adult participants from 20 panel countries (Istvan, 2016). Similarly, some other indexes have been developed to rank nation brands, such as Future Brand's Country Brand Index (CBI) and Anholt's newer Good Country Index (GCI), whereas each of those is based on their own specific framework, varying in sample size and methods used (Istvan, 2016).

### 2.3.2 Brand Estonia

Study by Jansen (2008) reveals that Estonia was the first country from the former Soviet states to launch a nation branding campaign. The research explains that the Brand Estonia initiative was led by Enterprise Estonia, an agency founded by Ministry of Economic Affairs. It was designed and launched in 2002 by Interbrand Corporation Global Brand Consultancy and Emor, an Estonian marketing firm, in order to introduce Estonia to tourists, foreign investors and export markets (Jansen, 2008).

The official brand manual included *“a set of national design elements, a brand style book, which included the logo ‘Welcome to Estonia’, photographic style, color palette and graphic devices”* (Jansen, p. 128). The original slogan *“positively transforming”* was changed to *“positively surprising”* in 2008 (Same, Solarte-Vasquez, 2014). Phrases used to describe Estonia included *“a Nordic country with a twist”, “a nation that is as progressive and hip as it is history-filled”, “the new Scandinavia”,* and an *“IT-nation”*. The core message was Estonia being ready to “welcome” visitors and investors (Same, Solarte-Vasquez, 2014).



Figure 3: Sign "Welcome to Estonia" and slogan "Positively surprising"

*Reprinted from: Same, S., Solarte-Vasquez, M. C. (2014). Country Branding and Country Image: Insights, Challenges and Prospects. The Case of Estonia. Baltic Journal of European Studies, 4(1), 137-165.*

Interbrand stated, that the campaign had both domestic and international success, yet critics claim that: *"The winners are urban, well-educated, young, individual-centered, predominantly male, ethnic Estonians living in the Western part of the country, especially Tallinn; the losers are those with farming or heavy industry skills from the Soviet era, the elderly, those without access to elite schools, community-centered traditionalists, Russian speakers and Russians who speak Estonian but are not integrated into Estonian culture, and those living in the rural Eastern part of the country."* (Jansen, 2008, p.129).

Furthermore, in 2008 Enterprise Estonia ordered a study measuring the awareness, recognition and reputation of "Welcome to Estonia" sign among Finnish, Swedish, German, Norwegian and British (Same, Solarte-Vasquez, 2014). The results showed low results both on awareness and recognition, while also claiming the sign to be uninteresting, not innovative and could not been associated with quality, friendliness and/or trustworthiness (Same & Solarte-Vasquez, 2014).

As Enterprise Estonia found out that only 2% of the exporting companies are using the "Welcome to Estonia" sign, while 50% of them see the necessity for a unified image, they re-created the Brand Estonia in 2016 with Estonian Design Team, a task team including best Estonian design and communication professionals (Brand Estonia, 2019). Brand Estonia (2019) launched a toolbox consisting of photos, videos, presentations, illustrations, icons and an official Aino typeface, as they believe that a logo alone does not bring awareness, but a coordinated content and unified communication will be remembered. The core messages of the renewed Brand Estonia (2019) include "independent minds", "clean environment" and "digital society. Enterprise Estonia claims the launch to be successful, as it has been used in various fields, but no official studies have not been done yet (Brand Estonia, 2019).

### 2.3.3 Critics on Nation Branding

There are also some significant paradoxes in nation branding. The nation brand must be unique to ensure competitiveness in the international field, while at the same time also rely on common associations with others to create psychological ties (Fan, 2006). This is especially difficult, as values vary across countries, which in turn affect the way our communicated message is perceived by others (Fan, 2006). Furthermore, a nation has to take into account that the level of knowledge about the nation varies across countries. (Fan, 2006)

Over the course of nation branding history, successful examples seem to be rare (Fan, 2006). Researchers such as Anholt (2010) have begun to question the effectiveness of nation branding campaigns as a means to market a country. He believes, that since communications was not the only thing which created a country image in the first place, it cannot alone be something which will change the image in the future (Anholt, 2010)

Furthermore, Anholt (2010) recognizes that some advertising campaigns, such as ones for tourism can yield great success, but warns that it will not result in an overall positive, cohesive nation brand, since other areas of the Competitive Identity Hexagon will still not be in control over the messages communicated. Thus, Anholt believes that even though it can help to market the country in some areas of the hexagon, branding campaigns alone cannot be used as a shortcut to enhance the image of a nation. (Anholt, 2010)

Alternatively, Anholt (2010) suggests that creating a better image and thus, a stronger brand for a nation is a lot cheaper, yet more difficult than previously thought. He explains that instead of campaigns, it can be achieved by creating substance: having a feasible but inspirational and strategical long-term vision for the country and pursuing it over many years through a series of symbolic actions, which can include *“good leadership, economic and social reform, imaginative and effective cultural and political relations, transparency and integrity, infrastructure, education, and so forth”* (p.50). By carrying out these kinds of symbolic actions consistently, the image created is more memorable and lasting (Anholt, 2010). As one of the examples of a symbolic action, he mentions Estonia declaring internet access a human right, which supports Estonia’s vision of being a digital society.

Furthermore, Anholt (2005b) pointed out that ordinary people often make the best “brand ambassadors”, since you do not need to pay them, while they are still incredibly effective as

nobody questions their sincerity. He states that the country should encourage ordinary people to share their stories by facilitating their process of travelling. Anholt (2010) believes, that people's love for their own country is extremely powerful and it is often purely instinctive for people to outpour their group pride of their origin. Thus, the country should also find ways how to make natives living abroad "public diplomats", as the love often grows stronger when the home country is distant (Anholt, 2005b). Lastly, encouraging tourism to the country could clearly be beneficial, as people more seldomly hold ill feelings towards the country they have visited (Anholt, 2005b).

## Case Description: The Estonian Song Celebration

Singing has always been of great importance in Estonia, as its roots lie in the tradition of Runic songs, a cultural heritage of Estonians which date back thousands of years (Raudsepp, Vikat, 2011). These songs functioned as intra-community interaction (Raudsepp, Vikat, 2011). Choral singing was introduced to Estonia only in 19th century but started to carry a significant meaning soon enough. (Raudsepp, Vikat, 2011)

In 1869, the first Estonian Song Celebration (ESC) took place in the second biggest city of Estonia, Tartu (Eesti Laulu- ja Tantsupeo SA, 2019). It was a grand performance of national songs by 878 male singers and brass players, initiated by Johann Voldemar Jannsen as a part of the national awakening of Estonia (Eesti Laulu- ja Tantsupeo SA, 2019). From 1879 to 1910, ESC took place irregularly six times, both in Tartu and in the capital Tallinn (Eesti Laulu- ja Tantsupeo SA, 2019). These festivals had a significant importance in the formation of both cultural and economic identity of Estonians (Eesti Laulu- ja Tantsupeo SA, 2019). With every celebration, the number of singers increased gradually. (Eesti Laulu- ja Tantsupeo SA, 2019)

In 1923 ESC moved to Tallinn for good and started to take place with regular intervals: every five years (Eesti Laulu- ja Tantsupeo SA, 2019). In 1928 a special Song Festival Ground was built, where the celebration still takes place today (Eesti Laulu- ja Tantsupeo SA, 2019). Preceding the celebration, a grand procession with all performers walking through the main streets of the city takes place (Eesti Laulu- ja Tantsupeo SA, 2019).



Figure 4: The Estonian Singing Celebration — Song Festival Ground and the fire

Source: Author's private collection

When the tradition started, Estonia was not an independent country yet and even though it managed to do it through the national awakening, throughout the history of ESC, Estonians have still been under many repressions (Eesti Laulu- ja Tantsupeo SA, 2019). During the Second World War, the 1943-year ESC was not held, but the tradition was restored in 1947 (Eesti Laulu- ja Tantsupeo SA, 2019). Many Estonians, including well-known musicians, fled to West and in 1946, first larger song celebrations by Estonians were held in Germany, later Sweden, USA, Canada, Australia and UK. (Eesti Laulu- ja Tantsupeo SA, 2019).

Despite of the efforts of Russian language dominance in the beginning and later the oppression of the Soviet propaganda songs, Estonians have kept their national songs alive (Eesti Laulu- ja Tantsupeo SA, 2019). As one of the most significant instances, during the darkest Soviet times, choirs still started to sing the “unofficial anthem” which had been removed from the repertoire before the concert, called “Mu isamaa on minu arm” (“My Fatherland is My Love”) (Eesti Laulu- ja Tantsupeo SA, 2019). Throughout these years, people were arrested even during the celebration for the traditional, not Soviet propaganda repertoire (Eesti Laulu- ja Tantsupeo SA, 2019). However, people felt this tradition helped to keep the longing for freedom alive (Eesti Laulu- ja Tantsupeo SA, 2019).

In 1934, a tradition of Dance Celebration emerged, following the theme of ESC and starting to take place parallelly (Eesti Laulu- ja Tantsupeo SA, 2019). Celebrating the first centennial of the ESC in 1969, a new tradition of a flame being lit in Tartu, the birthplace, and then travelling throughout Estonia to Tallinn, was introduced (Eesti Laulu- ja Tantsupeo SA, 2019).

In 1988 June, the “singing revolution” started at Tallinn Song Festival grounds, where thousands of people gathered to spontaneous singing night after night, finally adding up to many hundred thousand people (Eesti Laulu- ja Tantsupeo SA, 2019). It is believed that over the course of the following 4 years, Estonians achieved independence on 20 August 1991 thanks to the power of joint singing: many protests took place, which were peaceful and often revolved around singing (Raudsepp, Vikat, 2011).

What started out with only male singers in 1869, soon included mix choirs, later children choirs and finally added only female choirs (Eesti Laulu- ja Tantsupeo SA, 2019). Nowadays, the celebration brings together all generations: participants from grandparents to grandchildren

meet on a massive stage (Eesti Laulu- ja Tantsupeo SA, 2019). The number of participants has grown to 1046 choirs, equaling in about 30 200 performers in 2014. Incredibly, almost half of the population watches the concerts and shows, either as being a spectator on the festival ground or watching the live stream from the national television (Eesti Laulu- ja Tantsupeo SA, 2019). In 2019, ESC will jubilate 150 years from its first occurrence (Eesti Laulu- ja Tantsupeo SA, 2019).

ESC carries a special meaning to Estonians, as a small nation gets a chance to get together, wearing their traditional clothes and express the love to their home, traditions and language (Eesti Laulu- ja Tantsupeo SA, 2019). Furthermore, it is seen as a way to pay homage to forefathers for what they have been through (Eesti Laulu- ja Tantsupeo SA, 2019).

Together with Latvian and Lithuanian Song and Dance celebration, which were brought to life few years after ESC, the phenomena of Song and Dance Celebrations have been listed as UNESCO oral and intangible heritage since 2003 (Eesti Laulu- ja Tantsupeo SA, 2019).

To explain the methodology used in the thesis, the structure of The Research Onion by Saunders et al. (2016, p.124) will be used. To begin with, the overarching philosophy will be explained, after which layers are gradually being “peeled off” to dive deeper into the approach of theory development, research design and finally, explain the process of data collection and analysis. At the end of this section, ethical considerations will be discussed.

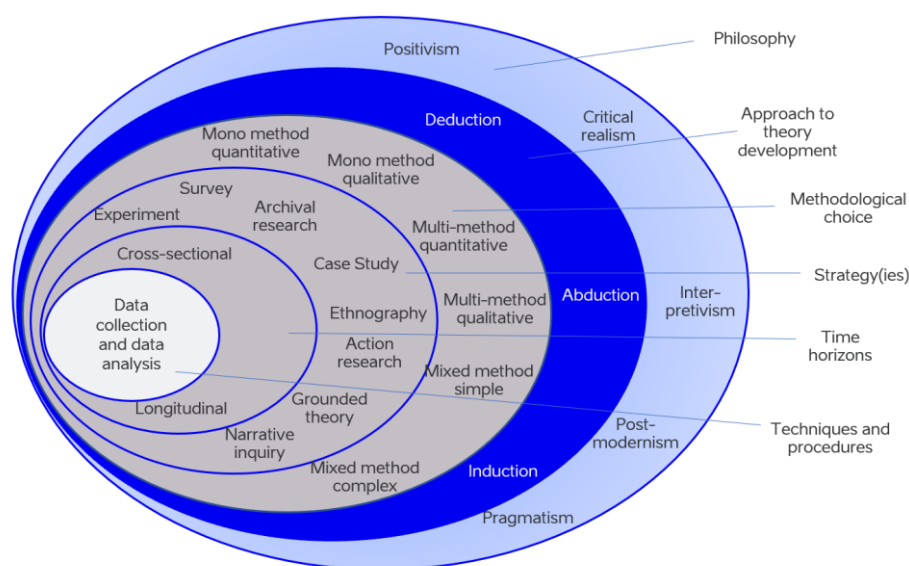


Figure 5: The Research Onion

*Adapted from: Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2016) Research Methods for Business Students. (7th ed.). England: Pearson Education Limited*

#### 4.1 Philosophy of Science

It is important to start by looking at the research philosophy used, as it inevitably influences the way the thesis is formed. To characterize the philosophy used in the thesis, the assumptions made about the human knowledge (epistemological assumptions) and about the realities encountered (ontological assumptions) need to be explained (Saunders et al., 2016).

On the continua between the two extremes of objectivism and subjectivism, this thesis is tilted towards subjectivism, believing that the reality is constructed by people’s perceptions and consequent actions (Saunders et al., 2016). This means that the phenomena studied is believed to be in constant flux and revision (Saunders et al., 2016). In order to understand the phenomena, a situation needs to be studied in detail, using also historical, geographical and



socio-cultural context (Saunders et al., 2016). Thus, this thesis will not only look into the brand of Estonia based on the gathered data, but also takes into consideration what has been done so far, what is particular to this nation and the geographical location (Saunders et al., 2016).

Accordingly, from the five major philosophies Saunders et al. (2016) have described (positivism, critical realism, interpretivism, postmodernism and pragmatism), this thesis falls under the category of interpretivism. Saunders et al. (2016) has described, that having the interpretivist approach, the researcher does not seek to find a universal law. Instead, the purpose of the thesis is to create new, richer meanings, as it is believed that different cultural backgrounds, under different circumstances and different times create different social realities (Saunders et al., 2016). This causes social situations to be complex and often unique (Saunders et al., 2016). Thus, instead of trying to find a unified rule about nation brand and how an event could affect it, this thesis seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the construct based on one country and one event example (Saunders et al., 2016).

## 4.2 Approach to Theory Development

The main two approaches of theory development are deductive and inductive. In the deductive approach, the thesis starts with analyzing theory and research is designed to test the theory, while in inductive approach, the data is gathered before and the theory is built upon that (Saunders et al., 2016).

However, the two approaches are not always clear-cut. This thesis is following mainly a deductive approach, as it follows the existing theory in the creation of interview guides and later, in the coding process. The purpose is to explore the phenomenon of nation brand, identify themes and explain patterns found from the combination of the previous theories and collected data. However, as the Estonian Song Celebration is a very unique case, there is not much theory developed regarding that and thus, when analyzing data about that, inductive approach is being used.

## 4.3 Research Design

### 4.3.1 Methodological Choice

When constructing a research, there are three main methodological choices: quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods (Saunders et al., 2016). Narrowly defined, the term ‘quantitative research’ is used for data collection and analysis of numerical data and ‘qualitative’ for non-

numerical data (Saunders et al., 2016). A researcher can decide whether to conduct the study using a mono (single) method or combine multiple methods (Saunders et al., 2016).

Due to time constraints, this thesis is constructed using a mono method. In compliance with the philosophy, the methodology adopted in this thesis is qualitative. Thus, both the data collection and analysis procedure rely on non-numerical data, which is in this case derived from interviews. This method allows to explore and gain a deeper insight into the subjective and socially constructed meanings expressed about the nation brand of Estonia concerning the Song Celebration (Saunders et al., 2016).

#### 4.3.2 Research Strategy

Research strategy can be explained as a plan the researcher has to achieve the goal: answering the research question (Saunders et al., 2016). Thus, it works as a link between the philosophy and choice of method (Saunders et al., 2016). In order to choose a proper strategy for this research, three aspects were considered: (a) which kind of question the research is looking to answer, (b) whether the research is focused on contemporary events and (c) is control over behavioral variables required (Yin, 2014).

To begin with, also explained by the need for qualitative methods, it was identified that this research seeks to find answers for such as “how” and “why”, as the research question proposed was “how does Estonian Song Celebration influence the nation brand of Estonia?” (Yin, 2014). Thus, instead of looking for who finds the celebration influential or how much it influences the nation brand, the focus remained on more explanatory approach. Even though Estonian Song Celebration (ESC) has a long history, the study focuses on the current effect and thus, on the contemporary event. To have results as close to the real life as possible, control over behavioral variables was not required.

Taking all these considerations into account, the strategy employed in this thesis is a single case study, which is defined as *“an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the “case”) in depth and within its real-world context.”* (Yin, 2014, p. 16).

The case that this study focuses on is a single event, Estonian Song Celebration. Even though there are similar events in two other Baltic states, it can be still considered a unique

phenomenon, especially from the view of nation brand. Using a case study approach allows to study the complex phenomena in a real-world perspective.

#### *4.3.3. Time Horizon*

The time horizon of a study can be either cross-sectional or longitudinal. The former studies the subject in a specific point of time, while the latter looks at the same data point over a certain period (Saunders et al., 2016).

As this research studies the phenomena of nation brand of Estonia regarding the Song Celebration at a specific point in time, when the interviews were conducted, this study is to be considered a cross-sectional study. Due to time constraints it is not possible to use longitudinal study.

#### *4.4 Data Collection*

For reasons explained earlier in this section, the best way to meet the purpose of this research is to collect data through interviews. The research seeks to find out not only how ESC influences the nation brand but also why it has such an effect. In order to get that answer, personal contact and a form of discussion could be considered beneficial groups (Saunders et al., 2016). Furthermore, interviews were also chosen because the amount of questions was rather high, the questions were open ended and the logic of the questioning might have varied. In order to avoid groupthink, individual interviews were preferred over focus groups (Saunders et al., 2016).

In order to explore the topic, the sample chosen can be divided into two large sub-groups: Estonians and foreigners.

Under the Estonian sub-group, two interviews were conducted. The aim of these interviews was to find out what are the views and expectations from the Estonian side regarding the connection of nation brand of Estonia and ESC. The sample included of (1) a representative of ESC and (2) three representatives from Brand Estonia. For the sample, the organizations mentioned were contacted in order to be assigned people who know most about the topic being studied. The organizations were chosen seeking for people who could give the most precise information about the possible compatibility of the nation brand of Estonia and ESC.

Due to geographical constraints, the interviews with Estonians were conducted via online call. It limited the ability to read the body language during the conversations, which can often be a great source of additional information (Saunders et al., 2016). However, compared to the alternative of having just email interviews, an online call still facilitated the communication of emotions to some extent.

Further, 6 people from different nationalities were interviewed. The aim of these interviews was to seek answers for the research question from a foreign perspective, as even though Estonians might wish to present their nation brand in a certain way, the foreigners actually represent the international stakeholders, who can describe the way they actually perceive the nation brand as well as ESC.

The sample of foreigners was limited to university students. On one hand, within the geographical area, the reachable representatives of various nationalities tended to be students. However, the choice was not only made by using convenience sampling but also taken into consideration the fact that nation branding is a long, gradual process: nation brand is shaped by thousands of messages sent out from a nation over the years (Anholt, 2005b). Thus, incorporating ESC to Estonian nation brand strategy today will have a stronger effect in the future and thus, it made sense to focus on the perception of a younger generation, which students present.

From the delimitation of students, purposive sampling was used, where the participants were hand-picked in order to have a variety of nationalities, to have as extensive overview of the topic as possible (Saunders et al., 2016). The goal was to cover people both from neighboring countries, from other European countries as well as from outside of Europe countries. To avoid self-sampling, participants who first wanted to avoid interviews, claiming not to know a lot about Estonia, were still encouraged to participate.

When choosing participants, personal acquaintances were avoided in order to avoid having dishonest answers due to politeness or respect towards the interviewer. Instead, network was used to find suitable candidates for the interviews. However, it is still important to consider that the participants might have guessed that the interviewer was Estonian and thus, interviewees might have been less willing to share strongly negative views about the nation.

This was intended to be prevented by facilitating a trustworthy conversation throughout the interview.

To acquaint the participants with ESC, an official video introducing ESC was shown. The 5-minute video showcased an overview of the history, showed frames from the celebration, familiarized with the singing movement between the celebrations and displayed emotional feedback of a foreign participant on ESC (XXVI Laulu- ja Tantsupidu, 2014). Here, it is important to consider that a video can only convey the first impression of the event, while actually visiting the event could result in broader perspective. However, due to the constraints on the scope of the research, it would have not been possible to interview people before the event and after actually visiting ESC.

Additionally, a video can be presented in a certain way, fostering preferable emotions. However, as the video is presented by ESC itself, it is believed to be factually accurate. Furthermore, even though one could question whether the video is exaggerating the emotional charge from the event, the studies have proved that the emotions from the celebration, such as feeling of belonging, are also in reality listed as one of the main reasons for visiting the event (Lauristin, Vihalemm, 2013).

With both sets of interviews, the question of language had to be considered. Researchers such as Cortazzi et al. (2011) have found that conducting interviews in a second language might require more time, as the interviewer has to explain the questions more often and the participants usually need more time to respond. Furthermore, there tends to be more expression and extra information in interviews in participants' their first language (Cortazzi et al., 2011). Due to lack of self-confidence, the interviewees might struggle to answer the questions (Cortazzi et al., 2011). Thus, the interviews with Estonians were conducted in Estonian, in order to confront these issues. All necessary translations across languages were done carefully to carry on the meaning of the questions (Saunders et al., 2016). However, inevitably, with foreign participants all the interviews had to be conducted in second language, both for interviewees and interviewer, meaning that greater amount of time had to be allocated (Cortazzi et al., 2011).

The interviews were semi-structured, relying on an interview guide prepared in advance (Saunders et al., 2016). In total, 3 interview guides were created (see Appendix 9.1). The

questions were derived from the information from the theoretical background. The questions were conducted carefully, trying to avoid influencing the participants' answers.

The overarching topics were similar across interviews, dividing questions between categories such as Estonian Song Celebration, Brand Estonia, nation brand, nation branding. However, each guide was customized to the type of the interviewee, focusing on the questions most relevant to the interviewee. Otherwise following the flow from the guide, additional questions were introduced when necessary.

The interviews were conducted until the point of saturation was reached. The conversations were audio-recorded and transcribed, the transcriptions were added to the thesis. At the end of interviews, a permission to contact the participants again was granted, if clarification would have been necessary.

## 4.5 Data Analysis

For data analysis, thematic analysis was chosen since it offers a systematic way to analyze one's data while remaining flexible, since it is not tied to a philosophical position (Saunders et al., 2016). After gathering and transcribing the interviews, the data was interpreted by coding, looking for patterns and themes related to the topic studied (Saunders et al., 2016).

As this thesis is using mainly a deductive approach, looking for to test existing theory, the themes for the analysis are derived from the gathered theory, led by the research objectives (Saunders et al., 2016). Not all data was focused on equally, leaving more weight to parts of the data set which are more relevant for the topics studied beforehand (Saunders et al., 2016). However, some theory, such as about the Song Celebration, was developed using inductive approach.

The organized data was divided into 3 categories, resulting the main topics to be:

- Estonian Song Celebration
- Nation Branding
- Nation Brand

During the coding process, the data was further divided into sub-themes. The precise distribution of topics can be seen from the coding tree in the Appendix 9.3.

Instead of names, the interviewee number, nationality or profession was used. Appendix 9.4 provides a table for an overview of the participants.

As this thesis is not interested in quantifying the effect Estonian Song Celebration has on the nation brand but wants to explore and explain the qualitative changes behind the topic, no introduced indexes (such as NBI, CBI, GCI) was used. Instead, Aaker's (2010) Brand Equity Model was used to analyze the current brand equity of Estonia and to discuss how Estonian Song Celebration influences the brand.

Furthermore, even though NBI was not used to quantify the strength of nation brand of Estonia, the underlying framework, the Competitive Identity Hexagon was still used to categorize the changes of the nation brand in foreigner's perceptions (Anholt, 2006). As Competitive Identity can be viewed as a part of both nation branding and nation brand theory, then the overlap is shown on the coding tree. However, for the sake of clarification, this theory will be discussed under the nation branding section in the analysis.

#### 4.6 Validity and Ethical Considerations

To assess the quality of the research, internal and external validity are discussed. In a qualitative study, internal validity reflects whether the results from the particular study are true (Saunders et al., 2016). To ensure that the data is interpreted correctly and reflecting what the participants actually intended to express, the researcher consciously avoided her preconceived expectations about the results (Saunders et al., 2016). Furthermore, when in doubt, the interpretation of data was checked with the participants, in order to yield precise results (Saunders et al., 2016).

The external validity of a qualitative research refers to the generalizability of the results (Saunders et al., 2016). The researcher ensures external validity by catering detailed descriptions about the questions, design, context and findings, providing an opportunity to transfer the study to some other settings (Saunders et al., 2016). However, it is acknowledged that since the study is case-specific, it is likely difficult to fully transfer the study to another settings (Saunders et al., 2016).

Additionally, when conducting a research, ethical issues might arise. Further, considerations and actions done in order to minimize the possible harm caused by those issues are discussed.

To begin with, when contacting the participants, the aim of the research was introduced in order to avoid being misleading about the topic (Saunders et al., 2016). For the purpose of this thesis, the identities of the interviewees were not required to be introduced. Thus, in order to ensure confidentiality, no names were presented in data collection nor analysis (Saunders et al., 2016). To avoid stressing interviewees, support was shown to the participants when they admitted not knowing an answer or they simply just wished to skip a question (Saunders et al., 2016).

In order to ensure the credibility of the data, all interviews were recorded, asking for permission from participants beforehand (Saunders et al., 2016). To ensure justice towards our participants, no generated data was left out nor extra data was added (Saunders et al., 2016). As two interviews were conducted in Estonian, only quotes used from the interview were carefully translated to English. Nevertheless, to avoid deception, the full-length Estonian interview is still added to the appendix, with a possibility for a full translation if necessary.



## 5.1 Song Celebration

To analyze the effect Estonian Song Celebration (ESC) has on the nation brand of Estonia, the ground is set by mapping the current situation of the event regarding foreign audience. Further, future outlooks are discussed.

To begin with, both interviews with Estonian participants confirmed that ESC definitely carries an important value for *Estonians* as the tradition is 150 years old, meaning that it has grown together with the past six-seven human generations (Interviewee 1,21,23). However, the organizers acknowledged that there is room for raising awareness among foreign audiences (Interviewee 1).

According to interviewee 1, currently, a separate target group of ESC is choir musicians. Regarding countries, the interviewee explained that there is naturally a higher interest among neighboring nations as well as countries with Estonian communities such as Australia, Canada and USA. Furthermore, the awareness of the event is related to other activities of Estonia. For example, it can be assumed that the cultural relations created by the former professional sumo wrestler Baruto Kaito explain the amount of inquiries from Japan (Interviewee 1). There is no clear overview about the awareness of the event among foreign audiences as it would be extremely difficult to measure due to the extent of the question (Interviewee 1). Regarding foreign interest for participation, as a rule of thumb, there are around three to four foreign collectives participating in each type of choir sections, varying according to the age (Interviewee 1).

In relation to the international scene, according to the Communication Manager of ESC, the main focus of ESC communication team has been to develop relationships with foreign representatives, being the ambassador of Estonian brand. Drawing the attention of the biggest media channels such as Deutsche Welle, BBC and New York Times could be considered as some of the biggest achievements (Interviewee 1). Additionally, for international audiences, all smaller practical actions such as creating an English website and social media are performed (Interviewee 1).

Even though ESC is a national event, the Estonian participants believed that its uniqueness can provide value also to foreigners. ESC can be seen as a peaceful manifestation of democracy, where choir music carries internationally understandable messages through the commitment of the performers (Interviewee 1). Furthermore, the tradition itself could be considered to be an easy and concentrated way to communicate the story of Estonian development (Interviewee 1). As the Communication Manager of ESC put it: *“It (ESC) shows the story of development, the efficiency, the speed of where we have come by today. We started it 150 years ago without a land, without our own cultural education and country and by today, we have break through to be at the top of innovation, being an e-country. This probably says something about us.”* (Interviewee 1).

The Latvian participant argued that there are not many countries which have maintained folklore while in Baltic states it can still be considered a part of everyday life. Thus, she believed the tradition to carry on the cultural heritage. However, some of the other foreign participants discussed that it is likely to be difficult for internationals to gain value from the event, as it is cyclical, very nationalistic, has the language barrier and is more likely to be resonating with the older generation (Interviewee 3, 7).

Interviewee 1 believed that ESC should reach the foreign audiences because it is a non-political, neutral narrative which is constantly evolving. Thus, it could be considered as an existing brand through which Estonia can showcase itself. Interviewee 22 pointed out that it is likely to raise interest among tourists to visit the country, offering economic benefits. Interviewee 1 added that it is a moment when all layers of Estonian population are represented - politicians, people of culture, the citizens - and thus, it offers an exclusive opportunity for journalists.

According to the Communication Manager of ESC, the goal regarding foreign markets should be to focus on making ESC as an integral part of Estonian brand. It can be believed to be a narrative which connects and represents Estonians and ignoring it would be waste of resources (Interviewee 1). Instead of marketing ESC as an event, it should be used to invite people to become a part of a bigger joint singing or choir music movement, which includes smaller song celebrations around Estonia as well as high level choir performances around the world (Interviewee 1).

Additionally, the Communication Manager of ESC believed that on an international scale, Estonia would benefit from cooperation with other Baltic states, in marketing the song celebrations as well as in regional marketing. He explained that even though all of the nations have their own brand and thus, a story to tell, in a global context, the traditions of song celebration and the goals of Baltic states are similar enough to focus on more collaboration. As an example he brought branding Scandinavia by their design - it seems to be benefiting for all the nations concerned. Furthermore, the Latvian participant noted that she only heard about the same tradition existing in Estonia through her own research, not from school, implying that there is not enough information about the shared aspects of the Baltic states.

However, the Communication Manager of ESC emphasized that as global marketing is an expensive, complicated and multilayered concept, ESC does not have resources to participate in marketing actions. The main effort of ESC remains in organizing the event and focusing on Estonians. As stated in interview: *“With today’s resources, we are basically near to maximum - what we are able to do, we do.”* (Interviewee 1). The Communication Manager stated that ESC can contribute by offering input for communication and being a reliable partner for organizations who manage Estonian brand on a daily basis.

## 5.2 Nation Branding

The representative of Brand Estonia pointed out, that nation branding is a complex subject in Estonia. More precisely, she described how in many other countries, nation branding is centrally coordinated by, for example, the bureau of the Prime Minister or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In Estonia, however, even though many activities are controlled by Enterprise Estonia, there is no nation-wide central coordination (Interviewee 23).

Regarding the overall concept, a couple of the foreign participants admitted that they had never thought about the conscious effort countries make to brand themselves (Interviewee 4,5,7). However, all of the foreign participants agreed that it is important for nations to brand themselves. Interviewee 5 concluded that: *“If they (countries) don't do the branding consciously, some things that end up on news will do the branding for the country. And then it's much more unpredictable and it might not be, you know, that good.”*

Other reasons for the importance of nation branding mentioned were avoiding prejudices, benefiting the tourism industry, differentiating from other countries and building connection to

its residents. Informant 8 mentioned that nation branding might be more vital for countries from the Soviet bloc as due to recent history they need to establish themselves in the Western countries.

Nonetheless, interviewee 8 also pointed out that nations need to be careful to avoid branding to become too nationalized, as it can become dangerous, referring to historical events. He added: *“I think it's important to explain why one's country is different and special but still remember that you are one amongst many.”* (Interviewee 8).

Furthermore, interviewee 6 implied that a country does not necessarily need to brand itself if its actions speak for itself. As an example, he brought Germany - the image of Germany might have been ruined because of Hitler but he believes that thanks to Chancellor Angela Merkel's decisions regarding accepting refugees, the image of Germany was enhanced to outsiders (Interviewee 6).

Most commonly mentioned characteristic regarding an appealing brand was nature, although it can be assumed that the participants were referring to different kinds of nature. Some of the other key features mentioned were history, modern technology, welfare state and democracy, care for the environment, no bad reputation regarding crime and policies regarding immigrants.

### **Competitive Identity Hexagon**

Using the structure of the Competitive Identity Hexagon by Anholt (2006), the current state of Estonian nation branding will be described, exploring which messages Estonian brand currently communicates to foreigners.

- **Tourism**

All of the participants travel approximately at least once per year, ranging up to seven times per year. Two participants mentioned that having acquaintances in the destination is a key parameter for choosing a destination (Interviewee 3,6). However, nation brand was also admitted playing a role. For example, interviewee 3 stated, that the perception of the place is essential when choosing a destination. He also admitted his perception to be made up from news headlines and that he is unlikely to do some research himself to change this perception. Other determinant parameters for possible destinations included cheap prices, beautiful nature, climate and culture.

All of the participants who had not been to Estonia said that they would be interested in visiting it. Interviewee 8 mentioned that for this, a better advertising for transportation means, such as flights and cruises, should be done. The reasons why informants were interested in visiting Estonia included beautiful nature, history (such as Dannebrog 800th birthday in Tallinn), getting to know the place more and/or knowing someone who is living there.

Interviewee 3 said that the best experience about visiting Estonia is the beautiful nature. As favorite things regarding Estonia, the participants also listed the Old Town of Tallinn, (cheap) spa treatments, cafes and restaurants (Interview 4, 5).

- People

Interviewee 7, who had no personal connections with Estonians, thought them to fall under Slavic family and thus, assumed them to be more open than Scandinavians. However, other participants related Estonians to be more like Finns and Scandinavians - features mentioned were calmness, emotionless, being closed, aware of their personal space, humbleness, friendliness. Two participants mentioned, that once you get to know Estonian people, they are open-minded, cool, helpful (Interviewee 3,6). Interviewee 4 also evaluates Estonian girls to very pretty. Informant 6 pointed out, that Estonians never initiate something and thus, the foreigner needs to be the one making the effort to communicate. Interviewee 3, who has been to Estonia, perceived Estonians to be defensive towards tourists, especially with a bit darker skin tone.

A representative of Brand Estonia mentioned, that a few years ago, during interviews for their brand research, it became prevalent that Estonians are known for being at the top of the alcohol statistic rankings. In the current sample, the Danish participant also perceived Estonians to value alcohol. However, a Dutch informant, who has spent time in Estonia mentioned as a surprising factor that Estonians do not actually drink as much as one would expect them to.

- Governance

Regarding governance, two topics were touched upon. Firstly, four of the six foreign interviewees mentioned that they have heard about Estonia being a highly digitalized, technologically advanced country (Interviewee 3,5,6,7). Keywords mentioned include e-residency and the government being digitized. The Latvian participant mentioned that some

Latvians might perceive it with feelings like *“They’ve already done this. Why can’t we do this as well?”* (Interviewee 5). The participant from Yemen suggested that as Estonia is currently doing a good job in digitalization, it should continue focusing on that.

On the other hand, the Danish and Dutch participants briefly mentioned how recent Danske Bank’s scandal, which included money laundering billions of euros in Estonian branch, may have influenced the nation brand of Estonia among Danes (Sorensen, 2018). The Dutch participant found it funny saying: *“They (Danes) have like these comedy versions of that and then Estonians are portrayed as like Russian oligarchs.”* (Interviewee 3). The Danish interviewee, believed that the possible present shift of perception towards Estonia being “a bit more Eastern country again” is only temporary, as there are several banks involved in scandals also in other Western countries, such as Switzerland.

- **Culture; Brands; Investment**

Among foreign participants, Estonia was not described through culture, brands or investment.

### 5.3 Nation Brand

To evaluate how ESC influences the brand of Estonia, the structure of Aaker’s Brand Equity Model will be used. Firstly, the current strength of the nation brand of Estonia will be evaluated and later, the effects of introducing ESC will be explored, category by category.

- **Brand Awareness**

Many participants were cautious before the interviews, saying that they do not know much about Estonia. Two informants who have been to Estonia admitted, that they barely had any perception before the visit (Interviewee 3,4). The Finnish participant revealed that she only knew that there should be cheap alcohol, as many Finns go there for that reason, but did not expect anything else. The Dutch participant expected *“an average European city”* without post-Soviet influences due to his Estonian friends’ influences.

The Yemenis participant admitted that most of his nation probably does not even know that Estonia exists, while the Dutch and Slovak interviewees believed that their compatriots would not know where Estonia actually lies or at least could not tell the difference between the Baltic states. Due to this lack of perception, the Dutch participant’s friends also had hard time understanding why he was visiting Estonia.

The foreign interviewees had difficulties recalling knowing anyone who have visited Estonia, except for the Finn and Latvian participant, who believed most of their friends had visited it.

- **Brand Associations**

To detect associations made with Estonia, the participants were asked to present three keywords which come into mind regarding Estonia.

To begin with, the representatives of Brand Estonia mentioned their three core messages: untouched nature, digitalized society and independent minds. Additionally, they mentioned Estonia might be thought of as an Eastern European country, not a Nordic country, and thus, it might be associated with cheap labor country. The representative of ESC, on the other hand, related Estonia to be a Nordic country, which values its traditions and is relatively old in its roots.

The associated keywords among foreigners varied, but few of them emerged more often than the others. The most frequent comment, from both people who have visited Estonia and from the ones who have not, was that they believe Estonia to be a mixture of post-Soviet state and a Nordic country, being the most prosperous of the Baltic states and culturally more similar to Nordic rather than post-Soviet states (Interviewee 3,4,5,8).

Another frequently mentioned characteristic was Estonia's success in the digitalization field. The participants from the two furthest countries, Yemen and Slovakia, mentioned it as one of the associations since they had heard about it through internet and network. Many of the participants also mentioned it during the conversations as a positive aspect, which they found interesting about Estonia.

Other associations made were about the nature, history, about Estonia being "a hidden gem", small, cozy and quiet, relatively cheap.

All the participants who had been to Estonia, initially said it was hard to recall any negative associations regarding Estonia (Interviewee 3,4,5). However, the Dutch participant recalled that he could sense some poverty while his visit and the Finnish interviewee mentioned one negative experience in customer service. The Yemenis participant mentioned white supremacy

as one of his associations and the Danish interviewee indicated the Russian minority in Narva to be a dangerous, hinting to conflicts in Crimea.

- **Brand Loyalty**

Two of the three participants who had visited Estonia said that they would like to do it again (Interviewee 4,5). As a reason for interviewee 3 not being interested in visiting Estonia in the near future again, he stated that he had already seen the country, but would consider revisiting it for his business. The other two participants would like to take a short trip to Estonia when they have friends visiting them from abroad.

Furthermore, all the participants who have been to Estonia would recommend visiting it to their friends, especially if they are looking for something instead of the “regular” destinations and would be interested in seeing the nature. Interviewee 3 pointed out, however, that it would be important to have a friend from Estonia beforehand, as it is difficult to find and get to remote areas without a car.

- **Brand Quality**

Regarding people’s expectations towards Estonia and the reality, different aspects were mentioned. The Dutch participant was surprised to see the nature, that can be so remote, as in the Netherlands the population is many times higher in a similar area of land. Furthermore, he expected Estonians to drink more. The Latvian participant mentioned that during her first visit, she was impressed by the cleanness of Tallinn, the mix of old and new architecture and cozy cafes in Old Town. The Finnish interviewee discovered during her trip that alcohol is as cheap as she expected, but that the city and architecture was surprisingly pretty and thus, it sparked a wish to visit Tallinn again. Also, she realized that Estonia is very similar to Finland.

As another positive factor, interviewee 5 mentioned that Estonia is safe for tourists, although some Westerners who have not been to post-Soviet countries might perceive them to be somewhat dangerous.

## **The Effect of Estonian Song Celebration on Brand Equity**

- **Brand Awareness**

The ESC was not mentioned by any of the participants before introducing the video. Four of the six foreign participants had not heard about the festival at all (Interviewee 4,6,7,8). The



Latvian interviewee knew about the celebration in Estonia as there is a similar event in Latvia but was surprised that she did not learn about it from school but from a documentary she watched herself. The Dutch participant had attended the event in 2017 since his Estonian friend proposed it when he was visiting him during the festival.

- **Brand Associations**

Introducing ESC created several new associations regarding both Estonia and Estonians. The most frequently mentioned associations made were related to having strong traditions, nationalistic spirit and love for one's country. Mostly these were perceived as positive traits, but it was pointed out that without a context, it could also be negative. While the participants agreed for these traits to be important, they also mentioned that as a foreigner, it cannot be considered too important (Interviewee 3,4,7).

However, some of the participants admitted that ESC changed their perception about Estonia, but only moderately. The Danish participant was surprised to find out that Estonians are so self-aware about their national identity and the Finnish participant said she has never acknowledged that there has been so much history and thus, she perceives Estonians stronger now. The Yemenis participant said that when visiting Estonia, he would now expect to see tradition-valuing people. The Slovakian interviewee pointed out that nationalistic awareness seems to be built in from a young age, as there were also young participants in the video. The Latvian participant associated the event with Estonians being passive, as it has been used as a form of nonviolent resistance in the past to break free from the Soviet Union.

Both Latvian and Danish participants recognized that different generations could perceive the event differently. They proposed, that the older generation might see it through their own educational and professional lens, maybe as a propaganda, while younger people, growing up in a more globalized world, would be more open-minded and simply curious about the event. The Danish participant further indicated that using ESC to brand Estonia could make it seem more joyful and happy, as singing is associated with positive emotions. He suggested that this could appeal also to older generation, as long as it is voluntarily and also perceived in that way.

- **Brand Loyalty**

The one Dutch participant who had been to ESC admitted that even if he would visit Estonia again, he would probably skip the event. He mentioned, that as a non-Estonian, it is worth seeing the event once, as one could not understand the songs.

All the other foreign participants said to be interested in visiting the event. However, the Slovakian participant admitted that there are probably other things she would do, and a couple of others said that they would only do it if it would happen to take place when they are already in Estonia. Furthermore, few of the participants were concerned that they would feel like outsiders during the event (Interviewee 4,6,7).

- **Brand Quality**

The Dutch participant, who has been to ESC and the Latvian interviewee who has attended a similar event in Latvia conceded that it is definitely an amazing experience. Interviewee 5 explained: *“I just think the amount of people and how authentic it is with the costumes and also the sound... It’s just... you can’t compare it to a concert. It’s phenomenal.”*

For the Yemenis participant, the event reflected solidarity and made him separate between the Estonian government and population. He thought Estonia to be nationalist in an “immigrant hating” way but by seeing the video, he sensed that Estonians would be welcoming, even if the government would not.

However, the Dutch interviewee also said that even though it sounds harsh, he does not really care about the traditions that the other countries have, unless he would move there. He explains that it plays a really small role in his perception and serves more as just a fun fact to know about the country.

Nevertheless, some of the other participants believed that ESC could be incorporated in nation branding as it made a good impression about the country for them (Interviewee 4,5,6,8). On the other hand, they pointed out that it would appeal to a small target group and would best appeal people through word-of-mouth spread.

## Discussion

With growing global competitiveness, countries are increasingly engaging themselves in nation branding (Dinnie, 2016). From the literature review it has become evident that instead of communicating messages crafted for a branding campaign, ones rooted in the national identity potentially yield bigger success. However, as national identity consists of multiple aspects, but it was found through theoretical review that the public is only willing to receive concentrated messages, and thus, choice of what to include in nation branding strategy needs to be made. To find out whether the potential of Estonian Song Celebration, a far-reaching and influential tradition, should be considered to communicate as a part of the Estonian brand, the learning outcomes of this thesis will further be elaborated on.

### 6.1 Learning Outcomes

Through-out interviews with both Estonian and foreign participants, the significance of ESC was discussed and the impact it has for foreigners was examined. Although both literature and the data gathered proved that ESC is an important part of the national identity of Estonians, using Anholt's (2006) Competitive Identity Hexagon, one of the main findings from the interviews was that currently, the foreign participants do not relate Estonia with culture and heritage but rather described the brand they perceive through tourism, people and governance.

Further, Aaker's Brand Equity Model was used as a basis to answer the question "where are we now?". The current state of the brand of Estonia was evaluated as well as the effect introducing ESC had on the nation brand. From there, another main finding of the thesis emerged – the overall impact introducing ESC to foreigners had on the nation brand can be evaluated as moderate, since improvements were made in brand associations, while other areas of brand equity did not witness such an improvement.

A more detailed discussion about these findings and more will follow.

#### **Competitive Identity Hexagon**

From the interviews it became evident that among the sample, travelling carries high importance, as the participants travel rather frequently. Due to this, at times it seemed that the participants had hard time to grasp the concept of nation brand, being often guided by their intention to travel and thus, focusing more on the destination brand. For example, when asked

to present the associations they have with Estonia, the participants seemed to describe how they see Estonia as a travel destination, rather than discussing Estonian brands, politics etc.

Furthermore, as the participants showed to be rather eager travelers, it is difficult to evaluate how genuine and serious their stated interest in visiting Estonia is, since as a traveler, it is natural to be interested in visiting a place, without actually ever planning to do it.

Overall, the participants perceived Estonia as an interesting destination, among else mentioning the Old Town, nature and safety. However, even though the brand of Estonia can be considered relatively strong regarding tourism, then according to Anholt (2010), that does not equal to having an overall positive brand.

In comparison, the participants made less associations with other areas of the hexagon. For example, although the interviewees seemed to have mainly positive associations related to Estonians, they did not mention them before specifically asking to describe the people. This can be due to a factor that many of the participants claimed not to know many Estonians and thus, needed to make assumptions. Overall, there were both positive and negative associations made, and thus, it can be assumed that the interviews were honest in their answers.

Regarding governance, it can be concluded that Estonia has been successful in communicating “digital society” as their message, since even participants from the furthest countries had heard about it and mentioned it themselves. Generally, it was described as a (very) positive aspect. However, the Latvian participant indicated that there is often news in their media about the tech success in Estonia, usually portrayed in a positive light but sometimes bringing along jealousy among Latvians.

Even though the Dutch participant believed that the Danske Bank scandal had influenced the perception about Estonia in the eyes of Danes, the affect can be evaluated as moderate, since the Danish participant did not relate the event to the interview until the researcher brought the topic up. While he admitted that the incident might have a role regarding the perception about Estonia among Danes, he also stated it is likely temporary. This is supported by Anholt’s (2010) claim that sudden dramatic changes are not likely to shift the perception of a country permanently.

None of the foreign participants mentioned anything from the area of culture regarding Estonia. However, the representative of ESC believed, that Estonia has a lot of potential in what to offer from the culture: festivals, music, theatre, movies. He believes that by organizations and organizers cooperating with each other, Estonia could become better presented as a cultural destination.

Anholt (2006) has acknowledged, that although it is impossible to excel in all possible areas of the hexagon, a task for creating a successful nation brand is to coordinate the communication strategy in all areas of the hexagon. Mapping the current situation showed that foreigners did not relate half of the areas of the hexagon to Estonia at all. According to the theoretical review, the fact that foreigners made no associations with culture, investment and brands indicates that Estonia has a great room for improvement in those areas.

Furthermore, the lack of associations in these categories can be also caused by the fact that there is no central organization responsible for enhancing nation branding in all across the hexagon, while there are organizations concentrated on specific areas, such as Visit Estonia promoting tourism. It can be argued that having a central organization coordinating nation branding would create more concentrated messages across the hexagon, which, according to Dinnie (2016), would increase the likelihood of these messages reaching foreign audiences.

### **Aaker's Brand Equity Model**

Based on the interviews, the overall awareness of Estonia can be ranked as low. Some of the interviewees seemed to evaluate it to be low themselves, as they were hesitant to participate in the research, fearing their lack of knowledge. The ranking can further be explained by the fact that the interviewees from non-neighboring countries believed that their compatriots do not have much of a perception about Estonia and said that it is not uncommon to be not aware of the country at all. According to Aaker (2010), this communicates that the brand of Estonia was weak regarding awareness.

The associations made with Estonia by interviewees were mainly positive, showcasing that the reputation of Estonia is pleasing. However, at times, a negative image-identity gap seemed to occur when Estonia was related to post-Soviet traits without clear reasoning. This is not surprising, as researchers like Anholt (2010) have acknowledged this kind of challenge for post-Soviet countries to occur.

Furthermore, it is said that a characteristic of a strong brand is that the associations made reflect the actual identity (Aaker, 2010). To evaluate the match, the core messages (independent minds, untouched nature, digitalized society) set by Brand Estonia (2019), aligned with the national identity of Estonia, are compared with the associations made by the participants.

The data of this thesis reveals that, depending on the interpretation, relation with independent minds is found to a lesser extent, while untouched nature and digital society were clearly mentioned several times. It was surprising to find that even participants from distant nationalities, who otherwise seemed to know little about Estonia, had still heard about it being technologically advanced. This phenomenon is supported by Anholt's (2010) claim that symbolic actions, such as Estonia declaring internet access as human rights, communicate the nation brand the best. All in all, considering the degree of match between the identity and associations, the associations aspect of Estonian brand can be evaluated as relatively strong.

The brand loyalty of Estonia can also be evaluated as relatively high since most of the participants are interested in (re-)visiting the country and/or would recommend it to their friends. Furthermore, the brand quality should showcase whether the brand meets the expectations. From the data it can be concluded that, for the participants who have visited Estonia, their experience exceeded their expectations and thus, the brand of Estonia can be described as strong in the quality category as well.

Hence, the brand of Estonia seems to perform well in most of the aspects of a strong brand equity. However, it can be assumed that the low awareness of the brand diminishes the benefits from other areas of the Brand Equity Model.

Interviews revealed that introducing ESC did not help to improve the awareness of Estonian brand, as most the foreign participants did not recall knowing this event. However, it can be argued that the low overall awareness is caused by the event to be appealing for a niche market, such as choir singers. According to Aaker (2010), that does not necessarily signal a weak brand. Nevertheless, as the goal of this thesis is for ESC to be part of Estonian brand, it should not remain known only among niche markets.

It can be argued that associations made with ESC, such as “far-reaching traditions” and “nationalistic spirit”, relate to the core message of “independent minds” which Brand Estonia wishes to communicate. Thus, introducing ESC to foreigners could strengthen the nation brand of Estonia by creating more identity-matching associations. In accordance with the theory by Anholt (2005b), the participants pointed out that it would best come across when communicated by the residents themselves.

According to the interviews, introducing ESC also did not seem to increase brand loyalty. Even though the participants said they would like to visit the event, the interest seemed to be modest. The only participant who had actually been to the festival said that he sees no reason to visit it again. However, since we have only one informant on this topic, it can be interpreted as a personal opinion and thus, no certain conclusions about brand loyalty can be made. Nevertheless, as Aaker (2010) has pointed out, loyalty should be directly focused on, as this would facilitate word-of-mouth among foreign audiences.

Regarding brand quality, interviews showed that ESC does not play a big role in the perception about Estonia but rather just serves as a fun fact to know. However, it can be argued that for the informants who had participated in the ESC or a similar event in the other Baltic state, it might have increased the quality of the brand as they claim it to be an amazing experience. Furthermore, for others it might have increased the expectations towards the brand.

### **Value of Estonian Song Celebration**

Asking about which nation brands are the most appealing, it was clear that it is dependent on personal preferences, as the answers were varying remarkably. However, while more frequent answers included nature, modern technology etc., none of the participants mentioned culture and history was mentioned only once. This might indicate that the current three core messages (untouched nature, digitalized society and independent minds) are well chosen by Brand Estonia, alluring young generation (Brand Estonia, 2019).

However, Dinnie (2016) has noted that in making strategic decisions about nation brand, both heritage and modern aspects should be considered. Furthermore, she even states that building a nation brand which is rooted in the cultural heritage tends to be more successful. Thus, the

value that ESC, a vital part of Estonian history and culture, might have on the nation brand of Estonia will be discussed.

Overall, when asking about the value ESC might have, the tendency to see it as a destination became prevalent again. The participants often described it from the point of view of what value being a visitor on the event could offer, instead of what the concept overall could communicate. However, the Estonian participant believed it could be a cohesive way to tell the story of Estonia (Interview 1).

Even though the foreign participants had hard time in pointing out how ESC could provide value, some important conclusions can be drawn from the conversations. For example, for interviewee 6, seeing the video made him perceive Estonians differently, saying that instead of “white supremacy”, which he mentioned as one of his main associations before, he would now describe Estonians more welcoming towards strangers. This conviction can be found surprising, as generally, he associated the event with being nationalistic. However, even though the songs performed are nationalistic, he felt the initiative is still inclusive.

Indeed, most of the associations made by foreigners included relation to Estonians being patriotic, valuing their national identity and traditions. Here, it became prevalent that there is a thin line between perceiving the event as something positive that is carrying on the cultural heritage of Estonia versus it being nationalistic propaganda. Thus, when communicating the message about ESC abroad, Estonia needs to be careful in choosing the ways of presenting it.

## 6.2 Implications

Through the theoretical review and the interview with Brand Estonia representatives, it has become clear that Estonia is continuously working on enhancing its brand. However, it also became evident that there is no central organization controlling all the areas of the nation brand in Estonia. Since the theory suggests that a centralized coordination for nation branding is more likely to yield success, the government of Estonia should consider creating an entity governing all the aspects of a nation brand. Additionally, as Estonia was known to be a Baltic state, according to interviewee 1 suggestion, Estonia could consider more collaboration with other Baltic states in branding song celebrations as well as in general region marketing.



Through interviews it was also discovered that there is still room for improvement in the current nation brand. As found out in the theoretical review, nation branding is a slow process and thus, it can be argued that the need for improvements is caused by the fact that the renewed Brand Estonia strategy has not reached all audiences yet and thus, the awareness is still relatively low. On the other hand, Estonia should also consider whether adding new angles to the messages communicated would potentially reach foreign audiences more successfully.

More precisely, the thesis reveals that due to consistent messaging of digital society, the modern aspect of Estonia has reached foreign audiences. However, to appeal to a more diverse audience, Estonia could consider putting more emphasis on its cultural heritage, ESC, when communicating their brand, as it is proven to be an important part of the national identity of Estonia, which also moderately strengthens the nation brand. Furthermore, it can be believed that ESC faces the paradoxes of nation branding quite well – it is unique while also is able to create psychological ties through its meaning and international language of music.

When deciding to implement ESC in the nation brand of Estonia, it is important to note that in order to communicate ESC to foreign audiences successfully, a clear decision has to be made and purposeful action taken. Estonia should encourage all possible stakeholders to communicate the message, explaining that creating interest towards the country through various strategic messages would also be beneficial for them.

In compliance with the theoretical view, which explained that international messages need to come across as sincere, the informants in the thesis also pointed out that when deciding to implement ESC in the strategy of the nation brand, it needs to be done carefully to avoid propaganda. Furthermore, a participant pointed out that the best way to spread the message about ESC would be through word-of-mouth. Thus, as we learn from the thesis that ESC moderately enhances the nation brand, Estonia could consider encouraging its own citizens to share information about ESC whenever introducing Estonia abroad. To simplify this, tools such as English introductory videos, vlogs and presentations about the Estonian Song Celebration could be created.

In addition to citizen brand ambassadors, ESC could consider encouraging famous Estonian sporting and cultural figures to introduce their home land through this tradition and thus, become brand ambassadors themselves (Dinnie, 2016). Furthermore, having strong presence

in social media channels such as Facebook, YouTube and Instagram are also potential ways to stimulate positive word-of-mouth (Dinnie, 2016).

Even though these branding actions might have merely a small effect on the nation brand, when guided by a prearranged strategy, these messages add up, creating a strong, cohesive image about the nation. Anholt (2010) has explain the worth of these efforts:

*“It’s true that each individual “branding” action, and its effect on the whole world’s perceptions of the country, may seem heartbreakingly tiny, hardly even worth doing: a mere drop in the ocean. But the ocean is made of drops and what is truly heartbreaking is when thousands of people, companies, products, politicians, personalities and cultural artefacts are drop-drop-dropping messages every single day about their country and it doesn’t amount to anything, because there’s no method behind it, no guidance, no strategy, no vision, no common purpose.” (p.106)*

### 6.3 Limitations

When constructing the thesis, some limitations were faced. Even though there are indexes to analyze the strength of nation brand, these are built upon large sets of data and are focused on giving a numerical value to the nation brand. Thus, these indexes were not suitable for measuring the possible effect of ESC within this study, as the change in the numerical value is not likely to occur instantly after introducing the video.

Furthermore, instead of quantifying the effect, the goal of this thesis was to explore the reasoning, why and how ESC could affect the nation brand. To describe this, Aaker’s Brand Equity model was adapted and modified for a nation brand. Having a similar framework specially developed for nation branding would eliminate potential biases of interpreting the general Equity Model, as some concepts from model were often explained focusing only on commercial brands.

Due to time and scope constraints, the foreign sample of this research was limited to six people. For a more extensive research, additional nationalities could have been included in the research, making it possible to make more precise generalizations about the effect of ESC on specific groups, such as neighboring countries, Europeans and the rest of the world.

Additionally, having more interviewees who have already visited ESC could have enriched the data, as they could talk from their own actual experience. Ideally, interviewees who have

visited the event once as well as others who are frequent guests of ESC could be presented, as this is also likely to give different insights.

Although the current generation of students will be *the future*, including informants from other demographic groups could be beneficial. More precisely, it could give a broader understanding, as it was found that different age groups probably act differently towards ESC.

Lastly, face-to-face interviews with the Estonian participants could have potentially also led to a higher quality data, as emotions could have been better interpreted. Also, it could be debated that in a face-to-face contact, people open up more and thus, again, richer data could have been gathered.

## 6.4 Future research

This thesis serves as a basis for future research on the subject of nation branding. In particular, as discussed in the thesis, to set a long-term focus, questions like “where are we now?”, “where do we want to go?” and “how could we get there?” need to be answered. This thesis focused on mapping the current situation and thus, answers the question “where we are now?”. The study also offers some possible directions for “where do we want to go?” by proposing the opportunity to include ESC in the nation brand and analyzing the possible effects.

Future research could consider other possible ways to enhance the nation brand of Estonia, so that all the areas of Competitive Identity Hexagon would be represented in the nation brand. For this, a similar analysis of the effects that these proposed messages could have on the nation brand needs to be done.

The practical implementation of the knowledge from the thesis could be further explored by creating a strategic plan of how to *alter* the nation brand to also communicate culture and thus, ESC. This future research would answer the question “how we could get there?”. For example, as this thesis suggests that the population itself often is the best messenger of those branding messages, further research could be done on how Estonians could best communicate the significance of Estonian Song Celebration to foreigners, how effective this approach is and what other possible ways could be implemented to communicate the message abroad.

Additionally, a longitudinal study of the nation brand of Estonia could be conducted. The study could focus on official rankings from different indexes such as NBI, CBI or GCI and analyze their changes over time. This could be further compared to the changes made in the communication of the nation brand. For example, the effect of implementing ESC could be measured over time by comparing the indexes before and after putting emphasis on it in the nation brand. However, it is important to note that in this study, it would be difficult to control all other variables possibly influencing the nation brand.

Lastly, after including ESC in the strategic plan of nation brand of Estonia, after some years a new study could be conducted to monitor and re-evaluate the state of nation brand. Again, possible indications of how to alter the brand for better could be found to keep the nation brand in constant development.

## Conclusion

The objective of this case study has been to find out how Estonian Song Celebration affects the nation brand of Estonia. For this, 8 semi-structured interviews were conducted, two of which were with representatives from Estonia and six with foreigners. The Estonian sample consisted of the Communication Manager of Estonian Song Celebration and representatives of the organization of Brand Estonia. The foreign sample introduced six university students from different nationalities.

The data generated provided an insight to the research question, finding out that the effect that Estonian Song Celebration has on the nation brand of Estonia can be evaluated as moderate. Relying on Aaker's (2010) Brand Equity Model, the strength of Estonian brand was evaluated before and after introducing the Song Celebration.

The overall strength of the nation brand of Estonia before introducing Estonian Song Celebration was found to be relatively pleasing, but it was argued that due to low awareness, all other aspects of Brand Equity Model might suffer too. The study found that introducing the event did not increase the awareness, quality nor the loyalty of the nation brand of Estonia. However, it was discovered that new identity-matching associations with Brand Estonia's proposed message, "independent minds", were made, as foreign participants described Estonia as a traditional country which values its own traditions and culture. According to the model, this signals a strong brand, indicating that Estonian Song Celebration has a positive effect on nation brand of Estonia. Nevertheless, as the other areas of the model did not improve, the overall effect that Estonian Song Celebration had on the nation brand is still described as modest.

Guided by the sub questions, the topic was delved into in greater detail. First, the ground was set by exploring the overall perception of Estonia and brand associations made with Estonia among foreigners. Using Anholt's (2006) Competitive Identity Hexagon, it was found that foreigners associate Estonia with categories like tourism, people and governance, while no relations were made to culture, brands and investments. The perception of Estonia was mainly positive, for example, the participants praised Estonian nature, safety, digital success, the Old Town of Tallinn and people being calm and humble. However, also some negative associations

were made, such as occasional poverty, “white supremacy” and people being emotionless or not initiative.

Further, the focus was brought to Estonian Song Celebration, as more detailed perceptions and brand associations regarding the event were discussed. The event was associated with having strong traditions, nationalistic spirit and love for one’s country. Thus, it was said due to this, they also perceive Estonia as a more tradition-valuing country.

When talking about the possible value Estonian Song Celebration could provide in branding Estonia, the participants focused more on visiting the event and pointed out, that even though it is definitely unique, it might be hard to fit in to the event as a foreigner. However, from the conversations it emerged that the participants just might not acknowledge the possible value. For example, one of the participants admitted that introducing Estonian Song Celebration made him change his mind, realizing that Estonia might be a more welcoming country than he had previously thought. Furthermore, an Estonian participant pointed out that Estonian Song Celebration can, with its internationally understandable message – singing, cohesively tell the story of development of Estonia.

Regarding the future goals of Estonian Song Celebration, it was found that the Communication Manager of Estonian Song Celebration believes that the celebration should become an integral part of communicating Estonian brand, as it is representing Estonia through its past and present. Furthermore, relying on the findings of the study, this research suggests that Song Celebration could indeed be one of the ways to enhance the cultural associations made with Estonia, since it is proven to carry high significance in the national identity of Estonians, while it also moderately enhances the nation brand of Estonia. To implement this knowledge, this thesis suggests using word-of-mouth through brand ambassadors as well as having a strong social media presence to reach the foreign audience.

This thesis took a case-specific approach to investigate the phenomenon of Estonian Song Celebration in a real-life context. However, as previously mentioned, there were several limitations due to time and scope constraints. Thus, further researches in the area could study the topic of Estonian nation brand regarding the Estonian Song Celebration more profoundly, using a greater sample and/or exploring the practical implications of the knowledge gathered from this thesis.

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## Appendices

### 9.1 Interview Guides

#### 9.1.1 Song Celebration representative

##### **1. Background information**

- What is your role and responsibilities?

##### **2. Song Celebration**

- What is the vision and mission of Song Celebration? What are the goals of Song Celebration?
- Describe shortly, what do you believe is the meaning of Song Celebration to Estonians including both old and young?
- How well known do you think Song Celebration is amongst foreigners?
- Which kind of foreign audience the Song Celebration attracts?

##### **3. Nation Brand**

- What is Estonia characterized by in the mind of foreigners?
- If you would need to use three words to describe Estonia, what would they be?
  - What are the positive associations / aspects?
  - What are the negative associations / aspects?

##### **4. Nation Branding**

- What branding strategies are for nation branding?
- What has been done to reach foreign audience with Song Celebration so far?
- What have been the biggest achievements with Song Celebration regarding foreign audiences?
- Do you have clear overview with regards to the reach of the foreign audience?
- Do you think Song Celebration should focus (more) on reaching for foreign audiences? Why?
- What value does Song Celebration bring to foreigners?
- What should be the goal of Song Celebration with foreign audience? How this goal could be achieved?
- Which would be the target groups in terms sociodemographic characteristics e.g. age, nationality? Why?

##### **5. Brand Estonia**

- In your opinion, what are the current focus areas of Brand Estonia's e.g. independent minds, clean environment, and digital society?
- Has Song Celebration cooperated with Brand Estonia? How?
- In your opinion, should Song Celebration market themselves abroad independently or in cooperation with Brand Estonia or both? Why?

##### **6. Additional remarks**

- Do you have any additional remarks what is important to consider?

### 9.1.2 Brand Estonia representative

#### 1. Background information

- What is your role and responsibilities?

#### 2. Nation Brand

- What is Estonia characterized by?
- If you would need to use three words to describe Estonia, what would they be?
  - What are the positive associations / aspects?
  - What are the negative associations / aspects?

#### 3. Brand Estonia

- Could you please describe what is the vision and mission of Brand Estonia?
- What are the current goals and the focus of Brand Estonia? What are they based on?
- In your opinion, do you see Brand Estonia as a success story? Why?
- What target group does Brand Estonia focus on? Why?
- Has Brand Estonia cooperated with Song Celebration? How?
- What value does/could Song Celebration bring to Brand Estonia?
- To what extent Song Celebration has been incorporated in the Brand Estonia? Why?

#### 4. Nation Branding

- What branding strategies are for nation branding?
- In your opinion, should Song Celebration market themselves abroad independently or in cooperation with Brand Estonia or both? Why?
- What value do foreigners see in Song Celebration?
- What should be the goal of Song Celebration regarding branding to foreign audiences?
- Do you think Song Celebration should focus on reaching for foreign audiences? How?
- What target groups should Song Celebration focus on?

#### 5. Additional remarks

- Do you have any additional remarks what is important to consider?

### 9.1.3 Foreigners

#### 1. Introduction

- Socio-demographics: age, gender, nationality, profession
- How often do you travel per year?
- What is important for you when choosing a destination to travel? What are the key parameters / aspects that you consider?
- How do you decide where to travel?

#### 2. Nation Brand

- Have you been in Estonia?
- Why have you visited Estonia? What were the main reasons for visiting Estonia?
- What was your perception about Estonia *before* visiting the country? Why?
- Has your perception about Estonia changed *after* visiting the country? How?
- What did you like the best/worst about Estonia?
- Do you know people who have visited it? Do you know what the reasons for their choice of destination were?
- If you would need to use three words to describe Estonia, what would they be?
  - What are the positive associations / aspects?
  - What are the negative associations / aspects?
- Could you describe how you perceive Estonian people?
- What do you think the overall perception of Estonia is among your nation (e.g. in general and as a travel destination)?
- Would you be interested in visiting Estonia in the near future? Why?
- Would you recommend Estonia to others? Why?

#### 3. Song Celebration

\*Introducing the Song Celebration\*

- Have you heard about this event before?
- What are your thoughts about the video and about the event? What associations does the video and the event create?
- How does the event affect your perception of Estonia as a country and Estonians as the nation?
- Would you want to visit the event? Why?

#### 4. Nation branding

- Do you think that the nation branding is important? Why?
- Which kind of brand would be inviting to you?
- What do you think Estonia should focus on in creating their brand?
- Do you think Song Celebration should be used to brand Estonia? Why?
- How do you think Song Celebration could affect the perception of Estonia?
- How could Song Celebration be used to brand Estonia?

#### 5. Additional remarks

- Do you have any additional remarks what is important to consider?

## 9.2 Transcriptions

### 9.2.1 Interview no.1

Translations to English made in the coding list.

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*R: Üleüldiselt ma tahtsin seda mainida, et ma olen otsustanud, et ma keskendun ainult laulupeole, sest muidu läheb lihtsalt maht liiga sureks.*

*Ja siis teooria osas ma olen uurinud nii palju, et ma leidsin sellise termini nagu nation brand, mis päris täpselt kirjeldab, mulle tundub, seda, mida te soovisite ka leida: kuidas riigi tuntust tõsta, aga mitte just ilmtingimata turismi jaoks või millegi kindla jaoks, vaid üleüldse riigi maine oleks siis nii-öelda parem.*

*Ja siis alguseks ma küsin nimetaks oma täpse ametinimetuse, et ma kuskil midagi valesti kirjutaks.*

I1: Eesti Laulu ja Tantsupeo Sihtasutuse teabejuht.

*R: Selge, aitäh. Nii ja siis soojendusküsimusteks ma küsiks veel niisugused küsimused, et: kui sa peaksid ise kirjeldama Eestit kolme sõnaga või sõnapaariga, siis mis sõnu sina kasvataksid?*

I1: Kui peaksin Eestit kirjeldama kellele?

*R: Ütleme nii, et siis välismaalasele*

I1: No Eesti on kindlasti põhjamaa. Eesti on koorilaulumaa ja selline traditsioon austav maa ja ma arvan, et üks on veel selline.. Eesti on vana maa. Paraku nüüd tänases Eestis juba ju igas mõistes, et rahvastik vananeb, on ju.. Aga hetkel pidasin siin loomulikult silmas rohkem seda pikki juuri, mis on kümme tuhat aastat ühe koha peal, eks ole.

*R: Väga hea. Nii. Kui sa paari lausega üritaksid selle seletada, miks on laulupidu eestlastele nii oluline, nii noortele kui vanadele?*

I1: Laulupidu on ju koorimuusika ikkagi suur sündmus ja muusika suursündmus ja tundub, et koorimuusika oma sellise pisut talgulaadse vormina sobib eestlastele väga hästi. Laulupidu on astunud ühte jalga Eesti arengutega viimase kuue-seitsme inimpõlve jooksul. See traditsioon sai alguse ju Eesti esimesel ärkamisajal, mis tähendab seda, et ta on selle aja jooksul kinnistanud ja saanud selliseks kultuuriliseks pärisosaks, mis tõenäoliselt siia siis sobib. Ja nii nagu laulupeo puhul ikka me räägime sellest, et tegemist ei ole ju ainult koorimuusika suursündmusega, vaid ta kannab endas ka kõiki neid olulisi väärtusi ja esindab neid väga loomulikult viisil, noh, millega on ennast lihtne samastada ja siduda.

*R: Küsin nüüd, et kui tuntud on laulupidu välismaalaste seas, teie hinnangul?*

I1: Jah, seda on väga raske öelda. Ma arvan, et et Eesti-sugusel pisiriigil on ilmselt ruumi tuntusele väga palju ja tõenäoliselt, kui umbes kolmkümmend aastat tagasi varsti juba, laulev revolutsioon oma sellises erilisusest võib-olla muutis laulupeo traditsiooni ka maailmas natukene nähtavamaks, siis täna tõenäoliselt me oma nähtavuselt ja tuntuks võistlеме maailmas täna selle e-Eesti kuvandiga, mis on olnud pigem viimaste aastate või kümnekonna või rohkem aasta Eesti põhiliseks sõnumiks väljapoole, mis tähendab seda, et ma paraku arvan, et ta ei ole nagu.. noh, nii nagu Eesti tervikuna ülearu, siis paraku tuntud.

*R: Ja kui, kui rääkida mingitest konkreetsetest sihtrühmadest, siis milliste sihtrühmade seas tundub hetkel, et laulupidu pakub kõige rohkem huvi? Rahvuste suhtes või vanuse suhtes..?*

I1: Tõenäoliselt see ikkagi on seotud ju kogu muu kommunikatsioonitegevusega üldisemalt, mida Eesti teeb. Noh, selge on see, et üks täiesti eraldi sihtgrupp on koori muusikud, kellel on oma ühendused ja oma maailmaorganisatsioonid ja kustkaudu tõenäoliselt ka see Eesti koorimuusikasündmus, laulupidu, on kindlasti kindlasti tuntud ja tunnustatud fenomen maailma koorimuusikute seas. Aga nüüd muus osas ma arvan, et tõenäoliselt see tundus käib ühte jalga Eestiga seotud muude tegevustega. Näiteks kui me vaatame täna suhteliselt, minu meelest, ikkagi väga häid suhteid Jaapaniga läbi meie kultuuriesindaja Baruto, siis näha on, et Jaapanis on huvi ka laulupidude traditsiooni vastu.

No ma ei oska öelda, et ta nüüd on silmatorkav või märkimisväärne, aga igal juhul Jaapanist päringuid laulupeo osas on suhteliselt palju. Kui me vaatame nii-öelda välisluvi meie vastu. Kindlasti on lähinaabrid siin - Läti, Soome - kes ju laulupeost teavad. Paraku näiteks jälle ma arvan, et Rootsis tuleks teha tööd, Taanit ma ei tea, see jääb natukene eemale. Rõõm on see, et Venemaaga on suhted soojenenud, nii et viimasel kahel peol on Venemaalt ka kollektiive siin käinud. Ja noh, see on jällegi tegemata töö.

Huvi on loomulikult nendes riikides, kus on eesti kogukonda: Austraaliast, Kanadast, Põhja-Ameerikast ja mujalt. See aitab ilmselt siis nagu sellel huvil huvi alles olla. Ja noh USA üldiselt on meil ju hea partner olnud, nii et USAst on päris palju huvi tuntud selle traditsiooni vastu.

*R: Ma ei ole kindel, kas see statistika on kuskil üleval ka, aga kui palju umbes on väliskollektiive keskmiselt laulupidudel viimastel aastatel olnud?*

I1: Noh, seda statistikat päriselt teha ei annagi. Sellist asja nagu "keskmiselt" tõenäoliselt ka vist ma ei oska niimoodi lambist öelda, aga mingisugune selline rusikareegel on umbes kolmeli kollektiivi igas liigis kaugemalt on siis see, mis laulupeol on olnud. Aga see võib kõikuda liigiti. Loomulikult ütleme täiskasvanute kollektiivide hulgas võib nüüd ka rohkem olla ja väiksemates liikides vist siis ka nüüd vähem.

*R: Mis on siiani tehtud, et välismaalaste seas teadlikkust tõsta?*

I1: Meie põhifookus laulupeo korraldajatel, kommunikatsioonitiimis on olnud tegelikult koostöösuhte arendamine välisesindustega ja välissidemete loomine ja hoidmine välisajakirjandusega. Ehk et me olemegi teinud kõik selleks, et, et läbi laulupeo jutustada seda Eesti lugu laiemalt maailma avalikkusele, just kasutades maailma meediakanaleid, massimeediakanaleid. Lisaks loomulikult kõik sellised väiksemad praktilised tegevused nagu inglisekeelne koduleht, inglisekeelne sotsiaalmeedia ja kõik need sellised asjad, eks ole. Aga põhifookus ikkagi meie jaoks on laulupeol kui Eesti brändi või eesti sõnumi kandjal maailmas ja me ei ole tegelenud nii palju sellise üksipiletimüügiga, sest et piletitega on meil siin kitsas käes juba, eks ole ju, ei ole neid. Et pigem ongi ikkagi läbi läbi laulupeo tutvustada Eesti lugu laiemalt massimeediat kasutades.

*R: Kui nimetada mingi konkreetne tegevus või saavutus, siis mis oleks kõige suurem saavutus, mida te seoses välisesturgudega siis nimetaksite?*

I1: Issand see küsimustele küllaltki ootamatult.. Suurim saavutus.

No me oleme suutnud tähelepanu äratada suurtel pidudel meie fookuses olevate riikide suuremates kanalites: Deutsche Welle, BBC, New York Times. Lihtsalt näiteid tuua ja see, et kui mõõta seda saavutust lihtsalt lugejate arvukusega, siis noh, tõenäoliselt nagu need suuremad kanalid on olulised. Noh, teisipidi jälle, meil on tekkinud ka mingit

püsi korrespondendid, mis on ju oma omakorda jälle saavutuseks. Ajakirjanikud, kes ikka-jälle tulevad siia tagasi ja leiavad uusi nüansse ja soovivad laulu- ja tantsupeo liikumist oma riikide kanalites kajastada. Ka see on, ma arvan, saavutus sellepärast et, töö meediaga või eriti töö välismeediaga - see nõuab pidevalt pingutust. Laulu- ja tantsupidude häda on sarnaselt kõigi teiste festivalidega selline tsüklilisus: tekib lühikese aja jooksul väga-väga palju teemasid, aga siis me kaome pikaks ajaks jälle ära. Ei ole midagi eriti pakkuda.

Meil on Eesti õnneks tekkinud oma väliskommunikatsiooni inimesed, kes selle teemaga tegelevad ja ma loodan väga ka siin Vabariigi Valitsuse poolt loodud StratCommi büroole – et seeläbi veelgi selline teadlik tegevus välismeediakanalitega aina kasvab ja muutub järjest teadlikumaks.

*R: Ja kas ma saan siis õigesti aru, et niisugust üldist selget ülevaadet ei ole? Välismaalaste teadlikkusest laulupeo kohta?*

I1: No globus on nii suur, et selles mõttes.. No kuidas sa seda mõõdad ja tõenäoliselt on Eesti brändiga tegelevatel ettevõtetel selle kohta rohkem infot, et kui palju, mis osas Eesti kohta teadlikkust on ja ma arvan, et vastuse kindlasti, et seda ei ole. Aga noh, tõenäoliselt ka Eesti brändiloojad keskenduvad siiski mingitele turgudele, ehk et selles mõttes on see ikkagi tõenäoliselt ikkagi fragmentaalne.

*R: Eesti Brändi kohta küsin hiljem natuke veel, aga enne ma räägiks eesmärkidest. Kas laulupidu peaks keskenduma rohkem välismaalasteni jõudmisele ja miks?*

I1: Noh, laulupidu tuleks kasutada rohkem selleks, et välismaalasteni jõuda, sellepärast et see on niivõrd silmatorkav, globaalses mõistes ka.. ma arvan, et hästi töötav ja selles mõttes nagu poliitiliselt mitte laetud, neutraalne narratiiv. Sellega on, ma arvan, Eesti üldsus ka suhteliselt kõhklemata nõus, et me läbi laulupeo ja ka tantsupeo ja läbi selle kultuuri osa ennast nii-öelda maailmale tutvustame, näitame. See on eestlastele oluline. Ma kujutan ette, et otsides ükskõik millist muud Eesti brändi, siis me tõenäoliselt vaatame nagu mööda sellest olemasolevast brändist. Milleks siiski on saja viiekümne aastaga saanud laulupidu. Ma arvan, et see on üks põhjus.

Teine asi on see, et laulu- ja tantsupeo liikumine on ju kogu aeg toimumas ehk et on ka lihtne seda lugu jutustada. Lisaks siis nii-öelda nendele kaadritele ja piltidele ja emotsioonidele pidudelt endilt on võimalik praktiliselt igal ajahetkel tutvustada Eestit läbi koorimuusika, rahvatantsu, läbi selle kultuuri. See kogu aeg toimub: toimuvad koorikontserdid, kõrgetasemelised, toimuvad meie väga heade kooride esinemised, väga olulistes esinemispaikades. Seeläbi on see ressurss suhteliselt kättesaadav, sellepärast ma arvan.

Ja noh ma ei räägi üldse sellest, et tuues ajakirjanikud või tuues avalikkuse tähelepanu laulu- ja tantsupidude ajal Eestisse. Selles mõttes on see ka üks hetk, kui tõesti kõik on kohal, sul ei ole vaja kunstlikult tekitada midagi, vaid tõesti: kultuuritegelased, poliitikud, loomeinimesed, lihtsalt õnnelik rahvas. Kõik on ju koos ja kohal. See on ju ajakirjanduse mõistes ju ülihea hetk, et küsi mida tahad – kõigile küsimustele vastused olemas.

*R: Aga mis väärtust võiks laulupidu pakkuda välismaalasele? Mis nagu välismaalase silmis laulupeo väärtus võiks olla?*

I1: No ma arvan, et laulupeo üks suur väärtus on just selle liikumise erilisus, Kui me siin eelmise laulupeo eel saatsime sõnumeid välismeediale, rääkisime sellisest mõistest nagu kakskümmend viis aastat Berliini müüri langmisest. See on selline nagu noh, mõnes mõttes võib-olla kõige ehedam ja kättesaadavam.. selline ootamatum demokraatia ilming. Ma arvan siin kuskil noh, kauges maanurgas, mida, mida ju väga vähe teatakse.



Koorimuusika ja samuti tants ja liikumine – need on rahvusvahelised sõnumid. Nendest on hästi lihtne aru saada. Nad kannavad läbi selle muusikale pühendumisega, mis lavalt silma paistab, igale vaatajale a priori niivõrd selgeid ja lihtsasti mõistetavaid sõnumeid. Minu meelest on kommunikatsiooni korraldamisel ka see väärtus omaette. Läbi selle laulupeo on võimalik väga kontsentreeritult ja lihtsasti tutvustada tervet Eesti sellist kaasaegset lugu. Tegelikult me ju tähistame igal laulupeol mingi arvu aastate möödumist pärisorjuse kaotamisest Eestimaal, nii nagu praegu kakssada aastat. Noh, see näitab seda arengulugu, seda efektiivsust, seda kiirust, kuhu me oleme tänaseks jõudnud. Me alustasime sada viiskümmend aastat tagasi ilma maata, ilma omaenda kultuurihariduse ja riigita ja tänaseks me oleme murdnud sinna innovatsiooni ja e-riikluse etteotsa. See tõenäoliselt meist midagi räägib.

*R: Aga mis võiks olla laulupeo tuleviku eesmärk seoses välisurgudega? Niisugune selgelt sõnastatud eesmärk.*

I1: Noh, laulupidu peaks saama, kui ma räägin ikkagi nagu kommunikatsioonist, mitte turismist, eks ole. Laulupidu peaks saama üheks selliseks lahutamatuks pärisosaks Eesti brändist. Kui me loome mingit sorti kommunikatsioonistrateegiat, siis kui me seame laulupeo üheks selliseks nagu pärisosaks, siis me teame ka, mis kaudu seda Eesti teel on võimalik tutvustada. Kõik need kooride esinemised näiteks, ma veel kord kordan, muutuksid osaks Eesti minapildist maailmas.

Ükskõik kus ja milliseid diplomaatilisi eesmärke või ülesandeid siin täidame Maailmas, et me jutustame sama lugu. Gloobus on niivõrd suur, maailma nii suur, eks ole. Inimesi rahvaid on niivõrd palju, et keskendudes ühele selgele sõnumile, me loome võimaluse sellel sõnumi siiski siin natukene kaugemale jõuda. Kui me pidevalt otsime mingeid uusi sõnumeid ja võimalusi ennast nähtavaks-kuuldavaks muuta ja ignoreerime olemasolevat, väga head narratiivi, mis seal juba on, eks ole – mis meid seob ja mis meid esindab, mida saab esindada tõesti kõikvõimalikes variantides. Et siis ma arvan, me lihtsalt raiskame ressursi. Et noh suurem kontsentreeritus, ma arvan, sellele samale loole, aitab veel ükskõik mis lugusid jutustada.

*R: Ja kas need sihtgrupid, kuhu laulupidu tahaks jõuda, oleks ikkagi needsamad, kus on juba praegu rohkem tuntust, ehk siis meie kus on eesti kogukonnad, meie lähisrahvad ja nii edasi või pigem üleüldine?*

I1: Noh, siin on nüüd selles mõttes oluline vahet teha, et mina räägin täna laulupeo korraldaja seisukohast ja noh, meil on omad sihid, keda meie rihime või sihime oma kommunikatsioonis ja loomulikult on meie fookuses globaalses mõistes ennekõike siis välisest kogukonnad ja need sihtturud, kes meie vastu juba huvi tunnevad. Need küsimused, mis puudutavad erinevaid turge ja rihtimist, et need küsimused tuleks tegelikult suunata ikkagi Eesti brändiga päevast päeva tegelevatele organisatsioonidele, meie eesmärgid on natukene mujal.

Meil tegelikult puudub endal isegi ressurss ja võimekus kogu seda brändi ümbrust vedada, et see on nagu ka oluline teema. Laulupeo sihtasutus on ju loodud ikkagi selle laulupeo korraldamiseks ja laulupeo fookuses on ju ennekõike, lõppkokkuvõttes siiski meie omad inimesed, eks ole. See, mis puudutab Eestist väljapoole kommunikatsiooni, see on ainult osa sellest ja tegelikult nii-öelda sellele keskendumine peaksid tõesti need, kes sellega siis tõesti tegelevad päevast päeva.

*R: Aga mis te arvate, mis osas siis teie saaksite täpsemalt seal nii-öelda toeks olla, et seda eesmärki saavutada, ehk siis, et seda sinna Eesti brändi tuua. Kui palju teie saaksite sinna panustada, kas lihtsalt siis jääks sinna korraldamise tasemele või te üritaksite võimalikult palju ikkagi nii-öelda sellest turundustegevuses ka osaleda?*

I1: Me ei saa turundustegevustes osaleda, globaalne turundus on niivõrd kallis, keerukas mitmekihiline mõiste, selleks ei ole meil eraldatud mitte mingeid ressursse. Me saame anda sisendeid ja olla heaks koostööpartneriks kõigile, kes sellega tegelevad, aga laulupidu niivõrd avalik ja suurejooneline sündmus, et seal noh, tõenäoliselt nagu selle sisendressursi taha ei tohiks jääda. Antud juhul me räägime sootuks teistest kategooriatest, kus meil ei ole võimalik eelarveliselt lihtsalt osaleda. Mis puudutab sisendit, siis seal kindlasti.

Seal oleme juba siiani ju tehtud kõik selleks, et olla olemas. Me oleme läinud selleni, et me pakume võimalust ajakirjanikele ühekaupa suisa saatjaid laulu- ja tantsupeo ajaks, et aidata neil mõista, mis laval toimub ja selgitada kõike tausta. Selles mõttes meie loome omalt poolt küll igale poole rohelised teed ja oleme seda alati teinud ja teeme ka edaspidi, etka ajakirjanikel või Eesti turundajatele ei jääks siis nii-öelda ükski sündmus kajastamata või märkamata, ükskõik mis põhjusel.

*R: Rääkides siis sellest Eesti brändist. Kas te olete konkreetset ka nendega koostööd teinud ja ühenduses olnud või see on ikkagi selline.. Teie olete valmis neid aitama, kui nemad meiega ühendust võtavad?*

I1: Me oleme läbi EAS'i erinevate osakondade siin koostööd teinud loomulikult. Ja teeme ka edaspidi. Eesti bränd oli ainult üks osa sellest, et ta sinna kuuluvad ju veel suur hulk teisi organisatsioone ka. Eesti brändi loomise juures olime kaasatud seal mingisuguses eksperttöörühmades, mis siis nii-öelda brändi loomisel siis kaasati.

Aga muus osas küll veel kord, ma kardan, et Laulu- ja Tantsupeo Sihtasutuse eesmärgid on pisut mujal kui EASil või teistel organisatsioonidel, kes peaksid tegelema või kes tegelevad Eestis täna Eesti turundamisega avalikkusele. Mis tähendab seda, et meie põhiline töö on suunatud siiski konkreetse produktsiooni, korraldamisse ja teostamisse siin kohapeal. Ja noh, tänase seisuga, tänaste ressursside juures, sisuliselt me oleme ju maksimumi lähedal - et mida me teha saame, seda me teeme. Ja püüame olla heaks partneriks kõigile teistele organisatsioonidele.

*R: Siis ma küsiks veel. Nad on määratlenud oma kolm põhisõnumit Eesti kohta: iseseisvalt mõtlevad inimesed, puhas loodus ja digitaalne ühiskond. Ja sa ennem mainisid ka, et see digitaalne ühiskond on jõudnud pildile Eesti brändi mõistes rohkem. Aga et mis te arvate nendest sõnumitest? Eriti veel seoses laulupeoga – et kas neid võiks kuidagi muuta või siis kas see katab ka laulupidu? Mõnes mõttes või?*

I1: No tõenäoliselt kindlasti ju katab, sest need kõik sõnumid on ju igapäevaselt esindatud ka laulu- ja tantsupeo liikumises. Samas noh, ma ei ole seda analüüsi teinud ja ütlen seda küll nüüd täiesti lihtsalt siin kohapeal ilma pikemalt mõtlemata. Aga noh, mulle tundub, et siin nagu ülearu palju tähelepanu sellele laulupeole pühendatud pole. Aga ma usun, et tõenäoliselt nendel sõnumitel moodustajatel on olnud selleks ka noh, mingit põhjust. Lõpuks on Eesti brändi loonud tõenäoliselt ikkagi tipptegijad selles valdkonnas. Eesti saabki kindlasti kohe mitut moodi turundada.

Samas kui me vaatame seda puhas loodust, siis noh, tõenäolist seda maailmas täna õnneks veel siit ja sealt leiab. Laulupidu leiab võib-olla siin Balti kultuuriruumis: Lätist ja Leedust veel, aga vaadates globaalses mõistes Eesti-Läti-Leedu ongi üks sama kant ja tõenäoliselt selline suurem integreeritud kommunikatsioon siia sellesse maanurka ei teeks arvatavasti niimoodi kõrvaltvaataja pilgu läbi hinnates küll küll midagi halba. Ehk et ma arvan seda, et laulupidu, laulupeo liikumist või laulupeo olemust sellise ürgse, oma juuri austava rahvakultuuri ilminguna - väga elava ilminguna, see liikumine on nüüd ainult kasvanud ja populaarsust



kogunud - seda ei tasuks ignoreerida, häbeneda. Ma ei ütle, et seda praegu tehakse, aga ma arvan, et seda saaks veel rohkem ära kasutada. Kindlasti.

*R: Aga sellega mul siuksed peamised küsimused hetkel otsas ja kui sul on endal midagi, mis sa sooviksid veel lisada, siis sa võid rääkida julgelt.*

I1: No veel kord, mul on õudselt hea meel, et seda teed. Ja ma arvan, et see valdkond Eestis vajaks kindlasti sellist ka suuremat kontsentreeritust. Hetkel on Eesti välisilmas tutvustamise, esindamise ja turundamisega seotud terve rida organisatsioone. Meil on nii palju pakkuda. Mõnes mõttes kõik need erinevad ülikõvad festivalid, mis meil siin Eestis ju toimuvad - Jazzkaar, Pimedate Ööde festival, Tallinn Music Week noh, ja loomulikult ka laulupidu ja ma ei tea, Viljandi folk - tegelikult ei peaks nagu võistlema, vaid kui me Eestit sellise kultuuri või rahvakultuuri sihtkohana või sellise kultuurimaana suudaksime paremini esindada globaalses mõistes, siis tõenäoliselt saadaks meid ka suurem edu. See oleks küll soov, et läbi sinu töö ja kõigi teiste sedalaadi algatuste jõuaksime suurema integreerituseni. Ja lõppkokkuvõttes, nii nagu ma juba mainisin, mitte ainult Eesti mõistes, vaid miks mitte siin ka lähisriike kaasates ja silmas pidades. Eesti-Läti-Leedu koostöö kindlasti oleks globaalses mõistes kindlasti ainult kasuks, aga noh, võib olla ka Soome-Rootsi ja nii edasi.

*R: Ma ma just mõtlengi, et, et Lätis ja Leedus on ka laulupidu, et kas sa arvad, et globaalses mõistes me võiksime ühtsena ennast nii-öelda turule panna hoidnud või pigem ikkagi üritada Eestit hoida eraldi?*

I1: Ma arvan, et kuna need traditsioonid on olemuselt niivõrd lähedased, et need puudutavad samu sihtgruppe. Lauupeo traditsioon oma olemuselt on üsna sarnane. Teatud nüanssides muidugi erinev, aga lõpuks, kui sa eemalt vaatad, piisavalt kaugelt juba, siis tegemist on ju mingisuguse sellise vägeva koorimuusika suursündmusega, eks ole, eemaltvaatajale, kus on väga palju sellist rahvuslikust, emotsiooni ja positiivsust. Leedu näitena - meil on üks ja sama laululava. Meil on ju ehitatud sama projekti järgi laululava. Et siis noh, astuks kaks sammu siit sellest regioonist eemale, tundub, et juba sulandubki üheks. Ma arvan, ei kaota keegi ei Eesti-Läti ega Leedu mitte midagi sellest, kui me teeme suuremat koostööd nagu igas mõttes. Olgu see siis laulupidu, regiooni turundus või ükskõik mis alane koostöö. Meie eesmärgid, mulle tundub, on siiski suhteliselt suhteliselt sarnased globaalses mõistes kindlasti. Mina olen seda meelt, et kui meil on head kontaktid näiteks välisajakirjanikega Eesti laulupeolt ja siis kui keegi küsib, siis ma olen neid kindlasti valmis jagama ja olen ka jaganud. Oleme ka jaganud oma Balti kolleegidega. Samamoodi saanud infot, kontaktivahetust teha ka sealtpoolt siia poole. Ei ole mõistlik hoida sedalaadi kontakte endale sellepärast, et me võidame sellest kõik, kui see regioon fookuses on maailmas.

*R: Selles mõttes, et kas Eesti bränd üleüldiselt võiks ka rohkem keskenduda erinevates valdkondades koostööle või ikkagi keskenduma Eestile, aga siis mingid valdkonnad, nagu näiteks laulupidu võiks olla ühised.*

I1: Selge see, et igal rahval on ju oma lugu jutustada. Leedukad on uhked oma Kuninga loo üle, lätlastel on oma lood ja no meil on oma lood. Eks meil kõigil on oma saatus, eesmärgid, mida me peame ikkagi ka fookuses hoidma. Ehk et me ei saa ju päris nii-öelda sellisesse sulatustiiki hüpata ja ennast hakata näiteks balti rahvaks siin sulatama. Selge on see, et meie eesmärk on täna ju ka lõpuks meie enda põhiseaduse preambulas sätestatud: eesti keele ja kultuuri hoidmine ja edasikandmine. Seda me peame kindlasti tegema, aga nüüd globaalses mõistes selle regiooni turundus, et see on noh, pisut erinev võib olla sellest ja sealt tulebki nii-öelda selgelt vahet teha, et mis on, mis on efektiivne, mis mitte.

Põhjamaad, Skandinaavia on ju väga hea näide sellest, et neil on teatud ühine kuvand, just see põhjamaaisus, kargus, disainijoon ja nii edasi. Ma ei arva, et ei Soome-Rootsi-Taani-Norra, Island oleks nüüd väga palju omaenda näoilmes selle ühise kuvandi tõttu kaotanud, pigem ikkagi võit.

*R: Ja üks küsimus, mis mul veel pähe torkas, praegu oli see, et kui tõesti saaks rohkem tähelepanu ja juhtuks see, et inimesed tahavad rohkem tulla, siis kas see võib ka osutuda probleemiks ja kuidas seda lahendada just selle pileti mõttes? Meil on niigi üsna kitsas juba seal.*

I1: Vot siin selle küsimuse puhul torkab silma see maailmavaateline erinevus, mida ma püüangi kogu aeg öelda. Eesmärk ei peaks olema kutsuda inimesi ühele sündmusele Eestis, sest see on suhteliselt lihtne üritusturundus või teeme midagi erilist.

Noh, maailmas otsitakse ju nii-öelda erilisust, eks ole, erilist elamust ja noh, laulupidu kindlasti seda pakub. Korra või paar müüa plats või paar globaalses mõistes välja ei ole probleem, tõenäoliselt. Aga minu sõnum ongi, et laulupidu ja laulu- ja tantsupeo liikumine, protsess, Eesti kultuurielu on niivõrd rikkalik ja pidevalt toimiv asi. Meil maailmas natuke Arvo Pärti. Natuke teatakse tõenäoliselt vähem, aga ka kindlasti osutusel suhteliselt lähedal on seal Erkki-Sven Tüür ja noh, mõned heliloojad arvatavasti veel. Üldisel võib ju öelda, et meil tehakse väga head muusikat, väga head teatrit. Meie filmid on väga okeid, kui vaadata seda "Eia jõulud Tondi kakul" - see on ju imeline lastefilm, mis võiks jõuda küll ükskõik kuhu jõulufilmiks ja nii edasi. Meil on seda potentsiaali palju ja me peaksime rääkima just nimelt sellest, mitte sellest, et tulge ühele sündmusele.

See on nagu see võib olla selline erinevus nägemuses, kuidas laulupidu kasutada. Aga laulupidu lihtsalt on üks supernäide sellest kõigest, mida me siin teeme, aga me ei peaks keskenduma sellele, et tulge kõik laulupeole. Pigem huvi Eesti vastu kasvatada.

Ma arvan, et siin on adekvaatne parallel on seesama Põhjamaade disain. Mis asi see Põhjamaade disain siis nii väga on. Ega lõpuks inimestel on kaks jalga all, nina keset nägu ja oled sa külmemalt või soojemalt riides, vahet ei ole. Aga ometi on suudetud maailmas muuta täiesti arvestatavaks brändiks Põhjamaade disain: Marimekko, IKEA - kaubanduslikud näited, võib-olla Põhjamaade kunstnikud ja nii edasi.

Meil on olemas väga hea muusika, väga äge kultuuriruum. Siitkaudu otsida seda meie sõnumit maailmale, sest tööstuslikult või kaubanduslikult me ju tegelikult maailmaga võistelda ei suuda ja see e-edu on ka ikkagi tõenäoliselt ikkagi nagu mööduv nähtus. Need igasugused g'd, mis siin tulevad, mobiili levis.. noh, küllap ikkagi suured arenenud riigid jõuavad üsna varsti meile järele, kõigis neis valdkondades. Meil endal siin täna on ette näidata Cleveron ja Skype laias laastus ja tõenäoliselt veel mingisuguseid vahvaid, Taxify ja muid selliseid start-up'e ja algatusi, aga noh, maailmas on neid oi-kui-palju, eks ole. Samas see Eesti kultuur, see on unikaalne. Ja see on väga hea, ta kahtlemata on see väga hea: meil on väga head heliloojad, väga häid näitlejaid, väga häid muusikuid. See on asi, mida tuleks rohkem ära kasutada. Spordimaailma suutnud seda teha. Kelly on meil õnneks olemas, Ott Tänak. Aga ka noh, sõbrad meil on ju.. Valter Soosalu ja Rasmus Puur ja nüüd varsti viiekümnendat juubelit tähistav Tõnu Kõrvits on juba.

*R: Küsimuse mõte oligi rohkem see, et isegi kui see eesmärk ei ole saada rohkem külalisi, siis ma arvan, et paratamatus on see, kui inimesed selle kohta rohkem teada saavad, et selline tore ja vahva, eriline asi on, siis kuna inimesed on nii uudishimulikud, siis ma arvan, paratamatult*

*tahavad tulla sinna rohkem. Oleneb kui palju see teadlikkus kasvab. See võib ühel hetkel probleemiks tulla. See on nagu ikka - mingid ilusad kohad, kuskil on salajased, siis üks hetk on järsku liiga palju inimesi ja enam ei ole.*

I1: See plats ära täita tänasel seisul, ma kordan.. Täna on see probleem, et täna meil ei ole võimalik väga seda trummi taguda küll. Aga noh, kui me suudaksime nii-öelda edastada oma sõnumeid teadlikult ja hästi siis noh, laulupeo ümbruses toimub ju Eestis.. ma ei oska öelda, kui palju, aga ikka kümneid ja kümneid te sedalaadi sündmusi: Tartu laulupidu, Ida-Virumaal näiteks toimub Kreenholmi manufaktuuris laulupidu siin juuni alguses. Ehk et kes tahab osa saada nii-öelda välismaalasena mingisugusest sellisest sündmusest või sellest õhustikust, siis see tegelikult on võimalik. Küsimus ongi selles, kui targasti neid sõnumeid seada. Kas me ütleme, et tulge laulupeole või tulla Eestisse, saage osa sellest liikumisest. Veel kord: maailmas elab seitse pool miljardit inimest või rohkem juba tänaseks tõenäoliselt ja meil on siin kasutada ainult 0,009% maakera pinnast, mis tähendab seda, et nad ei mahu siia mitte kuidagi kõik ära. Isegi tõenäoliselt need ei mahuks ära, kes tahaksid tulla korraga. Aga kui nad hajutada festivale mööda laiali siis juba pilt tõenäoliselt on palju parem.

*R: See on väga ilusti sõnastatud mõte, ma arvan. Kas on veel midagi, mida soovid lisada?*

I1: Nüüd ma vist lisasin küll kõik ära, et kell on päris palju, ma pean nüüd edasi liikuma, aga väga tore oli sinuga rääkida.

*R: Aitäh ja ma küsin igaksjuhuks üle, kui mul tekib veel mingi küsimus, et kas ma siis võin juurde küsida.*

I1: Ja, ikka, muidugi.

*R: Okei, super aitäh ja edu teile igapäevategevustes.*

I1: Aitäh ja nägemist.

Transcribing supported by:

Alumäe, T., Tilk, O., Asadullah. (2018) Advanced Rich Transcription System for Estonian Speech. *Baltic HLT 2018*.

### 9.2.2 Interview no. 2

Translations to English made in the coding list.

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*R: Küsimustega te vist natuke juba tutvusite ja enam-vähem samu küsimusi ma kavatsengi küsida, suures jaos. Et te võite siis kõik ükshaaval tutvustada, et mis on teie nimi, ametinimetused ja et mis on teie ülesanded organisatsioonis ka?*

I21: Mina olen siis Krislyn, olen Eesti brändi tiimis projektijuht.

I22: Ma kohe jätkan siit põhimõtteliselt, ma olen Mirjam ja ma olen ka Eesti brändi projektijuht ja põhimõtteliselt minu ja Krislyni roll siis sisaldab samu ülesandeid, aga me jaotame projektid omavahel ära. Et see töö nii toimub.

I23: Tere, mina olen Elina ja turundusjuht ja koordineerin turundus- ja meeskonnatööd.

*R: Selge! Ma ei teagi, kuidas nüüd teha, et kas te kõik vastate kõigile küsimustele, mis on ilmselt...*

I23: Kuule me teeme niimoodi, et järjest vastame ja Krislyn enamikele vastab. kui on kuskil üle. Kuna ma ise olen lihtsalt Eesti brändi projektiga algusest peale olnud seotud, siis ma tean, et mingeid vastuseid, aga lihtsalt kuna Mirjam ja Krislyn on suhteliselt äsja selle projektiga liitunud, siis on hea, kui nad iseenda jaoks prooviksid läbi mõelda ja vastaksid ja kui ma midagi tahan täiendada, siis me täiendame, et pigem nagu ühe küsimuse kaupa ja siis me vaatame jooksvalt siin.

*R: Selge!*

I21: Ma kõigepealt küsikski, et selles mõttes, et ma saan aru, et su töö fookus on, mis siis täpsemalt, nagu laulupidu Eesti brändiga seotud või pigem Eesti bränd seotud laulupeoga?

*R: Mu töö fookus on ikkagi peamiselt laulupidu ja see, et ma otsustasin Eesti brändi kaasata, tuli töö käigus, sest et ma uurisin rohkem teooriat selle taga ja jõudsin selle nii-öelda nation-brändi ja nation-brändingu kontseptsiooni juurde. Ja siis ma otsustasin, et ma lisan ka teie vaate sinna hulka, et kuidas teie näete, et kuidas laulupidu siis võiks aidata kaasa Eesti brändi loomisele.*

*Vot aga need esimesed küsimused on rohkem võib-olla isiklikust vaatepunktist, et mis iseloomustab Eestit ja mis võiks eristada Eestit teistest riikidest?*

I21: Jah, et noh et ma ei teagi, kuidas nagu kõige targem selle teemaga läheneda on. Noh, kui võtta nii-öelda üks põhisõnum või lugu, mis me Eestist tahame Eesti brändiga rääkida, siis seal on nii-öelda kolm märksõna. Et meil on Eestis puhas, puutumatu loodus, meil on kõige digitaalsem ühiskond ja iseseisvalt mõtlevad inimesed, kes teevad asju ära. Et need on need kolm nii-öelda brändi põhimõttetala. Kui nüüd, kuidas see küsimuse esitus oli, et noh, need on jah need kolm nii-öelda asja või sõnumit, mida me tegelikult Eesti brändiga tahame öelda.

*R: Aga kui peaks kirjeldama Eestit kolme sõnaga või sõnapaariga, siis mis need oleks, sest et need, mis te praegu välja toote on rohkem positiivsed seosed, aga näiteks kasvõi teie omast kogemusest, kui te olete ringi reisinud või inimestega suhelnud, siis milliseid seoseid tehakse veel Eestiga, nii positiivseid kui negatiivseid siis?*

I21: Noh, ma arvan, positiivne ongi, mille järgi meid võib-olla, noh üks oleneb inimestest ka onju, teatakse, ongi meie digitaalne ühiskond, et meil on e-riik, nii-öelda kõik see digivaldkond, milles me ikkagi oleme suhteliselt esirinnas.

Negatiivne pool võib-olla, mis meiega võib-olla veel siiani kaasas käib, on see, et me oleme ikkagi endine mingisugune Ida-Euroopa riik, mitte nagu Põhjamaa riik. Et ma arvan see on see, mis teatud riikides või piirkondades vajab veel nii-öelda seda tööd teha onju. Mis veel negatiivsed asjad võiks olla?

I22: Seostatakse odava allhankeriigiga põhimõtteliselt ja see käib selle Ida-Euroopa riigiga kokku.

*R: Jah, okei.*

I22: See on see jah, mis, mis võib olla, millena nähakse Eestit, mitte ta ei pruugi enam nii väga olla.

I21: Siis lisada võib-olla kunagi või mitte kunagi aga veel paar aastat tagasi hästi tugevalt oli see, et me olime alkoholistatistikas Euroopas esimesed, siis olime tegelt HIV selle nakatumises esimesed. Et see tuli kunagi seal kui me brändi intervjuusid tegime, tuli sellel ajal ka väga tugevalt välja, et siuksed nagu nii-öelda meil lähiriikidest nagu sarnane kuvand nagu soomlastele, et soomlased käivad eksju Eestis joomas siis noh Eestis, et eestlased joovad viina eksju umbes koguaeg. Et ja mida mis see negatiivne, või positiivne, või pigem siis ikkagi negatiivne on see, et ikkagi väljaspool Euroopat põhimõtteliselt Eestit ei teata. Et, et selles mõttes sellega barjääriga puututakse kohe kokku, et ükskõik, kas sa oled Araabia Ühendemiraatides või Aasia suunal kuskil, Kesk-Ida, USA poole, siis igal pool on ikkagi see, et Eesti ei teata tegelt.

I21: Praegu on see, et ei tehta üldse nagu vahetki riikidel, et kas Soome või, jah okei Soome ja Rootsi on nagu tugevamad brandid, aga noh ma ei tea, ma ka kuulnud ka kommentaari, ega vahet ei tehta ka see, et kas oled Rootsi või Soome või Taani või Eesti onju, et see on lihtsalt üks mingisugune regioon nende jaoks. Et noh, sama kui meie mõtleme võib-olla mingi USA-s osariigid onju, et me ei tee nendel väga vahet onju, see on lihtsalt mingisugune võib-olla kaardi peal enam-vähem, või noh isegi kaardi peal ma arvan ei tea täpselt, kus need asuvad, siis ma arvan võib-olla osade jaoks on ka Euroopa siuke üldine, kui võtta siis Põhja-Euroopa või Ida-Euroopa mis iganes, et tegelt ei tehta nagu vahet, et mis riik on mis ja mis sealt riigist tuleb ja mis selle riigi iseloom on.

*R: Ja sealt tulenevalt võibki kohe jätkata sellega, et mis on Eesti brändi visioon ja missioon?*

I21: No kõige suurem on ikka see, et Eesti tuntuks teha. Et seesama, see, et ikkagi mingisugused seosed Eestiga nagu loodaks, et seesama, need nii-öelda kolm asja, mida me enne nimetasime, et vähemalt need oleks need asjad, mida, millega Eestit nagu seostatakse. Et need oleks need esimesed märksõnad, mis Eestiga nõnda assotsieeruks inimestel.

*R: Ja mis te tuntuse all mõtlete täpsemalt?*

I21. No selles mõttes, et kui noh, ükskõik kellele siis öelda Eesti onju et tal siis tekiks Eestist mingisugune, et tal on mingisugune oma peas mingisugune kuvand sellest või arusaam, et see on ikkagi riik ja mis selle riigi taga siis on onju. Noh, see on sama, kui ma ütlen sulle ma ei tea mingi Ukraina onju, et mis see sinu jaoks on?

*R: Aga mitte siis ainult Euroopas, vaid üleüldse maailmas saavutada seda tustust?*

I23: No EAS-i juhatus tegelikult... siin on, tekib see, et meil tegelikult on ikkagi sihtriigid, noh et seda ikkagi EAS või nagu kogu Eesti riik peab vaatama, et kuna me oleme väike riik, siis ressursid on piiratud, et päris kogu maailma me ei saa, muidugi oleks tore et me kogu maailmas oleks tuntud ja teatakse, aga tõenäoliselt siin on see piiratus sellega, et igal projektil on tegelikult noh, umbkaudu kümme sihtriiki, need kattuvad ka suures osas Euroopas, aga väljapoole Euroopat on see juba väga seinast seina. Et ka välisesindused eksju, saatkonnad ma ei tea saatkonnad on nagu rohkemates riikides. Aga tegeleb tegelikult Eesti tuntusega nii-öelda kasvatamisega igapäevaselt. Et peamiselt saab öelda, et Eesti tuntuse kasvatamisega tegelebki EAS, siis Archimedes läbi Study research, läbi selle Eesti Teadusagentuuri, siis täna Kultuuriministeerium Eesti kultuuriväljaviimisega, kultuuriprogrammidega, Riigikantselei Eesti sajaga kindlasti tegeles väga palju Eesti tuntuse kasvatamisega, nüüd on see vähem ja siis välisministeerium läbi saatkondade aga noh, see on nagu poliitiline, et see ei ole nagu, kindlasti väga oluline selles mõttes poliitiline kuvand on ka väga oluline, aga mitte nii-öelda siis igapäevase nii-öelda mainega tegelemisega.

I21: Igal on oma tegevustel ikkagi jah, mingid niisugused sihtriigid, kellega nagu on fookus onju.

I23: Ehk siis jah, pigem võiks öelda, et jah läbi sihtriikide, et siis oleks need kolm, mis Krislyn mainis, et märksõnad oleksid alati teada, assotsieeruks siis Eestiga.

*R: Ja millised on Eesti brändi sihtgrupid ja miks just need siis?*

I21: Sihtgruppi ma arvan, selles mõttes seda ühtset on nagu suhteliselt raske määratleda, et see ongi, et noh, needsamad, mis nagu Elina mainis onju et neid valdkondasid on päris palju. Igal valdkonnal ongi oma sihtriik ja sihtgrupp onju, et kellega nad täpselt tegelevad. Et...

I22: Ma arvan, et brändil on selles mõttes ka kaks sihtgruppi, et üks on see, keda me kutsume üles seda kasutama. Et põhimõtteliselt meie, me ise ei tegele mitte otseselt riigi brändimisega, me tegeleme, et pakkuda materjale kõigile neile asututele, ettevõtetele, riigi esindusorganitele, et saaks Eestit brändida

I21: Et Eesti brändi tiim tegelikult ei tegele otsese selle nagu Eesti turundustegevusega, et me oleme ikka niisugune toetav organisatsioon või toetav grupp, kes nii-öelda kõikides nende... Needsamad, mis Elina mainis onju jälle need, kes tegelevad tegelikult otseselt Eesti maine ja Eesti turundamisega välismaal, et meie oleme nende jaoks lihtsalt nagu toetav tiim, kes neid sellest nagu aitavad. Et jah, meie tiim otseselt nagu lõppturul kusagil midagi ei tee.

*R: Okei.*

I23: Ja noh, Eestis nagu, taustainfona ka, et Eestis on nagu see riigi turundamine on nagu väga keeruline selles osas, et meil tegelikult, kui võrrelda mingite muude riikidega, et meil endal on väga head praktikad, näete, kuidas tehakse seda Suurbritannias ja kuidas tehakse Soomes, et siis tegelikult on see, et ta on nagu riigis tugevalt koordineeritud, kas siis peaministri büroo läbi või välisministeeriumile läbi. Et meil on Eesti bränd EAS siis, kuigi EAS teeb enamike tegevusi Eesti riigi tuntusega seoses erinevates valdkondades, siis noh, tegelikult me riigis nii-öelda riigi turundamist tsentraalselt tegelikult ei koordineeri. Mis on nagu noh, ongi see, et kas peaks või mitte? Ja seetõttu ma lihtsalt toon ka siia juurde, et mis on Eesti brändi visioon. Et noh, visioon, tegelikult peaks olema mõõdetav eesmärk. Missiooni sa võid jah öelda, et on need kolm



põhisõnumit või siis see *call message*, mis meil on seal kodulehel ka olemas. Aga visioon, tegelt peaks olema mõõdetav, et sa alati jõudnud sinnamaani, kus sa tahad olla. Ja noh selleks me võime öelda, et meil on näiteks *good country* indeks, või et nagu see *countrybrandi* indeks, et me kasvame näiteks nende läbi. *Good country* on ka Soomel endal on nagu väga tugevalt oluliseks nii-öelda brändi eesmärgiks, et seal ütleb seda, et me anname ühiskonnale midagi tagasi ja ma arvan, et see e-riigi kuvand on väga tugevalt sellega seotud, et digitaalne ühiskond, et me pakume ühiskonnale midagi tagasi ja selles mõttes ma tõenäoliselt, kui peaks olema riigis kokku lepitud, siis mina ütlen väga hea, nagu need missiooni puhul näiteks väga hästi seda ühe nagu eesmärgina seda, et kui me oleme *good country* indeksis jõudnud väga kõrgele kohale. Me juba praegu oleme väga kiiresti kasvanud seal, et see näitab seda, et me tegelikult liigume sinna suunas, kus me tahame, et Eesti kuvand liiguks.

*R: Okei, ehk siis, kas te arvate, et siiani on Eesti brändi tegevus olnud edukas ja kui selge ülevaade teil on üldse teie edust?*

I21: No selles mõttes meie saame oma edukust mõõta sellega, kui palju on Eesti brändi rakendajaid, et kes seda kasutavad, kas nii-öelda need töövahendid, mida meie loome, kas neid on hakatud kasutama. Ma arvan, et selles osas me saame öelda, et me oleme edukad, onju. Et meil tegelikult on ka, ma ei tea, kas ma loodan, et sa oled käinud ka [brand.estonia.ee](http://brand.estonia.ee)

*R: Ikka olen.*

I21: Seal on olemas ka 2017 kokkuvõte, kus meil on nagu mainitud, kui palju keegi, kus ja mida on kasutanud ja nüüd me kohe peagi oleme välja saatmas eelmise aasta kokkuvõtet, et kui palju ja kus on kasutatud Eesti brändi. Et noh, me saame öelda, et nii-öelda silmapaare, kes seda nii-öelda meie mingisuguseid tööelemente on näinud, et noh, see on ikka, ma arvan, et küündib sajale miljonile onju.

I23: Vähemalt.

I21: Et ühe kampaania tulemus täna oli juba seal üheksakümmend miljonit onju. Et noh, meie saame enda nii öelda Eesti brändi edukust mõõta ikkagi selles, et nende tööriistade kasutamise osas. Et see, et kas Eesti riigi brändimine on olnud edukas, see on juba natukene keerulisem küsimus. See ongi see mõõdetavuse küsimus, et kas me, nii nagu Elina ütles, et kas see on see *good country branding* või see *good country* indeksi kuskil edetabelis tõuseme, või nii-öelda see *nation*-brändi igasugustes edetabelites, kas me nagu liigume ülespoole või noh, et mis muutused seal toimuvad.

I23: Vabariigis ja tsentraalselt nagu kokkulepped, mida me siis jälgime selle all?

I21: Et noh, meie tiimi... Ikkagi nagu jah, nii-öelda brändi rakendamise osas, hindame oma nagu...

I23: Ja kuna ma saan nüüd võrrelda lihtsalt sellega ka, kuna ma olin seal loomise juures, et siis noh, kui Welcome to Estoniat kasutas sul tegelikult, alguses natuke oli tõenäoliselt rohkem neid kasutajaid, siis lõpuks kasutas seda ainult turismiüksus. Et noh, siis see tegelikult oli nagu väike, väga väike kitsas grupp. Et sellisel tasemel kindlasti seda nagu praegu kasutatakse, et president kasutab, kõik ministriumid kasutavad, allasutused kasutavad. Kuigi kindlasti sa leiad küll projekte, kus ei teata veel sellest, sest noh, info ja inimesed, kogu aeg vahetuvad ja liiguvad. Siis enamasti ma saan öelda, et enamik on selle kasutusele võtnud. Lihtsalt on veel ülemineku aeg, lihtsalt inimeste teadlikkus veel kasvab, sest ta on alles kahe aastaseks saanud.

Et see võtab veidike veel aega. Lihtsalt kõik, kes saavad lõpuks teada, alati on nõus kohe seda kasutama, et seda pole kunagi olnud, et ei, ma ei taha seda kasutada. Et see poolehoid on kindlasti selle Eesti brändi materjalide puhul on olnud.

*R: Mulle tundub, et see tuleb tihti välja see, et meil praegu puudub selline tsentraliseeritud Eesti brändimine siis, et kas teie leiaksite, et see oleks vajalik tekitada Eestile?*

I23: Ma pean lihtsalt, hästi konkreetne, ma pean segama vahele. Hästi konkreetne peab selles olema, et millest me räägime. Eesti bränd on loodud, Eesti bränd on olemas ja noh, okei, olen nõus sellega, et kui sa ütled, et kas Eesti bränd on nagu, et kas kõigini on see info jõudnud, et noh, tegelikult on see nagu välja teavitatud, sellest on meedias väga palju räägitud. Et selles mõttes, et teadlikkus sellest on olemas. Teine suund on riigi turundamine, eks ju. Et kaks suunda on seda. Et Eesti bränd on loodud, põhimõtted on olemas, seal oli väga palju kvaliteetseid intervjuusid, seal oli kvantitatiivne intervjuu taga. Need märksõnad ehk siis see puhas keskkond, ise mõtlevad inimesed, digitaalne ühiskond. Need pole lihtsalt tekkinud kuskilt taevast, eks ju, vaid need on need, millest tõesti kõik räägivad ja näevad, et see on Eesti väärtus, mis eristabki siis meid teistest riikidest, eriti see digitaalne ühiskond. Ja siis on see, et riigi turundamine, et kas see tsentraalselt koordineeritud. Kas me teame, mis sõnumitega välja lähme, kas me teame, kuidas me mõõdame seda, kas me teame, et see nüüd, okei, et nüüd me oleme sinnamaani jõudnud, kus me oleme tahtnud, need sõnumid on lõpuks sinnamaani jõudnud. See on see koht, mis ei ole tsentraalselt koordineeritud. Eesti bränd, tegelt võib öelda, et on olemas.

*R: Ma just praegu mõtlesin riigi turundamist, siis.*

I23: Jah.

*R: Et kas te leiaksite, et oleks vajadus sellele, et Eesti riigi turundamine oleks siis rohkem koordineeritud, kui ta on praegu?*

I23: Jah.

*R: Jah olgu. Ma liigun edasi siis, küsin paar küsimust laulupeo kohta. Et kas Eesti bränd on teinud koostööd laulupeoga ja kuidas?*

I21: Otseselt ma ei oska küll öelda. Et noh, kindlasti turismi nii-öelda Visit Estonia tiim kindlasti teeb nendega koostööd mingis osas. Aga seda ma ei oska praegu nagu selles valguses öelda, et noh, kui palju ja mida nad teevad, aga see, et kas laulupidu kasutab kuidagi Eesti brändi, siis seda ma ei küll ei tea, et nad kasutaks Eesti brändi laulupeo turundamiseks või promomiseks. Et selles osas me nagu ei ole koostööd teinud.

*R: Ja kas te leiaks, et laulupidu võiks lisada mingisugust väärtust Eesti brändile ja missugust? Selle kasutamine siis.*

I22: Ma arvan, et kui laulupidu saab toetuda samadele põhisõnumitele mingites oma teemades, mis on Eesti bränd välja töötanud, et see on see koht.

I21: Noh selles mõttes ma arvan, et laulupidu on nagu igatpidi nagu Eesti brändi mingisugune osa onju, et ta on meie kultuuripärand, kultuuri osa onju, mis on nagu ka üks osa ikkagi Eesti brändist onju. Et kas ta on läbi Visiti või on ta läbi mingi kultuuriteemade või läbi mingi kogemuse või elamuse või selles mõttes onju. Et ta on kindlasti mingi osa sellest, aga see, et ta oleks nagu kuidagi veel eraldi Eesti bränditud või...



I22: Üks-ühele praegu Eesti brändi... Meie tiim ei tee laulupeoga hetkel koostööd.

I21: Et noh siin ongi see küsimuse vaatevinkel, et kas me näeme, et laulupidu võiks olla nagu Eesti brändi võtmes tehtud. Visuaalses võtmes näiteks onju, et noh, see on, et igal üritusel on nagu mingi oma identiteet, samas nagu why not midagi nagu nii-öelda siduda onju, et näidata jälle ühise näoga seda.

*R: Aga et kas laulupidu võiks kuidagi siduda nende kolme põhisõnumiga? Või kas te leiate, et laulupidu on midagi sellist, mis võiks eristada Eestit teistest riikidest ja seetõttu olla brändi osa?*

I22: No ta praegu, ja nagu Krislyn ütles, ta ongi brändi osa, selles mõttes ta on isegi meil faktina välja toodud, et me toome teda välja kultuuri osas eksju. Et meil on nagu Song Festival, kus on nagu üks kümnendik Eesti rahvast koos ja kõik laulavad üheskoos eksju. Ja no kui sa näiteks USAs oled, siis mida teatakse, on ka laulev revolutsioon, eks ju. Kui me laulsime ennast vabaks eksju üheksakümnendatel. Isegi noh, seda tegelikult teatakse, mis on nagu hästi huvitav teatud ringkondades. Et noh, selles mõttes, et ta kindlasti loob väärtust, ta on kultuuri osa ja siis, kui me jätkame nendesamade laulude nii-öelda, need vahepeal viiakse ka uude võtmesse, mis on nagu väga huvitav, et kindlasti ta on osa ja turism kasutab seda kindlasti ka ära oma nii-öelda kampaanias selles tulge siis Eestisse, eks ju, et see on nagu võimalust teil saada osa meie nii-öelda kultuurist. Et selles mõttes ta juba on Eesti brändi osa ja ma tean ka tegelikult päris mitu ärikohtumist sihitakse sellel ajal just et näidata neile ka seda pehmet poolt. Et et selles mõttes kindlasti ta juba tegelikult on Eesti brändi osa mina ütlen. Ja seda et kas ta ka visuaalselt kannab, seda ma arvan, et, võib-olla ta juba oma sisult tegelikult kannab mingit väärtust, just seda nagu kui me ütleme *independent minds* ehk ise mõtlevad inimesed, ehk siis me tulemegi kokku ja laulame ja nii-öelda leiame neid nutikaid lahendusi, kuidas nagu seda ühtsust tunnetaks, et laulame ennast vabaks. Või siis nagu jätkame neid traditsioone. Et ma arvan, et seda ta juba tegelikult... nagu seda alustala ta mingis osas juba kannab.

*R: Okei.*

I22: Aga ma ei tea, mis see praegune see põhisõnum sellel aastal on. Ja neil kindlasti on jah oma see CVI üritusel endal onju.

I21: Ja neil on ka ju igakord on ju ikkagi erinev nii-öelda teema või temaatika onju. Ja sellega seoses ka siis oma CVI. Et laulupeol ei ole ju ka kindlat ühte CVID. Neil on iga üritus ikkagi oma need elemendid, mida nad kasutavad. Jah, see ongi seesama mõte, et kas nad Kuigi eelmine kord vist oli ka see nii-öelda mingi noh, noorte teema onju. Et noh, siuke vaatame tulevikku, oleme digitaalsemad või mis iganes onju. Et noh, et seal on need ühisosad võib-olla. Aga ta on jah ikkagi omaette nii-öelda bränd.

I23: Aga seda ma ütlen, et minu meelest see võiks jääda nagu Eestis sees ka kindlasti nii, aga mida ma näen, mida kindlasti võiks siin rakendada, on see, et kuna ma saan aru, et laulupidu, kui seda näiteks kasutatakse Eesti turundamisel, et siis tegelikult seal on küll neid kohti, kus tegelikult võiks Eesti brändi ka mingis osas kasutada. Sest noh, Eesti bränd ongi mõeldud Eesti tutvustamiseks ja nad alati peavad, eksju alustama sellest, et mis riik, kust nad tulevad, mis üritus see on ja siis nad jõuavad enda juurde. Et ka tegelikult laulupidu kindlasti nagu, kui ta otsib väljast endale nii-öelda kuulajaskonda, külalisi, siis kindlasti tegelikult on nagu neil mõistlik ja soovituslik kasutada Eesti brändi nagu selles osas. Et üldse tutvustada, mis riiki te tuleksite ja kuulaksite eksju.

*R: Okei, nüüd ma ei tea, need järgnevad küsimused on võib-olla rohkem suunatud teile kui eestlastele, mitte niivõrd Eesti brändi esindajatele. Vaid üleüldiselt rääkides laulupeost, siis kas te arvate, et laulupidu peaks keskkeskenduma rohkem välisturgudele jõudmiseni või peaks ikkagi peamiselt püsima siht meie enda rahval?*

I21: Ma arvan, et seal peab ikka nagu selles mõttes mõlemat olema. Et noh, eks see nii-öelda meie rahva teema, eks see on seesama traditsiooni alleshoidmine, edasikandmine onju, aga noh, välisturgudele ta kindlasti on üks niisugune väga atraktiivne üritus või mingi asi, et miks siia nagu rahvast kutsuda onju. See on üks põhjus, võib olla, miks keegi soovib siia tulla. Et see, et seda nagu väljapoole Eestit üldse ei räägitaks, noh see juba...

I22: Ma arvan et, see on ka hea, et tegelikult ta toobki Eestile rohkem turiste, ta toob nii-öelda majandusliku kasu selle võrra Eestile ka. Et selle võrra on see muidugi ka hea. Ja kuna ta väärtused ja nende sisu on ka asi, mida noh, tõenäoliselt välismaal imetletakse, siis kindlasti mina arvan küll, et väljapoole peab ka turundama laulupidu.

I21: See on see sama kultuuri turundamine.

I23: Ta näitab, väga hästi ühest küljest, iseloomustab.

I21: Noh juba see järjepidevuse ja traditsiooni püsimine. Juba see on nagu üks väga kõnekas fakt onju. Et kui me tähistame saja viiekümne aastat täitumist, siis noh, see on päris niisugune nagu kõnekas asi, mida kuskil väljaspool Eestit mainida.

*R: Te ütlesite, et igal projektil on erinev sihtrühm, siis mis te arvate, mis võiks olla laulupeo sihtrühm või sihtgrupp... välismaal?*

I21: See on suhteliselt keerukas küsimus.

I22: Esimene on kõik eestlased. Nii väliseestlased kui ka Eestis elavad eestlased ja edasi, see on juba...

I21: Ja ka mitte-eestlased, kes Eestis elavad.

I22: No ma ei tea, siuke isiklikust arvamusest, ma arvan, et kui laulupidu teeb näiteks koostööd Visit Estonia tiimiga, kellel on sihtriigid, siis nad võiksid võib-olla oma sihtgrupis ka lähtuda seal nendega koostöös nii-öelda nendest sihtriikidest, keda oodatakse Eestisse turistidena.

I21: Ma arvan, et see on nagu ikkagi väga noh, niisugune hästi laialdane sihtrühm, mis kaasa võtta, et ta on midagi väga spetsiifilist. Et kas me nüüd keskendume mingi muusikahuvilistele või mingi koorimuusikahuvilistele või mingi klassikalise muusikahuvilistele või noh, üleüldse et ma arvan, laulupeol ikkagi see sihtrühm on suhteliselt seinast seinä. Ja jah, täpselt see nagu Mirjam ütles, et võib-olla lihtsalt nagu fokusseerida koostöös nagu siis nii-öelda üldise turismi... Eesti turismisihtrühm sihtturuga.

*R: Ja sellega on peamised küsimused otsas, ja kas on midagi, mis te sooviksite veel lisada või?*

I23: Põnev oleks pärast lugeda. Ja kindlasti tahaks, et... Oota ma korra küsin, et mis su hüpotees on?

*R: Mul ei ole hüpotees, vaid uurimisküsimus on mul et...*

I23: Mis probleemküsimus on?

*R: Probleemküsimus on, et kuidas laulupidu mõjutab Eesti brändi? Mitte siis nagu Nation brand of Estonia, mitte Eesti brändi, kui teie firmat.*

I23: Jaa jaa riigi nagu et nagu et siis jah mhm.

*R: Just!*

...

*R: Ja siis ma küsiksin veel, et kui mul tekib mingi küsimus, kas ma võin teiega ühendust võtta?*

I23: Jah.

*R: Selge.*

I21: Võid kirjutada.

*R: Jah. Aitäh teile ja ilusat päeva!*

I23: Aitäh sulle ja edu! Ilusat päeva!

*R: Aitäh! Head aega!*

Transcribing supported by:

Alumäe, T., Tilk, O., Asadullah. (2018) Advanced Rich Transcription System for Estonian Speech. *Baltic HLT 2018*.

### 9.2.3 Interview no. 3

*R: So, to begin with, I would ask plain questions such as your age, nationality and profession.*

I3: What was your research question by the way?

*R: My research question is... Actually, I am not going to tell you that before, I can tell you that after.*

I3: But you're going to keep consistent with every interview, right?

*R: Yeah, right.*

I3: Alright, let's do it.

*R: So, age, nationality and profession.*

I3: So, I'm Dutch, I'm 21 and I'm a student, full time. Besides that, I am working at night life every weekend and I have a company, a start-up.

*R: OK, and then I would move on to the topic more and ask about how often do you travel per year, approximately?*

I3: Uh, I travel quite a lot I think. Does travelling home count as well? From home to home?

*R: I wouldn't count it as travelling.*

I3: Then I think around once in every one and a half months. So, around six times a year.

*R: Okay*

I3: Six, seven times.

*R: And what do you consider important when choosing a destination to travel?*

I3: I need a reason, first of all, to travel I think. I think it's only like once or twice a year when I just travel because of the destination, that I like the destination. Most of the other times, I call it more like a necessity or for a business. That I need to have a meeting somewhere or I need to buy leather or something from other place or if I need to visit home or something like that. So, the only two times, three times when I need to find the destination, it really depends on the name of it actually. As in, not just name as in the word, but what's your perception of the place. I don't want to go to, for example Gdansk. It is very cheap to fly there, but it is just the name of it. Like, I know it's a place in Poland or something. There's nothing much to do. But I don't want to go and do research about it. What's fun, what's fun to do. It's already the name of it, my perception of it is really bad. So that's why I don't want to go there.

*R: And why do you think the perception of it is bad? Just the sound or..?*

I3: No no. Not just the sound but if I am telling anyone that yea, I am going to Gdansk and Poland, you would be probably like "yeah, just because you found it cheap, right?" So I think

that plays quite a role in that.

*R: So you'd say that the key parameter would be..*

I3: My perception of the place, yeah. And if my perception is wrong, I'm not really likely to go and change it, I'm not really likely to go and do research about it like "beautiful Gdansk". Do you know what I mean? So, for example something basic like Malta, or places down there, I'm like "OK, sounds good, price is nice, let's go there". But usually I book my flights pretty last minute. Like one month in advance. So, it also really depends on the flight tickets. On the price of them. Actually, I never thought that much about that.

*R: No, but it's very interesting actually and very up to the topic, I would say. (laughing) So now I would ask more about Estonia because I heard that you've been there.*

I3: That's true, that's true.

*R: And what were the main reasons why you visited Estonia?*

I3: Well, it was like somewhere, not the last summer but a year before. I have a lot of Estonian friends because I knew one guy who was Estonian and he knew people and.. Just like, suddenly my whole friend group was Estonian. And he was like "yeah, you know, you should come to Estonia". And I was like "yeah, why not?" And it sounded really nice. So, then I was like: yeah, sure, I'll join you. Then I went to Estonia with him to see... Because I could never imagine how Estonia would look like. You know, we talked about the perception. I couldn't perceive anything. Like I did not have an image of Estonia.

*R: Because yeah, the next question would be that can you recall what was your perception about Estonia before visiting the country?*

I3: It was barely anything. Like, I did not know what to think of it. It might be a place like Vienna maybe, you know, like an average European city. That's what I thought because I knew it wasn't like a Soviet place, you know. Just a former Soviet. Which it was, it looked like a former Soviet sometimes (laughing). Yeah, I didn't perceive it like that.

*R: And why not? Or where did it..?*

I3: Because Estonians never want to be called Eastern Europeans, that's why. There must be a reason behind it. Because you guys always want to be Nordics. (laughing) So I was like, OK, it might not be really..

*R: OK. And did your perception about Estonia change after you visit the country and how did that change?*

I3: Definitely. How did it change? So, there's a lot of things that it changed. First one, the nature. It's great. And it's sort of like a hidden gem, I think, in Europe. Cause nobody really has a reason to go to there, why would you, right? And just because nobody goes there, there's only one million people, right?

*R: One point three*

I3: You people know it. So, you know, people living there and you can really tell. Like, it's very calm and some places you don't hear anything because it's so far from humanity. It's quite an interesting place to go to, especially when you come from cities. In Holland we live with 8 million people in the same size as Estonia. So constantly, everywhere you are, there's this light pollution. You can't see the stars cause there's so much light everywhere. And people everywhere, so there is a constant noise, like you hear right now, like that, the roads. And in Estonia, there are some places, like the wetlands, you don't hear anything. It's just super calm. And those little towers you can sit in. You have McDonald's over there so after going out (laughing) and it was just really... it was really nice. Really nice and calm. And that's how my perception changed. I did not know it'll be that beautiful. When I came to the nature of it.

*R: Okay. So were you in Tallinn?*

I3: Yeah, Tallinn, mostly. And Tartu for 2 days. Or 3 days.

*R: So you were in Tallinn but still, the main things you would recall are now about nature, you would say? Like that was the most incredible part?*

I3: Yeah, and then the night life... When I talk about the night life, it's that people are actually pretty closed. You know, the people were not that open there. Yeah, I might say that maybe Danish people would be more open. Yeah, as a tourist. Not that I talked to anyone, first of all. (laughing) But nobody talked to me either so that it's kind of hypocritical, I know. But I think people are.. They respect their own circle, I think. Or that's how it feels like. And a lot of Russians on the street, shady Russians. There was like a security guard at Sunset Boulevard. Is it Sunset Boulevard over there? Some sort of like..

*R: No-no. Hesburger maybe?*

I3: Yeah! Hesburger.

*R: They have shady security guards. (laughing)*

I3: Yeah and they had a bouncer, I was just like.. And the cashiers didn't speak any English at some places, no Estonian either, just Russian, you know. So that was.. uh..

*R: OK. So what did you like the best and worst about the country? If you would have to name something.*

I3: The best and worst... The best was definitely the nature. I really liked it.

*R: You can talk more about the nature. So you went to like swamps or like the wetlands?*

I3: Yeah, yeah, exactly. Swamps and these like.. forests, kind of

*R: Just hiking or.. chilling?*

I3: Yeah, hanging out, walking. There was one two days. Yeah. That was very nice and I went to some sort of like summerhouse kind of thing. Like, campfire, a lot of mosquitoes. But it was really nice. And then we had a little boat, we went on water with. So... The bad things, definitely mosquitoes and... People also spoke English so that was not that bad either. Uh, it's

tough to say what a bad thing is. I could feel some poverty, I cannot really recall what it was. And what else I really liked, it was probably like the old town. It's really beautiful. It's really... Kind of like Latin quarter over here. Yeah, really like rusty and... I thought it had some beauty to it. But I don't recall any bad things necessarily.

*R: And do you think it's because of the people that you were there or..?*

I3: Yeah, you should definitely know people before you go there. I think if you don't know anyone it's going to be really tough.

*R: Yeah? Why so?*

I3: I think any place is like that. If you don't know anyone, you need to make friends with locals and I think especially the Estonians, because they're not used to seeing tourists, especially not seen like people with a bit darker skin, that they might be very defensive. That's my perception of it. Is this true?

*R: I feel like it's going to... Because we actually just discussed it with my roommate a few days ago, that I feel that the younger generation is changing towards that but it might be true like, with the older generations. But it's true that we're very closed. But once you get to know us, then we're not, as you know.*

I3: Oh and you guys are very emotionless. Yeah, you guys have no emotions.

*R: I mean, we have but we just don't show them (laughing).*

I3: No-no, no emotions, I know enough Estonians to make a conclusion on this one. (laughing)

*R: Yeah? So, could you describe Estonian people? You say emotionless and what else?*

I3: (laughing). They are fairly open-minded, they they'll go out of their way to help you out. That goes for any Estonian friend that I have. I can recall like five-six-seven close Estonian friends. Even to the day of today, they would go out of the way to help me out. And almost every single one of them has helped me out with my business as well. In forms of photography, advising.. And they will make time, and they will go all the way from Aarhus to Herning, for example, to help you out with it. Yeah, and I think that's a great characteristic. They are humble. Well two of them are not but most of them are humble. And yeah, also very emotionless. That they would not really... It's kind of the opposite of Americans, you know. They are not very loud when they like something and they don't want to express their happiness or sadness. It's usually like "oh, that's okay" or "that's nice".

*R: Mhm. If you would describe Estonia to somebody, which three words you would use? Or, like, which associations you will make?*

I3: That will take more than three words but.. (laughing)

*R: Yeah but if you would need to... It can be like word pairs, but key words, let's say.*

I3: Key words, okay. I think it's really like a hidden gem. That would be one way. And it's very undiscovered and it is a beautiful combination of the former Soviet feelings and like the



Nordic influences that it has. You can see Nordic influences in... I don't really remember what it was. But I think the more people, like in the culture of the people but you can also see it's still the old Soviet feelings in there.

*R: So yeah, you mean the mixture, you can see it then like within people but also like, in the environment as well?*

I3: Yeah. The whole place, and it has a really nice combination of the Nordics and Eastern European... It's very nice like..

*R: And which traits would you say are from each side?*

I3: Like the Scandinavian thing is that people are very closed, people are very defensive. You know what I mean, they respect their own.. Yeah and I think that's very important. And from the former Soviet, I think that's very like, the older generation as well. You see the way the cars and stuff were. The houses.

*R: Yeah. Or the interior design, in some cases. (laughing)*

I3: Yeah, the interior design. And in the Nordics, for example, like the Nordic influence maybe like the sauna. Because it's very popular

*R: Mm hmm. Yes, that's true.*

I3: Just like the Finnish people. And also you guys think that the Finnish people or like you guys are good friends is Finnish people, right? Finland is like your big brother. But actually Finland doesn't really see you as a little brother either. (laughing) This is something I really realized because, when I've been to Finland I've been like "Oh yeah, I've been to Estonia". Like, they really couldn't care less. (laughing)

*R: (laughing) Yeah. I know.*

I3: Yeah. And in Estonia they are like "oh we have Finnish people coming constantly and all the nice cars that Finland have". They come there for cheap alcohol and as soon as the trip is over, they don't really care.

*R: Yeah, I know. I think it's something I learned when I came here. Oh yeah, not only the Finnish thing but overall that we think we are Nordic but everybody thinks we're Eastern European. I came like with few days I was like "Oh okay, I guess I'm not Nordic anymore."*

I3: Yeah, exactly. But the language looks really like Finnish. The sound of it. You guys understand Finnish but Finnish don't understand a lot of Estonian?

*R: I think it's because many Estonian people have I don't know... Like watch TV shows or something like this and in the past. Because I couldn't really understand Finnish because I don't have any connection. But for example, like my parents could because they've tried to understand it a bit and then it comes more easily than any other language I guess. But still it's not like as with Danish and Norwegian, I guess. I think it's easier for them. Yeah. Then I would ask: what do you think is the overall perception of Estonia among your nation? If any?*



I3: Among my nation? What's my nation?

*R: Among Dutch people.*

I3: Oh Dutch people, okay. I think most of them don't even know where it is. Like, when I was in Estonia my stories really had like the Soviet sign and they'd like the Russian sign, you know, Russian flag. Like it was a joke but also just people didn't know where Estonia was and I wanted to kind of call, I am near Russia. So, I think, unfortunately, it's less known than you might think in Holland. Like people really don't know. Like, they probably don't even know what's like Latvia Lithuania and Estonia. They know it's out there, but they did not like in which order. They might even think Estonia's the one bordering Poland.

*R: Yeah, it's not a surprise to me. When you travel then you realize that people don't really know.*

I3: But when you're traveling you don't want to say "Oh I'm from near Russia." "I'm near Finland!" (laughing)

*R: Yeah, "I'm under Finland" (laughing) But overall, okay they don't know about the country itself, like they know it exists with the other Baltic states. But what is the perception of Baltic states then?*

I3: It's near Russia, yeah.

*R: So basically, it doesn't really matter if it's like Estonia or Poland?*

I3: When I said I'm going to Estonia then people were just like "why?". If I'm going to Malta then people would be like "Oh, nice!". You know, when I'm going to Spain people would be like "so nice", but with Estonia, people really are like "what? What are you going to do there?" People don't see any reason I'm going there.

*R: OK but do you think it's that they don't have any perception at all or is it like...?*

I3: It's a lack of perception, just lack of perception. But right now with the whole Danske Bank thing. Not in Holland but Denmark they have a perception of... They see the.. It's funny because they have like these comedy versions of that and then Estonians are portrayed as like Russian oligarchs.

*R: Yeah I've seen some like a comedy version of... Where they actually like wash the money.*

I3: Yeah, I think I've seen the same, but it was like these Russian guys, right. And then I think that this is the perception they have right now. Estonians, they are just Russians.

*R: Yeah. So I mean Danes have like..?*

I3: Yeah, I think the Danish people do, yeah.

*R: That's so hypocrite, like we've nothing to do with it.*

I3: There's still a lot of Russians in Estonia.

*R: Yeah, no yeah that's true. But what I mean like, it's like Danske Bank's own bullshit what they were doing but in Estonia, so now we're like involved.*

I3: It just makes room for a lot of jokes.

*R: Yes. I mean like I agree. That's good humor.*

I3: I've made my fair amount of jokes for that one to my Estonian friends.

*R: Do you know other people who have visited Estonia?*

I3: No.

*R: Nobody?*

I3: Nobody.

*R: Really?*

I3: Well I think that I might know like a friend of a friend who might have gone to Estonia. But like, if you ask me what the name is, I'm not sure which one of the five it is.

*R: Yeah. OK. So you don't know like why was the..*

I3: No, I actually don't know

*R: OK. And would you be interested in visiting Estonia in the near future?*

I3: No.

*R: And why?*

I3: Cause I've already seen it, I think and I don't really have a reason.. Maybe if one day I wanna sell my products in Estonia, let's have a look over there. But otherwise I think it's not a high priority for me right now.

*R: So you think you like, seen it all? Or what it has to offer?*

I3: Yeah, I think I've seen it all.

*R: OK. But would you recommend Estonia to others?*

I3: Definitely. Yeah. But you need someone you know. Because, you cannot go to the wetlands without a car. You need a car, you need someone who knows where it is. So, make Estonian friends, step one. Step two, go to Estonia. Not the other way round.

*R: And why would you like... if you recommended it to somebody, then why would you say that it's the place to go?*

I3: I think it is a great new thing that people are like “hey, I'm looking for like... I don't want to go to these regular places like Italy or something. I want to visit something cool and I love nature.” Of you would consider going to Norway, maybe. I would say, try out Estonia. If you have Estonian friends. (laughing)

*R: (laughing) That's the first! OK. And then, now I would move on to a bit more specific topic about Estonia, which is the song celebration. Yeah. So the festival you went to where everybody is singing. (laughing) And then like, I would ask how did you hear about the event and why did you decide to go?*

I3: Are these questions for everybody by the way?

*R: No, this one is only for you. (laughing)*

I3: Oh, okay. I see, it's nicely tailored. That's nice. Well okay, question again, I forgot.

*R: How did you hear about the event and why did you decide to go there?*

I3: Because my friend was like: when we're there, the song celebration is up as well, we have to go visit that. Then I was like “oh, sure”. (laughing). You know, if that's where you go, I go too, no worries. So, that's the reason why I went there. So, I think I hadn't even googled it. I really just went out there. Without any thoughts.

*R: And were you there one day? Like one concert?*

I3: I think was that two days. I'm not 100 percent sure. Maybe one day. One very long day. (laughing)

*R: Yeah. (laughing) What are your thoughts about the event?*

I3: It was a lot of people, I was like “Shit, man, if there's like 1 million people living in this place, I wonder what kind of percentage is like out of here.” Because there was lot of people. A lot of people. Have you been there as well?

*R: Of course.*

I3: It was also funny like how everybody starts singing in the crowd. Yeah, it's nice. But then again, I am also the one who feels very left out because I'm the one who doesn't know the song.

*R: OK so you felt left out?*

I3: I definitely felt left out because I mean, I don't know what the songs are about, I don't know.. I mean, if you know what the songs are about, you have heard all your childhood, then it's just big brotherhood, you know, and you feel like one big unity. But I didn't. But it was a great experience nevertheless, it was a great experience.

*R: But how was it great or like, what kind of emotions it brought up in you?*

I3: Maybe goosebumps. At some point, because everybody's singing and you could see these little kids, singing too. I think there's this formations, right?

*R: Oh, that's dancing celebration maybe?*

I3: I think I did not have the dance, I just had the singers but.. Yeah.

*R: OK. And do you think that the events affected your perception about Estonia as a country or as a nation in any way?*

I3: They really care about their culture and about the unity and uh.. because nobody is forced to go there. Still, there's a lot-a lot of people. For such a small place, I think it's interesting. I mean if you had the same proportion in Denmark. It needs to be some really-really cool event to get such a high percentage of people to go there. I think Estonian people value their traditions. Also, I do remember like, in the voiceover, you know, before those concerts, between those concerts, I think, the voice over... There was this young kid saying like "What an Estonian is? Estonian is blue eyes, Estonian is blonde hair". It actually sounded very like.. very nationalistic? Maybe little racist, I don't know. But there's no one there to say, cause everyone's Estonian. (laughing)

*R: (laughing) You were there like: "NO".*

I3: I was there like... Because I got it translated like.. What if you don't have blue eyes, then they feel left out.

*R: I mean, not all Estonians have blue eyes, I'm just saying. (laughing)*

I3: Yeah, you tell her! (laughing) Well you do so, yeah, not a good example.

*R: Yeah, I'm not a good example, exactly, that's why I feel now.. I can't really protect them. (laughing). OK. But like, did it change the perception about Estonia or Estonians more?*

I3: Estonians.

*R: Okay. And you didn't feel like, after coming out from this event that Estonia is even a cooler place or it was just like, a fun thing to do, like any other, like going to a bog or something?*

I3: Yeah. But also one thing, by the way, I forgot to say about Estonian people, is that they don't drink that much. But for real. For example, we were at this camp fire, right. In Denmark, you would do the same.. There was only two people drinking. If you would be doing it in Denmark, everyone else would be drinking, playing drinking games, rolling their beer bowling, you know, beer pong maybe. Because you're in the middle of nowhere and nobody can hear you, loud music.

But Estonians, like, I only saw one Somersby. I mean, like, taking that drink. And the rest was just, I don't even know if they were thinking, they were barbecuing. There was no really alcohol involved. And that's something that's not so former Soviet culture, would make me think that there's a lot of alcohol for everybody.

*R: But do you think, maybe it was just your friends like.. I mean, when you went out or something, did you also felt that it's not like a problem that people drink that much or?*

I3: Oh, when I went out.. It's just the regular. It wasn't that bad compared to like.. But I'm more talking about like, social environment.

*R: Yeah, I would say that I think Estonians... I'm not necessarily saying that they drink less, but they definite drink differently. Like, they don't maybe need to drink beers, maybe they drink like strong alcohol. Quietly. You know, you just get drunk. It's not like this loud and social thing maybe. So yeah. Would you want to... One more question about the song celebration and then... Actually two. Do you think there's any value that song celebration could offer for foreigners?*

I3: I think it's very hard for internationals to really enjoy that. If the songs are European. No, Estonian. If it was this classic like "It's Raining Man", you know, everybody would sing along. (laughing) That'll be great. And that would attract a lot of like.. if you have one of those videos going viral, you get a lot of people going to Estonia. But I think if it was national songs it's very difficult.

*R: OK but one side of it, I feel is like...as a destination. So, like get more people to go there but I feel like the tradition itself... Is there something to learn for other nations from it? Or you think it's a very nation specific: that it's cool that Estonia has it but let it be their thing?*

I3: Well in Estonians they have these school choirs, right? School dancing. That most other countries don't have. So, if you want to do that, you got to start from the bottom up. Because most people down there can see themselves in those kids. They remember themselves being in their shoes as well, back in the days. And I think that plays a major role. So if you want to implement it, you got to start from the bottom up. And make it to like, into the blood of the nation.

*R: But do think it's something that Estonia could use to differentiate itself from other European countries? Or like, put itself into map, let's say?*

I3: I think, it has.. How long has it been there?

*R: This year we are celebrating 150 years so longer than ourselves.*

I3: So, I think that's longer than they have... I don't think that 150 years ago they were thinking about the way how to put themselves in a map of a globalizing world, you know. And I think that was not really the reason why they did that. (laughing)

*R: No, but I mean now. Should we use it now: Look we have this thing which nobody else does.*

I3: No but it's not every year, right? It's every 2 years?

*R: Yeah.*

I3: Every four years like the special one right.

*R: Yes.*

I3: Well, then it would also be difficult because it's not consistent. Imagine people come for that... If you're depending on the one big tourist flow, I don't know, every two years. In order

to get, you need to adjust the whole infrastructure of it. Also, the Internet. It's impossible to text anyone. Just so many people one place. So, that was quite a hell, actually. And there's not even seats to sit on. (laughing) No, but actually if you are standing for so long, your back starts hurting. Because the hill was going up. Physically, you're actually leading backwards all the time. As if you would have high heels on, right. Yeah, that's how it feels like. (laughing) I don't know but...

*R: You can try to compare. (laughing) Would you want to visit the event again? But I guess if you don't want to visit Estonia again, then you...*

I3: Naah, even if I'd visit Estonia, I would probably skip the event, I've already seen it. No. It's nice, if you're Estonian. But then again, if you're not Estonian, then you should've just seen it once and then it's fine. It's not like I want to go again and then be like "Oh yeah, let's see what songs are on now."

*R: I just.. Because I've seen videos where like foreigners are like getting touched from the vibe the others have, even though they don't understand. Like, I saw this video like, I don't know maybe a Canadian girl just crying like "I am so emotional, I don't know what's going on."*

I3: Some people also cry about just watching a normal movie, you know. So you just have to be very dramatic. (laughing)

*R: Or just me. (laughing)*

I3: I got goosebumps, I have to say that.

*R: So it's still like, you get touched by an emotion but it's like a one time thing?*

I3: I get a bit of brotherhood. Everybody is like singing out of their full chest, which is nice. It's just like any anthem would also give you goosebumps.

*R: OK. And now I would ask a bit more general questions about nation branding. So basically not just a on you know just overall. And do you think that nation branding is important? So should nations engage their branding themselves?*

I3: Yeah I think it's very important. Cause, I mean, in these days. When we're talking about Bali. We don't know Bali that much because of geography class, you know. It's mostly because there's these famous people going to Bali. If people go to Bali because they've seen their colleague, influences just go to Bali. The colleague influencer probably went because they got offered something by a local hotel or something. That is why I think... Bali is not a nation but I think it's very important. And I'm I'm a really big fan of the tourism industry nothing. I think it should be a big focus for any place, any nation. It's good for the economy, especially for Estonia. To have more tourists coming in.

*R: And just.. the nation branding itself is not the same as destination branding, which is more focusing on tourists.*

I3: I see. Is nation branding more of a theme like... when the Danske bank thing went out now?

*R: Yeah, for example. But it also includes tourism. It's: people, culture & heritage of the nation, investment & immigration, export brands, foreign and domestic policy and tourism. So it*



*includes all of the things which you might have perception about the country. For example, Swiss – you think of watches.*

I3: Do I think it's important? Definitely!

*R: Yeah. So, regarding that, what kind of brand would be inviting to you? If a nation would brand itself in that way or would have that kind of a brand, it would be inviting to you.*

I3: If any country could have any kind of brand? That's very broad. Italy could make pastas!

*R: Haha, for example. For you it can be important that country have happy people, or..*

I3: I think it is important you don't have bad name regarding crime. Because I think when you say a word Chicago then people already know – gangsters and stuff. Or when I say Malmö for example – I don't want to go there because when you read like Vice for example, you see all those no-go zones. Shooting, knifing each other. That's a part of nation brand as well. Or city brand. That plays a major role when I go.

It's not necessarily like... I think Finland become the happiest place this year and then Vice also made a very depressing video about it. I think it doesn't do anything about my perception of that place. I think nature is really important and just the lack of crime. I mean, Romania, Bulgaria.. The things I've heard about those places.. I don't want to go there. Even though it sounds like they have the most beautiful waterfalls.. I don't want to go there.

*R: Do you feel that you just buy into all the news? For example, you have heard that Bulgaria and Romania have a lot of crime, do you check the background as well or do you just..?*

I3: No. I'm very sensitive for the first headline that you hear. I have to really badly want to go to Bulgaria, for me to go look up "is the crime really there in Bulgaria?". For countries like that, when I hear bad news about it, I'm like: fair enough, then I am not going.

*R: Okay. And what do you think Estonia should focus on in their nation brand?*

I3: I think they should show a lot about their nature and stuff. Yeah, I think they could do a lot of good branding with it. Just the calmness of the nature – they could do a lot of great stuff with it. They have these very unique wetlands and maybe 50 second video, 30 second video. Ask some influencers or something. A lot of cool stuff going out there.

And then again, I am also afraid if they do that, it becomes a one big tourist destination and then it loses its beauty. Because the beauty is the fact that there is no tourism.

*R: Yeah, that's true. Is there anything else you would consider that Estonia could use in their nation branding?*

I3: I think Estonia is very well developed when it comes to financial technology. And when it comes to all of this start-up environment. And they are very very advanced when it comes to tax laws, start-up laws. Very convenient laws regarding start-ups, especially finance start-ups. For people, who are in this industry and well-aware of the advancements of Estonia. I know that for sure, no doubt. But to hit the regular people, the "average Joe", you need to have.. What was the question again? What should they do to change it?

*R: What should Estonia focus in their nation brand?*

I3: Oh, then nice nature would be nice. (laughing)

*R: No-no, because that's interesting. Why do you think they should include.. We call it e-country, so everything can be done online, anywhere.*

I3: Those laws are very specific group of people in the world. How many people have their own fin-tech start-ups. It is a very small amount. It is not very easy to attract start-uppers. Maybe people who want to work in fin-tech industry. Maybe they could have better laws for these guys, for people who want to work there. You are a fin-tech start-up owner, it should be easy for me to get somebody from India or Denmark to work for me. The government gives easier process of getting those people to the country, I don't know how it is right now?

*R: Yeah, I think they are working on it. We have this e-residency. So people become an e-resident so they could do all of these things more easily. But I wanted to know whether you know all of these things because your own start up experience or did you know it before?*

I3: No because I have Estonian friends. (laughing) And they just keep on talking about it all the time. But also, because I had this class Global Entrepreneurship and I could see that Estonia is really up, next to New Zealand. New Zealand and Estonia they were always ranking number one, together with Singapore.

*R: Do you think Song Celebration should be used to brand Estonia somehow?*

I3: Oh so we go back to Song Celebration. I think it could be a little 5-second part of it, the 30-second video, that would be nice. Something about the people of Estonia, they are.. They care about their nation and they care about their roots, their heritage, I think it's create. Very unique. I don't know how unique it is, maybe only place in the world where.. everybody sings together.

*R: But from a perspective of a foreigner, I am asking you, why should you care if a nation holds together or cares for its roots or something? How does it change the perception for you?*

I3: I think it doesn't

*R: No? It's just nice to know that people love each other?*

I3: Yeah, I don't really mind or don't care.. Don't care sounds really harsh but.. whether Spanish are eating paella on every 4<sup>th</sup> of May. I really don't mind, as long as I can go to my beach and it looks nice, it's fine. It has a really small role. Unless, I am trying to integrate to Spain – it would be a nice fun fact. 4<sup>th</sup> of May, everyone comes together. But then again, I know that I am not Spanish so then I am probably wondering what am I doing on 4<sup>th</sup> of May, is anybody inviting me and stuff like that. It is something that is a nice fun fact but is just nice for Estonians and that it is what it is.

*R: Okay. And now I am asking, whether you have any additional remarks.*

I3: Hmm. I really like the bus system – cheap convenient.

*R: In Tallinn then or?*

I3: No no, not the bus of Tallinn because these are not very good. But for example the bus from Tartu to Tallinn.

*R: Haha, so I am guessing you took the LuxExpress where you had the screens?*

I3: Yeah! Exactly! You have wifi, nice terminals. And paid 10€ for a hostel as well. I don't think I have anything to complain about. Taxis were okay-priced. Uber, is it still there? Taxify! Also Skype right? That is the biggest nation pride

*R: Yes haha, that's what we're proud of! Is there anything else you would like to add?*

I3: No no, I think it's fine now.



#### 9.2.4 Interview no. 4

*R: So, to begin with I would ask basic questions such as: what is your age, your nationality and your profession?*

I4: My age: I'm 23 years old. I'm from Finland and I work with digital marketing. But my profession is still a student.

*R: OK. And now I ask how often do travel per year approximately?*

I4: Quite a lot because I live in another country. So, I would say maybe like five times I go home. But then on top of that maybe three four trips a year. So, like 9, 10 tops. OK.

*R: Now except from going home. What are the most important factors you consider when choosing a travel destination?*

I4: Mm hmm. Depends if I want to do like a city trip or like a beach holiday. Mm hmm. Yeah but if I'm going to a city then I usually see that it's OK: it's like big enough, it's not too small. And then there is a lot of nice restaurants and cafes. That's like what I like to do when I travel. And yeah, if it's a beach, nice clear water, a lot of sunshine and... Yeah. I also like to see different cultures.

*R: Have you been to Estonia?*

I4: Yes, I have. Few times I think.

*R: And why have you visited Estonia?*

I4: I think the first time I went was for gymnastics. There's a lot of gymnastics teams in Estonia that are very good, and they organized this competition. It's in... where is it now, Tartu? Yeah, so I've been there. And then we've been with my family because it's very easy to go from Finland. You just take the boat from Helsinki. Takes like a couple of hours. We've been to Tallinn and then once we did like a trip from Estonia and all the way to Latvia, Lithuania. But then Tallinn I've been a few times just for like a weekend trip. Go and stay in a nice hotel. Also, the treatments, like all the spa treatments are a little bit cheaper there so we often make like a wellness trip to Estonia.

*R: Okay. Can you recall what was your perception about Estonia before you visited it?*

I4: Oh, I think in Finland, the reason why people go to Estonia is to buy alcohol because it's so cheap. So, I think that was my perception that it's like cheaper to go there but I didn't have any like.. how it's going to look like or anything. I didn't have any perceptions before I came

*R: Has your perception about Estonia changed after you visited the country?*

I4: The alcohol is still cheap (laughing). But it is.. Like after the first time I went there, I wanted to go again because I really like the.. like the buildings are so pretty and I think the culture is very similar to what it is in Finland. I don't feel like it's that different to go to Estonia.

*R: And what did you like the best and the worst about the country?*

I4: The best is that it's cheaper. So, it's nice to go. And I don't know the worst. One time we got very bad customer service but I don't know if it's something to do with that Estonian people get annoyed that the Finnish people come there and like.. I don't know, get drunk and mess around. So maybe that was a bad thing that we got bad customer service because we were Finnish people. I don't know, it is just this one experience.

*R: Do you know other people who have visited Estonia?*

I4: Yeah, I think everyone in Finland

*R: And what are the reasons?*

I4: The same (laughing). The alcohol

*R: Yeah, okay. (laughing) Now, if you need to use three keywords to describe Estonia then what associations or what words which you use? You can take time*

I4: I can say the same: cheap alcohol, that's one. And then maybe like history because I think there is a lot more than in Finland, like more old buildings. And I don't know. (thinking) Hmm. Maybe something with the nature or something. Can I just say like similar to Finland?

*R: Mhm. And could you describe how you perceive Estonian people?*

I4: Well. I don't know that many.

*R: Not just. Even if you don't know anybody. Then if you imagined an Estonian then how would you imagine an Estonian to be.*

I4: OK. I think girls are very pretty. Like yeah, very like put up, like nice makeup and nice lashes and that. But I don't really know, guys.. Yeah I don't know. But most of all I think nice people: very laid back. Not too uptight or anything like that.

*R: And what do you think, I think you already mentioned it a bit, but what do you think over all perception of Estonia among your nation is? So among Finns. Like, so cheap alcohol, but maybe something else as well. What do you think about Estonia?*

I4: Like the whole country? I think it's maybe.. like because it's almost like in the Nordics, but then it's like not quite. So it's maybe like a mix of Nordic countries and then like Eastern European countries. I think, like with all the standards of living I would think that maybe it's slightly lower than the Nordic countries. But then like then again like better than what it is in.. I don't know, Russia or somewhere.

*R: OK. And would you be interested in visiting Estonia in the near future again then? And why or why not?*

I4: Yeah I would! I was actually just looking as I'm going to Finland and I wanted my boyfriend, because he's coming with, and then he's never been to Estonia. And then I would like him to go to Tallinn with me.

*R: Oh yeah? And why?*

I4: Just to have a nice weekend, like to sleep in a hotel and eat some nice food. Yeah look around, see the old town and all that.

*R: So would you recommend Estonia to other people?*

I4: Yes I would. Tallinn, yeah, especially.

*R: OK, now I'm going to show you a little video.*

*\*introducing the video\**

I4: This is so sweet

*R: So, have you heard about this event before?*

I4: No never. No. No idea.

*R: And what are your thoughts about this? First of all, the video and then about the event?*

I4: I think it's so sweet. Like this was all new information for me. I had no idea, there's this kind of singing spirit in Estonia, that was so cool to see. And also know about the history a bit, that it used to be under the Russians and all that. No, a cool video I think.

*R: Okay, and more about the event. Like, what kind of associations you make with the event or what do you think about it?*

I4: Yeah I think... Is it just like national.. like feeling strong about your whole nation and nothing like religious or anything? Just more like country and being like.. I don't know how you say it. Have a high national spirit. Like being proud to be Estonian. Having survived all the difficult times and being strong.

*R: How does it affect the perception of Estonia or Estonians?*

I4: Hmm... I don't know like.. I didn't know that there's been so much. I never thought about that there's been so much history. Like difficult times. So, I don't know. Maybe changed a little bit. I like strong people, I don't know how to explain.

*R: Okay what about Estonia itself? This was more about the Estonians but did it change the perception about the whole country?*

I4: Yeah, yeah. Brought like a history perspective to it. That it's gone through a lot.

*R: Do you think it's like something important to consider or it's just nice to know?*

I4: Yeah, I know. It doesn't really like, include me. It is just for the country. But it's cool to know more.

*R: And would you like to visit the event and why?*

I4: It could be interesting to see. It seems like there are so many people and like, I don't know, maybe it's more for the local people. Because they feel that they're part of it. Maybe I would feel like an outsider.

*R: And now I would ask a bit more broader questions and it's not only about Estonia now. So, the topic of my thesis is nation branding, which is not the same as destination branding, which is focused on getting more tourists only. But nation branding includes also tourism but has these other areas of: people and culture and heritage and investment and immigration and exporting brands and foreign and domestic policies. So, it's like all kind of relations people make with the nation then. And then I would ask: do you think that nation branding is important and why?*

I4: Oh, I have never thought about that. Oh. I mean, yeah it is probably important. Like people have so strong perceptions about countries. I think it would be sometimes important to try to change those because.. I don't know, for example Russia or somewhere. A lot of people have these like prejudice about the country. But then when they actually visit they realize it's completely different. So, it would be important to show like, the other countries that: "This is how we have it. It's not like what you think. This is how it is." So yeah. I do think it is important that

*R: And what kind of brand would be inviting to you? Like over all right now? What should a country brand itself for?*

I4: Hmm maybe something with a clean nature and like, being ecological and thinking about the environment. I think that's very important these days.

*R: What do you think Estonia should focus on when creating their brand?*

I4: I think this was already.. the video was already like a good example. But just to. Oh, I don't know. Maybe talk more about the history and the culture that is there, the environment. I mean, there's so much to see probably and I only know about Tallinn. Show overall more about the way of living. Mm hmm.

*R: So you think a song celebration should be used to brand Estonia?*

I4: It could be. I think, it made me a good impression about the country.

*R: But how do you think song celebration could affect the perception of Estonia amongst people?*

I4: Yeah, I don't know. It didn't bring so many emotions but when it's combined with all the history stuff, then I think it was good. But then, yeah, only like singing would probably not bring so much to other people. If there's no context to it.

*R: So overall, how do you think it could be incorporated in branding Estonia? Like, should it be on some national level or maybe just social media videos or in what kind of way it could be used to brand Estonia?*

I4: Oh. I don't know. Yeah, probably YouTube is like a good way because so many people are on YouTube. But I don't know how other countries like promote their own county, I have no

idea.

*R: OK but then besides culture and history, then what else Estonia could focus on, in your view? Maybe what have you heard they've been focusing on or what do you think they could focus on?*

I4: Things like tourism, is pretty big and maybe they could focus even more like.. all their new restaurants they're adding and coming up with. Like try to promote the whole food culture to other countries. Because I remember, when I went, I had no idea there's going to be so many like, nice places. But then there was so-so many good places there. I think that could be something: like food culture and tourism and wellness holidays. Something like this.

*R: OK. And now I would ask if there are any additional remarks you would like to add. Anything, you say about Estonia or the Song Celebration or?*

I4: If there was.. I would like to see, like, if I went to Tallinn, for example, if there was something like this happening, I would probably go and look. Like, see how it is for them. But maybe not participate or anything, I wouldn't know the lyrics probably (laughing).

Yeah. Yeah. I don't know if I have anything to add.

*R: No, that's good. Okay, thank you.*

### 9.2.5 Interview no. 5

*R: So. As a first thing, I would just ask the basic questions such as: what is your age and nationality and profession?*

I5: It's twenty five, Latvian and a student.

*R: OK. And now, I would ask about traveling. How often do you travel per year approximately?*

I5: Including visiting back home?

*R: No, I would not include that.*

I5: Then maybe twice, probably.

*R: And what are the most important aspects or parameters you would consider when choosing a destination?*

I5: I think it would be... Yeah, about the activities I can do there and culture related things especially.

*R: Can you bring some examples? Like what kind of culture things, because culture is very broad.*

I5: Well normally if I would go, I usually go on smaller, like a city trip, so a weekend trip. So, I would pick a city somewhere in Europe and I would see like what is there.. Yes, starting with the museums maybe, more touristy things and ending with some interesting bars and cafes and so on. So, I would just see like what can I explore in the city. And it wouldn't be that often that I go to like hiking or countryside or anything like that.

*R: Okay, so you usually choose the city and then look up what is there to do there? Or is it the other way - that you hear that there's something cool to do in some certain city and then you just..?*

I6: I think maybe it's the other way around because, you know. It's easy, especially, you know, if you for example... If some artist was born in a city like Picasso and then you know that the city might have something related to that and then the other things just somehow come up.

*R: OK. And then have you been to Estonia?*

I5: Yes.

*R: And why have you been there or what were the main reasons for visiting Estonia?*

I5: Actually it was a... I think all the times I've been there, it has been part of some kind of exchange program. I've been one time in primary school to like a very small city and then to Tallinn maybe twice as a part of a larger exchange program with people from different European countries.

*R: So how many times in total?*

I5: Maybe three, I think. Oh, no, sorry. I went one time with my family to go to the museum in Tartu. So four.

*R: So... like the times you've visited have you... Like for example with exchange things, then did you also do some sightseeing or did you stay with the group activities there?*

I5: I'd say maybe not as much as I would like. Also, I was under aged back then. So, you know, I couldn't just roam around wherever. (laughing)

*R: Ok. So, could you recall what was your perception about Estonia before you ever visited it?*

I5: I thought that it's probably going to be visually kind of similar to Latvia and maybe kind of a quiet. Before.

*R: Okay. And then, did your perception change after you visited Estonia?*

I5: I remember when we first arrived to Tallinn, we were really impressed by how clean it was. And it was also very cozy and it had this mix of old and very modern architecture in the center. So, I'd say I had a good impression. It's like a relatively small city and I don't know if it's true but just from the places where we went. But yes I think it was cozy and clean.

*R: OK. What did you like the best and worst about Estonia?*

I5: Yeah, I think I really liked the old town, visually. I remember that there were some old buildings that would have like cafes or restaurants on two floors. And, you know, back then I hadn't seen that before so I was like "oh, so nice". And I think I also remember that there was a hill in the middle of the city, you could see the view and that was very nice as well. And of course, also the exchange students I felt they were very, you know, approachable and easy to communicate with them, both with the Estonians and Estonian Russians.

*R: OK. And what was the worst thing about Estonia?*

I5: It's hard to say because you know, it was like a part of a good experience. And also, maybe if I would go there alone, I would get into some kind of problems but here everything was so organized that it's hard to say. I mean, for my subjective taste, I prefer places that are a bit like crowded and noisy. So for me just very quiet. But that's not a negative thing, it's just my taste. (laughing)

*R: Okay. So do know other people who have visited Estonia? Amongst your friends*

I5: Let's see, the ones that have here in Aarhus?

*R: Overall.*

I5: Well. I mean of course the ones who went on the same exchange program. But otherwise, yes. I think, especially, it is quite common for Latvians to go to Tartu because it's not that far by car. You know, there is this museum and some spa center and all these activities at one place. So I think most Latvian people I know would have been there at least once. Yeah. I'm not sure about Danish or other. I'm not sure. I've seen some also like.. Swedish acquaintances



I have posting something from Estonia. So seems like they go there. Yeah, for the weekend trips or festivals or something like that.

*R: Okay, so like the main reason for going there is just like a weekend fun trip because it's close?*

I5: I have this impression that Baltic countries in general attract people with services, as they are much cheaper. So, I would guess that maybe yes, going to like... You know, to go to those cities to go out and to some spa center or something like that. It's quite appealing for some people.

*R: OK. Then, if you would need to use three key words to describe your perception of Estonia or associations you make with Estonia, then what they would be? You can take your time.*

I5: It can be also like nouns?

*R: Yeah.*

I5: Let's say, yes, like: cozy, calm and nature.

*R: Okay. Could you describe Estonian people?*

I5: Oh okay, that's a bit of stereotypes. (laughing) But as I think I stated before, they are a bit more like quiet and shy and maybe... I noticed that, I think, often they have like this facial expression, like they're smiling a bit. You know, when I've been to Estonia, I walk down the street and feel like they have like a kind facial expression, just a bit of this smile in the corner of the mouth. So yeah, but like a shy smile. (laughing) And I think for me, it's something that caught my attention because in Latvia we often look very serious and don't smile to each other in these kinds of social situations. (laughing)

*R: Hmm, that's interesting because usually they say the same about the Estonians, that we are very serious.*

I5: (Laughing) So compared to Latvians you smile a bit more. Yeah.

*R: Okay. What do you think is the overall perception of Estonia among your nation, so among Latvians? Like you would say something about Estonia?*

I5: I think it's often like this... You know, all this... It's almost also on a gossip level but there are often these stories about some really like... tech success in Estonia or that Estonia has done some very advanced. But also, it was floating around in the news about that e-citizenship. So, I think it usually comes in a positive light. That there is some, yes, I think there's a technological advancement or some political improvement that, let's say, people want in Latvia as well but they just can't manage to, you know, get it from the government. Mm...

*R: So think do think it's like... Latvians hold like rather positive emotions towards Estonia or it's more negative, that you are kind of like a bit jealous low key or..?*

I5: I think it depends on the person. Like for me, I wouldn't say that it's negative. But, you know, sometimes the way the media portrays it, it's like: "Oh, you know, they've already done



this. Why can't we do this as well." So, I think it really depends on the person, on the mindset.

*R: OK. Would you be interested in visiting Estonia now, in the near future?*

I5: Uh yes, maybe. Especially, I think, if... Let's say, some of my Danish friends would visit me in Latvia then I would probably try and show them a bit of Tallinn as well, just like as part of one trip.

*R: And why?*

I5: Because I think the capitals are kind of close to each other and I think it could be like a good tour. And also, I think that the old town in Tallinn it's... Yeah, It's somehow... Just the style is quite different, I think, from Riga. So yeah, I think it's something I would like to show to people who are not from the Baltics.

*R: OK. So you would recommend to visit Estonia for others or?*

I5: Yes. (a bit hesitant?)

*R: And what would be your reasoning for the recommendation?*

I5: Well I think, I would actually... Well, as I'm a student and my friends are also students, I would also say that, you know, it's cheap and like the city's a nice place to go out and... Oh yeah, I haven't mentioned this, but also safe. That's a big thing.

*R: And safe in which ways you mean?*

I5: Well, I think it's safe for tourists. I never heard, you know, of like any problems for tourists in Estonia. Meanwhile, I think some Western Europeans who haven't been to post-Soviet countries, they might be thinking that it's somehow dangerous although it might be actually safer than their own country. (giggling)

*R: Okay. And I'm gonna show you a little video.*

\*introducing the video\*

*R: Now I would ask that have you heard about this event before?*

I5: Yes, because in Latvia we have the same.

*R: And did you know that there's also the same in Estonia as well?*

I5: Uh, yes, I had seen it from some documentaries about the 90s, they also showed Estonia and the singing.

*R: OK. And what are your thoughts about this video, first of all, and then then about the events?*

I5: I think it was very nice. Especially in the beginning, that if you're even a person who lives in, I don't know, South America, and maybe has never heard about Estonia... It will show them the place on the map and some brief introduction to history. But also, I think maybe the video

could do more on the side of kind of inviting people to join if it's aimed at the foreigners. And to understand it's not some kind of nationalist thing. That it's actually, you know, it's like a celebration where everyone can join.

*R: Yeah and what do you think about the event overall?*

I5: I've been to this kind of event once and it was certainly amazing experience.

*R: And what made it amazing?*

I5: Yes. I just think the amount of people and how authentic it this with the costumes and also the sound... It's just... you can't compare it to a concert. It's phenomenal.

*R: And do you think foreigners should be invited to join this event?*

I5: I think yes, because it's something very unique. And also, it's a side of Europe that, I think, in a lot of European countries is not maybe maintained that much. So, I think that maybe a lot of European countries, the folklore is just like a small niche. But yeah, in Estonia and the Baltic countries, it's like still part of everyday life.

*R: OK. And then does this event somehow affect your perception about Estonia or Estonians? Or the tradition then.*

I5: I mean, it's hard to say because I know it. Probably I could answer better if it was something new.

*R: But do you think that the fact that we have this kind of tradition somehow shapes Estonians then to be some kind?*

I5: Yeah, I think maybe I would associate it with being more passivist.

*R: Why so?*

I5: Because I think it's very like... Also, when it was used when breaking free from Soviet Union, it's like a form of non-violent resistance. It's a very... It has been very uncommon through the world. So yeah, unique in that way.

*R: But do you think that now, like in today's world, you would somehow associate it with being passivist?*

I5: I think a bit. But maybe also a bit with being nationalistic.

*R: And is it in a good sense or..?*

I5: I don't know. I think, it depends... I think in the context it is a good thing. Because the country has so few people and yet so rich traditions. But I don't know how people from bigger countries would perceive it.

*R: OK. And would you want to visit the Estonian version of the event or...?*

I5: I think yes, that could be quite interesting. I think the songs are quite different. So I'd love to hear more of them.

*R: Mhm, OK. Now I'm going to ask a bit more about the nation branding and not specific to Estonia. So, like, is it important for nations to brand themselves and why? So that they... and not again, not focused on tourism only but overall to change or alter the perception among other nations...?*

I5: I think yes.

*R: And why?*

I5: I think because if they don't do the branding consciously, you know, some things that end up on news will do the branding for the country. And then it's much more unpredictable and it might not be, you know, that good.

*R: Yeah. OK. And then which kind of nation brands would be inviting for you? Like if you would think of a country, like if it would have these kind of things, then...*

I5: Denmark! (laughing) No, I mean totally. I think when I made my decision to move here I was actually influenced by the nation branding, even if I wasn't aware of it. And, you know, also the first time I came here, it was around the time when Bernie Sanders was running for election, so he was actually kind of also promoting Denmark. So that made me look more into the idea of welfare state and start reading more about Denmark. And usually, you know, it would say things like, yes: welfare state and equality and... Appeal to a lot of my values and interests. But now when you're asking me these questions, I realized actually a lot of it might be branding. Also, even when Denmark is shown as an example for like work-life balance. I don't think that, you know, it's just completely unconsciously that it has happened, that people somehow noticed the good work-life balance. (laughing)

*R: Yeah. So you would say, for you, it's like kind of towards politics then? Like if you talk about the equality or so? Or like the society or people, kind of these things, you would mention which would be appealing to you?*

I5: I think a bit of both. For visiting it would be more society and culture. But for making like a choice for where to live, it's also political.

*R: Okay then now, what do you think Estonia should or could focus on when creating their brands?*

I5: I mean it's hard to say because, you know, I've seen and heard mostly like positive things. But maybe just to focus more on the activities that are available to people when their visit.

*R: Do you think that song celebration should be used to brand Estonia in any sense?*

I5: I think like directly it would appear to a smaller target group, so maybe people who are interested in folklore in general or like singing in the choir or something. (laughing) But... It's hard to say because I think that the direct target is quite small but it can probably maybe, you know, sort of help like, in creating this... Kind of like a mysterious image maybe? That also, I think, was done quite well in this clip.

*R: So you think, if Estonia would use it, then it's more like towards some certain niche of people who it would spark interest in? So it wouldn't be something that an "average Joe" would be interested in?*

I5: I think maybe for people who would visit Estonia just for this event, those would be like a small group. But probably, you know, it can be used somehow, just to create this overall image: that there's this intact country with old traditions.

*R: And how do you think that would change the perception of Estonia? Like you already mentioned that it's more like... The last sentence you said: that it's preserving its traditions. What else that could make... or change in the perception of Estonia?*

I5: Well yes, maybe emphasize also like the new and like technological side. But then again, I think that is something that is already happening just through the news.

*R: And do you have any ideas how Estonia could use the song celebration to brand the Estonia? Like should it be more on like a political level, like that the heads of countries should brand it or should it be more like sharing in social media or like event level?*

I5: To attract visitors or to just create just a great image?

*R: Just create the image.*

I5: It's hard to say. I would say that the event level like maybe social media level but then... I don't know. I think it depends on the perspective because maybe I'm not the kind of person who, you know, I wouldn't follow some political events or you know, some United Nations representatives or something like that. Yeah. But maybe people in an older age group, they would follow that more.

*R: And do you think that younger people and older people would perceive the event differently?*

I5: Mm hmm. Yes, that's a good question. Yes, I think probably. Yeah, I think maybe all older people you view it like through the lens of their own, like an educational or professional background. But the younger people maybe just be curious and they respond to, you know, the first impression about how the event is like.

*R: And then I would also ask, you said something you have like stereotypes about Estonia or Estonians. What would you say as the first stereotypes that..?*

I5: I think a quiet or slow. (laughing)

*R: Yeah. And is there something more?*

I5: No. No, I think like a stereotype, no...

*R: Mhm. And then, overall, like again, taking into account we are neighboring countries, do you think that Latvians feel that Estonia is like their neighbor? Or is it just that we happen to be next to each other but not really connected?*

I5: I think... Yeah, it's also hard to say because of my own background, that I've been abroad for a longer time. So, you know, to me, like these countries, the longer I'm abroad, the more similar they seem and I notice the similarities. But otherwise often, when I look back on how we were taught in school, like the history lessons and so on... So, there was very minimal information. Like also about the this dance and song festival: first time I found out it existed in the other Baltic countries as well was from a documentary, so not from a history lesson. So, I think there's maybe not enough information about like the shared past. And, of course, then there's also the language barrier. That a lot of people maybe think that the Estonians are like similar to Finnish people in that sense.

*R: Right. I can ask that, if you have anything extra you want to add yourself about the topic like any ideas?*

I5: No. Yeah, I think it's hard to say.

*R: OK, then I think we're good. Thank you!*

### 9.2.6 Interview no. 6

*R: OK. To begin with, I would ask basic questions about you: such as your age, your nationality and your profession.*

I6: Yes. My age is 23 and... What was the other question?

*R: Nationality and profession.*

I6: Nationality: I'm from Yemen. And profession: I'm a student.

*R: And now I would ask how often do to travel per year? Approximately*

I6: I would say once or twice. Yes.

*R: And what factors do you consider when you're choosing a destination where to travel to? Based on what do you make your decision?*

I6: Whether if I know a person over there or not.

*R: So you usually travel to meet up with somebody?*

I6: Because you know if you travel to a place where you know someone... First of all, you don't need to you know, AirBnB, so you can just crash his place and he's going to show you around. Like all the different things that you need to see... And that's basically it.

*R: OK.*

I6: That's why I always, you know, when we have exchange students, I always make good friends with them. Sometimes I might need to go to their country. (laughing)

*R: And it doesn't matter how far it is?*

I6: Actually, the proximity does. I mean like... If it's like New Zealand, why would I go to New Zealand? It's just so far. Unless I was like nearby, then maybe.

*R: OK. Have you been to Estonia?*

I6: No.

*R: And do you happen to know anybody who has been to Estonia?*

I6: Yes, I actually know couple of Estonians. You mean like Estonians or non-Estonians?

*R: Non-Estonians.*

I6: Non-Estonians visiting Estonia... No, then I don't know.

*R: Okay. Now I would ask about the perception of Estonia that you have. If you would need to use three key words that come into your mind related to Estonia, which would they be?*

I6: First of all, digital. Second of all, very small. And third is... white supremacy. (laughing)

*R: And where does your perceptions stem from?*

I6: Mostly like, from talking to people or Estonians. Maybe making some research on the Internet. Yeah, some YouTube videos. Yes. That's how I would get my perception about Estonia.

*R: Okay. And could you describe how you perceive Estonian people? Not like a particular person but like overall Estonians.*

I6: I think that, you know, they can be calm and kind of friendly. I don't know. I mean, I don't have so much Estonian friends but... I think that it's quite similar to, you know, the Scandinavian regions. It could be rather conservative sometimes. Yeah, but from the Estonian friends that I have, they're very calm, cool and very chill

*R: And which way do I mean conservative?*

I6: Like you know, they will never initiate something, you have to go on and make friends with them. You have to go ask them something. They don't just come up to you and strike a conversation like that. But once you get to know them, they're very sweet.

*R: Okay, and what do you think is overall perception about Estonia among your nation? If any? Like if you would mention Estonia.*

I6: Let me see... I don't think that they actually know it exists. I mean, I didn't know that Estonia existed until I came to Denmark. Yeah, so, I don't think there's any perception whatsoever.

*R: Yeah. How did you find out about Estonia when you came to Denmark?*

I6: Yeah... I think the first Estonian friend I had, you kind of know him, his name is Robert. Yeah. I was like: "Hey, where are you from?". "I am from Estonia". "Can you show me on the map where this is?". And then he showed me, I was like "Oh okay." That's how I knew it existed.

*R: And would you be interested in visiting Estonia in the near future?*

I6: Yes! However... I mean, I've seen, you know, couple of videos. I think that the buildings and the infrastructure in Estonia looks kind of medieval, like some Vikings era. That's not really my type. But if I visit Estonia, it would probably be if I know someone over there. Yes.

*R: OK. And now, I would show you a little video.*

\*introducing the video\*

*R: So. I have to ask, have you heard about this event before?*

I6: No.

*R: And what are your thoughts about, first of all the video and then about the event?*

I6: The video was well made. But the event I could see some solidarity. Like, very strong tradition in Estonia. It also captures like how they love their country. Them coming together, celebrating a song that has been established some 150 years ago. That is tradition. And there's like.. The women wearing traditional clothes in the video. What's that called?

*R: It is traditional clothes.*

I6: What is.. What is like specific name for it?

*R: No, we're just calling them traditional clothes.*

I6: Yeah? I just noticed like, throughout the video, all the woman keeping on the, wearing the traditional clothes.

*R: Yeah. Also, men have their own style of traditional clothes. And it depends on the area of Estonia you are from. It's a bit varying.*

I6: Maybe I didn't see... It was more prevalent in the women. The dressing is very modest, I liked it.

*R: Okay. So overall, do you think the values this event carries are important?*

I6: To Estonians? I mean, if they're bringing them together, then yes, no matter what... Like what's the object that's bringing them together. What's the song or culture or even eating food. It doesn't really matter, as long as they are coming together and having a good time. So good for them.

*R: And how does this event affect your perception of Estonia or Estonians?*

I6: Well.. You know, when I first said, you know, describe three words... I said digital, something and then I said white supremacy because I had some talks with some Estonians about the Estonian government. And he just described it like very, you know, nationalist and immigrant hating and so. So, this video shows me that the people of Estonia are actually, you know... Maybe they don't have that kind of view, like hating the... You know, this nationalist like "Oh, we don't want other people, we just want Estonians". They're just like "We can come together and celebrate and have a good time." So it's just like... It gave me the separation between the government and the actual people of this country.

*R: OK. So in a positive way?*

I6: Yes.

*R: OK. Would you like to visit the event?*

I6: Is it in Tallinn?

*R: Yes*



I6: It is just like, only Estonians? Or just like people all over the world?

*R: I guess it's mostly Estonians.*

I6: Yeah. Well, I told you if I know someone Estonia, then why not. If I'm there and this event is taking place, then why not. When is it actually by the way?

*R: It's this year. Because it's actually every five years, the big one.*

I6: Oh like a World Cup?

*R: Yeah kind of. And this year it's in July, the first weekend. So, from 4<sup>th</sup> until 7<sup>th</sup>.*

I6: It's gonna be this year?

*R: Yes. It's a big, 150 this year.*

I6: Wow. So are you going?

*R: I'm definitely going. (laughing) Then, I would come away for a bit from the topic of Estonia and the song celebration and talk a bit more about nation branding overall. So, do you think nation branding is something important? And why or why not?*

I6: Can you give me your definition of nation branding?

*R: I can give you the actual definition which is: "a process by which a nation's images can be created, altered, monitored, evaluated and proactively managed, in order to enhance the country's reputation among a targeted international audience."*

I6: So it's like the country perceive itself to others. What's the question again?

*R: So do you think it's important? Should countries create or alter or evaluate or proactively manage their image?*

I6: Well, if a country is doing something good then they don't really need to, you know, to kind of... to validate themselves to have a good image outside. Let's say for example, in Germany. Back in the... During World War, Hitler did so many things so... He kind of had like a bad impression about Germany but then later, you know, like maybe five years ago, the Chancellor Angela Merkel... She took so many refugees without even thinking about this perception, because she really wanted to help them. And this kind of enhanced the image of Germany to so many outsiders. So, as long as the country is doing it... Like "do you". Like you do your Germaness or your Estonianess. So as long as you do that and it's good, then you don't need to care what other people think about you.

*R: So instead of like nation branding you should focus on constant good acts or good deeds within your nation?*

I6: Yes. It's because, you know, this is like some American shit, you know. They always, you know, they do this Hollywood movies like "oh, America we're the best people in the world. God bless America." But when you actually go there, they ain't shit. (laughing)

*R: OK. Then what's kind of brand would be inviting to? Here I would say that "branding" is if you are doing it proactively or something, but the brand exists anyway. So, for example the perception you've had about Germany, it's like the brand you perceived from them. So which kind of brand would be inviting to you? What should it communicate, the brand to you? So you would think that's a good country?*

I6: Hmm.. I need to think a little about this. (laughing)

*R: Yeah. And this can also include, again, from all the areas: either policy or the people, culture, export brands, tourism.*

I6: You know what, actually, I had a discussion with one of my friends two days ago or something. He asked me that: imagine you go to Japan. And then, you know, all the culture of Japan has been, you know, diversified. So you go there, you see some Chinese culture, some Vietnamese culture, maybe some French culture... That actually can be sad. Because, you know, I actually go to Japan to experience Japan, in my opinion, the Japanese culture. So, when it comes to your question, I think subjective, like very subjective. Like what people look for when they go to other countries.

But when it comes to me, I think, maybe nature could be one of the aspects that could be like an appealing marketing aspect. That I would go to a country. And maybe also if it's a country that I am thinking of living in the future... So I just go there, checked out how is it going and yeah, that could be also another factor. Moreover, it also could be like, all of the policies: how accepting they are to people who come from outside and how convivial and how happy and open-armed they are to people and tourists.

*R: Because, yeah, I wanted to ask about like, checking out the country for a living. Then what would you check out more precisely there?*

I6: It's definitely like the living standards. Yes. So, is it like a country that I can live in and then maybe my kids can grow up there, have a good life. Maybe that's the thing. You know, access to different services. For example, in Denmark, they have amazing services and it's like cashless society, you don't even use... You just MobilePay and all... That's a really good aspects in Denmark. That can tell me something about a country like "Oh it's very developed". My kids can have a good life over here. So, yeah, living standards.

*R: And about the nature then what kind of nature you have in mind, which would be appealing?*

I6: I mean, as long as it's like in Norway, like the Northern Aurora, like the northern lights. Then I don't give a shit. (laughing)

*R: So it should be like that or it shouldn't be like that?*

I6: It should be like that.

*R: OK.*

I6: But like, this nature is only for visiting not for living.

*R: OK.*

I6: Yeah. So, if I go to a country that has like a beautiful nature, it's just for visiting because if I live there, at some point would get tired of it. Like, OK, there's nothing to do here except looking at the tree or whatever.

*R: Yeah. Ok. Then, what do you think Estonia could focus on in creating their brand? Any ideas?*

I6: Maybe... They're actually already doing a good job in digitalization. I've heard like... I don't know, 90 percent of the government is being digitalized and then this e-residency and so many other aspects. That's just, you know, making life much more easier. So maybe they... They are already good on that so just focus on that. (laughing)

*R: Okay. And why do you think it's important to focus on that?*

I6: I think because they are already good at it. So, if you're good at something... Just you know, focus on it. That could be you know, the marketing appeal that can actually, you know, make people to come to Estonia and check like: why is this country the greatest in digitalization. And also, they can remove the cobblestones, that would be amazing.

*R: They can move...?*

I6: You know the cobblestones. Yeah. It's just like, you know, when the road is not flat, it's made of stones.

*R: Oh, yeah!*

I6: Yeah, I don't like that. (laughing)

*R: But that's a medieval city.*

I6: Yeah, that's why I said, just remove that. (laughing)

*R: Oh OK-OK. (laughing) And then... Do think that song celebration should be used to brand Estonia?*

I6: It could be very appealing to some people. I can see that. Because you know... Maybe, like around Europe, they like, you know, going to events, like songs and yeah, festivals. So, if they see that, oh you know, so many Estonians come at one point in time, you know, celebrating the same thing - that could be very appealing to some people. And, yeah. Maybe they can also feel, you know, some of the emotional or the strength of the Estonian people. And then they can like that. Maybe, I don't know.

*R: And how do you think song celebration could affect the perception of Estonia among all nations?*

I6: I mean, it could show other people that Estonia is a very traditional country and they value their norms and culture. Yeah. So, if someone sees the video and expects to go to Estonia, then he should expect that "I'm going to very traditional country and to some people who value their

own culture.” Some people actually like this, you know. As an example, before, you know, I told about Japan. Someone goes to Japan, he also sees the Japanese culture. So, if someone wants to go to Estonia, he will know for sure after seeing the video like “OK. They actually value their culture.” So, it could be a very good point.

*R: So you think it can be either good or bad for some people?*

I6: Not necessarily bad, because I told you it's very subjective. It cannot be appealing to some people. Yeah. So, it's not bad but it's just not for them.

*R: OK. And uh, do you have any ideas, how Estonia could use song celebration to brand itself?*

I6: I mean, the video is quite good. (laughing) Yeah.

*R: So through some social media channels or should it also be tried to be incorporated on the national levels?*

I6: Like how?

*R: So like meetings between heads of Estonia and other nations?*

I6: But that would be weird, you know. The president... You have president?

*R: Yes.*

I6: Imagine like, the president of Estonia goes to America. To Donald Trump, is like “oh we have this song festival”. That would be so weird. (laughing)

*R: Okay, so rather stay on...*

I6: It's like a social event. It's not like some national... It is national! When it comes to Estonia, it's national-wide but other people might not even know about this. So, maybe the best thing is through social media or maybe through Estonian people. Like just you, you telling me: “Oh there's this...” Like a word-of-mouth. Yes, it could be... But this is upon Estonians themselves. Yeah. Or maybe people have already visited Estonia, the festival, who are not necessarily Estonians. They can say: “oh, I have been to this great festival” and they can spread the word.

*R: OK. And actually, now I will ask, do you have any additional remarks?*

I6: About Estonia?

*R: Yeah maybe something to say about Estonia more or maybe about the festival?*

...

I6: It's a democracy, right?

*R: Yes.*

I6: So, maybe one observation I can make is, you know, there are all these different parties.

They win because certain people vote for them. So, you know, the people that we see in the video, the songs celebration... They all have different parties that they support, right? But then when it comes to this national thing, they will stand together. So, maybe that could be one aspect.. As an additional aspect. That they just leave aside all their political views, their agendas and differences and then, they just come together. "We want to celebrate Estonia as a nation via a song." So, maybe if they can do that, then why can't they do it in the government. I don't know.

*R: Yeah. I agree with you.*

I6: If you put that sentence in your thesis you're gonna get a twelve (laughing)

*R: OK, is there anything else?*

I6: No-no.

*R: Okay, thank you!*

### 9.2.7 Interview no. 7

*R: So, to begin with, I would ask the basic questions, just about you: your age, your nationality and your profession?*

I7: So, I am twenty-one years old and I am from Slovakia. I am a student. At Aarhus BSS, a bachelors student.

*R: Yes, and now I would ask, how often do you travel per year? Not including just going home but, travel.*

I7: Right now, maybe about one or two times a year. Yes.

*R: And what are the important factors when choosing a destination? What's key aspects do you consider?*

I7: The season. If I'm looking for some adventure or more just relax because that's often the aim of my travelling. Just relaxing. And I'm trying to visit places that maybe I haven't seen before. That would be what I consider, and price.

*R: Okay. Then. Have you been to Estonia?*

I7: I have not been. Unfortunately

*R: So yeah. Do you happen to have any other personal relations with Estonia? Like you know somebody from there or nothing?*

I7: I know you now. (laughing) No, but otherwise I don't think I have any relation to Estonia whatsoever.

*R: And do you know people who have visited Estonia? Anybody?*

I7: I thought my flatmate visited Estonia but it ended up being Latvia. So, no.

*R: Now, I would ask you to use three key words to describe Estonia? Like what kind of associations you have, it could be like whatever. And you can take your time to think if you want to.*

I7: Well one thing I definitely think about, I'm not sure if it's relevant, but it's part of the Baltic countries. That's the first association that comes. And that the there's.. (carefully) maybe to some extent threatened by Russia, to be taken over. And I just recently heard that Estonia is very advanced in the public administration, if I should call it that way. Compared to Denmark because I already thought Denmark is advanced but I heard Estonia is even more. I heard it from my flatmate.

*R: OK. And like. Do you know where she know from or?*

I7: No, I don't. Probably just read about it somewhere in news.

*R: Could you try to describe how you perceive Estonian people? Even if you don't know, then*

*just, like, if you say Estonian then how do you imagine the Estonian to be?*

I7: (laughing) I don't know, I am very much influenced by you now. But I think they fall.. Do they fall under the same.. like under the same Slavic-Slovak family? Or the like Russia and Baltic countries.

*R: I don't know if I should tell you. (laughing) I should ask you what do you think.*

I7: OK. Well I think they do. Yeah. So, so, therefore I guess I'm trying to relate it a bit to where I come from. That they are maybe similar.

*R: And which sense so?*

I7: So in.. That they are.. Maybe not so closed up as the Danish people are, that they are maybe a little bit more open. And I think, I'm guessing, they're fairly young or new country so they're probably quite modern. That's what I would be guessing

*R: And modern in which sense?*

I7: Modern infrastructure and technology. In that sense.

*R: And what do you think is the overall perception of a Estonia amongst your nation? So amongst Slovaks. Like, if you would say something about Estonia then, how would they react or what would be their perception, if any?*

I7: That's a good question. I think there wouldn't be much because I believe.. No, I'm actually not sure if it's big or small country.

*R: It's a small country (laughing). Yeah.*

I7: So yeah I think they would say that they are maybe a little closed up in the circle of the Baltic countries. And yeah, they have a lot of trading connections there, but maybe not so much with the rest of Europe. But I might be completely wrong.

*R: But what do you think is the reason you know so little about Estonia?*

I7: Because it's maybe a little far away from where I live. And maybe.. Yes, obviously because of the lack of knowledge about the country. And maybe because it's so up North that I'm not expecting the weather to be great there. (laughing)

*R: But would you be interested in visiting Estonia in the near future? And why or why not?*

I7: Sure. Sure. Yes, I will. But I think the reason to visit would be if I knew, to begin with, a bit more about it and had some aims which I will be coming to see. And the reason to not.. If there isn't any good flight connection, maybe that's a reason not to visit.

*R: OK. Now I will show you a little video.*

\*introducing the video\*

*R: Have you heard about this event before?*

I7: No.

*R: OK. And what are your thoughts about, first about the video and then about the event?*

I7: So the thoughts about the video are that it reminded me a little bit of my home country. Not that we sing so much maybe, but the clothing or the traditional clothes and maybe a little bit from the history also. It's very similar.

And yes, I certainly didn't know that the people sing a lot there. That it's a big thing in Estonia. It's very very nice. Nice event. And it must be very strong for the Estonians and and. What's the national language in Estonia. Is it Estonian? Is it similar to Russian?

*R: No.*

I7: OK, yeah.

*R: Is there anything else like about the event? Some associations it creates or? Maybe what values does it communicate to you?*

I7: The nationalism, maybe. It's very much oriented, I think, in building the spirit in.. A strong feeling for the country and holding, like being together through what has happened maybe in the past and what is going on now. I have no clue what they sing about. But but that's what I'm imagining it is about. Yeah.

*R: And are those values important to you? Or..*

I7: Yes sure. I think it's important that every country is very... Holds high spirit and values its own kind. Because... we first started or I feel like we're talking about why people don't know much about Estonia... But I think this is maybe not the way to get more people to come. This feels more like a national event. Not so much attracting foreigners. If that's what you're interested in hearing.

*R: Yes I am interested in hearing that! But why do you think so?*

I7: Because of the language barrier and... Well for some people it's probably very exotic. Some other countries... To see the national clothing and so on. Maybe not so much for me, coming from, yeah, also the post-Soviet occupation. But yes, I don't think they have seen anything like that maybe in more of the Western world. So that might be very big cultural experience for them.

*R: So do you think it shouldn't be used to brand Estonia?*

I7: I would like to see what more is there to it, to be honest.

*R: To the event or to Estonia?*

I7: To Estonia.



*R: And would you like to visit the event? Honestly, just be honest. (laughing)*

I7: Hmm... not too much. I mean of course, but not too much. There is probably other things I'd rather do. Yeah. Also in Estonia.

*R: Yeah. And now, not so specifically about Estonia but overall about Nation branding. So, like keeping your nation on a map, in a way. Do you think it's important for nations to brand themselves?*

I7: Yeah, yeah, I think so. I never thought about it before but yes definitely.

Although we are... I feel we are heading with the European Union... We are heading more towards all being very similar to each other and the differences are maybe disappearing. With every year... But I think definitely countries should, based on what their history looked like, to keep some of their traditions.

*R: So do you think we shouldn't become more unified?*

I7: No, I'm not... I don't want to say that. I am, actually, I am a fan. There are many advantages coming from it. But yeah, it's...

*R: So why do you think that nations should brand themselves? Why is it important?*

I7: For the people living in the country, I think.

*R: And how?*

I7: To feel proud about their country and not just leaving countries. Sometimes that happens that the people from small countries go and study in better universities. Maybe, you could say that like I we did. (laughing) And then yeah, don't come back. Maybe this nation branding could help. Yeah. So that people feel more connected to their countries that they've built in the home country.

*R: Yeah. And which kind of brand would be inviting to you?*

I7: In Estonia?

*R: No, or not now. Like what kind of countries are appealing to you?*

I7: Oh, well... Very developed countries, I think. I like to see the modern technology, the good infrastructure and to.. Yeah. I don't like to see, or I'm not so interested in the countries that they are maybe too stuck on the past. So I like the ones that think always in for the future.. At least that's what interests me. That would interest me.

*R: Is there something else? Or that's the main thing?*

I7: Well then of course nature. If there is mountains so that there is the possibility to maybe ski. And then if there is also the sea, that's nice for summer. If there's good temperatures for that and the regime probably that... Yeah. That there is democracy in the country.

*R: And now, what do you think Estonia should focus on when creating their brand. Or could focus on?*

I7: Well if you ask me, I just told you what I like. So so, maybe the modern thinking if that's how there are oriented... Or yeah, the nature, if there is a nature to show off.

*R: But about nature and maybe also about the modernity... Don't you feel it would be hard to differentiate yourself with it. Because like, many countries have nature? And many countries are modern? Or do you think it could be turned that way that people would still find it appealing?*

I7: It would be hard. Probably not impossible. As you say, to not just go with what everyone tries to present themselves with. But then there's maybe the risk to, yeah, have these aspects forgotten about the country.. And maybe then it's hard to compete with the other countries. But it also very much depends on what people are interested in when they want to travel. But I would say the nature and yeah, the modern city would be maybe what appeals many people.

*R: Mhm. And now I will go back to the song celebration again for a bit. And I would ask that, does this event affect how you perceive Estonia or Estonians in any way?*

I7: A little bit. Well, especially because I didn't have a clear picture of Estonia beforehand. I think I am feeling now that Estonians are very nationalistic. And they hold together. And yeah, they are building this awareness from the young age. I could see on the video there is also young people there. And yeah, this was only a very small aspect of Estonia. I don't know, I really think there is more to Estonia that I didn't have a chance to see through the video.

*R: Yes, yes, of course. OK. You say that you rather wouldn't recommend to use song celebration to brand Estonia but if, then how could this be incorporated?*

I7: Well, it could.. If you had to choose only one aspect to brand Estonia, it would be really hard. Maybe this would be the most unique thing. But I would want to see a bit more variety. So this could be one, about the culture.. The cultural part about Estonia. And then there could be a little bit about how the education goes, how developed is that in Estonia. And then the infrastructure. Yeah.

*R: That's good. Now, I only have to ask if there are any additional remarks you would like me to consider? Or anything extra you would like to add?*

I7: So yeah, the additional remarks about the video is that I feel that the event and the kind of clothing is more towards or.. is more attracting towards the older generation, maybe not so much the young generations. Because, at least where I come from, it's only the old people that wear it and they want to meet up and sing together. And it's yeah, not so popular with the young generations. So maybe that's why I don't think it's THE right way to brand a country.

*R: And what would be the right way then?*

I7: And then the right way would be, at least if you want to attract young people, to look at the modern aspects of the country. So maybe how developed Estonia is using internet for the elections and for all the public administration. I think that is super exciting.

*R: Mhm, but don't you think that keeping traditions should be valued more amongst young people or you just accept that it's going to fade away?*

I7: I could see that, it's a tricky question. That's a good question. If there could be found a right balance. Because traditions are important. Yes, they are very important. But I feel that naturally, we are just moving towards the modern, so that's also important for us, as students and young people. So I think balance would be important. Maybe when you are branding Estonia, a little bit of the tradition and a little bit of the modern.

*R: Okay, perfect, thank you!*

I7: No problem.

### 9.2.8 Interview no. 8

*R: So as first things I would ask for you to tell your basic information like age, nationality and profession.*

I8: Okay. I am 22 years old. I am from Denmark so I am Danish and right now I study history.

*R: Mhm. And now I would ask how often do you travel per year? Approximately?*

I8: Is that foreign travel?

*R: Yes*

I8: Okay. One time per year.

*R: And what do you consider when you're choosing a destination when you travel? Like what are the most important key parameters or?*

I8: Beautiful nature. Because I am a student, it would be nice if it would be a bit cheap. And preferably warm.

*R: Okay. And usually like.. What is the... Is it a combination of these things you've mentioned or if at least one of them is there, then it's fine or how?*

I8: Well it's fine if it's just one of the three things. Yeah. It depends on also what kind of mood I'm in, what season it is. Yeah.

*R: OK. And have you ever been to Estonia?*

I8: No, I have not.

*R: Yes. And then, do you know any people who have been there?*

I8: Um. No. I have a buddy who's going in the winter because he's in the military but otherwise no.

*R: OK. So, the reason why it's going is because in hitting the military and they're not transferring them?*

I8: Yeah

*R: OK. So, if you talk about Estonia now then, what is your perception about Estonia now?*

I8: Right now? My perception about Estonia is that it the best country of the Baltic countries. Yeah. I think it's the most prosperous and the most... the country that looks the most like Scandinavia or the Nordic countries. That's my perception right now.

*R: Okay. And why do you think so?*

I8: Hmm. Maybe because Estonia has such a shared history with the Nordic countries. And

from what I've heard they look a bit up to Finland and Sweden to... Yeah, they want to get there too.

*R: And do you think it's more... Like in what terms it's like a Nordic country? In terms of people, culture and, economy or...?*

I8: Mm. Yeah. In terms of prosperity and... What is it called? Welfare. Yeah. And then of course the people and culture also. Yeah I hear they have a bit of drinking culture and.. (laughing) So that's not too bad.

*R: Yeah, okay. So, if you would need to use like three keywords to describe Estonia or like three associations you have? It could be whatever, like from some brand or something about politics or people or their culture. Then what three keywords you would... first would pop in your mind?*

I8: Um. I would say, considering the region and recent history that came out of, they are liberal. They... Just give me a second. (thinking) Yeah. And um... Orientated towards the north because history and. Sorry, what was the question?

*R: Like three key words to describe Estonia or what associations come into your mind?*

I8: Oh well I don't... And then I just know. Tallinn.

*R: Mm hmm. And what do you know about Tallinn?*

I8: I know it's uh... Where the Danish flag went down from the sky and it's called the Danish village or something. And that's because I study history. And yeah. And otherwise I don't really know. They have a some Russian minority in Narva. Which is not very good. Uh maybe. Because Russia is... Because of Crimea and such so they need some help.

*R: So um. Most of the things you mentioned at the beginning are more like positive associations. But are there something negative or would you for example consider the Russian minority negative or something else?*

I8: Um. Yeah I would say the Russian minority is a bit negative but that's only because of Putin. And then, I don't know about their Communist time but I know that they celebrate the Germans as liberators. Isn't that true? Maybe. And uh. But you can possibly understand why, because communism was not that bad. Yeah but I don't really have it in the present time any bad association about Estonia.

*R: Mmhmm. Could you describe how you perceive Estonian people? Even if you don't know any, then like if somebody says "Estonian", how would you imagine an Estonian to be.*

I8: I would... To be honest I would actually imagine them to be a bit like the Finnish people. So, kind, aware of personal space and also glad of uh... alcohol (laughing). Yeah yeah. That's. That's right.

*R: Okay. And what do you think is the overall perception about Estonia among your nation so among Danes? Is there any or what kind of?*

I8: Among Danes... We don't really talk that much about Estonia but I think if we do... I think Estonia is a bit like Denmark because it's a small country, there's not a lot of people and because we have a early history of invading Estonia and such, uh, I think the perception is overall good. Also, because we don't think about the communism or we don't think that it's a communist country or anything. So, we think they look a bit like us. Okay. That's positive.

*R: Okay, so you don't or you think you don't perceive Estonia that much as like Eastern-European or like a post-soviet country? Like in the same pot with all these..?*

I8: Not really. It's interesting because um. Like Poland and Hungary and Romania, you think that "oh, East". But the Baltic countries, especially Estonia, you don't really think that much that they were an eastern country. But I think it's because they're also closer to us in some way, closer to the Nordic and. And yeah, the culture.

*R: And would you be interested in visiting Estonia in near future? And why or why not?*

I8: Yeah, I would actually but that's because I heard Estonia is celebrating the eight hundred birthday for Dannebrog falling down the sky and that is this summer. So, it actually could be quite interesting as history student to see that. But also, yeah, it would be an interesting country to look at. Especially Ösel, the large island. Yeah, I think you have beautiful nature there.

*R: So you would be interested in seeing the nature?*

I8: Yeah, the nature, culture and history because that's kind of my thing. You don't really have wonderful beaches so. (lauging)Well maybe.

*R: OK. But about the nature then. Where does your perception about the Estonian nature come from? Just you've seen on Internet or..?*

I8: Yeah and maps. So, I would imagine there's a bit of woodland and you have the some what of the large lake between Russia and Estonia. Uh. Yeah, that's where my mind is made from.

*R: OK. Now I'm gonna show you a video about one Estonian event and then I will ask later on. Yeah.*

*\*introducing the video\**

*R: You have not heard about this event?*

I8: No.

*R: Okay but what are your thoughts about this video or about this event?*

I8: I think it's amazing. Uh yeah. A lot of people come together and just sing and.. that's pretty amazing actually. Uh yeah.

*R: Just because of the amount of people or what makes it amazing for you?*

I8: Both the amount of people and the way that he described it in the video, that you can just come and experience it. Because it seems like obviously the song is important to Estonians and

something national but the way he talks about “you can come and not be Estonian to still get this feeling and just it's an event.” Yeah.

*R: Mm hmm. Does this video or events somehow affect the perception of Estonian or Estonians for you?*

I8: Mm hmm. Yes, it does. Um because I didn't know that Estonia was so self-aware about their national identity. Uh. And I also saw they had a lot of folk costumes and uh. Yeah. So that was actually quite interesting. Also, the blonde girl at the start and the end is like Estonian girl, maybe. I don't know.

*R: Okay. And are there like some other associations or like some traits that come into your mind or... Something regarding this video or regarding this event?*

I8: Some traits. Uh. I'm not really sure. Actually. (laughing) No I don't, I don't think so.

*R: Would you like to visit the event? And why or why not?*

I8: Yeah. I would like to visit the event just to experience and hear. Because it's a lot of people just hear the amount of people. Because we don't have that.. it's not a concert I know.. but we don't really have these large concert or events where people just sing together. And uh yeah. It would be amazing to experience that and then, experience how the Estonians kind of worship their culture themselves and compare it to Denmark.

*R: Mhm, OK. Now I'm gonna ask like not specifically only about Estonia but overall, about the concept of nation branding which is not the same as destination branding. The destination branding is more that you would attract tourism but nation branding is including all kinds of perceptions of every area including tourism but just what do you think about the people and what do you think about the culture and what you think about the policies, politics and so on. So I'm asking, do you think it's important for countries to focus on their nation branding? And why?*

I8: Yes, I would say that it's important for a country to focus on their nation branding because in a more globalized world it could be a little bit different to know “okay what's the difference between England or Scotland” for example. So, I think it's important. And also, because if you try and single out why you are different from the others, it can both be in a good way or a bad way, depending on where you stand. But in terms of economics, you can make some money. By saying, like Denmark “Oh we're the happiest people in the world”. We're no longer but yeah. So yeah, I think it's important as long as it does not come to a crazy national...Too nationalized spirit. That, I think, could be a bit dangerous

*R: And how it would be dangerous?*

I8: Uh well yeah we've seen in in history. That uh. Some terrible things can happen if you do that. So, I think it's important to explain why one's country is different and special but still remember that you are one amongst many.

*R: And are there some countries that you feel that..or some type of countries let's say.. you feel that should focus on it more than the others?*



I8: On nation branding?

*R: Yeah. Or is it just that everybody should pay attention to it?*

I8: Uh well I think that if you take the Eastern countries, the former Soviet bloc, they have a more.. I think they have a more need to do it because it's recent they got their independence, so they need to establish himself in the Western countries. It's perhaps not as needed there because we did not experience that trauma through generations.

*R: Then, what kind of a nation brand would been waiting for you?*

I8: In terms of Estonia?

*R: No. Right now overall.*

I8: Well because I studied history then of course history. And so history, nature and some sort of modernity. That you so show that you and your country are modern and not a setback. Oh, I think also, actually... Ecological or environmental. That you show that, well we're not just throwing things in the sea or something like that. So, yeah, that's probably what would matter to me.

*R: But some of the things, like for example history or nature maybe to some extent, that you mention is something that like a country cannot create itself really now. So do you think like it's just important that the countries would focus on communicating these messages from the past or like about future then more so people would know about the beautiful nature or the history more so they would be more interested in visiting those countries?*

I8: Oh. Come again?

*R: Yeah. So basically I'm saying that, in terms of like nation branding, history is something you can't really change. So. What you mean that a nation brand, which has interesting history, means that they would communicate the messages of history. Do you think that's important for a nation brand?*

I8: Yeah because a nation is... How do you say... a nation is there because of some history and maybe not all countries have interesting history... But, yeah, it's just because I like history and.

*R: Okay. And now back to Estonia then. What do you think Estonia could focus on when creating their nation brand? Or should focus on?*

I8: Um. Well I would focus on the singing. (laughing) Because it's lovely. And some of the folk costumes, some tradition. And maybe the struggle for independence. Because they were under Sweden and then Russia... I think, I believe. So, if they can brand how they affected the country or what they brought to Estonia. And then, yeah, I would focus on the nature because... What did they say, 3.1 million people pehaps?

*R: 1.3*

I8: 1.3?? (surprised) Oh, that's not a lot of people. In case of that, it is a huge country for one point three million. So. there must be some sort of wildlife or something that you could play



on and have some nature experience out there. Yeah.

*R: But like in terms of nature, there are many... or not many but there are some countries still out there, which also have a beautiful nature. So, do you think it could be still something that is differentiating Estonia from others?*

I8: Um if Estonia's nature is different than others and special... Uh. Yeah, I think naah. It probably reminds about some of the nearby nature like Finland, Russia or.. What is it, Latvia? Yeah, but if you could somehow sell it like the islands and... (thinking) Yeah, that's actually a bit tricky. (laughing) Maybe play on that that Estonia is a modern and safe country which has a lot of beautiful nature. You can go hiking or swimming in the lake or maybe canoeing or something.

*R: You kind of already answered that but do think that song celebration should be used to brand Estonia and why should it be used?*

I8: Yes. Because, as mentioned in the video, it's something that the Estonian people are obviously good at. So why not go along with that and especially, events which thousands of people singing is something extraordinary, I think. And it's on a voluntarily basis and that I think is important because in China you can maybe have millions sing but they are more or less forced to. So I think it's important that it voluntary event. And, yeah, it looked really nice.

*R: Before you answered it like from your own perspective but maybe you can think like in broader perspective, how could song celebration affect the perception of Estonia like in... world's eyes, kind of. Or could it?*

I8: I think it could. I think it could make Estonia a more... a country you would then think about that is joyful and happy because singing is usually happy. So yeah, I could imagine that some people would say... Would think about the Eastern Bloc as not a place you would go. I mean, just my parents they were like "Well we're not going down the east, we're going to stick with West: France, Italy on holidays" instead of the East, which is a shame. But if you use singing to show that you are happy. And as long as it does not come up as "we do it is because we have to". like in China because there's a bit of propaganda there. So as long as you show it as voluntarily and modern and safe, I think it would work.

*R: And do you have any ideas how it could be used to brand Estonia?*

I8: As how to do the marketing or what?

*R: Like, what would work for you? Like for example seeing this kind of video or just like people more talking about it somehow or seeing more it on Facebook or do you think it should be on a national level that heads of Estonia on meetings with other countries would introduce it more or...?*

I8: Um hmm. I think it would work if it was televised somehow. And if you then after the ad show some cheap flights because everybody loves when it's cheap and you probably have... uh I don't know, but you probably have some more cheaper stuff in Estonia than in Denmark. Maybe? Yeah. So, I think that would attract some people. Especially young people. And yeah, maybe then on social media if that's the target group.

*R: Do you think young people and older people would react similarly to the event? Or do you think there would be any difference in that?*

I8: I think there would be a difference because our parents have grown up in the Cold War era. And I think, even though the borders are now completely else and Estonia is a member of EU and NATO, I think this is some kind of thing in their minds, their upbringing, that told them “the East is bad, the East is bad, don’t go to the East”. Whereas, us young people in a more globalized world and we haven't experienced that, we maybe think “OK. It's an alright place”. But I think we are still somehow influenced by our parents. Even though we maybe shouldn't be because it's. Yeah...

*R: But how do you think then that the song celebration would... Like, for example your parents, how would they perceive it differently than you?*

I8: Uh. It's uh. (laughing) They would maybe perceive it as...

*R: Or maybe not they precisely but their generation.*

I8: Oh, okay okay. Um well maybe they will see this a bit like a propaganda maybe, for Estonia. Whereas young people think that Estonia is a Western country and therefore it should not be propaganda. And. So. Yeah I think that and also uh... I don't know. It's a bit tricky because we don't really have these large events in Denmark where people come and just gather. So, I don't know if that's a good answer.

*R: Yes, it is! And now I only have to ask if you have anything else you would like to add regarding the topic.*

I8: Something I would like to add about Estonia?

*R: Whatever around about this topic we have been discussing?*

I8: Hmm. Uh. Not really. Just the case about travelling. Uh you know, with flight or with ship. Because you don't, we don't really see ads for Estonia or the Baltic countries in any case. And so it's a bit foreign world, actually. I think. I didn't really know much about Estonia, I don't really think that much about Estonia unless it's in a history context. So yeah, I think Estonia could use a bit more branding and I think Estonia definitely has a potential, traveling potential.

*R: I actually came up came up with one question now because you're a Dane. So, regarding Danske Bank, have you heard about this? And has this any way shaped your perception of Estonia?*

I8: Oh yeah, actually a bit. (laughing) because.. It's good you mentioned it, I forgot it.

*R: Yeah, that's good that you forgot it. (laughing)*

I8: Yeah. Regarding that case, Estonia is perceived as a a bit of a more eastern country again. Like they are a bit dirty, you know. And yeah. I think so. But I think again most Danes are more or less over because there's a lot of banks that does this now. And even our tax returns are shit. So we're used to throwing money everywhere. (laughing) Yeah, it's not good.

*R: So, you think like the... whatever perception came from there now is more temporary?*

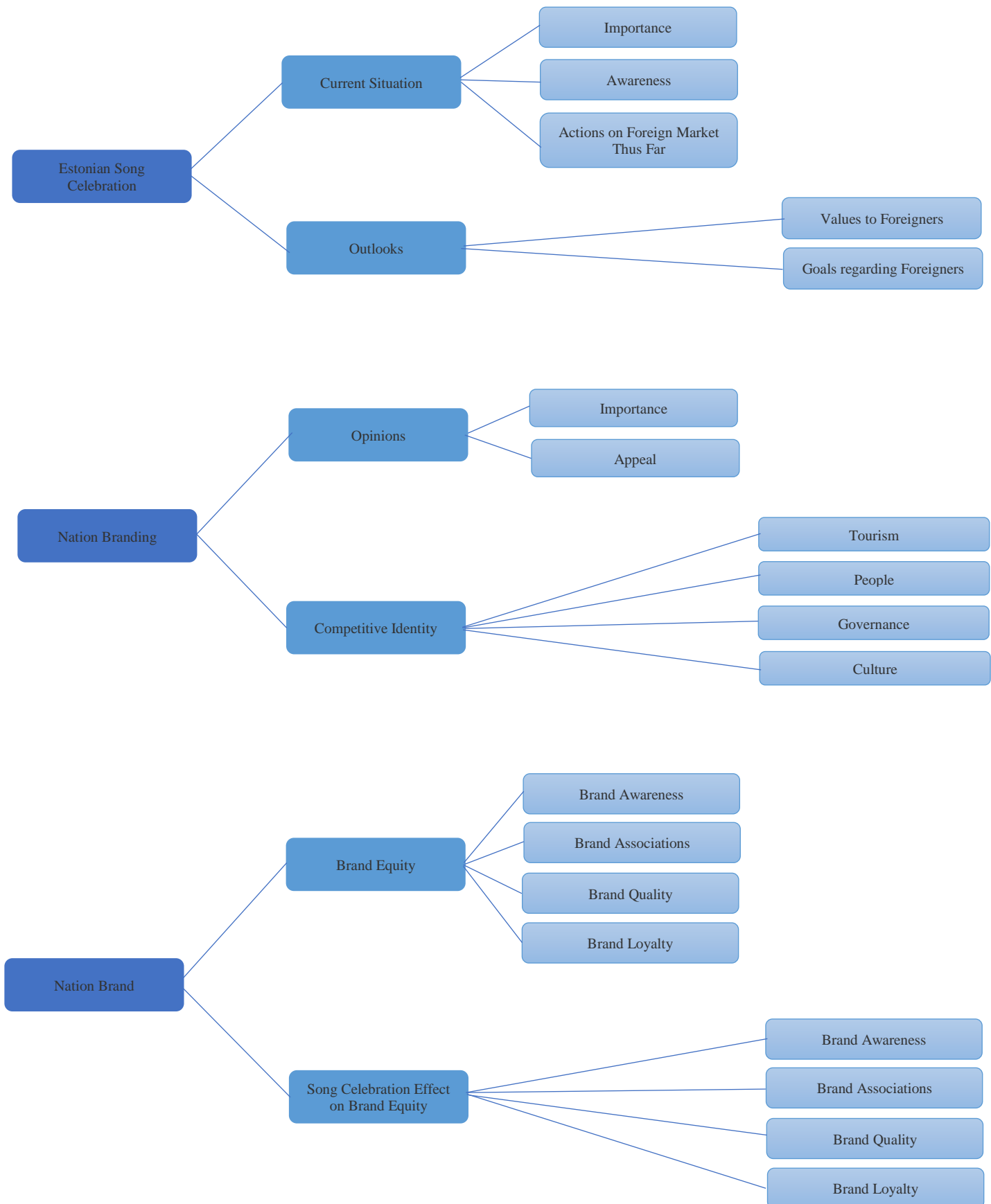
I8: Well, I think it's temporary, yeah, because also with the Panama Papers and you can hide money in like Switzerland, for example. So, I think it's temporary. And I think, yeah, Estonia might have to maybe explain why they are a good country and tourism-friendly and all that, just to break down some of the prejudice some people may have. Yeah.

*R: Okay. And now I ask you again if there's now anything else you would like to add.*

I8: Oh uh no I don't have anything.

*R: No? It's all good. Thank you!*

### 9.3 Coding Tree



## 9.4 Coding List

Name	Demographics
Interviewee 1 (I1)	male, Communication Manager of Estonian Song Celebration
Interviewee 21 (I21)	female, Project Manager of Brand Estonia
Interviewee 22 (I22)	female, Project Manager of Brand Estonia
Interviewee 23 (I23)	female, Marketing Manager of Brand Estonia
Interviewee 3 (I3)	male, Dutch, 21, student, has been to Estonia and Song Celebration once
Interviewee 4 (I4)	female, Finnish, 23, student, has been to Estonia several times
Interviewee 5 (I5)	female, Latvian, 23, student, has been to Estonia several times
Interviewee 6 (I6)	male, Yemenis, 23, student, has not been to Estonia
Interviewee 7 (I7)	female, Slovak, 21, student, had not been to Estonia
Interviewee 8 (I8)	male, Danish, 23, student, has not been to Estonia

1 Estonian Song Celebration		
1.1 Current Situation		
1.1.1 Importance		
	<i>The Song Celebration is a grand event both in choir music and in music overall. It seems that choir music with its 'bit "joint action day" kind of setting suits well for Estonians. The Song Celebration has been developing together with Estonia over the past six-seven human generations. The tradition began in Estonia's first awakening, which means that it has got fixed in the cultural inheritance in a way which is then probably suitable for this place. And with Song Celebration, we often talk about how it is not only a grand event in choir music but also carries important values in itself and presents them in a very natural way, making it easy for one to resonate and relate.</i>	I1
	<i>I believe that Song Celebration is a part of Brand Estonia in every sense – it is our cultural heritage, part of our culture, which is also a part of brand Estonia.</i>	I21
1.1.2 Awareness		
How well-known is the Song Celebration among foreigners?	<i>This is very hard to say. I think that as a small country like Estonia, there is a lot of room for raising awareness and probably, when around 30 years ago the Singing Revolution with its uniqueness made the Song Celebration a bit more noticeable, then in today's world, in terms of recognition and awareness we probably compete with e-Estonia image, which has been Estonia's main message to outside for the last years, decade or more. This means that, unfortunately, it is not... Just like about Estonia overall, there's not too much awareness.</i>	I1
Target groups	<i>This is related to the overall communication Estonia is engaged in. It is clear that one of our separate target groups is choir musicians who have their own unions and world organizations, through which probably this Estonian choir music event, the Song Celebration, is definitely a well-known and recognized phenomenon amongst world's choir musicians. But in other terms I think the awareness is related to the other activities of Estonia. For example, if we look at in my opinion relatively good relationships with Japan through our cultural ambassador Baruto, then we can see that there's also interest towards the song celebration tradition in Japan. I don't know how big or remarkable but still there's quite a few of inquiries from Japan.</i>  <i>Definitely our nearest neighbors, Latvia, Finland, know about Song Celebration. Then again, unfortunately, I think there's work needed to be done in Sweden. I don't know about Denmark, that's a bit further. Fortunately, the relationship with Russia has gotten better so during the last two celebrations, there were also collectives from Russia participating. But this is also work undone.</i>  <i>There's also interest of course in the countries, where there's an Estonian community: Australia, Canada, North-America and elsewhere. This helps the interest to remain. And overall, USA has been our good partner so there's quite a big interest for this tradition from the USA.</i>	I1
How many foreign collectives participating?	<i>Well, it is impossible actually to do the statistics. I cannot really say "the average" but the rule of thumb is around three-four collectives in each type of choirs. But that can vary across types. Of course, let's say, there can be more collectives among adult collectives and less among younger collectives.</i>	I1
1.1.3 Actions on Foreign Market Thus Far		
	<i>Our main focus for the organizers of Song Celebration, in the communication team, has been on developing cooperative relationships with foreign representatives, creating ties abroad and maintaining them with the foreign press. Thus, we have done everything to tell the story of Estonia to the wider public, using world's media channels, mass media channels. In addition, of course all smaller practical actions, such as an English website, English social media and everything like this. But our main focus is still for Song Celebration to be an ambassador of Estonian brand or a messenger of Estonia elsewhere in the world and we haven't put so much effort into sole ticket sale, as the number of tickets is limited anyway, right. So still, to introduce the story of Estonia wider through Song Celebration, using mass media.</i>	I1
Biggest success/ accomplishments regarding foreign markets	<i>We have succeeded in drawing attention in the biggest media channels of the countries in our focus: Deutsche Welle, BBC, New York Times, just to bring some examples. And to measure the success in the numbers of readers then these bigger channels are probably important.</i>	I1

	<p>And further, there are some permanent correspondents emerged, which is an accomplishment in itself. Journalists, who keep on coming back here, finding new nuances and wishing to broadcast the movement of Song and Dance Celebration to their countries' media channels. Also, this, I believe, is an achievement because work with media and especially with foreign media requires a constant effort. The problem with Song and Dance Celebration, similarly to all the festivals is the cyclicity: there are a lot of topics within a short time frame and then we're out of the picture for a long time again – we don't have much to offer.</p> <p>Luckily, there are people in Estonian foreign communications who are dealing with these topics and here, I also really have my hopes up for StratComm bureau created by the Estonian Government. So, through this, that kind of conscious action with foreign media channels grows and becomes more and more acknowledged.</p>	
Overview of the awareness	Well, the globe is so big, so how can you measure that. Probably organizations engaged with Estonian brand have more information about how much and in which areas Estonia is known, and I think the answer is that not really. Probably also the Brand Estonia team focused on some certain markets so probably the awareness is still very fragmentary.	I1
<b>1.2. Outlooks</b>		
<b>1.2.1. Value to Foreigners</b>		
	<p>Well, I think that one of the main values of Song Celebration is its uniqueness. Before the last celebration we signaled foreign media talking about terms like 25 years from the fall of Berlin Wall. This is maybe the most genuine and obtainable... kind of unexpected manifestation of democracy... Choir music, also dance and movement are international messages. They are very easy to understand. With the commitment which comes from the stage, they carry such clear and easily understandable messages to each spectator a priori.</p> <p>I think when organizing communication, this is a value by itself. Through Song Celebration it is possible to tell the whole story of Estonia in a very concentrated and easy way. Because with the Song Celebration we actually celebrate years passing by from the end of slavery, around almost 200 years now. And this shows the story of development, the efficiency, the speed of where we have come by today. We started it 150 years ago without a land, without our own cultural education and country but by today, we have break through to be at the top of innovation, being an e-country. This probably says something about us.</p>	I1
	<p>I think it's very hard for internationals to really enjoy that. If the songs are European. No, Estonian. If it was this classic like "It's Raining Man", you know, everybody would sing along. (laughing) That'll be great. And that would attract a lot of like... if you have one of those videos going viral, you get a lot of people going to Estonia. But I think if it was national songs it's very difficult.</p> <p>Well, then it would also be difficult because it's not consistent. Imagine people come for that... If you're depending on the one big tourist flow, I don't know, every two years. In order to get, you need to adjust the whole infrastructure of it. Also, the Internet. It's impossible to text anyone. Just so many people one place. So, that was quite a hell, actually. And there's not even seats to sit on. (laughing)</p>	I3
	I think yes, because it's something very unique. And also, it's a side of Europe that, I think, in a lot of European countries is not maybe maintained that much. So, I think that maybe a lot of European countries, the folklore is just like a small niche. But yeah, in Estonia and the Baltic countries, it's like still part of everyday life.	I5
	I feel that the event and the kind of clothing is more towards or... is more attracting towards the older generation, maybe not so much the young generations. Because, at least where I come from, it's only the old people that wear it and they want to meet up and sing together. And it's yeah, not so popular with the young generations. So maybe that's why I don't think it's THE right way to brand a country.	I7
<b>1.2.2. Goals Regarding Foreigners</b>		
Why should Song Celebration try to reach the foreigners?	<p>Song Celebration should be used more to reach foreigners because it's such an outstanding, even in a global way... I think it is working well and it is non-political, neutral narrative. I believe that the public of Estonia relatively agrees that through Song and Dance Celebration and through this part of the culture we introduce, show ourselves to the world. It is important for Estonians. I believe that finding whatever other Estonian brand, we probably just avoid the existing brand. Song Celebration has become something with its 150 years, after all. I think that's one of the reasons.</p> <p>Another reason is that Song and Dance Celebration movement is something that is happening all the time and thus, it is an easy tale to tell. In addition to those frames and pictures and emotions from the celebrations themselves, it is practically possible at any given point of time to introduce Estonia through choir music, folk dance and through this culture. It is happening all the time: there's choir concerts, on very high levels, performances of our very good choirs, in very important venues. Through this, this resource is easily accessible and that's another reason, I think.</p> <p>And I am not yet even talking about bringing the journalists or drawing the attention of the public to Estonia during the Song and Dance Celebration. In that sense, it is a moment when really everybody is here, one does not need to artificially create anything but really: people of culture, politicians, creative people, just happy people. Everybody's here and together. In a journalistic sense this is a superb moment to ask whatever you want to – there's answers to all the questions.</p>	I1
	<p>I think there has to be both, our own nations side – maintaining the tradition, carrying it on but also for foreign markets it is a very attractive kind of event and a reason to invite people here. It is one reason, maybe, why some people want to come here.</p> <p>Already the perseverance and the maintaining of the tradition. It is a remarkable fact, right. If we're celebrating 150 years, then it's something remarkable to mention outside of Estonia.</p>	I21



	<i>I think also this is good, that it brings more tourists to Estonia, brings along economic benefits too...Also, the values and its' nature is something which is probably admired abroad, then I believe too that song celebration should be marketed abroad. It characterizes us in one way.</i>	I22
Goal regarding foreign markets	<i>Talking about communication, not tourism. Song Celebration should become one of this integral part of Estonian brand. Creating some sort of communication strategy, then if we make Song Celebration a part of it, we know which ways Estonia could be introduced even further. For example, all these performances of choirs, I repeat, would become a part of Estonian self-image in the world. No matter where and which kind of diplomatic goals or tasks we fulfill here, we would tell the same story in the world. The globe is so big, there is so many people, so focusing on one clear message, we create an opportunity for this message nevertheless to carry a bit further. If we constantly try to find some new messages and ways to make ourselves seen-heard, and ignore what we have – a very good narrative, which connects and represents us, which can be used in all kinds of variances... Then I believe we just waste our resources. So, even bigger concentration, I think, to the same story helps us to tell no matter what kind of stories.</i>	I1
	<i>If we could communicate our messages consciously and well then... Around the time of Song Celebration there are, I don't know how many, but tenths and tenths of similar events: Tartu Song Celebration, Ida-Virumaa Kreenholm manufacture has a song celebration at the beginning of June. So, if a foreigner wants to become a part of these kind of events or atmosphere, then it's possible. The question is how smartly we communicate these messages. Are we saying come to Song Celebration or come to Estonia, become a part of this movement. Once again: there are 7,5 billion or even more people by today in the world and we have 0,0009% of the area of the world which means that they won't fit here any way. Even those who would probably want to come at one point of time wouldn't fit. But if they were distributed across the festivals, then it would probably turn out to be much better.</i>	I1
Target groups	<i>It is important to differentiate that I am speaking from the point of view of the organizer of the Song Celebration and we have our own targets, who we aim for in our communication and of course, our focus in the global sense is mainly the foreign Estonian communities and those target markets, which already show interest towards us. ... We actually don't have the resources or the capacity to work on this brand topic, which is an important topic. The Song Celebration foundation has been created to organize the celebration and after all, the main focus of Song Celebration is our own people, right. Talking about outer communication, then this is only a part of it and it should be focused on by people who deal with it on daily basis.</i>	I1
	<i>We cannot participate in the marketing actions, global marketing is so expensive, complicated and multilayered concept that we don't have any resources for it. We can give inputs and be a good partner for collaboration to all who work on it, but Song Celebration is such a public and grand event that probably the problem isn't in the input resources. We are talking about completely different categories, where we simply cannot participate with our budget. When it comes to input, then definitely. There, we have done everything to be there. We have come to a point where we offer journalists private guides during Song and Dance Celebration, to help them understand what is going on on the stage and explain the background. In that sense, we have created green lights everywhere, have always done so and will continue, so the journalists or Estonian marketers won't have any event left not broadcasted, for whatever reason.</i>	I1
Collaboration with Brand Estonia	<i>We have worked together through Enterprise Estonia different departments and will continue so in the future. Brand Estonia is only a part of it, there are a lot of other organizations there as well. We were included in some of those expert task groups in creating the Brand Estonia. But in other terms, once again, I am afraid that Song and Dance Celebration Foundation goals are a bit elsewhere than Enterprise Estonia's or other organizations', who should or who are working on marketing Estonia to public today. This means, that our main focus is still aimed at this concrete production, organization and execution, here in Estonia. And today, with today's resources, we are basically near to maximum – what we are able to do, we do. And we try to be a good partner to all other organizations.</i>	I1
	<i>It depends on the point of view of the question. Whether we see that Song Celebration could be made as Brand Estonia in visual part... Every event has its own identity but at the same time why not link something, show it similarly.</i>	I21
	<i>I think that Song Celebration could rely upon the same core messages in some topics, that Brand Estonia has proposed. ... One to one, our team does not work currently with Song Celebration team.</i>	I22
	<i>Currently it is already part of the brand, as we have even brought out the fact underneath the culture part. We have this Song Festival where one tenth of Estonian people is together, all singing together. If you are in US, then another thing which is known is singing revolution, when we sang ourselves free in the 90s. Even that is known in some circles, which is interesting. So, it definitely creates value, a part of culture... Tourism definitely uses it in its campaigns, saying "come to Estonia then" to become part of our culture. So, in a way, it is already part of Brand Estonia and I know that many business meetings are aimed to be at those dates to show them the "softer side". So, it's definitely a part of Estonian brand.  Already from its nature it carries a value – just like when we say independent minds – we come together, sing, find those clever ways to feel the unity, sing ourselves free. Or carry on the traditions. I believe that this core message it already carries to some extent.</i>	I23
	<i>What could be implemented is that when Song Celebration is used to brand Estonia then there are parts where Brand Estonia could be used. Because Brand Estonia has been created to introduce Estonia and they always need to start from what country, where do they come from, what is the event and only then they reach to themselves. So actually, is Song Celebration is looking for audience,</i>	I23

	visitors, then it's definitely reasonable and advisable to use Brand Estonia in that sense – to introduce what country you would be coming and listening to.	
	<p>It is clear that every nation has its own story to tell. Lithuanians are proud of their King story, Latvians have their own stories, we have our own. Of course, we all have our own destiny, our own goals we should keep in focus. So, we cannot just jump into this blending pond and melt ourselves into one Baltic nation. It is clear that our goal today is also set in our constitution: to preserve Estonian language and culture, to carry it forward. We definitely need to do that but in a global sense, the marketing of this region is a bit different and thus, it needs to be made clear, what is effective and what is not.</p> <p>Nordic countries, Scandinavia is a very good example of this, they have one common image – the nordicness, design etc. I don't think Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway nor Iceland has lost something in their own image due to this, rather won.</p>	I1
	So, you know, to me, like these countries, the longer I'm abroad, the more similar they seem, and I notice the similarities. But otherwise often, when I look back on how we were taught in school, like the history lessons and so on... So, there was very minimal information. Like also about this dance and song festival: first time I found out it existed in the other Baltic countries as well was from a documentary, so not from a history lesson. So, I think there's maybe not enough information about like the shared past. And, of course, then there's also the language barrier. That a lot of people maybe think that the Estonians are like similar to Finnish people in that sense.	I5
<b>2. Nation Branding</b>		
<b>2.1. Opinions</b>		
<b>2.1.1 Importance</b>		
	Also, as a background info: in Estonia nation branding is very difficult in a way that when comparing to some other countries, looking at how it's done in UK, in Finland, then we see it's very strongly coordinated – either by prime minister's bureau or through foreign ministry. We have Enterprise Estonia and although it does most of the activities regarding branding Estonia in different areas, then actually it doesn't coordinate the country marketing centrally in the country. Which is a question, should it, or shouldn't it?	I23
	But to say whether branding Estonia has been successful is more difficult. It is the question of availability for measurement. Whether it is rising in the good country index ranking or some nation brand rankings, what changes we have there	I21
	And that's why I also continue about Brand Estonia vision. Vision should be a measurable goal. Mission yes – you can say that those three core messages which we have at our webpage. But vision should be measurable, so you reach a destination where you want to be. And for this we can say for example good country index or country brand index – that we grow through these. Good country index is also a very strong brand goal in Finland, as it says something that we give back to society and I think that the e-country image is very strongly related to this. Digital society what we offer for the society something back and in that sense, if we should have something that we agree upon in the country, then I say it would be very good if in good country index we would get to a very high ranking. We have already now raised there rapidly and that shows that we are moving in a direction where we want the image of Estonia to go.	I23
	Do I think it's important? Definitely!	I3
	Yeah I think it's very important. Cause, I mean, in these days. When we're talking about Bali. We don't know Bali that much because of geography class, you know. It's mostly because there's these famous people going to Bali. If people go to Bali because they've seen their colleague, influences just go to Bali. The colleague influencer probably went because they got offered something by a local hotel or something. That is why I think... Bali is not a nation but I think it's very important. And I'm a really big fan of the tourism industry nothing. I think it should be a big focus for any place, any nation. It's good for the economy, especially for Estonia. To have more tourists coming in.	I3
	Oh, I have never thought about that. Oh, I mean, yeah it is probably important. Like people have so strong perceptions about countries. I think it would be sometimes important to try to change those because... I don't know, for example Russia or somewhere. A lot of people have these like prejudice about the country. But then when they actually visit they realize it's completely different. So, it would be important to show like, the other countries that: "This is how we have it. It's not like what you think. This is how it is." So yeah. I do think it is important that	I4
	I think yes. I think because if they don't do the branding consciously, you know, some things that end up on news will do the branding for the country. And then it's much more unpredictable and it might not be, you know, that good.	I5
	Well, if a country is doing something good then they don't really need to, you know, to kind of... to validate themselves to have a good image outside. Let's say for example, in Germany. Back in the... During World War, Hitler did so many things so... He kind of had like a bad impression about Germany but then later, you know, like maybe five years ago, the Chancellor Angela Merkel... She took so many refugees without even thinking about this perception, because she really wanted to help them. And this kind of enhanced the image of Germany to so many outsiders. So, as long as the country is doing it... Like "do you". Like you do your Germanness or your Estonianness. So as long as you do that and it's good, then you don't need to care what other people think about you.	I6
	<p>Yeah, yeah, I think so. I never thought about it before but yes definitely. Although we are... I feel we are heading with the European Union... We are heading more towards all being very similar to each other and the differences are maybe disappearing. With every year... But I think definitely countries should, based on what their history looked like, to keep some of their traditions.</p> <p>No, I'm not... I don't want to say that. I am, actually, I am a fan. There are many advantages coming from it. But yeah, it's...</p>	I7



	<i>For the people living in the country, I think. To feel proud about their country and not just leaving countries. Sometimes that happens that the people from small countries go and study in better universities. Maybe, you could say that like I we did. (laughing) And then yeah, don't come back. Maybe this nation branding could help. Yeah. So that people feel more connected to their countries that they've built in the home country.</i>	
	<i>Yes, I would say that it's important for a country to focus on their nation branding because in a more globalized world it could be a little bit different to know "okay what's the difference between England or Scotland" for example. So, I think it's important. And also, because if you try and single out why you are different from the others, it can both be in a good way or a bad way, depending on where you stand. But in terms of economics, you can make some money. By saying, like Denmark "Oh we're the happiest people in the world". We're no longer but yeah. So yeah, I think it's important as long as it does not come to a crazy national... Too nationalized spirit. That, I think, could be a bit dangerous</i>  <i>Uh well yeah, we've seen in in history. That uh. Some terrible things can happen if you do that. So, I think it's important to explain why one's country is different and special but still remember that you are one amongst many.</i>	18
	<i>Uh well I think that if you take the Eastern countries, the former Soviet bloc, they have a more... I think they have a more need to do it because it's recent they got their independence, so they need to establish himself in the Western countries. It's perhaps not as needed there because we did not experience that trauma through generations.</i>	18
<b>2.1.2 Appealing Brands</b>		
	<i>I think it is important you don't have bad name regarding crime. Because I think when you say a word Chicago then people already know – gangsters and stuff. Or when I say Malmö for example – I don't want to go there because when you read like Vice for example, you see all those no-go zones. Shooting, knifing each other. That's a part of nation brand as well. Or city brand. That plays a major role when I go.</i> <i>It's not necessarily like... I think Finland become the happiest place this year and then Vice also made a very depressing video about it. I think it doesn't do anything about my perception of that place. I think nature is really important and just the lack of crime. I mean, Romania, Bulgaria... The things I've heard about those places... I don't want to go there. Even though it sounds like they have the most beautiful waterfalls... I don't want to go there.</i>  <i>I'm very sensitive for the first headline that you hear. I have to really badly want to go to Bulgaria, for me to go look up "is the crime really there in Bulgaria?". For countries like that, when I hear bad news about it, I'm like: fair enough, then I am not going.</i>	13
	<i>Hmm maybe something with a clean nature and like, being ecological and thinking about the environment. I think that's very important these days.</i>	14
	<i>Denmark! (laughing) No, I mean totally. I think when I made my decision to move here I was actually influenced by the nation branding, even if I wasn't aware of it. And, you know, also the first time I came here, it was around the time when Bernie Sanders was running for election, so he was actually kind of also promoting Denmark. So that made me look more into the idea of welfare state and start reading more about Denmark. And usually, you know, it would say things like, yes: welfare state and equality and... Appeal to a lot of my values and interests. But now when you're asking me these questions, I realized actually a lot of it might be branding. Also, even when Denmark is shown as an example for like work-life balance. I don't think that, you know, it's just completely unconsciously that it has happened, that people somehow noticed the good work-life balance. (laughing)</i>	15
	<i>So, when it comes to your question, I think subjective, like very subjective. Like what people look for when they go to other countries.</i>	16
	<i>But when it comes to me, I think, maybe nature could be one of the aspects that could be like an appealing marketing aspect. That I would go to a country. And maybe also if it's a country that I am thinking of living in the future... So, I just go there, checked out how is it going and yeah, that could be also another factor. Moreover, it also could be like, all of the policies: how accepting they are to people who come from outside and how convivial and how happy and open-armed they are to people and tourists.</i>  <i>I mean, as long as it's like in Norway, like the Northern Aurora, like the northern lights. Then I don't give a shit. (laughing)</i>  <i>But like, this nature is only for visiting not for living.</i>  <i>Yeah. So, if I go to a country that has like a beautiful nature, it's just for visiting because if I live there, at some point would get tired of it. Like, OK, there's nothing to do here except looking at the tree or whatever.</i>	16
	<i>Oh, well... Very developed countries, I think. I like to see the modern technology, the good infrastructure and to... Yeah. I don't like to see, or I'm not so interested in the countries that they are maybe too stuck on the past. So, I like the ones that think always in for the future... At least that's what interests me. That would interest me.</i> <i>Well then of course nature. If there is mountains so that there is the possibility to maybe ski. And then if there is also the sea, that's nice for summer. If there's good temperatures for that and the regime probably that... Yeah. That there is democracy in the country.</i>	17
	<i>Well because I studied history then of course history. And so history, nature and some sort of modernity. That you so show that you and your country are modern and not a setback. Oh, I think also, actually... Ecological or environmental. That you show that, well we're not just throwing things</i>	18

	<i>in the sea or something like that. So, yeah, that's probably what would matter to me.</i>	
<b>2.2. Competitive Identity</b>		
<b>2.2.1. Tourism</b>		
Travelling habits	<p><i>I think around once in every one and a half months. So, around six times a year.</i></p> <p><i>I need a reason, first of all, to travel I think. I think it's only like once or twice a year when I just travel because of the destination, that I like the destination. Most of the other times, I call it more like a necessity or for a business. That I need to have a meeting somewhere or I need to buy leather or something from other place or if I need to visit home or something like that. So, the only two times, three times when I need to find the destination, it really depends on the name of it actually. As in, not just name as in the word, but what's your perception of the place. I don't want to go to, for example Gdansk. It is very cheap to fly there, but it is just the name of it. Like, I know it's a place in Poland or something. There's nothing much to do. But I don't want to go and do research about it. What's fun, what's fun to do. It's already the name of it, my perception of it is really bad. So that's why I don't want go there.</i></p> <p><i>Not just the sound but if I am telling anyone that yea, I am going to Gdansk and Poland, you would be probably like "yeah, just because you found it cheap, right?" So, I think that plays quite a role in that.</i></p>	13
	<i>My perception of the place, yeah. And if my perception is wrong, I'm not really likely to go and change it, I'm not really likely to go and do research about it like "beautiful Gdansk". Do you know what I mean? So, for example something basic like Malta, or places down there, I'm like "OK, sounds good, price is nice, let's go there". But usually I book my flights pretty last minute. Like one month in advance. So, it also really depends on the flight tickets. On the price of them. Actually, I never thought that much about that.</i>	13
	<p><i>Quite a lot because I live in another country. So, I would say maybe like five times I go home. But then on top of that maybe three four trips a year. So, like 9, 10 tops. OK.</i></p> <p><i>Mm hmm. Depends if I want to do like a city trip or like a beach holiday. Mm hmm. Yeah but if I'm going to a city then I usually see that it's OK: it's like big enough, it's not too small. And then there is a lot of nice restaurants and cafes. That's like what I like to do when I travel. And yeah, if it's a beach, nice clear water, a lot of sunshine and... Yeah. I also like to see different cultures.</i></p>	14
	<p><i>Then maybe twice, probably. I think it would be... Yeah, about the activities I can do it there and culture related things especially.</i></p> <p><i>Well normally if I would go, I usually go on smaller, like a city trip, so a weekend trip. So, I would pick a city somewhere in Europe and I would see like what is there... Yes, starting with the museums maybe, more touristy things and ending with some interesting bars and cafes and so on. So, I would just see like what can I explore in the city. And it wouldn't be that often that I go to like hiking or countryside or anything like that.</i></p> <p><i>(usually choose the city and then look up what is there to do there? Or is it the other way) I think maybe it's the other way around because, you know. It's easy, especially, you know, if you for example... If some artist was born in a city like Picasso and then you know that the city might have something related to that and then the other things just somehow come up.</i></p>	15
	<p><i>I would say once or twice. Yes.</i></p> <p><i>Whether if I know a person over there or not. Because you know if you travel to a place where you know someone... First of all, you don't need to you know, AirBnB, so you can just crash his place and he's going to show you around. Like all the different things that you need to see... And that's basically it. That's why I always, you know, when we have exchange students, I always make good friends with them. Sometimes I might need to go to their country. (laughing)</i></p> <p><i>Actually, the proximity does. I mean like... If it's like New Zealand, why would I go to New Zealand? It's just so far. Unless I was like nearby, then maybe.</i></p>	16
	<p><i>Right now, maybe about one or two times a year. Yes.</i></p> <p><i>(Depending on...) The season. If I'm looking for some adventure or more just relax because that's often the aim of my travelling. Just relaxing. And I'm trying to visit places that maybe I haven't seen before. That would be what I consider, and price.</i></p>	17
	<p><i>One time per year.</i></p> <p><i>(Depending on...) Beautiful nature. Because I am a student, it would be nice if it would be a bit cheap. And preferably warm.</i></p> <p><i>Well it's fine if it's just one of the three things. Yeah. It depends on also what kind of mood I'm in, what season it is. Yeah.</i></p>	18
	<i>Yeah, the nature, culture and history because that's kind of my thing. You don't really have wonderful beaches so. (laughing) Well maybe.</i>	18
Visiting Estonia	<i>Yes! However... I mean, I've seen, you know, couple of videos. I think that the buildings and the infrastructure in Estonia looks kind of medieval, like some Vikings era. That's not really my type. But if I visit Estonia, it would probably be if I know someone over there. Yes.</i>	16
	<i>Sure. Sure. Yes, I will. But I think the reason to visit would be if I knew, to begin with, a bit more about it and had some aims which I will be coming to see. And the reason to not... If there isn't any good flight connection, maybe that's a reason not to visit.</i>	17
	<i>Yeah, I would actually but that's because I heard Estonia is celebrating the eight hundred birthday for Dannebrog falling down the sky and that is this summer. So, it actually could be quite interesting</i>	18

	<i>as history student to see that. But also, yeah, it would be an interesting country to look at. Especially Ösel, the large island. Yeah, I think you have beautiful nature there.</i>	
	<i>Just the case about travelling. Uh you know, with flight or with ship. Because you don't, we don't really see ads for Estonia or the Baltic countries in any case. And so, it's a bit foreign world, actually. I think. I didn't really know much about Estonia, I don't really think that much about Estonia unless it's in a history context. So yeah, I think Estonia could use a bit more branding and I think Estonia definitely has a potential, traveling potential.</i>	18
	<i>Maybe play on that that Estonia is a modern and safe country which has a lot of beautiful nature. You can go hiking or swimming in the lake or maybe canoeing or something.</i>	18
Tourism in Estonia	<i>The best and worst... The best was definitely the nature. I really liked it... Swamps and these like... forests, kind of</i>  <i>Yeah, hanging out, walking. There was one two days. Yeah. That was very nice and I went to some sort of like summerhouse kind of thing. Like, campfire, a lot of mosquitoes. But it was really nice. And then we had a little boat, we went on water with.</i>	13
	<i>And what else I really liked, it was probably like the old town. It's really beautiful. It's really... Kind of like Latin quarter over here. Yeah, really like rusty and... I thought it had some beauty to it. But I don't recall any bad things necessarily.</i>	13
	<i>And then we've been with my family because it's very easy to go from Finland. You just take the boat from Helsinki. Takes like a couple of hours. We've been to Tallinn and then once we did like a trip from Estonia and all the way to Latvia, Lithuania. But then Tallinn I've been a few times just for like a weekend trip. Go and stay in a nice hotel. Also, the treatments, like all the spa treatments are a little bit cheaper there so we often make like a wellness trip to Estonia.</i>	14
	<i>Yeah, I think I really liked the old town, visually. I remember that there were some old buildings that would have like cafes or restaurants on two floors. And, you know, back then I hadn't seen that before so I was like "oh, so nice".</i>	15
	<i>I have this impression that Baltic countries in general attract people with services, as they are much cheaper. So, I would guess that maybe yes, going to like... You know, to go to those cities to go out and to some spa center or something like that. It's quite appealing for some people.</i>	15
	<i>... Oh yeah, I haven't mentioned this, but also safe. That's a big thing. Well, I think it's safe for tourists. I never heard, you know, of like any problems for tourists in Estonia. Meanwhile, I think some Western Europeans who haven't been to post-Soviet countries, they might be thinking that it's somehow dangerous although it might be actually safer than their own country. (giggling)</i>	15
<b>2.2.2. People</b>		
	<i>Yeah, and then the night life... When I talk about the night life, it's that people are actually pretty closed. You know, the people were not that open there. Yeah, I might say that maybe Danish people would be more open. Yeah, as a tourist. Not that I talked to anyone, first of all. (laughing) But nobody talked to me either so that it's kind of hypocritical, I know. But I think people are... They respect their own circle, I think. Or that's how it feels like. And a lot of Russians on the street, shady Russians.</i>	13
	<i>I think especially the Estonians, because they're not used to seeing tourists, especially not seen like people with a bit darker skin, that they might be very defensive. That's my perception of it.</i>	13
	<i>Oh, and you guys are very emotionless. Yeah, you guys have no emotions.</i>	13
	<i>(laughing). They are fairly open-minded, they they'll go out of their way to help you out. That goes for any Estonian friend that I have. I can recall like five-six-seven close Estonian friends. Even to the day of today, they would go out of the way to help me out. And almost every single one of them has helped me out with my business as well. In forms of photography, advising... And they will make time, and they will go all the way from Aarhus to Herning, for example, to help you out with it. Yeah, and I think that's a great characteristic. They are humble. Well two of them are not but most of them are humble. And yeah, also very emotionless. That they would not really... It's kind of the opposite of Americans, you know. They are not very loud when they like something and they don't want to express their happiness or sadness. It's usually like "oh, that's okay" or "that's nice".</i>	13
	<i>OK. I think girls are very pretty. Like yeah, very like put up, like nice makeup and nice lashes and that. But I don't really know, guys... Yeah, I don't know. But most of all I think nice people: very laid back. Not too uptight or anything like that</i>	14
	<i>Oh okay, that's a bit of stereotypes. (laughing) But as I think I stated before, they are a bit more like quiet and shy and maybe... I noticed that, I think, often they have like this facial expression, like they're smiling a bit. You know, when I've been to Estonia, I walk down the street and feel like they have like a kind facial expression, just a bit of this smile in the corner of the mouth. So yeah, but like a shy smile. (laughing) And I think for me, it's something that caught my attention because in Latvia we often look very serious and don't smile to each other in these kinds of social situations. (laughing)</i>	15
	<i>I think that, you know, they can be calm and kind of friendly. I don't know. I mean, I don't have so much Estonian friends but... I think that it's quite similar to, you know, the Scandinavian regions. It could be rather conservative sometimes. Yeah, but from the Estonian friends that I have, they're very calm, cool and very chill</i>  <i>Like you know, they will never initiate something, you have to go on and make friends with them. You have to go ask them something. They don't just come up to you and strike a conversation like that. But once you get to know them, they're very sweet.</i>	16
	<i>(laughing) I don't know, I am very much influenced by you now. But I think they fall... Do they fall under the same... like under the same Slavic-Slovak family? Or the like Russia and Baltic countries.</i>  <i>OK. Well I think they do. Yeah. So, so, therefore I guess I'm trying to relate it a bit to where I come from. That they are maybe similar.</i>	17

	<i>So in... That they are... Maybe not so closed up as the Danish people are, that they are maybe a little bit more open. And I think, I'm guessing, they're fairly young or new country so they're probably quite modern. That's what I would be guessing</i>	
	<i>I would... To be honest I would actually imagine them to be a bit like the Finnish people. So, kind, aware of personal space and also glad of uh... alcohol (laughing). Yeah yeah. That's. That's right.</i>	18
	<i>And, of course, then there's also the language barrier. That a lot of people maybe think that the Estonians are like similar to Finnish people in that sense.</i>	15
	<i>Then one could add that a few years ago it was very prevalent that we were ranking high in alcohol statistics – being first in Europe. Also, we were first in rankings of HIV infection. That was prevalent when we did brand interviews. As Finns come to Estonia to drink all the time, we get a image that well, we drink vodka all the time.</i>	121
<b>2.2.3. Governance</b>		
	<i>But right now, with the whole Danske Bank thing. Not in Holland but Denmark they have a perception of... They see the... It's funny because they have like these comedy versions of that and then Estonians are portrayed as like Russian oligarchs.</i>	13
	<i>They're actually already doing a good job in digitalization. I've heard like... I don't know, 90 percent of the government is being digitalized and then this e-residency and so many other aspects. That's just, you know, making life much more easier. So maybe they... They are already good on that so just focus on that. (laughing)</i>	16
	<i>Yeah. Regarding that case, Estonia is perceived as a bit of a more eastern country again. Like they are a bit dirty, you know. And yeah. I think so. But I think again most Danes are more or less over because there's a lot of banks that does this now. And even our tax returns are shit. So we're used to throwing money everywhere. (laughing) Yeah, it's not good.</i>  <i>Well, I think it's temporary, yeah, because also with the Panama Papers and you can hide money in like Switzerland, for example. So, I think it's temporary. And I think, yeah, Estonia might have to maybe explain why they are a good country and tourism-friendly and all that, just to break down some of the prejudice some people may have. Yeah.</i>	18
	<i>I think it's often like this... You know, all this... It's almost also on a gossip level but there are often these stories about some really like... tech success in Estonia or that Estonia has done some very advanced. But also, it was floating around in the news about that e-citizenship. So, I think it usually comes in a positive light. That there is some, yes, I think there's a technological advancement or some political improvement that, let's say, people want in Latvia as well, but they just can't manage to, you know, get it from the government. Mm...</i>  <i>I think it depends on the person. Like for me, I wouldn't say that it's negative. But, you know, sometimes the way the media portrays it, it's like: "Oh, you know, they've already done this. Why can't we do this as well." So, I think it really depends on the person, on the mindset.</i>	15
<b>2.2.4. Culture &amp; Heritage</b>		
	<i>I think the first time I went was for gymnastics. There's a lot of gymnastics teams in Estonia that are very good, and they organized this competition. It's in... where is it now, Tartu? Yeah, so I've been there.</i>	14
	<i>We have so much to offer. In a way, all these different awesome festivals we have here in Estonia – Jazzkaar, Pimedate Ööde festival, Tallinn Music Week and of course Song Celebration and I don't know, Viljandi Folk – we shouldn't be competing with each other but if we would manage to present Estonia more as a cultural or folk cultural destination on a global scale, we all would probably benefit from that.</i>	11
	<i>One could say that we have very good music, very good theatre. Our movies are alright – if you look at "Eia jõulud Tondikakul" – it is a magnificent children's movie which could reach anywhere as a Christmas movie and so on. We have a lot of potential and we should talk precisely about that, not that "come to one event":</i>	11
<b>3. Nation Brand</b>		
<b>3.2. Brand Equity</b>		
<b>3.2.1. Brand Awareness</b>		
	<i>It was barely anything. Like, I did not know what to think of it. It might be a place like Vienna maybe, you know, like an average European city. That's what I thought because I knew it wasn't like a Soviet place, you know. Just a former Soviet. Which it was, it looked like a former Soviet sometimes (laughing). Yeah, I didn't perceive it like that.</i>  <i>Because Estonians never want to be called Eastern Europeans, that's why. There must be a reason behind it. Because you guys always want to be Nordics. (laughing) So I was like, OK, it might not be really...</i>	13
	<i>Oh, I think in Finland, the reason why people go to Estonia is to buy alcohol because it's so cheap. So, I think that was my perception that it's like cheaper to go there but I didn't have any like... how it's going to look like or anything. I didn't have any perceptions before I came</i>	14
Know people who have been to Estonia	<i>No. Nobody. Well I think that I might know like a friend of a friend who might have gone to Estonia. But like, if you ask me what the name is, I'm not sure which one of the five it is.</i>	13
	<i>Yeah, I think everyone in Finland</i>	14
	<i>Well, I mean of course the ones who went on the same exchange program. But otherwise, yes. I think, especially, it is quite common for Latvians to go to Tartu because it's not that far by car. You know, there is this museum and some spa center and all these activities at one place. So, I think most Latvian people I know would have been there at least once. Yeah. I'm not sure about Danish or other. I'm not sure. I've seen some also like... Swedish acquaintances I have posting something from Estonia. So, seems like they go there. Yeah, for the weekend trips or festivals or something like that.</i>	15



	<i>Non-Estonians visiting Estonia... No, then I don't know.</i>	I6
	<i>I thought my flat mate visited Estonia, but it ended up being Latvia. So, no</i>	I7
	<i>Um. No. I have a buddy who's going in the winter because he's in the military but otherwise no.</i>	I8
Awareness amongst nation	<i>Oh, Dutch people, okay. I think most of them don't even know where it is. Like, when I was in Estonia my stories really had like the Soviet sign and they'd like the Russian sign, you know, Russian flag. Like it was a joke but also just people didn't know where Estonia was and I wanted to kind of call, I am near Russia. So, I think, unfortunately, it's less known than you might think in Holland. Like people really don't know. Like, they probably don't even know what's like Latvia Lithuania and Estonia. They know it's out there, but they did not like in which order. They might even think Estonia's the one bordering Poland.</i>	I3
	<i>When I said I'm going to Estonia then people were just like "why?". If I'm going to Malta then people would be like "Oh, nice!". You know, when I'm going to Spain people would be like "so nice", but with Estonia, people really are like "what? What are you going to do there?" People don't see any reason I'm going there.</i>  <i>It's a lack of perception, just lack of perception.</i>	I3
	<i>Like the whole country? I think it's maybe... like because it's almost like in the Nordics, but then it's like not quite. So, it's maybe like a mix of Nordic countries and then like Eastern European countries. I think, like with all the standards of living I would think that maybe it's slightly lower than the Nordic countries. But then like then again like better than what it is in... I don't know, Russia or somewhere.</i>	I4
	<i>Let me see... I don't think that they actually know it exists. I mean, I didn't know that Estonia existed until I came to Denmark. Yeah, so, I don't think there's any perception whatsoever.</i> <i>Yeah... I think the first Estonian friend I had, you kind of know him, his name is Robert. Yeah. I was like: "Hey, where are you from?". "I am from Estonia". "Can you show me on the map where this is?". And then he showed me, I was like "Oh okay." That's how I knew it existed.</i>	I6
	<i>That's a good question. I think there wouldn't be much because I believe... No, I'm actually not sure if it's big or small country.</i> <i>So yeah, I think they would say that they are maybe a little closed up in the circle of the Baltic countries. And yeah, they have a lot of trading connections there, but maybe not so much with the rest of Europe. But I might be completely wrong.</i> <i>Because it's maybe a little far away from where I live. And maybe... Yes, obviously because of the lack of knowledge about the country. And maybe because it's so up North that I'm not expecting the weather to be great there. (laughing)</i>	I7
	<i>But I think they fall... Do they fall under the same... like under the same Slavic-Slovak family? Or the like Russia and Baltic countries.</i> <i>OK. Well I think they do. Yeah.</i>	I7
	<i>Among Danes... We don't really talk that much about Estonia, but I think if we do... I think Estonia is a bit like Denmark because it's a small country, there's not a lot of people and because we have an early history of invading Estonia and such, uh, I think the perception is overall good. Also, because we don't think about the communism or we don't think that it's a communist country or anything. So, we think they look a bit like us. Okay. That's positive.</i>  <i>(perceiving as Eastern-European or post-soviet country) Not really. It's interesting because um. Like Poland and Hungary and Romania, you think that "oh, East". But the Baltic countries, especially Estonia, you don't really think that much that they were an eastern country. But I think it's because they're also closer to us in some way, closer to the Nordic and. And yeah, the culture.</i>	I8
<b>3.2.2. Brand Associations</b>		
	<i>Estonia is definitely a Nordic country. It is a choir music country and a country that values traditions. And another one is that... Estonia is an old country. Unfortunately, in today's Estonia in every sense – the population is ageing and so on... but I meant more the long roots that are standing for ten thousand years at the same place.</i>	I1
	<i>If you take our core message or story, which we want to tell with Brand Estonia, then there are three keywords. That we have clean, untouched nature, we have the most digitalized society and independent minds, who do things.</i>	I21
	<i>I think the positive association is what we are known for – our digital society. That we have our e-country, overall the digitalization where we rank relatively high.</i>  <i>The negative side maybe, which is still following us, is that we are some kind of Eastern European country, not a Nordic country...</i>	I21
	<i>We are related to a cheap labor country basically and that goes along with that Eastern European country image.</i>	I22
	<i>Uh, it's tough to say what a bad thing is. I could feel some poverty, I cannot really recall what it was.</i>	I3
	<i>I think it's really like a hidden gem. That would be one way. And it's very undiscovered and it is a beautiful combination of the former Soviet feelings and like the Nordic influences that it has. You can see Nordic influences in... I don't really remember what it was. But I think the more people, like in the culture of the people but you can also see it's still the old Soviet feelings in there... And in the Nordics, for example, like the Nordic influence maybe like the sauna. Because it's very popular</i>	I3
	<i>I can say the same: cheap alcohol, that's one. And then maybe like history because I think there is a lot more than in Finland, like more old buildings. And I don't know. (thinking) Hmm. Maybe something with the nature or something. Can I just say like similar to Finland?</i>	I4
	<i>Like the whole country? I think it's maybe... like because it's almost like in the Nordics, but then it's like not quite. So, it's maybe like a mix of Nordic countries and then like Eastern European countries.</i>	I4

	<i>I think, like with all the standards of living I would think that maybe it's slightly lower than the Nordic countries. But then like then again like better than what it is in... I don't know, Russia or somewhere.</i>	
	<i>Let's say, yes, like: cozy, calm and nature.</i>	I5
	<i>First of all, digital. Second of all, very small. And third is... white supremacy. (laughing)</i>	I6
	<i>Well one thing I definitely think about, I'm not sure if it's relevant, but it's part of the Baltic countries. That's the first association that comes. And that the there's... (carefully) maybe to some extent threatened by Russia, to be taken over. And I just recently heard that Estonia is very advanced in the public administration, if I should call it that way. Compared to Denmark because I already thought Denmark is advanced, but I heard Estonia is even more. I heard it from my flat mate.</i>	I7
	<i>My perception about Estonia is that it the best country of the Baltic countries. Yeah. I think it's the most prosperous and the most... the country that looks the most like Scandinavia or the Nordic countries. That's my perception right now. Hmm. Maybe because Estonia has such a shared history with the Nordic countries. And from what I've heard they look a bit up to Finland and Sweden to... Yeah, they want to get there too.</i>	I8
	<i>Um. I would say, considering the region and recent history that came out of, they are liberal. They... Just give me a second. (thinking) Yeah. And um... Orientated towards the north because history and... Tallinn. I know it's uh... Where the Danish flag went down from the sky and it's called the Danish village or something. And that's because I study history. And yeah. And otherwise I don't really know. They have some Russian minority in Narva. Which is not very good. Uh maybe. Because Russia is... Because of Crimea and such so they need some help.</i>	I8
<b>3.2.3. Brand Loyalty</b>		
Visiting again	<i>No. Cause I've already seen it, I think, and I don't really have a reason... Maybe if one day I wanna sell my products in Estonia, let's have a look over there. But otherwise I think it's not a high priority for me right now.</i>	I3
	<i>Yeah, I would! I was actually just looking as I'm going to Finland and I wanted my boyfriend, because he's coming with, and then he's never been to Estonia. And then I would like him to go to Tallinn with me. Just to have a nice weekend, like to sleep in a hotel and eat some nice food. Yeah look around, see the old town and all that.</i>	I4
	<i>Uh yes, maybe. Especially, I think, if... Let's say, some of my Danish friends would visit me in Latvia then I would probably try and show them a bit of Tallinn as well, just like as part of one trip.  Because I think the capitals are kind of close to each other and I think it could be like a good tour. And also, I think that the old town in Tallinn it's... Yeah, It's somehow... Just the style is quite different, I think, from Riga. So yeah, I think it's something I would like to show to people who are not from the Baltics.</i>	I5
Recommending to other people	<i>Definitely. Yeah. But you need someone you know. Because, you cannot go to the wetlands without a car. You need a car, you need someone who knows where it is. So, make Estonian friends, step one. Step two, go to Estonia. Not the other way around.</i>	I3
	<i>I think it is a great new thing that people are like "hey, I'm looking for like... I don't want to go to these regular places like Italy or something. I want to visit something cool and I love nature." Of you would consider going to Norway, maybe. I would say, try out Estonia. If you have Estonian friends. (laughing)</i>	I3
	<i>Yes, I would. Tallinn, yeah, especially.</i>	I4
	<i>Yes. (a bit hesitant?)</i>	I5
<b>3.2.4. Brand Quality</b>		
	<i>First one, the nature. It's great. And it's sort of like a hidden gem, I think, in Europe. Cause nobody really has a reason to go to there, why would you, right? And just because nobody goes there... So, you know, people living there, and you can really tell. Like, it's very calm and some places you don't hear anything because it's so far from humanity. It's quite an interesting place to go to, especially when you come from cities. In Holland we live with 8 million people in the same size as Estonia. So constantly, everywhere you are, there's this light pollution. You can't see the stars cause there's so much light everywhere. And people everywhere, so there is a constant noise, like you hear right now, like that, the roads. And in Estonia, there are some places, like the wetlands, you don't hear anything. It's just super calm. And those little towers you can sit in. You have McDonald's over there so after going out (laughing) and it was just really... it was really nice. Really nice and calm. And that's how my perception changed. I did not know it'll be that beautiful. When I came to the nature of it.</i>	I3
	<i>The alcohol is still cheap (laughing). But it is... Like after the first time I went there, I wanted to go again because I really like the... like the buildings are so pretty and I think the culture is very similar to what it is in Finland. I don't feel like it's that different to go to Estonia.</i>	I4
	<i>I remember when we first arrived in Tallinn, we were really impressed by how clean it was. And it was also very cozy, and it had this mix of old and very modern architecture in the center. So, I'd say I had a good impression. It's like a relatively small city and I don't know if it's true but just from the places where we went. But yes, I think it was cozy and clean.</i>	I5
	<i>But also, one thing, by the way, I forgot to say about Estonian people, is that they don't drink that much. But for real.  But Estonians, like, I only saw one Somersby. I mean, like, taking that drink. And the rest was just, I don't even know if they were thinking, they were barbecuing. There was no really alcohol involved. And that's something that's not so former Soviet culture, would make me think that there's a lot of alcohol for everybody.</i>	I3
<b>3.3. Song Celebration's Effect on Brand Equity</b>		

<b>3.3.1 Brand Awareness</b>		
	<i>It was a lot of people, I was like "Shit, man, if there's like 1 million people living in this place, I wonder what kind of percentage is like out of here." Because there was lot of people. A lot of people.</i>	I3
	<i>And yes, I certainly didn't know that the people sing a lot there. That it's a big thing in Estonia. It's very very nice. Nice event. And it must be very strong for the Estonians and...</i>	
Have heard about the event	<i>No never. No. No idea.</i>	I4
	<i>Yes, because in Latvia we have the same.</i>	I5
	<i>Uh, yes, I had seen it from some documentaries about the 90s, they also showed Estonia and the singing.</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	I6
	<i>No.</i>	I7
	<i>No.</i>	I8
<b>3.3.2 Brand Associations</b>		
	<i>They really care about their culture and about the unity and uh... because nobody is forced to go there. Still, there's a lot-a lot of people. For such a small place, I think it's interesting. I mean if you had the same proportion in Denmark. It needs to be some really-really cool event to get such a high percentage of people to go there. I think Estonian people value their traditions. Also, I do remember like, in the voiceover, you know, before those concerts, between those concerts, I think, the voice over... There was this young kid saying like "What an Estonian is? Estonian is blue eyes, Estonian is blonde hair". It actually sounded very like... very nationalistic? Maybe little racist, I don't know. But there's no one there to say, cause everyone's Estonian. (laughing)</i>	I3
	<i>Yeah, I think... Is it just like national... like feeling strong about your whole nation and nothing like religious or anything? Just more like country and being like... I don't know how you say it. Have a high national spirit. Like being proud to be Estonian. Having survived all the difficult times and being strong.</i>	
	<i>Hmm... I don't know like... I didn't know that there's been so much. I never thought about that there's been so much history. Like difficult times. So, I don't know. Maybe changed a little bit. I like strong people, I don't know how to explain.</i>	I4
	<i>Yeah, yeah. Brought like a history perspective to it. That it's gone through a lot.</i>	
	<i>Yeah, I think maybe I would associate it with being more passivist. Because I think it's very like... Also, when it was used when breaking free from Soviet Union, it's like a form of non-violent resistance. It's a very... It has been very uncommon through the world. So yeah, unique in that way.</i>	I5
	<i>(also in today's world?) I think a bit. But maybe also a bit with being nationalistic. (in a good sense?) I don't know. I think, it depends... I think in the context it is a good thing. Because the country has so few people and yet so rich traditions. But I don't know how people from bigger countries would perceive it.</i>	
	<i>I think that the direct target is quite small, but it can probably maybe, you know, sort of help like, in creating this... Kind of like a mysterious image maybe? That also, I think, was done quite well in this clip.</i>	I5
	<i>But the event I could see some solidarity. Like, very strong tradition in Estonia. It also captures like how they love their country. Them coming together, celebrating a song that has been established some 150 years ago. That is tradition</i>	I6
	<i>Well... You know, when I first said, you know, describe three words... I said digital, something and then I said white supremacy because I had some talks with some Estonians about the Estonian government. And he just described it like very, you know, nationalist and immigrant hating and so. So, this video shows me that the people of Estonia are actually, you know... Maybe they don't have that kind of view, like hating the... You know, this nationalist like "Oh, we don't want other people, we just want Estonians". They're just like "We can come together and celebrate and have a good time." So, it's just like... It gave me the separation between the government and the actual people of this country.</i>	I6
	<i>I mean, it could show other people that Estonia is a very traditional country and they value their norms and culture. Yeah. So, if someone sees the video and expects to go to Estonia, then he should expect that "I'm going to very traditional country and to some people who value their own culture." Some people actually like this, you know. As an example, before, you know, I told about Japan. Someone goes to Japan, he also sees the Japanese culture. So, if someone wants to go to Estonia, he will know for sure after seeing the video like "OK. They actually value their culture." So, it could be a very good point.</i>	I6
	<i>So, maybe one observation I can make is, you know, there are all these different parties. They win because certain people vote for them. So, you know, the people that we see in the video, the songs celebration... They all have different parties that they support, right? But then when it comes to this national thing, they will stand together. So, maybe that could be one aspect... As an additional aspect. That they just leave aside all their political views, their agendas and differences and then, they just come together. "We want to celebrate Estonia as a nation via a song." So, maybe if they can do that, then why can't they do it in the government. I don't know.</i>	I6
	<i>So, the thoughts about the video are that it reminded me a little bit of my home country. Not that we sing so much maybe, but the clothing or the traditional clothes and maybe a little bit from the history also. It's very similar.</i>	I7
	<i>The nationalism, maybe. It's very much oriented, I think, in building the spirit in... A strong feeling for the country and holding, like being together through what has happened maybe in the past and</i>	I7

	<i>what is going on now. I have no clue what they sing about. But that's what I'm imagining it is about. Yeah.</i>	
	<i>I think I am feeling now that Estonians are very nationalistic. And they hold together. And yeah, they are building this awareness from the young age. I could see on the video there is also young people there. And yeah, this was only a very small aspect of Estonia. I don't know, I really think there is more to Estonia that I didn't have a chance to see through the video.</i>	17
	<i>Um because I didn't know that Estonia was so self-aware about their national identity. Uh. And I also saw they had a lot of folk costumes and uh. Yeah. So that was actually quite interesting. Also, the blonde girl at the start and the end is like Estonian girl, maybe. I don't know.</i>	18
	<i>I think it could. I think it could make Estonia a more... a country you would then think about that is joyful and happy because singing is usually happy. So yeah, I could imagine that some people would say... Would think about the Eastern Bloc as not a place you would go. I mean, just my parents they were like "Well we're not going down the east, we're going to stick with West: France, Italy on holidays" instead of the East, which is a shame. But if you use singing to show that you are happy. And as long as it does not come up as "we do it is because we have to". like in China because there's a bit of propaganda there. So as long as you show it as voluntarily and modern and safe, I think it would work.</i>	18
Different reactions	<i>Mm hmm. Yes, that's a good question. Yes, I think probably. Yeah, I think maybe all older people you view it like through the lens of their own, like an educational or professional background. But the younger people maybe just be curious, and they respond to, you know, the first impression about how the event is like.</i>	15
	<i>I think there would be a difference because our parents have grown up in the Cold War era. And I think, even though the borders are now completely else, and Estonia is a member of EU and NATO, I think this is some kind of thing in their minds, their upbringing, that told them "the East is bad, the East is bad, don't go to the East". Whereas, us young people in a more globalized world and we haven't experienced that, we maybe think "OK. It's an alright place". But I think we are still somehow influenced by our parents. Even though we maybe shouldn't be because it's. Yeah...</i>  <i>Um well maybe they will see this a bit like a propaganda maybe, for Estonia. Whereas young people think that Estonia is a Western country and therefore it should not be propaganda. And. So. Yeah, I think that and also uh... I don't know. It's a bit tricky because we don't really have these large events in Denmark where people come and just gather. So, I don't know if that's a good answer.</i>	18
<b>3.3.3. Brand Loyalty</b>		
	<i>Naah, even if I'd visit Estonia, I would probably skip the event, I've already seen it. No. It's nice, if you're Estonian. But then again, if you're not Estonian, then you should've just seen it once and then it's fine. It's not like I want to go again and then be like "Oh yeah, let's see what songs are on now."</i>	13
	<i>It could be interesting to see. It seems like there are so many people and like, I don't know, maybe it's more for the local people. Because they feel that they're part of it. Maybe I would feel like an outsider.</i>	13
	<i>If there was... I would like to see, like, if I went to Tallinn, for example, if there was something like this happening, I would probably go and look. Like, see how it is for them. But maybe not participate or anything, I wouldn't know the lyrics probably (laughing).</i>	14
	<i>I think yes, that could be quite interesting. I think the songs are quite different. So, I'd love to hear more of them.</i>	15
	<i>Yeah. Well, I told you if I know someone Estonia, then why not. If I'm there and this event is taking place, then why not.</i>	16
	<i>Hmm... not too much. I mean of course, but not too much. There is probably other things I'd rather do. Yeah. Also in Estonia.</i>	17
	<i>Yeah. I would like to visit the event just to experience and hear. Because it's a lot of people just hear the amount of people. Because we don't have that... it's not a concert I know... but we don't really have these large concert or events where people just sing together. And uh yeah. It would be amazing to experience that and then, experience how the Estonians kind of worship their culture themselves and compare it to Denmark.</i>	18
<b>3.3.4. Brand Quality</b>		
	<i>Well in Estonians they have these school choirs, right? School dancing. That most other countries don't have. So, if you want to do that, you got to start from the bottom up. Because most people down there can see themselves in those kids. They remember themselves being in their shoes as well, back in the days. And I think that plays a major role. So, if you want to implement it, you got to start from the bottom up. And make it to like, into the blood of the nation.</i>	13
	<i>Yeah, I don't really mind or don't care... Don't care sounds really harsh but... whether Spanish are eating paella on every 4<sup>th</sup> of May. I really don't mind, as long as I can go to my beach and it looks nice, it's fine. It has a really small role. Unless, I am trying to integrate to Spain – it would be a nice fun fact. 4<sup>th</sup> of May, everyone comes together. But then again, I know that I am not Spanish so then I am probably wondering what am I doing on 4<sup>th</sup> of May, is anybody inviting me and stuff like that. It is something that is a nice fun fact but is just nice for Estonians and that it is what it is.</i>	13
	<i>I've been to this kind of event once and it was certainly amazing experience. Yes. I just think the amount of people and how authentic it this with the costumes and also the sound... It's just... you can't compare it to a concert. It's phenomenal.</i>	15
	<i>Well... You know, when I first said, you know, describe three words... I said digital, something and then I said white supremacy because I had some talks with some Estonians about the Estonian government. And he just described it like very, you know, nationalist and immigrant hating and so. So, this video shows me that the people of Estonia are actually, you know... Maybe they don't have that kind of view, like hating the... You know, this nationalist like "Oh, we don't want other people,</i>	16



	<i>we just want Estonians". They're just like "We can come together and celebrate and have a good time." So, it's just like... It gave me the separation between the government and the actual people of this country.</i>	
Incorporated in branding	<i>It could be. I think, it made me a good impression about the country.</i>	I4
	<i>Yeah, I don't know. It didn't bring so many emotions but when it's combined with all the history stuff, then I think it was good. But then, yeah, only like singing would probably not bring so much to other people. If there's no context to it.</i>	I4
	<i>I think like directly it would appear to a smaller target group, so maybe people who are interested in folklore in general or like singing in the choir or something. (laughing) But... It's hard to say because</i>	I5
	<i>Maybe they can also feel, you know, some of the emotional or the strength of the Estonian people. And then they can like that. Maybe, I don't know.</i>	I6
	<i>So, maybe the best thing is through social media or maybe through Estonian people. Like just you, you telling me: "Oh there's this..." Like a word-of-mouth. Yes, it could be... But this is upon Estonians themselves. Yeah. Or maybe people have already visited Estonia, the festival, who are not necessarily Estonians. They can say: "oh, I have been to this great festival" and they can spread the word.</i>	I6
	<i>Yes sure. I think it's important that every country is very... Holds high spirit and values its own kind. Because... we first started or I feel like we're talking about why people don't know much about Estonia... But I think this is maybe not the way to get more people to come. This feels more like a national event. Not so much attracting foreigners. If that's what you're interested in hearing.</i>  <i>I would like to see what more is there to it, to be honest.</i>	I7
	<i>Yes. Because, as mentioned in the video, it's something that the Estonian people are obviously good at. So why not go along with that and especially, events which thousands of people singing is something extraordinary, I think. And it's on a voluntarily basis and that I think is important because in China you can maybe have millions sing but they are more or less forced to. So, I think it's important that it is voluntary event. And, yeah, it looked really nice.</i>	I8