

Commentary

Film Branding: How the Estonia 100 umbrella brand influenced production, marketing and consumption of the Estonia 100 films



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ABSTRACT

The Republic of Estonia celebrated the 100th anniversary of its independence on February 24, 2018. The celebration marked a significant milestone for Estonians and, as a way of recognizing this, the Estonian government implemented different marketing and participatory strategies for involving individuals and organizations to take part in the celebration. As such, individuals and organizations were invited to create special gifts for Estonia and its citizens. These gifts could be in the form of tangible presents or in the form of special events and cultural programs. The official gifts were marked by the official Estonia 100 (in the Estonian language: EV100) logo. One such gift to the Estonian population were a number of audiovisual productions that were enabled through special funding from the Estonian government, managed by the Estonian Film Institute. These productions included, besides 40 short documentaries about young Estonian inventors, one animation, six feature films, two documentaries and a TV drama series (EV100 2019a).¹ This paper reports a study that explored the impact of the Estonia 100 brand on the production, marketing and consumption of these films and the TV series.

SOME BASICS: UNDERSTANDING BRANDS

Media are experience goods, which means that no one can assess the quality of media content before one has in fact experienced, i.e. consumed, it. With uncertainty in terms of expected rewards for the selection of particular media content, trusted brands may serve as guides for media selections (Siebert et al. 2015). A brand is “a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller’s good or service

as distinct from those of other sellers” (American Marketing Association 2019).

Brands that may trigger audience choices in terms of audiovisual productions may include, for instance, the actors, the directors, the characters, or the production company, just to name a few (O'Reilly, Kerigan 2013). Being able to create and market brands that positively trigger viewing choices is especially important in the film business, where financial investment in any production is very high and has to be made before it is known whether the production will be well-received by audiences. In such a high-risk environment, being able to rely on well-received brands may reduce the

¹ For the sake of simplicity, these Estonia100 sponsored productions are referred to as the Estonia100 film program in the following, although one of the productions was a TV series.

uncertainty in terms of audience selection (Chan-Olmsted 2011; Rohn 2015; Siegert et al. 2015).

In general, all brands need to be looked at in terms of their brand identity as well as their brand image. The brand identity is how the brand presents itself. It is the layout, color of the logo, and everything that the organization behind the brand strategically controls in relation to the brand in order for it to be positively perceived by the consumer or audience target group (Aaker, Joachimsthaler 2000). The brand image, by contrast, relates to the associations that the consumers or audience members have in relation to the brand (Kapferer 2008; Keller 1993; Kotler 2005). While the aim of the brand identity is to trigger a strong and positive brand image, how strong and how positive that brand image in fact is depends on the particular consumer or audience member. Where several brands are subsumed under one overarching or umbrella brand, the perception of the individual brands or products may be influenced to varying degrees by the identity and image of the umbrella brand (Aaker, Joachimsthaler 2000; Sullivan 1990). Unraveling the brand architecture behind the Estonia 100 branded film program, the study that this paper reports on aimed to understand the influence of the Estonia 100 umbrella brand on Estonia 100 films.

METHOD: HOW WE LEARNED ABOUT HOW THE ESTONIA 100 BRAND INFLUENCED THE ESTONIA 100 FILM PROGRAM

We applied a mixed method in our study, which included both expert interviews as well as an online survey. All of the data was gathered during spring 2019. For the expert interviews, we interviewed representatives from the Estonia 100 organizing committee, the Estonian Film Institute, the Estonia 100 film program jury, directors, scriptwriters and other producers of the Estonia 100 films, but also other individuals who were directly involved in the marketing and managing of the Estonia 100 brand and its film program. In total, we conducted interviews

with 14 experts, from which we learned about the procedures, priorities and decisions behind the Estonia 100 film program and its connection to the Estonia 100 brand, and how the fact that the films were part of the official Estonia 100 film program influenced their production and marketing. The interviews, which all took between 35 and 60 minutes, were conducted in the Estonian language and then transcribed and translated into English. All interviewees were guaranteed anonymity.

Regarding the online survey, we received 102 survey responses from individuals who had watched at least one of the films or the TV series that were part of the Estonia 100 film program and who had found our link through various social media channels, mostly Facebook. All of the respondents in the audience survey were Estonian, 48% of them were female, 52% were male, and more than half of the respondents (63%) were between 25 and 44 years old (see **Table 1**).

Age	Sample
Under 18	1
18–24	9
25–34	31
35–44	33
45–54	16
55–64	9
65	3

TABLE 1. Audience sample (n=102).

MORE ABOUT THE CASE: THE ESTONIA 100 UMBRELLA BRAND AND THE ESTONIA 100 FILM PROGRAM

The Estonia 100 brand identity

The Estonia 100 brand is managed and coordinated by the Estonia 100 organizing committee within the Government Office. For creating a visual identity for the anniversary, a public creative contest

was announced in July 2016 to which eight entries were submitted. Out of these, a jury of ten representatives of Estonian advertisers and marketing associations selected as the winning logo one designed by Meelis Opmann, Martin Tõnts, Ionel Lehari and Ants Lutsi of the Identity agency (EV100 2016). The logo (see **Figure 1**) makes creative use of the numbers 18 and 100, emphasizing that between the independence of Estonia in 1918 and the celebration of it in 2018 were 100 years. According to our interviewees at the Estonia 100 organizing committee, the logo is seen to represent “century and balance” and the colors in its original versions were inspired by the Estonian flag that includes the colors blue, black and white. In order for anyone to be able to use the Estonia 100 logo, one needed approval from the Estonia 100 organizing committee, and the products or other gifts, such as cultural programs, carrying this logo needed to be of high quality and comply with the positive values of celebrating 100 years of independence of Estonia (EV100 2019b).



FIGURE 1. Umbrella brand identity:
Estonia 100 logo².

The Estonia 100 brand image

We asked our interviewees what they associated with the Estonia 100 brand. Common references were made to celebrating a joint

history, culture and language, as well as the country's natural environment. And, more concretely, interviewees associated the brand with various offers and products that were made using the Estonia 100 brand. One filmmaker said:

“The celebration creates a bit-sweet feeling. History has not been kind to Estonia. Remembering the past, however, can create a better future.... Estonia 100 helps to remind us what is really important for us as a nation.... Different stories about my family and our culture come to my mind when I think about Estonia 100. As a commercial brand, Estonia 100 makes me think about cultural happenings, ice cream, and Estonia 100 candy.”

Another filmmaker said:

“Estonia 100 is a story about our forefathers and freedom... It is a dramatic story with a happy ending, and we get to live this story every day. I think it is very important, and it brings joy and glory to the citizens of Estonia.”

The Estonia 100 film program: Values and procedures in the selection process

Even before the Estonia 100 brand identity was created through the logo, the Estonian Film Institute publicly announced in 2012 a call for ideas for audiovisual productions that would celebrate the 100th anniversary of the country. The idea of this special call for project ideas was, as an interviewee told us, to “to give a voice and opportunity for filmmakers to say what they think is important in Estonia” and, as another interviewee emphasized, “to highlight topics important for Estonians and contribute to the Estonian film heritage”.

The winning ideas received special financial support. The interviewees told us that, as part of applying for this special funding, the applicants needed first

² https://pilv.riigikantselei.ee/index.php/s/Ey05pwu2q9Duhpk?path=%2FLogo%20EST#/Logo%20EST/Eesti_100_CMYK.jpg.

to submit a one-to-three-page summary of their idea as well as a signed approval from a qualified production company that would be capable of producing the idea. The competition was divided into different categories, which included: full-length feature films (also animation), documentary series, full-length documentaries, co-produced documentaries and short documentary TV shows. After a first screening, the applications had to go through multiple rounds in the competition. Equipped with some extra funding, the filmmakers also had to produce short visuals and snippets of their films to provide to the Estonia 100 film jury, and each filmmaker was assigned a script consultant who advised and provided feedback to the filmmakers.

According to our interviewees, a total of 211 ideas were submitted to the competition. Most of these (165) were ideas for full-length feature films. 27 ideas were for drama series, 11 for full-length documentaries, and four each for co-produced documentary series and short documentary TV shows. According to our interviewees, the Estonia 100 film jury, which consisted of carefully selected representatives from the Estonian Film Institute as well as film critics, filmmakers and individuals from the Estonia 100 organizing team, assessed the film ideas in terms of them providing strong, sustainable, original and engaging stories.

An interviewee told us that the jury was surprised that more than half of the ideas for the full-length feature films were based on Estonian mythology and folklore, such as the Estonian national epic *Kalev's Son*. Fearing that strong national symbolism would not attract large audiences, however, the Estonia 100 film jury tried, so said one interviewee, to avoid Estonian nationalism and mythology. Another interviewee told us about the selection process:

“The stories did not have to be about the celebration of Estonia 100... the films themselves can be seen as cultural heritage and a present for further generations.”

Besides the 40 short documentaries, the following productions won the special Estonia 100 grant (see EV100 2019a): the full-length animation *Lotte and the Lost Dragons*,³ written by Andrus Kivirähk, Janno Põldma, Heiki Ernits, directed by Janno Põldma and Heiki Ernits and produced by Kalev Tamm; the five feature films *Truth and Justice*,⁴ by writer and director Tanel Toom and producer Ivo Felt, *The Little Comrade*,⁵ by writer and director Moonika Siimets and producer Riina Sildos, *The Riggle of Jaan Niemand*,⁶ by writer and director Kaur Kokk and producer Katrin Kiss, *Take it Or Leave it*,⁷ by writer and director Liina Trishkina-Vanhatalo and producer Ivo Felt, and the children's film *Eia's Christmas at Phantom Owl Farm*,⁸ by writer and director Anu Aun and producers Maie Rosmann-Lill and Maario Masing; the two documentaries *The Wind Sculpted Land*,⁹ by director Joosep Matjus and producers Riho Västrik and Katri Rannastu, and *Roots*,¹⁰ by directors Nora Särak, Aljona Surzikova, Heilika Pikkov, Anna Hints, Moonika Siimets and Kersti Uibo and producer Ülo Pikkov; and one television drama series, *The Bank*,¹¹ by directors Rainer Sarnet, Juhan Ulfsak, Marianne Körver and Jan-Erik Nögisto, producer Paul Aguraiuja¹². (**Figure 2**)

Estonia 100 as an umbrella brand

One of our interviewees at the Estonian Film Institute pointed out that each of the productions that received the special funding for the country's 100th anniversary, and that were marked under the label “Estonia 100 films”, represented foremost their own brands, and that the Estonia 100 brand management did not interfere with the individual film brand management. According to the interviewee, the Estonia 100 brand merely bundled the individual productions

3 Original Estonian title: *Lotte ja Kadunud Lohed*.

4 Original Estonian title: *Tõde ja õigus*.

5 Original Estonian title: *Seltsimees Laps*.

6 Original Estonian title: *Põrgu Jaan*.

7 Original Estonian title: *Võta või Jäta*.

8 Original Estonian title: *Eja jõulud Tondikakul*.

9 Original Estonian title: *Tuulte Tahutud Maa*.

10 Original Estonian title: *Juuried*.

11 Original Estonian title: *Pank*.

12 <https://www.filmi.ee/en/movies/estonia-100>.



FIGURE 2. Film screenshots for a selection of Estonia 100 films.

under one common roof, or umbrella brand, for improved communication and marketing opportunities. To emphasize this, the interviewee pointed to the film *Lotte and the Lost Dragons*, which is based on the fictional character Lotte that has reached great awareness in Estonia and abroad through previous animated films, books, a theme park and extensive merchandising. Although the latest film on Lotte, *Lotte and the Lost Dragons*, which in fact marked the fourth film in the Lotte film series, was part of the Estonia 100 film program, the Estonia 100 brand was a mere add-on to the existing Lotte brand, according to our interviewee.

Yet, all of the films that were bundled under the Estonia 100 brand had to follow certain rules. As such, they had to refer to the Estonia 100 brand with a logo and a message at the beginning of the film stating: "This film (series) was produced for the 100th anniversary of the Estonian Republic" (see **Figure 3 and 4**). According to our interviewees, the special screening and promotion events also had to have references to the Estonia 100 celebration, such as on the invitations, posters and tickets.

INTERVIEW RESULTS: THE ESTONIA 100 BRAND INFLUENCE ON THE PRODUCTION OF THE FILMS

In order to understand if the fact that the productions were part of the Estonia 100 film program influenced the way they were produced, i.e. influenced the nature of the content, we discussed with our interviewees possible influences of Estonia 100 on the chosen genre, the storyline, its characters and cast, the chosen music, the presented location and portrayed country of origin, as well as on the placed brands and tie-ins, but also on possible spin-offs of the films. According to O'Reilly and Kerigan (2013), these elements of a film are important elements of its brand identity. Strictly speaking, the Estonia 100 brand had not yet been launched when the Estonian Film Institute announced its call for ideas for audiovisual productions to be introduced in

the year of the country's anniversary. Yet, the interviews with the producers confirmed that the connotations and associations in relation to their country's anniversary and the brand identity that was later launched were already present.

Regarding the genre, the call for submissions for ideas for the Estonia 100 film program invited a multitude of different genres, as it was the idea to offer content for every taste. Hence, filmmakers did not feel that they needed to produce a certain genre to fit the Estonia 100 idea. In terms of storyline, some filmmakers claimed that the competition for the Estonia 100 film program inspired them to write their stories. The story of *Lotte and the Lost Dragons*, for instance, was especially created for the competition – the filmmakers had no plan for a new sequel to the Lotte movies prior to the competition. Also, *The Wind Sculpted Land* was inspired by the competition. *Eia's Christmas at Phantom Owl Farm*, on the other hand, was originally thought of as a book, but the competition inspired the filmmakers to first produce a film about the story. And although the interviewees suggested that some of the stories would not have been produced if it had not been for the competition announced by the Estonian Film Institute, the interviewees agreed that the fact that the films wanted to be, or were, part of the Estonia 100 film program, did at no point in the production influence their actual storylines, i.e. the stories as such and how they was told. Two of the films in the program, *Truth and Justice* and *The Little Comrade*, were book adaptations, where the story including the characters were a given. While the characters in most of the productions had no obvious reference to Estonia's 100th anniversary, this was different for the movie *Lotte and the Lost Dragons*. Here, the birth of Lotte's sister Roosi in the movie marks the celebration of a birthday. Furthermore, the dragons in the story that needed to be found had been lost for 100 years, and the characters in the story wore national patterns. In terms of cast, however, all interviewees confirmed that skill and talent were the most



FIGURE 3. Screenshot of the Estonia 100 brand credits in the TV series The Bank.

FIGURE 4. Screenshot of the Estonia 100 brand credits in The Little Comrade.

important factors in the selection of the cast, and that the fact that the films were part of the Estonia 100 film program did not influence cast choices.

In terms of music, the filmmakers emphasized that music played an important role in their films. In the film *The Wind Sculpted Land*, the music resembled Estonian folk music and was inspired by the sounds of Estonian nature. In *The Little Comrade*, the music was inspired by national folklore and the Estonian music of the time of the story. Besides these two cases, the interviews did not suggest that the fact that the films were part of the Estonia 100 film program impacted their music selection. Rather, music was composed and chosen based on its ability to support the story.

In terms of the presented location and portrayed country of origin, an interviewee at the Estonian Film Institute told us that Estonia was presented in all of the films through references to forms of culture, events, conflicts, and locations. This corresponds with what the filmmakers told us, namely that Estonia was part of their films, either as the obvious location of the story, or even as a character. The film *Take it Or Leave it* portrays today's Estonia. According to our interviewees for that film, especially international viewers enjoyed the film as it introduced them to modern-day Estonia. The TV series, *The Bank*, on the other hand, portrays the 1990s in Estonia and, according to the interviewees, allows especially younger generations to get a glimpse of those very tumultuous times in Estonia. The film *The Little Comrade* portrays Estonia as a strong and independent country, according to our interviewees. In *The Wind Sculpted Land*, it is Estonia's natural environment that is at the center of the film. Likewise, Estonian nature plays a crucial role in *Eia's Christmas at Phantom Owl Farm*. According to the interviewees, the film reminds Estonians that it is the country's nature and forests that they can be proud of, while at the same time the film points to the dangers of deforestation and its impacts on animals as well the

attraction of the country. *Lotte and the Lost Dragons* is the only production that does not portray Estonia as the country of origin for the story. Although it makes many references to Estonian folklore, it is obvious that the story takes place in a fictional place with no obvious references to a past or contemporary Estonia.

Although the productions in the Estonia 100 film program were allowed to apply brand placements or tie-ins, only two of the films made use of this option, and none of the films referred to the Estonia 100 brand. The film *Eia's Christmas at Phantom Owl Farm* had a tie-in with the Estonian knitwear company Woolish, and *Lotte and the Lost Dragons* had references to the related theme park in Estonia. In terms of spin-offs, the films *Truth and Justice* as well as *The Little Comrade* themselves are spin-offs as they are based on books. Some of the filmmakers reported that they were planning spin-offs based on their films, such as games, though they said that these decisions were not inspired or influenced by the fact that the films were part of the Estonia film program. And although the Estonia 100 logo would be on all future spin-offs, they said there was no financial support for such spin-offs through the Estonia 100 scheme.

INTERVIEW RESULTS: THE ESTONIA 100 BRAND INFLUENCE ON FILM MARKETING

The marketing efforts for promoting the Estonia 100 films did not differ very much from the marketing of other films, an interviewee at the Estonian Film Institute told us. The films were promoted in the same way and on the same channels as other films. Also, recognizing that filmmakers knew best how to market their films, the Estonia 100 organizing committee did not interfere in their marketing plans, as a marketing adviser for Estonia 100 told us. The only restriction they had was that the films needed to follow a specific and strict release plan in order to avoid that the films in the Estonia 100 program were competing with each other during their launches.

Furthermore, the producers needed to inform the Estonia 100 organizing committee of all of their marketing activities, and the committee monitored and evaluated the use of the Estonia 100 brand identity in the marketing activities.

Although the Estonia 100 funding that the films received was not meant for marketing purposes, the producers were free to apply for additional funds for marketing and distribution from the Estonian Film Institute, an opportunity open to any producer. Some of the filmmakers of the films in the Estonia 100 film program applied for such additional funding, others did not. However, due to their relatively high visibility, the films in the Estonia 100 programs were more attractive for additional sponsors, as an interviewee at the Estonian Film Institute told us.

In fact, the films in the Estonia 100 film program had the advantage of benefitting from the general awareness of the Estonia 100 film program among the public, as an interviewee stressed. As such, the films received a relatively high amount of attention from the media due to their special role in the celebration of the country's anniversary. Some productions, however, received more media attention than others. The TV series *The Bank*, which was shown on the public broadcaster, was particularly talked about in the media.

One of our interviewees stressed the positive long-term effect that being part of the Estonia 100 film program would have on the awareness of and findability of their films:

“Estonia 100 has a positive impact on our film. In future, when people watch Estonia 100 films, they are most likely to discover our film as well and watch it.”

Our interviewee for the film *Lotte and the Lost Dragons* stated that the power of the Estonia 100 brand was less important for this film than it was for other films, since the character Lotte already served as a

strong brand. What is more, the main target audience of the film was children, a target group most likely less receptive to the Estonia 100 brand identity and what it stands for. Hence, the marketing efforts for this film focused more on Lotte as a character than on Estonia 100. Despite the general agreement that the Estonia 100 brand helped creating awareness for the films, one interviewee pointed to the limitations of the brand as a promoter of the films:

“The brand alone does not attract people to the cinema... filmmakers need to have strong and appealing visuals that attract audiences to the cinema.”

Internationally, the fact that the films were part of the Estonia 100 film program had, and continues to have, mixed effects, as an interviewee told us. Not only did the Estonia 100 brand have much less marketing power outside of Estonia compared to within Estonia, being associated as a part of celebrating the country's 100th anniversary could potentially harm the image of the films outside of Estonia. As an interviewee at the Estonian Film Institute told us:

“The brand can even suggest that the film is dedicated only to a certain nation and that the story is packed with patriotism.” Hence, in order to avoid a possible negative impact of the Estonia 100 brand on the international sales market, international marketing did not emphasize that the films belonged to a specific program to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the country. Also, the film program as a whole did not receive special attention internationally because it competed with similar film programs from Latvia and Lithuania that celebrated those countries' 100th anniversaries. Though some collaborative marketing activities with these countries were conducted, the main marketing effects of the Estonian 100 brand were in Estonia and not international, the interviewees agreed.

INTERVIEW RESULTS: THE ESTONIA 100 BRAND IMPACT ON AUDIENCE SELECTION AND CONSUMPTION

Our survey was addressed only to individuals who had watched at least one of the productions in the Estonian 100 film program. We asked them whether the fact that the production they watched was part of the Estonia 100 film program had influenced their choice to watch it. As the means in **Table 2** show, this was not the case.

We asked the respondents to name keywords that they associated with the 100th anniversary of Estonia. Figure 5 shows the words that were mentioned by at least two respondents. (**Figure 5**)

In another question, we asked the respondents to name keywords that would describe their associations with the Estonia 100 brand. Figure 6 shows the keywords that were mentioned by at least two respondents. (**Figure 6**)

The respondents also provided the keyword 'films'. 7.8% (n=8) of the respondents used the term 'films' to describe their associations with the 100th anniversary of the country, and 15.7% (n=16) used it to describe their association with the Estonia 100 brand. In general, the respondents' associations with the Estonia 100 brand were more diverse than with the 100th anniversary. More keywords were mentioned by only one respondent to describe an association with the brand.

In another question, we asked whether the respondents thought that the films or the TV series they watched matched with what they associated with the Estonia 100 brand. As **Table 3** shows, the tendency was that the audiences did not see a connection between the films and the Estonia 100 brand, though the answers differed across the productions.

Although, in general, audiences did not see a match between the productions and their associations with the Estonia 100 brand, the films *The Wind Sculpted Land*, *Truth and Justice*, and *The Little Comrade* serve as exceptions. Both the films *The*

Little Comrade and *Truth and Justice* played a prominent role in the year-long celebration of the anniversary, with *The Little Comrade* opening the celebration and *Truth and Justice* closing it. This may have influenced the audiences' stronger connection between these films and the Estonia 100 brand. The film *The Wind Sculpted Land*, however, received the highest numbers in terms of a perceived connection between the film and Estonia 100, although it did not enjoy such a prominent launch date. The fact that it focuses on Estonia's nature may have something to do with it.

Interestingly, although the respondents did not see much of a connection between the productions and the Estonia 100 brand, they somewhat agreed that the story in the films and the TV series reflected Estonian culture and history. The level of agreement, however, is relatively low and differs across films. Accordingly, the film *Truth and Justice* reflects more of Estonian culture and history than the other films, and *Lotte and the Lost Dragon* and the *Riddle of Jaan Niemand* reflect Estonian culture and history the least. For the latter film, however, the number of respondents was extremely low so the data may not be reliable (see **Table 4**).

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS STUDY?

Our study suggests that the Estonia 100 film program and the fact that a film was included in it, or aimed to be included in it, did not influence the nature of the content nor the way in which the stories were told. The productions funded by the Estonia 100 scheme vary greatly in their genres and the stories they tell, as well as in terms of how much they present Estonian society, its history, folklore, and nature. And although the special call for production ideas to be included in the Estonia 100 film did not influence the stories that these productions portrayed, it did influence the very fact that some of the production ideas emerged. Most notably, neither the film *Eia's Christmas at Phantom Owl Farm* nor the film *Lotte and the Lost Dragon* would have been

Film	n	Strongly disagree (-2)	Mostly disagree (-1)	Mostly agree (1)	Strongly agree (2)	Mean	Standard Deviation
<i>The Little Comrade</i>	60	43.3%	35%	20%	1.7%	-0.98	1.18
<i>The Bank</i>	47	44.7%	19.1%	23.4%	12.8%	-0.59	1.55
<i>Truth and Justice</i>	45	35.6%	33.3%	22.2%	8.9%	-0.64	1.4
<i>The Wind Sculpted Land</i>	41	24.4%	26.8%	34.2%	14.6%	-0.12	1.48
<i>Take it Or Leave it</i>	15	33.3%	60%	6.7%	0%	-1.2	0.77
<i>Eia's Christmas at Phantom Owl Farm</i>	15	26.7%	26.7%	33.3%	13.3%	-0.2	1.52
<i>Lotte and the Lost Dragons</i>	10	27.3%	36.4%	18.2%	9.1%	-0.6	1.42
<i>The Riddle of Jaan Niemand Roots</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%	-2	0
	1	100%	0%	0%	0%	-2	0

TABLE 2. The fact that the film (TV series) was part of the Estonia 100 program positively affected my choice to watch it (n=102).

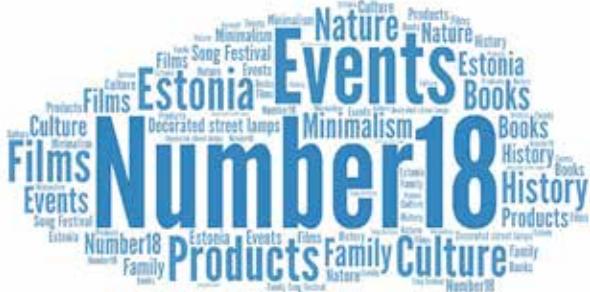


FIGURE 5. Respondents' associations with the 100th anniversary of Estonia (n=102).

FIGURE 6. Respondents' associations with the Estonia 100 brand (n=92).

Film	n	Strongly disagree (-2)	Mostly disagree (-1)	Mostly agree (1)	Strongly agree (2)	Mean	Standard Deviation
<i>The Little Comrade</i>	72	27.8%	12.5%	43%	16.7%	0.08	1.53
<i>The Bank</i>	59	32.2%	20.3%	28.8%	11.9%	-0.38	1.48
<i>Truth and Justice</i>	56	19.5%	16.1%	42.9%	21.5%	0.30	1.47
<i>The Wind Sculpted Land</i>	48	22.9%	10.4%	41.7%	25.0%	0.35	1.53
<i>Take it Or Leave it</i>	23	43.5%	21.7%	34.8%	0%	-0.73	1.35
<i>Eia's Christmas at</i>							
<i>Phantom Owl Farm</i>	23	34.8%	21.7%	21.7%	21.7%	-0.26	1.65
<i>Lotte and the</i>							
<i>Lost Dragons</i>	14	21.4%	35.7%	42.9%	0%	-0.35	1.27
<i>The Riddle of</i>							
<i>Jaan Niemand</i>	2	100%	0%	0%	0%	-2	0
<i>Roots</i>	2	0%	100%	0%	0%	-1	0

TABLE 3. The film (TV series) matches with what I associate with the Estonia 100 brand (n=102).

Film	n	Strongly disagree (-2)	Mostly disagree (-1)	Mostly agree (1)	Strongly agree (2)	Mean	Standard Deviation
<i>The Little Comrade</i>	72	0%	5.6%	44.4%	50.0%	1.38	0.76
<i>The Bank</i>	59	8.5%	20.3%	49.2%	22.0%	0.55	1.27
<i>Truth and Justice</i>	56	7.1%	21.5%	35.7%	35.7%	0.71	1.34
<i>The Wind Sculpted Land</i>	48	2.1%	2.1%	27.1%	68.7%	1.58	0.79
<i>Take it Or Leave it</i>	23	8.7%	26.1%	52.2%	13.0%	0.34	1.26
<i>Eia's Christmas at</i>							
<i>Phantom Owl Farm</i>	23	13%	17.4%	43.5%	26.1%	0.52	1.41
<i>Lotte and the</i>							
<i>Lost Dragons</i>	14	21.4%	42.9%	35.7%	0%	-0.5	1.22
<i>The Riddle of</i>							
<i>Jaan Niemand</i>	2	0%	100%	0%	0%	-1	0
<i>Roots</i>	2	0%	50.0%	50.0%	0%	0	1.41

TABLE 4. The production reflects Estonia's history and culture (n=102).

produced if it had not been for the Estonia 100 film competition.

Our interviews suggest that the fact that the films and the TV series in the Estonia 100 film program were bundled under the Estonia 100 umbrella brand has provided them, and is likely to continue to do so, greater visibility compared to stand-alone films. The effect of this may even increase in the long term as future generations may stumble upon certain productions simply because they belong to the special set of films and TV series produced for the 100th anniversary of the country. As such, the films and TV series of the Estonian 100 program play an important role in the cultural heritage of Estonia. Yet, our interviews suggested that the positive spill-over effect of the Estonia 100 brand to the success of the films is most of all a national matter. Internationally, the over promotion of the Estonia 100 film program risked coming across as too nationalistic. And although it has helped to coordinate marketing activities with Latvia and Lithuania, which also have special film programs for their 100th anniversaries, there is no unique standing of the Estonia 100 program in this context internationally. Despite having more opportunities to market and promote the films through being able to use various Estonia 100 celebration platforms, and despite the consequently higher media coverage, the producers of the films in the Estonia 100 program were very independent in their marketing, and also financial, activities. In general, the marketing did not differ from the marketing of other films.

In terms of audience reception, our survey suggests that audiences did select the films they watched based on their being part of the Estonia 100 program. But although our surveyed audience members claimed that there was no brand influence on their consumption decision, the mere fact that the films they had chosen to watch were part of the film program gave these films special exposure in the media and greater public awareness. This most likely attracted additional audiences, although audience members did not connect this

with the Estonia 100 brand. And although our surveyed audience did not see, or hardly saw, a connection between the productions and the Estonia 100 brand, they agreed that the productions in the Estonia 100 film program represented Estonian culture and history. Both, the 100th anniversary in general as well as the Estonia 100 brand triggered the keyword ‘films’ with our surveyed audiences – though more so for the brand than for the general anniversary. What also became obvious in our survey is that the audience associations with the Estonia 100 brand appeared less clear across respondents than the associations they had with the country’s anniversary. As many as 12 out of the 102 respondents named keywords to describe the Estonia 100 brand that nobody else named. A somewhat vague or mixed set of associations with the brand may raise questions as to how well the brand was communicated. And although a strength of a brand can be that individuals interpret it differently and in their own way, the associations that respondents had with the 100th anniversary were much more focused. Here, all of the keywords were mentioned more than once.

Although the study suggests obvious results, it does have its limitations. The information we received through the expert interviews was rich, so that additional interviews would not have provided additional information. The number of the survey respondents, however, was low. Most strikingly, only two of the 102 respondents watched the films *The Riddle of Jaan Niemand* and *Roots*, a number way too small to draw conclusions about the brand impact of consumption for these two films. Yet, the results are similar across most films with some notable exceptions, suggesting that the survey did find some trends.

In general, the study suggests that the influence of the Estonia 100 brand on the success of the films has been much more indirect than direct. As such, the Estonia 100 film program has increased both production volume as well as the awareness of the productions. The fact that there was extra funding for productions and the fact

that these productions were subsumed under one common program helped both with the quantity output of Estonian productions as well as with their visibility. Hence, the study suggests that it is not so much the brand as such, but rather the increased funding and output as well as media attention, that has benefited the Estonian productions. And according to an interview, the Estonia 100 film program may well have inspired the creation of other cultural programs as anniversary gifts to the country.

The extra funding that the Estonian film industry received for productions to be launched in the year of the anniversary has been crucial for the industry. The extraordinary competition for the Estonia 100 funding stipulated ideas and productions of films. What is more, the increase of output also led to an increase of audience numbers. In 2017, 282,421 viewers watched Estonian films at the cinemas, accounting for a €1.54 million box office (EFI 2018). In 2018, the year of the 100th anniversary, there were as many as 648,585 visitors who came to the cinema to watch Estonian film, making for a €3.35 million box office (EFI 2019). And these numbers do not, yet, include the very successful *Truth and Justice* that was the closing film of the year-long celebration that ended in February 2019. Not so much the brand, rather the money behind the Estonia 100 film program, which led to an increase of output, will have a long-lasting positive effect in terms of enriched cultural heritage in Estonia. We can only hope that the production capabilities and opportunities in Estonia as well as the excitement for home-grown productions persists for years to come.

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