Beyond the music:
Exploring the Dynamics of National and European Identity in the Eurovision Song Contest

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Abstract

This thesis examines how member nations manage their national identities within the supranational context of the Eurovision Song Contest (ESC) and the significance of the ESC in creating a shared European identity. Patterns of identification and attitudes relating to culture, ethnicity/nationality, religion/faith, and gender/sex are discovered by studying the winning submissions from 1998 to 2022 through content analysis and discourse analysis. The ESC acts as a soft power instrument by encouraging member nations' sense of solidarity and cultivating respect for and understanding of other cultures. It serves as a platform for cross-cultural dialogue, self-promotion, and nation branding, fostering diplomatic connections and providing opportunities for commercial and cultural exchanges.

The ESC emphasizes the dichotomy between national and European identity, but it also demonstrates how these identities intersect and support one another. It advances the formation of a European identity while giving states a forum to showcase their national and cultural identities. The ESC influences notions of European identity and defines what it means to be European.

**Keywords:** Eurovision Song Contest (ESC), European identity, national identity, popular culture, nation-building, Imagineering, constructivism, imagined communities, soft power.

**Word count:** 13 937
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Introduction

The Eurovision Song Contest (ESC) is an annual international musical competition where both European and non-European countries enter a performance in the hope of impressing the continent enough to receive the highly coveted 12 points. The ESC started as a means to test live television programming across European countries after the Second World War but has evolved into a unique phenomenon where it now serves as a bonding exercise and a platform for cooperation and friendship for European countries. The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was created in 1952 to protect the continent from another war. In the same spirit, the ESC was created in 1954 by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) for a continent that was rebuilding itself after the devastating effects of the Second World War (Mantzaris, et al., 2018). By creating bonds both economically and culturally across Europe, the European countries that had regularly had violent conflicts with each other in the past were now interconnected and grew closer together creating a common European identity.

Over the 70 years that the contest has existed, Europe has changed drastically. Borders have been redrawn, countries have come in and out of existence, wars have started and been resolved and with all of that the contest has had to evolve as well. The rules, the number of contestants and the scale might have changed but one rule has stayed steadfast: The ESC is a non-political event and performances are prohibited from being political. While this has been one of the core rules since the inception of the contest has had issues being political since its conception. As a live televised event broadcast to over 161 million people in 2022, the messages portrayed in the songs and performances have an impact on how people perceive themselves and other countries (European Broadcasting Union, 2022).

The politicization of the ESC is an essential part of the contest. If political trends and events impact the ESC, is it possible to track trends in European politics by examining the subject matter of the songs competing in the Eurovision Song Contest? What can the performances tell us about the countries themselves? Is it possible to understand European countries' national identity by examining their participation in the ESC?

The study of popular culture in International Relations, while not the core of the field, commonly occurs as it can have an impact on international politics by providing inspiration and commentary on the foreign relations and political acts of nations. The study of ESC is relevant to International Relations because it enables an examination of states' political expression through performance and how other states respond to it. Observing what each
country chooses to emphasize in their national contestant conveys messages about national priorities, identity, and culture (Weber, 2016). “Constructivism offers alternative understandings of a number of the central themes in international relations theory, including the meanings of anarchy and the balance of power, the relationship between state identity and interest an elaboration of power and the prospects for change in world politics” (Hopf, 1998, p. 172). Therefore, the first purpose of this paper is to address how popular culture, specifically international mega-events such as the ESC converge with core themes in international relations of identity, collective self-esteem, and Europeanisation.

Second, and more empirically, is to analyze how national identity and European identity are portrayed and complement each other in the ESC. Through a content analysis of all winning entries from 1998 to 2022, patterns of identity and sentiments emerge. Four sub-categories are identified as essential to an individual’s/nation’s identity: culture, ethnicity/nationality, religion/faith, and gender/sex. The results thereafter will be interpreted through an understanding of how the performance connects to the wider context; that being the country’s recent history and relevant major events during the year prior. This helps inform the analysis of each entry and how they connect, create and project national identity.

What role does the Eurovision Song Contest, as a soft power tool, have in shaping a common European identity, and how do member states navigate their national identities within this supranational framework?

The ESC (ESC) is a complicated platform where nations display their national and European identities, weaving a rich tapestry of cultures. The participating nations purposefully use the European identity to support and strengthen their respective national identities. The ESC highlights the distinctive characteristics of European identity established by history, cultural traditions, and cooperation while reflecting the European imagination and the coexistence of national and transnational spheres. National identities are strengthened and brought into alignment with European values by stressing their Europeanness.

The ESC acts as a forum for cultural exchange, self-promotion, and national branding. It gives nations a chance to highlight their national and cultural identities and indicates that they are actively engaged in the European project. Participation in the competition may strengthen
diplomatic ties, open doors for business and cultural interactions, and highlight the advantages of European collaboration and integration.

In conclusion, the ESC illustrates the dichotomy between national and European identity. It provides a platform for rivalries between nations, celebrations of variety, and the formation of national and European identities. In addition to advancing political and economic integration, increasing international prestige, and cultivating friendships among participating nations, the competition significantly contributes to defining Europeanness and influencing conceptions of European identity.

Theory/Literature Review

Introduction to The Eurovision Song Contest

The literature review focuses on the role of the Eurovision Song Contest (ESC) as a soft power tool for European nations for signalling, branding, Imagineering and as a platform to form coalitions. Soft power is the “ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments… Soft power arises from the attractiveness of a country’s culture, political ideals and policies” (Nye, 2004, p.256 cited in (van Ham, 2008, p. 126). As a cultural phenomenon, the ESC has been moderately studied in the context of international relations. The literature on this topic has been sorted into a few categories, and for this analysis, only research regarding national identity, nation-building, image construction, image projection, and imagined communities has been considered. The articles reviewed examine the contest's political and cultural significance, its role in shaping national identities, the emotions it evokes, and the importance of image construction and projection in shaping global perceptions of nations. The contest is viewed as a key site for the formation and expression of gender and European identities, as well as a means for emerging powers to assert their presence on the global stage. The review highlights the contest's potential to promote cross-cultural understanding and asserts that the contest's influence is not limited to the entertainment industry.

Research on popular culture, specifically popular music, is a fairly new practice in international relations and has therefore demanded an investigation into other fields of study for example political sociology, political psychology, media and communication studies, sports studies, and musicology to access academic research relevant to the topic. Literature on the ESC or relevant
aspects of the contest can be sorted into a few categories. For this literature analysis, while further academic material on the topic exists, only research regarding national identity, nation-building. Imagineering (image construction, image projection) imagined communities and voting coalitions has been considered.

**National Identity and Nation-building**

National identity is a term used to define types of communal self-perception and behaviour that citizens of countries share (Neiburg, 2001, pp. 233-236). In the field of international relations, national identity and nation-building have been explored in detail, particularly when utilizing constructivist IR theory. According to Hopf, identity performs three functions in society: “They tell you and others who you are and they tell you who others are” (Hopf, 1998, p. 175). Participation in cultural events like the ESC or other major events helps nations define and display their identities. But doing so can strengthen essentialist notions of national identity and marginalize minorities. National identity and the conduct of people and groups in international politics are significantly shaped by nationalism, essentialism, and emotions.

Six articles will be reviewed in this section of the literature review as they each bring a different analysis of national identity within the context of Eurovision. The goal is to provide a full review of the topic of the prevalence of national identity in popular culture such as ESC and the underlining reasons for this.

In her essay "Wild Dances and Dying Wolves: Simulation, Essentialization, and National Identity at the Eurovision Song Contest," Catherine Baker explores how the ESC is utilized to create and express national identities. To demonstrate how these performances are connected to essentialist conceptions of national identity, which can be problematic because they might perpetuate prejudices and exclude national minorities, Baker analyzes case studies of Serbia and Ukraine.

The author argues that the contest is a space where national identities are essentialized and stereotyped, often through the use of simulation and performance. The article also examines the role of cultural and historical references in constructing national identities at the contest, as well as the contest's relationship to broader geopolitical issues.
Roland Bleiker and Emma Hutchison examine the part that emotions play in global politics in their article "Fear No More: Emotions and World Politics." The writers underline the importance of emotions in determining how behavior is seen in international politics. The authors then offer several case studies to demonstrate how political actors may harness feelings like fear, rage, and optimism to sway public opinion and legislation. The writers also cover how emotions affect how people see their national, racial, and gender identities.

In "The Politics of Power, Pleasure, and Prayer in the Eurovision Song Contest," Philip V. Bohlman examines the political and cultural relevance of the contest. The contest's cultural and political significance, according to Bohlman, is profoundly influenced by questions of power, pleasure, and prayer. The article examines the contest's history and its relationship to broader cultural and political trends, including the rise of European nationalism and the challenges of multiculturalism. He also discusses the importance of enjoyment in the tournament, making the case that its emphasis on music and entertainment serves as a potent tool for fostering intercultural understanding and bringing people together.

The Russian pop duet t.A.T.u's appearance in the 2003 ESC is discussed in the essay "t.A.T.u You! Russia, the global politics of Eurovision and lesbian pop" by Dana Heller. According to Heller, the duo's rendition of their popular song "All the Things She Said," which depicted two young ladies kissing, defied prevalent sexuality and gender narratives in Russia and drew in a large European audience that was becoming more accepting of LGBTQ+ identities. The performance of t.A.T.u was analyzed in terms of how it fits into a larger trend of queer visibility in popular culture by Heller, who contends that it had significant repercussions for the politics of representation and visibility in Russia and elsewhere. Overall, she contends that t.A.T.u's performance provides crucial insights into the intricate and sometimes conflicting interactions between sexuality, politics, and popular culture on a worldwide scale.

The use of the ESC by the Azerbaijani government to create and promote a national identity is examined in the article "State, Identity, and the Politics of Music: Eurovision and Nation-Building in Azerbaijan," written by Murad Ismayilov. The author makes the case that the contest in which the government invested enormous resources and efforts to win, played a crucial role in shaping the nation-building process in Azerbaijan. In addition to examining the contest's connection to wider political and cultural developments in the area, the study looks at
how music and performance contribute to the construction and representation of Azerbaijani identity.

Shannon Jones and Jelena Subotic's paper "Fantasies of Power: Performing Europeanization of the European Periphery" examines the Europeanization of the European periphery with an emphasis on the Balkans. The authors contend that the process of Europeanization encompasses more than just economic and political integration; it also includes the performance of cultural and symbolic rituals that foster a sense of solidarity among members of the European continent. They examine how cultural events like music festivals are utilized to create and advance a sense of European identity in the Balkans and how these events are frequently associated with ideas of modernity and advancement. The concept of European identity, the authors write, can, however, reinforce existing power disparities and exclude underprivileged people, which can be problematic. They contend that a more critical perspective on Europeanization is required, one that considers the nuanced and frequently contentious processes by which identities are created and expressed on the European periphery.

**Signalling, branding, and Imagineering**

In international politics, a state’s personality is essential in our analysis of them, with van Ham describing countries as “friendly (i.e. ‘Western-oriented’) and credible (‘ally’) or, in contrast unreliable (‘rouge state’) (van Ham, 2008, p. 130). Countries often try to portray themselves in a certain way in international politics and cultural events such as the Olympics and ESC. However, this projection may differ significantly from reality.

Branding helps guide the consumers facing complex images and creates a way for the general public to understand, in a simplified manner, but not necessarily true, essentials about a country (van Ham, 2008, p. 130). The literature examined for image construction and projection acknowledges that there is no objective reality but rather a matter of perception, however, emphasizes that projection is a powerful tool by nations to create a false front. These articles demonstrate the importance of image construction and projection in shaping global perceptions of nations.

Various methods have been used in the research on image creation and projection. In her article "Sochi 2014 and the rhetoric of a New Russia: image construction through Mega-events," Anna Alekseyeva investigates how the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, helped to create a
new perception of the country as a contemporary, forward-thinking society. Alekseyeva contends that the Sochi Olympics were utilized to advance a narrative of a contemporary, successful, and tolerant Russia while downplaying issues like governmental corruption and violations of human rights. This was accomplished by employing techniques including symbolism, technology, and press coverage.

Scarlett Cornelissen investigates the connection between global politics' developing powers and sports mega-events with her article "The Geopolitics of Global Aspiration: Sport Mega-Events and Emerging Powers,". According to Cornelissen, sports mega-events have grown in significance as a way for developing nations to indicate their ascent to global power status, enhance their national image, and prove their legitimacy on the international stage. It has been crucial to examine major events like the Olympics in the literature on the ESC since most observations made during these occasions are relevant to the ESC as well.

In the essay "In the End, Germany Will Always Resort to Hot Pants," Myria Georgiou examines how national stereotypes are created and reinforced by the ESC. According to Georgiou, the contest has developed into a major setting for the creation and dissemination of ethnocentric stereotypes. Concepts like otherness, binary oppositions and orientalism are addressed to illustrate how these stenotypes are harmful to minorities as they erase or misrepresent culture, which simultaneously preserves and promotes a country's cultural legacy.

Peter van Ham's article "Place Branding: The State of the Art" gives an overview of the idea of place branding and its development over time. Van Ham describes place branding as the process of giving a location its distinct character and image to set it apart from competing locations and draw in business, tourists, and talent. He contends that to properly comprehend the consequences and possibilities of place branding, one must engage in a rigorous investigation and engage in critical reflection.

**Imagined communities and Voting Coalitions**

‘Imagined communities’ is a concept that explores the idea of communities formed through common identification. This aligns with Alexander Wendt’s constructivist framework of ‘collective self-esteem’ – a group's desire to feel good about itself – as one of four primary national interests’ (Wendt 1999 cited in (Alekseyeva, 2014, p. 169). Imagined communities
within the context of the ESC have mainly focused on the LGBTQI+ community and fandom culture.

Furthermore, the contest has become a site of Europeanisation; a place for nations to establish themselves as European, and where voting blocks are formed based on common culture, geographical proximity, migration, and political relations. These coalitions could be understood as imagined communities but will be henceforth referred to as voting blocs or coalitions.

In "The 'gay Olympics'? In The Eurovision Song Contest and the Politics of LGBT/European Belonging," Catherine Baker explores the relationship between politics, gender identity and sexuality. According to Baker, the competition has grown into a significant space for the development of European identity and the promotion of LGBT rights. Baker claims that it is possible to draw a connection from trends in European politics to trends in the contest. She illustrates this by relating the growth of LGBTQI+ performances to the rise of gender discussions in European politics between 1997 and 2013. In addition, Baker examines how Eurovision contributes to a broad view of Europe while also recognizing its shortcomings and difficulties.

The article "Culturally Biased Voting in the Eurovision Song Contest: Do National Contests Differ?" by Oliver Budzinski and Julia Pannicke examines whether the patterns of cultural bias in voting in the ESC differ across national contests. The authors analyze voting data from both the ESC and national contests in Germany and the United Kingdom between 2000 and 2010 and find evidence of bias based on geographic proximity and cultural and linguistic similarities in all three contests, but also find that influence of cultural and linguistic similarities is stronger in the ESC than in national contests.

The essay "Popular Geopolitics Past and Future: Fandom, Identities and Audiences," by Jason Dittmer and Klaus Dodds, examines the connection between popular culture and geopolitics. According to Dittmer and Dodds, popular culture has always been crucial to the creation and development of geopolitical narratives. The writers talk about how fan culture is ingrained in society and how it may influence geopolitical discourses and reflect them, affecting how people view and comprehend geopolitical events.
Victor Ginsburgh and Abdul Noury explore the degree to which political and cultural elements affect voting patterns in the ESC in their article, "The Eurovision Song Contest: Is Voting Political or Cultural?" The authors use statistical models to analyze voting data from the contest between 1998 and 2003 and discover that while political factors like past conflicts and alliances between nations are important, so are geographical proximity and cultural and linguistic similarities. They contend that the competition gives nations a stage on which to display their cultural distinctiveness and communicate their political stances to the world.

The article "Examining Collusion and Voting Biases between Countries during the Eurovision Song Contest since 1957" by Mantzaris et al. examines voting trends and potential collusion between nations in the ESC since its inception in 1957. To analyze voting trends and determine how much linguistic, cultural, and political aspects affect voting, the authors employ statistical modelling and network analysis. They discover evidence of collusion between nations, especially those with strong linguistic and cultural links, and they hypothesize that this cooperation may have a considerable influence on the competition's result. The writers contend that the ESC offers insights into the dynamics of intergroup connections and collaboration and acts as an example of the complicated political and cultural relationships that exist between European nations.

The article "Queer to be kind: Exploring Western media discourses about the 'Eastern bloc' during the 2007 and 2014 Eurovision Song Contests" by Ulbricht et al. examines how Western media discourse during the ESC has constructed and portrayed the "Eastern bloc" of countries, particularly about queer issues. They argue that media discourse surrounding the "Eastern bloc" has often reinforced stereotypes and stigmatized these countries, particularly concerning their perceived lack of support for queer rights. Ultimately, they suggest that the ESC provides a useful lens through which to examine broader geopolitical discourses about the "East-West" divide and queer issues.

In conclusion, research on national identity, image construction, and imagined communities has been conducted through various approaches, including case studies, historical analysis, and discourse analysis. These studies provide insights into the complex and multifaceted nature of national identity, image construction, and imagined communities, and offer valuable perspectives on the relationship between culture, politics, and global governance.
Methodology

By examining lyrics, music, and performance elements, researchers can identify patterns and differences in the ways different countries express notions of national identity and common identities and develop theories about the ways that cultural events contribute to the formation of national identity. This research has implications not only for understanding the ESC but also for understanding the broader cultural and political contexts in which national identity and image construction are increasingly important.

To explore the themes of national identity, nation-building, image construction and projection and imagined communities in relation to the ESC, there is a need to combine methods. The methods that this research design will apply are a content analysis of ESC entries to identify how different countries use patterns of expressing national identity and a discourse analysis of how European identity is formed in ESC and how it is used to legitimize the national identity.

Data

National identity is deeply rooted in personal experiences, values, and beliefs, shaping an individual's sense of belonging to a particular nation. Primary data are required to capture these individual perspectives. Engaging with the lyrics directly enables academics to investigate their narratives, offering insightful information on the emergence, development, and manifestation of national identity.

Researchers may place historical and cultural impacts on national identity in context by using primary data. This method reveals the nuanced and complicated aspects of national identity that may not have been completely understood by secondary data alone.

Following Gillian Rose’s description of content analysis in the 2016 book ‘Visual Methodologies – An introduction to researching with visual materials’, the data sampling is done stratified meaning that it is collected based on subgroupings with pre-conditions. Firstly, data collected for this research is the lyrics and video footage of specific ESC entries. The data collection can be done by searching for the lyrics and recordings online from the official website. If songs are not originally in English, the official translation from the ESC website or Eurovisionworld is used. Rather than choosing a systematic or random selection of years, only
the performances from 1998 onward will be considered. This is due to the introduction of televoting in 1998, where both an expert jury and the general public could choose the winner of the contest. The hypothesis is that this would lead to a more interesting and contemporary discourse analysis when considering the context. While having as large of a sample size as possible to analyze would be preferable, between 1998 and 2022, 911 songs competed in the contest which would be beyond the scope of this thesis. Therefore, songs that did not qualify for the final after the semi-final are not going to be considered. This is also due to inconsistencies in the contest structure where the semi-final was only introduced in 2004. Lastly, there are different factors to consider when selecting countries for Eurovision, such as the voting block they belong to and their geographical region. Other factors to consider is whether it should be the same country over a period of time or rather only the winners of the contest. The songs that will be considered for the content analysis are songs that have won the contest from 1998 through 2022, which is 24 songs.

Table 1. Overview of all songs with descriptive information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Song Title</th>
<th>Singer(s)</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Diva</td>
<td>Dana International</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Take me to your heaven</td>
<td>Charlotte Nilsson</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Fly on the wings of love</td>
<td>Olsen Brothers</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Everybody</td>
<td>Tanel Padar, Dave Benson</td>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>I wanna</td>
<td>Marie N</td>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Everyway that I can</td>
<td>Sertab Erener</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Wild dances</td>
<td>Ruslana</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>Ukrainian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>My number one</td>
<td>Helena Paparizou</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Hard Rock Hallelujah</td>
<td>Lordi</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Molitva (Prayer)</td>
<td>Marija Serifovic</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>Serbian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Believe</td>
<td>Dima Bilau</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Fairytale</td>
<td>Alexander Ryback</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Satellite</td>
<td>Lena</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Running Scared</td>
<td>Ell/Nikki</td>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Euphoria</td>
<td>Loreen</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Only teardrops</td>
<td>Emmelie de Forest</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Rise like a Phoenix</td>
<td>Conchita Wurst</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Heroes</td>
<td>Måns Zelmerlöv</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Song Title</td>
<td>Artist</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
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<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Jamala</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>Ukrainian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Amar Pelos Dios (Love for Both)</td>
<td>Salvador Sobral</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>Portuguese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Toy</td>
<td>Netta</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Arcade</td>
<td>Duncan Lawrance</td>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>__________</td>
<td>__________</td>
<td>__________</td>
<td>__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>Zitti e Buoni</td>
<td>Måneskin</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Italian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>Stefania</td>
<td>Kalush Orchestra</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>Ukrainian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Beyond national bounds, the concept of "European identity" includes a general sense of identification with the European Union (EU) and its supranational institutions. Secondary data sources offer a wide range of data for comparative study among EU member states, including academic studies, government publications, and public opinion polls. These resources provide insight into the similarities, distinctions, and changing patterns in European identity and aid in the geographical identification of common values, political viewpoints, and sociocultural dynamics.

**Content Analysis**

A content analysis uses codes to analyze a large number of visual images which may reveal patterns that would not have been visible when analyzing lone images (Rose, 2016, pp. 85-105)

Gillian Rose establishes that there are four steps to a content analysis which is:

1. Finding your images
2. Devising your categories for coding
3. Coding the images
4. Analyzing the result

The first step has already been explained in the data section of this methodology, however, three categories of data are gathered; the basic information about the song (e.g., artist, country, year, language etc.), the lyrics (either original or translated to English) and the performance that was recorded of the final contest. These three components inform the coding and analysis that follows.

The second step in the content analysis is choosing the codes, which means attaching a set of descriptive labels to images. These codes must be exhaustive, exclusive, and
enlightening and should have a clear connection to the research question. The core of the research question is identity and the different ways that we describe identity, therefore the five main categories to describe either an individual or national identity are selected as the codes. These codes as culture, ethnicity/nationality, religion, gender, and sex/sexuality which are described in Table 2. Under each code, words relating to these concepts were identified to explain each code further which is explained in Table 3-7 in the appendix.

For the third step, each lyric and performance are considered, and the correct codes are attached to them. Researchers read through the lyrics to identify themes and words related to culture, religion ethnicity, gender, or sexuality. This might entail looking for words or phrases that are frequently used to communicate certain topics or examining the overall message and tone of the songs.

As for the performance, emphasis is needed on staging, costumes, props, and other visual aspects to find symbols and themes that reflect the national identity and shared identities. To understand how they contribute to the manifestation of various identities; researchers need also to pay attention to the music and choreography. However, it is important to keep in mind that national and cultural symbols can vary from one country to the next and that the same symbol may have different meanings depending on the location.

Lastly, when all of the songs and performances have been coded, all the codes will be counted, and quantitative accounts is produced based on the content of the codes. Rose suggests a few ways to analyze the data through frequency counts (both absolute and relative), comparing values over time and exploring the relationship between different coding categories. Researchers may also consider the historical and cultural backgrounds of the nations participating in the competition to uncover potential influences on how national identities are expressed.

**Discourse Analysis**

Examining how language and communication affect our perception of the world and how we interact with it is done through discourse analysis. Human subjects are not simply born but rather are created through certain procedures, according to Foucault. Foucault's theoretical ideas and his methods both centre on discourse, or groupings of statements that shape how we think about something and how we behave because of that thinking. By using discourse
analysis in combination with content analysis, the codes and the analysis can be put into context and the most interesting or controversial songs can be further examined.

The discourse sources that will be analysed are the national identity which the lyrics of the selected ESC songs portray. Additionally, academic articles written on the topic of Eurovision will be used to gain a broader perspective on the discourse around the themes identified. Discourse analysis emphasizes that language does not simply reveal reality, but rather produces an interpretation. Through the discourse analysis, we will be able to understand how the songs relate to real European politics and how the ESC can be used as a soft power tool.

Discourse analysis must consider the power dynamics at work as well as the social environment in which it is formed. The discourse around European identity and the ambivalence between national and European identity will be discussed. Researchers need to identify the primary ideas, metaphors, and rhetorical strategies that appear in the discourses around European identity in Eurovision to start the analysis. Specific attention should be paid to how language and discourse represent and negotiate ideas about Europe, cultural heritage, diversity, and togetherness. The three general themes will be analysed through the lens of conventional constructivism in the discourse analysis of Europeanness as individualistic yet universalist, European Identity used to legitimize national identity and how soft diplomatic ties are evident in the ESC.

I will critically examine the discourses to elucidate power dynamics, ideological underpinnings, and opposing viewpoints. I look at how these discourses could support or contradict popular ideas about European identity. I also look for patterns, similarities, and differences among many sources and discourses. To spot discursive shifts, developing trends, and points of agreement or disagreement on European identity in Eurovision, I will compare and contrast the discourses. I hope to do this to expose hidden patterns and divergent viewpoints.

I place the discourses within the larger context to present a thorough study. This entails taking into account the historical context, current debates, and geopolitical pressures that have an impact on how European identity is constructed discursively in Eurovision
Analyzing the data, recognizing overarching themes, and putting the right analytical frameworks and theoretical perspectives to use allow us to interpret the discursive creation of European identity in Eurovision. I give examples that are directly taken from the data to support my analysis and conclusions.

Furthermore, the purpose of discourse analysis is to persuade rather than to prove something, so our analytical claims must be somewhat modest. In terms of bias, the content analysis prevents certain biases from occurring while the discourse analysis is completely subjective to the author. As for the replicability and validity of the research, both the discourse and the content analysis aim to analyse the data in a broader context in a transparent manner.
Results

Graph 1: Song Themes in ESC from 1998-2022
Graph 2: Culture in ESC from 1998-2022

Graph 3: Nationality/Ethnicity in ESC from 1998-2022

Graph 4: Gender in ESC from 1998-2022
Graph 5: Religion in ESC from 1998-2022

Graph 6: Sexuality in ESC from 1998-2022
Analysis

Identity politics is at the core of the European Song Contest and there are certain trends in songs that portray this. The contest can be a platform to establish one’s national identity, however, it is also a platform for European identity. These identities do not combine but rather compete against each other which the state chooses to emphasize. Either it is the national identity with their unique culture, linguistics and history or it is the European identity based on shared values and interests.

This analysis is divided into two sections; the first analyses entries from 1998 to 2022 examining the aspects of national identity or European identity that the song and performance portray. This is following the content analysis of the entries where patterns of identity were found. This will then be put into context and discussed in relation to the literature.

Seven entries between 1998 and 2022 are not addressed in the section about national identity. This is the 1999 ‘Take Me to your heaven’ by Charlotte Nilsson from Sweden, 2002 ‘Everybody’ by Tanel Padar & Dave Benson from Estonia, 2009 ‘Fairytale’ by Alexander Ryback from Norway, 2010 ‘Satellite’ by Lena from Germany, 2017 ‘Amar Pelos Dois’ by Salvador Sobral from Portugal and 2019 ‘Arcade’ by Duncan Lawrance from the Netherlands. The motivation behind this exclusion is either due to insignificant patterns, outliers that have been judged to be an error or an anomaly or would produce an insignificant analysis of the country’s national identity.

Secondly, I will analyze the ways that national and European identity is constructed, how they coexist and interact and how this is portrayed in the ESC. The first section will address how the European identity is individualistic by having to incorporate aspects of each national identity into itself while at the same time being universal; creating an overarching identity for a continent. Secondly, I will describe how and with what motivation countries use the European identity to legitimize themselves and their national identity within the ESC. Lastly, I will discuss how the ESC has become a discursive tool for defining Europeanness and explain the West/East divide in the contest.
National Identity

The research that follows tries to investigate how a small selection of songs portrays a sense of national identity. It is significant to highlight that the findings reached via this study do not establish the proper national identities of the analyzed nations. Instead, they serve as a foundation for understanding how songs could represent facets of identity in the study of international relations. The research does not claim to reflect the varied and complex nature of national identities, and it acknowledges the inherent limits in making generalizations from a limited sample of songs.

Israel

1998 Diva by Dana International

Dana International was the first transgender person to ever win the ESC. The choice of transgender singer Dana International to represent Israel in the competition was regarded as a turning point in Israeli cultural history since it questioned conventional gender roles and emphasized Israel's progressive views on LGBTQ+ issues.

In contrast to the rest of Europe, many European nations have made further progress toward gender parity in terms of gender equality, including by enacting anti-discrimination laws and policies that aim to close the gender pay gap. Yet, it was Israel that chose to send a song that focused on gender and gender expression. The song "Diva" by Dana International might be seen as an attempt to promote and brand Israel as a forward-thinking nation. Israel has been accused of ‘pink-washing’ concerning “their marketing of the ‘Israel’s’ gay decade” which Diva contributed to this strategy (Baker, 2017, p. 102).

The song and its performance reflect the legitimization of Israel's national identity with the ambition to be accepted as a member of the political and cultural life of Europe. Lemish argues the song “centered around nationalistic sentiments and a desire for international recognition dissociated from issues of war and politics“ (Lemish, 2007, p. 123). The song's lyrics and message of self-empowerment and celebration of uniqueness resonate with the shared values of the European community.

1 Pink-washing is the tactic of highlighting LGBT rights protections as proof of liberalism and democracy, particularly to divert attention from or condone violence against other nations or people and has been used to restore nation's damaged reputation.
2018 Toy by Netta

Netta’s song "Toy" not only questions gender norms but also more general social themes like body image and self-acceptance. It is possible to interpret the song's success and popularity as a reflection of broader social and political movements that aim to increase acceptance and recognition of gender and sexual diversity. Overall, it can be said that Netta's song "Toy" is a feminist anthem that questions conventional gender roles and stereotypes.

The words of the song and Netta's assured performance on stage paint a picture of a country that isn't scared to stand up for its values. The song promotes empowerment and self-expression, which is in line with the themes that Dana International touched on in 1998. The song's lyrics, which promote self-reliance and assertiveness, are inspired by Israel's historical battle for independence and the country's aspiration to be viewed as a powerful and tenacious nation. Toy rejects the conservative values held by the majority of the Middle East; something Ulbricht et al claim to contribute to the anti-eastern discourse (Ulbricht et al., 2015).

The songs "Diva" by Dana International and "Toy" by Netta portray Israel's national identity as:

- Progressive views on Gender and LGBTQ+ Issues: Israel is shown as a nation that cherishes inclusion, variety, and acceptance of different identities and lifestyles in this representation.
- Forward-thinking nation: The songs demonstrate Israel's desire to present itself as a contemporary, progressive country that is in line with the principles and objectives of the United Nations by addressing issues of gender expression, body image, self-acceptance, and empowerment.

Sweden

2012 Euphoria by Loreen

The song "Euphoria" honors the strength, beauty, and joy that love may offer. Some aspects of Swedish cultures, such as a focus on equality, individualism, and resilience, could be seen as reflecting the song's message of overcoming hardship and discovering inner strength and joy. The music and Loreen's performance both have a strong feeling of uniqueness and authenticity. This fits with Sweden's reputation as a nation that encourages uniqueness, innovation, and being oneself. "Euphoria" captures Sweden's reputation as a nation of modernity, creativity, and innovation.
2015 Heroes by Måns Zelmerlöv
“Heroes” is a song about the conflict between good and evil as well as the personal demons that people may have to deal with. With phrases like "breaking free" and "letting go" of the past, it delves into Sweden's progressive stance on a variety of issues, including mental health, sustainability, and migration. In this context, "Heroes" might be seen as a metaphor for the tenacity and fortitude of people dealing with difficult situations. Furthermore, "Heroes’ lyrics promote solidarity and the idea of coming together. This is consistent with the concept of imagined communities; the feeling of connection and shared identity among individuals, such as the shared European identity (Dittmer & Dodds, 2008). Taking this into consideration this may serve as a reminder of Sweden’s dedication to the European community.

The songs “Euphoria” and “Heroes” portray Sweden's national identity as:

• Modernity with a preserved cultural character: Sweden is depicted as a progressive country with a thriving cultural scene. The blending of pop and dance elements in music represents Sweden's progressive principles and cultural identity.

• Musical traditions and export: Sweden are a nation with a long history in music, which is furthered by the fact that it is one of the top exporters of internet music in the world.

• Equality, Individualism, and Overcoming Adversity: Sweden promotes originality, ingenuity, and self-expression, which is consistent with its devotion to authenticity in art.

Denmark

2000 Fly on the Wings of Love by the Olsen Brothers
"Fly on the wings of love" is a song that speaks about the ability of love to cross the boundaries of time and place. The song implies the virtues of marriage, that love transcends all, through the good and the bad and that this should be something that we should strive for. A sense of real passion and authenticity is conveyed by the song's straightforward structure and sincere lyrics, which can be considered as representing Danish ideals of sincerity, honesty, and authenticity.

The Olsen Brothers' 2000 performance of "Fly on the Wings of Love" reveals a connection to Danish musical traditions and the nation's cultural history. The song's timeless tone and traditional Eurovision-style ballad may appeal to Danish nostalgia and create the view of Denmark as a nation that values collaboration, cultural exchange, and European integration.
The song "Only Teardrops" is about the need for peace and understanding as well as the devastating nature of human disputes. It might be considered as a reflection of the principles of cooperation, universality and solidarity held by Danish society.

Weldes describes how popular culture can reproduce politics by introducing themes or settings about current affairs in politics, as may be the case with ‘Only Teardrops’ (Weldes, 1998). During that time, Denmark was involved in several ongoing armed conflicts such as the Syrian civil war and the Libyan civil war. While the song does not explicitly address warfare or armed conflicts, with the context of the year, the song's message of harmony and camaraderie is applicable in a wide range of circumstances, including those involving conflict.

Furthermore, the song's lyrics praise the wonders of nature and encourage listeners to unite and express their feelings, arguing that doing so can help the world change for the better. It shows that Denmark places high importance on the conservation of natural resources, environmental harmony, and sustainability.

Lastly, the song is related to Denmark's cultural heritage since it uses instruments from traditional Danish folk music, such as flute and drums. It displays Denmark's pride in its folk customs and the value of commemorating and conserving its cultural origins.

The songs "Fly on the Wings of Love", and “Only Teardrops” portray Denmark’s national identity as:

- **Solidarity and Unity**: Denmark as a nation values harmony, peace, and understanding. Emphasizing cooperation and a sense of solidarity while reflecting Danish values of collaboration and universality.
- **Authenticity and cultural heritage**: Denmark are proud of its culture and values maintaining authenticity in creative expression.
- **Awareness of the environment and sustainability**: Denmark is a nation that is dedicated to sustainability and appreciation for environmental concerns.

**Latvia**

**2002 I wanna by Marie N**

Marie N's song "I Wanna" is about wanting someone to love and appreciate you even if they might not reciprocate. The song's gender-bending aspects made the performance at the 2002
ESC stand out. Marie N, a cisgender\(^2\) woman, made her on-stage entrance in a suit and tie, hat, and short hair. In addition, Marie N's performance was viewed as being a part of a larger trend of androgynous and gender-bending performances in popular culture in the early 2000s, especially in the aftermath of the success of performers like David Bowie and Prince (Baker, 2017).

In terms of gender expression and identity, Latvian culture was still generally conservative in 2004, with conventional gender roles and expectations for men and women. However, ‘I wanna’ portrays Latvia as a country that is liberal in terms of gender equality and expression.

The song “I Wanna” portrays Latvia's national identity as:

- Progressive nation in change: Latvia is a country of progressive gender movements to overturn conventional gender norms. The goal of these initiatives was to promote a wider acceptance of various gender identities and manifestations.
- Global influences: Latvia is a country that is progressive in terms of gender and sexuality. It is a global actor and Latvia's attitudes about gender expression and identity are impacted by wider worldwide developments in cultural norms.

**Turkey**

2003 *Everyway that I can* by Sertab Erener

The song generally discusses the importance of love, and the extent individuals would go to for their loved ones. The song combines modern dance-pop production qualities with Turkish folk music elements, such as the usage of a darbuka drum and a maqam-based melody. Turkey's past as a crossroads of civilizations and its contemporary status as a rapidly modernizing country are both reflected in this fusion of traditional and modern musical forms.

The theme of the song, which emphasizes living life to the fullest and embracing one's emotions and wants, can be interpreted as reflecting a larger cultural attitude in Turkey that emphasizes celebration and happiness as well as a desire to be accepted by others. The song's contemporary tone and victory in a global contest like Eurovision represent Turkey's aspirations for modernization and stronger ties with Europe.

Solomon describes the factor that contributed to Turkey's win in 2003. Turkey had limited its support for the invasion of Iraq leading up to 2003 and had even refused for

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\(^2\) a person whose gender identity corresponds with the sex the person had or was identified as having at birth.
allies to use Turkish territory for military operations. Furthermore, the relations between Turkey, Greece and Cyprus has improved temporarily (Solomon, 2007). This was positively perceived by the majority of Europe as it portrayed Turkey as a nation moving towards peaceful agreements rather than militant operations. This was further emphasized by Turkey's interest in joining the European Union (Solomon, 2007).

The song “Everyway that I Can” portrays Turkeys’ national identity as:

- Fusion of Traditional and Modern: Turkey's national identity as a synthesis of traditional and modern influences. This fusion highlight both the nation's current status as a rapidly modernizing country and its historical function as a crossroads of civilizations.
- Modern European Nation: shifting social environment that upends conventional assumptions and conventions.
- Cultural nexus: Turkey's distinctive position as a link between civilizations, the East and the West and its rich cultural history.

Ukraine

2004 Wild Dances by Ruslana

The song's lyrics speak about the happiness and freedom that come from dancing freely and letting go. The vocalist expresses a desire to be loved while simultaneously showing her independence and power in the lyrics, which also touch on themes of love and rebellion.

Catherine Baker argues in her 2008 article that Wild Dances can be an example of essentialization.

“Essentialization would occur when a performance involves the construction of a national tradition (e.g., through folklore) or a tradition of Europeanness.... may also be seen from a post-colonialist perspective, as in the works of Bhabha (2004 [1994], p.83), where it involves a claim of cultural authenticity or purity (Baker, 2008, p. 174).

The visual performance of the song is based on the Hutsul people, depicted as a culture that remains untouched by modernity and industrialization (Baker, 2008, p.175). Furthermore, as Eurovision is a contest between nations, the performance seems to represent a nation as a whole, inclining the viewers to believe the inauthentic representation of Ukraine is true.
Essentialization is meant to involve a claim of authenticity and when the opposite occurs, rather than a true representation, a simulation is portrayed.

Overall, Ukraine was a nation in transition in 2004, with several simmering racial, cultural, and national problems. As Ukrainians fought for greater political freedom, independence, and national identity, the Orange Revolution marked a turning point in the nation's history. The song created a view of Ukraine as an Eastern European country that blended modernity with its deep cultural traditions.

2016 1944 by Jamala
The song is about the Soviet government's expulsion of Crimean Tatars in 1944, which occurred during World War II. The Crimean Tatars, who were forcibly exiled from their country and sent to Central Asia, are depicted in the lyrics as having experienced sorrow and misery. The song expresses optimism for a brighter future in which people may live in harmony and freedom.

The lyrics of the song are deeply personal and emotional, describing the pain and suffering of the Crimean Tatars as they were removed from their homes and sent into exile. The song also touches on the themes of loss, identity, and displacement that people and communities that are excluded or oppressed which demonstrated how valuable emotions can be in terms of influencing both popular culture and politics (Bleiker & Hutchison, 2008).

The song emphasizes the need of remembering and respecting the experiences of minority communities who have endured discrimination and persecution throughout history. The song promotes awareness of the ongoing fight for justice and respect for this and other ethnic minority groups worldwide by drawing attention to the predicament of the Crimean Tatars.

The song can be seen as a reflection on Ukraine's complex history and the ongoing tensions between Ukraine and Russia over the status of Crimea. 1944 mirrors the turbulent period that Ukraine was experiencing in 2016 with political unrest, protests, and armed conflict. Russian forces occupied Crimea, a Ukrainian province, in March 2014.

2022 Stefania by Kalush Orchestra
Stefania” is a song about the singer's mother, Stefania. The singer's love and admiration for their mother and the significant part she has played in their lives are expressed in the song's
lyrics. The song is a celebration of the love and connection between a mother and child. In the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in the spring of 2022, the mother can be interpreted as the motherland; Ukraine and the child are the Ukrainian people.

Stefania has taken influence from Ukrainian folk music with its instruments and incorporation of ethnic minority music. In this regard, "Stefania" might be viewed as a representation of the musical and cultural traditions of Ukraine. The song inspires a sense of pride and enthusiasm for Ukraine's distinctive cultural identity, which has been created by the nation's long history and its many ethnic groups.

Utilizing Ukrainian folk music is another way to stay connected to the country's past and protect its cultural heritage for future generations. Overall, it can be said that "Stefania" is a celebration of Ukraine's rich cultural heritage and a portrayal of the nation's strong sense of national identity.

The songs “Wild Dances”, “1944” and “Stefania” portrays Ukraine’s national identity as:

- Political Unrest and Change: Ukraine is undergoing a period of political and economic change, which was accompanied by persistent political unrest and a quest for greater political independence and national identity.
- Rediscovery of Cultural Heritage: This theme aims to highlight the rich and diverse cultural identity of the country by focusing on rediscovering and revitalizing cultural traditions that were impacted by Ukraine's past as a part of the Soviet Union. This also emphasizes the need to remember past injustices and fight for justice.
- Pride in Cultural Identity: via the celebration and promotion of Ukraine's unique cultural identity, which is exhibited via song, dance, and traditional practices, the country hopes to instil pride in and a passion for its history. The representation of Ukrainians' longing for love, independence, and peace, as well as their resolve to overcome hardship, shows a strong sense of resilience and national pride in the face of difficulties and conflicts.

**Greece**

2005 *My Number One by Helena Paparizou*

The love ballad "My Number One" is about an intense and passionate loving connection. The song "My Number One lyrics can also be seen as a glorification of Greece. According to this interpretation, the song celebrates Greece as the singer's "number one" love by highlighting its natural splendor, rich history, and cultural diversity. Baker writes that many Mediterranean
countries use their constructed national image of ‘the warm south’ as a part of their success in Eurovision.

Eurovision entries from Spain, but also Greece, Cyprus, Turkey, and Malta, often draw on the representational strategies of commercially successful Latin pop music, such as “bright colors, rhythmic music, and brown or olive skin”. Studies of Latin music itself often view this as a “de-contextualized, de-historicized” essentialization of Latinity and warn that it maintains the “hyper-sexualization” of Latinas and Latinos … “warm South” … appropriation of fashionable and sensualized “Latinity” in Eurovision entries from the eastern Mediterranean…play on images of the sunny Mediterranean in their marketing (Baker, 2008, p. 181).

It transmitted a sense of happiness and enjoyment that helped create Greece's reputation as a top travel destination and further contributes to the Imagineering of Greece.

The song “My number one” portrayed the national identity of Greece as:

- Love and Passion: Love and relationships are important in Greek culture. Greece is a place of carefree enjoyment and a kind and inviting environment.
- A proud nation: Greek glorification with the natural beauty, extensive history, and rich cultural variety of the nation are all being highlighted. There is a great sense of pride in and admiration for Greek culture and achievements.

**Finland**

*2006 Hard Rock Hallelujah by Lordi*

The song's lyrics discuss the force and vitality of rock music and mention theological concepts like angels and devils as well as the notion of rock and roll as a means of redemption. Additionally, "Hard Rock Hallelujah" has been interpreted as a celebration of individualism, self-determination, and rebellion—values frequently linked to Finnish culture. Finland has a long history of supporting equality and individual freedom, and Lordi's triumph with this song at the Eurovision showed their capacity to push limits and question expectations.

The hard rock and heavy metal music scene in Finland has grown to be well-known across the world. The words and musical style of the song are typical of this musical heritage, which has grown to be a significant component of Finnish cultural identity. Lordi's performances have become known for their distinctive kitsch visual aesthetic, which is influenced by fantasy, monsters, and horror films. Allatson describes kitsch to be an aesthetic
mechanism for moderating radical differences and preventing inter- and intracultural conflict (Allatson, 2007, p. 91). Lordi’s appearance could therefore be seen as, not an indication of national identity, but rather of European identity where we can put our differences aside.

The song “Hard Rock Hallelujah” portrays the national identity of Finland as:

- Uniqueness & Originality: Finland is a nation that values individualism and innovation. It also is a country that does not take itself too seriously and values creativity and self-expression.
- Exports of Culture: Finland’s rock and metal scene is still significant and shows that the nation is not only home to more traditional music styles.

**Serbia**  
**2007 Molitva by Marija Serifovic**

Molitva means prayer in Serbian and is about a person who can't let go of a prior relationship. The song describes how the person repeats their ex-partner's name as a prayer and how they find consolation in prayer. The lyrics provide a message of hope and the ability of prayer and faith to help one get over the suffering and melancholy of a shattered heart.

Religion has continued to play a significant role throughout Eastern Europe, especially the Balkans, in society and cultural identity. The song's message of optimism and solidarity may be regarded as echoing larger themes of resiliency and tenacity that are frequently associated with Serbian identity. Bohlman argues that "Molitva" helped close the historical gap between Serbia and Europe, which had increased during the post-communist era of the New Europe and reimagining the existence of a New Serbia in a New Europe (Bohlman, 2007, p. 45). Furthermore, he states that “the song was more about Europe than it was about Serbia, but it was decidedly about both” (Bohlman, 2007, p. 44).

Overall, despite the lack of overt political or cultural allusions, "Molitva"'s message of hope and unification can be seen as having resonance with larger issues in Serbian society and culture.

The song “Molitva” portrays the national identity of Serbia as:

- A religious country: Serbia is a country that values religion and it significantly contributes to the formation of cultural identity.
• Tenacity and cultural heritage: A nation which is resilient and has an important cultural legacy. It emphasizes the general optimism and strength of the Serbian people when facing problems and difficulties.

Russia

2008 Believe by Dima Bilan

The theme of the song "Believe" is maintaining self-assurance despite challenges and doubt from others. It conveys an upbeat, empowering message of having the strength and resilience to overcome obstacles and achieve our objectives if we just believe in ourselves.

As part of the chorus, Bilan sings, "I believe in you, I believe in me, and I believe in the power of people's unity." This message of harmony and self-confidence might be compared to religious doctrines that stress the value of community and faith. The song's music video also includes imagery that may be regarded as religious, such as Bilan standing in a field with his arms lifted to the sky and a choir singing in a church. These images can allude to a relationship to spiritual or religious concepts given their positive message and the song's visuals.

Past Russian Eurovision entries have been tied to exemplifying aspects of the Russian national identity. Meerzon and Priven (2013) argue that Russia uses Eurovision to create an image of Russia as an ideologically and culturally stable country to be able to position itself independently but in dialogue with the West. This includes all national progressive ideas that might unite and energize society (Meerzon & Priven, 2013). Believe feeds into the idea of unity and community that is at the core of Russian identity with the addition of certain Christian elements to further appeal to the audience.

The song “Believe” portrays Russia’s national identity as:

• Empowerment and Resilience: Russia is seen as a country that values strength and determination.

• Unity and Community: The idea of community in the song is comparable to religious ideologies that place a strong emphasis on family and religion. It is consistent with the value of group identification and cohesiveness in Russian society. Furthermore, it connects with the religious imagery and identity that is significant to Russia’s cultural identity.
Azerbaijan

2011 Running Scared by Ell & Nikki

The song "Running Scared" is about being in love and feeling exposed and afraid as a result. The words of the song may be seen as a reflection of Azerbaijan's history and place in the world. With phrases like "Just when you think you're safe, you're in the eye of the storm" and "We're running out of time, but we'll make it through together," the song's lyrics convey a longing for love and security. This might be interpreted as representing Azerbaijan's historical experiences as a nation that has dealt with political instability and violence, as well as its hopes for future peace and security (Ismayilov, 2012).

Azerbaijan might portray itself via music and performance as a link between Eastern and Western cultures, exhibiting its distinct fusion of influences and advancing a good image of cultural variety and tolerance (Ismayilov, 2012). Azerbaijan had only joined Eurovision in 2008 which might be an indication for a closer relationship with Europe. A favorable opinion from Europe may help the nation's attempts to build its brand and image by portraying Azerbaijan as a talented and lively cultural nation.

The song “Running Scared” portrays Azerbaijan’s national identity as:

- **Historical Experiences and Aspirations for Peace:** Azerbaijan has historical experiences of political instability and conflicts however has hopes for security, stability, and peace.

- **Cultural Fusion and Tolerance:** The idea of cultural fusion is highlighted by the way that Azerbaijan is portrayed as a link between Eastern and Western civilizations. The nation's unique fusion of influences and advocacy for cultural diversity and tolerance contribute to the perception of it as a lively and inclusive culture.

- **European Integration and Relationship Building:** The issue of European integration is reflected in Azerbaijan's participation in the ESC and its aim to forge stronger ties with Europe.

Austria

2014 Austria – Rise like a Phoenix by Conchita Wurst

The song "Rise Like a Phoenix" is about overcoming adversity to become more powerful than before. The phoenix, a legendary bird that rises from its ashes to be reborn, is a metaphor for this change.

Conchita Wurst, the stage name of Austrian singer Thomas Neuwirth, is a drag queen who identifies as gay and uses feminine pronouns when performing in character as
Conchita. With lines like "I'm gonna rise like a phoenix from the ashes" and "Once again I'm rising up from the flames," "Rise Like a Phoenix’s lyrics are likely related to gender transitions and disregarding people’s opinion (Baker, 2017). The struggle of oppressed groups more generally, as well as Conchita's path as a drag queen and LGBTQ+ activist, can be reflected in the song. Another noteworthy aspect of Conchita's rendition of the song at the 2014 ESC was its powerful visual depiction of the gender identification (Weber, 2016). Conchita defied conventional gender conventions and expectations as she took the stage with a long golden gown and a full beard. Conchita Wurst's victory in the ESC and subsequent international fame contributed to the increased knowledge and acceptance of LGBTQ+ identities (Weber, 2016).

The song “Rise like a Phoenix” portrays the national identity of Austria as:

- Embracing Diversity and Individuality: Austria has a national ethos of welcoming variety and expressing uniqueness. There is tolerance for all gender identities and manifestations. It is a nation that has advanced LGBTQ+ rights and is renowned for its moderately progressive views on gender and sexuality.

- Cultural Representation and International Perception: Austria is attempting to portray itself to the world as a nation that values tolerance, inclusion, and cultural variety.

**Italy**

2021 Zitti e Buoni by Måneskin

The title "Zitti e Buoni," is an ironic remark on the pressure to live up to social norms and expectations and translates to "Be quiet and behave,". The song has been interpreted as a call to reject conformity and be genuine to oneself, as well as a message of empowerment.

The dynamic and rebellious attitude of the song, which connected with many young people in Italy and beyond, is one of its essential components. A larger cultural movement in Italy toward greater individual freedom and self-expression can be noticed in the lyrics, which are generally centered on themes of independence, non-conformity, and breaking away from societal expectations.

Additionally, the song is entirely sung in Italian, which may be interpreted as a reflection of the importance and pride that modern Italy places on its use of the Italian language and culture. Promoting the Italian language and culture has received fresh attention recently, especially among younger generations.
Overall, "Zitti e buoni" is but one illustration of the vibrant modernity and rich cultural legacy of Italy, which continues to be a significant cultural and economic force in Europe and the rest of the globe.

The song “Zitti e Buoni” portrays the national identity of Italy as:

- Non-conformity, Empowerment and Rebellion: The Italian culture of individual freedom and self-expression. The spirit of rebellion and the longing for individualism in Italian society is highlighted by this song.
- Importance of Italian Language and Culture: The song's complete use of Italian illustrates the value and pride that are attached to the Italian language and culture. It demonstrates the importance of fostering and maintaining Italian heritage, especially among younger generations.

**European Identity: The ambivalence between National Identity and European Identity**

**The European Project: Individualistic yet Universal**

The Eurovision Song Contest is a unique forum where the domestic and global interact and is “a common platform of celebrating cultural commonalities” (Georgiou, 2008, p. 4). While each country represents itself in the contest through their entries, it is its participation to begin with that is interesting to consider. Eurovision evolved to become a stage for showcasing national identities, with the performer held personally accountable for expressing their nation's musical characteristics and showcasing its distinct ideals in popular song (Mutsaers, 2007, p. 63).

The ESC began as a means to broadcast television at a lower cost by transnational cooperation but has evolved to something much greater. Georgiou argues that “the contest is something uniquely European… the first element of this imagination signifies a sense of clear separation between the national and the transnational; these two spheres are understood as being distinctly different and not competing but coexisting with each other” (Georgiou, 2008, p. 21). The two spheres interact and influence each other through a process called Europeanization which Katzenstein argues, is the process in which the events and decisions made on the European level have an impact on the domestic level (Katzenstein, 2006, p. 20).
There is not only a clear link between the cultural impact of the ESC on the countries, but it is a loop where the domestic side reverberated and has an impact on the regional level.

The European Identity is not a culmination of all of the national identities of Europe but rather has its own distinct identity. Hopf writes that “constructivism [instead] assumes that the selves, or identities, of states, are a variable; they likely depend on historical, cultural, political and social contexts” (Hopf, 1998, p. 176). The European identity is built upon European history, diverse cultures, and the regional framework of European cooperation in the forms of the European Union.

The history of Europe is rich in significant events, movements, and conflicts that have shaped the continent. The collective memory of historical occurrences and the cultural legacies they have produced have shaped European identity, from ancient civilizations to medieval kingdoms, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and the effects of both World Wars. Europe's experience of overcoming historical conflicts, particularly after the devastation of World War II, has fostered a desire for peace and stability (Fricker & Gluhovic, 2013).

Furthermore, within the mainstream European identity (which is based on the central/western European countries) liberal values such as freedom, equality, tolerance, and solidarity are emphasized in European identity. The European Union (EU) is crucial in determining these characteristics. The EU fosters collaboration, integration, and shared decision-making among numerous European nations by acting as a political and economic union (Raykoff, 2007). By providing a forum for cooperation and tackling shared problems, the EU's institutions, policies, and initiatives help to foster a sense of European identity.

The European political identities are being constructed, shaped and politicized by everyday social and cultural practices of Europeans just as much as by elite projects of institutional Europeanization (Jones & Subotic, 2011, p. 542). Europe is known for its vast cultural diversity, with different languages, traditions, cuisines, and artistic expressions. The European identity recognizes and embraces this diversity, valuing the distinctive contributions of each culture and fostering intercultural communication.

On the one hand, the competition is a celebration of a multicultural society where many cultural creations coexist, and on the other, it is a contest between nations where cultures are defined and framed at the national level (Georgiou, 2008, p. 17).
European Identity as a means of legitimizing national identity

Shared Values and Norms:
Values like democracy, human rights, and the rule of law are frequently associated with the European identity (Raykoff, 2007). By embracing these common values, nations can reaffirm their dedication to these ideals, which will strengthen their credibility and appeal to both home and global audiences.

Van Ham describes the process by which countries use soft power tools to manage their country's public image.

Conceptually, public diplomacy can be compared with place branding since they both combine foreign policy goals with internal soft power strategies and objectives... for both place branding and public diplomacy, a key element is to build personal and institutional relationships and dialogue with foreign audiences by focusing on values, setting them apart from classical diplomacy, which primarily deals with issues (van Ham, 2008, p. 135).

Rather than engaging in formal diplomacy over issues and conflicts, countries can interact by aligning values. By showcasing a specific culture, language, symbol, or subject matter in the ESC, countries may indicate an aspect of their national identity to receive legitimacy from the other participating countries and the international audience.

In 2011, when Azerbaijan won the contest, the performance was praised internationally for its modern performance while also receiving critique for emphasizing 'Western' values. Ismayilov argues that the Azerbaijani society and elite praised the “Western character of the songs performed and the Western guise of its performance” to strengthen the European identity among the populace (Ismayilov, 2012, p. 835). States have frequently used Eurovision as a cultural platform to legitimize their national identity by emphasizing their Europeanness and separating themselves from undesirable European "others" (Jones & Subotic, 2011, p. 549).

Another example of this is the Austrian entry in 2014 by Conchita Wurst. She emphasized values that are commonly associated with Europe such as liberal, openminded, inclusive and accepting with her gender-bending performance (Baker, 2017). This then
reverberated to the Austrian national identity which was portrayed to have the same values as the European identity.

**Economic and Political Integration:**

The promotion of political and economic integration among the member states of the European Union has been a major accomplishment. In order to underline their involvement in this integration process and to highlight the advantages of collaboration, common governance, and access to the EU internal market, nations may draw on their sense of European identity (Raykoff, 2007). Annually, The ESC emphasizes the borderless cooperation that exists through competition while simultaneously pitting nations against each other. Heller argues that rather than geography uniting the participating countries, it is the media space and the continuous creation of common culture and history (Heller, 2007, p. 199).

Since the mid-1990s, there has been an Eastward expansion in the ESC as more former-Soviet countries have joined the contest. Bohlman suggests that this is a means to gain recognition and legitimacy as a new nation-state before joining the European Union (Bohlman, 2007). Jones and Subotic further the analysis of the expansion and the political integration of new nation-states into Europe by suggesting that is a correlation between the winning countries from 2001-2003 and 2007 (Estonia, Latvia, Serbia, and Turkey) with their pursuit of EU membership. They argue that their participation in the cultural conference will boost the countries' popularity across the continent and promote political and economic integration. (Jones & Subotic, 2011, p. 548).

Before 2003, Turkey had not performed well in the ESC, with only one song in the decade prior breaching the top ten. Additionally, Turkey was considering becoming a member state of the EU, which may have prompted the Turkish Broadcasting Union to increase its resources in 2003 to gain cultural recognition. Countries prior to Turkey, such as Estonia and Latvia have used the ESC as a rite of passage into the European community; caring and excelling at a cultural phenomenon that is uniquely European.

**International Standing and Influence:**

The European Union is considered to be a significant force in world politics and economy. Countries can position themselves as involved and active members of the European community by leveraging their European identity to increase their international standing and influence. This can improve their diplomatic ties and open business and cultural collaboration doors.
Writing about the Olympic Games, Cornelissen argues that hosting and taking part in mega-events by "today’s emerging powers occurs through a common agenda: events are used to showcase economic achievements, to signal diplomatic stature or to project in the absence of other forms of international influence, soft power” (Cornelissen, 2010, p. 3010). No matter the seniority, size or influence, each country receives an equal opportunity to participate in the ESC and receives an equal amount of time to perform. This creates an ideal cultural platform to project soft power for countries that do not have the influence or resources to project it in other manners.

An example of this is Azerbaijan’s participation in Eurovision, as Raykoff and Tobin argue, is “undoubtedly, if not solely, an expression of its “assertion of modernity and [its] claim to membership in Europe and the West” (Raykoff and Tobin 2007 as cited in (Ismayilov, 2012, p. 834). This is due to their performances focusing on elements that seem contemporary Western with minimal reference to their ethnic or cultural heritage. Their success in 2011 has increased Azerbaijan’s international standing with a rise in regional tourism and foreign investments (Azerbaijan, 2022).

Moreover, as previously stated a country can use the European identity to legitimate its national identity which can also increase its international standing. Ukraine has utilized the platform that the ESC to legitimate its national identity both in 2016 and 2022 with advantageous results. Both songs speak of a unique aspect of their history and victimize themselves with the song. Since both songs won, we can understand that Europe responded favorably to this display of national identity which also legitimizes and raises their international standing and influence.

**The European Brand and National Imagineering:**

Similar to how nation-states use the World Fair to promote themselves, countries use the ESC as a platform for self-promotion (Bolin, 2006). Looking at the newly established sovereign states that were recently liberated from Soviet rule makes this especially clear. Furthermore, it is undeniable that events from popular culture have the potential to alter Europe's geopolitical landscape and that the EU’s newest members are using them in this manner (Bolin, 2006, p. 203).

Especially songs relating to gender and sexuality such as ‘Diva’, ‘Rise like a Phoenix’ and ‘Toy’ have had an impact on the European ‘brand’ and the political landscape.
Both ‘Diva’ and ‘Rise Like a Phoenix’ address gender expression and have increased trans/non-cis visibility with both performers becoming spokespersons or ambassadors for non-governmental organizations or international organizations such as the United Nations (Baker, 2017; Weber, 2016).

According to Cornelissen (2010), mega-events entail the depiction, branding, and Imagineering of cities or nations for domestic and international consumption. Eurovision is a way to portray and convey the European Identity of cooperation, peace, and liberal values to a regional audience in Europe and an international audience across the globe. Black and Van Der Westhuizen explain further how Imagineering for Nations supports the legitimization process.

Internally, marketing power is related to attempts by state elites to shore up political legitimacy, reinforce a sense of national identity and placate those constituencies adversely affected by the growing internationalization of domestic issue areas. Marketing power also serves an external political purpose, as proponents of sporting and cultural festivals in the developing world justify the huge costs of hosting an event by subsidizing the local film or music industry by framing the debate in developmental terms (Black & Van Der Westhuizen, 2004, p. 1204).

Thus, based on their unique local interpretations, needs, and contexts, states can envision their versions of Europe through Eurovision. An example of this is how Russia portrays itself as a modern, progressive nation in its 2008 entry ‘Believe’. According to Jones and Subotic (2011), performative Europeanization is a desperate attempt to engage in and belong to the European identity while remaining true to oneself.

**Eurovision as a friendship network**

**East/West tensions**

A significant debate in the contemporary ESC is the tensions between Western Europe and Eastern Europe. Discussions have arisen regarding the participation of Eastern European nations since some nations (particularly the “Big Four”) believe they fall beyond the intended definition of Europe, even though the event has never been stated limited to a geographically delimited Europe (Georgiou, 2008, p. 10). The tensions are further emphasized by the contrasting approaches to the contest with the more earnest and calculated attitude of the competing nations from Eastern Europe, coming into conflict with the Western, more sarcastic
attitude toward the competition, with its camp ideology (Bolin, 2006, p. 195). Continuing on Bolin’s (2007) argument, the competition has developed into a discursive tool for defining Europeanness and acting as a base for political tactics of Europeanization. When it comes to the formation of new identities and national representation, the ESC has a significant impact on how people perceive and define what it means to be European (Bohlman, 2007, p. 45).

Particularly Eastern European nations have attempted to integrate into the continent's greater community, highlighting their desire to be recognized as "full Europeans" (Jones & Subotic, 2011). The institutional ideology around cultural diversity inside countries, however, upholds dichotomies between "us" and "them," based on hegemonic, nationalist, and orientalist preconceptions (Georgiou, 2008, p. 28). This conceptualization helps to explain the West/East divide in the ESC, as some nations are positioned as more "European" and others as less in line with idealized Europe. This is based on the idea that the definition of Europe as ‘western, civilized and refined’ in contrast to "eastern, barbaric, and savage" (Neumann and Welsh, 1991 as cited in (Jones & Subotic, 2011, p. 545).

An example of this internal conflict is the prominent national identity narrative that links Croatia to Europe. While distinguishing itself from its eastern neighbors as being a member of the Balkans, the concept of "Europe" is extremely significant in the case of Croatia. The Balkans are seen as the fundamental "other" in the Croatian national story, and this narrative promotes a desire for Europeanness while rejecting any resemblance to the Balkans (Baker, 2008).

**Voting coalitions**

Voting coalitions have long been on display at the ESC. The importance of voting patterns and regional blocs in determining the competition's outcome has been highlighted by academics (Blangiardo & Baio, 2013; Budzinski & Pannicke, 2017; Clerides & Stengos, 2006; D'Angelo et al., 2018; Dekker, 2007; Fenn et al., 2005; Gatherer, 2007; Ginsburgh & Noury, 2008; Haan et al., 2005; Mantzaris et al., 2017; Spierdijk & Vellekoop, 2009; Yair, 1995). A selection of their findings is highlighted in Figures 7 and 8.

While the organizers of Eurovision strive to avoid political controversy, national and regional political interests, disagreements, and conflict have always defined the events (Allatson, 2007). The tradition of national voting patterns, whereby neighboring nations frequently give each other high marks for their submissions, demonstrates the existence of regional and ethnic blocs inside the competition (Allatson, 2007; Clerides & Stengos, 2006).
The process not only reflects the conveying of ideas about geographic boundaries and identity but also allows spectators to engage in their narrative work and project their geopolitical imagination onto the results (Baker, 2017). According to Dittmer and Dodds (2008), this system reveals the existence of interpretive communities—social groups that have similar meanings and cultural competencies—which have an impact on voting behavior. Within the Eurovision support system, the hegemonic Western bloc stems from their tendency to favor themselves and avoid competing against each other (Yair & Maman, 1996).

Figure 7: Estimated latent positions 1998–2015. (D’Angelo et al., 2018)

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3 The legend reports the probabilities corresponding to a distance of 0.2 in the latent space, years 1998, 2004 and 2008. The values refer to the case of $x_{ij} = 0$, within the brackets are reported the values for $x_{ij} = D’$Angelo, S., Murphy, T. B., & Alfì, M. (2018). Latent Space Modeling of Multidimensional Networks with Application to the Exchange of Votes in Eurovision Song Contest [Working Paper]. The Annals of Applied Statistics, 13(2), 900-930. https://doi.org/10.1214/18-AOAS1221
Figure 8: Dendrogram showing the voting clusters within the Eurovision network (Fenn et al., 2005).

As the rescaled distance increases, the clusters become less correlated. Greece and Cyprus, for example, form the most correlated cluster. Fenn, D., Suleman, O., Efstathiou, J., & Johnson, N. F. (2005). How does Europe Make Its Mind Up? Connections, cliques, and compatibility between countries in the Eurovision Song Contest. In.
Conclusion

The Eurovision Song Contest, as a soft power tool, plays a significant role in shaping a common European identity by providing a platform for cultural exchange and fostering a sense of unity among member states. Through the contest, participating countries showcase their music, performance, and cultural expressions, thereby highlighting the diversity and richness of European cultures.

The ESC creates a shared experience among European nations and audiences. It promotes a sense of belonging and community across national boundaries, as viewers from different countries come together to watch and celebrate the performances. The contest fosters cross-cultural understanding, appreciation, and empathy, leading to the formation of a collective European identity that transcends individual national identities. However, while participating in the contest, member states also navigate their national identities within the supranational framework of the ESC. They aim to maintain their unique cultural characteristics and distinctiveness while fitting into the larger European context. Countries often incorporate elements of their national identity, traditional music, or iconic symbols into their performances, allowing them to express their distinctiveness while participating in the collective European event.

The representation of national and European identities in the songs and performances is the main topic of this analysis of the European Song Contest (ESC). The ESC offers nations a forum to forge and promote their unique national identities while simultaneously advancing the development of a European identity. These identities, however, are not always in harmony and instead vie with one another for attention.

Two sections make up the analysis. Each entry from 1998 through 2022 is examined in the first segment, which also analyzes the components of national and European identity that are communicated via the songs and acts. Identity depiction trends are discovered through content analysis and explored in connection to the body of literature. The second segment investigates the construction, coexistence, and creation of European identity through discourse analysis. Countries strategically use the European identity to legitimize themselves and their national identity within the ESC. Through the analysis of the songs and performances, it becomes
evident that the ESC is a complex arena where nations showcase their national and European identities, creating a multifaceted tapestry of cultural expressions.

The competition itself is a reflection of the European imagination and the coexistence of national and transnational domains, even if nations engage in it to highlight their national identities. European identity is more than just the sum of national identities; it has its unique traits created by European history, a variety of cultural traditions, and the framework of European collaboration.

By highlighting Europeanness and harmonizing with European principles, national identities may be validated and reinforced. The ESC offers participating nations a cultural stage from which to display their national identities, win respect, and distinguish themselves from undesired European "others." Participation in the competition may also be used to emphasize the benefits of cooperation and access to the EU internal market, as well as the economic and political integration within the European Union. Countries may improve their diplomatic connections and create opportunities for commercial and cultural exchanges by making the most of their European character.

Additionally, the ESC offers a venue for national branding and self-promotion. Countries use the competition to showcase their cultural and national identities, especially newly constituted sovereign nations. Newer EU members use the competition to highlight their engagement and active participation in the European Union, which has the potential to change Europe's geopolitical landscape. The contest's cultural phenomena, particularly those concerning gender and sexuality, have affected the European brand and the political environment, raising awareness and acting as forums for social and political campaigning.

Discussions on the participation of Eastern European countries in the ESC highlight the tensions between Western and Eastern Europe. The competition serves as a discursive instrument for defining Europeanness, influencing how individuals understand and define what it means to be European. The competition's result is influenced by voting coalitions and regional blocs, showing the importance of voting patterns in determining the outcome.

The ESC showcases the ambivalence between national identity and European identity. It serves as a stage for both cultural celebrations of diversity and contests between nations, influencing and shaping national and European identities. The contest is not only a reflection of the
European imagination but also a platform for legitimizing national identities, promoting political and economic integration, enhancing international standing, and fostering friendship networks among participating countries. The ESC plays a significant role in defining Europeanness and shaping the perceptions of European identity.

This negotiation of national identities within the supranational framework is a delicate balance. Member states strive to showcase their unique cultural heritage, gain recognition for their artistic contributions, and secure votes from both their neighboring countries and the broader European audience. This process contributes to the shaping of a common European identity while allowing for the expression and preservation of national identities. The European Song Contest should be seen as an occasion for feeling and expressing Europeanness. This may contribute to countries perceiving themselves as European in addition to their national identity.

In summary, the Eurovision Song Contest acts as a soft power tool in shaping a common European identity by facilitating cultural exchange and fostering a sense of unity. Countries navigate their national identities within the supranational framework by showcasing their cultural distinctiveness while engaging in a collective European event.
Bibliography


Appendix

No 1. Table 2. Overview of the codes used in the content analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identity</th>
<th>Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Customs, traditions, values, language, art, cuisine, ritual, beliefs, fashion, architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity/Nationality</td>
<td>Ancestry, geography, history, self-identification, community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion/Faith</td>
<td>Belief, practises, community, ethics, history, symbolism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Sex (female, male), gender expression, gender identity,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex/Sexuality</td>
<td>Sexual orientation, sexual behavior, love</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No 2. Table 3. Overview of the description of sub-code culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customs</td>
<td>traditional practices and behaviors of a particular group or society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td>beliefs and practices that are passed down from generation to generation within a culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>principles or beliefs that a culture holds to be important or desirable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>system of communication used by a particular group or society, including its vocabulary, grammar, and syntax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>creative expression of a culture through various mediums, such as painting, sculpture, music, dance, and literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuisine</td>
<td>the types of food and cooking practices that are associated with a particular culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rituals</td>
<td>ceremonial practices and performances that are important within a culture, such as religious ceremonies or cultural celebrations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs</td>
<td>ideas and concepts that a culture holds to be true or important, such as religious beliefs or philosophical principles within the culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td>clothing styles and trends that are associated with a particular culture or time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>the style and design of buildings and structures that are associated with a particular culture or time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No. 3. Table 4. Overview of the description of sub-code ethnicity and nationality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity and Nationality</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Codes</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ancestry  
person's cultural or racial background, often based on their biological or cultural heritage. It can include factors such as language, customs, and traditions.

Geography  
a person's country of origin, citizenship, or legal status. It is often based on factors such as where a person was born, where they live, and their legal status in a particular country.

Culture  
Both ethnicity and nationality can be influenced by cultural factors such as religion, food, music, art, and other customs and traditions. This concept focuses on the aspects of culture that is vital to their nationality or ethnicity.

Language  
Language is often an essential aspect of both ethnicity and nationality, as it can reflect a person's cultural background and geographic origin. Focus on groups of people who are defined by their language.

History  
Historical events, such as wars, migrations, and colonialism, can influence a person's ethnicity and nationality.

Self-identification  
Ultimately, both ethnicity and nationality can be self-defined, and individuals may identify with multiple ethnic and national groups based on their personal experiences and sense of identity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No 4. Table 5. Overview of the description of sub-code religion and faith</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religion and Faith</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Codes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Symbolism | the use of symbolic imagery, such as religious icons, scripture, and other sacred texts, to convey its beliefs and values.

No 5. Table 6. Overview of the description of sub-code gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>person's biological characteristics, typically determined by their chromosomes, hormones, and reproductive organs. Most people are categorized as male or female at birth based on their physical anatomy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Gender refers to the social and cultural expectations and roles that are associated with being male, female, or nonbinary. It encompasses how individuals see themselves and how they are perceived by others, and it can vary widely across different cultures and societies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender identity</td>
<td>a person’s internal sense of their gender, which may or may not align with their biological sex. Some people identify as transgender, meaning their gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender expression</td>
<td>how a person expresses their gender through clothing, behavior, and other outward markers. It can vary widely across individuals and cultures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No 6. Table 7. Overview of the description of sub-code sex and sexual orientation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation</td>
<td>a person’s romantic and/or sexual attraction to others. It is often categorized as heterosexual (attraction to people of a different gender), homosexual (attraction to people of the same gender), or bisexual (attraction to people of multiple genders), though there are many other possible orientations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual behaviour</td>
<td>the specific activities a person engages in with others. This can include sexual intercourse, oral sex, masturbation, and other forms of sexual contact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>Love can be defined as an emotional connection and bond between two individuals, characterized by feelings of affection, care, and concern. While sex can be an expression of love, it is not necessary for love to be present in a sexual relationship and vice versa.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No. 7. Overview of the song with additional descriptive information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Song Title</th>
<th>Singer(s)</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>About</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

53
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Song Title</th>
<th>Artist(s)</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Diva</td>
<td>Dana International</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td>Ode to powerful women in history and mythology, mentioning Egyptian queen Cleopatra, Roman goddess Victoria and Greek goddess Aphrodite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Take me to your heaven</td>
<td>Charlotte Nilsson</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>&quot;Take Me To Your Heaven&quot; is a song about the desire to be with someone and the magical emotions that come with being in their presence. The lyrics describe the anticipation of a romantic encounter and the intense feelings that arise when two people connect. The singer longs to be taken to their lover's heaven, where they can be together and share a journey to the stars. The song expresses a deep longing for love and companionship, and the hope that the singer's feelings will be reciprocated by their partner. Ultimately, the song is about the power of love to transport us to a place of happiness and fulfillment, and the transformative effect that love can have on our lives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2000 | Fly on the wings of love    | Olsen Brothers   | Denmark  | English | The song "Fly on the wings of love" is about the power of love to transcend time and space. The lyrics describe a couple who are deeply in love and enjoying their time together, whether it be in the summer nights or in the softest sand. The chorus emphasizes the idea of reaching for the stars and touching the sky through the power of love. The song expresses a sense of optimism and hope, with the couple feeling lucky to have found each other and the speaker describing their partner as "the greatest love I've ever had". The phrase "Fly on
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Song</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Everybody</td>
<td>Tanel Padar,</td>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>The song &quot;Everybody&quot; is about having fun and enjoying life with friends. It emphasizes the power of music to bring people together and create a positive, carefree atmosphere. The lyrics encourage everyone to let go of their worries and dance and sing along to the music. The song also highlights the idea that no matter how much time passes, the joy of being with good friends and the memories shared will always stay with us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>I wanna</td>
<td>Marie N</td>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>The song &quot;I Wanna&quot; by Marie N is about wanting to be loved and appreciated by someone who may not reciprocate those feelings fully. The lyrics express a desire to be with that person despite their flaws and the emotional struggles that come with it. The singer wants to be the light in their life, the sunshine in their arms, and the love-spark in their eyes. At the same time, the song acknowledges the risks and costs of such a relationship, and the possibility that the other person may not be as invested in it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Everyway that I can</td>
<td>Sertab Erener</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>It is a love song that expresses the singer's desire to win back the affection of a former lover who has moved on to a different path in life. The lyrics suggest...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
that the relationship ended due to some sort of misunderstanding or disagreement, but the singer is willing to do anything to make it work again. The song's catchy beat and energetic vocals convey a sense of determination and passion, with the singer promising to try every possible way to make the other person love them again. Overall, the song is about the power of love and the lengths people will go to for the one they love.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Wild dances</td>
<td>Ruslana</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>Ukrainian</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>My number one</td>
<td>Helena Paparizou</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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</table>

The lyrics are about the joy and liberation that comes with dancing freely and letting go. The song encourages people to dance without inhibitions and to embrace their inner wildness. The repetition of "Dai na" throughout the song is a call to action, urging listeners to take their chance to dance and be free. The lyrics also touch on themes of love and defiance, with the singer expressing a desire to be loved while also asserting her independence and strength.

The song "My Number One" is a love song about a passionate and intense romantic relationship. The singer expresses their deep love and devotion for their partner, who is their one and only true love. The lyrics describe the lover as the singer's "number one" and the only treasure they will ever have. The singer also acknowledges the addictive nature of their passion and the intensity of their desire for their lover. Overall, the song is about the all-
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Song</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Hard Rock Hallelujah</td>
<td>Lordi</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Molitva (Prayer)</td>
<td>Marija Serifovic</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>Serbian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Believe</td>
<td>Dima Bilau</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The lyrics of the song are about the power and energy of rock music, particularly hard rock. The song also contains references to religious themes, such as angels and demons, and the idea of salvation through rock and roll. The chorus of the song encourages listeners to join in a "hard rock hallelujah" and celebrate the power of rock music. Overall, the song is a celebration of hard rock music and its ability to bring people together in a spirit of joy and excitement.

Molitva" is a song about a person who is unable to move on from a past relationship and still loves and trusts their former partner. The lyrics express the protagonist's deep feelings of sadness, loneliness, and despair as they struggle to cope with the loss of their loved one. The song talks about how the person finds comfort in prayer, and how they repeat their former partner's name like a prayer. The song also acknowledges the difficulty of moving on and the pain of letting go, even though the relationship has ended. The lyrics convey the message of hope and the power of faith and prayer to help overcome the pain and sadness of a broken heart.

The song "Believe" is about having faith in oneself and one's abilities, even in the face of adversity and doubt from others.
The lyrics suggest that nothing can stop the singer from achieving their goals as long as they believe in themselves and keep pushing forward. The song encourages listeners to have a positive outlook on life and to never give up on their dreams. It's a message of hope and empowerment, reminding us that we have the strength and resilience to overcome obstacles and achieve our aspirations if we just believe in ourselves.

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Fairytale</td>
<td>Alexander Ryback</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Satellite</td>
<td>Lena</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The song "Fairytale" is about a past relationship that the singer had with a girl. He remembers their time together fondly but acknowledges that they had their share of fights and disagreements. Despite their breakup, he still loves her and considers her to be a fairytale that he can't let go of, even if it hurts. He also feels cursed by this love, as it consumes him, and he can't seem to move on. He hopes to find her again one day and start anew.

The song "Satellite" is about someone who is deeply in love with another person and is willing to do anything for them. The lyrics describe the lengths the singer will go to for their loved one, including going anywhere for them, fighting for them, and even painting their toenails for them. The singer compares their love to a satellite in orbit, saying that they cannot go a minute without the love of their significant other. The chorus repeats the line "Can't
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<th>Artist</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Lyrics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Running Scared</td>
<td>Ell/Nikki</td>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>“Running Scared” is a song about being deeply in love and feeling vulnerable and scared because of it. The singer expresses their intense emotions and need for their loved one, wanting to be around them all the time and to keep them safe. The lyrics convey the idea that love can be a frightening experience, but the singer is willing to face their fears and run towards their love, despite feeling scared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Euphoria</td>
<td>Loreen</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>“Euphoria” is a song about the feeling of being in love and the euphoric state that it can bring. The lyrics describe the idea of wanting to stay in the moment forever and being completely consumed by the love and connection felt between two people. The song talks about the freedom of being in a relationship where everything is allowed, and love comes first. It also expresses the idea of reaching for something higher and divine, possibly representing a sense of spiritual or emotional transcendence. Overall, &quot;Euphoria&quot; celebrates the power and beauty of love and the joy that it can bring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Only teardrops</td>
<td>Emmelie de Forest</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>&quot;Only Teardrops&quot; is a song about the destructive nature of human conflict and the need for unity and understanding. The lyrics speak to the futility of fighting and the harm it causes, asking why we make it so hard to get along.</td>
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</table>
The chorus emphasizes that despite all the fighting and tears, there is still hope for reconciliation and a better future if we can let go of our past and work together towards a brighter tomorrow.

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Rise like a Phoenix</td>
<td>Conchita Wurst</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Heroes</td>
<td>Måns Zelmerlöv</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Jamala</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>Ukrainian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Rise Like a Phoenix" is a song about rising from the ashes of destruction and becoming stronger than before. The lyrics describe a person who has been through a difficult time but is now ready to transform and start anew. The song speaks of seeking justice, but not through revenge or violence. Instead, the singer chooses to rise above the situation and become a better person. The phoenix is a metaphor for this transformation, as it is a mythical bird that rises from its own ashes to be reborn. The song encourages listeners to believe in their own ability to overcome adversity and to rise up stronger than before.

"Heroes" is a song about the struggle between good and evil, and the internal demons that individuals may face in their lives. The lyrics suggest that despite being heroes in their own right, people often have to battle with their own inner demons and dark thoughts. The song encourages listeners to face their fears and sing out loud, and to unite together to overcome their struggles. Overall, the song serves as an anthem of hope and perseverance in the face of adversity.

"1944" is a song by Ukrainian singer Jamala that won the Eurovision Song Contest in 2016.
Contest 2016. The song is about the deportation of Crimean Tatars by Soviet authorities in 1944 during World War II. The lyrics express the pain and suffering of the Crimean Tatar people, who were forcibly removed from their homeland and deported to Central Asia. The song also carries a message of hope for a better future where people can live in peace and freedom.

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Amar Pelos Dios (Love for Both)</td>
<td>Salvador Sobral</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>Portuguese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>&quot;Amar Pelos Dois&quot;</td>
<td>Salvador Sobral</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>Portuguese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Toy</td>
<td>Netta</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>&quot;Toy&quot;</td>
<td>Netta Barzilai</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Amar Pelos Dois" is a Portuguese song that won the Eurovision Song Contest in 2017. The English translation of the song is "Love for Both." The song is a love ballad about a person who has lived their life solely to love someone else. The lyrics express the idea that the singer only truly existed once they fell in love with the other person. The singer begs for the other person to return their love and hopes that they will learn to love them in return. The final lines of the song suggest that even if the other person cannot love them back, the singer's heart will love for both of them instead.

The song "Toy" by Netta Barzilai is about self-empowerment and not being controlled by others. The lyrics celebrate individuality and reject societal expectations and pressures to conform. The singer describes herself as a "beautiful creature" who does not care about the opinions of "modern-time preachers." She warns a "stupid boy" that she is not his toy and will not be
<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Arcade</td>
<td>Duncan Lawrance</td>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>English</td>
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<td>2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>Zitti e Buoni</td>
<td>Måneskin</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Italian</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The song "Arcade" is about a person who has been left with a broken heart and is struggling to cope with the pain. The lyrics express the feeling of being lost and afraid, with a mind that feels like a foreign land. The singer acknowledges that they have given all their love to someone, but it was a losing game. They compare themselves to a small-town boy in a big arcade, addicted to a losing game. The repeated chorus emphasizes the theme of the song, that loving this person is a losing game. Despite this, the singer carries on, still trying to fix the cracks in their broken heart. The final lines express a desire to end the game and get off the rollercoaster of emotions that loving this person has caused.

The song "Zitti e Buoni" is about a person who is misunderstood by others and is determined to follow their own path, even if it goes against what society expects of them. The lyrics talk about feeling like an outsider and being judged by others, but also about the strength and determination to pursue one's dreams despite the obstacles. The title, "Zitti e Buoni," which translates to "Be quiet and behave," is a sarcastic commentary on the pressure to conform to social norms and expectations. The song has
been interpreted as a message of empowerment and a call to reject conformity and be true to oneself.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>Stefania</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>Ukrainian</td>
<td>&quot;Stefania&quot; is a song about the singer's mother, Stefania. The lyrics express the singer's love and appreciation for their mother and the important role she has played in their life. The song talks about how Stefania has always been there for the singer, even in difficult times, and has provided strength and support. The singer also acknowledges the sacrifices their mother has made for them and expresses a desire to always be close to her. Overall, the song is a tribute to the love and bond between a mother and child.</td>
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