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Abstract

Over the last six decades, the Eurovision Song Contest has tried to embody the voice of European unity and international cooperation. Previous scholars have depicted Eurovision as something highly influential and beneficial to all participating parties - whether that relates to the opportunity for commercial profit, outspoken Europeanist aspirations, or desired political progress - the song contest is utilized by multiple actors for varying reasons. In this study, I aim to demonstrate how it functions as an alternative cultural battlefield, a unifying apparatus, a signifier of projections, and a vehicle for soft power politics in warfare. It is an essay about political storytelling exploring the dichotomies between collaboration and resistance, Europeanist aspirations versus nationalistic objectives, the democratic against the totalitarian, the good and the bad.

The Eurovision rationale aims to encourage certain rules of behavior and regulate conduct towards those nations that have failed to adhere to these rules. When these assumptions gain terrain in the public discourse, epistemological hegemonies are maintained, power relations sustained, and public opinion arguably affected.

The study uses a methodological framework of qualitative research, and the empirical data consists of seven interviews followed by a visual analysis of the performances and context surrounding entries from Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia over the last two decades. Three main narratives have emanated from this study. The Eurovision Song Contest can be understood as an imagined community created by language and imagined through symbols of meaning. The governing body of Eurovision constitutes the sovereign player who gets to control the political discourse by managing the selection of competing songs and participating countries. With impression management, the participating nations try to regulate how they are perceived in a public setting, which is communicated through carefully curated performances and acted out by constructed characters. When one fails to adhere to the rules set by the Eurovision organizers, disturbances occur, and the competition's core values are threatened.

About

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Currently working as a journalist for a local newspaper in Sweden as well as a freelancer for the student newspaper.