

Scientific seminar

Public and cultural diplomacy in Estonia, Finland, and Sweden

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From National Institutes to the Eurovision Song Contest

The cultural aspects of International relations have been the focus of increased scrutiny in the past 10 years, as the practices and research interests of “cultural history” spread into the realm of diplomatic studies and the History of international relations. Regarding small states, this research agenda has dovetailed with earlier findings concerning the tendency of these states to use their image and reputation as compensatory mechanisms for their lack of hard power: doesn’t “soft power” come more easily to those who lack the instruments of “hard power”?

One can thus observe in the contemporary diplomacies of small European states various efforts at “national communication”, “propaganda”, “public diplomacy” and “nation-branding”. These efforts can be used by the historian, both as instruments to observe the assumptions and methods of small states’ diplomacies, but also as window-glasses into various processes, phenomena and debates happening inside these states. Communicating the nation involved constructing it, reflecting on its contours and characteristics. The very act of communicating could involve various actors with different visions; take different forms at different periods... Is communicating the nation selling the nation? And if one is to sell the nation, one has first to construct the nation.

This seminar will study these questions from an historian’s point of view and through three case studies originating from Estonia, Finland and Sweden: nation-branding in Finland, the question of the Swedish Institute, and the Estonian involvement in the Eurovision song contest as an example of cultural diplomacy.

The seminar will be conducted in English between researchers from the University of Turku, Helsinki, Cardiff University and the University of Stockholm.

It will take place on the 24th of February, 2012, in the Tauno Nurmela-lecture room (University Main Building lecture hall 1)

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Part of the seminar series *Approaches to International Relations*



This seminar will study the cultural aspect of international relations and foreign policy through three case studies originating from Estonia, Finland and Sweden: nation-branding in Finland, the question of the Swedish Institute, and the Estonian involvement in the Eurovision song contest. These will be studied and discussed as examples of cultural and public diplomacy. The goal of the seminar is to reach out for the problems involved in public diplomacy and to find out the historical contours and evolutions of “national communication” in small Nordic/Baltic states.

24th February 2012, 09.00-12.00

Tauno Nurmela-lecture room (University Main Building lecture hall 1)

9.00: **Laura Kolbe**, Department of History, University of Helsinki

“Is there a Finn on Board?” - Beyond Country Branding in Finland”

10.00: **Nikolas Glover**, Department of History, Stockholm University

“A model of the Swedish Model: The public diplomacy of the Swedish Institute 1945-1970”

Comments: **Louis Clerc**, Department of Political Science and Contemporary History,
University of Turku

11.00: **Paul Jordan**, Post-Doctoral Researcher, Cardiff University

“Public Diplomacy and the Eurovision Song Contest – the case of Estonia”

Comments: **Mari Pajala**, Media Research, University of Turku

In English, open to the public.

For more information, please contact Louis Clerc (loucle@utu.fi, 02 333 6945)