

The Symbiotic Relationship Between Good Governance and Country Branding

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Abstract A nation's social cohesion, economic progress, and prosperity depend on its good governance. Country branding is a strategic governance instrument through which governments aim to shape favourable international perceptions, particularly among foreign investors and tourists. However, there is still a lack of research on the connection between branding and governance, especially in the context of European countries. The purpose of this paper is to close this gap by examining how governance practices support nation branding initiatives and vice versa. This study examines the relationship between good governance and nation branding practices, focusing on three European countries: Norway, Switzerland, and Estonia, to understand the symbiotic relationship between branded country image, governance, and governance effectiveness. Paper adopted qualitative multi-sample research approach to review policy documents, media articles, and governance measures such as the World Bank's Global Governance Indicators and the Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index. The analysis shows that these two phenomena reinforce each other, creating a symbiotic relationship where good governance strengthens the country brand, and in its turn effective country branding strengthens the international perceptions of country's governance. Each case study illustrates this interaction in different cultural and historical contexts. This article examines good governance and nation branding and argues their linkage, that contribute to policy-making and managing international practices. The analysis shows that these two phenomena reinforce each other, creating a symbiotic relationship, where good governance strengthens the country brand and, in turn, effective country branding strengthens international perceptions of the country's governance. Each case study illustrates this interplay in different cultural and historical contexts. This article examines good governance and country branding and discusses their relationship, which contributes to policy-making and international governance practices.

Keywords Country branding; good governance; European nations; nation branding; international relations

1. INTRODUCTION

Every nation has a distinct national image that forms the cornerstone of their country branding efforts, whether they regulate their image or not. Improving the image of a nation is a complex and long-term task. The primary sources that shape the image of a country include its economy, politics, history, society, environment, architecture, science, and geography. In addition, the image of a nation is

influenced by its historical heritage, role in global history, and current position in the international community. This image is created by synthesizing these various elements formed by the unique traditions of the people (Dinnie, 2008). Therefore, the image of the country is formed from the characteristics obtained from these sources.

Good governance and country branding are pivotal in contemporary nation-building and international relations. Generally, good governance involves managing a country's resources and affairs in an efficient, accountable, and transparent way (Islam, 2018). Good governance is linked to maintaining political stability, the rule of law, the absence of corruption, quality public services, and one's adherence to democratic norms. In contrast, country branding refers to efforts by a state to influence how a nation is seen globally, using tools based on diplomacy, international communication, and reputation management.

Nation brands that are strongly built and protected cover global narratives as competition for skilled labour, trade and export markets increases (Kaneva, 2011). The aim of this study is to offer new perspectives on the relationship between nation branding and good governance, which may have significant implications for international narratives.

1.1 Research problem and objective

There is a lack of literature on linking good governance and country branding. Scholars have focused on researching the correlation of nation branding to public diplomacy (Szondi, 2008), cultural diplomacy (Hurn & Tomalin, 2013), and soft power (Fan, 2008), and this gap needs to be filled. Enhancing understanding of the nexus between good governance and nation branding may greatly benefit policymakers during their strategic planning, international relations, and public diplomacy initiatives. It is plausible that effective governance will strengthen a nation's reputation abroad by building trust and credibility, while good nation branding can sustain governance domestically by garnering public and resource support for pro-good governance policies.

This study aims to understand how good governance interacts with nation branding and reverse. In particular, this paper investigates whether well-governed countries can create stronger nation brands and whether targeted nation branding campaigns can constructively change international perceptions of governments.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

The term "governance" stands for all forms of government, as institutions, processes, and decision-making procedures. The World Bank first introduced the idea of good governance in its 1992 report "Governance and Development", emphasizing it as one of the critical components considered in conjunction with a nation's economic strategy. Good governance addresses the processes and structures through which a government ensures that political, social, and economic priorities are achieved in a thorough, efficient, transparent, just, and accountable manner. Because of its wide-ranging nature, there is no single authoritative definition of good governance (Gisselquist, 2012).

Nonetheless, international institutions and scholars have identified key dimensions that define effective governance. For example, the World Bank's influential Governance and Development Report (1992) described governance as the way in which authority is exercised to manage a nation's economic and social affairs for developmental purposes. Similarly, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) of the United Nations emphasizes that "The true test of good governance is the extent to which it delivers on the promise of human rights— civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights" (OHCHR, n.d.).

Fukuyama (2013) suggests that the effectiveness of governance depends on two main factors as state's capacity and autonomy of its bureaucracy. Minimal oversight is achievable through bureaucratic autonomy. Conversely, states with low capacity need tighter controls and less autonomy. This view suggests that regarding institutional capacity and context, "good" governance is relative, though, in general, a compromise between autonomy and oversight is required to function optimally (Fukuyama, 2013). From an empirical perspective, these would include stable economic growth alongside low levels of corruption, the rule of law, public services of high standard (education, healthcare, security, etc.), the insurance of property and human rights, and an inclusive and participatory process for citizens in politics (Rotberg, 2014).

In its 1992 report on "Governance and Development," the World Bank also states that if uncertainty is to be reduced or eliminated from the system, good performance of public institutions must occur since this will provide consumers with what they need for their lives in a way that firms find it more difficult to have competitive prices (Kaufmann & Kraay, 2002). This report expresses governance as how authority supervises economic and social resources so the country grows. Sound development management is what good governance means. According to the Bank's observation, programs or projects help to finance technically correct ones but, unfortunately, do not provide anticipated outcomes due to the government's poor performance (Preston, 1992).

The World Bank sponsors the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) program (Kaufmann & Kraay, 2007) to evaluate governance quality within 200 nations. Governance evaluation by WGI is based on six criteria: Voice and Accountability, Political Stability and Absence of Violence, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law, and Control of Corruption:

- Voice and Accountability (VA): Measures how freely citizens can engage in political processes, including elections, freedom of expression, association, and access to independent media.
- Political Stability and Absence of Violence (PS): Evaluate the likelihood of political unrest, violence, or terrorism that could destabilize the government (World Bank, 2023.).
- Government Effectiveness (GE): Focuses on the quality and reliability of government services, the competence of civil

servants, and the government's ability to formulate and implement sound policies (Guisan, 2009).

- Regulatory Quality (QR): Assesses how well the government develops and implements policies and regulations that support private sector development.
- Rule of Law (RL): Examines how much people trust the legal system, including how well laws are enforced, property rights are protected, and the justice system functions.
- Control of Corruption (CC): Looks at the extent to which power is exercised for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption.

The WGI database is an important source of information for academics and public policy experts in public administration, political science, and institutional development. Strong performance on these six indicators is often seen as a sign of democratic stability, effective governance, institutional trust, and administrative capacity. Such environments are relatively more capable and politically more willing to deliver reliable public services, protect civil liberties, and support sustainable socio-economic development. The indicators also reflect systemic factors that influence governance outcomes around the world.

1.3 Country Branding: Concepts and Models

As Anholt (2007) suggests, country branding revolves around the attempt to capture its individuality and, therefore, use it as a competitive advantage on a global scale. However, Aronczyk (2013) highlights the cultural and political dimension of nation branding, highlighting its impact on the perception and experience of citizenship, sovereignty, and national identity.

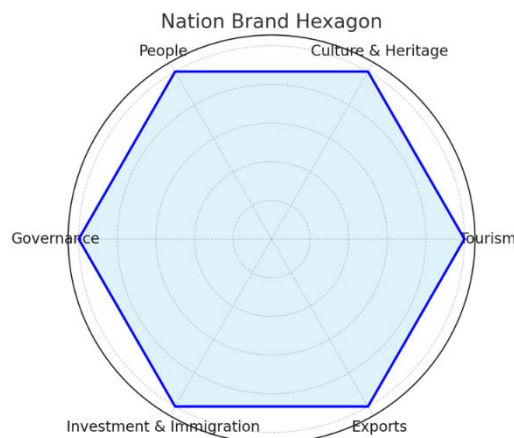
In Dinnie's (2008) conceptualization, nation branding is a strategic process encompassing identity construction, image projection, and reputation management (Dinnie, 2008). These background ideas make it possible to comprehend how country branding currently works globally. Historically, nations have had to rebrand themselves to reflect the changing times, just like corporations. The branding process ensures that nations coordinate their internal realities with their current identity or circumstances (Olins, 2002). Nation branding is more complex than product branding in improving a nation's image.

The concept of country branding is based on Anholt's model (Fan, 2006) as in Figure 1, which outlines six dimensions of nation image, i.e., governance, culture and heritage, people, tourism, exports, and investment/immigration. These dimensions together give an overall impression of the global country image (Anholt, 2007):

- Governance: Covers global perceptions of a country's leadership and its level of competence, fairness, commitment to democracy, environmental sustainability, and social justice.
- Exports: Covers the perception and attractiveness of a country's services and goods in the international market. Their quality and appeal to consumers are also captured.
- Tourism: Evaluates how much a country is appreciated and recognized for its natural features, vibrant cultural heritage, historical landmarks, and other notable attractions.
- Culture and Heritage: This includes appreciation of a country's contribution to global society and acknowledgment of its past and present culture in the form of art, literature, music, and sports.
- People: Analyses whether the rest of the world perceives a country's citizens as hospitable, educated, open-minded, and a wholesome personality.

- Investment and Immigration: Measures the perception of a country in terms of mobility, investment, employment, education, and economic opportunities.

Figure 1. Nation Brand Hexagon (Anholt, 2007)



The theory of Nation Brand Hexagon (Figure 1) is based on the concept of branding, which applies marketing principles to countries. Anholt contends that nations have brands like corporations that influence their international relations and economic performance. A strong national brand can attract tourists, investors, skilled migrants, and global partners, while a weak or negative.

These dimensions are quantified through the National Brand Index (NBI), an annual survey-based index created by Anholt. The NBI polls thousands of respondents worldwide to gauge perceptions of various countries regarding the six facets discussed above (TPBO, 2024). Each country's scores can be visualized on a hexagon diagram (Figure 1), which succinctly captures its strengths and weaknesses in each category.

According to Anholt's framework, the nation's brand is not entirely under the control of its government but is co-created through the actions, accomplishments, and attitudes of its people, businesses, and organizations.

Scholars have discussed different approaches to nation branding. Anholt's approach focuses on competitiveness and identity and how nations globally brand themselves and compete. Aronczyk's (2013) perspective is more critical, examining the cultural and political aspects of nation branding. She argues that nation branding campaigns attempt to redefine national identity and can be fundamentally political and economic. In the same spirit, Wally Olins (2002) offers a historical perspective, stating that countries have always managed their images. However, the formalized concept of "branding" is a recent development due to globalization and competition for investment. "Nation branding" is placed by Keith Dinnie (2008) within the context of an overarching strategy that involves the creation of a national identity, the construction of a national image, and the management of national reputation, and therefore should be coordinated at all levels of government, private, and non-profit organizations.

As with any growing area that requires more scholarly attention, voicing concerns regarding the effectiveness of nation branding is not uncommon, especially when deep-seated traces of national identity are set in stone and cannot be "rebranded" through mere advertising efforts. Fan (2006) questioned the issue, pointing out that branding will remain pointless until fundamental tactical shifts

are made to the country's governance, economy, culture, and societal products. Consequently, one of the more vital takeaways from the literature is that nation branding requires substance; a nation's image can only improve if there are actual improvements or strengths in factors that the nation's observers care about, like governance, culture, or economic opportunities.

1.4 Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

Drawing on theoretical foundations, we argue that good governance and nation branding have a symbiotic relationship characterized by mutual reinforcement. Figure 1 (Nation Brand Hexagon) already points to governance as a key aspect of nation branding. Our framework suggests that countries that excel in governance indicators also tend to excel in cultivating a positive nation brand and that well-designed nation branding initiatives can enhance the positive impact of good governance on international perceptions. Nonetheless, we also recognize that such interplay might vary across contexts; the historical and cultural background may influence the translation of governance into a brand image.

This framework leads us to propose the following three hypotheses:

- H1: Countries with higher governance quality (especially in government effectiveness, rule of law, and control of corruption) achieve stronger nation branding outcomes.
- H2: Active and positive nation branding efforts lead to improved international government perception.
- H3: Good governance and country branding are context-dependent, varying across different cultural and historical contexts.

Comparative case studies have been utilized to test the given hypotheses. While H1 and H2 posit a generally positive two-way relationship, H3 allows for nuance – suggesting that one size may not fit all when linking governance and branding in practice.

1.5 Methodology

A qualitative multi-centered research design was adopted to investigate the above hypotheses. Case studies are beneficial for the in-depth exploration of complex phenomena in real-life contexts where the boundaries between phenomenon and context are unclear. According to Yin (2018), case study methodology is suitable for investigating contemporary phenomena over which the researcher has little control and allows for multiple sources of evidence. By examining multiple cases, we can also engage in comparative analysis that strengthens the generalizability of findings through analytical replication (each case confirms or refutes patterns observed in the others).

Case selection: The cases selected for this study are Norway, Switzerland, and Estonia. Although these countries were selected through purposive sampling to capture differences in governance models and branding strategies, they are all somewhat successful. Norway and Switzerland are consistent leaders in governance indicators (having high democracy and institutional stability) and have well-known national branding or a strong international image. On the other hand, Estonia represents a smaller post-Soviet European state that has made significant progress in governance (especially governance) and has actively branded itself over the past two decades. Estonia also adds historical and contextual diversity to help test H3 (contextual differences). All three countries are located in Europe, which controls for some broad regional factors but differ in governance, culture, branding, and focus.

Data Sources: The data collection utilized both qualitative and quantitative data for triangulation as follows:

- Qualitative data: Policy documents and media coverage related to communication policies concerning each country's branding strategy were gathered and studied. Based on availability, national branding strategy documents were analyzed as information from the official branding website or a campaign such as "Brand Norway," Presence Switzerland programs, or the e-Estonia branding platform. The case study chapters were constructed relying on secondary data.
- Quantitative Data: To evaluate governance processes, data was leveraged from the World Governance Indicators (WGI) for 2021 and 2022, based on data availability. WGI value for Norway, Switzerland, and Estonia for all six constituent dimensions (VA, PS, GE, RQ, RL, CC) was retrieved accordingly. The Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index (NBI) reports for 2021 and 2022 were explored for country branding outcomes. The Good Country Index and other rankings on tourism competitiveness were also used to broaden the picture of the country's reputation. The credibility of this research is enhanced by using multiple sources in this way.

Analysis approach: Each case study was first analyzed individually (within-case analysis) to document the governance context, national branding strategy, and any evidence of interactions between the two. Then, a cross-analysis (comparative discussion) was conducted to identify commonalities and differences. This comparative step was critical to assessing H3 – to see how context influences the governance-branding relationship. Throughout the analysis, hypotheses were centered, and evidence was sought to support or refute each. Creswell and Poth's (2017) approach to qualitative research design guided the iterative coding and theme development process from the qualitative data, ensuring that research remained grounded in the data when interpreting the results. Key themes of interest (taken from our framework) include mutual reinforcement (where management initiatives enhance image or branding initiatives refer to management), tensions or trade-offs (perhaps where branding glosses over management issues or where management focus ignores branding) (cultural orientation, historical factors influencing values). The following sections present the results of each case study, followed by a discussion of how these findings support our hypotheses.

2. CASE STUDIES

2.1 Norway

Transparency, accountability, and social welfare policies are Norway's main features. Norway has high government effectiveness and low corruption as its governance model (Aarhus University 2024). Norway's branding has successfully capitalized on its natural resources, such as petroleum and gas, to project it as a sustainable, environmentally conscious (Norway - Green Technologies 2024) country. The "Norway brand" features nature conservation, innovation, and egalitarianism. This paper explores current practices and recent trends in sustainable business management and branding in Norway. In 2017, Erna Solberg, Prime Minister, urged the nation to strive towards "increased innovativeness as well as the adoption of smarter and greener lifestyles" (Blazhevskaya, 2017).

Specifically, the Norwegian Prime Minister sought to position the country as a global leader in green technology and sustainable innovation. This ambition gave rise to the development of Brand Norway—a renewed national image underpinned by strategic

messaging and a forward-looking identity designed to highlight Norway's distinctiveness and strengthen its overall international brand presence.

Brand Norway was illustrated while acknowledging its contemporary features and traditional attributes (Norway—Green Technologies 2024).

Brand Norway was launched in 2022 by the Norwegian government and designed to enhance the competitiveness of the Norwegian business and industrial sector. The program that was established for this purpose is known as the "Norwegian Branding Labelling Programme," which provides for marking all products and services made in Norway with an acknowledged symbol indicating their origin as well as their status as far as sustainability, responsibility, and historical background are concerned (Norway - Green Technologies 2024). This government project aimed to "Capitalise on the many positive associations the world has of Norway as a country of origin" (Norway - Green Technologies 2024).

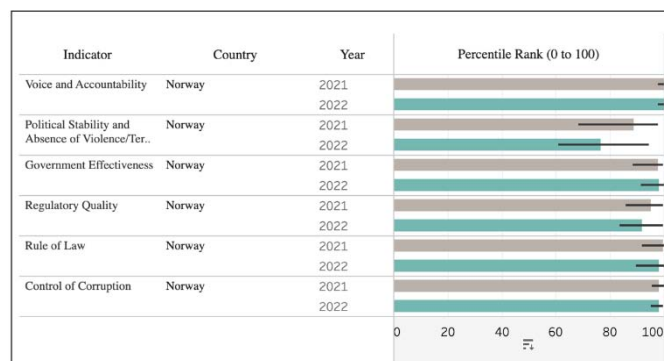
Norwegian tourism brand evolves around the "Norway -powered by nature" statement. The distinct landscape, rich historical background, local traditions, and food culture available in different regions of the country make for an enlightening trip accommodating every type of visitor (Scandinavian Design Group, 2021). In helping Norway's travel industry, the leading organization is Innovation Norway, which supports sustainability in tourism through cutting-edge solutions for the sector's businesses by assisting Visit Norway. This initiative is consistent with nature conservation and preservation of culturally significant artifacts since they serve as a basis for developing local community attitudes (Branding Norway with Sustainable Tourism (En) | ITC n.d.). Norway was positioned 22nd in the Nation Brand Index for 2021 and 2022 (McGrath & Bobev, 2023).

Considering using green technologies, sustainable resource management, and renewable energy, Norway and its Nordic neighbors are regarded as global leaders. Norway has complied with international obligations to cut emissions (including those from sulfur, NOX, and carbon dioxide) and has even gone above and beyond them (McGrath & Bobev, 2023). The Norwegian government's industrial policy launched in 2022 is called the "Green Industry Initiative." The policy has an initial roadmap highlighting seven priority sectors for green growth: offshore wind, hydrogen, batteries, marine industry, CO2 management, bioeconomy, and process industries (McGrath & Bobev, 2023).

Norway is popular not only for its natural environment but also for its higher education rate, equality standards (Larsen, Moss & Skjelsbæk, 2021), and effective socio-economic model. The Norwegian nation brand is also rooted in these characteristics (Larsen, Moss & Skjelsbæk, 2021).

Good Government has been the agenda of the Norwegian government for many years. Norway continuously ranks high on the World Bank's Good Governance Indicators due to its efficient and robust governance structure (Kaufmann & Kraay, 2023). The following are some of these indicators: (Figure 2)

Figure 2: World Bank Governance indicators – Norway in 2021 and 2022 (World Bank Group 2023)



VA: Norway scored a perfect 100, in this category for two consecutive years. The country's sovereignty in a hegemony emerged from its commitment to democracy whose heritage started long ago and from a high level of public involvement.

PS: In the year 2022, Norway's score dropped to 76.42 from 88.68 in the year before.

GE: There is no doubt that Norway has a great government based on its civil service quality, public service delivery, and level of protection against political pressures. Since 2021 and 2022, Norway has always placed higher than 97 indicating good governance.

RQ: Norway scored 95.24 in Regulatory Quality in 2021, a figure that marginally fell to 91.98 in 2022. Nonetheless, the country still ranks among the best in terms of regulatory environments that are favorable for doing business.

RL: The high ranking is based on Norway's strong judiciary system and low corruption rates, therefore enabling it to shine in this category with 99.52 in 2021 and 98.11 in 2022.

CC: Norway ranked 98.10 and 98.11 in 2021 and 2022 respectively with the integrity of its public institutions and effective anti-corruption measures in focus.

Norway's high rankings across the World Bank's Good Governance Indicators demonstrate its robust governance framework and effective public institutions.

2.2 Switzerland

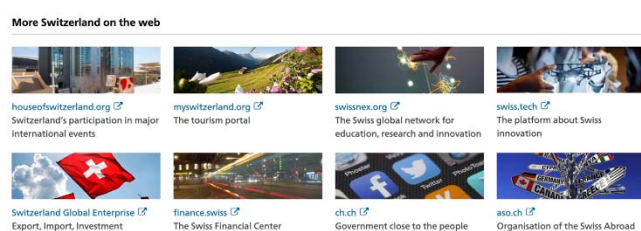
Switzerland is known worldwide for its positive clichés like chocolate, picturesque landscapes, and watches. Again, its reputation is solid when it comes to dependability and quality. Over the years, governments, global organizations like the Red Cross, multinational corporations including Roche, and athletes such as Roger Federer have shaped this image. The governing principle in Switzerland is anchored on other social aspects, including strong rule of law, direct democracy, and decentralized decision-making. Regarding branding, nothing much separates Switzerland from being perceived as a global financial epicentre that is also reputable as an innovative place on earth and a centre for international diplomacy. Terms like neutrality, precision, and reliability (BrandEquity, 2024) are usually used when mentioning the "Swiss brand."

Maintaining a positive national image requires constant effort. Adverse events can leave a lasting impression, which requires

promoting Swiss values and continuous communication with key target groups and networks. The Swiss public and government have agreed that careful, consistent, and strategic communication is needed to give a country a worldwide stable, distinguished, and preferred image, such as a "national brand". Successful national branding, i.e., presenting a unique, flawless profile, sets a country apart. In this regard, national branding is an important investment in a country's future.

Presence.ch (Präsenz Schweiz – PRS n.d.), the official Swiss platform dedicated to cultivating and enhancing the nation brand provides insights into the Swiss government's priorities in nation branding. In the bottom part of the platform's homepage, eight websites are referenced, which deal with the different directions of the Swiss nation brand. (Figure 4)

Figure 3: Presence.ch referenced website (Präsenz Schweiz – PRS n.d.)



1. Houseofswitzerland.org: This website showcases Switzerland's involvement in global events and highlights the work Switzerland does to achieve its diplomatic objectives globally (House of Switzerland, n.d.).
2. Myswitzerland.org is the official travel website that provides extensive information on tourism and travel within Switzerland (Tourismus, n.d.).
3. Swissnex.org: This international network enhances the standing of Switzerland in areas such as education, research, and innovation. (Swissnex, n.d)
4. Swiss tech: The platform aims to better Switzerland's standing as an internationally acknowledged center of business innovation, highlighting its world-class deep tech and other firms and their superior research capabilities abroad (Swisstech, n.d.).
- 5.
6. Switzerland Global Enterprise: This helps to make international business connections with its focus on investing, exporting, and importing ((Switzerland Global Enterprise, n.d.)
7. Financeswiss: This site presents how important Switzerland's role in global financial markets is as the financial capital of Switzerland has been promoted in this website (Finance.Swiss n.d.)
8. Ch.ch: This website details how the Swiss government implements the slogan "Government close to the people" (Homepage Ch.ch - Official Information From the Authorities n.d.)
9. Aso.ch: The platform aims to maintain contact with Swiss people living abroad and defend them domestically (SwissCommunity, n.d.)

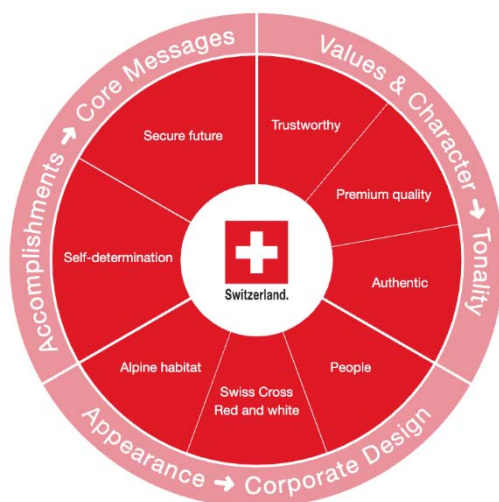
Since 2000 (Schweizer Tourismus Digitalisiert, n.d.) Presence Switzerland (PRS) has played an important role in ensuring that Switzerland's image remains credible and authentic. PRS does not only focus on aspects like quality of life and environmental friendliness, among others; the organization also emphasizes the already accepted practices, including innovation and educational system, as well as direct democracy, in addition to their promotion of less publicized strengths. Additionally, the

Houseofswitzerland.org portal offers a structured vision of Switzerland, featuring images, stories, and personalities that embody the Swiss brand, effectively leveraging clichés and stereotypes to reinforce national identity.

As presented on myswitzerland.com website (Figure 4), the Swiss tourism brand promotes the “We need Switzerland” statement. Brand Switzerland guide, presented in 2010 to employees of the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, partner organizations, and sponsors who carry out Swiss activities abroad in cooperation with Presence Switzerland, highlighted the brand communication of the rebranded Swiss nation brand. Swiss nation brand is anchored by:

1. Two core messages are a secure future and self-determination.
2. Values as trustworthiness, premium quality, and aestheticism.
3. Brand identity elements include alpine habitat, Swiss Cross – Red and White, and Swiss People.

Figure 4: Swiss nation brand scheme (myswitzerland.com, n.d)



In the NBI Index 2019 and 2020 (McGrath & Farkas, 2021), Switzerland was among the top 5 countries in the Governance and Immigration-Investment categories. In 2021 and 2022, despite the decrease in the general points, Switzerland still was one of the ten top countries (McGrath & Bobev, 2022)

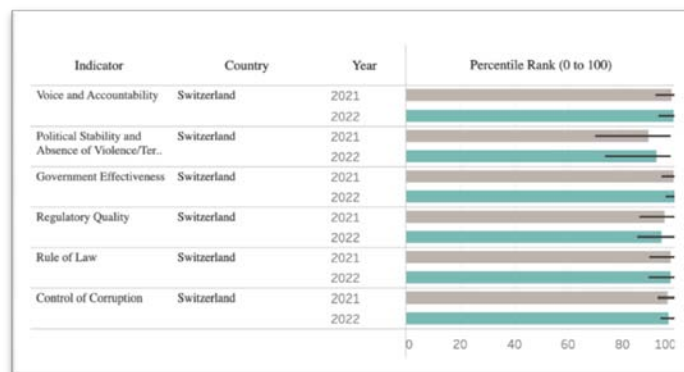
The Swiss government model is characterized by highly decentralized power, open democracy, and leadership through the people. It seeks power distribution and civic participation (Carson & Steiner, 2018)

As a federal state, 26 Swiss cantons can decide on the local governance structure (Debela, 2020). Owing to the historical progress of municipal autonomy, unique types of local government exist in regions. These models have strengths and drawbacks, yet all have been effective in practice.

Switzerland's (OECD, 2023) international cooperation efforts can be characterized by good governance. Swiss authorities embody the fundamental principle of competent and transparent public service performance, making governance inclusive, accountable, and effective. In addition, Switzerland has managed to excel in implementing good governance internally while also being a strong advocate for good governance initiatives worldwide through its various agencies (Läubli, 2017)

Switzerland's strong governance, as evidenced by its performance on the World Bank's Good Governance Indicators:

Figure 5: World Bank Governance indicators – Switzerland in 2021 and 2022 (World Bank Group 2023)



VA: The World Bank's good governance indicators show that Switzerland scored 98.1 in 2021 and 99 in 2022, thereby indicating strong participatory governance.

PS: This indicator registered 89.63 in 2021 but increased to 92.45 in 2022, thus indicating the same trend of peace and security.

GE: Swiss governance efficacy was confirmed in 2021 and 2022 when it scored 99.

RQ: Having scored 95.7 in 2021 and dropping by a slight margin to 94.3 in 2022, it is evident that Switzerland is strict on regulations.

RL: Switzerland has a highly efficient and equitable judicial system; the country achieved ratings above 97 in 2021 and 2022.

CC: The country has also been highly ranked in this area, according to data for 2021 (96.6) and 2022 (97.1).

The good governance indices reveal Switzerland's excellent governance performance, further proving that it has a good reputation for being efficient and transparent. Switzerland is not only competitive in terms of citizen welfare but is also a yardstick in global governance.

2.3 Estonia

After gaining its independence, Estonia underwent transformational changes and has become an innovation center in Europe. This transformation is characterized by e-governance initiatives, digitalization (Jansen, 2008), and a strong emphasis on innovation (Jansen, 2008) and entrepreneurship in governance. Case studies of Estonia feature how these initiatives have shaped its brand identity, both domestically and internationally (Tpbo, 2023)

Estonian nation branding campaigns began in 2001 when the country hosted the Eurovision Song Contest.

Through that event, Estonia managed to attract the attention of foreign media more than ever (Alimaskoski, 2022). In 2003, Brand Estonia was introduced at a tourism fair. For starting to form Estonia as a unique independent brand in the international arena, Enterprise Estonia has presented a hexagon logo with the words "Welcome to Estonia" and the slogan "Positively Transforming" to the public (Papp-Váry, 2018) Interbrand, which made the brand book, has defined five narratives: Fresh Perspective; A Radical, Reformatory and Transformative Attitude; Nordic Temperament and Environment; Skilled Self-Starter by Nature; and the European Society.

Innovation and nature are two key points of the Estonian nation brand (Kentie P. 2023). The key areas of innovation are e-government, e-tax systems that include Skype, cyber defense, and e-banking. In addition, there is a deliberate attempt to merge education with science within the brand's storyline in line with broader developments in nation branding.

The idea behind Brand Estonia is to increase the confidence of foreign investors in Estonia as a hub for their investments, tourism, and exports. This takes into account the limited resource base in Estonia, which necessitates cooperation between sectors.

The Estonian Nation Brand campaign contained several strong slogans and strategic directions. Each campaign contributed uniquely to Estonia's global image, demonstrating effective place branding strategies that engaged and resonated with diverse audiences. (Figure 6)

Figure 6: The Estonian Nation Brand campaign contained several strong slogans and strategic directions. (Author's table based on literature review and analysis)

campaign	slogan	Objective	Key Elements
Welcome to Estonia	Positively Transforming	Highlight Estonia's transformation and investment readiness	Simple, strong message
Positively Surprising	Positively Surprising	Emphasize innovation, openness, and development	Collaboration with experts, updated visual identity
Introduce Estonia	An Old Country in a Shiny Package	Promote tourism through cultural, city, nature, and wellness holidays	Symbols (objects, event phenomena, landmarks)
Just Estonishing	Just Estonishing	Promote Estonia's digital society and unique identity	EST-concept, wordplay (e.g., "smartest," "coolest")
A Fresh and Forward-looking Nation	A Fresh and Forward-Looking Nation	Target business environment	Constructive feedback and experience for improvement

Estonia. ee is the country's current national branding platform, which sticks to core themes and features slogans such as "Estonia is a place for independent minds" and "We always find a way." The new brand aims to highlight Estonia's digital society and its international e-residency service while emphasizing its unspoiled nature. The main objective of this branding is to show that digitalization allows people to have more leisure time (Andero,2017) in Estonia. ee portal references below websites, which facilitate branding projects:

Figure 7: Estonia.ee website references

Visit Estonia	illustrates Estonia as a travel destination in addition to highlighting its nature and culture.
Settle in Estonia	provides information and resources for relocation.
Work in Estonia	emphasizes job opportunities for career development among both locals and expatriates.
Study in Estonia:	addresses the educational opportunities in the country.
Research in Estonia	highlights research facilities and research opportunities.
Education in Estonia	features Estonian education system and programs.
Trade with Estonia	showcases Estonian trade policies and opportunities.
Invest in Estonia	demonstrates showcasing Estonia's business-friendly environment.
e-Estonia	promotes Estonia's digitalization and e-government services.
e-Residency	displays e-Residency program which allows people from different countries to run an online business.

Even though the Simon Anholt Nation Brand Index does not measure or evaluate the Estonian national brand, the Campaign follows the national brand hexagon theory and demonstrates its elements.

Estonia has made significant improvements in governance, evident in the World Bank's Good Governance Indicators rankings:

1. VA: Estonia shows a strong commitment to democratic values, as depicted by its high scores in this category (88.4 in 2021 and 87.92 in 2022).
2. PS: Estonia scored over 70 in both 2021 and 2022 years.
3. GE: Estonia also scored higher in this measurement, with scores of 88.57 in 2021 and 89.62 in 2022.
4. RQ: Regulatory Quality: Estonia's regulatory environment is favorable for business, characterized by policies that encourage entrepreneurship and innovation. Its scores were around 92 in 2021 and 2022.
5. RL: Estonia boasts a strong legal framework, evidenced by high scores of 88 in 2021 and 89 in 2022.
6. CC: Estonia has made significant progress in controlling corruption, achieving scores above 90 in 2021 and 2022.
7. These indicators collectively show that Estonia is efficiently controlled and committed to a transparent, efficient, and democratic society development process.

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