



heritage and identity in  
NORTH KARELIA –  
FINLAND

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# **Heritage and Identity in North Karelia - Finland**

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## **Abstract**

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The region of North Karelia can be identified in different ways. Identity can be seen as the link between people, heritage and place. People want to identify themselves with a place, because for them that place has a special character. Many features distinguish places from each other and heritage is one of these features that contribute to the identity of a place and to the identification of individuals and groups within that specific place. Therefore heritage is an important contributor when people identify themselves with a place. Nowadays the interest in heritage and identity is strong in the context of processes of globalisation. Globalisation has resulted in openness and heterogeneity in terms of place and culture. More and more, identities are being questioned and globalisation has caused nationalism and regionalism in which heritage is used to justify the construction of identities.

## **Karelia**

North Karelia can be seen as part of Karelia as a whole. Karelia is situated partly in Finland and partly in Russia and that makes it a border area. Karelia is a social-cultural constructed area with no official boundaries. The shape, size and its inhabitants changed many times during the centuries. Karelia has been an area of conflict between Eastern Orthodoxy and Western Catholicism, later Lutheranism, because different national powers had different interests. In the 20th century, it became a conflict area between Eastern Communism and Western Capitalism. The Finnish border changed many times, because of these conflicts.

Before Finland became a national state, it was first dominated by the Kingdom of Sweden and later by Russia. During the period of Finland as a Grand Duchy of Russia, it developed a national identity and in 1917 the country became independent. Until the Second World War it was possible for people in both Finnish and Russian Karelia to cross the border easily to exchange goods or to visit their families. But after the Second World War, the border was firmly closed and almost all connections were cut off between the two regions. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union the border reopened and again people and goods were able to move more freely across the border. But it became clear that there was a large economic difference between the two border regions and that the gap in living standards was one of the deepest in the world. But with the opening of the border between Finland and Russia and the membership of the EU, for North Karelia new chances and possibilities have been created.

### **Identities of North Karelia**

Different agents are involved in the construction of North Karelian identities. Agents in the academic discourse distinguish three main North Karelian identities. North Karelia can be identified as the origin of Finnish culture and landscape, as a frontier area between Eastern Orthodoxy and Western Lutheranism and later between Eastern communism and Western capitalism and it can be identified as a border region in transition.

Agents in the lay discourse find it difficult to define North Karelia, but they agree that there are one or more identities. They define themselves as most important agents involved in constructing North Karelia identities. Many different features seem to relate to North Karelian identities, but *happy* seems to be the most important feature.

According to agents in the policy discourse people and their characteristics are important features of North Karelian identities. Also cultural features of identity are important and especially features that relate to Karelian culture seem to be important. The travel industry sells these aspects of Karelian culture in order to attract tourists and companies. But this is questioned, because it can be seen as an unrealistic representation of North Karelia.

Analysing the academic, lay and policy discourses it becomes clear that in general agents find it difficult to describe North Karelian identities, but that they are confident of the fact that several identities can be distinguished. The different North Karelian identities are related to each other and many of the same aspects come forward in the identities. But one single North Karelian identity does not exist.

### **Heritage in North Karelia**

Heritage is used by different agents in different ways. The focus in this research has been on material heritage and which heritage seems to be important in the construction of North Karelian identities. In this research material heritage refers to cultural sites, architecture and other elements of the built environment. The built environment in Finland is characterized by wood as a construction material and only 5% of the buildings date from before 1921. At the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the traditional town landscape changed, because the centres with traditional wooden building stock were replaced by stone. But even today wood is a popular building material. The rural cultural landscape and its building stock are characteristic of Finland's architectural heritage. The landscape is diverse and villages with wooden houses and churches play key roles. Policies regarding heritage are implemented on different governmental scales. National, regional and local authorities are involved in the protection and preservation of heritage.

According to agents in the academic discourse three objects of heritage are used to identify North Karelia. Koli, the border and the Bomba house as a symbol of Karelian culture are used in identifying the region. According to agents in the lay discourse heritage is regarded to be important for the identity of North Karelia. Landscape and old Karelian style buildings are the most important groups in which Koli and the Bomba house are the most important objects of heritage according to the respondents. Overall, Koli and in the second place the Bomba house are the most important objects of heritage for the identity of North Karelia. Old settlements with old wooden buildings and Churches seem to be the most important objects for the identity of the region according to agents in the policy discourse. It becomes clear that Koli and the Bomba house do not play such important roles compared to the lay discourse.

Heritage has many uses, it serves different users at different times and it carries different meanings to different people. Conflicts about heritage occur when users do not agree about the usage of heritage or when they start to claim it. Usage of heritage is not regarded as important to agents of the lay discourse. But agents in both the lay and policy discourses mention conflicts. The main conflicts that are mentioned encompass conflicts about Koli and old wooden buildings. It has appeared from the interviews that the main conflict is between economic and cultural uses of heritage. People want to preserve their heritage and to get public acceptance for it, but there are always people who are not interested and who want to exploit it in the best profitable way. In many cases 'money talks' concerning the usage of heritage. Local people use heritage as a socio-psychological resource, because it is part of their everyday life. It has become clear that the usage of immaterial heritage -compared to material heritage- is more important to local people and to their identity.

Heritage is used by different agents who are involved in the construction of North Karelian identities. The usage of heritage to identify the region is complex, because North Karelia can be defined in several ways in which different agents are involved. It has appeared that for agents heritage and identity are difficult concepts, but the usage of some objects of heritage in North Karelia play key roles in the construction of North Karelian identities.

**Keywords:** heritage, identity, North Karelia, Finland.

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**Contents**

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<b>Abstract</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Preface</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1.1 Structure</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1.2 Agents, research material and methods</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2 Concepts of research</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>2.1 Heritage</b>	<b>12</b>
2.1.1 Categories of heritage	13
2.1.2 Usage of heritage	13
2.1.3 Users of heritage	14
2.1.4 Conflicts	14
<b>2.2 Identity</b>	<b>15</b>
2.2.1 Personal identity	15
2.2.2 Cultural identity	16
2.2.3 Place identity	16
2.2.4 Globalisation	18
<b>2.3 How heritage and identity interrelate</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>3 The untouched east: North Karelia in a historical context</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>3.1 History</b>	<b>19</b>
3.1.1 Karelia	19
3.1.2 The Kingdom of Sweden	20
3.1.3 Russian rule: the Grand Duchy	20
3.1.4 Period of war	21
3.1.5 The lost land	22
<b>3.2 North Karelia</b>	<b>23</b>

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<b>4</b>	<b>Identities of North Karelia</b>	<b>25</b>
4.1	<b>Academic discourse</b>	<b>25</b>
4.1.1	North Karelia as a source of a Finnish national identity	<b>25</b>
4.1.2	North Karelia as a frontier area	<b>27</b>
4.1.3	North Karelia as a border region in transition	<b>28</b>
4.2	<b>Lay discourse</b>	<b>29</b>
4.2.1	Questionnaire	<b>29</b>
4.2.2	Important agents according to the lay discourse	<b>31</b>
4.2.3	Happy	<b>32</b>
4.3	<b>Policy discourse</b>	<b>32</b>
4.3.1	Tourism	<b>33</b>
4.3.2	Local and regional authorities	<b>33</b>
4.4	<b>Different discourses: one North Karelian identity?</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Heritage in North Karelia</b>	<b>36</b>
5.1	<b>Finland's heritage</b>	<b>36</b>
5.2	<b>Policies</b>	<b>37</b>
5.2.1	National level	<b>37</b>
5.2.2	Regional level	<b>38</b>
5.2.3	Local level	<b>39</b>
5.3	<b>Which North Karelian heritage?</b>	<b>39</b>
5.3.1	Heritage according to agents in the lay discourse	<b>39</b>
5.3.2	Heritage according to agents in the policy discourse	<b>41</b>
5.3.3	Objects of heritage	<b>42</b>
5.4	<b>The usage of heritage in North Karelia: conflicts?</b>	<b>46</b>
5.4.1	Usage and conflict according to agents in the lay discourse	<b>47</b>
5.4.2	Usage and conflict according to agents in the policy discourse	<b>48</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>50</b>
	<b>References</b>	<b>56</b>
	<b>Appendices</b>	<b>60</b>



## **Preface**

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As the easternmost region of Finland, North Karelia has a special character. It is a peripheral area and very close to another land and to another world, Russia. North Karelia can be seen as part of Karelia as a whole. Karelia is a social-cultural constructed area with no official boundaries. Rule and war has made the area split up in two different parts. Nowadays it is situated partly in Finland and partly in Russia and that makes it a border area. People have maintained their traditions and North Karelia can be seen as a region where the traditional Karelian culture still holds strong.

In North Karelia heritage is used to identify the region. North Karelia can be identified in different ways, because different agents use heritage to construct North Karelian identities. Heritage and identity are two concepts with various definitions, interpretations and facets. Therefore these two concepts contribute to an interesting research.

This master's thesis is basically a source of information about heritage and identity in North Karelia. But more strongly, it describes what is underneath the surface: the usage of heritage by different agents to identify the region. This master's thesis is written at the University of Groningen, The Netherlands and the research is done in the province of North Karelia at the University of Joensuu, Finland.

The research and eventually the writing of this thesis owes much to a number of persons and organizations. I am especially grateful to my supervisor in Groningen, dr. P. D. Groote and my supervisor in Joensuu, Senior Assistant Professor Minna Piipponen. Besides them, I would like to thank all the people living in North Karelia who gave me lots of information by interviews and filling in questionnaires. Finally I would like to thank my family and friends, who have been of great support during my research.

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Diënné van der Burg



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**1****Introduction**

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The painting *Autumn Landscape of Lake Pielisjärvi* by Eero Järnefelt (1899) (Ateneum Art Museum 2003) is one of the many representations of the region of North Karelia. The exceptional and magical landscape and the authentic traditional culture of North Karelia has been a source of inspiration for many people during the centuries.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century Finland developed a national language and culture that created a national Finnish identity. The contribution of North Karelia to a national identity can be seen in several ways. First of all North Karelia is often seen as part of Karelia as a whole. Karelia is a social-cultural constructed area situated partly in Finland and in Russia. Karelia has been the area where folk poetry was collected from which the national epic the Kalevala was composed. The Kalevala can be regarded as a central source for the creation of a national identity. Secondly, Finnish artists were attracted to North Karelia, because they were inspired by the landscape and culture. They gave expression to their arts based on the national epic the Kalevala and they hold a great deal in creating a national identity. And finally the region has played a key role in strengthening the creation of a national identity, because of its location next to the Russian border. After Finland became independent in 1917 the border became an important symbol for the creation of a national identity.

North Karelia, situated in the easternmost part of Finland stretching out along the Russian border, is a peripheral area. For centuries it has been a border area and the location between Eastern

Orthodoxy and Western Lutheranism, and later between Eastern communism and Western capitalism, makes North Karelia an interesting area to examine. It has a long history as a fundamental dividing line between contrasting cultural and political systems. New possibilities have been created with the opening of the border between Finland and Russia. Nowadays North Karelia is involved in cross-border cooperation projects that have revived the connections with Russia.

North Karelia is often seen as a region where an authentic traditional culture still holds strong. According to the above text, the region can be identified in different perspectives, which make it an interesting and exceptional area. First of all North Karelia can be identified as the origin of Finnish culture and landscape. It has been a source of inspiration for the creation of a Finnish national identity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In the second place, it can be seen as a frontier area between Eastern Orthodoxy and Western Lutheranism and later between Eastern communism and Western capitalism.

And thirdly, the region can be identified as a border area in transition. North Karelia has always been influenced by the changing border. When the border between Finland and Russia opened again after the end of the Cold War, cross-border cooperation became possible. Nowadays things change slowly, but they improve and they offer new possibilities for North Karelia.

The identity of a place is a product of social actions of the way in which they are constructed. Individuals and groups are involved in the construction of places and for that reason a particular place can have different identities. The individuals and groups that are involved in constructing North Karelian identities can be seen as agents.

Many features distinguish North Karelia from other places. Heritage is one of these features that contribute to the construction of identities of North Karelia and to the identification of agents within North Karelia. Because these identities can be contested, agents struggle with the different identities. This leads to the main research question of this thesis.

### **How is heritage in North Karelia used by whom to identify the region?**

This main research question comes up for discussion, because nowadays the interest in heritage identity is strong in the context of processes of globalisation. Globalisation has resulted in openness and heterogeneity in terms of place and culture. More and more, identities are

being questioned and globalisation has caused nationalism and regionalism in which heritage is used to justify the construction of identities.

North Karelia has played an important role in the construction of a national Finnish identity. First of all, the Kalevala and its landscape and culture can be seen as constructors of a national identity. But what does that mean for the identity of North Karelia itself? Does a North Karelian identity represent a national identity or is it of no importance?

Secondly, the opening of the border between Finland and Russia has created new possibilities for cross-border cooperation and it has consequences for the identity of North Karelia and Finland as a whole. Agents define themselves by looking at the 'Other' and in this case that is Russia. But with a neighbouring country in transition, what are the effects on North Karelian and Finnish identities? And how do agents use heritage for that matter? These issues make the research question interesting and challenging to answer.

## **1.1 Structure**

The two main research concepts are heritage and identity. These concepts are multifaceted and to get insight in the subjects of heritage and identity in North Karelia, the focus in chapter two is on these concepts and how they interrelate. The third chapter discusses the historical context of North Karelia. The focus is on the history of Karelia as a whole and of North Karelia.

Chapter four examines identity in North Karelia. It tries to answer the sub question which dominant identities can be distinguished by the agents. Heritage in North Karelia is the subject of chapter five. It discusses heritage in Finland, policies towards heritage, heritage that is of importance for the agents and the usage of heritage by the agents. The sixth chapter deals with the conclusions and therefore it tries to answer the main research question.

## **1.2 Agents, research material and methods**

There are many different agents who are involved in constructing North Karelian identities. In this thesis the focus is on the academic, lay and policy discourses. Agents in the academic discourse are agents who interpret heritage and identity in North Karelia on an academic level. Agents in the lay discourse are local people. And agents in the policy discourse work on different governmental levels or these agents are professionally involved in the construction of North Karelian identities.

Research material is needed to answer the main research question and the subquestions. In this research primary, secondary and tertiary data has been gathered. The primary data consists of

interviews, questionnaires and observations of heritage and identity. The secondary data consists of other sources, e.g. maps and brochures. The tertiary data is material already presented by other researchers.

Several methods are used to gather primary data. The questionnaire (see Appendix I&II) was set up according to the research questions and agents in the lay discourse were asked to fill in a questionnaire. The region of North Karelia consists of five subregions. These subregions were visited to gather questionnaires and a variety of local people were approached. In total 111 questionnaires were filled in of which 59 were Finnish and 62 were English. The questionnaires are examined and analysed through SPSS analysis and the results are discussed in chapter four and five.

Eight in-depth interviews with agents in the policy discourse were held in the largest town or municipality of each subregion. Four interviews were held in Joensuu and in Kitee, Outokumpu, Ilomantsi and Lieksa one interview was held. Two interviews were held with representatives of regional governments, five with representatives of local governments and one with a representative of the tourist office of North Karelia (see Appendix III). The questions were set up according to the research questions, but the questions and time varied according to the different agents. In some cases agents based their answers on solid ground by an excursion. These excursions -beside own observations- can be seen as direct observations of heritage and identity. The observations of heritage and identity are important, because they reflect the 'sense of place'. The researcher was an 'outsider' and heritage and identity were discovered by seeing, feeling, hearing, tasting and touching. The results of the analysis of the in-depth interviews are discussed in chapter four and five.

Secondary data consists of travel brochures that were collected at travel agencies and of information on the World Wide Web. Travel brochures tend to present certain identities of North Karelia for the purpose to attract tourists. And a lot of information can be found on the World Wide Web ranging from maps to complete articles.

Finally an extensive literature study was the method to gather tertiary data that is used through the complete thesis. The data was gathered at the libraries of the University of Groningen and Joensuu and of the city library of Joensuu.

A limitation has been the fact that a great part of data is in Finnish. Because I do not speak or read the Finnish language, much information was inaccessible. But a lot of information came from the people of North Karelia, because they were very helpful.

## 2

### Concepts of research

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Heritage and identity are the main concepts of research. These concepts are multifaceted and to get insight in the subjects of heritage and identity in North Karelia, this chapter focuses on these two concepts.

#### 2.1 Heritage

Heritage is a multifaceted and multi-used concept. It is used in various ways related to the past in some way. According to Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge (2000) heritage can be defined as the contemporary use of the past. Heritage is that particular part of the past that people select in the present for contemporary purposes (Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge 2000).

Ashworth and Howard (1999) say that heritage is a comprehensive concept that is associated by different people at various places at various times. For some persons heritage can be their family photo album and for other persons it can be a specific building. In a simple way, heritage is everything people want to conserve, preserve, protect and collect and so there is an enormous range of things that is considered to be heritage.

Heritage has been approached in different ways. From the 1850s the focus was on the preservation of artefacts and buildings from the past and from the 1960s conservation became more important. In the 1970s there was a shift to a market orientation when artefacts and buildings from the past became economic products. The constitution of a heritage product is determined by an individual at a particular moment of consumption of that product. The different approaches of individuals causes the variety of heritages.

The constitution of heritage is influenced and constructed by historical events, personalities, folk memories, mythologies, literary associations and physical relics. These physical relics refer to places. Places are heritage products and heritage is often seen as one of the main determinants of the identity of a place. Heritage planning is important in shaping the identity of places (Ashworth and Larkham 1995).

### **2.1.1 Categories of heritage**

Heritage is an ambiguous concept. Nature, landscape, monuments, artefacts, activities, people and mythical heritage are the categories in which heritage can be distinguished. The categories relate to people and their identity. But not everything can be seen as heritage and some items can overlap in different categories. These categories relate to each other and most heritage objects carry different meanings to many people.

In many cases, nature has been cultivated and therefore it can be seen as culture. Landscape refers to *areas conserved for their aesthetic appeal and their cultural evidence* (Ashworth and Howard 1999, 12). Monuments can be considered the most important aspects of heritage and refer to the built environment. The reasons for conserving the built environment diverge from conserving because particular buildings are the most outstanding examples of their type and time to conserving because they are just odd. Artefacts refer to things that are made by human beings and collected by them. Activities are things that are very important to people's identity, but that are not visible, for instance language. Activities can be described as intangible heritage. Some people can be identified as heritage, for instance royalties. And the last category, mythical heritage is connected with certain sites without any necessary physical remains. These sites are associated with stories, writers and artists (Ashworth and Howard 1999).

### **2.1.2 Usage of heritage**

Heritage can be used in various ways. It can be used as a socio-psychological resource, because it seems to be important to the well being of individuals (Ashworth and Howard 1999). Individuals live in certain places and heritage is one of the features that contribute to the identification of places. Places are important to the identity of individuals and therefore within a certain place, heritage contributes to the identification of individuals.

In the second place heritage can be used as a cultural resource. Heritage becomes part of a broader idea of culture (Ashworth and Howard 1999). According to Hall (1995, 176) culture means *the systems of shared meanings which people who belong to the same community, group or nation use to help them interpret and make sense of the world*. Within these systems of shared meanings the collection of heritage is a central activity and museums play an important role in such collecting. Museums are buildings in which items are stored and displayed, but they can also be seen as sites or collections of buildings. The museum is an instrument in communicating with society and the central function is display and interpretation of artefacts. Traditionally the government decides which heritage is transmitted to the people. An alternative reaction has been the representation of the unrepresented in which *folk* and *everyday* are the key words.

Thirdly, heritage can be used as a political resource. Heritage is an important aspect in nation-state building and in the process of identification of its people. It also plays an important role on other levels of spatial governmental units. Identities of regions and localities can be produced by the usage of heritage.

Finally, heritage can be used as an economic resource. The most obvious and direct use is in heritage tourism and it can cover a wide range of activities. Other economic uses refer to the usage of heritage in the promoting of places for investment, residence or recreation (Ashworth and Howard 1999).

### **2.1.3 Users of heritage**

Different agents are involved in the usage of heritage, because they want heritage and because they are affected by it. The users can be distinguished in owners, insiders, the government, visitors and academics.

Heritage is owned by private people or by public organisations (governments, companies, the Church). The national governmental, professional agent is often considered to be the most powerful, but it does not mean that it is the most meaningful to people.

Insiders in communities want to preserve the past, because it is related to their identity. These local people often have a quite different opinion about what is heritage compared to professional people.

Governments at different levels use heritage to legitimate themselves as organisations and their boundaries. Money plays an important role, because money is put in to protect the built environment and because of funding of all kinds of projects related to heritage. In some cases, heritage can be used in a political way when governments want to control a national identity.

Visitors refer to tourism. Tourism is part of heritage, because it is an important funding source. There are different visitors that use different heritages. But not all visitors are tourists. Visitors can also be people who use heritage frequently, for instance just for a walk. Pilgrims use heritage for spiritual or aesthetic reasons rather than simply sightseeing. Academics are very much involved in heritage, because they are often responsible for the discovery of new heritage (Ashworth and Howard 1999).

### **2.1.4 Conflicts**

Heritage has many uses, it serves different users at different times and it carries different meanings to different people. The multiple usage of heritage raises the questions, who decides what is heritage and whose heritage it is (Graham, Ashworth and Tunbridge 2000). All users have their



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own interests concerning heritage. Conflicts about heritage occur when users do not agree about the usage of heritage or when they start to claim it. This can have negative effects for heritage itself. For example, in several parts of the world claiming cultural heritage has caused destruction of heritage for reasons of symbolism, identity, aggressiveness, misunderstanding and rejection (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2003).

## **2.2 Identity**

Identity is fashionable. All over the world people and groups of people struggle with the question who they are. Processes of globalisation and modernization have forced people to rethink their identity. People identify themselves by characteristics that distinguish them from others. But nowadays more and more people seem to have the same characteristics. As a reaction people emphasize their own unique characteristics that distinguish them from other people. People who consider themselves to have the same identity want to have their own territory and that can cause conflicts between different people. Places become fragmented and it seems that local places become more important.

The second main research concept is identity. Identity is a term that is conceptualised in many different ways. Here the focus is on three different approaches. First of all it is related to the individual. The personal identity is related to the question *who am I?* Secondly, identity is related to culture. Culture constructs identity and therefore it gives individuals a sense of who they are. And thirdly, the identity of a place is a product of social actions of the way in which they are constructed. Different individuals construct particular places and for that reason one particular place can have different identities.

### **2.2.1 Personal identity**

According to Baumeister (1986) identity is difficult to define. It is not a recent invention, but the difficulty is that there is a change in the way identity is created and shaped. The main criteria of identity are continuity over time and differentiation from others. Components of identity are units of self-definition which are linked to the question *who am I?* Components of identity are for instance geographical home, ancestral family, marriage, social rank, gender, religion and age. These components can change over time. Society produces the context for identity. Problems with identity arise when the context for identity becomes unclear.

There are two approaches to understand personal identity. The first is looking at the outer context such as religion and society and the second focuses on terms of the inner self that is difficult to know (Baumeister 1986). These approaches can be applied to the collective dimension that refers to the same nature of individuals and the individual dimension that refers to the difference between individuals. National and spatial aspects of identity are the most important components of identity, besides age, gender, race, social class, language, religion, ideology and education. The people in question determine the significance of any component, although some can have an identity that is not recognized by others. Identity can change according to the situation (Leimu 1996).

Not only is identity focussed on the self, but also on the 'Other'. Liebkind (1996) says that identity is related to the way in which people define themselves and others. A personal identity is formed by the characteristics that distinguish a person from other members of the same group. For a group, features of their culture may contribute to their sense of identity, which distinguishes them from other groups.

### **2.2.2 Cultural identity**

Identity is related to culture. *Culture means the systems of shared meanings in which people who belong to the same community, group or nation use to help them interpret and make sense of the world* (Hall 1995, 176). Culture constructs identity, because within the set of shared meanings it gives people a sense of who they are. Processes of globalisation are thought to have an unsettling effect on cultures and cultural identity and it causes new cultural patterns.

Cultures are being composed by systems of meanings. For instance, religion is a component of cultural identity. It refers very strong to 'belongingness' and the establishment of difference and 'otherness'. Another component of cultural identity is custom and tradition. Present forms of life are linked with the distinctive life of one's ancestors. Place can be a symbolic guarantee of cultural belongingness with boundaries, marking off those who belong from those who do not.

But these systems of meanings do not have to be homogeneous, they can be contested and transformed where identities are not stable and that can be caused by globalisation (Hall 1995).

### **2.2.3 Place identity**

Traditionally, places were considered to be settled communities with a distinct character. But the concept of place has changed because of globalisation, worldwide communication and migration. People who live in a place are no longer unworldly, but they have access to everything that other places in the world have to offer. They eat at McDonald's calling with their Japanese cell phone to

their friends on the other end of the globe wearing a handmade Nepalese scarf and so on. On the other hand nationalism and regionalism have resulted from the effects of globalisation. Feelings of being unsafe and insecurity make people long for a safe and settled community to live in. Many nations want to have their own territory and that causes places to become fragmented. Local places seem to become more and more important (Rose 1995).

According to Rose (1995, 88) *identity is how we make sense of ourselves and geographers, anthropologists and sociologists, among others, have argued that the meanings given to a place may be so strong that they become a central part of the identity of the people experiencing them. Identity refers to lived experiences and all the subjective feelings associated with everyday consciousness.* People create places. The connection between place and people refers to identity. Sense of place indicates that places are infused with meaning and feeling. The experiences and feelings are embedded in a wider social context (Rose 1995).

Sense of place and identity are related to each other in different ways. First of all by a feeling of belonging to a certain place. Senses of places combine the local, regional, national, supranational and global scales. Scales can be combined and the same location can have different senses of place. Secondly, sense of place and identity are linked together by the fact that people contrast themselves by their sense of place and who they are with somewhere they feel is very different from them, the other. Finally, the meaning of a sense of place can be irrelevant to identity. In that case, identity and sense of place are not so much related to each other (Rose 1995).

But what does all this mean for the identity of a place? People construct places. *Identities of places are products of social actions and of the ways in which people construct their own representation of particular places* (Jess and Massey 1995, 134). Conflicts about places occur, because different agents define the meaning of place in different ways and they want to use it in different ways. The conflicts are about claiming the identity of places. Such claims are based on the interpretation and on the past of a place, rather than on the present character. The interpretation of the history of a place is used to justify the use in the future. Representations of places over time are images of how people interpret a place. Different people claim their interpretation of the present identity of a place and how it should be in the future. A place is complex, because it has different contested interpretations (Jess and Massey 1995).

Place-identity, cultural identity and personal identity are related to each other. When a cultural or personal identity is formed, identification with a place is a key term. The relations are complex, because changes occur constantly. Persons, cultures and places can have more than one identity.

Identities are constructed and they can be different. Because they can be contested, power determines the construction of the dominant identities of place and culture (Massey and Jess 1995).

#### **2.2.4 Globalisation**

Nowadays the interest in identity is strong, because of the processes of modernization and globalisation. According to Simon (2004) identity is fashionable. For some people the interest is caused by fears and for others by hopes. In any case, most people are interested in identity and what it does for themselves and for others. An important component of identity is the place of birth, because it gives access to a national culture.

Language, religion and geography are important in creating a national culture. Nations become imaged communities when they are socially constructed. The boundaries between nations do not necessarily have to correspond with the boundaries of for instance language, religion and geography. That makes culture not restricted to boundaries (Simon 2004).

Globalisation has resulted in openness and heterogeneousness in terms of place and culture. It is a process of social change that is uneven over space and time. Places are constructed in which identity, representation and sense of place are important aspects (Massey and Jess 1995).

### **2.3 How heritage and identity interrelate**

Heritage and identity are interrelated through places and people. Identity can be seen as the link between people, heritage and place. People want to identify themselves with a place, because that place has a special character and an important contributor to this is heritage. Heritage is a spatial phenomenon and so it refers to places. Many features distinguish places from each other. Heritage is one of these features that contribute to the identity of a place and to the identification of individuals and groups within that certain place.

Heritage and identity are interrelated on different scales. Each individual has a personal heritage that justifies the individual or supports identification with the family. The national and local scales are the most dominant, because national and local governments want to designate, maintain and present their heritage. On an international scale organisations attempt to emphasize the idea of world heritage. The various scales challenge each other and conflicts between scales occur. Regional heritage can be more dominant than national heritage and it can contribute to political separatism (Graham, Ashworth and Tunbridge 2000).

## 3

## The untouched east: North Karelia in a historical context

The historical background is essential to understand heritage and identity in North Karelia. Heritage can be seen as contemporary use of the past. Identity is related to the past through heritage, because heritage contributes to the identity of a place and to the identification of individuals and groups within a certain place. This chapter is focused on how North Karelia can be seen in a historical context.

### 3.1 History

#### 3.1.1 Karelia

When examining the historical context of North Karelia it is necessary to take a closer look at the whole, that is Karelia. North Karelia can be seen as a part of Karelia. Karelia is situated partly in Finland and partly in Russia and that makes it a border area. Karelia is a social-cultural



Figure 2.1 The many Karelias (Nevalainen 2001)

constructed area with no official boundaries. The shape, size and its inhabitants changed many times during the centuries. The name Karelia has been used for different geographical areas, which makes it sometimes a confusing subject. As figure 2.1 shows there are many *Karelias* that constitute Karelia as a whole. Already by the beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup> century people were living as a tribe in Karelia (Nevalainen 2001). These inhabitants of Karelia, the Karelians, managed to maintain their identity and traditions although they lived in an area where they were influenced by the East and the West (Sihvo 1996). Because different national powers had different interests, Karelia has been an area of conflict between Eastern Orthodoxy and Western Catholicism, later Lutheranism. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it became a conflict area between

Eastern Communism and Western Capitalism. The Finnish border changed many times, as figure 2.2 shows, because of these conflicts.

### 3.1.2 The Kingdom of Sweden

Karelia was first divided in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, when it became a battlefield between Swedish and Russian powers. The area was divided in 1323 (Nevalainen 2001) and Finland as a whole became a part of the Kingdom of Sweden. Finland had full political rights within the Kingdom. Because Sweden wanted to expand its Kingdom and its religion, the eastern border changed many times (Klinge 1987). The border moved more eastwards after de Peace of Stolbova in 1617 and that made Finnish Karelia united in a single Swedish province. From that time Karelians from the East and the West were separated from one another.

The Karelian borderland became an area influenced by different national and international forces, but it also forged its own history. It has been an area of conflict, but also a bridge between cultures (Sihvo 1996) and economic activities (Nevalainen 1996). The effect of the Swedish rule in Finland can nowadays be seen in for instance architecture and in the fact that Swedish is the second official language in Finland.

### 3.1.3 Russian rule: the Grand Duchy

The Swedish dominance ended in 1809 when the Russians made Finland an autonomous Grand Duchy of Russia. During that period Finnish Karelia was very much focussed on St. Petersburg, because it was the economic centre of the area at that time. The main exports from Finland to Russia were foodstuffs and firewood, although this was a small fraction of the Russian demand. On the other hand many Russians spent their summer holidays in Finland and that had a positive effect on income and work (Nevalainen 2001). Because of the close economic relations and the border that was easy to cross, there was an increasing migration back and forth across the border. Also people from North Karelia were

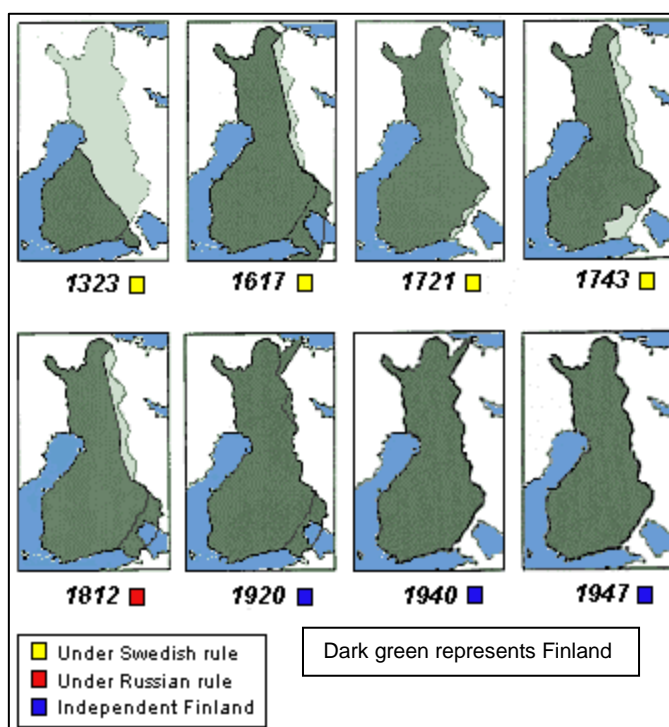


Figure 2.2 Finland's eastern border 1323 – 1947

(<http://virtual.finland.fi/finfo/english/karjala.html>)

attracted to St. Petersburg and many decided to move to Russia (Nevalainen 1996).

During the period as an autonomous Grand Duchy Finland had formed a national identity. A national language and culture were developed and Helsinki was made the administrative centre in 1812 and it became the new capital. Russia was pleased about this new national identity, because that made Finland more estranged from Sweden. Although Finland's autonomy, Russian influences have been perceptible, for instance the Orthodox Church.

Finland was of strategic importance to Russia, but Finland became more and more attracted to the West in economic and cultural ways. Eventually Finland declared itself independent in 1917, caused by the Communist October Revolution, and Russia recognized it (Klinge 1987). The political relations between Finland and Russia changed and that also reflected in economic relations. Practically all economic relations were cut off, which caused an economic crisis in eastern Finland. The population in Finland had to find new ways of livelihood to make a living and the wood-processing industry had to find a new foreign market in Western Europe (Nevalainen 1996). Nowadays it is reasonable to speak in terms of Finnish and Russian Karelia. Over the centuries people in both areas became more and more distinct from each other and that becomes clear in language, culture and religion (Nevalainen 2001).

#### **3.1.4 Period of war**

At the end of the 1930s a period of war in Europe had begun in which Finland played a special role. Germany had started to expand its territory and the Soviet Union was concerned about this expansion. With its small population, Finland itself was not a threat to the Soviet Union, but its location near Leningrad could be used as a German base (Federal Research Division 1988). The Soviet Union tried to force Finland to accept certain demands concerning areas of Finnish territory along the Finnish border. When Finland did not want to accept these demands, the Soviet Union attacked Finland and the Winter War had begun that lasted from November 1939 to March 1940. Although Finland was forced to make peace in 1940, the nation preserved its independence. Finland had to accept Soviet demands by among other things surrendering large parts of Finnish Karelia (Klinge 1987).

The period of war did not end with the Winter War. In June 1941 the Continuation War between Finland and Russia had started and the reasons for this war are somewhat contested. The main reasons were the Winter war and therefore the return of the lost areas, the distrust of the Soviets, the belief of the German victory and German pressure.

In 1941 Germany attacked the Soviet Union in order to capture Murmansk and Finland allowed the Germans troops through northern Finland. As a reaction the Soviet Union started to attack



Finnish territory in June 1941. Finland fought back and they captured the areas that were lost in the Winter War, but it did not join the Germans in attacking Leningrad. The Germans were losing the war by the beginning of 1944 and Finland and the Soviet Union were talking about ending the war. But again the Soviet Union attacked Finland and that resulted in furious fighting on both sides. At the end of the summer of 1944 Finland realized that peace with the Soviet Union was the only possible way to avoid going down with the Germans.

Eventually Finland again had lost the same areas that were lost in the Winter War to the Soviet Union and it had to pay huge damage payments. Also the Germans had to be driven out of Finland and that resulted in a fighting between the former allies. Eventually, the last German troops left in April 1945 (Yrjölä 1994).

### **3.1.5 The lost land**

Eventually the border between Finland and the Soviet Union was officially defined in the Treaty of Paris in 1947. In total 10 percent of the territory of Finland was lost and more than 430.00 people from the ceded areas, whose ancestors had lived there for centuries, had to be resettled in other parts of Finland. They were evacuated from the ceded areas, because they did not want to live under Soviet rule. (Klinge 1987). After the period of war, people from the ceded areas longed for home and they hoped that they could be reunited with Karelia. But the conversation with the Soviet Union about returning the ceded areas back to Finland lead to a dead end and the public discussion died out in the 1970s. Today the debate about returning the ceded areas has revived, because since the end of the Cold War, Karelia was again a subject of discussion. It is a non-political issue, although the public discussion still goes on in both countries (Nevalainen 2001). For the Finns evacuated from their homes the term Karelia refers to the ceded areas, while the media uses Karelia to refer to Russian Karelia (Hawkins and Vallisaari 1997). Again it becomes clear that the term Karelia can be used in many ways.

After the Second World War Finland and the Soviet Union agreed in the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance (1948-1991) to prevent any attack on the Soviet Union through Finnish territory. Although the relation was neutral and the border was tightly closed (Klinge 1987), trade between the two countries started again in 1945. Frontier trade began in 1958 with the aim to stimulate economic cooperation. This frontier trade constituted mainly of raw timber, textiles and clothing and was handled through trade commissions (Nevalainen 1996).

In the 1990s the disintegration of the Soviet Union made clear that there was a big economical difference between the two border regions and that the gap in living standards was one of the deepest in the world (Eskelinen 1994). Trade relations changed and cross-border cooperation

increased. People were able to move freely across the border and close ties were being formed. In 1992 the two countries concluded an agreement concerning cross-border cooperation and with the focus on improvement of the economy and environment (Nevalainen 1996).

### 3.2 North Karelia

Originally Karelia was more or less a unified area, but that changed in the 14<sup>th</sup> century when the area was split in two by a border. Over the centuries the border in Karelia changed many times. Nowadays Karelia is situated partly in Finland and in Russia. As part of the Province of Eastern Finland, Finnish Karelia encompasses North and South Karelia. Finland consists of 19 regions of which North Karelia is one.

The Regional Council of North Karelia is a regional public organization owned by the region's 19 municipalities. The Council is responsible for economic development, regional planning, protection of regional interests and setting up a knowledge infrastructure. North Karelia itself consists of five subregions and each subregion is divided in municipalities (The Regional Council of North Karelia 2004). Municipalities and the province are responsible for the local government. The local government's autonomy and democracy are ascertained in the constitution (Finlandsite, 2004).

North Karelia is a region shaped by its hills and lakes and characterized by its traditional culture with small peasant villages. Originally the inhabitants were Karelians, but nowadays the Karelians have intermixed with different population groups. Situated in the western fringe of Karelia, North Karelia has been a meeting place for different

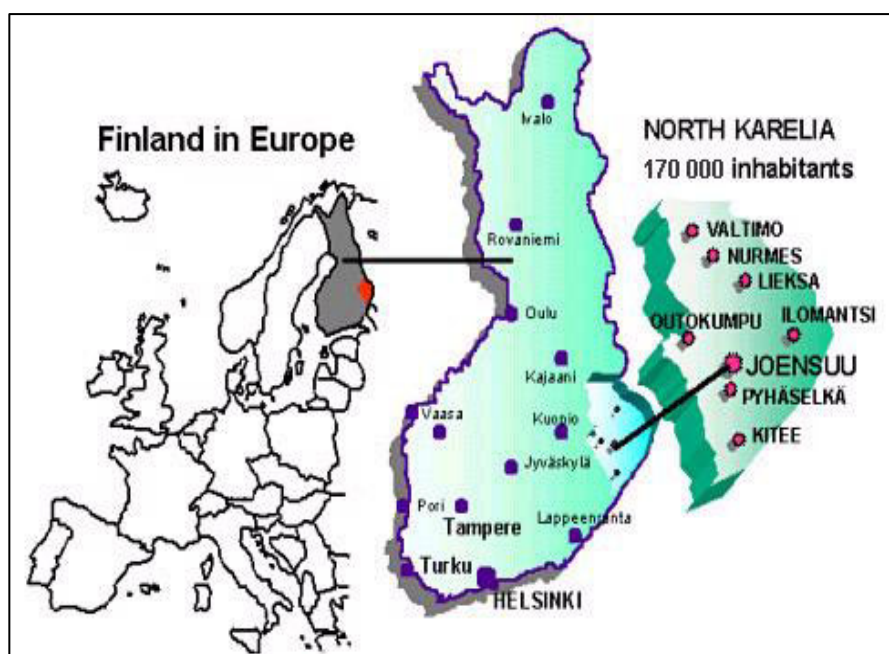


Figure 2.3 North Karelia  
<http://www.pkky.fi/Resource.phx/pkky/english.htx>

people from western parts of Finland and from the historical province of Savo in the north. Prosperity came to North Karelia in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century when towns emerged from industrial centres (Pirkko 2003). Joensuu, founded by Czar Nikolai I of Russia in 1848, became the biggest city in North Karelia. It was a centre of manufacture and commerce and by the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century the sawmill industry began to develop and water infrastructure was improved. The city became one of the largest inland harbour cities and a lively commerce between North Karelia, St. Petersburg and Middle Europe was established (The city of Joensuu 2000). Because of the restructuring of the predominantly agricultural and forestry-based economy in the 1960s and 70s, many people moved out North Karelia. Although industrialization was growing and the service sector was developing, North Karelia was in the 1990s still one of the poorest parts of Finland (Nevalainen 2001). With the opening of the border between Finland and Russia and the membership of the EU, new chances and possibilities have been created for the region of North Karelia.

## 4

### **Identities of North Karelia**

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The identity of a place is not a tangible artefact, but its components can be visible and tangible, for instance people and landscape. A place can have different identities, because different individuals are involved in constructing these identities. North Karelia probably has as many identities as there are inhabitants, but a few dominant identities can be distinguished. This chapter examines these identities of the region of North Karelia. The people who are constructing the region's identities can be seen as agents. These agents can be subdivided in a few discourses. Agents in the academic, lay and policy discourses seem to be important in the construction of North Karelian identities. Agents in the academic discourse are involved in constructing identities on an academic base, agents in the lay discourse are local people, agents in the policy discourse work on different governmental levels or these agents are professionally involved in the construction of North Karelian identities.

First of all agents in the academic discourse distinguish three North Karelian identities. Secondly North Karelian identities according to agents in the lay discourse are discussed. The next paragraph focuses on North Karelian identities described by agents in the policy discourse. Finally this chapter looks if there is one general North Karelian identity.

#### **4.1 Academic discourse**

##### **4.1.1 North Karelia as a source of a national Finnish identity**

In the point of view of agents in the academic discourse three different North Karelian identities can be distinguished. First of all North Karelia can be identified as a source of inspiration for the creation of a national Finnish identity. The region can be seen as the origin of Finnish culture and landscape. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century during the period of Finland as a Grand Duchy of Russia it was able to develop a national language and culture that created a national Finnish identity. The contribution of the region of North Karelia to this national identity can be seen in three ways. In the first place North Karelia holds a great deal in the creation of the national epic of Finland, the Kalevala. North Karelia is often seen as part of Karelia as a whole and in this particular area poems and stories were told and they became known as the Kalevala. The inhabitants of Karelia had been

telling this folk poetry for many years. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century this folk poetry was collected by Elias Lönnrot and published in 1835 in the *Kalevala or Old Poems of Karelia from the Ancient Times of the Finnish People*. The material of the Kalevala consists mainly of old folk poetry collected in Karelia. The poetry is about the life and feats of Karelian heroes (Hawkins, H. and Vallisaari, P. (eds) 1997). In 1849 Lönnrot published an enlarged version of the Kalevala and that edition is nowadays known as the national Finnish epic (Branch 2000). With the appearance of the Kalevala in 1835 the awareness came that also the Finnish people had their own language, history and ancient culture. The Kalevala became a source of a national identity. Among great epics like Homer Iliad, it is recognized as one of the great epics of world literature (Hawkins, H. and Vallisaari, P. (eds) 1997). Secondly, North Karelia has attracted Finnish artists and these artists and especially their work hold a great deal in creating a national identity. They were attracted to North Karelia, because they were inspired by its landscape and culture. They gave expression to their arts based on the national epic the Kalevala. To these Finnish painters, writers, architects and composers Karelia as a whole had a major attraction. They travelled throughout Karelia and inspired by the Kalevala they gave expression to their art. For instance, paintings made by Järnefelt and Gallen-Kallela, buildings designed by the architect Saarinen and music composed by Sibelius can be seen as cornerstones of Finnish art. They hold an important place in constructing a national identity (Nevalainen 2001). The Koli hills and its location on the shore of Lake Pielinen in the region of North Karelia plays an important role as a source of inspiration for many artists. In ancient times it was a sacred place and it has been a landmark ever since. For example, Eero Järnefelt's paintings made Koli into the epitome of the Finnish heritage landscape and Sibelius even took his grand piano up the Koli hills to play his music (Reunala 2001). Even today many people come to Koli to experience the scenery and the landscape.

The term applied to this cultural movement of fine arts, literature and music is called *Karelianism*. It is the national romantic version of the myth of a golden age. Compared to other parts in Europe at that time, it was not a unique Finnish phenomenon. Peripheral areas with authentic traditional cultures were settings for a quest of identities (Oksa 1999). Through the years the Kalevala became more than just a collection of folk poetry, but more and more a symbol of a national identity. Finally in 1917 the country became independent and a dream came true. Although the material for the Kalevala was collected in Russian Karelia by Finnish people among Finnish-speaking populations, the Kalevala was adopted as a symbol of the national identity (Kirkinen and Sihvo 1985). In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the attention for the Kalevala and Karelia decreased, but nowadays they have once again become subjects of interest (Asplund 2000). The influence of the Kalevala still lives on in Finnish culture. Names of children, streets, ships, companies, newspapers and theatres are

inspired by the Kalevala and it is the most translated book of Finnish literature with versions in almost forty languages. The Kalevala and Karelia have become powerful symbols of Finland's national identity (Branch 2000). Sihvo (1996, 13) also underlines that *Karelia is a fundamental part of the Finnish national culture and civilization*.

Finally North Karelia has played a key role in strengthening the creation of a national identity, because of its location next to the Russian border. After Finland became independent in 1917 the border became an important symbol for the creation of a national identity. The border represented the eternal opposition between Finland and Russia (Paasi 1994). Finland defined itself by the characteristics that distinguished the country from the 'Other', Russia.

#### **4.1.2 North Karelia as a frontier area**

In the second place North Karelia can be seen as a frontier area between Eastern Orthodoxy and Western Lutheranism and later between Eastern communism and Western capitalism. Before examining North Karelia as a frontier area, it is necessary to take a closer look at what the terms border, frontier and boundary actually mean. Paasi (1999) defines boundary as a line of physical contact between states, border as an indicator of the neighbouring areas that line the boundaries and frontier as a political division between states or a division between the settled and uninhabited parts of a country. A borderland is a transition zone within a boundary lies. Boundaries can be very important in the construction of a sense of place. Boundaries exclude 'outsiders' from their place (Jess and Massey 1995). The term boundary is linked to the 'Other' and therefore related to identity. An identity is constructed by certain characteristics that distinguish it from the 'Other' (Paasi 1999). Boundaries between nations do not necessarily have to correspond with the boundaries of for instance language, religion and geography (Simon 2004).

As described before, North Karelian identity cannot be seen without looking at Karelia as a whole. The term Karelia is used for different entities. It is a social-cultural constructed area with no official boundaries. The border between Finland and Russia has been an important element in identifying the Karelian area. Karelia can be seen as a battlefield, but also as a landscape of peace (Paasi 1994).

In the 14<sup>th</sup> century Karelia was split up in a Swedish -and later Finnish- part and a Russian part. Karelia became an area with a variety of cultures. Nowadays the Finnish part consists of North Karelia and South Karelia. North Karelian identity refers to the Orthodox tradition and a dialect of the actual Karelian language. South Karelian identity refers to the Lutheran tradition and south-eastern dialect (Sihvo 1996). According to Nevalainen (2001) North and South Karelia have found it difficult to develop a sense of regional identity and what actually the meaning is of being a Karelian person. Because of their location in Karelia, these regions have been a meeting place for

different population groups. The North Karelian population mixed with people from Savo and that changed the North Karelian region. North Karelia is often seen as the origin of Finnish culture and where Karelian traditions still hold strong. It tries to emphasize its sense of a Karelian identity through the Orthodox faith and the Karelian traditions just across the border to the east (Nevalainen 2001).

From the 1970s Karelian societies, local authorities and the tourist industry have constructed a new Karelian identity in Eastern Finland. This mythical Karelian identity is constructed in Eastern Finland and can be seen as an utopian concept of a lost community that is still present in people's minds. A symbolic space for Karelia is created in North Karelia in which marketing of tourism by authorities play an important role (Paasi 1996) and it finds expression in intangible heritage, like cooking and tangible heritage, like the Bomba house. This Karelian identity can be seen as a *mental substitute* for the ceded areas (Paasi 1994) and for Finland as a whole these ceded areas were of great importance. When these ceded areas were part of Finland, they developed strong and its economy and cultural life were important aspects in the increasing prosperity of the country. When Karelia became a battlefield in the Second World War, it meant a great tragedy for the entire country. Eventually, Finland had to give up the ceded areas and many Finnish Karelians had to be resettlement all over the country (Hawkins and Vallisaari 1997).

#### **4.1.3 North Karelia as a border region in transition**

In the third place North Karelia can be identified as a border region in transition. The region has always been influenced by the changing border. When the border between Finland and Russia opened again after the end of the Cold War, cross-border cooperation became possible. Nowadays things change slowly, but they improve and new possibilities for North Karelia are being created (Oksa 1999). Jukarainen (1994) defines three different periods of the identity of North-Karelia as a border region. First of all the Finnish-Russian border was a formality during the period of the Grand Duchy. The people living in Finnish and Russian Karelia spoke the same language, had the same religion and they were able to move freely across the border. Secondly, when Finland became independent, the border became a key element in the construction of the nation's identity. And in the third place nowadays the border region plays a key role in European integration. The border region can be seen as a link based on the same culture, history and language. These border regions known as *Euregio's* are being formed all over Europe. They are enlarged border-crossings and they play important roles in European integration and in a common identity for the regions. Although the border is open, it still is a guarded boundary that is only crossable at a few points.



Nowadays the border does not make North-Karelia a peripheral area in Finland, but it starts to benefit from cross-border cooperation with Russian Karelia (Eskelinen 1994).

## 4.2 Lay discourse

### 4.2.1 Questionnaire

The second group of agents involved in constructing North Karelian identities is the lay discourse. Agents in the lay discourse are local people and they were asked to fill in a questionnaire in which components of identity were part of the questionnaire. Place of residence, place of birth, gender, language, dialect and religion are the components examined in the region of North Karelia. The identity of North Karelia and the personal identity of the respondents are related to each other, because identification with a place is the key term when personal identities are being formed.

A sample of the total population of North Karelia was carried out by visiting the biggest municipality or town in each of the five subregions of North Karelia. These municipalities were Ilomantsi, Lieksa, Outokumpu and Kitee and the city of Joensuu. In the centres during day time in total 112 respondents were asked to fill in a questionnaire. This sample can be seen as a reflection of the total population - approximately 170.000 - of North Karelia.

Of the respondents 95,5% has their residence in North Karelia and 58% was born in North Karelia. Of the respondents 83% is protestant, 2,7% is Orthodox, 1,8% is Jehovah and 12,5% is non-religious. It seems that the people in North Karelia are very religious, but the way in which people consider themselves to be religious depends on the way questions regarding religion are asked. In this questionnaire people were asked what kind religion is theirs. Probably the answers would have been different when in the first place people were asked if they were religious at all and subsequently what their religion would be.

Finnish is the native language of 97,3% of the respondents and 69,6% also speaks Swedish. Dialect is an important component of identity in North Karelia and 80,4% speaks a local dialect and 50% of the respondents speaks a Karelian dialect. A Karelian dialect refers to people who speak a North Karelian, Savo Karelian, South Karelian or East Finnish dialect. Of the people who speak a Karelian dialect 87,5% consider themselves living in the region of North Karelia as a Karelian.

In total 112 respondents filled in a questionnaire of which 81 were women and 31 were men. The fact that the number of women is larger than the number of men can be explained by the way the survey was organized. During day time the survey was carried out and probably more women than men walk around in the centres during that time of day, although in general more men than women live in North Karelia (figure 4.1).

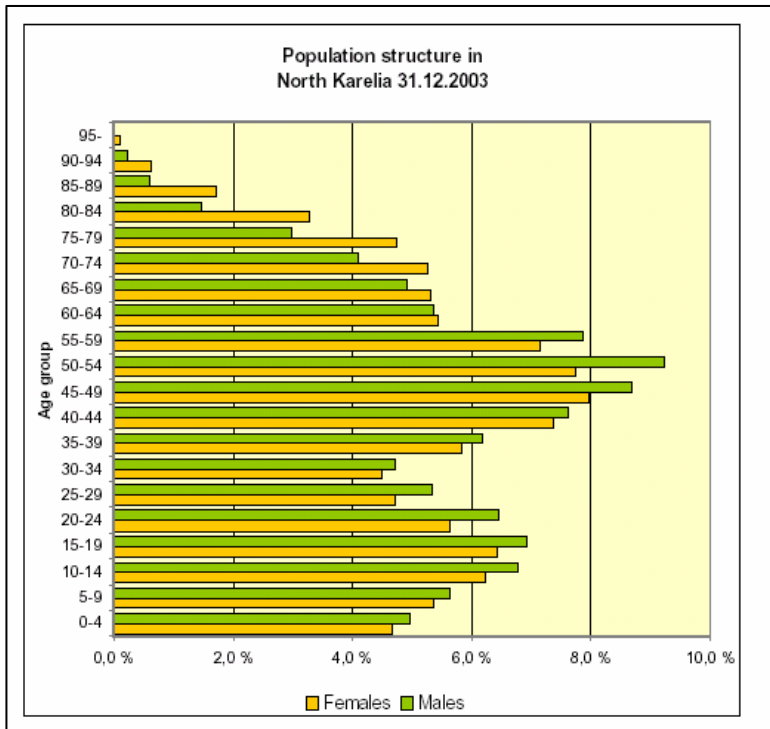


Figure 4.1 Population structure (The Regional Council of North Karelia 2004 II)

There seems to be a difference between men and women concerning Karelian identity. Table 4.1 shows that 58,1% of the male respondents identifies himself as a Karelian and 70,4% of the female respondents identifies herself as a Karelian. But from the Chi-Square test it becomes clear that there is no association between gender and identification as a Karelian. The null hypothesis – there is no association between gender and identification as a Karelian - can not be rejected, because 0,05 is smaller than 0,365. Although women have a stronger relationship with being a Karelian than men, the difference is not big enough to be statistic significant. Also the Cramer’s V results in a low degree of association between gender and identification as a Karelian, because 0,134 is close to zero that indicates no association between variables.

Gender versus identification as a Karelian						
		Living in the province of North Karelia, do you identify yourself as a Karelian?				
			yes	no	I do not know	Total
GENDER	male	Count	18	10	3	31
		% within GENDER	58,1%	32,3%	9,7%	100,0%
	female	Count	57	16	8	81
		% within GENDER	70,4%	19,8%	9,9%	100,0%
Total		Count	75	26	11	112
		% within GENDER	67,0%	23,2%	9,8%	100,0%

Chi-Square Tests				Symmetric Measures			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)		Value	Approx. Sig.	
Pearson Chi-Square	2,018 <sup>a</sup>	2	,365	Nominal by Nominal	Phi	,134	,365
Likelihood Ratio	1,936	2	,380		Cramer's V	,134	,365
Linear-by-Linear Association	,738	1	,390				
N of Valid Cases	112						N of Valid Cases
							112

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.  
 b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

Table 4.1 Gender and identification

But what does it mean to be a Karelian? According to Hawkins and Vallisaari (1997) the concept *Karelians* is a matter of ethnicity and identity. The Karelians were a tribe who spoke the same language and had the same ethnic background. But when the border between Sweden and Russian was drawn, the people were spilt up in two different geographical areas. During the centuries the border changed and so did the people who lived in those border regions. Features of Karelian identity are perceptible, although the ethnic background exists of many sources. Overall the respondents seem to have a strong relationship with Karelian identity, because 67% of the respondents identifies himself or herself a Karelian.

#### 4.2.2 Important agents according to the lay discourse

According to agents in the lay discourse local people living in North Karelia seem to be the most important agents in constructing North Karelian identities. Table 4.2 indicates that 96,4% of the respondents agrees on the fact that local people are the most important agents.

Agents who are important in constructing North Karelian identities			
	Name	Count	Pct of Cases
Local people construct North Karelian identities.	LOCA.PEO	108	96,4
People who just have just moved into the region	MOVE.IN	15	13,4
People who just moved out of the region construct	MOVE.OUT	18	16,1
Tourists construct North Karelian identities.	TOURISTS	32	28,6
Travel industry constructs North Karelian identities.	TRAVEL	64	57,1
Local government constructs North Karelian identities.	LOCALGOV	47	42,0
Regional government constructs North Karelian identities.	REGIOGOV	37	33,0
National government constructs North Karelian identities.	NATIOGOV	6	5,4
		-----	-----
	Total responses	327	292,0
0 missing cases; 112 valid cases			

**Table 4.2 Agents who are important in constructing North Karelian identities according to the lay discourse**

Because the questionnaire focussed on agents in the lay discourse who are local people, the respondents think themselves as the most important agents. Local people give expression to their identity through heritage, arts, literature, paintings, music and so on. Small groups and organisations of local people come together to express aspects of their identity. Especially the people who want to emphasize the Karelian culture and traditions play an important role. When people get older, they become more interested in their roots and culture. But also younger people are involved in keeping their culture alive. For instance in Ilomantsi where young people still learn how to play the Kantele. The Kantele is one of the symbols of ancient Finnish culture. It was described in the national epic the Kalevala as the typical Finnish musical instrument and today it is the oldest Finnish instrument. The use of it almost died out in the 1950s, but the instrument made a comeback in the early 1980s when it was introduced as a school instrument (Virtual Finland 2001).

### 4.2.3 Happy

According to the results of the questionnaire 86,6% of the respondents has the opinion that there is a North Karelian identity. Of the respondents 21,2% answers there is one identity and 57,6% answers there is more than one identity. Also there seems to be a difference between North Karelian identity and Karelian identity. Taking a look at the questionnaire 48,2% of the respondents thinks there is a difference between North Karelian identity and Karelian identity as a whole. But apparently this is a difficult matter, because 35,7% of the respondents does not know if there is a difference.

But how do agents in the lay discourse describe North Karelian identity? People were asked to write down on the average five features related to North Karelian identity. These features can be seen as components of identity. 101 respondents wrote in total 447 features of which 103 were different. Table 4.3 shows the top 25 of the answered features. It becomes clear that *happy* is the most answered feature related to North Karelian identity. In total the features can be subdivided in a few dimensions (table 4.4). In a strong way it seems that agents in the lay discourse relate North Karelian identity to the social dimension, which refers to human characteristics like happiness, hospitality and honesty. The people and the people's characteristics are part of North Karelia and therefore they can be seen as components of the region's identity. To a less extent North Karelian identity is related to the landscape and cultural dimensions. The economic feature seems to be of no importance to the respondents.

Feature	#	Feature	#
Happy	51	Orthodox	8
Friendly	30	Honesty	7
Talkative	28	Folk music	7
Nature	24	Border	6
Food	23	People	5
Open	21	Relaxed	5
Dialect	21	Peaceful	4
Hospitality	17	East	4
Hard work	16	Seasons	4
Koli	11	Countryside	4
Lakes	10	Building	4
Forests	9	Humour	4
Lively	8		

**Table 4.3 Features of identity according to the lay discourse**

Dimension	# features
Social	241
Landscape	92
Cultural	111
Economic	3

**Table 4.4 Dimensions of identity**

## 4.3 Policy discourse

The final group of agents concerns the policy discourse. Agents in the policy discourse work on different governmental levels or these agents are professionally involved in the construction of North Karelian identities. In each subregion one or more persons were interviewed about heritage and identity in North Karelia and these agents work in tourism and for regional and local authorities.

### 4.3.1 Tourism

Agents in the policy discourse working in tourism play an important role in constructing identities. In North Karelia the main tourist company with a few offices in the region is *Karelia Expert*. Earlier the city of Joensuu owned the tourist office, but now it is a private company. According to a permanent worker of the tourist office the main goal is to sell North Karelia and thus the brochure presents North Karelia at its best. Tourism is important for North Karelia in which nature and the Karelian culture play important roles. North Karelia has a positive image and that attracts tourists. Selling North Karelia is difficult. But what does the travel industry sell? What kind of image or identity do they try to present to attract tourists and companies? Nature, Orthodox religion and culture, joyful people and Karelian culture are important aspects for the identity of North Karelia. *Karelia Expert* sees North Karelia as a miniature of Finland where all aspects of Finnish landscape come together (Karelia Expert 2005).

The identity presented by the travel industry is questioned. It is said that a cliché truth, which can be described as an official Karelian identity, about North Karelia is promoted. On the contrary the real and common identities of North Karelia are constructed by the people itself. These identities are immaterial and they are constructed on a different set of rules and in a totally different reality.

### 4.3.2 Local and regional authorities

Different authorities function at different spatial levels. Local authorities and regional authorities are important in constructing North Karelian identities, because they have certain powers. They have power, because they are able to subsidize cultural life. These authorities are not so much directly involved in constructing identities, but indirectly they are. Agents that are involved in constructing identities get support, for instance when a municipality puts a conference room at the disposal of a North Karelian cooking club or when a government subsidizes cultural clubs or organisations. Agents working for local and regional authorities that were interviewed agree that several different identities can be distinguished, but that it is hard to describe. It depends on which part of the region you live in and who you are. There is a search for identities and different identities can be distinguished. Features mentioned by the agents working for local and regional authorities can be subdivided in four dimensions that also have been described in table 4.2 (table 4.5). In a strong way the agents seem to relate North Karelian identity to the social dimension. The people and the people's characteristics play important roles. The cultural dimension also seems to play a key role. The Orthodox religion is emphasized, although it is not the religion of the majority. Especially in the subregion of Ilomantsi the Orthodox religion, with its churches and tsasouna's, is an important part of one's life and this characteristic is well known all over Finland.

The Orthodox religion and the typical Karelian culture distinguish the people of Ilomantsi from the people in North Karelia as a whole.

Social	Landscape	Culture	Economic
story telling heritage	villages on the hills	orthodox	peasant way of life
people and people's character	nature	border area	
joyfull	water system	cooking and handicrafts	
open		dialect	
happy		history	
talkative			

**Table 4.5 Dimensions of identity according to agents in the policy discourse**

It appears from the interviews that history has made North Karelia a border area where eastern culture meets western culture. The region has a strong relationship with Russian Karelia and this relation becomes clear from the fact that many people have lost their homes after the Second World War. Nowadays these people are old, but their children are interested in their roots and reconnect the ties with Russian Karelia. Another feature of the cultural dimension is periphery. North Karelia can be seen as a distant region where all new styles and influences arrive years late and often stylistically altered. It has been an area where cultures struggle, because of the different influences during the centuries. People had to rely on themselves and they have held strong to their own traditions. The region can be seen as the most Karelian area in Finland and its identity refers to immaterial things that are related to Karelian culture. Things like music, poetry, the Kalevala, the Kantale, cooking and handicrafts are important in the construction of identities. These features related to Karelian culture play important roles. Karelia is seen as something from the past where old traditions still hold strong. But things like folk music and even Karelian language courses enliven Karelian culture in North Karelia. Karelian culture can be seen as part of North Karelian identity.

Next important features of the landscape dimension are nature, water systems en villages on the hills. These wide spread villages with small populations, where traditional log building can be found, are characteristic for the region. Nature is important, because people live so close to it and life is interweaved with nature related activities like fishing and hiking. The economic dimension seems to play a minor role according to agents in the policy discourse. Only the peasant way of life is mentioned as feature of identity.

#### 4.4 Different discourses: one North Karelian identity?

Agents in different discourses are involved in constructing North Karelian identities. Because many agents are involved, many different identities can be distinguished. Agents in the academic discourse distinguish three identities. North Karelia can be identified as a source of a national Finnish identity, as a frontier area between Eastern Orthodoxy and Western Lutheranism and later between Eastern communism and Western capitalism and it can be identified as a border region in transition.

Although agents in the lay discourse find it difficult to define the region of North Karelia, they do think there is a North Karelian identity. Agents define themselves as the most important agents involved in constructing identities. Many different features seem to relate to North Karelian identity, but *happy* seems to be the most important aspect of it. According to agents in the policy discourse people and their characteristics are important features of North Karelian identity. Also cultural features of identity are important and especially features that relate to Karelian culture seem to be important. The travel industry sells these aspects of Karelian culture to attract tourists and companies. But this is questioned, because it can be seen as an unrealistic representation of North Karelia.

Analysing the academic, lay and policy discourses it becomes clear that in general all agents find it difficult to describe a North Karelian identity, but that they are confident of the fact that several identities can be distinguished. On the other hand differences between the discourses come forward, especially between the academic discourse and the lay and policy discourses. In general agents in the lay and policy discourses approach North Karelian identity more or less in the same way. They agree on the fact that the people of North Karelia are the most important agents that construct identities and that they are the most important features of identity. Happy seems to be the key term according to the lay discourse. But the academic discourse seems to approach North Karelia identity differently. The three identities distinguished do not correspond with the approaches of the lay and policy discourses. Although agents in the lay and policy discourses do mention some aspects like border and Koli, these features do not come forward as very important. The people of North Karelia do not seem to play a key role in the view of agents in the academic discourse. It has become clear that several North Karelian identities can be distinguished. The different North Karelian identities are related to each other and many of the same aspects come forward in the identities. But one single North Karelian identity does not exist.



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## 5

### **Heritage in North Karelia**

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Heritage is a comprehensive concept and it can be interpreted in different ways. It can be defined as contemporary use of the past (Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge 2000). The constitution of heritage is influenced and constructed by historical events, personalities, folk memories, mythologies, literary associations and physical relics. These physical relics refer to places. Places are heritage products and heritage is often seen as one of the main determinants of the identity of a place (Ashworth and Larkham 1995).

Heritage can be distinguished in several categories and these categories are related to people and their identities. The categories relate to each other and most heritage objects carry different meanings to many people. In this research the focus is on the categories that relate to material heritage<sup>1</sup> and whether the heritage is of importance for the identity of the region. Material heritage refers to cultural sites, architecture and other elements of the built environment. The categories that are involved are nature, landscape and monuments.

Heritage in North Karelia is the main subject of this chapter. First heritage in Finland is described. Secondly, the local, regional and national policies towards heritage will be discussed. Then objects of heritage and their characteristics, which are of importance for the identity of North Karelia according to agents in the lay and policy discourses, are described. Finally the usage of heritage and the question whether the usage of heritage causes conflicts will be discussed.

#### **5.1 Finland's heritage**

Only 10% of the total area of Finland is built or shaped by man and large parts are dominated by forests and lakes (Ministry of Environment 2005). Finnish architecture of the built environment is in a strong way influenced by the natural conditions and therefore wood as a construction material has been the dominant building material for thousands of years. But also stone architecture has a long tradition. The building stock is relatively young compared to other European countries: only 5% has been built before 1921 and over 80% of the building stock was completed after 1945. Pre-

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<sup>1</sup> In this chapter and so on heritage refers to the term material heritage.

19<sup>th</sup> century building stock includes castles, churches and manor houses. Buildings that were completed at the turn of the century include among other things town halls and educational institutions. As a result of fires and fire safety aspects settlements were forced to change their town plans and at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century towns have been using stone to built their districts (The National Strategy for Built Heritage 2004). The biggest changes in city structures occurred in the 1960s when, along with urbanization, town plans had to be revised. All medium and large sized towns were restructured. Although wood has been the oldest building material, only a few wooden city districts have been preserved. Today wood is still a popular building material for single-family houses and summer cottages. Finland's inhabitants are said to have a strong association with wood, because it refers to homeliness and health (Saikkonen, Strandell and Karkinen (eds.) 1999).

The rural cultural landscape and its building stock are characteristic of Finland's architectural heritage. The landscape is diverse in which villages with wooden houses and churches play key roles. Also some characteristic buildings like old iron works and schools can be found in the rural landscape (The National Strategy for Built Heritage 2004). The rural landscape is characterized by its sparse settlement with compact villages being less common. Nowadays many farms have been deserted and preservation of the cultural landscape is needed (Karkinen, Saikkonen and Strandell 1999).

Wooden towns, old town centres, villages, ironworks, industrial environments, workers' housing areas, manor houses, churches, railway stations, castles and old roads and canals can be seen as the most characteristic features of the country's historic built environment. Approximately 25.000 objects of the cultural environment are protected by town plans and building plans (Saikkonen, Strandell and Karkinen (eds.) 1999). But in North Karelia the number of protected buildings is relatively small (Hämäläinen, Luotonen and Vainio (eds.) 2000).

## **5.2 Policies**

### **5.2.1 National level**

Policies regarding heritage are implemented on different governmental scales. On a national level the Ministry of Environment formulates the policy regarding heritage. The Ministry is responsible for environmental aspects in international cooperation and at all levels of government. It formulates policies, carries out strategic planning and makes decisions related to cultural landscapes and architectural heritage. The Ministry is also responsible for supervising the cultural

landscapes and architectural heritage and it is supporting the maintenance of heritage sites and landscapes (Ministry of Environment 2005).

According to the Ministry of Environment (2005) management and protection of Finland's cultural landscapes and architectural heritage are controlled by national legislation and international agreements and recommendations. The Act on the Protection of Buildings protects culturally or historically significant buildings, and archaeological artefacts are protected under the Antiquities Act. Other Ministries are also involved in issues related to heritage. The Ministry of Education is responsible for issues related to cultural heritage and supervises The National Board of Antiquities. The National Board of Antiquities is responsible for the preservation of material cultural heritage. This preservation of material cultural heritage includes among other things the protection of built heritage and cultural valuable landscapes. The Board is also involved in advising agents about heritage issues (The National Board of Antiquities 2004). In rural areas heritage is controlled by The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

In 2000 the Finnish Land Use and Building Act came into force and national land use guidelines were set up. Under the Land Use and Building Act, regional and local planning should promote the implementation of these national land use guidelines. The guidelines compromise among other things the cultural and natural heritage, recreation uses and natural resources. Finland is committed to several international conventions regarding cultural heritage in which the national land use planning plays an import role. One of the guidelines is that land use should contribute to and protect the preservation of cultural heritage and built environment and the country's regionally diversified character (Ministry of Environment 2002).

### **5.2.2 Regional level**

On a regional level in total 13 Regional Environment Centres deal with issues related to environmental protection, construction and land use planning, nature conservation, the management of cultural landscapes, and the management and use of water resources. Regarding heritage the Regional Environment Centres supervise planning to ensure that local authorities protect significant heritage (Ministry of Environment 2005). Beside the Regional Environment Centres, Regional Councils also play a role in heritage issues. These Councils are responsible for regional planning and development and partly for channelling EU funds. The Regional Councils manage other developments of the regions, for instance, developments that relate to specific characteristics of cultural environments (National heritage policy Finland 2005). The Regional Environment Centre of North Karelia and the Regional Council of North Karelia are both seated in the city of Joensuu.

### 5.2.3 Local level

Local authorities take care of the preservation of valuable landscapes and buildings on a local level. They supervise land use planning, construction and demolition work. Their responsibility also lies in increasing the awareness of the cultural environment. Many heritage sites are owned by local authorities (Ministry of Environment 2005). Because of the Land Use and Building Act local authorities are able to work on an independent level and therefore their plans do not need approval from a higher authority (Ministry of Environment 2002).

## 5.3 Which North Karelian heritage?

### 5.3.1 Heritage according to agents in the lay discourse

This paragraph discusses heritage that is regarded as important for the identity of North Karelia by agents in the lay and policy discourses. Agents in the lay discourse are local people and they were asked to fill in a questionnaire in which questions about heritage related to North Karelian identity were part. It became clear that heritage is important for the identity of North Karelia (table 5.1). Heritage is important or very important for the identity of the region according to 87% of the

What is the importance of heritage for identity?

	Frequency	Percent
very important	34	30
important	64	57
neutral	10	9
not very important	4	4
Total	112	100

**Table 5.1 Importance of heritage for North Karelian identity according to the lay discourse**

respondents.

Agents in the lay discourse were asked which objects of heritage they thought were important for the identity of North Karelia. In total 78% of the respondents mentioned 334 objects of heritage -of which 65 were different- that they thought were important for the identity of the region. These objects of heritage can be subdivided in categories

and three categories seem relevant in this case. Nature, landscape and monuments are the categories (Ashworth and Howard 1999) in which the 334 objects of heritage can be divided. The category of nature is still part of cultural heritage, because it is defined as nature from a cultural perspective. Often nature and culture intertwine when for instance fields are cultivated or trees are moulded by human touch (Jokinen and Veijola 2003).

Landscape refers to *areas conserved for their aesthetic appeal and their cultural evidence* (Ashworth and Howard 1999, 12).

Nature and landscape are both defined from a cultural perspective, but the difference lies in the fact that elements of landscape consist of 'items of nature' as well as human

Category	#
Nature	46
Landscape	79
Monuments	197
Other	12
Total objects of heritage	334

**Table 5.2 Categories of heritage**

artefacts. Therefore landscape consists of more cultural aspects and it can be seen as more cultural than nature (Jokinen and Veijola 2003). Monuments can be considered the most important aspects of heritage and refer to the built environment. The reasons for conserving the built environment range from the conservation of particular buildings, because they are the most outstanding examples of their type and time to the conservation of particular buildings, because they are just odd. These categories are related to people and their identity and therefore heritage objects carry different meanings to many people (Ashworth and Howard 1999).

Nature		Landscape	
Nature/Natural parks/Wilderness/Hikingroutes	13	Koli	43
Ruuna rapids/area	10	WWII battle sites	5
Lakes/Lakesystem	8	Cultural landscape in the countryside, fields/pasture, farms	5
Lake Pielinen	6	Ilomantsi and its orthodox-ness and karelian-ess	5
Hills/Hills scenery	4	Landscape	2
Rivers/river sides	4	Pyhajarven landscape	1
Pielisjoki river and its surroundings	3	Park areas	1
Lake Anakainen	1	Border	1
Forests	1		
Total objects of heritage	50	Total objects of heritage	63
Old settlements with old wooden buildings		Old Karelian style buildings	
Old buildings/Old traditional wooden architecture	19	Bomba (Nurmes)	30
Wooden/old Nurmes	2	Old Karelian buildings/villages	11
Wooden/old Juuka	2	Rune singer's house (Ilomantsi)	9
Old mansions	1	Korpiselka house (Tuupovaara)	6
Murtovaara house museum (Valtimo)	1	Total objects of heritage	56
Sissola (Mekrijarvi)	1		
Total objects of heritage	26		
Churches		Industrial buildings	
Orthodox church(es) and tsanouna's/Orthodox culture	17	Old (saw) mills	2
Churches	14	Old powerplants	1
Lutheran church(es)	3	Total objects of heritage	14
Total objects of heritage	34		
Museums		Other buildings	
Studio of wood sculptures Eva Rynanen & Paateri chapel	10	Festival stage Joensuu	8
Pielinen open-air museum (Lieksa)	6	Joensuu centre (theater, market, etc.)	6
North Karelian Museum (Joensuu)	6	Martketplaces	6
Art Museum (Joensuu)	3	Summer cottages	3
Warrior's house (Hattuvaara) (Taistelijan talo)	2	Kivikeskus stone center	3
Museum canal at Jakokosken (Kontiolahti)	1	University buildings	2
Bunker Museum (Joensuu)	1	Hunting huts/bird towers	2
Total objects of heritage	29	Arena Joensuu	2
		Science park Joensuu	1
Other		stone buildings from Finnish Romanticism (Sortavala, Russia)	1
Valamo	4	Single buildings	1
Folklore/poems/music/handicrafts	3	New wooden buildings	1
People	2	Little cottage of Juhana	1
Wild animals	1	Hospital building Joensuu	1
Vaski week Raakkyla	1	Historical/modern buildings	1
Seasons (cold winters & nice summers)	1	Bridges	1
Total objects of heritage	12	Stone houses	1
		Total objects of heritage	50

Table 5.3 Groups of objects of heritage in North Karelia according to agents in the lay discourse

Table 5.2 shows the categories nature, landscape, monuments and other objects of heritage. It becomes clear that the respondents associate heritage mostly with monuments and to a lesser extent with nature and landscape. To get more insight in the categories, the 334 objects of heritage can be further subdivided in nine groups (table 5.3). These nine groups are landscape, nature, old settlements with old wooden buildings, old Karelian style buildings, churches, industrial buildings, museums, other buildings and other objects of heritage mentioned by the respondents. Table 5.3 points out that *Landscape* and *Old Karelian style buildings* are the most important groups in which Koli and the Bomba house are the most important objects of heritage according to the respondents. Overall, Koli and in the second place the Bomba house are the most important objects of heritage for the identity of North Karelia. Objects in the group *Other* are mentioned by agents as objects of heritage, but these objects can not be seen as heritage discussed in this research.

Object of heritage	Value
Koli	988
Bomba	633
Orthodox church	489
Marketplace	460
Cottage	449
Town Hall Joensuu	427
Festival stage Joensuu	386
Wooden house II	385
Lutheran church	377
Wooden house I	364
Scenery Joensuu	359
Old mine Outokumpu	324
Art Museum Joensuu	303

**Table 5.4. Objects of heritage according to agents in the lay discourse**

Table 5.4 confirms that Koli and the Bomba house are the most important objects of heritage for the identity of North Karelia. Agents in the lay discourse were presented 13 objects of heritage (see Appendix II) and they were asked to range the pictures from 1 – 13. The object of heritage with the strongest association of North Karelian identity was given 1 and the object with the lowest association was given 13. To get more insight in the results, each number was given a value (see Appendix IV) and that resulted in table 5.4. Koli and the Bomba house were given the highest values and therefore they can be seen as most important objects of heritage, which is also illustrated by bar charts (see Appendix IV).

### 5.3.2 Heritage according to agents in the policy discourse

Agents in the policy discourse (see Appendix III) were also asked which heritage is important for the identity of North Karelia. The fact that the policy discourse concerns only eight agents, compared to 112 agents in the lay discourse, has to be taken into account. However, the results of the policy discourse are as much valuable as those of the lay discourse. Table 5.5 points out which objects of heritage are important, subdivided in eight groups. The groups *Old settlements with old wooden buildings* and *Churches* seem to be the most important for the identity of the region. Comparing the lay and policy discourses it becomes clear that there are many similarities, but Koli and the Bomba house seem to be less important for the identity of North Karelia according to agents in the policy discourse.

Nature	Landscape	Churches
Lake Pielinen 1	Landscape 1	Orthodox churches 2
Water 1	Koli 2	Churches Joensuu 1
Total objects of heritage 2	Total objects of heritage 3	Churches Ilomantsi 1
		Churches 2
		Total objects of heritage 6
	<b>Old Karelian style buildings</b>	
	Bomba 2	
	Rune Singer's house (Ilomantsi) 2	
	Total objects of heritage 4	
		<b>Other buildings</b>
<b>Old settlements with old wooden buildings</b>	<b>Industrial heritage</b>	University of Joensuu 1
Old wooden houses & buildings 3	Penttila sawmill Joensuu 1	Town hall Joensuu 1
Old villages 1	Old mine Outokumpu 2	War heritage 1
Hill top villages 2	Industrial heritage 1	Total objects of heritage 3
Wooden Nurmes 1	Total objects of heritage 4	
Murtavaara house museum (Valtimo) 1		
Total objects of heritage 8		

Table 5.5 Groups of objects of heritage in North Karelia according to agents in the policy discourse

But which objects of heritage according to agents in the lay and policy discourses are most important for the identity of North Karelia? Some objects of heritage are mentioned or described many times by agents and therefore they can be seen as important objects of heritage. Next, out of each subdivision the most important object or objects of heritage will be discussed.

### 5.3.3 Objects of heritage

#### *Landscape*

The North Karelian landscape is characterized by hills covered with trees and lakes and rivers in the valleys. The villages are characterized by sparse settlement and in 1992 some traditional villages were nominated as a National Landscape (Louhenjoki-Schulman and Hedenström 2003). In the subdivision *Landscape* and in the whole research Koli seems to be an important object of heritage for the identity of North Karelia according to agents in the lay and policy discourses. But it is not clear why Koli is the most important object of heritage, because the agents were not asked the reason for mentioning Koli.

Koli has been a National Park since 1991 and the purpose is to ensure the preservation of the heritage landscape and forests. Also it tries to maintain the technique of swidden cultivation. Swidden



Figure 5.1 Koli scenery (picture by author)

cultivation is clearing the land for cultivation by slashing and burning the forest vegetation cover. This technique was already used 400 years ago and today it is used to restore the heritage landscape. It is said that the Koli hills, and its location on the shore of Lake Pielinen, is one of Finland's heritage landscapes, because of its unique character. In ancient times it was a sacred place where people made sacrifices for nature to seek fortune in all kinds of aspects. It has been a landmark ever since and even today many people come to Koli to experience the scenery and the landscape (Lindroos 2004). In the 19<sup>th</sup> century Koli played an important role in the creation of a national Finnish identity when it became a source of inspiration for many Finnish artists. Eero Järnefelt's paintings for example made Koli into the epitome of the Finnish heritage landscape and Sibelius even took his grand piano up the Koli hills to play his music (Reunala 2001). Since that time Koli has been a major tourist attraction in the region of North Karelia.

#### *Old Karelian style buildings*

The Bomba house can be seen as an object of heritage representing Karelian culture. It is part of a holiday resort that was built in 1978. From the 1970s onwards a strong revival of Karelian and Orthodox religious culture occurred. Features of Karelian culture were reconstructed to symbolize the Karelian past and the Bomba house can be seen as a symbol of this Karelian past. Bomba is a wooden building in old Karelian style where people can experience aspects of Karelian culture and it can be seen as part of the commercialisation of the image of Karelia.

Many old Karelian style houses have been built to represent Karelian culture and they are actively marketed to attract tourists. These houses are part of a new symbolic space to revitalize and reproduce the Karelian culture and they refer to the lost Karelian territories (Paasi 1996). Other examples, mentioned by the respondents, are the Korpiselka house near the Russian border and the Rune Singer's house on Parppeinvaara hill in Ilomantsi. These Karelian style buildings represent Novgorodian or North Russian house type (Nikkula 1993). The Karelian architecture can be characterized by cornice and window frames decorated by woodcarvings and by well-proportional measures. These characteristics can also be found in Orthodox church buildings and grave memorials (Haaksluoto [et al.] (eds.) 1998).

But do these old Karelian style buildings represent genuine North Karelia heritage? According to agents in the policy discourse the Bomba house is not a genuine North Karelian house, because it is Russian. The original Bomba house was built in 1855 in Suoj rvi, Russia by Jegor Bomba for his son. But the house was demolished in 1934. In the 1960s some people got the idea to rebuild a new Bomba house modelled on the old one and that resulted in the new Bomba house completed in



1978 in Nurmes. Although these examples of old Karelian style buildings are not genuine North Karelian, for the respondents they are of great importance for the identity of North Karelia.



Figure 5.2 Old Karelian style buildings: Bomba house (picture by author) – Rune Singer’s house (picture by author) – Korpiselk house (www.korpiselka.com).

### *Nature*

Nature plays an important role in the identity of the region. It is an important aspect in selling the region to attract tourists. In North Karelia there are three National Parks and several nature reserves in which hiking trails attract many tourists. Especially water plays a key role in the identity of the region: 70% of the area consists of water (Virtamo and Vuorjoki 2005). For instance, the Ruuna rapids and the Ruuna hiking area are important tourist attractions. The water is not only a source for tourism and recreation, it is also an economic resource. The water system has always been used for the transportation of logs, although nowadays that is used to a less extent. The water system has also been of great importance for the sawmill industry.

Nature is characteristic not only for North Karelia, but for Finland as a whole. With short warm summers, but cold, dark and long winters people are dependent of nature. The countryside is characterized by sparse settlement and by many forests. The way of life is determined by nature and therefore it is an important aspect in the construction of identity.



Figure 5.3 Farmhouse Pielinen Musuem (picture by author)

### *Old settlements with old wooden buildings*

Wooden buildings are characteristic for Finland as whole. But during the years many wooden buildings have been demolished and replaced by stone buildings, especially in the 1960s when many town and municipality districts were restructured. This concerns also towns and municipalities in North Karelia. Still some places can be

found where the traditional wooden centres have been preserved, for example in Nurmes. The town of Nurmes was established in 1876 by the tsar of Russia, Alexander II, and nowadays the original town plan with its wooden buildings still exists. In Joensuu examples of old wooden buildings are protected, like the wooden houses on Rantakatu and some old mansions. Other old wooden buildings are presented in the Pielinen open-air museum in Lieksa, the second largest open-air museum in Finland. The buildings dating from 1765 to 1950s were mainly collected and transferred from the region between Lake Pielinen en Russian Karelia. The buildings include farmhouses and mills and the museum also includes forestry, agricultural and a fire section. The museum represents the Karelian lifestyle in the region during the centuries (Pielinen museum 2001).

### *Churches*

In Finland both the Lutheran as well as the Orthodox religion play key roles in society. Of the population 85% is a member of a parish of the Lutheran church and only 1.1% of the population is a member of the Orthodox church. The interest in the Orthodox religion has grown, particularly in the traditions of the Orthodox church (Kääriäinen 2002). The Orthodox religion finds the best expression in North Karelia where 6% of the population is a member of the Orthodox church (Paasi 1996). The Orthodox character of the region can be seen in for instance church buildings, tsasouna's and traditional *praasniekka* festivals. Tsasouna's are little Orthodox chapels and *praasniekka* festivals are celebrations of a particular saint. These objects of heritage are still perceptible in the region and they have become strong tourist attractions.

Ilomantsi can be seen as the most Orthodox municipality in North Karelia and in Finland as a whole, because the largest wooden Orthodox church has been built in Ilomantsi and the Orthodox congregation is the oldest in the country (Louhenjoki-Schulman and Hedenström 2003).

### *Industrial buildings*

The old mine in Outokumpu is an example of industrial heritage in North Karelia and for agents it is of great importance for the identity of the region. With the discovery of copper ore in 1910 Outokumpu became an important mining town. In 1989 mining was exhausted and changes were made in order to maintain and develop commercial and industrial life. The old mine was reopened in 1990 when it became a cultural centre. Nowadays it also



Figure 5.4 Outokumpu mine (picture by author)

houses a Mining Museum and all kind of cultural activities are taken place (The Town of Outokumpu 1999).

### *Museums*

Museums are of no great importance to the agents in the policy discourse. But according to the agents in the lay discourse museums do seem to be important for the identity of the region. Especially the studio and Paateri chapel designed and built by Eva Ryynänen seem to play key roles. Eva's wooden sculptures are well known in North Karelia and in Finland as a whole. Her sculptures are a reflection of nature, children, animals and life in the countryside (Louhenjoki-Schulman and Hedenström 2003).

### *Other buildings*

The Town Hall in Joensuu is an object of heritage designed by the Finnish architect Eliel Saarinen and was built in 1914. Nowadays it houses not only the town council, but also a theatre and a restaurant. The Town Hall dominates the city landscape and it is typical of Saarinen's architecture. The building reflects both late Art Nouveau and National Romantic style (City of Joensuu 2004). The National Romantic style is characterized and inspired by the national epic the Kalevala that meant a great deal for the construction of a national Finnish identity. The building material meant to recall the settings of the Kalevala. Saarinen has reinterpreted the Kalevala in his own way and it finds expression into his work (Cupola 2005).

## **5.4 The usage of heritage in North Karelia: conflicts?**

Heritage has many uses, it serves different users at different times and it carries different meanings to different people. It can be used as a socio-psychological resource, because it seems to be important to the well being of individuals. It can also be used as a cultural, economic and political resource (Ashworth and Howard 1999). The uses of heritage can overlap. For instance, an Orthodox church can be used as a socio-psychological resource for local people, but it can also be used as a cultural resource for tourists. The multiple usage of heritage raises the questions, who decides what is heritage and whose heritage it is (Graham, Ashworth and Tunbridge 2000). All users have their own interests concerning heritage. Conflicts about heritage occur when users do not agree about the usage of heritage or when they start to claim it.

#### 5.4.1 Usage and conflict according to agents in the lay discourse

Agents in the lay discourse seem to use heritage mostly for recreation, tourism and because it reminds them of their culture (table 5.6). To a less extent it is used as an economic resource for benefits and as a political resource. Of the respondents 28% considers heritage as their own and the heritage concerns all kind of different objects (table 5.7, see Appendix V). Overall, these objects of heritage correspond with the objects of heritage mentioned by the lay discourse in paragraph 5.3.1. That means that the objects that are important for the identity of the region are also considered to belong to individual agents in the lay discourse. For instance, Koli, nature and the old mine in Outokumpu are mentioned as objects of heritage that belong to agents in the lay discourse. Of the respondents 26% agrees that heritage belongs to specific groups.

	% respondents
Usage of heritage for recreation	59
Heritage reminds me of my culture	42
Usage of heritage as a tourist	38
Usage of heritage as an economical resource for benefits	7
Usage of heritage as a political resource	1
No, I do not use heritage	7

Table 5.6 Usage of heritage according to agents in the lay discourse

Again it concerns objects that are mentioned as objects important for the identity of the region (table 5.8, see Appendix V). For instance, Orthodox churches that are used by Orthodox people and the usage of the old mine in Outokumpu by artists and tourists. But most of the respondents (70%) do not consider specific heritage as it is their possession and 71% does not think heritage belongs to a specific group. Consequently, the usage of heritage does not seem to be important according to agents in the lay discourse.

The usage of heritage can cause conflicts. In North Karelia 39% of the respondents has mentioned some sort of conflict in the area, but two conflicts have attracted most attention. First of all Koli is mentioned often as a source of conflict. There has been a lot of discussion about Koli and mostly it is about the use of Koli as a natural area or as a place for tourists. In the 1980s some people supported the plan to make Koli a huge tourist attraction, but others wanted to protect the 'unspoilt' area. In 1991 it became a National Park where nature and tourism go hand in hand. But even today there is discussion about the use of it.

The second conflict often mentioned by the respondents is the use of old wooden buildings. In many Finnish towns there are conflicts about demolishing old wooden buildings and to built something new. Towns and municipalities want to preserve and protect their buildings, but sometimes owners do not care and demolish the buildings. In Joensuu the example of the 'green houses' on Kauppakatu is mentioned many times. These wooden buildings housed small shops, but they have been demolished in 2004. A large public debate was raised and a signature campaign was held. But the economic benefits took overhand and the houses were demolished.

#### **5.4.2 Usage and conflict according to agents in the policy discourse**

According to agents in the policy discourse the usage of heritage in North Karelia has caused conflicts between different users. It appears from the interviews that the main conflict is between economic and cultural uses of heritage. People want to preserve their heritage and to get public acceptance for it, but there are always people who are not interested and who want to exploit it in the best profitable way. In many cases 'money talks' concerning the usage of heritage. In general people seem to prefer economic values prior to cultural values. When in the 1960s many people moved from rural areas to urban centres, towns changed. Many wooden buildings were demolished, because these traditional wooden buildings were considered to be old fashioned and to symbolize poverty. But in the 1970s the people's attitude towards heritage changed and the questions of preservation about heritage were raised into public debate. Changes slowly spread from the south of Finland to the east and north of the country. Also in North Karelia people became aware of their heritage, but even today most people can only see economic aspects of heritage.

According to agents in the policy discourse heritage as a political resource is only used when new planning projects are introduced or when heritage should give room to more efficient land use. Heritage as a socio-psychological resource is used by local people, because it is part of their everyday life. But it seems that immaterial heritage -compared to material heritage- is more important to local people and to their identity. For instance Orthodox cemeteries are characteristic for North Karelia, but they are mainly used as a socio-psychological resource. Heritage is said to be in someone's heart and therefore people are connected to it. People become more interested in heritage when they get older.

A recent example in North Karelia that is also mentioned by agents in the lay discourse, but that is also mentioned by many agents in the policy discourse is a conflict about the 'green houses' on Kauppakatu that were demolished in 2004. It appears from the interviews that the houses were not so much of architectural significance, but they were important for the local history. These buildings carried emotions and memories for local people and therefore they wanted to protect them. But on the other hand the fact is emphasized that local people do not care much about their heritage. In some cases it does not mean much for their culture and identity. An example is the Rune Singer's house in Ilomantsi that is not used as a cultural resource by local people, but it is used for ordinary family activities, like weddings. This old Karelian style building seems to be used mainly to attract tourists. It is built on Parppeinvaara hill where also some other old Karelian style buildings have been (re)built. But it is striking to see that along the road to this hill an authentic North Karelian farmhouse is falling into pieces. It seems that on Parppeinvaara hill



genuine and original North Karelian heritage is being neglected and non-authentic (but still original) Karelian heritage is being emphasized. It seems that the main reason to rebuild these old Karelian style building is to attract tourists.

Another conflict about heritage occurred about the Linnuniemi mansion in Joensuu. It is located near the city on the shores of lake Phyhäselkä. Before the city of Joensuu bought the mansion in the 1970s, it was a tradesman's summer house. Local people want to have public access to it, but nowadays it is unoccupied and it is uncertain what the use will be. Meanwhile the house is not taken care of and it is almost fallen into pieces. Beside this mansion, the wooden buildings in Joensuu are of significant importance, because those buildings are the remains of the wooden town Joensuu once was.



**Figure 5.5** Vanha Hovi Suorlahti (picture by author)

Another example of an object of heritage that is not taken care of is Vanha Hovi in Suorlahti near Kitee. It is an example of an old farmhouse built in the 1600s and that is almost fallen into pieces. It is said to be that the town of Kitee does care about it, but has no money to persevere it.

Finally an object of heritage as a source of conflict that is often mentioned by agents is Koli. With the establishment of Koli as a National Park in 1991 some conflicts occurred between regional and non-regional

agents, because local people felt somewhat ignored. But now the cooperation between these agents is better. People are aware of Koli as an important heritage site and what it means for future generations. Therefore they want Koli to become known internationally by making it a World Heritage site.

Until recently, not much attention was given to heritage. Mainly the focus of heritage has been on immaterial heritage, like music and traditional cooking. People are not so much aware of the heritage, but some projects have initiated the public debate about heritage. For instance, the European Heritage days that are planned every year in September when different agents work together. It has increased the public debate and awareness of heritage in North Karelia.

## 6

### Conclusions

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In the eastern part of Finland an area stretches out along the Russian border. As part of this area the region of North Karelia is important in the construction of a national Finnish identity. North Karelia, with its capital Joensuu, is a region shaped by its hills and lakes and characterized by its traditional culture. As a border area the region is influenced by the traditional Karelian culture that nowadays still holds strong.

The aim of the research was to find out how heritage in North Karelia is used by whom to identify the region. This main research question raised several subquestions. First of all North Karelia has played an important role in the construction of a national identity, because the Kalevala and its landscape and culture can be seen as constructors of a national identity and because of its location next to the Russian border. But what does that mean for the identity of North Karelia itself? Does a North Karelian identity represent a national identity or is it of no importance?

Secondly, the opening of the border between Finland and Russia has created new possibilities for cross-border cooperation and it has consequences for the identity of North Karelia and Finland as a whole. Agents define themselves by looking at the 'Other' and in this case that is Russia. But with a neighbouring country in transition, what are the effects on North Karelian and Finnish identities? And how do agents use heritage for that matter? Besides finding an answer to the main question posed at the beginning of the thesis, this chapter also deals with these other questions.

There is no simple answer to the main research question. Therefore it can be answered in the first place by analysing agents who are involved in constructing North Karelian identities. Secondly by analysing North Karelian objects of heritage. And finally the main question is answered by analysing the usage of objects of heritage by the agents in the region.

#### **Agents identifying North Karelia**

The region of North Karelia can be identified in different perspectives. It has become clear that one North Karelian identity does not exist. The different identities are related to each other and aspects of the identities overlap. The focus in this research has been on the agents in the academic, lay and policy discourses who distinguish different identities. First of all agents in the academic discourse identify the region in three different perspectives. North Karelia can be identified as a source of a

national Finnish identity, as a frontier area between Eastern Orthodoxy and Western Lutheranism and later between Eastern communism and Western capitalism and it can be identified as a border region in transition.

According to agents in the lay discourse it is difficult to define the region. Many different features seem to relate to North Karelian identity. In a strong way it seems that agents in the lay discourse relate North Karelian identity to the social dimension that refers to human characteristics. In the social dimension and overall, *happy* seems to be the most important feature of it.

Defining North Karelia is also difficult for agents in the policy discourse. A difference between agents in the policy discourse seems to be perceptible. According to agents working in tourism, the travel industry tries to sell North Karelia in which nature, Orthodox religion and culture, joyful people and Karelian culture are important aspects. But this identity presented by the travel industry is questioned, because it seems to be unreal. The people and their characteristics are the most important features according to agents working for local and regional authorities. Also cultural aspects seem to be important to these agents.

The perspectives of the lay and policy discourses encompass many similarities. But the academic discourse seems to approach North Karelia identity differently. The three identities distinguished do not correspond with the approaches of the lay and policy discourses. Although agents in the lay and policy discourses do mention aspects that come forward in the identities described by agents in the academic discourse, these features do not come forward as very important. And the people of North Karelia do not seem to play a key role in the view of agents in the academic discourse.

Thus the primary data that consists of an analysis of information presented by agents of the lay and policy discourses does not correspond with the tertiary data that consists of information given by agents in the academic discourse. Agents in the lay and policy discourses interpret North Karelian identity with features relating to the people of North Karelia as opposed to agents in the academic discourse who interpret North Karelian identity relating to 'Others'. These 'Others' refer to Russia and to Finland as a whole. North Karelia is put in a wider and more global context by the academic discourse. On the contrary, agents in the lay en policy discourses have interpreted the region in a more local and regional context.

### **Objects of heritage in North Karelia**

Heritage is one of the features that contribute to the identity of a place and to the identification of individuals and groups within that specific place. Therefore heritage is an important contributor when people identify a place and themselves with a place.



In the research the focus was on material heritage, but it has appeared that immaterial heritage plays a more important role. Aspects of this immaterial heritage are among other things handicrafts, cooking and music. This immaterial heritage relates in a strong way to the traditional Karelian culture. But objects of heritage<sup>2</sup> do play a role in the construction of the region's identity. The agents in the lay discourse agree that Landscape and Old Karelian style buildings are the most important groups in which Koli and the Bomba house are the most important objects of heritage. Overall, Koli and in the second place the Bomba house are the most important objects of heritage for the identity of North Karelia. According to agents in the policy discourse Old settlements with old wooden buildings and Churches seem to be the most important objects of heritage. It has become clear that Koli and the Bomba house do not play key roles as opposed to the lay discourse.

### **Usage of heritage by agents in North Karelia**

Heritage has many uses, it serves different users at different times and it carries different meanings to different people. All users have their own interests concerning heritage. Conflicts about heritage occur when users do not agree about the usage of heritage or when they start to claim it. Agents in the academic, lay and policy discourses are involved in the construction of North Karelian identities and they use objects of heritage to give expression to different identities.

According to agents in the academic discourse three objects of heritage are used to identify North Karelia. In the first place an object of heritage is Koli that seems to play an important role as a source for the construction of a national Finnish identity. As part of the North Karelian landscape it inspired many artists who meant a great deal for the creation of a national identity. In the second place the border has been used as a symbol for the creation of a national identity, because it represented the eternal opposition between Finland and Russia. Finland defined itself by the characteristics that distinguished the country from the 'Other', Russia. And in the third place symbols of Karelian culture are used to present a mythical Karelian culture in North Karelia. These symbols of Karelian culture encompass among other things the Bomba house.

According to agents in the lay discourse the usage of heritage does not seem to be important. The main reasons to use heritage are for recreation, tourism and because it reminds them of their culture. The objects of heritage that they consider as most important for the identity of North Karelia are Koli and the Bomba house.

According to agents in the policy discourse the usage of heritage in North Karelia has caused conflicts between different users. It has appeared from the interviews that the main conflict is

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<sup>2</sup> In this chapter and so on heritage refers to the term material heritage.

between economic and cultural uses of heritage. People want to preserve their heritage and to get public acceptance for it, but there are always people who are not interested and who want to exploit it in the best profitable way. In many cases 'money talks' concerning the usage of heritage. The usage of heritage as an economic resource is used by the travel industry to sell the region. But the identity of North Karelia presented by the travel industry is questioned, because it seems to be unreal. The usage of heritage as a socio-psychological resource is used by local people, because it is part of their everyday life and the usage as a political resource is only used when new planning projects are introduced or when heritage should give room to more efficient land use. The objects of heritage that they consider as most important for the identity of North Karelia are Old settlements with old wooden buildings and Churches.

Agents in both the lay and policy discourses mention conflicts about heritage. Mainly the conflicts that are mentioned encompass conflicts about Koli and old wooden buildings. These conflicts are caused by economic and cultural interests.

#### **North Karelian identity = National Finnish identity?**

North Karelia is regarded as important for the construction of a national Finnish identity. But what does that mean for the identity of North Karelia itself? Does a North Karelian identity represent a national identity or is it of no importance? It has become clear that the importance of North Karelia for a national identity is put forward only by agents in the academic discourse. They argue that the region is the origin of Finnish landscape and culture and therefore a source for the creation of a national identity in which Koli and symbols of Karelian culture as objects of heritage play important roles. To agents in the lay and policy discourses North Karelia seems to be of no importance for the creation of a national identity. But they do agree that Koli and the Bomba house –symbols of Karelian culture- are of great importance for the identity of the region.

But North Karelian identity cannot be equated with a national Finnish identity. Because first of all not one single North Karelian identity can be described, because different agents define North Karelian identities. And secondly, a national Finnish identity encompasses many aspects of which the region of North Karelia can be one. This research did not focus on the construction of a national identity, but it has become clear that to agents in the academic discourse North Karelia has played an important role in the construction of a national identity.

#### **Border**

The opening of the border between Finland and Russia has also raised question regarding identity. What are the effects on North Karelian and Finnish identities? And how do agents use heritage for

that matter? The opening of the border has created new possibilities for cross-border cooperation. Agents define themselves by looking at the 'Other' and in this case that is Russia. As for North Karelia, compared to the whole country, Russia has been an important neighbour. Nowadays the effect of Russia on North Karelia regarding the usage of heritage can be seen in three ways. In the first place in North Karelia the Orthodox church finds the best expression. Although only 6% of the North Karelian population is a member, the Orthodox culture as an important part of the region's identity is emphasised by the travel industry. Secondly, Karelian culture is seen as an important part of the North Karelian identity. For instance the Bomba house is presented as original North Karelian, but it has been replaced from Russian Karelia. And in the third place Russia has its influence through the border. Although nowadays the border can be crossed more easily, it still surrounds some mystic in which war heritage refers to the border and to Finland in contrast with Russia.

To agents in the academic discourse Russia seems to play a role in the construction of North Karelian identities. This research did not focus on the construction of a national identity, but North Karelia and the border seem to be of importance for the construction of Finland's identity.

For agents in the lay and policy discourses Russia is not regarded as important, maybe because the border has been closed so many years that only the elderly people are connected to the 'Other'. But the opening of the border has created new chances and possibilities, especially for future generations.

### **Final**

This research has tried to answer how heritage is used by whom to identify North Karelia. Heritage is used by different agents who are involved in the construction of North Karelian identities. Agents in the academic, lay and policy discourse interpret North Karelia in their own way and that makes that the region has different identities. Immaterial heritage seems to play a more important role compared to material heritage. But present North Karelian heritage is used by agents to identify the region. Agents in the academic discourse use Koli, border and symbols of Karelian culture to identify North Karelia. According to agents in the lay discourse the usage of heritage is not considered to be of much importance, but Koli and the Bomba house are the most important objects of heritage for the identity of the region. Heritage can be used in different ways according to agents in the lay discourse, but Old settlements with old wooden buildings and Churches seem to be the most important objects of heritage for North Karelia.

North Karelia seems to be of importance for the country's identity, although not all agents agree on that fact. Russia also seems to play a key role and its influence on North Karelian identities can be seen through different uses of heritage.

The usage of heritage to identify the region is complex, because North Karelia can be defined in several ways in which different agents are involved. It has appeared that for agents heritage and identity are difficult concepts. Karelia and Karelian culture seem to be important, but the term Karelia can be interpreted in many ways and therefore Karelia means many different things.

People seem to be aware of the importance of heritage for the identity of the region. Governments on different spatial levels want to protect and preserve heritage, although sometimes money talks. In some cases it seems impossible to protect heritage, because financial means are missing. In the worst case scenario, in spite of public resistance, heritage can be demolished.

It has become clear that some objects of heritage play key roles in the construction of North Karelian identities. Koli, the Bomba house, border, Old settlements with old wooden buildings and Churches can be considered to be the most important objects of heritage used by agents to identify North Karelia.

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## **Appendices**

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<b>Appendix I</b>	<b>Questionnaire English</b>
<b>Appendix II</b>	<b>Questionnaire question 18</b>
<b>Appendix III</b>	<b>Policy discourse: Interviews</b>
<b>Appendix IV</b>	<b>Frequencies &amp; Bar charts</b>
<b>Appendix V</b>	<b>Tables 5.7 &amp; 5.8</b>