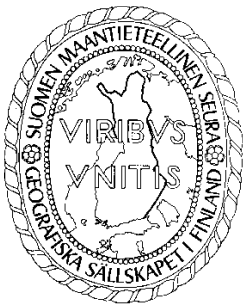
The development of specific locations into tourist attractions: cases from Northern Europe

TANJA LÖYTYNOJA



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Locations such as geodetic lines, geographical extreme points and national boundaries fascinate tourists because of their specific character, and therefore many of these have become significant tourist attractions and resources for tourism development. The aim of this paper is to conceptualize specific locations, and to analyse their development from a point or a line into a tourist attraction. In addition, the production of specific character is discussed. The transformation of specific locations into tourist attractions is approached through four cases in Northern Europe. Each of the cases is discussed using Dean MacCannell's model of sight sacralization in order to test its applicability in the empirical context. It is noted that specific locations develop into attractions in a series of stages, but the model of sight sacralization does not fully explain their transformation or their specific character. The stages may occur in different order, they can be overlapping or same stage can take place several times during the process. Furthermore, the development of specific locations does not end to the last stage of the model. It is suggested that specific locations should be approached more widely through social and political processes that influence their production and development.

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Introduction

A group of tourists is swarming around a monument. Most of them are photographing it, and each other posing in front of it. A nearby painted line on the ground interests them equally. Some tourists are straddling the line, and even jumping across it. After a while a group heads for the souvenir shop to buy certificates, t-shirts and other commodities. In addition, most people will send a couple of postcards with a special postmark to friends and relatives.

The above activities are typical of tourists visiting the Arctic Circle at Rovaniemi in Finland, but they can take place in connection with any tourist attraction that is based on a specific location. The Equator, the Meridian at Greenwich, and North Cape, for example, are locations where an invisible geodetic line or a geographical extreme point has been transformed into a tourist attraction (Jacobsen 1997; Timothy 1998, 2001). Thousands of tourists visit places like this every year, record the event by taking photographs, and buy souvenirs as proof of their visit. Many people are also eagerly engaged in activities such as crossing a line, standing on it, or walking round a monument that represents an extreme point.

Specific locations can be conceptualized as locations that interest tourists because of their specific character. When standing on a border, for example, it is possible to be in two or more places at the same time (Ryden 1993: 1). In the case of the Arctic Circle, this means being at once "in the north" and "in the south". Furthermore, since borders mark the limit of something, they are considered exciting and mysterious places. This becomes especially evident in the context of ideological boundaries, such as the Iron Curtain that once ran

between Eastern and Western Europe, or the borders of conflict or demilitarization zones (Medvedev 1999; Timothy et al. 2004). In addition, crossing a political or temporal border often means transition to another country, culture, or time zone. Not only are tourists tempted to cross borders, but crossings of the Equator and other geodetic lines have been significant occasions for sailors since the 16th century, entailing various initiation rites and ceremonies (Richardson 1977; Mires 2006). Extreme points are by nature geographically or politically significant sites, usually exact locations that have been defined and marked on the ground. They attract tourists because they express the limits of territories or of natural phenomena (Vuoristo & Vesterinen 2001: 20–22).

The fascination inspired by certain locations has also been noticed by the tourism industry, and many specific locations have been transformed into tourist attractions which may even achieve significance as international tourist destinations (Pretes 1995; Jacobsen 1997; Birkeland 2002). Especially in peripheral areas, where many of these attractions are located, such a location offers an opportunity for differentiation from other attractions, and when properly commercialized, a means of generating an income from tourism.

The aim of this paper is to discuss specific locations and their development into tourist attractions. What makes these locations fascinating, and how are they produced? The development of specific locations is approached in the context of Northern Europe, discussing the production of attractions and their specific character through four cases: North Cape, the Arctic Circle, the Centre Point of Finland and the Easternmost Point of the European Union. The first two cases, North Cape and the Arctic Circle at Rovaniemi in Finland, are examples of specific locations that have developed into international tourist destinations that receive hundreds of thousands of visitors annually, while the latter two are single attractions of mainly local significance for tourism. The purpose is to adapt Dean MacCannell's (1976) theoretical model of sight sacralization to these cases and to examine empirically whether the model serves to explain their development as attractions. North Cape has been previously discussed from this viewpoint by Jacobsen (1997). The other cases are investigated in order to see if the development processes equal to North Cape and to find out which elements have an influence on the development.

Attractions and the production of a specific character

Tourist attractions can be conceptualized in many ways. They are often defined as elements with a pulling power or magnetism which attracts visitors (Lew 1987: 554; Gunn 1988: 37, 46). According to Lew (1987: 554), tourist attractions consist of all the elements of a "non-home" place, so that landscapes, activities, tourism services and experiences can all be considered to be attractions. It is important, however, to note that a tourist attraction in itself does not draw tourists in or have any inherent pulling power but that the image of attractiveness is created by the tourists (see Leiper 1990: 368–369). It depends on the tourists' interests and preferences as to which elements are perceived as tempting. Consequently, tourists themselves have a role in the production of a tourist attraction. It is for this reason that a tourist attraction is often understood as a system which consists of various components, the tourist being one of them. MacCannell (1976: 109), for example, approaches attractions through a relationship between a tourist, a sight and a marker, i.e. any information that refers to the sight.

A systemic approach to attractions has been developed further by Leiper (1990), whose model replaces the sight with the concept of a nucleus, the central element of an attraction, or any feature or characteristic of a place which is visited by tourists. For Gunn (1988: 49), who originally introduced the concept in 1972, a nucleus signifies the principal attracting force. Despite the perceived attractiveness of a nucleus, it may not always be enough to pull in large numbers of visitors. Present-day tourists want new experiences, exciting activities and opportunities for shopping, eating well and sleeping in pleasant accommodation. A monument at a specific location may cause some passers-by to stop and take photographs, but if there are no tourism services in the vicinity they will usually move on towards the next attraction. In addition, sightseeing alone does not provide local tourism entrepreneurs with an income. Consequently, additional attractions are usually needed around the nucleus. According to Gunn (1988: 50), the grouping of attractions into larger complexes makes them more fascinating and successful. Attractions are also essential elements in the development of tourist destinations, because destinations usually form as combinations of attraction

clusters, connecting routes and a service community (Gunn 1988: 56–60).

In his model of tourist attraction, Leiper (1990: 381) divides a marker into three parts: a general marker consisting of information received before travelling, a transit marker comprising information received en route, and a contiguous marker found at the nucleus. The first two correspond to MacCannell's off-sight marker, whereas the third is parallel to an on-sight marker (cf. MacCannell 1976). Consequently, a picture representing a monument, a story told by a friend, a map and a description in a brochure are all off-sight markers with which tourists are often in touch before visiting a sight, whereas a monument, a sign and a story told by a guide at the location are examples of on-sight markers. Sometimes a marker may even become more important than the actual sight, as is obvious in the context of specific locations (Culler 1981; Timothy 2001: 44–52). When tourists are photographing the Arctic Circle, for example, they are not recording the location itself but a painted line and a sign, the on-sight markers of the location.

There are various ways of classifying tourist attractions on the grounds of their characteristics, of which the most interesting in the context of specific locations is that proposed by Wall (1997). He approaches tourist attractions on the basis of spatial characteristics: points, lines and areas, and bases his classification on visitor behaviour, the potential of an attraction for commercial development, and its requirements in terms of planning and management. In point attractions such as monuments, historic sites and sporting events, for example, visitors are concentrated in a small area. This can lead to congestion and a reduction in the quality of the visitor's experience. On the other hand, point attractions are quite easy to commercialize because activities can be directed at one location. Linear attractions, such as coastlines, highways and routes, can also become crowded, but the visitors are usually dispersed over a wider area than with point attractions. Linear attractions nevertheless resemble point attractions in that they are often developed as a series of nodes separated by less developed areas. The third type of attraction, an area, can serve large numbers of visitors, as they are usually dispersed over many different locations, which makes their commercial exploitation much more challenging. The cases discussed here are examples of point attractions and linear attractions.

Attractions are often unique and exceptional, but some typical, representative elements can also become attractions (Koivunen 2006), e.g. landscapes, customs and food. Specific locations are of interest because of their peculiarity, however. What makes an attraction specific depends on a definer, a context and the characteristic of the attraction. For a member of the *Most Traveled People*, for example, a website for people who want to rank themselves on the grounds of their travels, every country is specific, and the list contains not only countries but also territories, autonomous regions, enclaves, island groups, major states and provinces. The goal is to visit all 673 of these destinations (Most Traveled People 2007). On the other hand, the *Degree Confluence Project* urges its participants "*to visit each of the latitude and longitude integer degree intersections in the world, and to take pictures at each location.*" (Degree Confluence Project 2008). They are then asked to post pictures and narratives of their visits on a website, as in the case of the Most Traveled People. Consequently, members of these two virtual communities can be categorized as place collectors, visiting places and crossing boundaries for competition and status reasons, and enumerating the locations they have visited (Timothy 1998). The more remote and difficult to reach, the more valued a location is among collectors (Butler 1996: 216). Specific locations are not approached in that sense here, however, but are understood as exact locations, points and lines which are of interest to tourists and are manifested as attractions in the landscape of tourism.

Specific locations are usually abstract and invisible in the landscape until they are marked on the ground with a sign, a monument, a line or some other material object (Raivo 1996; Timothy 1998, 2001). Thus a location has to be made visible by means of on-sight markers before it can become a tourist attraction, but as is previously stated, off-sight markers are equally significant for visualizing an attraction and providing it with a specific character. Furthermore, a location can be made into a meaningful place by defining and naming it (Cresswell 2004: 2–7). A location expressed with coordinates, such as 71°10′21″N, 25°47′40″E, is unknown for most people until it is defined, in the case as North Cape. Because it is often perceived as the northernmost point of Europe, North Cape gains added meanings of northernness, remoteness and a mystic place where you can see the midnight sun, to name just a few. Meanings are

often produced in relation to other places, and represented through dualisms such as north-south, sacred-profane or ordinary/everyday-extraordinary (Shields 1991; Birkeland 2002; Urry 2002). Binary oppositions as well as superlatives are much used in tourism marketing, which is a powerful means of making places, constructing images and producing a specific character for a location.

Naming is also the first stage in MacCannell's model of sight sacralization (1976), which has been widely used in tourism research (see Fine & Speer 1985; Jacobsen 1997). According to MacCannell, sight sacralization takes place through five stages. First, a sight has to be differentiated from other attractions that are worth visiting. This is usually done through naming. Second, a sight has to be framed and elevated. Framing takes place by constructing an official boundary around the attraction, thus controlling admission to it, while elevation means the displaying it through effective promotion, or opening it up to visitors. Third, at the stage of enshrinement, a special setting is created for its preservation and admiration, emphasizing its unique characteristics. Fourth, a sight is represented through mechanical reproduction. Especially in the case of a highly commercialized destination, the name and image of an attraction are used in connection with various souvenirs and tourism products. In addition, the photographs taken by tourists, pictures in brochures and narratives in guidebooks are expressions of the mechanical reproduction of an attraction. The fifth and final stage in sight sacralization is social reproduction, in which destinations, companies or regions are named after famous attractions. At this stage the sight becomes a basis for identification.

Although sight sacralization offers a framework for approaching the creation of an attraction and the production of a specific character for it, the model does not fully explain the development of an attraction. It has been noted that the stages of sight sacralization can take place in a different order (Jacobsen 1997), in addition to which, MacCannell's approach has been criticized for regarding attractions as static elements without paying attention to their dynamic structure and constant transformation (Saarinen 2001: 36). The aim in this paper is to examine whether sight sacralization can explain the development of specific locations. Three cases from Finland are discussed and compared with Jacobsen's interpretation of the making of North Cape into an attraction (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. The case studies.

The process of sight sacralization: cases in Northern Europe

North Cape

North Cape in Northern Norway has fascinated explorers, travellers and tourists for centuries. The spectacular landscape and the image of this promontory as lying the edge of Europe have constituted the primary nuclei of the attraction. According to

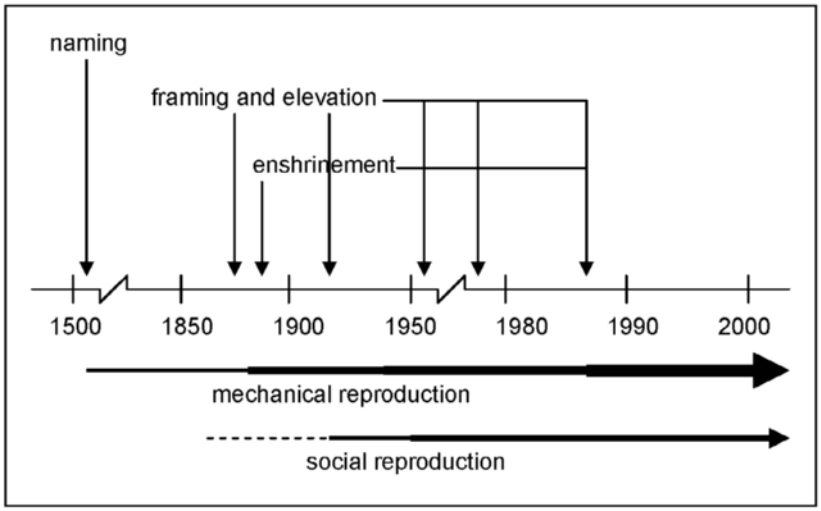

Fig. 2. The process of sight sacralization at North Cape (following Jacobsen 1997).

Jacobsen (1997), its history as an attraction began in 1553, when the promontory was named and marked on a map as the result of an expedition. Through maps and written reports produced by early visitors, North Cape became known as the northernmost edge of the world (in Europe).

Originally North Cape was accessible only from the sea, and it was only in 1956 that a road was constructed to it. Tourism had already started to become a business there during the 19th century, however, and the numbers of visitors increased when regular steamship tours were started. In addition, North Cape interested many famous visitors, such as King Oscar II of Sweden and Norway, who travelled there in 1873. Jacobsen (1997) interprets these visits of celebrities as an expression of elevation, whereas the development of tourist accessibility and the controlling of the tourism business through the establishment of a nature reserve, the fencing of the plateau and the charging of an admission fee have been means of framing the attraction. The next stage of development, enshrinement, has taken the form of the construction of monuments to be remembered by visitors, for example (Jacobsen 1997).

Although mechanical reproduction takes place at the fourth stage in the model of sight sacralization, this started very early in the case of North Cape, leading Jacobsen (1997) to suggest that it was actually the second stage in the development of the location. It has been reproduced by artists and travel writers constantly ever since its "discovery", and home-produced souvenirs were already being sold there at the end of 19th century. Thus walking sticks, animal figures made of sealskin and painted stones, for example, were produced in large quantities before the Second World War, and stamps, certificates and postcards were bought as proof of a visit (Birkeland 2002). Nowadays North Cape is intensively reproduced, and there are various commodities for sale referring to the specific location. According to Birkeland (2002), a new period in the development of tourism began in 1987 when the airline company SAS started to invest in North Cape. A new, massive service building was constructed, and this became a dominant marker on the plateau. At the moment, North Cape Hall is operated by a hotel chain, and the building includes a hotel, restaurants, a souvenir shop, a post office, exhibitions, a movie theatre and an ecumenical chapel.

North Cape has been reproduced socially, too. Tourists are offered the opportunity to join the Royal North Cape Club, for people who have visited North Cape. In addition, the hotel group, ships, and even the surrounding municipality have been named after this attraction (Jacobsen 1997).

Apart from the stage of mechanical reproduction, the development of North Cape into a tourist attraction has mainly followed the model of sight sacralization. It is possible to outline a timescale for this (Fig. 2), but it does not tell us why the attraction has been developed in that particular way, by whom, or how it has gained its specific charac-

ter. To clarify this, North Cape has to be approached as a socio-spatial construct which is historically produced, constantly transforming and represented through different practices and discourses (Saarinen 2001). The focus of this paper is to test the model of sight sacralization, however. Some viewpoints considering the specific character of the attraction should be put forward anyway.

The specific character of North Cape consists of both natural and contrived elements. According to Jacobsen (2000), North Cape has two different images. First, it is considered a remote, monumental and impressive place, an image in which the promontory is represented as a mythical, sacred site and a symbol of the edge of Europe. Second, it is felt to be a commercial and crowded tourist place. The construction of a large service building has increased commercialization and the arrival of over 200,000 visitors[1] a year has strengthened its image as a contrived attraction and a touristic place. Tourists who approach the North Cape with a "romantic gaze" (Urry 2002) consider the appeal of the place to have diminished because of crowding and commercialization. Furthermore, as Jacobsen (2000) has noticed, North Cape is often considered a place one should see. The success of many contrived tourist attractions is based on this same phenomenon: "*Their broad popular fantasy appeal --- has lasted for so many years that they become popular because everyone visits them, rather than for their inherent attraction. They become world landmarks – famous for being famous.*" (Pretes 1995: 13). Consequently, many tourists are motivated to visit North Cape because of its famous character.

North Cape has become known as the northernmost point of Europe, but Knivskjelodden, a headland near the promontory, reaches even farther north. This flat headland is not as impressive as the promontory, however, and thus the plateau gained the image of being on the edge of Europe (Jacobsen 1997; Birkeland 2002). The actual northernmost point is accessible by foot, but most of the tourists seem to be satisfied with North Cape Hall and its surroundings on the plateau. In other words, rather than the actual location, tourists are searching for markers of the location. These markers have been reproduced in various brochures and photographs, and thus they have come to symbolize North Cape. Tourists are expecting to see the well-known off-sight markers on the spot, and if the on-sight markers equate with mental images they have created, the attraction is usually experienced as authentic. Consequently, authenticity of origin is not so important in the context of tourism as constructed, subjective authenticity, the image of being authentic (Wang 1999; Cohen 2007).

The Arctic Circle

The Arctic Circle at Rovaniemi in Finland is perhaps one of the best examples of a location which has been transformed from a geodetic line into a tourist attraction and finally into an international tourist destination. Just like North Cape, the position of the Arctic Circle was marked on early maps, but it remained invisible in the landscape until 1929, when it was marked by a sign on the main road near the town of Rovaniemi. The sign was erected by the local colonel and was aimed at tempting passing tourists (Sassi & Heij 1975). There had been a demand among tourists for some kind of monument representing the location of the Arctic Circle. Cutcliffe Hyne, for example, describes his visit to Lapland in 1898 as follows: "*On this stage we were due to recross that imaginary boundary, the Arctic Circle, and come once more into that Temperate Zone which was our more native atmosphere, and we were on the keen lookout for some official recognition of its whereabouts. I do not quite know what we expected to see – a cairn or a wooden notice would have satisfied us – but the absence of any mark whatever jarred upon us. That a country which could mark off the kilometres on its roads with fine red posts, should ignore a geographical acquisition like the Arctic Circle, seemed a piece of unappreciative barbarism.*" (Hyne 1898: 271).

The marker of the Arctic Circle became a sight which was represented in photographs, postcards and tourism brochures. Thus mechanical reproduction started as soon as the location was defined and marked in a particular place. Quite soon it was also being reproduced in souvenirs. A small cabin was built for the visit of Mrs Roosevelt at the Arctic Circle in 1950, and for the first few years this cabin was open in the summer months, so that it was possible to buy coffee and souvenirs and send a postcard with the special postmark (Sassi & Heij 1975). The cabin was later extended and rebuilt, but the development of the site into a significant tourist destination did not begin until 1985, when the present Santa Claus' Village started to be established there (Pretes 1995).

This destination now represents a combination of the Arctic Circle, the Christmas theme and the

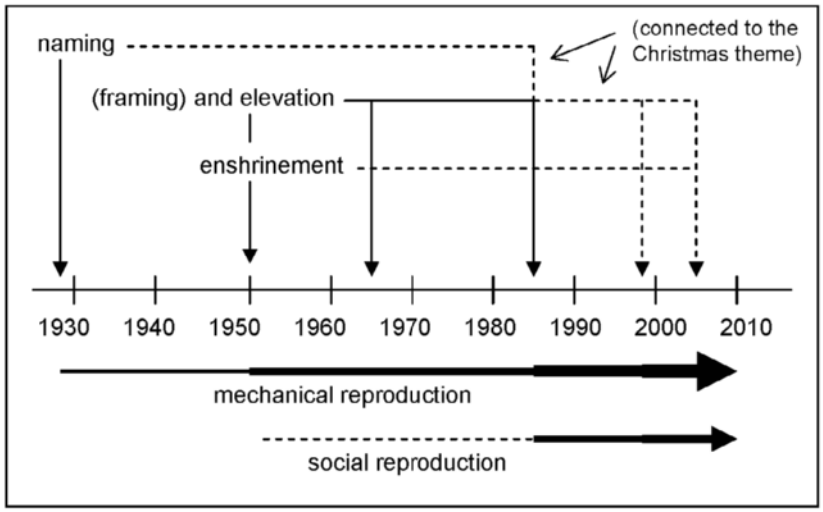

Fig. 3. The development of the Arctic Circle at Rovaniemi in relation to the model of sight sacralization.

nature and culture of Lapland, and the village, which consists of Santa Claus' Office, a Christmas exhibition, Santa's post office, shops and restaurants, is visited by over 300,000 tourists[2] every year. There is also a theme park known as Santa-Park located in the vicinity of the Arctic Circle nowadays, and the international airport is not far away. These three attractions constitute the Christmas Triangle region, which during the Christmas season alone it is visited by over 60,000 foreign tourists and day visitors arriving on charter flights (Rovaniemen matkailustrategia 2006).

The development of the Arctic Circle into a tourist attraction started when the sign was founded near the town of Rovaniemi (Fig. 3). At first the attraction was based on the geographical location, but since the construction of the cabins, and especially Santa Claus' Village, the geodetic line has been transformed into one of the attractions of the destination. Furthermore, the painted line of the Arctic Circle was the first expression of framing the attraction. There are now several service buildings framing Santa Claus' Village, and the markers of the Arctic Circle are located in the midst of these. The construction of the first cabin and of the present-day exhibitions related to the history of the Arctic Circle and Christmas can be interpreted as a stage of enshrinement. The Arctic Circle, which is marked on the ground with a line and a sign, is reproduced through souvenirs, a certificate, tourism promotion pictures, and thousands of photographs taken by tourists every year. The Christmas theme has been commercialized even more strongly, with one-day packages including a meeting with Santa Claus. In addition, as a manifestation of social reproduction, many companies have been named after the Arctic Circle and Christmas.

The specific character of the Arctic Circle at Rovaniemi is based on several elements. First, the Arctic Circle is manifested as a mystical line drawn at a point where it is not only possible to experience the midnight sun or the darkness of the northern winter, but also to transfer from the south to the north. Second, the Arctic Circle as a home of Santa Claus makes the location even more exciting. Third, the Arctic Circle marked at Santa Claus' Village is not in its actual location but is a touristic location. The actual position of the Arctic Circle varies, and is in fact constantly moving, being capable of ranging over a distance of as much as 200 kilometres. At the present moment it is located a couple of kilometres north of its markers and is slowly moving northwards (Ollikainen & Poutanen 1997). Similarly, the first sign and the Roosevelt cabin were not located exactly on the Arctic Circle, either. According to Sassi and Heij (1975), the location of the sign was estimated and the cabin was built on a site donated for this purpose. Fourth, because the Arctic Circle is a geodetic line that circulates the globe, it is possible to find it in other places and countries as well. There are many competing attractions around the world that make use of the Arctic Circle for tourism purposes (Timothy 2001), including the Middle Tornio Valley on the

Finnish-Swedish border, which is also marketed as *the Land of the Arctic Circle* (Prokkola 2007).

The Centre Point of Finland

The geographical centre point of a country, state, or other region can be conceptualized as a specific case of an extreme point. It is usually defined on the grounds of national boundaries, a landmass, a continental shelf, an intersection of latitudes and longitudes, or regional characteristics, and it has a strong symbolic value. A centre point carries connotations of the core of a nation, and has often become a place for personal identification. On the other hand, many centre points have originally been located "in the middle of nowhere", but they have been moved to a more favourable place for better accessibility or for image reasons (Pekonen 1998; Ridanpää & Löytynoja 2003). One major motive for relocation has usually been the potential of the location as a tourist attraction.

In Finland, the geographical centre point was defined by the magazine *Suomen Kuvalehti* in 1958, by a simple method that involved hanging a plumb line over the map of Finland. The centre of gravity that the intersection of the lines demonstrated was located in the middle of a swamp, but as the centre point of Finland was meant to become a tourist sight, it was moved to the nearest village by a main road. A sign was erected in this village, and the next year it was replaced with a monument (Valentin 1958; Sivuranta 2002). The result was that the village of Leskelä in the municipality of Piippola came to be known as the Centre Point of Finland, and the monument was pictured in guidebooks and on postcards and photographed by passing tourists. No significant additional attractions were provided in the vicinity of the monument, however.

In 1972 the monument marking the Centre Point of Finland was demolished because of roadworks and transferred to the other side of the road, where it was reconstructed in an identical form but larger. The monument is still there, and a small park has now been constructed around it. Many development projects have taken place in the village of Leskelä since the 1990's, and some of these have included the production of new tourism services around the centre point and marketing of the village as a tourist attraction. The specific location has been connected with the local cultural heritage, for example (Löytynoja 2006). The tourism services in question have been of a seasonal nature, however, or have existed only for the duration of a particular project. Any record considering the total number of visitors has kept either. At the moment there are some programme and catering services available to on request, and art exhibitions are organized in the house of the village association which is located near the centre point monument.

Despite its unique character, the Centre Point of Finland at Leskelä is not the only such point to have been defined (Ridanpää & Löytynoja 2003). In 1975 the centre point of mainland Finland was identified as lying in the municipality of Puolanka. So for a long time two centre points coexisted. Both were regularly mentioned in guidebooks and brochures, but they were based on different definitions. Moreover, since 1998 there have been two monuments representing the location of the Centre Point of Finland in the village of Leskelä, as in the context of a development project, a new monument was set up next to a newly constructed layby beside the road, not far from the site of the original monument. Thus the specific location was copied and manifested by two synonymous markers. The second monument was erected on the grounds that the monument of 1972 was located slightly to one side of the main road.

Furthermore, the exact location of the centre point has been contested by neighbouring municipalities. New calculations performed by the National Land Survey of Finland in 2002–2005 led to the recognition of six centre points (Ruotsalainen 2005), each based on a different measurement of centrality. In general there has been much active discussion over the authenticity and ownership of the Centre Point of Finland (Ridanpää & Löytynoja 2003; Löytynoja 2006). As a result of contestation, two more signs have been provided to mark this specific location, and a new areal unit known as the "*Centre Point Region of Finland*" has emerged as a consequence of regional and international cooperation. The region has not yet been clearly delimited, however, but is subject to different interpretations and negotiations. Regardless of all these contestations, the village of Leskelä in Piippola has still retained the image of being the Centre Point of Finland.

The Centre Point of Finland is a good example of an attraction which has gone through the stage of naming several times (Fig. 4). It was first named as such in 1958, and the attraction and its location have been variously redefined since. There have

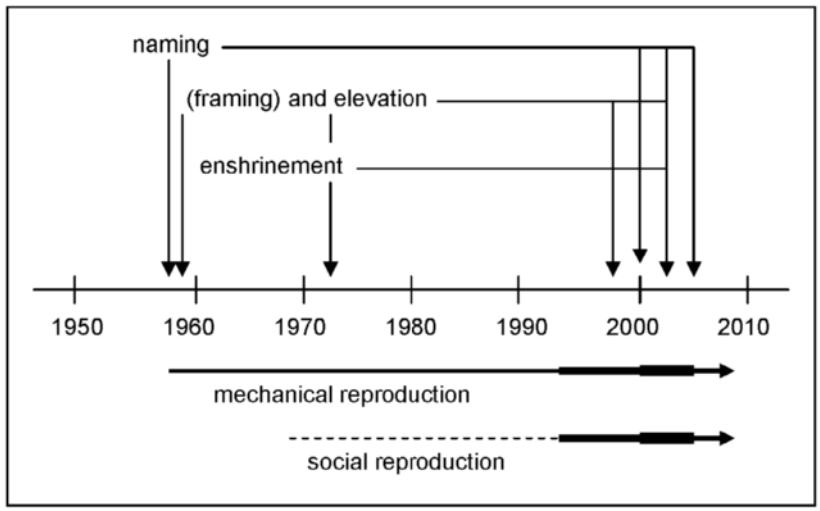

Fig. 4. The stages of sight sacralization in the case of the Centre Point of Finland.

been many actors involved in this process, including a national magazine, local officials, project personnel and the National Land Survey of Finland. Furthermore, the erecting of the first monument, the construction of a larger one and the marking of the "new" centre points can be interpreted as manifestations of elevation. The stage of enshrinement is closely related to elevation, so that the demolition of the first monument and its reconstruction on the other side of the road can be seen as an act of enshrinement. On the other hand, no very clear framing of the attraction has taken place. It is framed by a small park and a lay-by beside the road, but no fences have been set up, nor is any entrance fee charged. In addition, the centre point has been used more recently as a regional concept (the Centre Point Region of Finland), which could be considered an effort at framing, although no agreement has been achieved as to its composition. Some mechanical reproduction has taken place since the marking of the location, as photographs and references have appeared in guidebooks. As a consequence of the contestation of the site, a certificate and some souvenirs representing the monument have been produced. Social reproduction has been quite efficient too, so that companies, associations and even the new, emerging region have been named after the attraction.

The Easternmost Point of the European Union

When Finland joined the European Union in 1995 it became its easternmost country, in addition to which the boundary between Finland and Russia was the longest external border of the EU at that time. This enhanced the specific character of the boundary, and soon the easternmost point on it became a peculiar attraction. A monument was erected by the local Rotary Club near the extreme point, in Ilomantsi, in 1996, and local tourism organizations together with the Border Guard Service developed the attraction over the next few years by constructing a small-scale tourism infrastructure, including a parking place, information signs and a hut with a camp-fire, and by creating some programme services. There were organized tours with a guide, for example, beginning with a welcoming toast at the monument and continuing with an opportunity to photograph the monument and to have dinner around the camp-fire. As a token of their visit, participants also received a certificate. The number of visitors remained quite low, however, being less than 7000 in 1998 and decreasing since then (Pitkäniitty 2006). One reason for this might be that the Easternmost Point of the EU has lost its charm or novelty, but perhaps a more important factor is the highly peripheral location of the attraction, combined with the fact

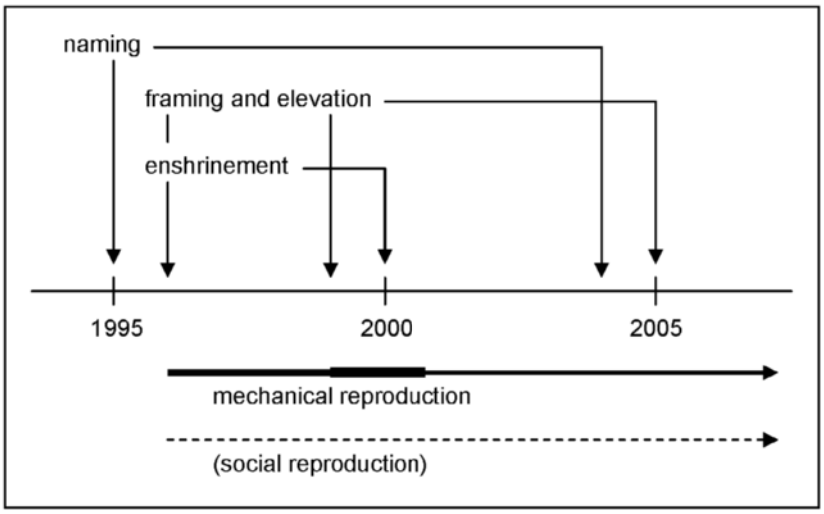

Fig. 5. Sight sacralization in the case of the Easternmost Point of the EU.

that, by definition, it is located in the border zone and hence a border zone permit is required to visit it. Consequently, it is mainly visited by some tourist groups and place collectors.

Again, the monument was not built exactly at the easternmost point. The actual extreme point was located on a nearby island, but because of the difficulty in reaching it, the point was moved to the mainland. Furthermore, this small movement is not the only transformation that the point has encountered (Löytynoja 2008). After the enlargement of the EU in 2004, its easternmost point has no longer been located in Finland but in Cyprus. Despite that, Ilomantsi in Finland is still marketed as the Easternmost Point of the EU, or more precisely, as the Easternmost Point of *the continental* EU. According to the media (STT 2004), the representatives of Finland and Cyprus have made a deal that Finland can keep the easternmost point, whereas Cyprus can promote itself as the South-Eastern Point of the EU. It is therefore still possible to visit the Easternmost Point of the EU in Finland, even though this point is actually located far, far away from its marker.

In this case naming of the attraction took place twice, in 1995 and in 2004 (Fig. 5), and framing and elevation started when the monument was set up. When visiting the monument, one can move around only in the area marked on the map, and later even the path leading to the monument was bounded with a rope. Although the border zone permit is in effect a means of controlling access to the attraction, it can be interpreted at the same time as a marking a form of enshrinement. Elevation has taken place through active promotion, e.g. the organizing of a Millennium Celebration at the Easternmost Point of the EU. The attraction has also achieved the fourth stage of sight sacralization, in that it has been mechanically reproduced in photographs, brochures, souvenirs and a special postmark. Mechanical reproduction was especially powerful during a marketing project in 1999–2000 (Rytkönen 2000). Furthermore, the adjective "easternmost" has been used in marketing to emphasize the specific location of the municipality, the easternmost village, and some companies. But even so, the last stage of sight sacralization has not been realized properly. No companies have been named after the extreme point, for example, but identification with the boundary has become more common.

Comparison of the cases and their development processes

Of the four cases of specific locations discussed above, the Arctic Circle is an example of a geodetic line, whereas the other three cases are geographical extreme points. In addition, the Easternmost Point of the EU is located on the national boundary and on the external border of the EU which makes its position even more interesting.

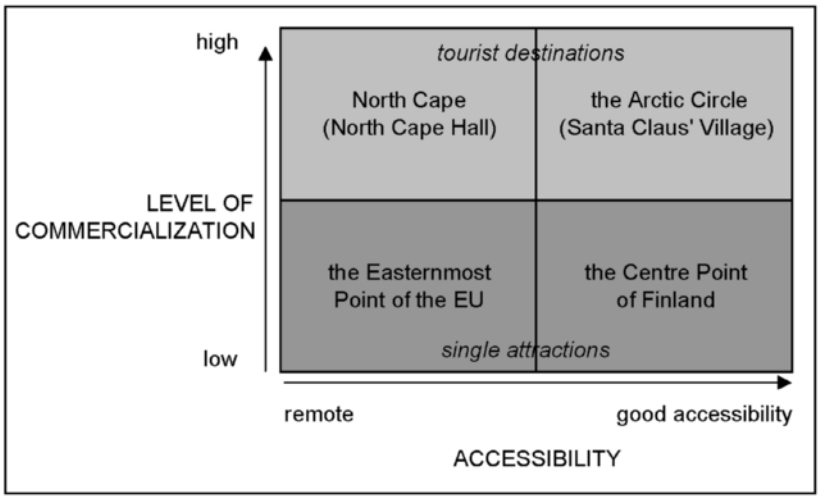

Fig. 6. Categorization of the specific locations by accessibility and the level of commercialization.

Each of these locations has a certain specific character, but their significance as a part of the tourism industry is something very different.

The development of each of the four specific locations into a tourist attraction started from its naming and the defining of its specific character. North Cape stands out from the other cases, however, because it has a far longer history as an attraction (Jacobsen 1997). Furthermore, it was originally a natural attraction with an appeal that was based on its impressive and distinctive landscape, and its location on the northern extremity of Europe. The Arctic Circle, the Centre Point of Finland and the Easternmost Point of the EU, on the other hand, have been created purposefully. Their transformation into an attraction started in each case from the erection of a single sign or monument purporting to manifest the exact spot concerned. Tourism development can alter the original character of an attraction, however, as it has been the case with North Cape. The transformation from a natural sight into a contrived attraction seems according to Gunn (1988: 48) to be representative of a tendency common to all attractions: "*Every attraction today is created. --- In the context of modern tourism, even the most compelling places do not become true attractions until they are provided with access, lookout points, parking areas, interpretation programs, and linkages with service centers.*"

Despite its specific character, a single location is seldom attractive enough to interest numbers of tourists without additional attractions around it. North Cape and the Arctic Circle have developed into attraction complexes and commercialized destinations, whereas the Centre Point of Finland and the Easternmost Point of the EU are mainly single attractions with a low level of commercialization. North Cape and the Arctic Circle (Santa Claus' Village) have been developed by or in cooperation with national and international tourism companies[3] since the 1980's, which may also be one explanation for their success. On the Arctic Circle, the Christmas theme has been connected to the specific location by virtue of Santa Claus' Village, and it seems that many tourists actually visit the destination because of Santa Claus. Furthermore, both North Cape and the Arctic Circle have many supplementary services, including catering services, accommodation (at North Cape) and programme services that strengthen the nucleus. They also fit into Wall's (1997) definition of point attractions and linear attractions, in that they have developed into visitor concentrations with occasional crowding (Jacobsen 2000). The Centre Point of Finland and the Easternmost Point of the EU do not follow the principles of this classification, however.

All of the locations discussed here are peripheral, which is probably a part of their appeal. The Arctic Circle at Rovaniemi is quite accessible in the context of Northern Europe, however (Fig. 6), as its location close to the airport, beside the E4highway and in the vicinity of the town of Rova-

niemi facilitates tourist access. As a curiosity, the Centre Point of Finland is located by the same highway, but the attraction does not tempt tourists in the same way as the Arctic Circle. This is probably because of limited commercialization and the fact that it is located in a region which has not yet achieved a tourism profile. Thus location in the middle of a country does not automatically guarantee large numbers of visitors. Furthermore, the location of the Easternmost Point of the EU is highly peripheral, which means that tourists have to purposely travel to this attraction. Despite its remoteness, North Cape is located on the route of passing cruise ships.

However, the level of commercialization and accessibility can only partly explain why some of these attractions have succeeded better than others. As tourists participate in the construction of attractions through their mental images, it is important to consider the meanings given to the locations one is discussing. North Cape and the Arctic Circle, for example, may also interest tourists because of the ideas of the North and the Arctic that are connected with them. According to Davidson (2005: 9), everyone has his own subjective idea of what constitutes the north, but there are still many general characteristics of the north which are recognised by most people of the same origin: "*For a Scandinavian, north – further north, Arctic north – represents a place of extremes that is also a place of wonders: of the 'fox fires', the aurora in the winter sky, the habitation of the Sami, of legendary magicians and heroes*." This image is much used in the context of tourism, and many of the people who visit the Arctic Circle or North Cape are certainly motivated by it. On the other hand, the Finnish–Russian border has been perceived for centuries as a boundary between East and West, and there is something left of this image even nowadays but the number of visitors to the Easternmost Point of the EU in Ilomantsi has remained quite low. There are many reasons for this. Perhaps it is not perceived as "Eastern" enough, or interest in an attraction defined on political grounds does not run so deep as that in the more image-provoking idea of the North.

It seems to be typical of specific locations that despite the existence of exact coordinates and a sign marking the spot, this is not necessarily the real location. North Cape, the Arctic Circle at Rovaniemi, the Centre Point of Finland and the Easternmost Point of the EU are all attractions of that kind. Their on-sight markers have never been located in the exact spot, but instead they have been placed somewhere which is more suitable for tourism, or is perceived as more attractive. In addition, some specific locations have been shifted to another place because of political changes, or on the grounds of image (Ridanpää & Löytynoja 2003). What happens to the authenticity of an attraction if it does not exist in its actual location? And is it even possible in some cases to define the actual location because of its dissonance? As previously noted, a marker of an attraction may sometimes become more important than the attraction itself (Culler 1981; Timothy 2001). The visible markers of a location are often experienced as more authentic than the actual location, and because of this the tourist gaze is usually directed at monuments, signs and other markers that represent the location. In the context of tourism, a specific location exists in the spot where the sign or monument manifesting it stands, the spot which, in addition, has come to be known among tourists as the famous sight. Consequently, the history of a place as a tourist attraction is often enough to create an image of authenticity. This also explains why some locations are perceived as authentic ones even after being moved.

Because of various redefinitions, continuous transformation, and the mobile character of specific locations, they are especially interesting examples of tourist attractions. This makes them difficult to approach from the perspective of sight sacralization, however. As the above cases show, the stages of sight sacralization can be outlined, but there are differences in the development processes. The development of North Cape follows the model of sight sacralization most closely, but differs in the order of the stages (Jacobsen 1997). The other cases reveal that several stages of sight sacralization can take place at the same time, and that some stages can even be included in the development process more than once. The Centre Point of Finland, for example, has been in the stage of naming several times because of redefinitions of its location. Elevation and enshrinement, which are often intertwined, can also take place throughout the process of development. Furthermore, one feature common to all the cases is that mechanical reproduction started early in their development. At the beginning this took the form of maps, travel narratives and photographs, and later on brochures, souvenirs and various tourism services. It is also interesting to note that contestation of a location seems to increase both mechanical and so-

cial reproduction, as these are available as means for image-building and identification when the "ownership" of the location is challenged (Löytynoja 2006). On the other hand, contestation can also endanger the development of an attraction if the interest of tourists is focused on other, competing attractions. In addition, it is suggested that mechanical reproduction is often active during development and marketing projects and usually increases when the attraction becomes more commercialized. Thus the stage of mechanical reproduction seems to be the crucial point for the success of an attraction and should be noted more closely in connection with its development.

Conclusions

The appeal of a specific location consists of the location itself, additional attractions and various meanings connected with it. The most tempting attractions are usually ones in which all these three aspects are interconnected. In the cases discussed here, the specific character is constituted by different elements which also have an effect on the development of the attractions.

A specific location can be attractive enough to interest tourists as such, like North Cape originally was. Travellers visited the promontory because of its perceived magnetism and the image of the edge of Europe. As a consequence of the present-day tourism industry and its commercialization, however, many additional services have developed around the nucleus at North Cape, too. Furthermore, a specific location can be connected with other attractions, so that together they constitute an attraction complex. This has taken place at the Arctic Circle near Rovaniemi, the development of which has been strongly influenced by the Christmas theme and the construction of Santa Claus' Village. On the other hand, because of a low level of commercialization, a remote location or a less attractive surrounding tourism region, a specific location may remain at the level of a single attraction which is mainly visited by place collectors, some tourist groups and occasional passers-by. The Centre Point of Finland and the Easternmost Point of the EU are examples of this. Despite their specific character, they are in danger of remaining just monuments and curiosities unless new tourism products centred on them are developed in the near future.

MacCannell's theory of sight sacralization is useful in the context of specific locations, but it does not fully explain the development of a specific location into a tourist attraction. As the four cases show, there are several problems in approaching the transformation of specific locations through the model of sight sacralization. First, as Jacobsen (1997) has emphasized, the stages of sight sacralization may take place in a different order from that in the model. Second, some stages may recur as the process of development continues. Third, instead of developing step by step, an attraction can reach several stages at the same time. Consequently, the stages should be understood as simultaneous rather than sequential processes. Fourth, not all attractions necessarily go through all the stages of sight sacralization. All five stages could be outlined in this paper, but some were not so clearly in evidence. Fifth, the process of development does not end with the stage of social reproduction but continues through constant redefinition or mechanical reproduction, for example. On the other hand, some attractions may become involved in a process of de-sacralization as well, if their specific character vanishes and they are no longer attractive to tourists. Thus, attractions require continuous product development and image-building to maintain their appeal.

The model of sight sacralization offers a starting point for analysing the development of specific locations into tourist attractions, but wider approaches are needed in order to understand the process. Specific locations should not be taken out of context, but should be examined as a parts of larger attraction complexes if they are connected with such. In addition, the history of an attraction, the demands expressed by tourists, the motives of tourism developers and the possibilities for future development should all be investigated. Tourist attractions are constantly changing constructions which are often re-defined, re-marked and re-interpreted. They do not exist alone, but rather their production and development is influenced by various social and political processes.

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NOTES

[1] North Cape received 198,969 visitors in the period 1 May – 31 August 2007 based on ticket sales in North Cape Hall (Innovation Norway 2008). The number of visitors during the whole year will have been higher, however, because North Cape Hall is also open outside the summer season.
[2] According to optical counters, Santa Claus' Office in Santa Claus' Village received 324,291 visitors in 2006 (Santasalo 2007). This number does not include all visitors to Santa Claus' Village, however, e.g. people visiting only the shops or passers-by who just stop at the Arctic Circle are not included. The estimated total number of visitors annually is around half a million (Huhtamo 2008).
[3] North Cape Hall has been operated by Scandinavian Airlines and Rica Hotels. Tourism products on the Arctic Circle have been developed together with some British tour operators, for example (on the development of charter flights during the Christmas season, see Hakulinen et al. 2007).

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