

Contested cottage landscapes: Host perspective to the increase of foreign second home ownership in Finland 1990–2008

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Pitkänen, Kati (2011). Contested cottage landscapes: Host perspective to the increase of foreign second home ownership in Finland 1990–2008. *Fennia* 189: 1, pp. 43–59. Helsinki. ISSN 0015-0010.

Cross-border and international second home ownership is a worldwide phenomenon and growing in popularity as people seek desirable environments further away than before. As the desired landscapes are also likely to possess a considerable local and national value, research is needed to find out how host societies perceive and receive the newcomers. This paper explores the Finnish public debate on foreign second home ownership from 1990 to 2008, a period that has witnessed a considerable growth in foreign property ownership. The paper uses the concept of cottage landscape to analyse how second homes are positioned nationally and how foreign second home ownership is debated in relation to the national definitions and valuations. Based on changing emphases and fears related to the phenomenon, three periods of public debate are distinguished. The results demonstrate the iconic image of cottage landscape in the Finnish society by showing how foreign second home ownership is perceived as a threat to the Finnish way of life, landownership rights and national identity. From the perspective of the host society, foreign second home ownership is a complicated and emotional matter with potential to raise opposition and even conflicts when the foreign demand focuses on locally or nationally valued landscapes. Therefore research on the internationalisation of second home ownership can no longer ignore the perspective of the host society.

Keywords: second homes, public discourse, national landscape, contested landscapes, international second home tourism, foreign second home ownership

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Introduction

“We are soon standing on the last shore!” (Helsingin Sanomat, 19 May 1992)

“Treasures of our shores to foreigners?” (Helsingin Sanomat, 13 September 1993)

“Russians are invading Eastern Finland piece by piece” (Itä-Savo, 4 March 2007)

“Buy a piece of fatherland” (Suomen Kuvalehti, 3 October 2008)

These are examples of Finnish newspapers and magazine headlines reacting to the loosening of restrictions of foreign property ownership and the gradual increase in foreign second home purchases during past decades. Finland is no exception,

but cross-border and international as well as domestic second home ownership are growing in popularity worldwide. Second homes and multiple dwelling are an established part of leisure in many countries and have also for a long been a topic of academic research (Coppock 1977; Hall & Müller 2004; McIntyre et al. 2006). More recently, improved access to communication and transportation, general opening of borders, and growth in income and private financial resources have enabled certain classes of people to seek desirable environments or cheaper and available properties abroad (Williams & Van Patten 2006; McCarthy 2007; Woods 2009). In research literature a well-known example of internationalisation of second home ownership are ‘snowbirds’, peo-

ple who migrate seasonally to sunnier and warmer locations within or across national boundaries (Karisto 2000; Williams et al. 2000, 2004; Timothy 2002; McHugh 2006; Haug et al. 2007). Examples of single nationalities crossing borders in search for second homes include Brits and Dutch in rural France (Buller & Hoggart 1994; Hoggart & Buller 1995; Chaplin 1999a, 1999b; Priemus 2005), Americans in Mexico and Canada (Timothy 1994) as well as Germans in Denmark (Tress 2002) and Sweden (Müller 1999, 2002).

These previous studies on the internationalisation of second home ownership have mainly focused on the geographical patterns of foreign ownership (Hoggart & Buller 1995; Müller 1999) and foreigners' motives and their integration to the receiving country (Buller & Hoggart 1994; Chaplin 1999a, 1999b; Müller 2002). Foreign ownership has been analysed especially as a part of international amenity migration and globalization of countryside (McCarthy 2007; Woods 2009). Some studies have referred to potential negative impacts on rural communities such as rising of property prices, real estate speculation, gentrification, language problems, cultural differences, and creation of seasonal communities and ethnic enclaves (Buller & Hoggart 1994; Müller 1999; Timothy 2002). However, it has been stated that these developments are geographically uneven as the globalised market has materialized only in relatively small number of rural landscapes meeting the requisite aesthetic and amenity requirements (McCarthy 2007). Although these amenity landscapes with exceptional natural environment are also likely to possess a considerable local and national value and be important locations of domestic tourism and leisure, no studies have reported on conflicts or hostility between the newcomers and host society. Furthermore, there is lack of research on how host societies perceive and debate foreign second home ownership.

This paper sheds light on these matters by exploring the Finnish public debate on foreign second home ownership. The paper reviews Finnish media discourse from 1990 to 2008, a period that has witnessed a growth of foreign property ownership for the first time in a century. It is asked: what kind of public discourse has revolved around foreign second home owners, what kinds of fears have been raised and what these fears are based on? The paper uses the concept of cottage¹ landscape (Halseth 1998; Pitkänen 2008) to refer to an imagined space of second homes and their related

practices and meanings. Cottage landscape is a cultural practice, a way of valuing, giving meaning and making sense of the material and immaterial settings of cottage life (Mitchell 2002b; Matless 2003). The concept is here used as a tool to analyse how second homes are positioned nationally and how foreign second home ownership is debated in relation to the national definitions and valuations. The paper first introduces the cultural approach to landscape and the context of Finnish cottage landscape as a nationally valued space. The paper then proceeds to apply the approach in the analysis of Finnish public discourse.

Cultural approach to landscape

The cultural approach to cottage landscape derives from the cultural geography's discursive accounts into landscape. These were popularised by the cultural turn in social sciences in the 1980s and 1990s that emphasised interpretative and discursive analysis and linked landscape to the notions of power, representation and visuality (Wylie 2007). In his seminal work Dennis Cosgrove (1984) interpreted landscape as a socially induced way of seeing. For him landscape was a kind of 'veil', an act of power of certain socio-economic classes which hides behind the underlying truth (Wylie 2007).

Extending from this interpretation Don Mitchell (2000) has stressed landscape as work, a product of human labour, people and social systems that go into its making. For Mitchell (2000, Wylie 2007) landscapes are always under work, open to change, alteration and contestation. However, at the same time powerful social interests are trying to represent landscape as fixed, total and natural. David Matless (1998, 2003), in turn, has argued that landscape should be conceived in terms of practice and an 'art of living'. Landscape is not only about visuality and symbolic representation, but also constituted by corporeal practices and performance (Matless 1998; Wylie 2007). What landscape is (and how it should be 'read'), therefore, cannot be approached without considering how it works (Mitchell 2000) or what it does (Mitchell 2002b; Matless 2003). These interpretations move from conceiving landscape as an 'image' and a visual entity into understanding it as a process.

Landscape can then be best described as a medium and cultural practice (Mitchell 2002b). It is a

unique mixture of imaginal and material qualities, practices and their economic, social, political and aesthetic values (Matless 2003). One particular function of landscape often considered by cultural geographers is that landscape can make something that is cultural appear as natural, taken for granted and right (Matless 1998; Mitchell 2000, 2002a). However, the meaning of the landscape is not stable but it is constantly struggled over, contested and defended by different social actors in their efforts to use the landscape according to their ways of seeing and living (Matless 1998; Gold & Revill 2000; Mitchell 2000, 2002a).

An established example of the naturalization of meaning, power and contest are *national landscapes*. Iconic images of nature and national landscape have played a powerful role in the shaping of modern nation-states as the expressions of a claimed natural relationship between a people or nation and the territory or nature it occupies (Cosgrove 2003). These landscapes have become valued as national landscapes that evoke the historic home of the people, their virtues, the ways of life, and authentic national experience (Gold & Revill 2000). Matless (1998) writes about 'landscaped citizenship' referring to appropriate conduct, aesthetic ability and art of right living associated with landscape whereby individuals and nations give form to themselves environmentally. According to Gold and Revill (2000) any threat to such landscape becomes reified as a threat both to the way of life it symbolizes and to the very idea of landscape.

The flip side of national or any other valued landscapes is that as much as they are about belonging, they are also about exclusion, keeping out those you do not like and identifying yourself largely in terms of who you are not (Kinsman 1995; Mitchell 2000). Arguments over landscaped citizenship always work in relation to a sense of 'anti-citizenship' (Matless 1998). Hence, landscapes are embedded with codes and barriers accessible to some whereas certain claims, practices and groups are excluded from or made invisible in it. These exclusions can have economic or political grounds, but can also involve struggles over issues of race, ethnicity and gender (e.g. Kinsman 1995; Halfacree 2003; Dowler et al. 2005).

Following these interpretations, the cottage landscape is here understood as a nationally valued landscape, an imagined space that works to assert certain claims, practices, meanings and values related to Finns, Finnishness, Finnish nature-

culture relationship and Finnish cottage life and its environmental surroundings. It is argued that by enforcing certain images and values, it excludes others and is the result and site of continuous contestation and struggle related to power, national identity and values.

Finnish cottage landscape as a national landscape

The strong cultural significance of cottages in Finland derives from the social development in the 20th century. In contrast to what the headlines in the introduction might let one expect, the history of Finnish cottage culture is international. The origin of second home ownership dates back to the 18th century and time under the Swedish rule. Later the Russian occupation at the beginning of the 19th century made Finland a destination of the Russians (Jaatinen 1997; Lovell 2003). This international era ended in the Russian revolution and Finnish independence in 1917 after which second home ownership remained a privilege of the Finnish urban upper classes. Second home ownership became a mass phenomenon after the Second World War when the urbanising society sought one's way to the countryside for summer. The relative abundance of land, inheritance and cheaper prices for relatives made it possible also for lower middle-class and working class families to acquire second homes (Vuori 1966; Löfgren 1999). Today second home ownership is a large-scale phenomenon. There are 485,100 second homes and approximately 800,000 Finns belong to the cottage owner households (Statistics Finland 2010).

During the 20th century second home ownership has remained almost entirely a domestic phenomenon. This has been partly due to national legislation that has restricted property ownership from foreigners. Foreigners have been allowed to buy properties since 2000, after the accession of Finland to European Union (EU) in 1995 and the five year derogation period of national legislation. The 2000s has gradually witnessed an increase in the number of foreign second home purchases. Especially the ski centres in Lapland and Finnish Lakeland in southeastern Finland, within a few hours reach from St. Petersburg, have attracted a growing number of foreign second home tourists (Tuulentie 2006; Pitkänen & Vepsäläinen 2008; Kotilainen et al. 2010; Fig 1).

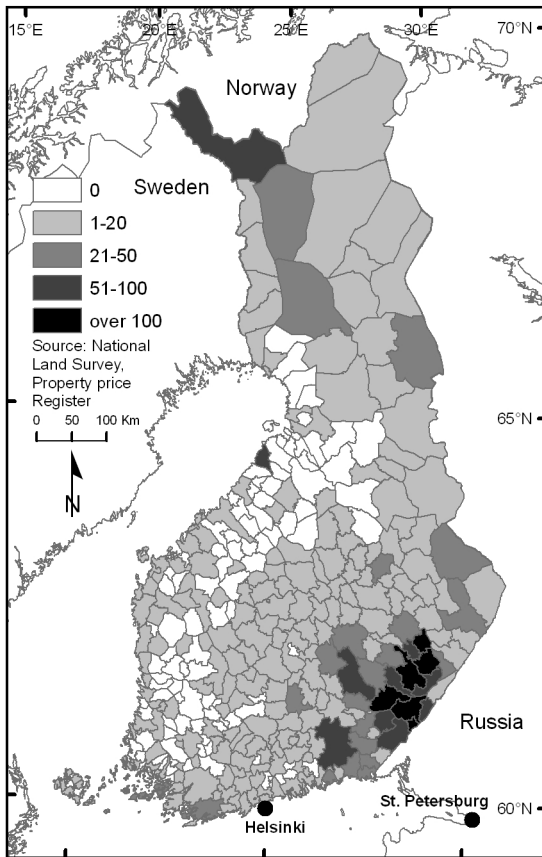


Fig. 1. Foreign property purchases in Finnish municipalities during years 2003–2009 (source: National Land Survey of Finland, official property price register)

Finnish Lakeland is one of the most popular areas for second homes. Relatively accessible from the large population centres in southern Finland, the amenity-rich landscape of the area has attracted a dense stock of cottages along the lake shores. The Lakeland landscape is a relic of the Ice Age with labyrinth-like structure and rocky shores. The biggest lake in the area is called Lake Saimaa, the fourth largest lake in Europe. The Lakeland landscape has many symbolic meanings in the Finnish culture. During the rise of the nationalistic ideology at the turn of the nineteenth century, the lakes were adored as a national landscape (Eskola 1997; Häyrynen 2005). Correspondingly, ever since the accelerated urbanisation in the 1950s, the lake landscape has been seen as a symbol of the golden

youth and countryside nostalgia (Pitkänen & Vepsäläinen 2006).

It has been argued that in the second half of the 20th century the cottage development along the lakeshores has been absorbed into the national landscape imagery (Karisto 2006; Pitkänen 2008; Vepsäläinen & Pitkänen 2010). A cottage by a lake has become an iconic second home and national landscape. Moreover, the appreciation of the cottage landscape has resulted in the construction of powerful cultural facades on how second home landscape and life there should be like (Karisto 2006; Periäinen 2006; Pitkänen 2008).

Hence, second homes are an integral part of Finnish culture and the way of life. Moreover, they are intertwined with the ideas of the nation and national landscape creating an illusion that a cottage by a lake is an eternal and natural part of Finnishness (also Periäinen 2006). This cultural image, however, hides a complex reality of change and contested meanings. In her article on Finnish second home landscape, Pitkänen (2008) suggests that one of the current factors changing and challenging the established cultural imagination related to second homes is the foreign second home ownership.

Data collection and analysis

National media coverage, such as newspaper accounts, provides a rich data for the analysis of Finnish cottage culture. The foreign interest in second homes has raised a lot of interest on national and regional levels during the past couple of decades. This interest has manifested in regular media coverage and attention. Foreign second home ownership has received both negative and positive attention and it has been portrayed as significant not only regionally but for the nation as a whole.

Research material used in this study consists of a series of newspaper accounts published during the time period of 1.1.1990–31.12.2008. The accounts were acquired from an electric newspaper archive, ARKISTO (<http://www.helsinginsanomat.fi/yritykset/sanoma-arkisto>) maintained by the leading newspaper publisher in Finland, Sanoma Corporation. The analysed material forms an extensive cross-section of the Finnish media discourse including both serious and tabloid journalism. The limitation of the archive, and thereby also the analysed material, is lack of visual material connected with the original articles and items. The

archive comprises the content of the following newspapers:

- Since 1990: Helsingin Sanomat (HS) is the leading newspaper paper in Finland, read by more than three-fourths of the residents of the Helsinki metropolitan area and by a quarter of all Finns. The paper is independent and non-aligned. The average daily circulation of the paper in 2010 was 397,838 copies.
- Since 1993: Ilta-Sanomat (IS) is the leading tabloid (60% share of the market) and the second biggest newspaper in Finland. The paper is read by 734,000 people daily. In 2008, the average audited circulation of the paper was 161,615 copies.
- Since 1998: Taloussanomat (TS) is a financial newspaper published only online since 2008.
- Since 2001: In addition, the archive contains summaries provided by Esmerk Oy. Esmerk monitors almost all Finnish national and local newspapers and leading periodicals and provides media analyses and summaries.

Articles and items were searched from the archive using a Boolean search of terms covering the different synonyms of second home (tourism/tourist/property) and foreigners in Finnish. After an initial review the material was complemented with similar searches on terms indicating second homes and Germans and Russians. The final material comprises 454 newspaper accounts (HS: 263, IS: 114, TS: 34, Esmerk: 43). Most of the accounts were published as articles or news items, but the material also includes 41 accounts published either as invited addresses or under the section meant for readers' letters and opinions.

The material was analysed using thematic coding and analysis. The focus in the analysis was on 'what' was said rather than 'how' or 'to whom' and the purpose was to identify common thematic elements across newspaper accounts (Braun & Clarke 2006; Riessman 2008). The analysis proceeded from the identification of latent nuances to the creation of descriptive thematic categories (Cope 2005; Braun & Clarke 2006). To begin with, all the accounts were read through carefully and categorised according to their latent negative, positive or neutral content so that the same account could belong to one or more of these categories. Excerpts of original accounts or keywords were listed as codes under these categories as notes to facilitate further analysis. Concurrently, notes were made also of the type of the account (e.g. readers' letters) and the nationalities of the

foreign second home owners mentioned in the text.

The accounts included a variety of arguments for, against or neutral to foreign second home ownership. At the second stage, based on the notes made at the first stage, these arguments were collated and sorted into thematic categories to gain an overview of the different themes and arguments related to the phenomenon at different times. It was studied: what kind of negative and positive aspects of foreign second home ownership are raised as well as what kind of neutral issues, and how these issues change during the study interval (Table 1). On the basis of continuity, emergence and persistence of different themes as well as number of accounts published each year, three distinct periods of media coverage were distinguished: 1990–1996, 1997–2004 and 2004–2008 (Fig. 2).

At the final stage, a closer look was taken on the negative publicity and especially the embedded national rhetoric to identify collective fears related to the phenomenon. All excerpts (altogether in 49 accounts) in which explicit or implicit nationalistic rhetoric was used to argue against foreign second home ownership were identified and assorted thematically and in relation to the three periods. These were then used to analyse how the cottage landscape works to naturalise and assert certain meanings, practices and values related to the national culture-nature relationship. The three analysis periods are presented in the following sections supported by relevant background information and figures.

Three periods of media debate

Figure 2 illustrates the development of media coverage on foreign second home ownership during the three analysis periods. Figure 3, in turn, shows the annual number of foreign property purchases. Comparing these figures reveals that media coverage of foreign second home ownership in the 1990s and 2000s parallels the rate of foreign property purchases.

Both are also related to the development of national legislation concerning foreign property ownership. Originally, acquiring properties was restricted from foreigners already in the Grand Duchy of Finland in the Russian Empire in 1851. After the independence in 1917, property ownership was restricted also from Russians by an order

Table 1. Coding scheme of the thematic analysis. A single newspaper account can be categorised under one or more of the themes.

NEGATIVE	I	II	III	T
Dubious real estate business	21	3	25	49
<i>National rhetoric</i>	23	0	26	49
Threat to the nation	22	1	21	44
Rush of foreigners/too many foreigners/foreign invasion	20	2	21	43
Environmental impacts	31	0	1	32
Public opposition	7	2	20	29
Raise of price level	10	0	18	28
Permanent houses used as cottages	7	4	17	28
Reciprocity, Finns cannot buy abroad	2	0	15	17
Impacts on the Everyman's right	7	0	1	8
'Bad foreigners'	3	1	4	8
Selective real estate business	2	0	6	8
Ethnic enclaves	0	0	3	3
Dependence on foreign cottage owners	0	0	2	2
POSITIVE	I	II	III	T
Economic revenues (private and public)	11	6	30	47
Boosts real estate business	7	1	10	18
Vitalises rural areas	2	3	9	14
'Good foreigners'	4	1	6	11
Image of Finland	4	1	3	8
Internationalisation	4	1	3	8
Demand on unwanted properties	1	1	6	7
Intensified second home development	1	0	1	2
Threat of foreign invasion accelerates shoreline protection	1	0	0	1
NEUTRAL	I	II	III	T
Scope and statistics	33	9	43	85
Legislation	36	2	4	42
No signs of foreign invasion	27	10	2	39
Examples of properties bought by foreigners	3	2	31	36
Examples of foreign cottage owners	8	4	17	29
Foreigners are no worse than Finns	18	0	0	18
Russian dacha culture	1	7	9	17
Examples from abroad	13	1	1	15
'Rush of Germans' discourse in the 90s	3	3	4	10
General comments about people's attitudes	8	0	2	10
Finns have the right to buy properties abroad	7	0	1	8
There is plenty of available shoreline	4	1	1	6
Historical examples	0	5	1	6
Unknown impacts	2	0	4	6
Free trade	2	0	4	6
No effect on real estate prices	2	0	4	2

of the Senate in 1918 and by law in 1920 set to ban foreign property ownership in the province of Vyborg in Karelian Isthmus (Hämäläinen 1983; Virtanen 2010). One of the factors driving the de-

velopment of the regulation was Russian second home ownership in Karelian Isthmus which was seen to raise local property prices and pose a political threat to the whole nation (Hämäläinen

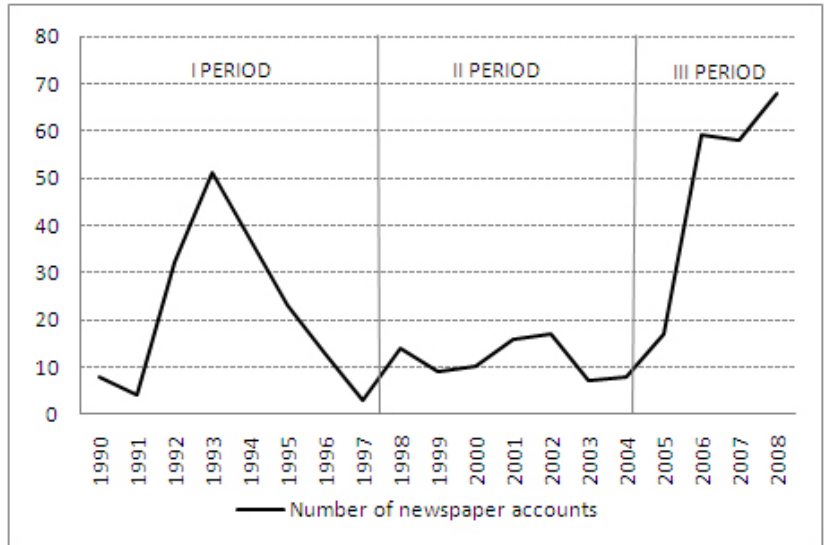


Fig. 2. Number of newspaper accounts in the three periods of the analysis.

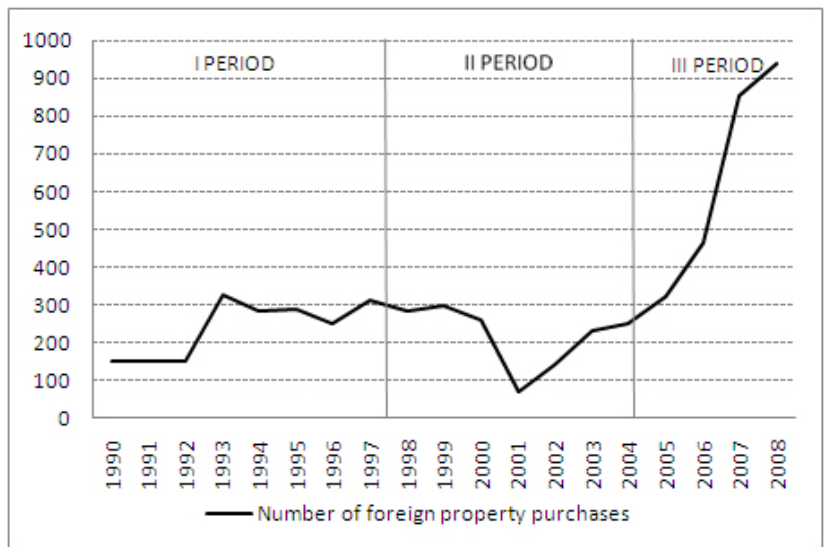


Fig. 3. Number of foreign property purchases in the three periods of the analysis (Sources: National Land Survey, Bill 171/1999, 1990-1992 figures are estimations).

1983). In 1939, the orders were complemented by a law (219/1939). According to this law, subject to a licence from the Ministry of the Interior, only those foreigners residing permanently in Finland or former Finnish nationals were permitted to own properties (Ailio 1957). There are no complete figures available on foreign second home purchases before the 1990s, but it has been estimated that for example in the 1980s foreigners bought approximately 150 properties annually most of these be-

ing permanent or second homes (Finnish Government Bill 120/1992).

The 1939 law was struck down only 60 years later as property ownership was freed as a part of the process of accession to EU. The first period covers the years 1990–1996 when the amount of newspaper coverage peaked during the accession to and negotiations with EU. As a result of the negotiations Finland, along with Austria and Sweden, was allowed to maintain special restrictions

concerning second homes for a five-year derogation period. During this time those residing permanently outside Finland were required to apply for a permit from the County Administrative Board to buy a second home (Finnish Law 1613/1992). These regulations were finally abandoned in 2000 (Finnish Law 1299/1999) as foreign property purchases had remained at a very moderate level. According to a Finnish Government Bill (171/1999) and National Land Survey of Finland, foreigners bought approximately 290 properties annually 1993–1998 and a half of these were second homes. The media debate quieted down in the mid 1990s and was moderate also in the early 2000s. These years 1997–2004 cover the second period of the analysis. The third period 2004–2008 is marked by the growth of Russian second home ownership, which has initiated a renewed public debate. National Land Survey has kept rough track² of the number of second home properties sold to foreigners in the 2000s. After a temporary decrease in the beginning of the 2000s, the amount of foreign purchases has increased annually. The growth in the share of foreign purchases has been fast especially since 2005. Although the share of foreigners of the total property market is still low, one to two percents annually, in some municipalities where only a limited number of properties are sold annually, foreigners cover almost a third of all property purchases.

Rush of Germans (I Period, 1990–1996)

The first period of media coverage is characterised especially by the accession to European Economic Area (EEA) in 1994 and EU in 1995 and the related changes that were required to the national legislation concerning property ownership. EU demanded that the contemporary legislation based on nationality was discriminating and should be abandoned allowing all EU citizens to buy properties in Finland.

In the media, it was feared that the deregulation would immediately result in a rush of second home buyers from Europe. The negative publicity peaked in 1992 along with the preparation of the legislation in the parliament. A general fear expressed in many of the accounts directly or indirectly was the 'rush of Germans': "rich Germans come and buy all the Finnish forests and lake shores as their second home plots" (HS, 6 December 1992). In some of the accounts it was estimated that the demand from Germany and Central

Europe would easily double the number of the contemporary 400,000 cottages. Finland was compared especially with Denmark that had been a member of EEC since 1973 and as an old EU country had negotiated a derogation legislation to protect its second homes from the demand from Central Europe. Similar demand was seen to be obvious also in the Finnish case. In many of the accounts it was stated that "Finland is the only country in Western Europe where shoreline development is allowed (HS, 19 May 1992)".

The rush of European second home tourists combined with domestic demand was seen to be catastrophic and result in the congestion of shorelines, damages to fragile nature and other negative environmental impacts. The foreign demand was also seen to dramatically decrease the openness of shorelines and thereby restrict Everyman's rights, the traditional Nordic legal free right of access to the land and waterways, and the right to collect natural products. The national regulation of land use and shoreline building was seen as inefficient to prevent the damages. Therefore the need to develop regulation and planning and "safe the lake-shores (HS, 31 December 1992)" was emphasized as an important agenda before the accession.

The importance of shoreline conservation in the public discourse is explained by the topicality of the theme at the beginning of the 1990s. The Council of State had enforced a shoreline protection programme in 1990 that had raised a debate on landownership rights (Nieminen 1994). This debate is reflected also in the analysed data. In one of the readers' letters it was claimed that fear of foreigner invasion was used as a tool to reclaim the land from landowners for nature conservation without resistance (HS, 26 July 1990). On the other hand, it was also feared that foreign interest in the shores would hinder the execution of the programme.

Landownership rights have traditionally been strong in Finland (Nieminen 1994; Jokinen 2004). The constitutional protection of property covers land ownership and gives the owners the right to manage and develop their properties. These rights can only be restricted by legislative measures and losses to the owners must be compensated. Besides the resistance to nature conservation, this liability for damage was visible in the analysed data. Even if the mainstream publicity was against selling, there were a few remarks on how the demand from abroad would raise land prices and benefit landowners. Along with the preparation of

new derogation legislation, it was even suggested that “later it might be necessary to think how the landowners are compensated (HS, 26 August 1992)” when they would not get the market price of their property due to the exclusion of foreigners from the property market.

However, these remarks were only exceptions to the mainstream publicity which emphasized the negative consequences of selling land to foreigners. The potential impacts are very similar to those referred to in international literature (Buller & Hoggart 1994; Müller 1999; Timothy 2002). Besides damage to Finnish nature, foreign buyers were associated with dubious real estate business, land-jobbing and money laundering. A frequent fear in the accounts was that the external demand would raise property prices and thereby affect the possibilities of Finns to acquire second homes. These fears materialised finally in the new five-year derogation legislation set to monitor how the foreign demand would affect the price level, the execution of nature conservation programmes or otherwise be against national interest (Finnish Government Bill 120/1992).

Besides the accounts reporting on the preparation of legislation, the foreign second home property ownership was made a national issue also in many other ways. The cottages and cottage landscape was represented as a precious national property. The cottage landscape was strongly associated with the Finnish Lakeland landscape held as a national landscape. The landscape of water, forest and cottages on lakesides was represented as something that was unique in the whole Europe. These spots on the lakesides were Finns’ or “our shores (HS, 28 August 1993)”, “the soil of the Fatherland (HS, 30 September 1993)”, “national treasure (HS, 27 May 1993)”, “crown jewels (HS, 16 June 1996)”, “the gems of the shores (HS, 13 September 1993)” or “the most beautiful seductions of the Finnish Maiden (HS, 31 December 1992)”. Property prices were seen to be too low and selling properties to foreigners was deemed as discounting land or even “prostitution (HS, 19 December 1992)”. An account reporting on parliamentary proceedings related to the accession into EEA quoted the words of Eero Paloheimo, MP of the Green party, “in EEA Finland is doomed like the North American Indians once were. The land goes for free... (HS, 18 June 1992)”. The outer threat was not particularly characterised, the accounts wrote simply about foreigners, big money from abroad or Europeans, Central Europeans or

Germans at the most. The focus on national rhetoric was on characterising the cottage landscape as the legitimate property of Finns and Finland as well as an important source of Finnishness. Therefore, it was important that the landscape would stay in the Finnish possession also to prevent the scenario that “the next generation of Finns will end up as crofters on their own shores (HS, 12 January 1993)”.

No rush of foreigners after all (II Period 1997–2004)

The number of newspaper accounts decreased notably after the mid 1990s reaching the lowest point in 1997. Years 1997–2004 mark a second period of the data characterised by abating negative publicity and change into neutral media coverage. This was mainly due to the fact that contrary to the fears and speculations in the first period the number of foreign property purchases did not start to increase. During this period, typical were accounts that only reported the number and different nationalities of foreign buyers. These numbers were used to reassure that no foreign rush on Finnish shores had taken place or was to be expected to do so. The rhetoric employed in these accounts was also moderate in comparison with those of the first period. The most provoking accounts of the period include accounts titled like “The fear of foreigners’ lust for land has proved to be groundless (HS, 10 October 1997)”, “The shores remain in the possession of Finns (HS, 15 January 1998)”, “Finland has remained in the domestic hands (HS, 30 May 1999)”, “The Finnish shores do not excite foreigners (HS, 2 May 2000)”, “The foreigners did not rush to buy second homes from Finland (HS, 30 August 2004)”. Also the rescission of the derogation period in January 2000 received only very moderate interest. Helsingin Sanomat speculated in December 1999 that: “The deregulation is not expected to increase the share of foreign buyers in the Finnish second home market (HS, 4 December 1999)”.

The nationalities of the foreigners interested in Finland represented in the media changed during the second period. Whereas during the first period the foreign second home tourism was thought to come from Germany and other Central European countries, during the second period, the direction gradually changed to east. This change, however, was noted without any drama reassuring that the overall number of foreign buyers still remained

very low. Helsingin Sanomat reported in 1998 that: “The Finnish cottage life with its fishing opportunities appeals more to the Russians than Germans after all. Finland was a popular second home destination already during the era of Autonomy. The shoreline cottages and plots, however, are attainable only to the most affluent Russians (HS, 15 January 1998)”.

The emergence of Russian demand was reflected also in the emergence of a variety of different perspectives to the phenomenon. In a number of accounts it was reminded how the Russians had owned second homes in Finland already a century ago and there were also few accounts on the Russian dacha culture and its similarities to the Finnish cottage culture. However, the most notable increase was in the number of accounts on foreign interest in commercial cottages. The number of articles on the Russian interest in holiday and rental cottages in Finland increased after the turn of the 21st century. This parallels with the overall increase in inbound tourism from Russia (Kotilainen et al. 2010). Besides reporting on Russians renting cottages the accounts increasingly reported on the development of commercial cottage landscapes, rental cottages and holiday villages, planned and built especially for Russian demand. However, these commercial endeavours and the increase of Russian tourists did not raise negative publicity.

During the second period foreign second home ownership was, for the first time, bound to the idea of reciprocity. This is related to the topicality of Karelia Question, a political dispute over the returning of a border area called Karelia from Russia to Finland. The area was ceded to the Soviet Union in the Second World War and the population was evacuated to Finland. The loss was considered significant; the ceded area covered approximately 10 per cent of the whole country and Vyborg, the second most important town of the time. Therefore, during the Cold War and especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union an emotional debate over the return of the area to Finland has surfaced in the media and politics frequently (Paasi 1999). The preparation of Russian land reform in the beginning of the 2000s raised the Finnish hopes of the possibilities to buy land in the ceded area. In the analysed data, Finns, whose birthplace or roots were in the area, were reported looking for opportunities to buy land or properties to be used as second homes. In some accounts it was speculated that the land reform would open up the possibility to “buy the land back to Finns piece by

piece (HS, 16 May 2002)”. A couple of accounts even reported that on her visit to the Karelian Isthmus in 2002 President Tarja Halonen “conciliated the fears arisen in Russia over the potential Finnish property purchases in Karelia (HS, 28 May 2002)”.

Russian invasion (III Period since 2005)

The third and still on-going period is characterised by the re-emergence of a heated media debate over foreign property ownership. The annual number of foreign purchases started to increase rapidly after the slow second period and in four years the annual foreign purchases almost quadrupled. This has been due to increasing demand from Russia. Whereas in 2003 and 2004 the Russians were buyers in one third of the foreign property purchases, in 2008 their share was over 80 per cent. This growth has reawakened the media interest on the phenomenon and has started a third period of publicity.

The third period is characterised by many elements familiar from the previous periods. Like in the previous periods, the main focus of many accounts have been the annual figures and their development. Whereas in the second period this type of accounts were published once a year or biannually, along the third period the pace has accelerated so that in 2008 the newspapers reported the figures quarterly. Also the coverage on incoming tourism from Russia and Russian investors in Finnish commercial cottage business has continued as a popular theme. During the third period, the newspapers reported on altogether 14 new holiday village plans run by Russian investors. These investments were greeted with pleasure as they were seen to create new jobs and revitalise the local economy. Old businesses or land for new developments were purchased especially from eastern Finland and Lapland: “Russian money floods into the Finnish tourist centres (TS, 21 October 2006)”.

The greatest difference from the second period is the change from neutral back to the negative publicity of the first period. Even though the change in the nationalities of incoming second home tourism clearly changed already in the second period, this change raised interest only in the third period. Many of the themes related to the fear of the rush of Germans have been revitalised during the third period, with a focus on a ‘Russian invasion’: “In Finland people are nervous that the Russians come and buy all our shores and land,

build their luxurious dachas and resettle in Finland. A few years ago people were afraid that the Germans will come with similar intentions. This did not happen (IS, 12 November 2005)".

The change from Central European tourists into Russians has not been simple as feelings among civil society towards Russia and Russians are very complicated (Paasi 1999). According to Vihavainen (2004) the attitudes towards Russia have always been twofold. Although Russophilia has almost always been distinctive to the Finnish society at the political, cultural as well as human level, the basic historical attitude has been a certain kind of negativity (Paasi 1999). Russia has been the 'other' to Finland and it has been used to reflect the Finnish self-identity (Vihavainen 2004). Similarly, the political history still affects the relationship. The countries have frequently been on opposite sides in wars and Finland has been part of Russia during its history. The last war between the two countries ended in 1944 and the traces of the war are still visible in eastern Finland, where also the Russian second home purchases have mostly taken place (Pitkänen & Vepsäläinen 2008).

Deriving from this background, the national rhetoric employed in the accounts over Russian second home tourists has been aggressive. Like in the first period, the cottage landscape under threat was identified as the national Lakeland landscape. This landscape was represented as "the Saimaa lakeside (TS, 29 July 2007)", "the pearls/best spots on the shore of Saimaa (IS, 13 July 2007)" as well as "national landscape/heritage (IS, 18 July 2007)" and a "Finnish idyll (IS, 25 November 2008)". Compared with the rhetoric of the first period, however, the representation of the outer threat was different and more dramatic. The emergence of the Russian buyers in the Finnish real estate business was represented to be against national interests. The newspapers reported on the "conquest of Finland by Russia/Russians (IS, 31 July 2007, HS, 18 November 2008)", "the colonization/russification of Finland (IS, 23, 25, 26 February 2008, HS, 27 February 2008)", "the transformation of Saimaa lakesides into dacha villages (HS, 29 July 2007)" and "the loss of freedom (IS, 29 February 2008)". It was reminded that Russia was the occupying state, the old enemy that had won more than enough land in the last wars in which the sacrifices had been harsh. A reader's letter in *Ilta-Sanomat* in 2007 summarised these thoughts: "The Russians buy the best places along the Finnish shores as the

stupid and greedy landowners sell them. Why did my father waste five years of his best youth in the war defending the independence if the then enemy now invades our country with money (IS, 31 July 2007)?"

The emotional national rhetoric was supported by the concrete negative impacts of Russian second home ownership raised in many accounts. The negative impacts are similar to those raised during the first period, but this time the arguments were backed up with hearsay experiences or the fact that Russians indeed are buying properties in Finland. In many accounts, the focus was on the dubious features in the real estate business connected to, for example, the background of the buyers and money laundering: "The Russians' rapidly increased buying power has initiated a debate on the origin of the money. Many suggest the origin is suspicious (IS, 23 February 2008)". In some accounts, rumors were spread that Russians are willing to pay almost anything for the properties they desire: "According to real estate agents a Russian buyer does not bargain, but pays the offer price. There are cases that a Russian buyer has paid even more than the offer – to prevent the selling to a competing Russian buyer (IS, 26 February 2008)". This was seen to have led to the creation of a selective market and marketing available properties only in Russia: "The Finns sell properties to Russians secretly... The properties are for sale only on Russian websites and in Russian (TS, 29 June 2008)". The Russian interest in the Finnish real estate market was reported leading to a raise in the price level and eventually to the displacement of Finnish second home buyers: "The overheated market leads to rising prices – at the moment the situation is completely wild. The Russian demand has increased the prices by a fifth (IS, 28 July 2007)". Besides outbidding the Finnish second home buyers, during the past couple of years an increasing number of accounts reported on the displacement of locals from the housing market and change of residential areas to vacation use. It was reported that the Russian interest did not only focus on lakeside and second home properties, but also houses and plots meant for permanent residence provided with municipal engineering were increasingly sold to Russians.

These negative features were used to argue that local residents, the common people and the Finns in general were against allowing Russians to buy properties in Finland: "For the decision-makers all that matters are roubles and euro and dollars.

But the common people are against it (IS, 25 February 2008)". The accounts reported on a couple of petitions and local initiatives organized as resistance to restrict Russian property purchases. One of the key arguments for the local opposition was the claim for reciprocity in land trading. Like in the second period, the reciprocity claim was supported by the emotional arguments related to Karelian question. A reader's letter in Helsingin Sanomat in 2009 pleaded that: "The Finnish government should take care of the rights of the Finnish landowners of Karelia and other ceded areas and help its own citizens. Russia will most certainly take care of its own. The Finnish possession in these areas is eternal (HS, 7 August 2007)". As a new feature it was reported that the possibilities of Finns to purchase land abroad are limited. The criticism focused especially on Russia, and a clear preference was made between EU and non-EU citizens: "Because Finns do not have similar rights in Russia, it is not fair that Russians can buy from Finland. It should be reciprocal. The Spanish and all other EU-citizens have reciprocal rights (HS, 17 January 2008)". These notions supported claims on revising the current legislation: "Timo Soini, the leader of the parliamentary party the Finns thinks that new legislation should be introduced to stop selling properties to non-EU citizens – that is for Russians... Leasing is acceptable but buying not, says Soini (IS, 25 February 2008)".

Along with the growth of awareness of the phenomenon and its negative features also a number of positive impacts were recognized such as revenues for local economy and business life and revitalisation of the rural real estate market. The newspapers also introduced a number of examples of Russian buyers to the audience. These accounts underlined how the Russian second home buyers are mostly 'common people'. In 2008 *Ilta-Sanomat* headed an account "Not mafiosos, but Russian intelligentsia (IS, 10 July 2008)" and a week later Helsingin Sanomat reported on family Formin who had purchased a second home in Valkeala: "Cottage life in Valkeala seems so familiar that one would think the family has read the Rough guide of cottaging in Finland (HS, 20 July 2008)". Interestingly also many of the second home owners interviewed in the newspapers seemed to have lineage in Finland. Hence, in between the lines the Russians were evaluated according to the ways of right living in the Finnish cottage landscape.

Discussion

The media debate around foreign second home ownership clearly demonstrates the iconic image cottage landscape has in the Finnish society. A cottage by a lake is a stereotypical image of the cottage culture and has taken on the role of national landscape. The cottage landscape, however, is not only about collective representation. In Finnish as well as international context it has been emphasized that second homes are an important part of people's leisure pursuits but also their whole life cycle and lifestyles (Jaakson 1986; Karisto 2006). Being sometimes the only stable place during one's life cycle second homes have become to be valued as sites for traditional lifestyles and emotions such as rootedness and stability (Kaltenborn 1998). Besides the cultural values the cottage landscape, thus, represents a significant emotional and material investment. This combination of cultural as well as subjective values and investment can also be found underlying in the debate over foreign second home owners.

These values became challenged at the beginning of the 1990s along the accession to EU. The media debate that followed was a part of the larger process of redefining the national identity and independence in relation to Europe and globalization (Ruuska 1999). Deregulation of property ownership raised a lot of negative publicity and fears that found a culmination point in the debate over foreign second home ownership. The threat of the rush of Germans was politically used by those actors opposed to the accession to appeal to the public. The negative publicity gradually vanished by the turn of the Millennium only to surface again a decade later. Although there were signs of emerging Russian interest in the Finnish property market in the second period, the idea of 'Russian invasion' has hit the media consciousness to the full only during the past couple of years.

The media debate evolved from the very one-sided publicity of the first period, to neutral orientation in the second period and finally to the third period characterized by negative nuances. The fears related to the increase of foreign second home owners surfaced especially during the first and the third period. The focus of the fears was very similar during both of these periods.

The most significant difference between the first and the third period was the fear of the first period that the massive foreign demand would cause severe environmental consequences. It was feared

that this would lead into overdevelopment and closing up shorelines thereby spoiling the landscape and restricting the public access of lakeshores. The popularity of the theme can be explained by the general raise of environmental consciousness in the 1980s as well as the topicality of the theme at the beginning of the 1990s. Hence, at that time, appealing on the environmental consequences provided legitimate and widely acceptable grounds to oppose foreign ownership in the defence of the Finnish cottage landscape. During the third period there has not been any single and dominating cause for the fear of Russian invasion, but the most specified explanations have been the rise of property prices and dubious real estate business. However, during both periods, in most of the accounts no specific reason for the perceived threat has been given. The rush of foreigners into the Finnish property market has simply been seen to be a great national loss and against national interests. Regarding foreign cottage owners a threat is grounded on the features of Finnish culture and society. At least three prominent explanations can be found.

Firstly, foreign second home ownership challenges the Finnish way of life. According to Matless (1998) the idea of national landscape embeds also the idea of a landscaped citizenship and right way of living. As Gold and Revill (2000) put it, a threat to a valued landscape is perceived as a threat to the way of life it symbolizes. Second homes are in many ways an integral element of the Finnish way of life. There are powerful cultural images of how second homes and life there should be like. Cottage owners, thus, are considered knowing the cultural codes of cottaging and behaving accordingly. In this respect, the foreign ownership poses a threat which is revealed, for example, in accounts that try to convey a positive image of foreign second home owners. Instead of reporting on the positive features of the foreigners' own culture and traditions, the emphasis has been on how well the newcomers have adopted the Finnish ways of cottaging. Similarly, in the debate over foreign second home ownership, issues such as gentrification and displacement have been associated with second homes for the first time. It has been feared that wealthy foreigners will restrict the possibilities of Finnish cottage buyers. Interestingly, however, similar questions are not raised in respect of wealthy Finnish cottage owners, but cottage ownership is considered something natural and socially equal in relation to the

social class or socio-economic position in the Finnish society. Cottaging is seen as a citizenship right, almost a civic duty. As in other Nordic countries second home ownership is relatively widespread in the Finnish society, but maybe not as widely as people like to think. As cottage ownership tends to be a life course matter, the majority of cottage owners are well-off urbanites and belong to a rather narrow generational group (Nieminen 2009). Furthermore, during the last decades the rise in second home property prices has been continuous leading to the regional differentiation and creation of elite landscapes in the most attractive areas (Pitkänen & Vepsäläinen 2008). Hence, the cottage landscape works to hide these features and naturalise the image of cottage landscape as equal.

Secondly, foreign second home ownership challenges Finnish landownership rights. As often stated, the function of the landscape is to hide its social origins, embedded power relations and the labour that has gone into its making (Cosgrove 1984; Mitchell 2000; Wylie 2007). One of the functions of the cottage landscape is that it naturalises a set of ideas of landownership. This becomes obvious in the way foreign second home purchases are seen to propose a threat to the idea of Finnish private landownership. The cottage landscape under threat is frequently referred to as 'our lakeshores/property/landscape' and it has been held utmost important that the land would stay in the possession of Finns. Especially in the rhetoric of the first period it was held important that the contemporary and future generations of Finns would not have to lease the land that was rightfully theirs and thus become crofters on their own land. Foreign landownership also seems to have raised questions on what landowners should be allowed to do with their property. During the third period, it has been feared that Russians will build pretentious and high-priced estates deemed clearly unsuitable for the Finnish cottage landscape. However, similar criticism is not raised on the constructions of Finnish cottage owners. Up to the present, the strong landownership rights in Finland have guaranteed landowners relatively free development rights and affected also the cottage landscape tremendously (Granö et al. 1999; Jokinen 2004). According to Granö et al. (1999) this has led to a situation in which the best shores are occupied by cottages and have become almost entirely inaccessible to other forms of use. According to Jokinen (2002) on the level of individual

properties the weak regulation has allowed intensive management and, for example, the creation of artificial shores and jetties by earth fillings and removals, dredging and concrete are common.

Thirdly, foreign second home ownership challenges national identity and raises fears related to the foreign influence. As said in the beginning the valued landscapes are as much about belonging as they are about exclusion and identifying yourself in terms of who you are not (Kinsman 1995; Matless 1998; Mitchell 2000). In the debate over foreign second home ownership the exclusive function of cottage landscape is emphasized especially in the debate over Russians, a group that has traditionally and historically represented the 'other' to Finns. The debate changed from the early 1990's representation of the relatively faceless threat of western globalization into the 2000's situation where the threat suddenly came from the direction people are used to connecting it with, the East. In the most pointed comments the cottage landscape is threatened by a hostile invasion. These comments are not external to the fact that besides the recent growth in second home ownership the Russian 'invasion' has also affected many other areas of social life in Finland. The closeness of Russia has become a significant element in the local economies and lifestyles in the border areas and there is a significant minority of Russians living in Finland (Kotilainen et al. 2010). According to a poll commissioned by *Ilta-Sanomat* (8 March 2008), approximately 70 percent of respondents wanted to restrict non-EU residents', thus Russians', possibilities to purchase properties in Finland. Interestingly, the most positive towards Russians were people from eastern Finland. Hence, the Russian invasion is most feared by people not really even affected by it. It is here that the iconic value of the cottage landscape is proven. In a way the cottage landscape has provided a scapegoat, thus a legitimate vehicle to externalise the historical prejudices and suspicions felt against Russians.

Conclusions

A growing amount of research in second home tourism focuses on the impacts of second homes on local communities (e.g. Casado-Diaz 1999; Mottiar & Quinn 2003; Marjavaara 2008). However, the impacts of foreign and cross-border second home ownership have rarely been analysed although the results of this study illustrate that

from the perspective of the host society it is not unimportant where the demand comes from. Foreign second home ownership is a complicated and emotional matter with potential to arise opposition and even conflicts especially when the foreign demand focuses on locally or nationally valued landscapes. Therefore research on foreign second home ownership cannot ignore the perspective of host society. Leisure practices are part of landscaped citizenship, the art of right living whereby societies perceive themselves (Matless 1998). Second homes are a specific form of leisure not comparable to other forms of tourism as they are directly entwined with practices such as land-ownership and dwelling in landscape. Furthermore, foreign second home ownership is a specific form of second home tourism as the newcomers do not (always) share the language and culture of the host society. Foreign second home ownership, therefore, does not cross only borders between nations, but also between cultures, societies, ideologies and the ways of living and perceiving the world. Sometimes, like in the Finnish case, the borders can also be historical, reproduced in prejudices and attitudes coloring the way the host society debates the foreign arrivals. Furthermore, when the inbound second home tourism comes from a single nationality or area, the images and fears tend to be escalated by historical relations and national stereotypes. On the other hand, the fear of the unknown can also be concretised by singling out a nationality to focus on.

The way the host society debates foreign second home ownership in the media is not necessarily equal to how the foreigners are received in local communities and by individuals. However, negative publicity influences how people perceive the foreigners and can convey the feeling of general hostility and conflicts. The publicity can therefore hinder the integration of the newcomers to local communities and, in the worst case, escalate conflicts although the foreign property ownership would not inflict direct negative impacts. In the Finnish as well as global context, more research is needed to study how and if the public opinion manifests locally in the attitudes and actions of the host community residents.

More research is also needed to study the political dimension and exclusive structures of leisure and second home tourism. The Finnish case shows how certain ways of seeing and living in the cottage landscape have become axioms that are valued and held right despite their embedded dis-

crepancies. As a carrier of collective and subjective value, emotions and meanings the cottage landscape is a powerful tool for the creation of meaning in the Finnish society. The analysis illustrates how the cottage landscape has been transformed into a political construction to support certain claims on land and relationship between people and land. The debate shows how by naturalizing social and cultural meanings the cottage landscape is used to sustain the idea of cottage landscape as the legitimate and equal property of Finns. Furthermore, the human labour and land-ownership rights that have gone into its making become hidden and naturalised.

NOTES

¹ Cottage is the closest translation to the Finnish word 'mökki' which is widely applied in colloquial and official contexts and has strong cultural value to Finns.

² It is not allowed to record the nationality of the buyer, so foreigners are tracked down from property purchase registers by location of permanent residence and name of the owner.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Mervi Hiltunen, Antti Honkanen, Ari Lehtinen, Olga Lipkina, Dieter Müller, Mia Vepsäläinen and two anonymous reviewers for their help in improving the manuscript. The paper was made possible by funding from the Academy of Finland (projects SA:114532, SA:255424) and Kone Foundation (project: Local impacts of transborder tourism and leisure).

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