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As a PhD student, I'm a doctoral researcher at the Karelian Institute in the University of Eastern Finland and a member of the Urban Karelianity research project. Funded by the Karjalaisen Kulttuurin Edistämissäätiö (KKES, a foundation for the promotion of Karelian culture), this project seeks to open new perspectives for research on Karelian identities.

I completed my MA in 2016 after studying general and Finnish history, sociology, sociology of arts, philosophy, musicology, and arts at the University of Eastern Finland. My master's thesis focused on the art concept of the early 20th-century French writer Marcel Proust as based on his letters and literary works.

In 2019, I got the opportunity to start working in the Urban Karelianity research project led by professor Maria Lähteenmäki. The purpose of the project is to see Karelia from a fresh perspective, through the eyes of the urbanized generations born after the Second World War. The conjunctive question in the project's sub-studies is how the significances connected to urban Karelian identities are seen, experienced, described, and determined by the third and fourth generations of (young) urbanized Karelians and, for their part, by the elderly generations who have needed to adjust to living in the cities. Traditional archival materials are complemented by new digital sources and platforms.

My doctoral dissertation focuses on Karelianness in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, examining self-images and identity narratives of associations and persons who identify themselves as Karelians. My interest is in ethnic-cultural discourses and different ways of remembering, which help in the analysis of how Karelianness has been constructed in this new kind of urban environment farther west than geographic Karelia. My main source materials comprise a questionnaire, interviews, and oral history collections.

Since becoming the capital of Finland in 1812, Helsinki has grown to be Finland's centre of migration and multiculturalism. Due to several migration waves, different Karelians (as regional viewpoints) and different Karelians (as groups) have met each other in the capital region. Thus, multiple layers of Karelianness have been produced in the urban and social space of the area – and can now be recognized there. Among the first associations manifesting their Karelianness in Helsinki were student nations that arrived when the university moved from Turku to Helsinki in the late 1820s. In the early 20th century, the migration wave from Russian Karelia to Finland led to the establishment of Karjalan Sivistysseura (the Karelian Cultural Society). In the Second World War, more than 400 000 people were evacuated from Finnish Karelia, which led to the foundation

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of several evacuee Karelian associations – most notably Karjalan Liitto (the Karelian Association) – in Helsinki. Also, associations connected to Finland's North Karelia were founded in the capital region as part of Finland's urbanization in the second half of the 20th century, and associations connected to Russian Karelia were established after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, new kinds of Karelian associations have emerged and been active in the early 21st century.

It has been fascinating to analyse what kind of urbanized Karelian layers exist in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area and what kind of articulations might be fading. It's a complex matter who have been seen (or identifying themselves) as Karelians and what Karelianness has meant in different contexts: the meanings of Karelianness have followed the political climate of each era. After the Second World War, evacuee Karelian narratives and a sense of loss were dominant in Finland (also, most of the associations and persons that took part in my research have evacuee backgrounds). In the early 21st century, the status of the Karelian language in Finland has improved, which is also linked to the EU's minority policy, while some associations in Helsinki are approaching Karelianness through cultural activities (such as music, science, and laments). This at a time when some of their members might not have specific geographic or family-based connections to Karelia.

In our research group's latest article, Karelianness in the urban space of Helsinki was analysed through places of memory. The key conclusion was that urban Karelianness in Helsinki appears as layers of time associated with, firstly, Karelianistic Karelia and Kalevala enthusiasm, and secondly, evacuee Karelian layers built after the Second World War. Urban Karelianness in the city space of present-day Helsinki is fragmented, and collective representations of Karelianness are manifested mainly through numerous evacuee and recreational associations.

I'm captivated by cultural themes. For more than ten years, I have worked as an artist in international music projects, which has also involved touring and working around Europe and North America. Currently I'm living and working remotely on the outskirts of urban settlement, next to a nature conservation area in Kuopio, Finland. My goal for the future is to stay inspired and learn from others.