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School Song Repertoire as a Means of Building National Identity

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School songs have commonly been used as a means for education on different topics, regardless of culture and time. This study explores the content of 12 songs in the traditional Finland-Swedish school song repertoire from the 19th century until today. The main aim of this article is to analyze the lyrical content of these songs using a hermeneutical approach, with special focus on how the canonization of a song repertoire has been used as a means of building national identity and fellowship within a language cultural group. The structure of the study is a threefold hermeneutical perspective: the sociocultural, the music pedagogical, and the musico-analytical perspective. However, this article will be limited to lyrical content analysis. Preliminary results suggest that songs that survive despite changes in society generally share some common characteristics: the lyrics contain nature descriptions and patriotic expressions.

Key words: School Song repertoire, Finland Swedish, Lyrical Content Analysis, National Identity

Introduction

Oh, lovely tune, our precious heritage,
may you sound loud and free,
from shore to shore through centuries...

J.F. Hagfors in Song of Our Mother Tongue (free translation)

The above lines exemplify the main content of the Finland-Swedish song *Modersmålets sång*. It is an example of how song lyrics express fellowship, national identity and belonging, by relating to language, traditions and nature. Songs that survive from one generation to another retain their value over time, despite changes in society. What kinds of values are considered so important, that a song consistently claims its position within a canonized song tradition? National song repertoires obviously tell the history of a nation and its traditions, and so do the songs of Finland-Swedish origin, which are in focus in this article. I choose to study the canonization of songs as a socio-cultural process, which, in cooperation with school curricula, have contributed to the molding of a song repertoire, thus mediating national identity and fellowship through songs. In the empirical analysis, I look for expressions of national and cultural identity through the song lyrics. Some results of the musical analysis will also be incorporated in order to better understand the type of songs studied here. For a further examination of the musical elements in the studied songs, I refer to my thesis in progress.

In this study, my aim is to explore the lyrical content of twelve common songs in three song lists of Finland-Swedish origin. Focus will be on finding lyrical characteristics which can be interpreted as traits of national and cultural identity. The research question is: In which ways do the lyrics of the 12 songs in these song lists indicate cultural and/or national identity? In order to answer that question, the school song repertoire needs to be positioned in a broader context, that is, the socio-cultural arena from which it has developed. Furthermore, a music pedagogical perspective in the form of general aims and values in the school music curricula will be incorporated into the background for analyzing the lyrical content.

The song repertoire in this study is analysed and interpreted through three perspectives, which are also used as a framework for the whole study: the socio-cultural perspective, the music pedagogical perspective and the musico-analytical perspective. The three perspectives are visualized in Figure 1. The first two perspectives form the theoretical background for the study, while the third, the musico-analytical perspective, consists of the primary empirical material, 60 songs. However, due to lack of space, in this article the empirical analysis will be limited to the lyrics of twelve songs in the three song lists.

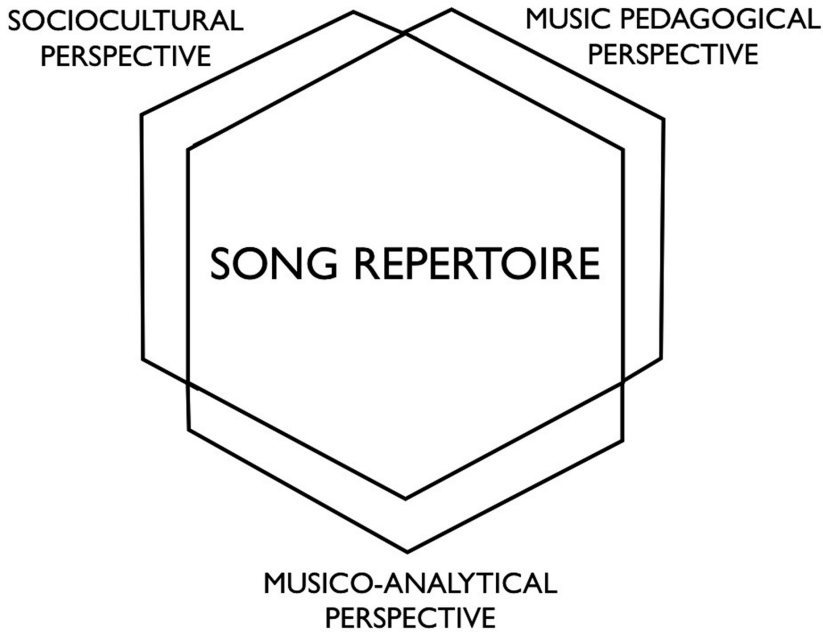


Figure 1. Three perspectives applied on the song repertoire.

Based on this threefold perspective, I perform a hermeneutical interpretation in order to expose certain traits that can be considered building blocks for national and cultural identity, and how they appear within the Finland-Swedish song tradition.

Research motives and previous research

In my thesis in progress I have extracted four general research motives to carry out research on the canonization of songs: lack of research in the field, lack of description of the characteristics and development of the Finland-Swedish song canon, the gradual changes of song repertoire in general music education, and finally, my own personal interest in the field. In this article emphasis is put on the second motive: the need for a description of common characteristics within a national song repertoire from a Finland-Swedish point of view. Are the characteristics of the twelve songs similar to previous research, or are there significant differences that can be traced to the minority status of the population studied?

There are only a few educational studies about the canonization of (folk) songs: In Sweden Netterstad (1982) discusses song lyrics in school song books as literature, while Flodin (1998) has done research on song lists from Swedish teachers' colleges in the 1940s. Reimers (1983) studies both lyrics, music and the social context in nursery songs composed by Alice Tegnér. Norwegian school song traditions are discussed by, for instance, Berg (2006) and Lund (2010). Berg uses an electronic survey in order to explore today's knowledge of traditional Norwegian song repertoire, while Lund studies song book repertoires, comparing them with the school curricula over time. Lund's approach has much in common with my thesis project, as I also have studied a lot of song books, although from a different starting point: the three previously mentioned song lists. In Finland, I have found one thesis about the Finnish school song tradition (Pajamo, 1976), and only a few Master's theses about school song repertoire: for instance, Reinikainen (2007a), Ranta (1998) and Ekuri (2008). The general conclusions made in these theses are that patriotic, religious and nature elements are common characters of school song repertoires.

No clear description or validation of which songs belong to the Finland-Swedish song canon seems to exist. By examining school song books and other song books, it is possible to find out which songs truly belong to the canon and its transformation over the years due to new repertoire and societal development. Initial work examining song books in the Finland-Swedish arena has been done by, for instance, Hansén (1985) and Häggman (1996). However, these songs no longer play an obvious part in the general music education due to a) change of priorities in school curricula, b) the gradual change from national to international focus, and c) change of music ideals, and the ever-increasing music production. My personal interest in the subject originates from my professional work as a music teacher, where I have noticed a decreasing knowledge of traditional Finland-Swedish songs among my students. The songs that used to be commonly known in our culture no longer play an obvious part of the song repertoire in schools. This is, of course, a natural development, but still the question "why" and "what happened" arises. What kind of songs survive through time, and what kind of messages do these songs mediate?

Theoretical background – a threefold perspective

My research approach is hermeneutical, and it contains both an analysis of the song lyrics and a music analysis. The method used is a descriptive content analysis (Dey, 1993; Forsberg & Wengström, 2003; Ödman, 2007). In addition to the hermeneutical approach, where philosophical statements by Gadamer (1976/2004) contribute to my ontology, my position draws on features from the social constructivist field of research, according to which reality and common sense' is a social construction, built up through an ongoing interaction between former knowledge and new experience (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2008). Furthermore, Alexander's (2011) discussion of cultural sociology supports my general point of view; songs are cultural artefacts formed by several complex socio-cultural background factors.

The empirical arena for my study is Finland-Swedish song culture, the songs and their impact on society from the end of the 19th century until today. The Finland-Swedish population today is a linguistic minority of a little less than 300 000 citizens, with their own cultural traditions, such as native songs in Swedish. This kind of song repertoire is my main interest in this study. The Finnish national school curricula include compulsory education in music. Previously, this school subject was called "singing", which implies the focus of musical education. However, in 1970, the name was changed to "music", thus allowing a broader educational perspective within the school music arena (Grundskolans läroplan, henceafter GrL, 1970).

Socio-cultural perspective and key concepts

Within the socio-cultural perspective, several arenas of impact on the development of a song canon can be distinguished since the late 1800s. Hansén (1988, 1991) describes the reasons for development of a national identity from the linguistic point of view: the overall nationalistic forces in Europe during the national romantic era, the development of an independent nation after World War I, and the gradual changes considering linguistic relationships in the 1900s. Accordingly, concerning song tradition, there are several coinciding sociopolitical events which have contributed to the forming of a song canon. I have found four consistent themes within the socio-cultural perspective since the late 1800s: nation, identity, language, and since the 1970s, internationalism. These four themes can also be found within the music curricula, expressed directly or indirectly. Within

these themes, there are key concepts concerning cultural heritage, tradition, canonization, identity and nationalism. The definitions of these key concepts will be discussed in this section.

Concerning cultural heritage, Halvorsen (2005) underlines the importance of knowing your own cultural heritage. The transmission of a certain song tradition presumes knowledge about it, and without this awareness, you cannot possibly decide whether and how to preserve it or not. The Finnish national school curricula have long emphasized the importance of knowing your country's traditions and culture as a means of understanding other, different cultures (see, for instance, the national school curricula (Grunderna för grundskolans läroplan, 1994, 1985; Grunderna för läroplanen för den grundläggande utbildningen, 2004)). Björkholm's (2011) thesis on the subject: "Intangible Cultural Heritage as Concept and Process" states that the characteristics of a cultural heritage consist of a considered general value, in combination with a strong symbolic value. Björkholm divides the process of the artefact becoming a cultural heritage in three stages: selection, attribution of value, and symbolic status. Beckman (2005) divides the cultural heritage into two parts, a) an unconsciously transmitted cultural heritage within a natural process, and b) an institutionalized cultural heritage, which consists of a selection, chosen through societal, ideological, or political interests, then attributed with value, and thus transmitted as valuable artefacts. In this study, the molding, or canonization of a certain song repertoire, has undergone the latter version of legitimization. Based on these statements, I define a cultural heritage considering song repertoire as songs that possess some or all of these characteristics, that is, they have been legitimized, published in song books, repeatedly sung in schools and at concerts, and have through that process received a symbolic status and value.

Published song books have become important mediators for the song canon. This process have a lot in common with the process of canonization, as defined by Shreffler (2011, p. 5), discussing the traditional classical music masterworks: ".../ first, the maintenance of the existing canon of older masterworks, second, the process by which newer works are added to it, and third, the formation of parallel canons within different repertoires." The existing canon is, according to Shreffler, continuously re-evaluated nowadays, and also, there are parallel canons of different types, such as music style or origin. The meaning of the word canon itself is somewhat crucial, while a canonical song tradition is formed through influences from various non-musical sources, such as societal interests, cultural and historical impacts and economic benefits, a phenomenon that is often

called 'the hidden curriculum' (For further explanation of different types of curricula, see Wilson (2005)). Thus, songs considered to belong to a canon are in fact chosen for many different, non-musical reasons, a fact that is commonly ignored by the admirers of the canonical songs. In this article, I speak of the song canon as the state of the art in the 20th century, consisting of songs that, through expressed ideals in the school curricula and school doctrines (see Kivinen, 1988), were considered important, and thus, for decades, were taught to pupils in folk schools in the Swedish-speaking regions in Finland. These ideological and political questions, as well as the origins of the traditional songs, are also discussed by Häggman (2005).

Canonization is an on-going process that slowly changes with time. Similarly, the Finland-Swedish song canon has undergone revisions since the mid-1940s, when the first song list in the study was defined. The existing 'masterworks' in this study are likely to consist of songs by famous poets and composers of Finnish origin, while newer works might occur in the latter song lists, especially in the third one, as it allows the repertoire to also contain songs not originally from the school song repertoire. In brief, a song canon is here defined as a combination of individual artefacts into an empirical body of material, which can be studied using the three song lists through individual analysis and comparison. The canonization of songs can be described as the process of adding and subtracting songs within a certain type of song repertoire with symbolic value. Thus, another question arises: which songs actually belong to the canon-in-use?

Research on and statements about tradition have been made by a lot of researchers and philosophers (Bourdieu, 1990, 1991; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Dahlhaus & Austin, 1982; Ehrenforth, 1986; Halvorsen, 2004, 2005; Shils, 1981). Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2008) define the social order and legitimization of traditions according to Berger and Luckmann's (1979) statement, where the institutionalization (construction of permanent acting strategies) is a central characteristic of tradition. That is, through habitualization, the process where habits are repeated and consolidated in similar situations, and through constant revision, tradition is formed and communicated from one generation to another. Shils (1981) shares Berger and Luckmann's point of view, adding to the previous statement by emphasizing the importance of repetition as a means of validation of traditions. In my opinion, song repertoires which retain their value, despite rapid changes in society, are formed through this kind of process: repetition, legitimization and transmission. Hence, the school curricula play an important role by imprinting certain values, which the song lyrics in a recommended school song repertoire also support.

Cultural identity and the concept of nationalism

The question of identity soon arises when discussing a matter like song canonization. Halvorsen (2004, p. 34) states that the experience of roots and context is important for the development of a personal and cultural identity. One of the main aims for putting together a common repertoire in the late 19th century was to unite the otherwise rather heterogeneous group of Swedish-speaking people in Finland (Åström, Lönnqvist & Lindqvist, 2001). According to Liedman (1994), at this period of time, the process of building a collective national identity was considered very important. The public folk school was one of the main means of building such a national identification, and by using school textbooks and core songs, the consciousness of belonging to a specific nation or culture was established (see also the statements of Tingsten (1969) on the use of school textbooks for certain ideological purposes).

The common opinion of national identity in those days, and also the roots for the national romantic era, was based on Herder's statements on *Volksgeist*, a concept according to which different peoples possessed some kind of natural 'national spirit' or character (Curtis, 2008). Although this concept is now more obsolete, it had substantial impact on the nationalistic ideals. Consequently, the folk song tradition was one of the most genuine ways of discovering the spirit of national identity' also known as *Volksgeist*. This was the starting point for the collection of folk songs, carried out by Otto Andersson and the Brage Association in the early 1900s (Nyqvist, 2007). The concept of national identity in its turn laid the foundation for the nationalistic movement, which, according to Lampinen (2000), increased throughout 19th century Europe, especially in such countries where a linguistic minority was in control of the society. Lampinen considers the school to be in a very important position for uniting people, but points out that the celebration of the home country also includes opposite effects, that is, by setting up boundaries against minorities and cultures within the nation. Furthermore, he underlines the differences between nationalism and patriotism, the latter being an inclusive appreciation of cultural and national differences, while nationalistic forces oppose other cultures.

Curtis (2008) emphasizes the idea of a *Volksgeist* being a social construction, an imaginary invention by nationalist intellectuals. Accordingly, the construction of national identities follow a similar concept, of which Geisler (Andersson & Geisler, 2007; Geisler, 2003) regards national anthems as a good example of implying patriotic values, with the possibility to include or exclude people from other cultures. In Finland, Østern (2004) has

described various perceptions of cultural identity among Finland-Swedish adults, while Lönnqvist (2001a, 2001b) presents a thorough description of the development of a Finland-Swedish concept of national identity within a nation, i.e. “being Finnish in Swedish”. Considering the above discussion, I define the origin of patriotic songs as a result of the general nationalistic movements during the 19th century, a tribute to the home country, without any expressed intentions of excluding others. However, such underlying meanings can obviously also be extracted from the song lyrics, but using manifest content analysis only, searching for such traits is not my intention.

Building a Finland-Swedish song tradition

The main part of the Finland-Swedish song tradition originates from the national-romantic epoch in the late 1800s, one of the main reasons being the awakening of a Finland-Swedish national identity (Lönnqvist, 2001b). Poems by Swedish-speaking authors, such as Zacharias Topelius and Johan Ludvig Runeberg, were originally published in school textbooks. Some of these poems were set tunes to, and due to the widely spread textbooks they gradually became well-known examples of the Finland-Swedish song repertoire (von Numers, 1999). During the 1800s, composers such as Fredrik Pacius and Karl Collan wrote many songs, a few of which have become an important part of the Finland-Swedish song culture (von Numers, 1999). Later on, in the early 1900s, composers such as Jean Sibelius and Oskar Merikanto also participated in the construction of a song repertoire that nowadays could be called the Finland-Swedish song canon.

Another part of this song tradition was formed by a vast number of folk songs, which music researchers like Otto Andersson started to collect in the beginning of the 20th century, mainly through the Brage Association, founded in 1906, whose main interest was to collect and preserve different cultural artefacts of Finland-Swedish origin. The melodies that Otto Andersson collected, performed by violin players in the Finland-Swedish region, were later simplified, before Andersson gave the new’ folk melodies to his poet friends, consciously developing a Finland-Swedish song repertoire. (Nyqvist, 2007, p. 139-143)

Thus, the Brage Association, in a rather short time, constructed a general song repertoire from the old melodies. The lyrical topics often were about nature and the beautiful countryside, and these songs were highly appreciated among the new bourgeois social class in the Finnish cities. As Häggman (2000) states, these songs were even more traditional than the

original folk songs. Another form of transformation was the revitalizing of old folk songs: some of the original lyrics were discarded as inappropriate, so the lyrics had to be changed in order to suit the more cultivated bourgeois people (Nyqvist, 2007; Stenius, 1991). Many of these songs are also known within the song tradition in Sweden, which clearly shows that Finland-Swedish composers and lyricists have made their contribution also to the Scandinavian song canon (for a further description of the Swedish song tradition, see Flodin (1998) or Netterstad (1982).

Music pedagogical perspective

The music pedagogical perspective focuses on the educational impact on school song repertoires, i.e. the content of the school curricula considering fields of importance for the development of a song canon. Formed out of sociopolitical decisions, school curricula stress certain themes, which are exposed in song lyrics.

In Finland, the national folk school educational system was a result of the aims for educating the Finnish people. School songs, or core songs, played an important role in this education, as songs as well as poems. The general cultural and historical values were presented in the most famous early textbook from Finland, *Boken om vårt land* (Topelius, 1875). After the Independence Declaration in 1917, Finland started building a school system which would grant the right to an education for every citizen, regardless of home location, urban or rural (Kivinen, 1988).

Since 1866, when the first steps towards a public folk school were taken, the national school curricula have gone through many revisions. The main focus has changed quite a lot over time, from the emphasis on religious and patriotic repertoire in the early curricula, over to a gradual emphasis on international matters in the curricula dating from the late 1900s. The hymns and sacred songs are no more mentioned in the music curricula after 1970. A special notification is made in the curriculum from 1952, according to which popular music should not be sung or performed at school due to its simple character and unsuitable lyrical and musical content (National Finnish School Curriculum, 1952). The earliest curriculum (Lönbeck, 1901) stressed the importance of lyrics rather than the music itself, while the first half of the 20th century emphasized the virtues of a common repertoire as well as the enjoyment of singing and musical performance. In 1985, the school song books had become international to such an extent that the need for reviving the traditional songs seemed to be justified. Accordingly, within

the frames of the national curriculum, the second song list was incorporated into the school music curriculum (*Grunderna för grundskolans läroplan*, henceafter GrL, 1985).

Content analysis – the musico-analytical perspective

The musico-analytical perspective in this article closely relates to the empirical material, that is, the three song lists and the analysis of song lyrics. In this section, I describe the methods used for the selection of the songs, and the overall process considering the lyrical content analysis: the main song categories, the node groups and some of the descriptors.

The three song lists

The repertoire in focus is chosen through three song lists, with a total of 60 different songs. The forces behind the development of such song lists can be traced to sociopolitical interests during the late 1800s, when the national awakening took place in Europe (Curtis, 2008). As a result of this national awakening, many countries formed their national song repertoires during this period, exposing them through national school curricula, as the recommended repertoire for citizens within a nation (Castrén, 1945; Emanuelson, 1990; Flodin, 1998; Lund, 2010; Pajamo, 1976). The use of songs has long been considered important for educational purposes, such as transmission of religious, aesthetic and patriotic values (Knudsen, 2007; Pajamo, 1976). The first two song lists evolve from such educational motives exposed in school curricula. In Finland, several waves of national mobilisation can be recognized, such as the general national romantic era in the late 1800s, and the period after World War I, when Finland became independent (Hansén, 1991). Furthermore, the division in linguistic emphasis performed in the 1920s resulted in the Finland-Swedish population identifying itself as a linguistic and cultural minority: a nation within the nation (Lönnqvist, 2001a, 2001b).

The first two song lists consist of recommended school song repertoires expressed through curricula, while the third one comprises a top-thirty-list, a survey result completed by the Finland-Swedish music journal *Resonans* (FSSMF, 2000). The first song list was published in the school song book *Visbok för skolan* (Castrén, 1945), and consists of 20 songs that every Swedish-speaking Finn should know, and pass on to future generations. This is a normative statement, referring to the decision by the Finland-Swe-

dish School Association in the mid-1940s (ibid. 1945). These songs have been considered important cultural artefacts in the 1940s, and have a lot in common with the Swedish tradition of core songs, as described by Flodin (1998) and Netterstad (1982), two of the researchers who have studied the Swedish song tradition, in a similar way to mine.

The second song list consists of a recommended school song repertoire of 41 songs. It was published in the national school curriculum in 1985 (GrL, 1985). One reason for this action towards a common school song repertoire, and the need for emphasis on native Finland-Swedish songs, can be traced to the school song book series *Vi gör musik* (published by Engström & Cederlöf in the 1970s), where the number of traditional Finland-Swedish songs clearly decreased. In fact, complaints about the lack of traditional songs in this series resulted in a separate song book with only Finland-Swedish songs: *En visa vill jag sjunga* (Cederlöf, 1978). Furthermore, Berg (1986) published a school song book based on this given repertoire: *Vår gemensamma musikskatt*, aiming to meet the needs of the new music curriculum from 1985.

The third song list consists of 30 favorite songs plus 11 “self-evident”, patriotic songs, that is, a total of 41 songs. This survey was initiated by the Finland-Swedish Song and Music Association, thereafter called FSSMF (2000), and completed by their music journal *Resonans*. The number of respondents was 93, and this song list is used in order to explore which songs have kept their position in the Finland-Swedish song canon over time.

The distribution of songs in these song lists is quite diversified. Only twelve songs appear on all three lists. I define these as some kind of core songs within the Finland-Swedish tradition, hence choosing to analyze these lyrics further in this article. Naturally, we find the Finnish national anthem *Vårt land* among these twelve, but beside that, there are folk songs, patriotic songs, lyric-romantic songs, and one hymn. As they also occur frequently in the studied song books, they indicate the character of the core of the Finland-Swedish song canon. The song titles, their authors, the main song category, and amount of song books published, are shown in the table below.

Table 1. Twelve common songs in the three song lists.

Song title (Main song category)	Lyricist	Composer	Published in number of song books (n=29)
1. Vårt land (A)	J. L. Runeberg	F. Pacius	21
2. En sommardag i Kangasala (B)	Z. Topelius	G. Linsén	15
3. Modersmålets sång (B)	J. F. Hagfors	J.F. Hagfors	15
4. Nylänningarnas marsch (B)	Th. Lindh	H. Borenius	15
5. Ålänningens sång (B)	J. Grandell	J.F. Hagfors	11
6. Giv mig ej glans (C)	Z. Topelius	J. Sibelius	14
7. Plocka vill jag skogsviol (D)	A. Slotte	Trad.	15
8. Slumrande toner (D)	A. Slotte	Trad.	13
9. Sommarmarsch (D)	E.V. Knape	Trad.	13
10. Båkländets vackra Maja (E)	A. Mörne	H. Hagbom	11
11. Svanen (E)	J. L. Runeberg	F.A. Ehrström	16
12. Vid en källa (E)	J. L. Runeberg	F.A. Ehrström	19

Methods for categorization

The methods used for analysing the material were a combination of two: firstly, the Finnish national school curricula from the 19th century until today were analysed, exploring the musical content and statements about recommended characteristics of song lyrics. In addition to this, 29 Finland-Swedish song books were studied in order to explore the song frequencies and how the published song books divided the different types of songs into groups. Such categories were folk songs, Christmas songs, patriotic songs, hymns, and lyric-romantic songs, mostly about nature. After this pre-work on song categories, a close reading of the song lyrics demanded some additions to the previous categories. These findings resulted in eight main song categories, the twelve studied songs belonging to categories A-E. Categories A and B are both patriotic in content. Table 2 shows the distribution of the 12 songs in each category.

Table 2. Distribution of songs.

Main song categories	Number of songs (n=12)
A Scandinavian national anthems (patriotic)	1
B Patriotic songs	4
C Hymns (Sacred songs)	1
D Folk songs	3
E Lyric-romantic songs	3

Node groups and descriptors

However, this division into main categories appeared to be insufficient, as the songs were likely to contain elements from several different categories. Therefore, a preliminary content analysis of the twelve songs was made using the computer programme N'Vivo. This resulted in several nodes with new sub-nodes, or descriptors, to which also new additions were made continually during the close, denotative reading of all the lyrics. Since I was not interested in the amount of a certain descriptor, but only the possible occurrences of each descriptor in a song, N'Vivo was not used further in the analysing process. In all, the songs were analysed through 82 descriptors, divided into nine different node groups, which are shown in Table 3. These node groups were constructed using the former song categories, although specified for the purpose of the wanted detail analysis.

Table 3. Node groups and number of descriptors in the detailed content analysis.

Node groups I–IX		Number of descriptors
I	Patriotism	11
II	Religion	2
III	Music style and origin	9
IV	Human relations, emotional expressions	17
V	Time and season	16
VI	Target group (person, profession)	6
VII	Nature descriptions	13
VIII	People (as subject or object)	7
IX	Singing and music (in general)	1
	Descriptors in total	82

Lyrical content analysis results

In this section, I describe a few of the content analysis results, with primary focus on the song lyrics of the twelve studied songs. It is impossible to reveal all the results, so the discussion will be limited to the most frequent lyrical characters. As earlier mentioned, a node tree was constructed while performing a close examination of the song lyrics, applying descriptors and defining node groups at the same time. Table 4 displays the number of songs within each node group and the number of descriptor occurrences connected to them.

Table 4. Results of the content analysis of the song lyrics. Number of songs within each node group and occurrences of descriptors.

	Node group I–IX	Number of songs within the node (n=12)	Number of descriptor occurrences
I	Patriotism	9	30
II	Religion	7	7
III	Music style and origin	5	5
IV	Human relations, emotional expressions	12	50
V	Time and season	10	23
VI	Target group (person, profession)	5	5
VII	Nature descriptions	12	70
VIII	People (as subject or object)	11	19
IX	Singing and music (in general)	7	7

Within these nine node groups, the most common lyrical content concerned nature descriptions. Statements about the Finnish nature were assigned to this node group: expressions referring to landscape and/or a special place, hills, forests, seas and lakes, herbs, flowers and trees, but also phrases describing heaven, earth and weather conditions were considered to belong in this node group (see Figure 2 below). A sub-category within this group was referral to water elements, such as rain, waves, ice, snow and shorelines. All twelve songs contain this kind of vocabulary, the number of descriptors being as many as 70.

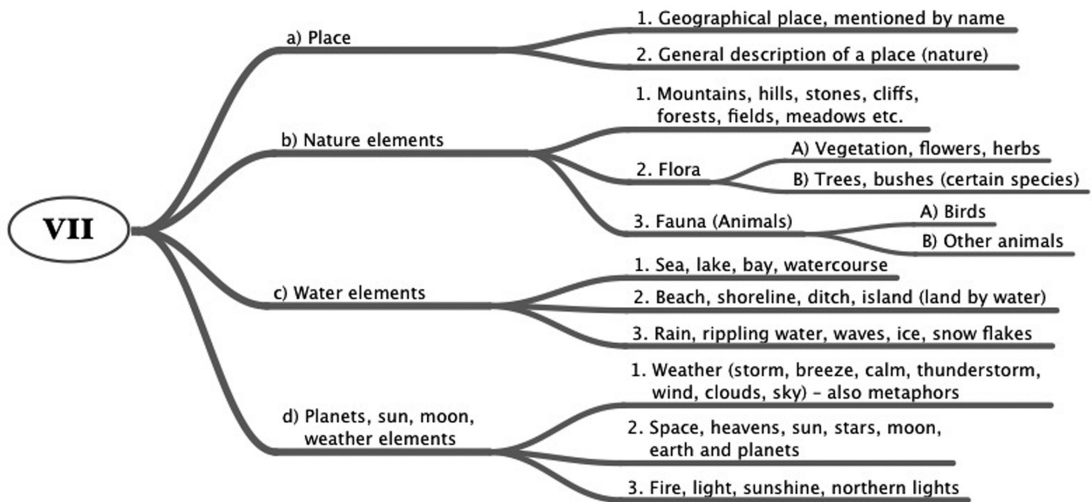


Figure 2. Node group of nature descriptions.

Another group of significant characters in the song repertoire is human relationships and emotional expressions. All twelve songs show signs of emotion, which is nothing extraordinary, since in general, most songs do refer to emotions of some kind. The main node is divided into three subgroups: a) love and affection, b) expressions of emotion, and c) memories, thoughts, dreams and reflections, with a total of 50 occurrences considering the descriptors.

Node group I includes patriotic traits, the most expressive signs of national identity. Figure 3 shows the layout of the descriptors within this node. Three subgroups were formed within the patriotic node group: a) home country, general patriotic and historical traits, such as fight for freedom and loyalty to the country b) homestead, region and provinces c) heritage, traditions, habits and 'valuable symbols', such as the flag, and the mother tongue.



Figure 3. Descriptors within the node patriotism.

Nine of the songs contain patriotic terminology. The occurrence of patriotic expressions is rather high, with 30 occurrences. The most frequent content within this node group concerns homestead and regional referrals (Ib2 – 6 songs), followed by proclamations of something valuable (Ic1 – 5 songs). Within node group Ia, historical traits and patriotic love are most frequent with 4 songs.

Most of the songs contain some kind of personal subject and/or object. Within this node group, there are subgroups such as persons with actual names, along with more neutral expressions like “you” and “I”. A special subgroup within this node group is the statement of unity within a group, with expressions such as we’ and our’, but not referring to a relationship between man and woman. The Finnish national anthem Vårt land is a suitable example of this type of a song, where the indication of fellowship is frequently expressed by use of the term our land’ and our home country’. Only one song, Svanen, does not contain such expressions of personal pronomina. This song uses birds as subjects instead of people.

The space within this article does not allow me to go further into the details of the musical analysis, but one specific trait deserves to be mentioned: all twelve songs are in a major key. Compared to the general description of Finnish music as being “sad and in a minor key” (Kukkonen, 1997; Kukkonen, 2008), that does not seem to be the case with the Finland-Swedish core songs. This finding is supported by the work of Kukkonen (1997), who claims the Finland-Swedish songs to be happier than the Finnish ones. Similar results are described by Cornelis, Lesaffre, Moelants

and Leman (2010), who show that the further west we go in Finland, the brighter and happier the tonality of the songs are. Furthermore, the national school curricula from 1927 (*Lantfolkskolans läroplan, LaFL, 1927*) prescribes suitable songs and melodies for children to be “in major key, sung in a brisk tempo”. In conclusion, the Finland-Swedish song repertoire used in schools shows signs of being positive, both regarding tonality and lyrical content.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to explore what kind of traits a school song repertoire might contain, which can be considered building blocks for a national and/or cultural identity. The focus has been on lyrical themes occurring frequently in 12 common songs, and how they might contribute to a sense of fellowship and identity. Four distinct song categories can be found: five patriotic songs, three lyric-romantic songs, three folk songs, and one hymn.

What kind of common traits then appear in the Finland-Swedish song repertoire? The most frequent traits are nature descriptions, which to a large degree consist of elements typical for the Finnish landscape: the flora and fauna. That is, the birds are often swans and warblers, the flowers are, for instance, violets or heather, and the trees are birch, spruce and fir. The studied songs refer to water, lakes and shores, and the stories are about people, their relationships, thoughts and emotional lives.

There are implications that patriotic values have been considered important, since nine of the songs contain such traits. The Finland-Swedish population being a minority, the importance of mother tongue has been expressed, directly or indirectly, through the song lyrics, thus establishing a solid ground for the sense of belonging and fellowship. These results coincide with previous research on the subject (Flodin, 1998; Netterstad, 1982; Pajamo, 1976; Ranta, 1998). The school song repertoire studied here expresses signs of national as well as cultural identity, by means of using patriotic words, referring to local nature and the importance of a cultural heritage. Hence, the method used in the article might be of interest also to other researchers within the same field. Even though the categories and descriptors used here seem to be coherent, another selection of songs might have given a different result. However, the preliminary results of the lyrical analysis of all 60 songs in my thesis (Cederholm, in progress) coincide with the results presented here.

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