Ways of Managing Border Disputes in Present-Day Europe: The Karelian Question

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An European Border

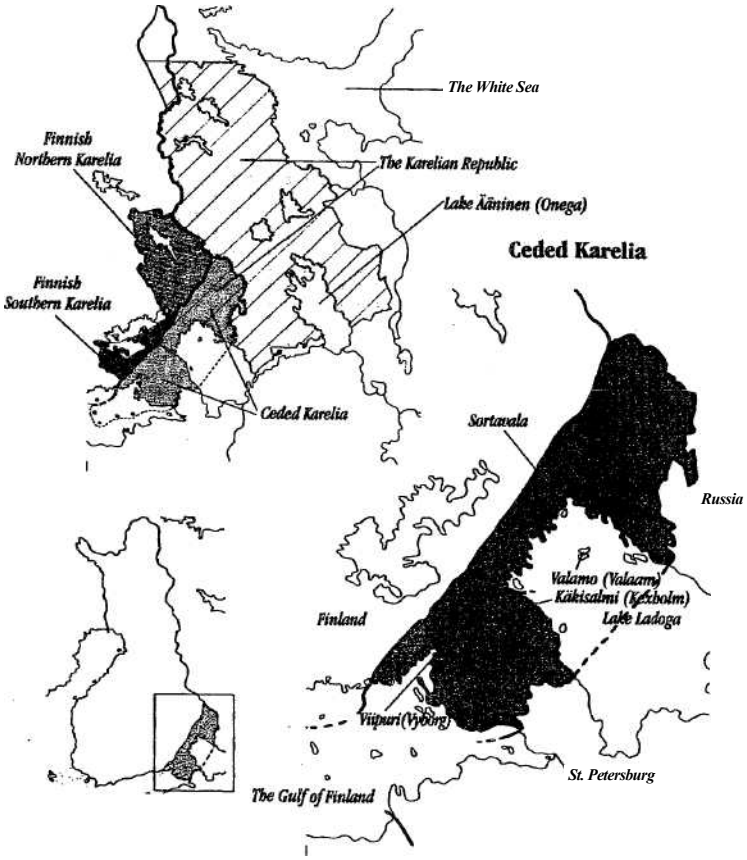
The Karelian question is neither a major theme on the European agenda, nor does it constitute a pressing one in current Finnish-Russian relations. After having been dormant for decades, it came alive in the beginning of the 1990s, with the demise of Soviet Union, the re-unification of Germany and the restoration of the independence of the Baltic republics. There was intense discussion surrounding the question for some years, but it now appears to be in decline as the states have been reluctant to engage themselves in talks on restitution of those parts Karelia ceded to the Soviet Union in the Paris Peace Treaty of 1947.

The question remains mainly of interest to Finnish civil society at least if judged on traditional grounds. There are no decisive breakthroughs in sight and the issue hence pertains, in a broader perspective, "to the unknown backwoods between St.Petersburg and the Kola Peninsula" (Eskelinen, 1994:172). Internationally the issue has attracted little interest and is not known to any broader public.*[1]

However, my purpose here is to go beyond such a traditional perspective. Instead of contributing to a further peripheralization, the aim is one of highlighting some aspects of the issue that link it with essential aspects of current European development. It is claimed that the Karelian question is very much alive, although not in the way expected, if it is studied in the context of the changing meaning of borders and territoriality in Europe. It provides insight into the development of Finnish as well as Russian foreign

forced to cede to the Soviet Union after the Second World War. These areas, constituting some 10-15 percent of Finland's prewar economy, and the population of some 420,000 people that migrated to Finland from the ceded areas, is what Finns usually have in mind when referring to the Karelian question.*[2]

Different Parts of Karelia*[3]



After the Finnish-Russian war, ending in 1944, the ceded area was first incorporated into the Finnish-Karelian Soviet Republic. The northern part around Lake Ladoga still remains part of the Republic, but some years later the southern part consisting of the Karelian Isthmus was transferred to the Leningrad Region (Oblast). Strong measures of russification took place for example in the form of changing the names of the various places and cities in the region.

As the pre-war population by and large left the annexed parts of Karelia for Finland, people from various parts of the Soviet Union, especially from Belorus and Ukraine as well as other regions that had suffered most from the war, moved to the area during the late 1940s and the 1950s. However, the region remained sparsely populated and peripheral to the Soviet Union. Out of an overall population of some 800.000 inhabitants in the whole Karelian Republic, only one-tenth are now of Karelian or Finnish descent (Laine, 1994:24; Oksa and Varis, 1994).

On the Soviet side the reasons for the annexation were above all security-oriented, but reflected also a Russian tradition of centralism as well as a fear of foreign influences in the border areas. The war-time experiences were interpreted as speaking for a larger in-between zone and a need of adding distance between the sensitive and vulnerable region of Leningrad and Finland, Scandinavia as well as the West in general. In particular, the areas bordering to Finland became military buffer zones and remained largely unpopulated (cf. Forsberg, 1995:206-207). Hence also the new, post-war border of some 700 kilometres between Finland and Soviet Union had a very statist and security-oriented character. Moreover, it had a system-character in the sense of drawing a line between ideologically opposed social systems. It separated the entities from each other, thereby providing exclusive spaces, and a rather unequivocal territorial ordering into the "inside" and "outside" in a Europe of rather clearcut divisions. Anssi Paasi (1995:248) argues that the policies pursued were those of deliberate peripheralisation, de-nationalisation and separating the region from its previous history.

Signs of Change

For decades the former Finnish Karelia, divided between the Karelian Republic and the Leningrad Oblast, remained rather isolated and had mainly the function of an outpost against external threats. The city of Vyborg, located close to Leningrad and being a transit town for traffic to and from Finland, was to some extent an exception, but even there the contacts remained modest. Finland was not really interested in changing this state of affairs. Although Finland's trade with the Soviet Union was extensive, there was a lack of contact with the neighbouring regions at the eastern border. The interaction was restricted to Finnish purchases of timber for the pulp industry located in the eastern part of Finland and the construction of the mining town of Kostamus by Finnish entrepreneurs (Eskelinen and Varis, 1994).

This state of affairs changed to some extent during the years of perestroika and glasnost in the 1980s. At the beginning of the 1980s Vyborg was opened up to tourism and in the late 1980s even visits to the countryside of the Karelian Republic were permitted, considerably increasing the number of visitors, especially Finns. Local entities such as the Finnish border-town of Lappeenranta engaged themselves somewhat more actively in transborder relations. Plans emerged on the Soviet side for special economic zones, and the Vyborg region was singled out as one of the candidates (Dörrenbäher, 1991; Kosonen, 1991). If implemented on a larger scale, such ideas would have significantly changed the nature of the border and the border region. However, implementation turned out to be problematic as well as time-consuming, and so far the concrete consequences have boiled down to very little. The ideas turned out to be controversial on the Russian side, and it has been difficult to agree upon a distribution of the benefits between the local players and the central authorities. On the Finnish side a recession in the economy took the wind from the sails of the enterprise, and simultaneously opened up possibilities of investing in and cooperating with other, more developed and technologically advanced regions such as those of

St. Petersburg and Murmansk. Some interest was, however, directed towards Vyborg, this considerably changing its nature. The fact that Vyborg is the town in Russia closest to a Western country now shapes its daily life and gives it a rather special character, resembling to some extent the one it had during its earlier history (Forsberg, 1995:208; Kosonen, 1994).

The demise of the Cold War in particular entailed an end of many of the dynamics peripheralizing the Karelian Republic in Soviet politics. The Republic, downgraded and renamed the Autonomous Republic of Karelia in 1956, declared sovereignty in November 1991. It was thereby following similar acts by some other autonomous areas that aimed at improving their situation and bolstering their position vis-à-vis the centre. The benefits of sovereignty have remained modest, although a special status was granted already in 1991. The notion of sovereignty is devoid of any profound dissident or separatist features, and has mainly implied an increased influence on decision-making pertaining to the use of natural resources, taxation, currency incomes and environmental issues. The central authorities have played it rather softly, and the Karelian Republic has received rights to make treaties with third powers when these were not in conflict with Russian law. The Republic thus enhanced its position as to politics, identity and to a certain extent autonomy.

The aspiration for a less marginalized position also led to the establishment of a foreign ministry, headed by influential politicians, within the administration of the Karelian Republic. There is some substance to this, as the Karelian Republic has become a member of the Barents Regional Council, a body that promotes transnational cooperation and channels local initiatives, in the context of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (BEAR). Likewise, the Republic has taken an active part in various forms of cooperation around the Baltic Sea open to regional interest groups.

The Debate over the Karelian Question

The loss of Karelia was so traumatic for Finland that the

issue was certainly not fully settled with the Peace Treaty of Paris. The various Finnish post-war political leaderships all had hopes that the question could be taken up with the Soviet leaders at some proper juncture, although they refrained from raising the issue publicly and did not encourage public discussion. The return in 1955 of the naval base of Porkkala, located outside Helsinki, kept the hopes high, and so did the leasing of the Saimaa Canal in the Vyborg region to Finland in 1960. President Kekkonen thought that the Finnish recognition of the German Democratic Republic could potentially bring Vyborg back (Forsberg, 1995:212). There was, however, considerable resistance on the Soviet side to touch upon the Karelian question, and particularly during the Brezhnev era the Soviet position remained quite uncompromising.

This did not change in any profound way with the emerging of detente and the various efforts to tackle some of the issues that the Second World War left unsettled. It rather seems that Finland accepted in the 1970s a closing of the issue in unhesitatingly approving the pledges of the CSCE document which denounced the right of making territorial claims.

However, the disintegration of the Soviet Union put the question back on the agenda, at least in the Finnish civic discussion.*[4] If the Baltic countries could regain their independence and Germany could become unified, what would prevent a restitution of the ceded Karelia to Finland? As there was no longer a conflict between opposed social systems and the border did not demarcate a profound difference between western freedom and eastern totalitarianism, what would prevent a redemption from taking place?

These arguments were raised in a number of interventions coming mainly from those who had been evacuated from Karelia and belonging to the Karelian Association. It was felt that finally the moment was there. Initially the support for these claims of re-drawing the border was considerable. According to polls taken in 1991, a third of Finns supported negotiations with the Soviet Union over the return of the ceded Karelia.*[5]

Those advocating a redemption often used moral arguments.

Their claim has been that because of historical justice as well as cultural values, the pre-war borders should be reinstituted and Karelia returned to Finland. Articles proliferated in the press, questions were raised in Parliament, and the Karelian Association, representing the will of those having immigrated to Finland, announced itself ready to prepare a proposal concerning future relations with Karelia. The chairman of the movement presented a plan of his own according to which the Finnish Karelia should receive an autonomous status similar to that of the Aland Islands, a group of islands located between Finland and Sweden in the Baltic Sea.

Some critical voices were raised as well. It was feared that the opening of the Karelian question would have a negative influence on the relationship between Finland and Russia. Moreover, it was pointed out that the making of territorial claims would be detrimental to the conduct of international relations by strengthening a move towards bringing up various injustices that were receding into the past. It was feared that by increasing the significance of the various territorial disputes, one could destabilize the European system.*[6]

The return of Karelia was opposed also for economic, political and social reasons. It has been known that the ceded region, and the Karelian Republic in general, has been experiencing economic hardship. A restitution could hence become very costly and demand huge investments (the sum of some $ 20 billion has been mentioned). Moreover, it could endanger Finnish membership of the European Union if the impression developed that there was an open border dispute with Russia, and a restitution could imply that Finland would get a Russian-speaking minority of some 300,000 people within its borders.

It was also argued that military-strategic reasons went against any alterations of the border. General Gustav Hägglund, Head of the General Staff, was of the view that Karelia should not be accepted into Finland "even if it was offered on a golden plate".*[7] He emphasized the strategic value of the Karelian Isthmus to the Russians and the possible dangers of not understanding the logic

of the Russian thinking concerning their security.

Views of the Political Leadership

The Finnish President, Government and leading politicians have not shown much enthusiasm for the return of Karelia. The option of initiating negotiations has been kept open, although it has not been pushed or made use of in any formal manner. In contrast to the views held by broad segments of the public, the leadership did not view the end of the Cold War and the falling apart of the Soviet Union as a "window of opportunity" and an invitation to raise the question.

President Koivisto (1981-1993) assumed, although not resisting a civic discussion on the matter, a quite reserved attitude by stressing that the question had been resolved in three peace treaties in 1940, 1944 and 1947. "The issue has been settled", he stated adding, however, that too extreme claims might foreclose the option of waging a dialogue.*[8] Koivisto's successor, President Ahtisaari (1994-), has stated that he has not buried the issue, but will not actively pursue it in not wishing to cause strains in Finnish-Russian relations. The issue can, in his view, be discussed, but it requires that also the Russian side assumes a preparedness to engage oneself in such discussions.*[9]

Finland and Russia concluded in 1992 a neighbourhood-agreement that, besides leaving out any commitments to cooperation in the sphere of defence contained in a previous treaty with the Soviet Union, also defined the status of the border. In the preceding negotiations (then still between Finland and the Soviet Union) on a new basic agreement, the Soviet side tried to formulate a statement on the finality on the common border. The Finnish side did not want to have any separate statement on borders. A compromise was reached as Finland wished to refrain from the impression that it had some plans in the future to return to the question, and as a result the agreement includes an article on the borders, but does so in a quite vague manner.*[10]

The article prescribes that Finland and Russia preserve their

common border as a border of good neighbourhood according to the principles of the CSCE Final Act and respect each others territorial integrity (cf. Blomberg, 1992). According to the Finnish interpretation this leaves open the possibility of changing the border, whereas the Russians have interpreted it more strictly, i.e. the agreement confirms the finality of the border (Forsberg, 1995:213). Finland stresses that borders can be renegotiated and changed peacefully with the consent of the parties concerned. This line has been exemplified by that minor changes in borders have been agreed upon for between Finland and Sweden.

In the view of Jaakko Blomberg (1996), Director General of the Foreign Ministry, "the choice of wording underlines the aim of changing the nature of the border from a dividing to a unifying one". Hence he testifies to a certain strategy of de-bordering and indicates that the very thinking in Finnish foreign policy concerning borders has changed. His interpretation is validated by a number of clauses in the agreement that aim at providing a legal framework for the cooperation in the neighbouring areas and encourage direct cross-border contacts between regional and local authorities.

The impression of a conceptual change has been strengthened by Ilmari Susiluoto (1994), Senior Research Fellow at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He argues that the agreement implies that after 70 years of isolation and iron-curtain mentality, possibilities for genuine cooperation have now been opened up, based on geographical proximity and natural human interests on the regional level. Susiluoto depicts the change as a historical turning point. However, it could also be viewed as a return to the past as the border is now less of a symbol through which both the contradistinction between Finland and Russia as well as their dependence on each other is expressed. There is a certain de-politization of the border taking place allowing for more pluralistic understandings - resembling those that historically have been quite favourable Kaleria - of political space to unfold.

Obviously Finland felt itself under pressure to make moves prior to the beginning of negotiations on entering the European Union. These negotiations would have been complicated, it was

thought, with the existence of defence policy commitments or open border disputes with Russia.*[11] There are no indications of the EU having raised the issue, but the Finnish interpretation of the EU-logic has been that borders should be stable and not subject to conflicts. Finland's concern was presumably not just restricted to the negotiations on accession. The border issue provided an opportunity to engage oneself in Europe-making, with Finland as a potential EU-member influencing EU's eastern border, and thereby also the conditions for the future relationship between the European Union and Russia.

It therefore seems that both the concern for good relations with Russia and the need of complying with the understanding prevailing within the EU, pushed Finland in the direction of downgrading and re-interpreting the Karelian question. These two viewpoints - the traditional statist and geopolitical logic, and the one underlying European integration - had a parallel impact, although they differ considerably from each other.

The policy pursued more recently hence seems to be based on the assumption that aiming at restitution is neither realistic, taking into account the prevailing circumstances, nor is it warranted as there are other, more favourable options available. There is a reluctance to raise any territorial claims as such claims are taken to be tantamount to the undermining of international treaties and agreements. Instead of a redemption Finland opts for a policy of circumscription. Jaakko Blomberg (1996) summarized the line taken as follows: "Finland has based the policy pursued in the context of the CSCE / OSCE on the understanding that preserving peace and stability in Europe requires a respect of the borders that emerged after the war. Such a respect implies that all the states should refrain from making territorial claims. What is at issue here is one of the basic pillars of the international order".

However, the policy is not merely one of keeping the border as it is. There is also a positive goal involved in the sense of aiming at reducing the obstacles resulting from existing borders. Blomberg corroborates this by stating that "the line chosen is one of supporting exchange and cooperation between neighbouring

regions". The aspiration is not one of status quo, or one of re-drawing of borders in the sphere of "high politics" but making room for "low politics" that make the Finnish-Russian border more passable, porous and furnish it with a multifaced character. With these policies a barrier functions less than it used to do as a sluice-gate at a fixed geographical point and assumes a far more cooperative character.

Moreover, also "high policy" aspirations are now seen as gaining from cooperation among neighbouring regions as evidenced by the Finnish Governments report to the Parliament on security policy (1995:25). It is observed that growing contacts between citizens, extended opportunities for action by NGOs, new economic collaboration and lively interaction across the common frontier have all meant that the opportunities offered by social reforms in Russia and the effects of instability in that country have an immediate impact on Finland. "The new situation has made possible cooperation in neighbouring areas that allow Finland to give concrete support for economic and political reforms in Russia and to work in cooperation with Russia in resolving and preventing common problems that could endanger stability".*[12]

Russian Views

Over time, no major changes have occurred in Russian attitudes towards the Karelian question. There has been concerns about its reopening, and hence the option of adjusting and re-drawing the border in any formal way has been categorically dismissed. Changes in the location of borders have been regarded as dangerous and therefore politically impossible to execute. However, this line has not prevented Russia from adopting a positive attitude towards policies regarding "low-policy" cooperation in border regions. For example the Karelian Republic has been allowed considerable liberties in this regard.

The rejectionist view, according to which there is no Karelian question, has grown a bit softer in recent years. Foreign Minister Kozyrev and President Yeltsin both stated in 1992 that there existed

no issue concerning borders and no territorial claims between Finland and Russia (Forsberg 1995:216). Prime Minister Chernomyrdin and Lukin, the Chairman of the Committee of Foreign Affairs of the Duma, both reiterated these views in 1994, referring at the same time to the enlargement of the cooperation of neighbouring districts and the establishment of free-economy areas (The Karelian Association, 1996:47).

More recently Russian political leaders have been somewhat more forthcoming and ready to make at least symbolic concessions on the Karelian question even though talks on border shifts have been strictly avoided. Increased understanding has been shown for the wish of Finnish Karelians to discuss the issue, visit their homeland and raise cultural monuments there. In May 1994 President Yeltsin for the first time acknowledged, responding to questions from journalists during President Ahtisaari's visit to Moscow, that the annexation of Finnish Karelia was an aggressive act of Stalin's policy.*[13]Juri Derjabin, Russia's ambassador to Finland, has met with groups advocating a return of Finnish Karelia, and has stated publicly that the decline of Vyborg is something that Russia should be ashamed of.*[14]

In 1996 it seems that the heat surrounding the Karelian question during the first half of the decade has largely run out, and there is little interest on either side to return to the issue again in terms of altering the border. Russia stays with its reserved attitude, and hence the issue is blocked in terms of restitution as Finland has pledged not to make any moves without the consent of Russia. The decline of the issue as one pertaining to a re-drawing of borders seems to have encouraged a discussion on the transparency of the border in question, and the initiation of various projects that would lower it. In particular, the leadership of the Karelian Republic has been active in this regard. Their persistence has contributed to the emergence on the Finnish side of a debate on the value of engaging oneself in active cooperation. There has been pondering on the existence of profitable targets for investment, effective ways of tackling environmental hazards, questions pertaining to growing immigration or issues pertaining to the spread

of organized crime. So far this debate has had only a modest concrete impact, although Finns have the most extensive contacts with the Karelian Republic compared with any other foreign presence.

Future Options

The first part of the 1990s brought about, due to the re-emergence of the Karelian question, an extensive discussion on the nature of the Finnish-Russian border. The traditional statist logic still influenced the debate to a considerable degree. It coloured the thinking of those advocating a restitution as well that of the opponents (cf. Joenniemi, 1996). However, a different, more societal, cooperative and less territorially fixed thinking also emerged. This has been strengthened by developments of integration with the border between Finland and Russia turning into an external border of the EU. The changes are quite obvious in the case of Finnish thinking but have also, to a degree, influenced the line pursued by Russia.

The various dynamics that have contributed to the peripheralization of the Finnish-Russian border, and provided the Karelian question features of a statist border dispute, have declined in importance. With the European, integration-oriented and inclusive logic getting stronger, the way of perceiving the issues involved has gradually changed. The debate has assumed a different character in benefitting from a kind of "civilization" of borders in the current Europe. Instead of dividing, the border agreed upon in the Peace Treaty of 1947 increasingly groups Finland and Russia together. A previous boundary of mutual division transforms into a frontier. There is less peripheralization and with the endeavours of making increasing use of the resources of the border-region, the previously very statist border is well on its way of assuming a new, trans-statist meaning.

In other words, a process of de-bordering is also at work in Finnish-Russian relations. The strategies applied work around borders, thus initiating a formation that transcends the previous

territorially defined space along the border without leading to new territorial demarcations.

The new logic has come in with considerable force. It appears to be so powerful that changes can be discerned even in the publications of the Karelian Association. In the beginning of the 1990s the Association focused almost exclusively on a restitution of the ceded area, whereas the more recent statements devote considerable attention to the option of introducing various transborder schemes of cooperation. Instead of shifting the border in a formal sense, the effort is now much more one of lowering it in order to make space for an intense network of crossborder contacts.

The most recent programme of the Association (1996:50) states that "Finland's membership of the European Union offers additional possibilities of cooperation of neighbouring districts, in the field of economy as well as culture". It is further observed that the development of St. Petersburg and the Karelian Republic have become more important than before as regards the Karelian question, and it is noted that the growth of significance of St. Petersburg adds to incentives for crossborder cooperation. "Emphasizing Finland's role as both a bridge between Russia and the European Union and an active cooperation of neighbouring areas, constitutes current Karelian policy". It is remarked "that the more we are positively involved with the ceded Karelia and the Karelian Republic, the more natural seems the presence of the Finnish population and its return to the native districts in ceded Karelia". In other words, the previous insistence on statist measures of restitution now runs parallel with emphasing a domestication and socialization of the border through various forms of "low policy" cooperation.

The moral connotations as well as divisions into "we" and "they" with clear-cut territorial delineations seem to be in decline, and provide space for more functional arguments to take over. This is to say that a foundational change has taken place as the implementation of the EU-approach is now seen as providing a

way of making progress in regard to the Karelian question. Although there is still a broad variety of options to regain the ceded areas in the discussion, these ranging from buying it entirely or partially, leasing it or providing the region with partial autonomy in the manner of the autonomy of the Aland Islands, most discussion has been devoted to the idea that the areas with a Karelian background on the Russian and Finnish side of the present border should be turned into a region of transborder cooperation. Formulas should be adopted similar to those applied in the border-regions between Germany and Austria, Germany and Holland, or Germany and Poland. The various parts of Karelia should, according to the new thinking, remain part of the present states. There is no need to alter borders in a statist sense, but instead of dividing, the border should invite cooperation and unity.

The implementation of such a cooperative strategy would emphasize the importance of local groups, and in many cases the Karelians themselves. Moreover, it would invite the EU to assume an active role in the shaping of one of its main borders, for example by utilizing the various funds and programmes for transborder cooperation (Tacis, Interreg). There would be a role for the states as well, but not in the sense of changing statist borders and making territorial adjustments. States are relegated to a supportive role instead of being the decisive players. It has been demanded, for example, that the Finnish Government prepares a Karelia-program in the context of advancing cooperation between neighbouring regions and in the Baltic Sea region at large. The states should remain in the background, allow other actors to assume a central position and refrain from implementing and returning to a strict territorial logic demanding unambiguous borders.

This is to say that the Karelian question shows considerable signs of transformation. It appears to move from an unresolved territorial issue, adjusting a border felt to be highly unjust, to an opportunity and resource with European connotations. Undoubtedly, the new thinking has to become stronger in order to really yield results. It is still in its initial phase, and there has so far been little implementation and active interaction as compared

to many other transborder regions in current-day Europe.

However, the new ideas are here, and are probably here to stay. They have already achieved a relatively firm base in the policies pursued by Finland and the Finnish debate, and enjoy some support in Russia as indicated by the efforts to establish economic free-zones and the many proposals for cooperation emerging from the Karelian Republic. Moreover, the EU is taking a few first steps in coming to grips with its new eastern border. Presumably this latter factor will, in the future, be rather important. With a certain de-territorialization of politics there will presumably be a downgrading of many of the previous concerns which lean towards a traditional statist approach to borders and territorial issues.

Moreover, the new spatial dynamics will call for solutions that could re-furnish Karelia with its historical role as a 'third' with some subjectivity of its own in an increasingly pluralistic Europe. This still remains in the future, and is far from certain, but in any case the territorial determinants of social life and political processes appear to be on their way to becoming less strict, auguring well for a return of the Karelian question in a manner beyond restitution and an adjustment of statist borders.

Notes

It seems that for example the inaccuracies in a report on the Karelian region carried by the *Economist* in January 1993 indirectly illustrate the peripheral nature of the region.

On the Russian side Karelia is equated with the Karelian Republic, which is in turn, in the older Finnish usage of language, has connotations of Eastern Karelia. These different conceptualizations and ways of reading the issue cause considerable confusion in the debate.

The illustration has been published by the Karelian Association, *The Karelian Issue,* Helsinki 1996, p. 4.

A summary of the discussion has been presented by a study group established by the Karelian Association, see Karjala-

työryhmän raportti 31.1. 1995. The report is mainly based on a study carried out by Arja Kuittinen. See Arja Kuittinen, Neuvostoliiton hajoaminen käynnisti vilkkaan Karjala-keskustelun lehdistössä. *Keskustelua Karjalasta.* Karjalan Liitto, Helsinki 1993, pp. 22-26.

Over time a decline in support seems to have taken place. Polls carried out in December 1995 indicated that only 17 percent of the respondents supported an opening of the question on governmental level while 80 percent took the view that the Finnish government should not take any initiatives. See *Helsingin Sanomat,* December 27, 1995.

See *Karjala-työryhmän raportti 31. 1. 1995,* Karjalan Liitto, Helsinki 1995, pp. 47-55.

An interview with General Hägglund, then Chief of Staff and now Commader of the Armed Forces, in *Keskisuomalainen,* March 29,1992. In *Dagens Nyheter* (March 6,1992) Hägglund explained his way of arguing by stating that it would be unwise for geostrategic reasons to push the Finnish border back towards St. Petersburg. This is so as the value of this region for Russia in defensive terms has increased over the recent years. Such a move, if implemented, would transform Finland into Russia's zone of forward defence and consequently the Russian military leadership would prepare plans to take territorial advantage of Finland in view of a crisis. For a broader analyses on the geopolitical reasoning, see Penttilä, 1993.

President Koivisto has included a chapter on the Karelian question in his book "Historian tekijät (The Makers of History)", pp. 455-458. The issue came up already during Koivisto's visit to Japan in 1987. It became obvious then that the Finnish and Japanese attitudes to ceded regions were different, with Finland pursuing a much more restrictive policy. The two issues are not fully comparable as the Karelian question is regulated by statist agreement, whereas that of the Northern Territories has more openness in this regard (cf. Ishiwatari, 1995). The matter was touched upon also in the context of Prime Minister Nakasone's visit to Finland in 1988. The Japanese leadership hoped for a

more active stance, and perhaps some support for its own posture, but to no avail. In 1989 President Koivisto signalled to Moscow that Finland would not raise the Karelian question even if the Soviet Union would make concessions to Japan regarding the Northern territories. See, Suomen Kuvalehti, December, No. 49, 1995, p. 18. Finland's policy has obviously been one of dislinkage and has been based on the avoidance of multilateralization.

9 These views have been put forward in interviews in Demari, January 24, 1994 and Ilta-Sanomat, April 9, 1994.

10 See the statement of Undersecretary of State, Jaakko Blomberg, in *Suomen Kuvalehti,* December, No. 49, 1995, p. 20. The newspaper itself concludes that Finland was perhaps too much in a rush in accepting negotiations on a neighbourhood-agreement. "According to established view in the Foreign Ministry the previous Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Aid would have expired by itself without any negotiations. Hence there was no need to cede Karelia again for a second time as a price to be paid for getting rid of the FCM-Treaty".

11 Measures were taken to dismiss any impressions of that there existed a border dispute. Hence the Ministry of Foreign Affairs gave an order to its embassies, in January 1993 on the eve of the EU-negotiations, not to display and distribute copies of a particular issue of the Finnish Defence Review. The paper contained a critical article on the Karelian question written by Martti Valkonen, a Finnish journalist posted as a correspondent in Moscow.

12 The increasing conceptual clarity and interest in transborder cooperation has so far not yielded any impressive results. On the contrary, Eskelinen and Varis (1994) label the situation as somewhat chaotic as to the organization of cooperation, and this goes for both the Finnish and the Russian side. Investments have been modest and it seems that other regions such as the Barents or St. Petersburg regions attract much more interest leaving the ceded Karelia in a peripheral position. However, it is important to note that is no longer the border as such that disencourages investments or other forms of cooperation.

13 See *Helsingin Sanomat,* May 19, 1994.

14 Interview with Ambassador Juri Derjabin, *Helsingin Sanomat,* March 4, 1992.

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