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### Communicating Geopolitics through Postage Stamps: The Case of Finland

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## **Communicating Geopolitics through Postage Stamps: The Case of Finland**

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A study of geopolitics and postage stamps raises three interrelated questions:

1. How do these tiny pieces of paper connect to geopolitics?
2. What makes stamps useful as geopolitical data?
3. Why is a particular country an illustrative answer to the first two questions?

I open by connecting postage stamps to critical and popular geopolitics and by defending the stamps' worth as scholarly data. Behind this promotion of stamps lies (1) a firm belief in their power to offer fresh, broadly applicable insights into geopolitics and (2) a desire to diversify the discipline's current scope. Modest approaches can support new ways of thinking by pointing to the obvious from a fresh angle or to the previously little examined. Three first-hand observations defend this modesty. (1) Creative, simple exercises can facilitate methodologically and theoretically sophisticated discoveries by clarifying thoughts. (2) Clear thoughts and quotidian examples work wonders in the classroom,<sup>1</sup> where scholarly ideas get tested and the discipline's future is determined. The *fun* aspects of critical and popular geopolitics should be cherished, (a) because these topics are relevant far beyond academia and (b) because attracting students to a youngish field of inquiry needs open-minded approaches. (3) Despite the growing interest in visual culture and methodologies,<sup>2</sup> and despite the obvious centrality of the visual in geopolitics, plenty of space is still available for novel connections between these fields. With this article I argue that mundane visual data are worth exploring further for the above-listed reasons. These reasons serve as an implicit inspiration behind my empirical example of how postage stamps can be used in communicating geopolitics.

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I will clarify why Finland so well exemplifies the benefits of postage stamps for critical and popular geopolitics. After an overview of Finland's postal history before independence (1917), my focus will be on the twentieth century, as described in a segment about the data and methods. A geographically, temporally, and thematically organised discussion of selected images illustrates how Finnish stamps (have) serve(d) geopolitical communication. I pay special attention to cartography throughout the assessment, because maps made visual communication central in Finnish nation-building early on and because they are prominent in the examined sample.

## GEOPOLITICS AND POSTAGE STAMPS

Most postage stamps are official state documents. Their communicative power results from their institutional status, pictures, other semiotic characteristics, and circulation. The omnipresence of postage stamps in quotidian life offers the national elite of a state a direct, mundane contact with its citizens. The elite-steered imagery celebrates the nation's achievements and erases controversial episodes of history from its collective memory.<sup>3</sup> Stamps thus draw ordinary citizens "into hegemonic culture as subjects of its constituent discourses,"<sup>4</sup> foster a 'national' political culture, and resemble money,<sup>5</sup> place naming,<sup>6</sup> and other identity-political iconographies in their service to "banal nationalism"<sup>7</sup> and the creation of "imagined communities."<sup>8</sup> The establishment or breaking of an imperial rule, territorial claims, and sources of national pride have been visualised on postage stamps<sup>9</sup> and sometimes contested in clandestine issues.<sup>10</sup> These semiotic qualities connected to political power make stamps prime tools of persuasive techniques and propaganda (including place boosterism).<sup>11</sup> The messages are multi-layered in a manner that crystallises Harley's well-known idea of "geopolitical signs,"<sup>12</sup> highlighting particular politico-administrative boundaries, territories, and territorial visions (for example, a stamp portrays the national flag and territory).

Stamps circulate globally on interpersonal mail and through collectors' networks. Crossing national boundaries adds to the stamps' semiotic power. Each issue points to a specific territory and a cultural sphere, for the stamp carries the issuing country's name in its official language(s). That country's postal authorities set the stamp's price in a particular currency, which is valid in a given territory. The stamps' commemorative, celebratory, or advertising imagery conveys the national elite's (and, depending on the openness of the stamp design process, the citizens') understanding of their country's contribution to the world. That these pictures have power is most dramatically demonstrated in political upheavals where old narratives are "symbolically annihilated"<sup>13</sup> and replaced by new ones. Those who get to (re)write the ideological messages displayed in quotidian environments

exercise considerable power, because they manage and support a sense and an image of a nation.

In this light surprisingly few academic studies about the (geo)politics of postage stamps exist. In geography and related fields, the interest in visual culture and methodologies has already produced critical, intertextual studies of landscape, empire, and collective memory,<sup>14</sup> studies of maps as socially constructed political and cultural texts,<sup>15</sup> and studies that employ such visual data as the Internet and political cartoons.<sup>16</sup> The Finnish case will show that stamps fit well in this framework, matching perfectly the five statements Ó Tuathail and Dalby use to describe critical geopolitics.<sup>17</sup> First, as a special “spatial practice” of the state, stamps have both a “material and representational” dimension which help the national elite educate the citizens and promote “a visual order” across the national territory. In their “optical consistency” and efficiency in fostering a ‘national’ community, stamps are comparable to maps and statistics in that they are both “*fixed* as a representational form and *movable* across territory as inscribed on paper.”<sup>18</sup> Second, stamps highlight the nation’s “material” and “conceptual borders” through their communicative powers in mundane environments and by distributing an imagery of ‘us’ and ‘our’ sources of pride. Both borders are embedded in the standard practices of the postal services – for example, domestic and international postage rates apply in a given territory. Third, stamps “saturate the everyday life of states and nations” and, at least in today’s Finland, represent both “elitist and popular” worldviews, because both the national elite and ordinary citizens participate in the design and selection of stamps. Fourth, still following Ó Tuathail and Dalby, the stamps’ relationship with a statewide, governmental institution highlights the technological aspects of these products of visual technologies. As their issuer and distributor, the postal service exercises control over the national territory, strengthening the state’s “techno-territorial networks.” And finally, the study of stamps is indeed “situated knowledge,” for the messages embedded in the imagery are closely related to their space- and time-specific contexts of transmission.

For the increasingly popular studies of “geopolitical iconography”<sup>19</sup> stamps represent a fresh, visually rich, and clearly territorial data. Its benefits include accessibility (most countries publish comprehensive, inexpensive catalogues easily available through collectors’ networks), flexibility in spatial and temporal sampling or comparisons (per decade, theme, region, purpose, etc.), and global applicability (countries issue stamps for similar purposes). Finland is a useful example because the number of its stamps is manageable and matches that of many other countries. Information about Finnish stamps is easy to find from multiple sources, thanks to the Finns’ historical interest in their country’s postage stamps. This sample thus offers a temporally comprehensive way to illustrate how the issuers of stamps draw from “the prevailing circulation of ideas and values”<sup>20</sup> and changing

geopolitical contexts, often addressing popular concerns and explaining connections in a manner generally typical of popular geopolitics.

The Finnish case directs attention to this communication because of the relatively early and contested history of the postage stamp in Finland. Before independence from Russia, postage stamps were central in the propaganda for, and resistance against, the promotion of a particular 'national' iconography. Finnish experiences after 1917 further illustrate how stamps communicate between national elites, ordinary citizens, and foreign audiences. The country's variably sensitive geopolitical position as a borderland between East and West highlights contrasts, showing how the foci and concerns of nation-building follow (geo)political changes. An overview of Finnish postal history and a discussion of independent Finland's selected stamp issues summarise the relevance of this data to critical- and popular-geopolitical themes. The case exemplifies empirical inquiries into 'banal' citizenship education, nation-building, and nation-advertising, helping to detect how mundane visual images can be used to "convey complex developments in world politics" in lay(wo)men's terms<sup>21</sup> – or to support or challenge explanations presented elsewhere.

This flexibility obviously paves the stamps' way to classroom exercises and professional presentations, where they can promote approachable, visually attractive, and thought-provoking ways to communicate (about) popular and visual geopolitics. This communication can promote creative discoveries, bring scholarly pursuits closer to 'real life', and advertise geopolitics as an open-minded, critical, and popular field of study in the fullest sense of these words.

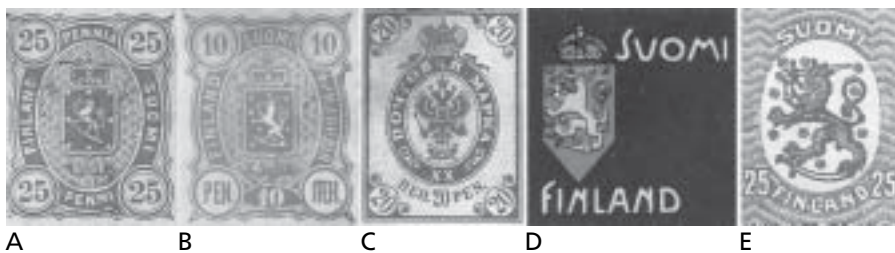
## STAMPS AS MARKERS OF FINNISHNESS

The importance of postal services for Finnish nation-building and international image-making dates back to the seventeenth century, but over two hundred years was needed before the issue became politicised. This occurred when Russia tightened its control over its peripheries in the nineteenth century. In Finland, the Empire's autonomous western borderland, this Russification policy targeted cultural and politico-administrative privileges, many of which were created during the Swedish period (until 1809).<sup>22</sup> 'Finnish' institutions included postal services, which had been established in 1638 and which had issued its own postage stamps since 1856. Both the institution and its products strengthened the idea of 'Finland', for they marked its boundaries and visualised them semiotically. The jurisdiction of Finland's Post had limits within which its service network operated. The stamps depicted an old heraldic reference to the territory of Finland (a lion from a Swedish coat of arms)<sup>23</sup> and the territory's name in Finnish and Swedish. The stamps were a particular source of pride for the Finnish elites,

who saw the adoption of stamps soon after their introduction in Britain (in 1840) as evidence of innovative thinking and technological progressiveness in Finland. Because stamps were something that *independent* states had, they signified national exceptionalism and sovereignty in the context of emerging national(ist) sentiments.

That Russification targeted the postal services already in 1890 influenced the methods of the Finnish resistance. The movement had time to think about its strategies before the 1899 February Manifesto, which conventionally marks the beginning of Russification in Finland. Attention was directed to the stamps' iconography when Russia's double-headed eagle replaced Finland's lion coat of arms and Russian-language text gradually pushed aside Finnish and Swedish on Finnish stamps (Figure 1A–C). This first “symbolic annihilation”<sup>24</sup> – the stomping of visualised Finnishness – made stamps highly useful for the resistance, which by the onset of more comprehensive Russification policies had organised and had visual evidence of the Czar's earlier hostility against Finnish privileges and peculiarity. The leaders of the resistance clearly understood that “Finland” had to be produced as a symbolic landscape in the popular realm to form and support consciousness of a coherent ethnic nation.”<sup>25</sup> They were also well equipped to do this, for many famous artists supported the resistance. Postage stamps thus complemented national-romanticist landscape painting and photography as key tools of visualising Finnishness.

The publication of an unofficial protest stamp (Figure 1D), timed to coincide with the final ban on the use of Finnish stamps in 1900, summarises the importance of postage stamps and individual talent in mobilising resistance against Russification. The image, designed by the national-romanticist painter Akseli Gallen-Kallela and printed by the publisher Wenzel Hagelstam, used territorially associated heraldry and a



**FIGURE 1** The Czar's Russification policy in the 1890s led to a gradual erasure of Finnish symbols and languages from autonomous Finland's postage stamps, issued since 1856: (A) Finland's lion coat of arms and name in Finnish and Swedish on an 1875 stamp; (B) Cyrillic script on an 1889–1895 stamp; and (C) Russia's double-headed eagle and Cyrillic script on a Finnish 1901 stamp, which no longer carries the country's name. (D) An unofficial “Mourning Stamp” was launched in protest in 1900 and (E) independent Finland's first stamp design, by architect Eliel Saarinen, restored the national symbolism in 1917.

commonly understood colour code to deliver its message. By placing this black “Mourning Stamp” on the usual right-hand upper corner of the envelope and the Russian stamp on a secondary position elsewhere on the envelope gave ordinary Finns a way to claim the Finnishness of their mail. To guarantee the protest stamp’s visibility after its quick prohibition by the Russian authorities, the wildly popular stamp was sent abroad in bulk. Sympathisers of the resistance then mailed the stamp back to Finland on individual envelopes and postcards. The sudden ‘blindness’ of the largely domestic employees of Finland’s postal services secured the protest mail’s delivery and visibility against the authorities’ orders.<sup>26</sup>

This contest convinced the leaders of the resistance of the stamps’ power in popularising territorial symbols, mobilising masses in their support, and raising international sympathies. One important lesson was that the distribution of small quotidian items was easy through informal channels and quite impossible to control for the central authorities, especially when national institutions supported the effort. Another lesson was that repetitive visualisation of the message on these items was an inexpensive and participatory way to boost its delivery. Images of the lion stamps and the lion coat of arms soon appeared on variously priced gift items (greeting cards, jewelry) and everyday consumables (candy wrapping paper)<sup>27</sup> which people made and purchased to show support and to create a sense of ‘us’. Stamps thus helped in separating one country from another, in drawing boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’, and in crafting roles for the country and its people on the international stage.<sup>28</sup>

A generally strong emphasis on visualisation characterised the Finnish resistance. Finland was represented as being separate from Russia on the maps of the first editions of the *Atlas of Finland* (1899, 1910). The blond Maiden of Finland, an allegorical territorial figure, posed on postcards in a stereotypical lake scenery wearing a national dress and holding a shield with the lion coat of arms (or, later, the national flag).<sup>29</sup> Anti-Russian political cartoons appeared frequently in newspapers and magazines.<sup>30</sup> Typical of all these forms of visualisation was a fairly persuasive tone. The approach kept channels open within the ideologically and culturally diverse national elite, was pragmatic in resisting a mighty empire, and pleased foreign sympathisers.

According to a recent study about the early propaganda efforts of Finland’s Ministry for Foreign Affairs “to make Finland known” abroad, visualisation was so central in the Finnish political elite’s communication strategies during the first decades of independence that some of its methods were adopted abroad, especially in Germany.<sup>31</sup> However, less attention has been devoted to the examination of “visualizing Finland”<sup>32</sup> after its independence, even if the emphasis on the visual in political communication has remained in place. That postage stamps issued during the independence have been almost entirely ignored is surprising because of their contested origins and

obvious importance in later Finnish nation-building. The lessons from the past encouraged the young state's leaders to keep the design and production of postage stamps under strict control. The past supported an intimate relationship between ordinary Finns and the country's postage stamps, serving communication between the political elite and the citizens. That stamp imageries matter to the Finnish public today is evident in the attention design contests and new stamp issues attract in the media and among the public, and in the quick sales of the most popular new stamps. Even if the national postal authorities still have the final say in what gets represented and how, the increasingly inclusive approach verifies a relaxed relationship between the state and its subjects.<sup>33</sup> The approach was also motivated by the commercialisation of Finland's postal services in 1990 and the subsequent need to raise revenue. By focusing on little-examined twentieth-century data, this case study opens new insights into Finnish (geo)political visualisation and adds to the literature available in English about this theme.

#### DATA, METHODS, AND SUPPORTING SOURCES

Behind this case study is an examination of 1,501 stamps issued by continental Finland's postal services from the country's independence in 1917 to 2001, after which the euro replaced the markka.<sup>34</sup> A review of the early data shows that until 1929, the sole image on Finnish stamps was the lion (Figure 1E), which now represented an independent territory, an emerging state, and, following the 1918 Civil War, the bourgeois ('White') ideology of the divided nation's political elite.<sup>35</sup> The lion stamps thus delivered a powerful geopolitical message about a new "visual order"<sup>36</sup> and nation-state.

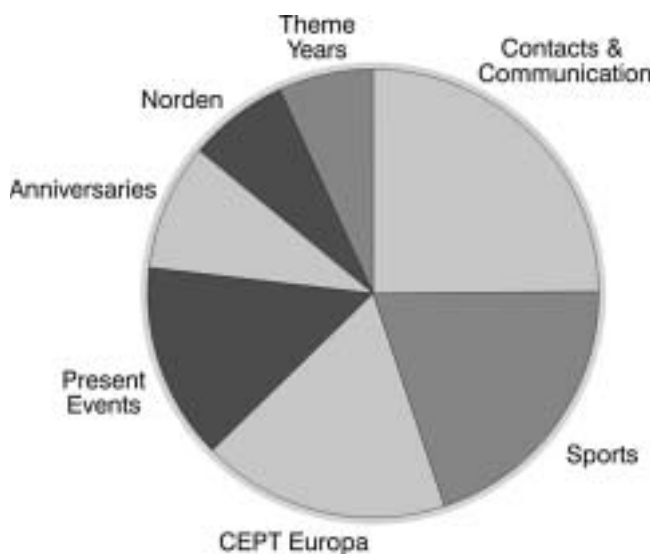
These lion stamps are nevertheless excluded from the core sample I use to exemplify my case. For pragmatic reasons I chose a stricter focus on 'international references'. To qualify, the issue needed to make an explicit and emphasised textual or visual reference beyond Finland's national boundaries. The knowledge that a key design principle of Finnish stamps is to stay within Finland's borders supported this definition. I nevertheless faced typical dilemmas of narrowing down a stamp sample, because the images contain multiple, overlapping narratives. In the broadest sense, all stamps qualify, because they all reach foreign audiences through mail or as collectables and souvenirs indicating a particular country. Choosing the primary theme was sometimes difficult, because some references are indirect, as the lions' implication of Finland's territory and boundaries exemplifies.

Two examples clarify my choices.<sup>37</sup> The first 'international reference' is a 1928 lion stamp which qualified for its textual overprint celebrating an international stamp exhibition held in Helsinki. The stamp's context of issue highlighted its purpose as a souvenir and as a collectable, which served humble fund-raising and publicity purposes in a poor country. Finland's first



picture stamp series saluted the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the southwestern city of Turku in 1929. The three stamps hint at a variety of international contacts, depicting a ship leaving the harbour for Stockholm,<sup>38</sup> the Turku Castle, and the Cathedral. The images suggest that this former capital city of Finland (until 1812, when the Czar gave the status to Helsinki) has active external trade and other contacts; has defended Sweden's borderland against the empire in the east; and adopted Christianity, an import that reached Finland along the east-west trade route between Novgorod and Sweden roughly 1,000 years ago. However, I only included the ship stamp and interpreted the primary reference of the two other stamps to be the celebration of the young nation's long history. The excluded images were also travel advertisements, but, arguably, in that particular political-economic context, primarily served nation-building at home.

Similar arguments support each stamp in the final sample of 325 'international references', which represent one-fifth of the entire data. Basic iconographical analysis and semiotics<sup>39</sup> offered the key methods for the examination, the principles of which I have explained in two co-authored case studies about identity-political iconography in Europe (euro coins) and Finland (stamps).<sup>40</sup> Following this previously tested approach, I started from descriptive, identifying questions (*what, who, where, and when*) to classify the sample and reveal frequencies. The largest of the resulting seven mutually exclusive and exhaustive thematic categories, (1) 'Cultural Contacts and Communication', contains 81 stamps issued since 1928 (Figure 2). A significant subgroup of this category is the celebrations of international stamp exhibitions hosted in Finland. That most of these 39 stamps were issued

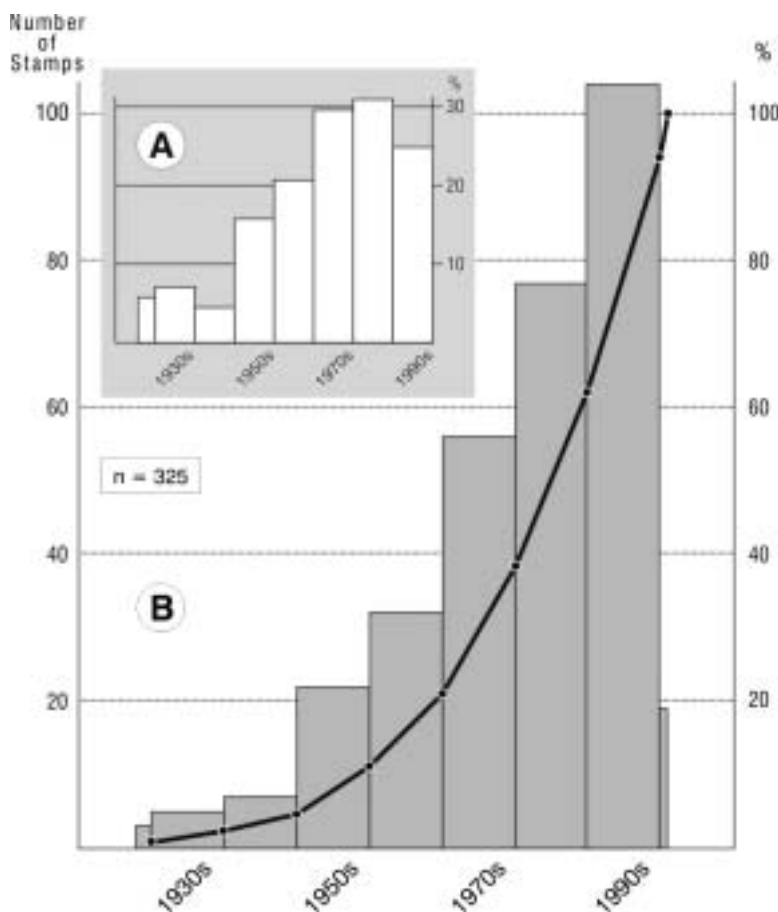


**FIGURE 2** The seven categories in the 'international references' sample of 325 stamps (1928–2001).

after the commercialisation of Finland's postal services underscores the stamps' functions as fund-raisers and advertisements to specific market niches. (2) The 65 'International Sports References' include celebrations of international sports events and achievements of individual Finnish athletes, since 1938. A total of 58 stamps were issued in (3) the Conference of European Postal and Telecommunication Administrations' *CEPT Europa* series in Finland in 1960–2001. The 46 stamps in the category (4) 'Celebration of the Present' depict political treaties and events, Finland's memberships in international organisations, and political and scientific meetings, beginning in 1941. (5) 'Commemoration of the anniversaries of international organisations and treaties' is the theme on 30 stamps, issued from 1939 onwards. Twenty-three stamps were published under the Nordic postal alliance's so-called (6) *Norden* series, beginning in 1956, when Finland joined the Nordic Council. (7) 'International theme years' or campaigns, mostly those announced by the United Nations, are the theme on 22 stamps, beginning in 1960.

A comparative overview of the entire data shows that the international orientation of Finnish stamps strengthened over the decades. Before 1950, less than ten percent of each decade's issues contained 'international references', after which their proportion grew rapidly (Figure 3A). The most extroverted decades were the 1970s and the 1980s, when the world's geopolitical atmosphere relaxed and Finlandisation (Moscow's influence in Finnish domestic affairs)<sup>41</sup> encouraged explicit celebration of international cooperation. The absolute number of 'international references' grew so that almost one-third of them were issued in the 1990s (Figure 3B). The trend has strengthened further in the new millennium: 43 percent of the issues in 2001 were 'international references'.

The question *where* revealed the scale of the references. Many of the international sports references (World Championships and Olympic Games) and the United Nations theme years are global. The CEPT's *Europa* stamps focus on Europe, the primary spatial reference of the Nordic series is regional. Some of the stamps link individual localities to supranational scales, typically as hosts of an international sports event or a major political or scientific meeting. The role of maps in communicating 'international' themes is particularly prominent. Roughly one-fifth of the sample contains cartography, compared to four percent in the background corpus of 1,501 images. This prominence points to the centrality of maps in the visual tradition of Finnish international propaganda efforts and to the role of geography as a 'national science'<sup>42</sup> in Finland. The latter guarantees a fairly high level of map literacy among the general population, which is important from the perspective of geopolitical communication. My assessment of cartography in the stamp imagery relied on commonly used methods of critical cartographic analysis<sup>43</sup> and focused on such elements as boundaries, centres, peripheries, orientation, colour, and contrasts. Well-known media and communication studies about persuasion and propaganda techniques



**FIGURE 3** 'International references' per decade: (A) Proportion (%) of internationally themed stamps of each decade's stamp issues; (B) Number of 'international references' per decade and the growth of the sample.

complemented similar geographical literature on propaganda, geography, and maps.<sup>44</sup>

The questions *what does this mean* and *why* helped to reveal (often veiled) meanings embedded in the imagery. I thus assessed each image in relation to its spatial and temporal settings, purpose of issue, and style – that is, read the images as socially constructed texts which represent particular historical moments in particular places and are in interdependent relationships with other similar texts. These procedures and the supporting research-methodological literature are described in more detail in the two previously mentioned studies about identity-political iconography and visual method(ologie)s.<sup>45</sup> Philatelic, encyclopedic, and journalistic sources backed up the research on specific themes, as did selected publications about Finnish politics, society, culture, and iconography.<sup>46</sup>

## COMMUNICATING THE CHANGING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EAST

Finnish stamps that allude to the relations with the Soviet Union/Russia, and themes that are *not* depicted in the imagery despite their (inter)national prominence, are particularly clear mirrors of major geopolitical turning points and the Finnish national leaders' (geo)political ideologies. In this chronologically organised segment, a selection of these stamps illustrates how I 'read' their geopolitical semiotics and how their messages, communication styles, purposes, and target audiences relate to specific geopolitical contexts.

### Until the end of World War II

Finland of the early twentieth century was a war-ridden, sparsely populated developing country. The national politico-administrative and economic elites – the white victors of the Civil War – faced the challenge of carving a nation out of the politically divided, emotionally devastated population and legitimising their own actions. On postage stamps, an 'us' was promoted through masculinist state nationalism and depictions of leadership, cultural achievements, historical landmarks, Lutheranism, and ideal landscapes (as portrayed by the nineteenth-century nation-builders). 'International references' were few in number, but the emphasis on 'national' themes and symbols of sovereignty contributed to boundary-drawing against other countries, especially the Communist neighbour in the east.<sup>47</sup>

By 1939, Finnish nationalism had obtained fascist undertones and the examined 'international references' were becoming openly propagandistic in tone. The nationalists cherished ideas of Greater Finland (which would unify 'Finnish tribes' in Finland, Russian Karelia, and Ingria) and were louder in their anti-Communism. The ideological and territorial disputes with the Soviet Union led the Finns to three military conflicts during World War II. That the stamps were used to support, justify, and celebrate the decisions of the national political and military leaders becomes particularly evident in the wartime imagery through prominent "shouts"<sup>48</sup> and whispering absences.

Finnish nationalist propaganda on stamps peaked in 1941, in the beginning of the Continuation War (1941–1944) in which the Finnish military pushed eastwards across Finland's former boundaries. Three stamp series mobilised support for controversial military maneuvers and their makers. The loudest (and semiotically the richest) of these issues are the three identical images named the "Reconquest of Vyborg" (Figure 4A), which were released in August of 1941, one day after the Finnish troops had reached this formerly Finnish city and when a victory parade was celebrated in its streets. The timing and the speed of printing and distribution, especially in relation to the 1940s' stamp-making technologies and wartime economy,



**FIGURE 4** Finnish nationalistic fervour against the Soviet Union in 1941: (A) “The Reconquest of Vyborg” and (B) War Marshal C. G. E. Mannerheim, the man “behind the achievement,” as described in the Finnish-language philatelists’ magazine *Suomen Postimerkkilehti* in 1942 (number 8).

reveal that these stamps were prepared in advance, with a clear propaganda strategy in mind. The image communicated simultaneously with at least four audiences. First, to a domestic audience, especially to those thousands of evacuees who had left Vyborg at the end of the Winter War (1939–1940), “the reconquest” could be justified because of the previous war experience and because of the city’s prominence in the Finns’ collective memory. Because of its borderland location, Vyborg had been both an important site of conflict between empires and a busy node of international exchange, becoming a leading economic, cultural, and demographic centre in a young state. Second, by acknowledging success, the image could boost the desired spirit among the Finnish troops (which were not unanimous about the wisdom of territorial aspirations). Third, foreign sympathisers could join the celebration – the stamp argued the Finnish military was returning stolen property to its rightful owner. And fourth, the same message could be sent to annoy the enemy.

The image is loaded with territorial, identity-political signifiers and Harley’s “geopolitical signs.” The medieval Vyborg Castle, the city’s best-known (and military-historical) landmark, is repossessed with an exaggerated Finnish national flag. Hardly accidentally, the flag reaches beyond the frame of the image, crossing a boundary line. Additional heraldic (that is, historically territorial and military)<sup>49</sup> signifiers (Karelia’s coat of arms and the rose separating the two official, prominently written names of the country) connect the city to a region and to a national territory. The Gothic font, rare on Finnish stamps, repeats these messages by pointing to ‘Old Finland’, to the province of Vyborg as it was called in the beginning of the eighteenth century. In Karelia’s coat of arms, the swords make a general historical reference to the ideological, cultural, and military

conflict between (Islamic) East and (Christian) West. The city's future looks bright, for rays of heavenly light enhance the flag's promise and new growth is indicated in a symbol which is either an ear of wheat or the new growth on a pine tree (which in Finnish national symbolism would also refer to endurance).

National leadership (masculine nationalism), cartography, and volume were added to boost the impact of these stamps in December, when two series of six portraits (that is, at that time an exceptional total of twelve stamps) of War Marshal Gustav Mannerheim (Figure 4B) and President Risto Ryti were issued in celebration of the "reconquest" of Vyborg. The portrayal of Mannerheim in a uniform in front of a map depicting Finland's southeastern border in Karelia makes a cartographic and military reference to Greater Finland. The stamp is a stereotypical "geopolitical sign" as Harley<sup>50</sup> describes it: the military leader's command of, and control over, a territory and its boundaries are underscored by portraying the man in front of a recognisable map and with a determined appearance. The bookshelf suggests that the commander is an educated man. Not surprisingly, this stamp reappeared with the military administration's textual overprint in 1942 in the occupied East Karelia, where the Finnish provisional government promoted a new "visual order" by using its own stamps in 1941–1944.<sup>51</sup>

Absences in the stamp imagery can communicate loudly as well – through a pointed silence. Considering the national and regional significance of the War of Lapland (against the Germans, in 1944–1945) and the general tendency in stamp imageries to acknowledge major political events, the visual exclusion of this particular Soviet-sanctioned military endeavour in Finnish territory against a former ally qualifies as one prime example of "symbolic annihilation" of undesired collective memories. A similar exclusion, the visual erasure of the undesirable Eastern 'Other within', applies to the absence of all references to the Orthodox Church in Finland in the Finnish stamp imagery until the 1970s. The legally equal status of this minority church with the majority's Lutheran National Church, the latter's prominence in the stamp imagery especially before World War II, and other studies of Finnish propaganda and nation-building efforts<sup>52</sup> support this interpretation. This 'Russian' influence waited for acknowledgement until the ethno-culturally more tolerant 1970s and the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Orthodox Church in Finland in 1977.<sup>53</sup>

### During the Cold War

After the wars, the Finns had to adjust to living next to their former enemy, which now was a Cold War superpower. The sensitive situation changed the tone on Finnish postage stamps, but expanded their communicative qualities. One new approach hinted at additional interpretations of geopolitical events and their public commentaries. What the political leaders avoided saying could be expressed visually on tiny pieces of paper. These stamps, typical of the 1950s, served as an understated form of resistance.

They requested support for the political leaders' choices, but indicated that not everything had been said in public.

A stamp called "Porkkala, Lighthouse and Map" (Figure 5A) is a typical geopolitical balancing act of this period. The seemingly innocent lighthouse stamp carries a powerful message in its timing. The stamp was issued on January 26, 1956, when the Soviet Union returned its naval base in Porkkala, southwest of Helsinki, to Finnish authorities. The Soviets had leased the area for fifty years, based on the Truce of Moscow in September, 1944. A rushed evacuation of thousands of people, livestock, and much of the harvest preceded the arrival of the Soviets, scarring the Finns' collective memory. That the stamp says "1955" shows how eager the Finnish leaders were to get Porkkala back – a stamp had been drawn as soon as an agreement on the base's return was reached. The transfer took longer than was anticipated, so that the stamp ended up celebrating the agreement year. This, however, worked in the Finnish leaders' favour, for too explicit a celebration was avoided in a geopolitically delicate situation. The return of Porkkala to Finnish possession was important to the Finns' self-esteem and to the credibility of the country's nascent neutrality policy. The motives of the Soviet Union to return the base were multiple – encyclopedic Western sources typically mention Khrushchev's destalinisation project, Sweden's



**FIGURE 5** Semiotically rich maps served as typical “geopolitical signs” on Finnish postage stamps during the Cold War: (A) “Porkkala, Lighthouse and a Map” issued in 1956 and (B) a celebration of the SALT meeting in Helsinki in 1970.

decision to stay outside of the NATO, and the early steps of Finlandisation which were making the former enemy more trustworthy. The military emphasis within the Baltic sphere was also moving southwards so that the base now cost more than it was strategically worth.

The stamp makes good use of cartography in drumming celebration to a domestic audience. The depicted area corresponds to the territory the Soviets controlled in 1944–1956 (roughly 1,000 km<sup>2</sup>). The return of the depicted railroad contributed significantly to the economic development of Finland's southern coastal areas. To aid the power of association, the beam from the lighthouse is directed towards the Porkkalanniemi Cape, thus illuminating the toponym included in the image and suggesting a brighter future for the area.

Maps were used again in the early 1970s, when the SALT and CSCE treaties were negotiated and signed in Helsinki. The map on the 1970 SALT stamp is particularly multi-layered and openly self-boosterish in tone (Figure 5B). Finland is placed in the most important part of the map, in the middle, as a centre of this globally important activity – and as *the* centre of attention. The blue-and-white flag “flags the nation”<sup>54</sup> to a global audience. A prominent depiction of a territory's two most important cartographic distinguishers, its boundaries and its name, enhances this advertisement. In this image, the capital city Helsinki is a place for peace, as its name rests on top of a universally recognised symbol of peace. The event's participants are the United States and the Soviet Union, the globe indicates that the meeting has global importance. The participants' national territories are colour-coded according to their flags. Following the logic of Western colour conventions, the prominent Soviet red points to Communism, but also indicates anger, threat, blood, and heat.<sup>55</sup> The arrow-like stripes, which on the US territory are directed towards the other superpower, enhance this association with confrontation.<sup>56</sup> Additional sense of threat comes from the polar projection, which was popular during the Cold War for placing the two superpowers ‘face to face’.<sup>57</sup> The Soviet borderlands – most notably Estonia, Finland's brother in arms and culture – have been left white, implying purity, neutrality, and unknown territory. These borderlands are thus made equal with the rest of the depicted territories, communicating that they are only indirectly concerned in this matter (it is unclear whether this choice indicates the mapmakers' ideological preferences in any way).

These globally significant events took place in the high season of Finlandisation, when stamps were also used to confirm the country's chosen political course and to remind the public of geopolitical necessities and virtuous ways of thinking about the world. This tone of self-censorship culminated in the semiotically modest acknowledgement of the Finnish–Soviet Peace and Friendship Treaty in 1973, on its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.



## After the Cold War

The end of the Cold War again shifted the tone and foci of Finnish stamps “with the geopolitical times.”<sup>58</sup> A novel approach to national boundaries characterised the 1990s: instead of underscoring a dividing line between ‘us’ and ‘them’, the eastern border was now persuasively underplayed in the imagery with new geopolitical realities and concerns in mind.

One new focus was the commemoration of past conflicts that had clearly been avoided because of its geopolitical controversiality. Among the first post-Cold War issues were two landmark recognitions, both issued in 1990. One commemorated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Winter War, the other honoured the same anniversary of the Disabled War Veterans’ Association of Finland, a national organisation founded to serve the interests of the 94,000 individuals disabled in the conflicts of the 1940s (15,500 are still alive).<sup>59</sup> These formal acknowledgements of the war and its sacrifice were important milestones on the road to final recovery. The vast majority of the Finns consider the Winter War a victory despite the military defeat, because the country remained independent and because the nation was unified for the first time after the Civil War.<sup>60</sup> The Winter War’s positive connotation is highlighted by the observation that the end of the controversial Continuation War was ignored in the stamp imagery in 1994, as was the end of the bitter War of Lapland in the following year.

Another characteristic of the 1990s’ stamp imagery is the redirection of scale from global events towards national and regional contexts. At this time, the Finnish stamp imagery generally shifted towards individualism and quotidian, popular-cultural activities from its previous emphases on collectivity and ‘high culture’.<sup>61</sup> The commercialisation of Finland’s postal services in the context of economic restructuring was one important factor behind this grassroots approach – the satisfaction of the consuming public was vital for revenue.

Even if commercial and individualistic values gained importance over identity-political nation-building, ‘international references’ still communicated powerful geopolitical desires, visions, and concerns. One multi-scaled messenger is a 1993 issue celebrating the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Vyborg Castle and depicting the old east–west commercial route along the shores of the Gulf of Finland (Figure 6). This stamp is a notable deviation from the stamp design policy that rather strictly selected ‘Finnish themes’ and stayed within Finland’s borders. This boundary crossing gains its political meaning from the context in which numerous Finns were visiting their old home areas in Russian Karelia after the opening of the border and demands about returning Karelia to Finland had been heard in public. The stamp thus appears to be an acknowledgement of a sore collective memory and a concession towards those citizens whose lives were changed by the fate of Vyborg. That no political boundaries appear on this map is intriguing in this context of geopolitical change and public debate. An official revisit to the



**FIGURE 6** A boundary-erasing stamp celebrated the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Vyborg Castle in 1993.

idea of Greater Finland is highly unlikely – demands about ‘getting Karelia back’ soon ran out of steam when the poor condition of the formerly Finnish territories became apparent. Rather, the stamp acknowledges the new ease of movement in the borderland. In this reading the image expresses a desire or a vision about the borderland’s future – trade and cultural exchanges flourished here in the past and would be desirable again. The context of the issue supports this interpretation: the collapse of the Soviet Union greatly damaged Finland’s (bilateral) foreign trade and the entire economy, leading to a depression in the early 1990s. The message clearly had both domestic and international audiences, both at the grass-roots level and in the cabinets of political power.

Most importantly, the foci and tones in this imagery illustrated new concerns and strategies of thinking. The long border with somewhat chaotic Russia was opening up and the rest of Europe increasingly saw Finland as a gateway to these markets. Coping with, and benefiting from, the new situation required rethinking of attitudes and actions. The stamps countered suspicion, distrust, and memories of hostility through such ‘soft’ themes as environmental cooperation. A 1995 Finnish–Russian joint issue of four stamps depicted endangered animals in wilderness landscapes typical of the Finnish–Russian borderland. In the 2001 “Gulf of Finland” issue, the largest of the five stamps depicted a naval chart (Figure 7). The included land areas represent the countries around the Gulf, but rhumb lines dominate the image. It suggests that the welfare of this delicate body of water is a shared responsibility of Finland, Russia, and Estonia, between which traffic is increasingly active and, sometimes, politically and environmentally controversial. The other four stamps enhanced the message by depicting the Gulf’s history, culture, and ecology. These images simultaneously addressed Finnish



**FIGURE 7** A regionally oriented, environmentally concerned “Gulf of Finland” stamp series was launched in 2001 and has continued on Finland’s euro-value stamps.

concerns about safety and economy (acknowledgement and agreement), built positive connotations by emphasising what the countries had in common (persuasion), and underscored the need to find new, open-minded approaches to collaborate for everyone’s benefit (promotion of desire and vision). The boundary that had been strengthened through a variety of visual means one hundred years earlier was now actively downplayed. With this approach the Finnish stamp designers placed their country in the lead in the prevention and management of potential hazards.

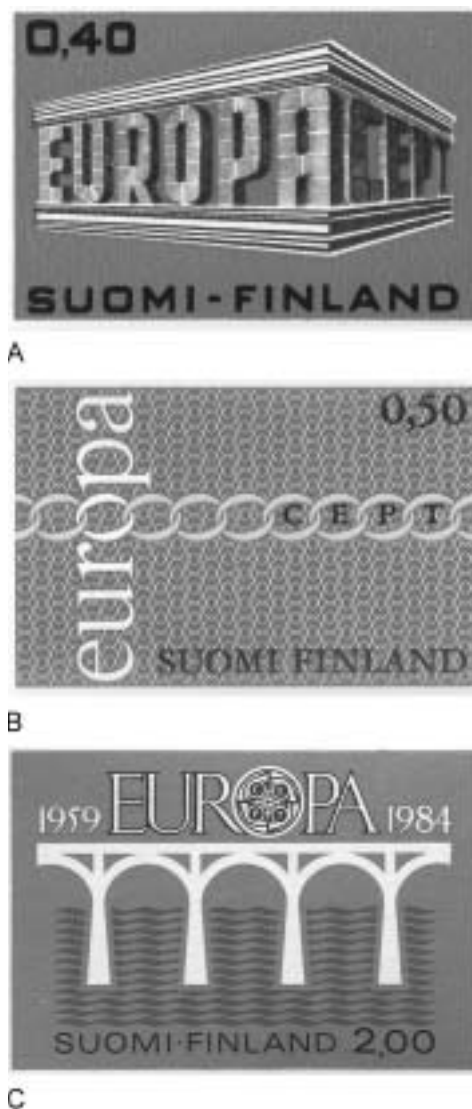
## PLACING FINLAND IN THE WEST

The Finns' desire to place themselves among Western nations and to demonstrate their roots in (Western) European cultural and political heritage<sup>62</sup> as an identity-political way to step away from the East is evident in three thematic bodies of stamps. In the Cold War context these stamps appear as acknowledgements by the national elite of popularly held sentiments and as a form of understated resistance. First, the *Norden* and *CEPT Europa* stamp series connected Finland to Nordic and Western–Central European cooperation through joint postal projects. Second, sports gave positive international visibility to a small country. Third, themes such as culture and emigration confirmed the Finns' Western heritage and connections. These imageries are notably popular-geopolitical in the sense that they emphasise individual citizens' international affiliations and cultural activities over formal foreign policy.

## Postal cooperation

The *Norden* and *Europa* stamp series were launched in the early years of the Cold War to build cultural and ideological unity supranationally through 'apolitical' institutional practices. The stamps in both series seem neutral, for they depict generally accepted and appealing natural, historical, and cultural themes. However, by bringing national entities under a supranational umbrella through a celebration of things in common, or by illustrating national contributions to a common cause, these stamps become fundamentally (geo)political. Both series promote (Western) Europe's economic and political integration by underscoring 'Nordic' and 'European' mainstream values.

For example, the CEPT stamps examined here repeatedly employ what are commonly (and uncritically) perceived to be constituents of a 'common European heritage'. Three abstract images issued during the Cold War illustrate this well: In a 1969 design (Figure 8A), Europe's foundation is built on the legacy of classical Greece and Rome. The building style and material associate 'Europe' with solid democracy that has millennial roots in one significant 'cradle of civilisation' and its cultural, ideological, and institutional heritage. A chain design two years later uses an obvious metaphor, where a whole consists of parts whose connections and unity determine the strength of that whole (Figure 8B). Similarly obvious symbolism is included in the 1984 bridge design (Figure 8C) – it is no accident that these connecting (and, more cynically, easily controllable) structures appeared on the euro banknotes as symbols of unified Europe.<sup>63</sup> These stamp designs express a specific politico-territorial desire and are textbook examples of whispering visual persuasion.<sup>64</sup> Accordingly, both supranational stamp series promoted economic and cultural exchanges and technological achievements through the turbulent 1990s.



**FIGURE 8** Shared ‘European’ ideals and symbolic unity on Finnish *CEPT Europa* stamps in (A) 1969; (B) 1971; and (C) 1984.

### Affirming boundaries through sports

Finland’s fame as an athletic superpower of the 1920s and 1930s is a cherished constituent of the popular national narrative in Finland and a long-term tool of the national elite’s international image-making strategies.<sup>65</sup> Not surprisingly, the ‘international sports references’ focus on success – on track and field athletics, cross-country skiing, ski-jumping, and motor sports. Almost two-thirds of these stamps refer to World or European Championships and Olympic Games,

which have considerable publicity value for the organising and participating countries, cities, and individuals and which all are 'Western' institutions.

Accordingly, the most important stamps for Finland's international sports visibility and national pride were the ones issued for the XV Summer Olympic Games, which were held in Helsinki in 1952, twelve years after the initially scheduled date. The four stamps were 'charity stamps', issues with a surcharge designed to collect funds in support of the Finnish team's participation in the Games. This collection of a 'voluntary tax' for a common, globally important goal boosted Finnish identity and a sense of unity, marking an important milestone on the road to post-war recovery. As souvenirs and collectables these Olympic stamps supported the organisers' worldwide publicity efforts.

All the depicted athletes have global name recognition as World Champions or Olympic medalists and are Finnish citizens, with one exception – the Swedish high-jumper Patrick Sjöberg is portrayed on a Finland–Sweden event stamp in 1994. That it is he who represents Swedish track and field on a Finnish stamp is hardly accidental because of his Finnish family connection and popularity in Finland. From the perspective of Finnish identity politics it is clear why the annual track and field meets were arranged with small, historically friendlier Sweden – interaction between the two countries remained close throughout the twentieth century and was greatly aided by Sweden's neutrality during the Cold War years. The stamps confirmed that the western neighbour is a respected, desired, and matching opponent and partner. The national teams' well-known love–hate relationship is a source of great positive excitement in both countries.

A prominent heraldic signifier, the Swedish flag design on the stamp, indicates Sjöberg's homeland. In general, the numerous national flags included in the sports imagery connect individual athletes, their homeland, and their national competitors, offering yet another example of "geopolitical signs." The individuals become 'national commodities' in the national team's flag-coloured sportswear or otherwise in relation to the flag.<sup>66</sup> If the stamp does not specify the event, international competition is suggested by depicting the individual against other countries' flags. An illustrative example is a 1989 stamp honouring the life and achievements of the long-distance runner Hannes Kolehmainen (Figure 9). In the image, modeled after a well-known photograph, he finishes as the champion in front of a large audience and a series of flags, all of which represent Western countries. Kolehmainen's shirt portrays Finland's lion coat of arms, for the image is from the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm, when Finland was still part of Russia, the blue-and-white flag was not yet in use, and Kolehmainen's victory was an important booster of Finnish nationalist sentiments. The nations are thus "flagged" on the stamps in the finest tradition of Billig's "banal nationalism" and one's own is elevated above others in the eyes of both domestic and foreign audiences. The imagery 'confirms' Finnish national exceptionalism against other nation-states, but does it in a friendly team-spirited tone.



**FIGURE 9** Placing Finland in the West and one's own national representative above others on a stamp honouring the long-distance runner Hannes Kolehmainen (1989).

### Other Western references

Other symbolic reconfirmations of this sense of belonging in the West include migration, religion, education, science, and European cultural, economic, and technological cooperation. This imagery emphasises historical continuity, although the fashions and specific ideological affiliations of each era come through as well. For example, modern German technology and Graf Zeppelin's visit to Helsinki in 1930 were celebrated with a special issue in a country which had old commercial and cultural ties to Germany and where German and Fascist sympathies were rising. The long geopolitically conditioned caution towards Estonia was overcome with a joint Friendship issue in 1992 (one year after Estonia's independence), portraying personal interaction through a correspondence theme. The stamp's date of issue in February targeted it at the emerging Valentine's Day market, which revealed the increasingly commercial outlook of Finland's postal services and specific Western influences in Finnish (and Estonian) popular culture.

The memory of mass emigration to North America from Finland was still vivid in 1938, when the "Tricentenary of Delaware" stamp honoured those Finns who moved from Sweden to Delaware to found New Sweden in 1638. The Finns cherished their personal international contacts and the support they received across the Atlantic. The importance of this emigration



**FIGURE 10** Stamps indicating Finland's Western connections and values: (A) The 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of New Sweden in North America (1988) and (B) One hundred years of Finnish Christian missionary work (1959).

history and continuous contacts with the USA is evident in the return to the same theme in 1988 (Figure 10A), when 350 years had passed since the founding of New Sweden and another peak in emigration from Finland to North America had occurred after World War II. The stamp was a joint issue with Sweden and the USA, where President Reagan had declared 1988 a “year of friendship” between Finland and the USA in the aftermath of the Second Cold War.<sup>67</sup> Finnish settlers in Sweden were celebrated in 1967, at the height of the Finnish exodus across the Gulf of Bothnia. The ideological-geopolitical meaning of these stamps is underscored by the observation that the Finnish settlement in Russia and Estonia (the roots of which likewise date back to the seventeenth century) is entirely ignored in the imagery.<sup>68</sup> Again, the East is symbolically deleted as a place of bad memories and exile.

The Finnish political leaders' general goal in their self-proclaimed neutrality was to avoid arrangements that resulted directly from the world's geopolitical bipolarity. Scientific achievement and exchange thus offered another way to celebrate international contacts after World War II. Among the first post-war ‘international references’ were two stamps issued to honour the Third International Forestry Congress held in Finland in 1949. International acknowledgement of Finnish expertise in a nationally significant field was designed to boost the citizens' self-esteem. Towards the end of the century, the persistent celebration of international scientific conferences advertised Finland more and more loudly as an experienced meeting organiser, following the generally commercialising and boosterish tone of Finnish stamps.

References to Lutheranism and Christian values confirm the Finns' connections with the Nordic and Western European cultural spheres, when read as juxtaposed to the above-described visual erasure of the Orthodox Church until the 1970s. The International Scout Movement and Finnish Lutheran missionary work exemplify Christian West-affiliated activities and organisations acknowledged on Finnish stamps in the 1950s. The missionary map (Figure 10B) covers only those areas where work is ‘still needed’ – the



Western world is already 'safe' and its 'outpost Finland' spreads the word in selected locations in Africa and Asia. The portrayal of Jesus Christ (1963) and Martin Luther (1967) among the few foreigners depicted on Finnish stamps further confirms the prominence of Christianity in the mainstream definition of Finnishness.

All these foreigners are Westerners. That most of them appeared in the imagery after the fall of the Berlin Wall reflects the new openness of Finnish society and makes particularly striking the observation that *all* individuals depicted on Finnish stamps are white.<sup>69</sup> The stamps thus fail to acknowledge that in the 1990s Finland transformed from "a country of emigration to a country of immigration"<sup>70</sup> and the number of foreigners in Finland rose from 20,000 in 1989 to over 100,000 by the end of 2001.<sup>71</sup> The official portrait of Finland as represented on its stamps has thus clung to the myth of an ethno-culturally homogeneous country, thus ignoring the substantial demographic change in Finnish society since the end of the Cold War; the growing recognition of this change in legislation, education, and social practices; and the increased permeability of national boundaries in Europe.

However, the changing "geopolitical times" were not overlooked in institutional references. Finland's participation in the United Nations and European cooperation was acknowledged increasingly openly towards the end of the century. The political leaders were now comfortable celebrating their country's institutional affiliations with the West, thus bringing practical and popular geopolitical imaginations closer to one another through a quotidian visual channel of communication. An extroverted, self-propagating attitude now accompanied the passive acknowledgement of anniversaries and theme campaigns, as in one of the two 1993 stamps celebrating the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Finnish Armed Forces.<sup>72</sup> The image, which portrays a UN military vehicle at a checkpoint, was the first recognition in the stamp imagery of the work of the more than 30,000 Finns who have served in UN peace-keeping operations since 1956 (the Finns were already in the Suez one year after the country became a member of the UN). The growing desire to guarantee a strong position in Western European markets and European integration can be traced in the stamp imagery. Among these landmarks confirming the stamps' value as temporally comprehensive data are a 1967 stamp celebrating FINEFTA (Finland's special arrangement with the EFTA); commemoration of EFTA's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1985; a stamp celebrating Finland's membership in the Council of Europe in 1989; and a stamp issued for Finland's EU membership in 1995. Finland's EU presidency received its own stamp in 1999 and the European Year of Languages in 2001. For many, the membership and participation in EU cooperation represented the culmination of the westward orientation and an "identity-political correction" of Finland's previous "false location" in the East.<sup>73</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

Finnish stamps illustrate how the political elite's and ordinary citizens' understanding of their country's place in the world has changed over time and how powerful neighbours and global politics have conditioned the gradual opening of Finnish society to the outside. The foci evolved from war to peace, from conflict to caution and cooperation, from closed to open boundaries, from passive peripherality to active participation, and from East to West. The style of communication has changed accordingly, from loud propaganda to cautious persuasion, confirmation, and resistance, and to self-confident advertisement and place-boosterism. These changes illustrate the Finns' constant negotiation of their country's borderland position; their historical desire to be a Western nation and symbolically distance themselves from the East; and the identity-political need of the national elite to articulate these processes to ordinary citizens in their everyday environments. What is communicated, and in what manner, is important, and so are the silences, as the repeated visual erasure of the East and the celebration of new Western affiliations as "corrections" of Finland's place in the world suggest. These articulations (or lack thereof) are not unique – recent comparable examples of quotidian visual geopolitics include the symbolic relocation of the post-socialist European countries in Central Europe through the means of country-promotional cartography,<sup>74</sup> the reimagining of Britain's global leadership in James Bond movies,<sup>75</sup> and the redefinition of threat and enemies in other Hollywood blockbusters.<sup>76</sup>

For the teachers and researchers of critical and popular geopolitics stamps are a goldmine. They connect to visual method(ologie)s, the importance of which in the study of geopolitical phenomena is obvious. They illustrate hegemony and resistance, propaganda and persuasion, and such iconographical concepts as "geopolitical signs" – and show the necessity of spatial and temporal contextualisation in their interpretation. Stamps "create an imagined geography of the world"<sup>77</sup> and place one's country within that framework. Because stamps are comparable to other quotidian 'texts' with strong territorial ideological contents, they provide material for entertaining exercises in critical comparison. Stamps are easy to obtain and they speak to all of us, facilitating accessible discussion. Neither entertainment nor accessibility should be overlooked in the classroom and can be combined with 'serious' subject matter.<sup>78</sup> The power of stamps confirms that "it is essential to consider the mundane, everyday, often subconscious rituals that instill and reinforce political identity."<sup>79</sup> The same mundaneness teaches the importance of paying attention to detail – nationalism (or similar spatial political phenomena) do not mostly happen "someplace else" to "other people."<sup>80</sup> Stamps are *fun*, because they still constitute a rather unconventional approach to, and data for, teaching and researching geopolitics. They thus provoke interest and encourage crossing conventional lines of thought in the finest tradition of *critical* and *popular* geopolitics.

Topics for new exercises in postal geopolitics are numerous and underutilised. Fresh themes and perspectives will contribute to the emerging study of quotidian geopolitics and to stamp studies, which have begun to proceed towards theoretical and methodological rigour, following the example of geographical place-name studies.<sup>81</sup> My case study about Finland ended in 2001, after which a significant identity-political change was introduced in EU Europe with the adoption of the euro. Finnish stamps now indicate both national and supranational scales. The first impression is that this diversification of scale did not weaken the powerful nation-building triangle of money, stamps, and naming. But new research questions emerge: Do the foci of Finnish stamps change further because of this recent “identity-political correction”<sup>82</sup> of Finland’s geopolitical location? If so, then how and why? And, most importantly, what can that change (or lack thereof) teach us about European integration, geopolitics, and identity politics at the supranational and national levels?

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19. K. Dodds, 'Enframing Bosnia' (note 16).
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21. Ibid.
22. See, for example, M. Klinge, *A Brief History of Finland*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Helsinki: Otava 2000).
23. T. Talvio (1997): *Suomen leijona* (Helsinki: Museovirasto, Suomen kansallismuseo 1997).
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26. The forms of Finnish postal resistance are described and illustrated in M. Poutvaara, *Postia sortokaudelta* (Jyväskylä, Finland: Gummerus 1973).
27. Ibid.
28. Compare this with Sharp, *Condensing the Cold War* (note 4).
29. A. Reitala, *Suomi-neito* (Helsinki: Otava 1983).
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31. P. Lähteenkorva and J. Pekkarinen, *Ikuisen poudan maa* (Helsinki: WSOY 2005).
32. Raento and Brunn 2005 (note 3).
33. Ibid.
34. My main data source was *LAPE Special Stamp Catalogue: Suomi Finland 1856–2003 & Abvenanmaa Åland 1984–2003* (Turku: Philatelic Service of Finland 2004). For the selection and characteristics of the initial sample, see Raento and Brunn (note 3).
35. See R. Alapuro, *State and Revolution in Finland* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1988).
36. O'Tuathail and Dalby (note 17).
37. See Raento and Brunn 2005 (note 3) pp. 148–149.
38. *LAPE* (note 34) p. 130.
39. R. Barthes, *Mythologies* (London: Paladin 1973); Scott (both references in note 9); Lutz and Collins (note 14); P. Bell, 'Content Analysis of Visual Images' and T. van Leeuwen, 'Semiotics and Iconography', in van Leeuwen and Jewitt (note 2) pp. 10–34 and pp. 92–118; Rose (note 2) pp. 5–32, 135–163.
40. Raento et al. (note 1); Raento and Brunn 'Visualizing Finland' (note 3).
41. For more about *Finlandisierung*, consult R. D. Liebowitz, 'Finlandization: An Analysis of the Soviet Union's "Domination" of Finland', *Political Geography Quarterly* 2 (1983) pp. 275–288 and T. Vihavainen, *Kansakunta räbmällään* (Helsinki: Otava 1991).
42. A 'national science' is a field of academic research which is seen as a central constituent of a country's nation-building process.
43. Note 15.
44. D. R. Hall, 'A Geographical Approach to Propaganda', in A. D. Burnett and P. J. Taylor (eds.), *Political Studies from Spatial Perspectives* (New York: John Wiley & Sons 1981) pp. 313–330; Jowett & O'Donnell (note 11); Kosonen; Monmonier; Pickles; Zeigler (all in note 15).
45. Raento et al. (note 1); Raento and Brunn (note 3).
46. For details, see Raento and Brunn (note 3). Useful English-language texts about Finnish politics, society, culture, and iconography include M. Jakobson, *Finnish Neutrality* (London: Evelyn 1968) and *Finland: Myth and Reality* (Helsinki: Otava 1978); Alapuro (note 35); A. Paasi, 'The Rise and Fall of Finnish Geopolitics', *Political Geography Quarterly* 9/1 (1990) pp. 53–65 and *Territories, Boundaries and Consciousness* (Chichester, UK: Wiley 1996); J. Häkli, 'Cultures of Demarcation: Territory and National Identity in Finland', in G. H. Herb and D. H. Kaplan (eds.), *Nested Identities* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield 1999); M. Klinge, *The Finnish Tradition* (Helsinki: Finnish Historical Society 1993) and *A Brief History of Finland* (note 22); E. Jutikkala and K. Pirinen, *A History of Finland*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (Espoo, Finland: Werner Söderström 2003); T. Talvio, *The Coins and Banknotes of Finland*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Helsinki: Bank of Finland 2003).
47. Cf. H. Mikkeli, *Europe as an Idea and an Identity* (London: MacMillan 1998) and I. B. Neumann, 'Constructing Europe: Russia as Europe's Other', in U. Hedetoft (ed.), *Political Symbols, Symbolic Politics* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate 1988) pp. 226–266.
48. Zeigler (note 15).
49. See O. Neubecker and J. P. Brooke-Little, *Heraldry* (New York: McGraw-Hill 1976).
50. Harley, 'Maps, Knowledge, and Power' (note 12).
51. *LAPE* (note 34) pp. 531–532. These and other regional and special purpose stamps were excluded from the sample.

52. Lähteenkorva and Pekkarinen (note 31); Raivo, 'The Limits of Tolerance' (note 14).
53. Raento and Brunn (note 3) pp. 157–159.
54. Billig (note 7).
55. Monmonier (note 15) pp. 170–171.
56. Ibid., pp. 107–108.
57. Henrikson, 'America's Changing Place in the World' (note 15), p. 108, 111.
58. Dodds, 'Licensed to Stereotype' (note 20) p. 127.
59. The situation in Aug., 2006. See <[www.sotainvalidit.fi](http://www.sotainvalidit.fi)>.
60. See Raivo, 'Landscaping the Patriotic Past' (note 14).
61. Raento and Brunn (note 3).
62. An illustrative example of this bias is Klinge's *A Brief History of Finland* (note 22); M. Antonsich, 'Cardinal Markers on Finland's Identity Politics and National Identity,' *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 46/4 (2005) pp. 289–304. S. Moisio, 'Finlandization as False Location: Finland's EU Membership and Political Recognition', *National Identities* 9 (2007; forthcoming). Special issue on Finland (ed. P. Raento).
63. Pointon p. 252; Heymans (both in note 5); Raento et al. (note 1).
64. Jowett and O'Donnell (note 11); Monmonier; Zeigler (both in note 15).
65. Lähteenkorva and Pekkarinen (note 31) pp. 9–11, 220–229.
66. Cf. V. Hewitt, 'Soft Images, Hard Currency: The Portrayal of Women on Paper Money', in V. Hewitt (ed.), *The Banker's Art* (London: British Museum 1995) pp. 156–165.
67. The event was described in detail in the Finnish-language philatelists' magazine *Suomen Postimerkkilehti* in 1988 (69/2 pp. 71, 80–81 and 69/4 p. 247).
68. Consult H. Kulu, 'Finnish Diaspora in Russia and Estonia: Population and Settlement Changes in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century', *Fennia* 197/1, 62–79.
69. Raento and Brunn (note 3) pp. 157–159.
70. J. Korkiasaari and I. Söderling, 'Finland: From a Country of Emigration to a Country of Immigration', in I. Söderling (ed.), *A Changing Pattern of Migration in Finland and Its Surroundings, Publications of the Population Research Institute, Series D 32* (1998) pp. 7–28.
71. An update of the statistics is available at <[www.stat.fi](http://www.stat.fi)>.
72. See Raento & Brunn (note 3) p. 153.
73. Moisio (note 62); see T. Tiilikainen, 'Finland and the European Integration', in L. Miles (ed.), *The European Union and the Nordic Countries* (London: Routledge 1996) pp. 120–125 and S. Moisio, 'Geopoliittinen kamppailu Suomen EU-jäsenyydestä' (English summary: 'The Geopolitical Struggle for Finland's Membership in the EU'), *Annales Universitatis Turkuensis C* 204 (2003).
74. Zeigler (note 15).
75. Dodds, 'Licensed to Stereotype' (note 20).
76. J. P. Sharp, 'Reel Geographies of the New World Order: Patriotism, Masculinity, and Geopolitics in Post-Cold War American Movies', in Dalby and Ó Tuathail (note 16) p. 163.
77. Sharp, *Condensing the Cold War* (note 4) p. x.
78. Morgan; Raento and Hottola (both in note 1).
79. Sharp, *Condensing the Cold War* (note 4) p. xvi.
80. Billig (note 7).
81. See Kearns and Berg (note 6).
82. Moisio, 'Finlandization as False Location' (note 62).