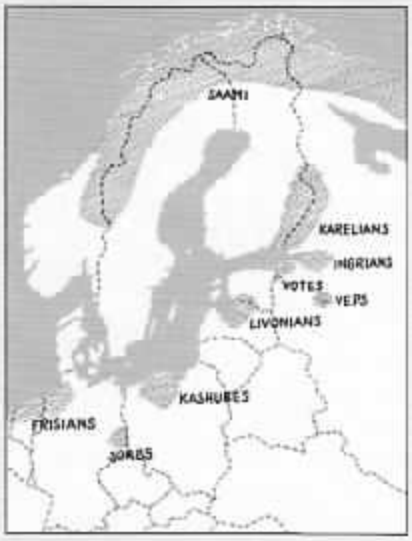


Territorial minorities

Territorial minorities inhabit a well defined area, and in many cases they can refer to a presence far back in history thousands of years ago. Territorial minorities who are regarded as the earliest inhabitants in an area, by themselves or by others, are called indigenous or autochtonous.

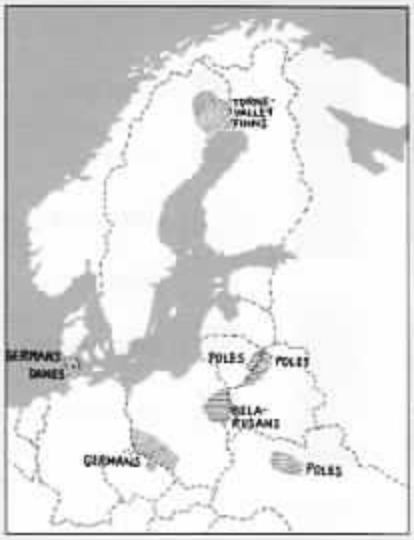
The *Saami*, a Finno-Ugric people in Northern Scandinavia and Russia, are recognized by the United Nations as indigenous.

The Slavonic *Sorbs* live in the Lausitz area in eastern Germany, with its center in Cottbus. The Sorbs number about 70.000. Many speak Sorbian as well as German.

The Kashubians live in Pomerania, with its centre in Gdansk. This Slavonic population numbers some 150,000 to 200,000.

Several Finno-Ugric peoples exist today only as remnants of larger populations. The *Livonians*, or Livians, in Latvia number only about 100 individuals. The *Votes* and *Veps* also remains in small numbers. *Ingrians* and *Finns* in the St. Peterburg area number several thousands. The *Karelians*, who live in both Finland and Karelia, make up a 10 % minority in the Russian republic Karelia.

The Germanic *Frisians* live on the Dutch and German Frisian Islands in the North Sea and on neigbouring shores.



Border minorities

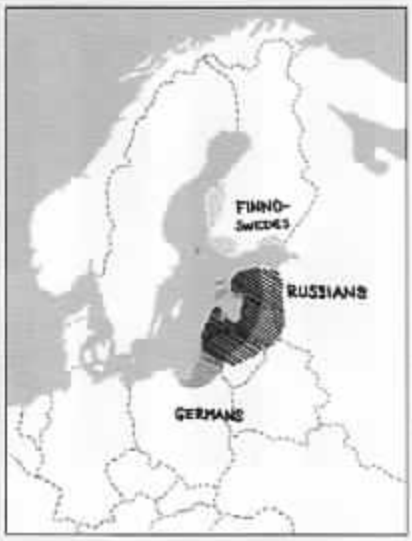
Border minorities are created when borders are drawn or changed as a result of military force or political agreements. They are long-time inhabitants of an area. Although they are neighbours to the majority culture from which they originated, they may not identify with it, and they speak their own version of the language.

The settlement of 75,000 *Danes* south of the Danish-German border, and some 20,000 *Germans* north of that border, is largely a result of the 1864 peace treaty.

The *Torne Valley Finns* became a minority in northern Sweden after the division of Sweden and Finland in 1809. This Finnish-speaking group lived under a restricitive Swedish minority policy up to the early 20th century.

Poles are found in several areas outside present day Poland. The borders of Poland have changed more dramatically than those of any other country in the Region. After WWII large areas of eastern Poland were transferred to the Soviet republics of Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania. Many hundred years earlier the Lithuanian-Polish commonwealth included these regions.

Germans in areas bordering Germany are found in Silesia (Slansk) in southern Poland, and Denmark among other areas.



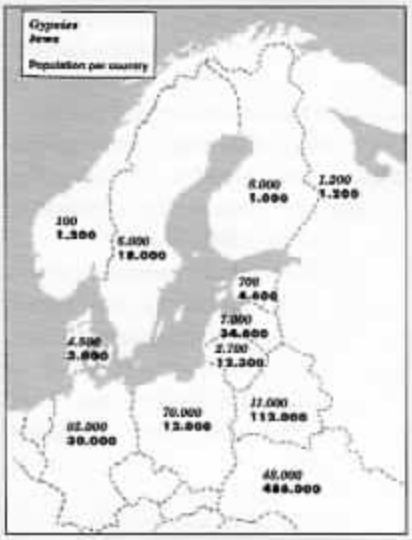
"Post-colonial" minorities

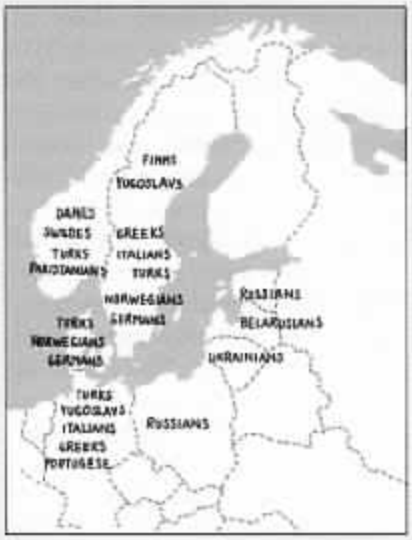
Minorities stem from different historic processes, e.g. fusion and dissolution of states.

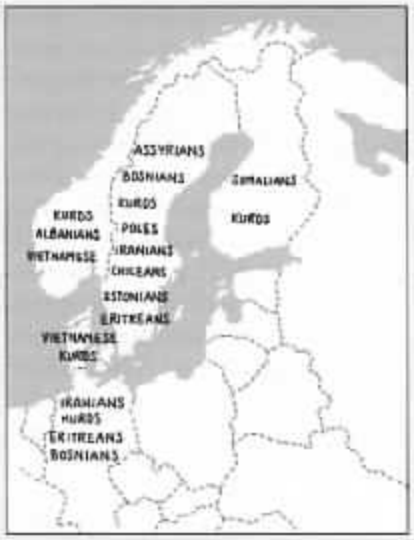
Finland's Swedish-speakers are hard to classify. Parts of Finland were "colonized" from Sweden in the Middle Ages in a combination of crusades, settling, trade and military expansion. Gradually Finland was integrated in the Swedish state. The two language groups must be seen against the Finnish brand of nationalism, which also led Swedish-speakers to shift to Finnish for political reasons.

Germans in today's Estonia and Latvia had an upper hand after expansion of the Teutonic order and the Hansa. Socially Germans were a dominant minority also after the Russians had taken control in the early 1700s. The German Balts decreased from the late 1800s and were enticed to Germany after the 1939 Molotov—Ribbentrop Treaty.

Russians moved into Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania at a slow pace in the 1800s. After the incorporation in the Soviet Union 1940, the political, military and industrial sectors were russified, and workers, military personnel, and administrative personnel were recruited from other parts of the USSR. The demise of the USSR in 1991 left a large Russian-speaking population in the area.







Non-territorial minorities

Non-territorial minorities have a migratory background. Escaping prosecution they have settled in a larger region covering several countries. They preserve their language, culture and religion and often live apart from the majority culture, although individuals might be assimilated.

The Baltic Region was the home of the *Jews* for centuries. From the Middle Ages up to the beginning of this century 90 % of world Jewry lived in a region comprising eastern Poland, Western Ukraine, Belarus, and Lithuania. Today only a small part of the once numerous Jewish population remain in the area. Many were killed in the Holocaust, others emigrated, mostly to the United States and to Israel, and still others were assimilated in the majority cultures.

Roma, or *Gypsies*, have been present in the Baltic Region for centuries although most Gypsies live elsewhere. They speak Romani, an ancient Indoeuropean language, and uphold their own cultural traditions. Earlier they led a partly nomadic life, but are today more often settled.

Labour migrants

Labour migrants are recruited to an area often as labour or expertise. They typically aim at integration into the new society, although sometimes traditions from original cultures are conserved for generations. Labour migration has occurred for centuries. In this century massive labour immigration into the western part of the Region occurred in the 1960s and early 1970s.

The largest group of immigrant labour in Sweden was the *Finns*, followed by *Yugoslavs* and *Greeks*, but many more nationalities were represented. As a whole the internordic migration dominated. In Germany the *Turks*, *Yugoslavs*, *Italians* and *Greeks* constituted a majority of labour migrants. Today the Turks count about 1,500,000 in Germany.

Within the former Soviet Union labour migration was extensive. The industrialization of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania led to massive immigration of workers, particularly from Russia, Belarus and Ukraine.

Poland did not experience a similar influx of workers, although recently a Russian labour immigration is notable.

Refugees

Refugees escaping prosecution, terror or other life-threatening living conditions settle in a new country often with the hope of returning home soon. They try to keep their culture. There have always been refugees although their numbers increase during wars. International conventions define when an indivudual is to be considered a refugee and thus to be granted asylum.

Large refugee groups from the Second World War were *Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanias*, and *Jews*. As the only country to stay out of the war Sweden received all of these groups, often only as a transit country. Norwegians, Danes and Finns also fled to Sweden. Large numbers of *Germans* living elswhere, in particular East Prussia, fled to Germany at the end of the war.

During the 1970's conflicts and prosecution in countries in Africa, Asia and South America resulted in a heavy influx of refugees. *Ethiopia, Sudan, Vietnam, Chile, Argentina, Kurdistan, Iran, and Iraque* were some of the refugee countries from which people fled to Western Europe. After 1992 the war in former Yugoslavia has forced tens of thousands of *Bosnians*, *Croatians*, and *Albanians* to come the the Region.

(Ill: Karin Hallgren)

The Multicultural Baltic Region

Part 1

Peoples, Migrations and Ethnic Coexistence

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