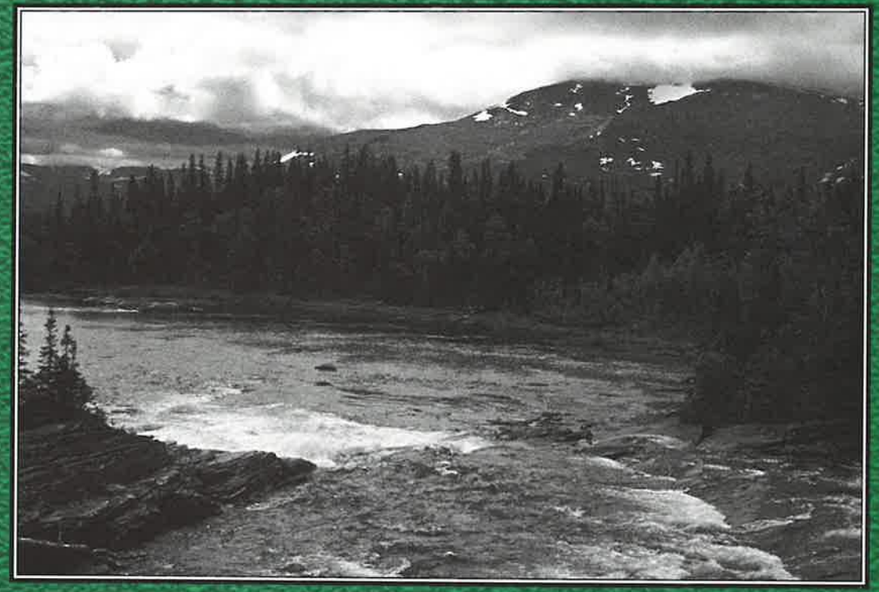
NORDEN

A THEMATIC AND HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

by Robert Ostergren



NCCP No. 3
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About the Author

Robert Ostergren is professor of geography at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. He is a specialist in Nordic historical geography who has lived and studied in Norden on a variety of occasions. Nineteenth century emigration to North America has been the focus of much of his research and writing. He has published numerous scholarly articles on the subject and is the author of *A Community Transplanted: The Trans-Atlantic Experience of a Swedish Settlement in the Upper Middle West, 1835–1915* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988).

Nordic Culture Curriculum Project

NCCP—the Nordic Culture Curriculum Project—is the acronym for a two-volume work planned by a North American committee of scholars. The primary volume is meant to make up a STUDENT READER in a form suitable for undergraduate instruction. The volume, which consists of a series of pamphlets, will provide short and authoritative introductions (in quarto size: ISSN 1977-2073) to various aspects of Scandinavian Life and Civilization. The pamphlets of the READER are written by scholars with expertise in the areas concerned and are subjected to a voluntary field testing by interested Scandinavianists at various universities. The series will also include a "Guide for Student Use." The companion volume, a TEACHERS' GUIDE (in octavo size: ISSN 1077-2073), will provide additional information for each of the pamphlets, possible student examinations and research topics, and updatable supplementary bibliographies for students and instructors.

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In 1952 The Nordic Council was established (it is now an 87-member parliament, consisting of delegates from Denmark, the Faeroe Islands, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and Åland), and in 1971 the Nordic Council of Ministers was formed as an instrument to coordinate cooperation between the governments of the Nordic countries. The Council has furnished the financial support necessary to start the NCCP series, which will initially make the following titles available:

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NORDEN: A THEMATIC AND HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

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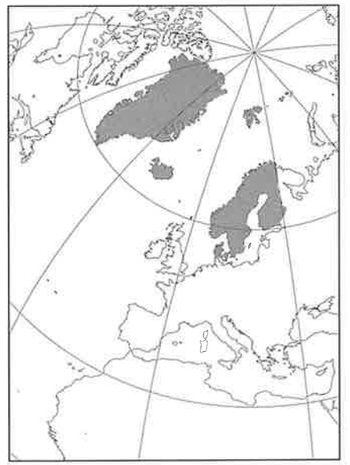
The five northern states of Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Iceland comprise one of the most widely recognized regions within Europe. Few would deny that this is a distinctive part of the world. To outsiders, it is the "rooftop" of Europe, a peripheral and relatively pristine land of fjords, glaciers, forests, and midnight sun. It is also popularly known for its storied Viking past, for its cultural traditions in food ways, sport, music, art and cinema, and for its uniquely progressive and modern society. To its inhabitants, it is the part of Europe in which they can feel most at home, can interact freely wherever they may go in terms of customs, manners, attitudes and ease of communication.

While generally accepted as a region, a certain amount of confusion exists as to what it should properly be called. The most generally accepted term worldwide has been "Scandinavia." The term dates back to classical times, occurring for the first time in the writings of Pliny the Elder. Originally it was meant to denote a rather large island among the many vaguely defined islands and peninsulas perceived by the ancients to lie on the northernmost reaches of the continent. Later it was applied solely to the southernmost portions of present-day Sweden, and then broadened (in an account by Ptolemy) to include the Danish archipelago. In more recent times it has included various reaches of the larger region, but is most commonly associated with the peninsular core of Sweden, Norway, and Denmark.

Substitute labels have made their appearance from time to time. For example, a negative cultural sensitivity to the term Scandinavia that arose within Finland during the late 19th century resulted in the promotion, for a time, of the concept of "Fenno-Scandia." This is essentially a geologic term that refers to the massive granite shield that underlies the greater part of the Scandinavian Peninsula and Finland. The use of Fenno-Scandia as a regional name, however, posed a problem in that the so-named geologic structure did not extend far enough westward to include Iceland, while extending a considerable distance eastward into Russia. Thus it failed to conform to recognized cultural and political boundaries and was no more precise than the term for which it was intended to be a substitute.

A more acceptable alternative that has emerged over the last half-century or so is the term "Norden." Particularly impor-



A Global Perspective on Norden A high perspective on the world reveals the extreme northerly position of the Nordic region. In addition to being the "rooftop" of Europe, Norden is positioned far to the north of any major population concentrations in North America. If placed in the western hemisphere, most of the region would lie at or to the north of the center of Hudson's Bay. Due to the influence of warm Atlantic currents, high latitude in Europe is more hospitable to human settlement. The Nordic region contains roughly half of all the people on the planet who live north of 60 degrees latitude.

The effects of glaciation are seen nearly everywhere on the landscapes of the Nordic countries, for nearly the entire region was covered by the ice sheets at one time or another. Today the glaciers have all but disappeared, the major exception being in Iceland where glaciers still cover roughly 11 percent of the island's surface. Hofsjökull is one of Iceland's largest glaciers, stretching out over 925 square kilometers. Hofsjökul is seen here in juxtaposition with the barren interior highlands of the island—haven in former times to those who had been outlawed from the settled coastal margins.

tant in this process was the founding in 1952 of the Nordic Council, an international consultive body dedicated to promoting a spirit of cooperation and mutual self-interest among the five states within the broad areas of cultural, political, and economic affairs. Also important was the reinforcement of this effort in 1971 through the creation of the Nordic Council of Ministers to serve as an intergovernmental vehicle for cooperation in specific policy areas. The Nordic Council and Council of Ministers have done much to promote the concept of Norden, and its definition as the five Nordic states plus the three autonomous areas of the Færoes, Greenland, and Åland. In an age of increasing economic and political integration within Europe, the concept of Norden has also been useful in providing residents of the region with an identity distinct from the rest of Europe. The term has become commonplace and is used freely today within the region, along with the older term "Scandinavia." It is, however, probably less familiar to people outside the region.

Regardless of what we may choose to call it, there is a commonly accepted set of variables that serve to define the region, the most important of which are cultural. Although ethnographic and linguistic differences certainly exist, especially in the case of the Finns, there is a degree of ethnic and linguistic homogeneity to this multinational region that is seldom found in the world. Moreover, the histories of the five countries are inextricably linked. At one time or another nearly all parts of the region have been politically united with or under the political domination of one or more of their regional neighbors. Ideas and institutions have been shared. Challenges from within and without have often been met by similar strategies and means. The five states clearly share common political and economic outlooks, which are in large part the product of a common past.

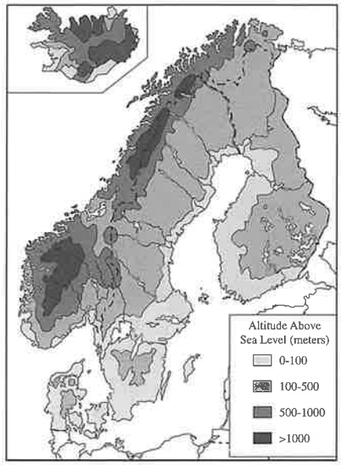
Geographic position and environmental features have played supporting roles. By virtue of its insular character and relatively remote location at the "rooftop" of Europe, the region has enjoyed (or suffered from) a high degree of isolation from the overt economic, cultural, and political influences of its European neighbors over the centuries, although this is certainly less the case in modern times. Whatever value may be placed on this isolation, it has forced the Nordic states to look traditionally to their own resources and ideas in setting the course of their affairs. Similarly, the relative harshness of the Nordic environment, with its meager agricultural resources and former lack of fossil fuels, has promoted a high degree of independent inventiveness on the part of its inhabitants. It is because of the harshness of the environment and peripheral position of the Nordic countries, writes geographer W.R. Mead, "...that technological invention and innovation have had relatively greater consequences for the countries of Norden than for most countries of Europe".

This interplay of culture and environment is the key to any appreciation of the forces that serve to structure the Nordic world. The essay that follows is a brief, but highly thematic geography of Norden. It emphasizes the ways in which the Nordic peoples have interacted with each other and the unique properties of the physical milieu they inhabit. It is also very historical, viewing the features of Nordic geography in an evolutionary sense. It does not pretend to be an encyclopedic description of geographic facts, rather an explanation of how this region emerges as a uniquely homogeneous, yet differentiated, part of the world.

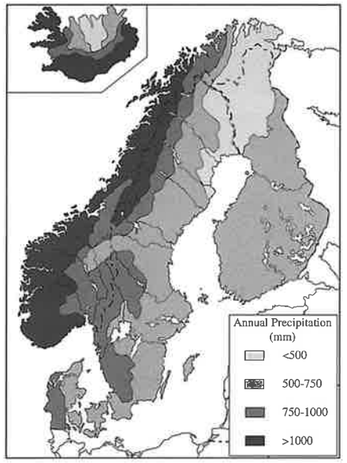
The Physical Base

Any discussion of the environmental realities of the Nordic region might well begin by considering the outline and relative position of the landmass. Norden is an insular realm. It is made up of a collection of islands and peninsulas, all of which have long and highly interdigitated coastlines. It is, indeed, relatively difficult to be far from the sea wherever one might find oneself in the Nordic countries, and perhaps even more difficult to escape its influence. The sea has served throughout time as both an isolating factor and a means of outside contact. In some ways the region may be seen as facing two directions, depending on local association with the sea. There is a westward facing realm (Iceland-Norway-Denmark) that looks to the Atlantic and an eastward facing realm (Sweden-Finland) that depends upon the Baltic. The countries of this region also occupy a northerly position on the earth's surface. The southernmost of the Danish islands lies at about fifty-four and one-half degrees north latitude. The latitude of Norway's North Cape is a bit more than seventy-one degrees. A comparable position in the western hemisphere would stretch from roughly the latitude of the southernmost reaches of Canada's Hudson Bay (James Bay) to the northerly portions of Baffin Island.

The combination of high latitude and insularity has profound climatic implications. Taken alone, the high latitude would imply a harsh subarctic climate. But, in fact, a relatively moderate and hospitable climate prevails. This is due to the ameliorating influence of the ever-present sea, the Atlantic margins of which are warmed by the northward movement of currents from mid-latitude waters. The sea moderates the extremes



Altitude Above Sea Level The high backbone of the Scandinavian peninsula, the Kjølen Range, runs almost the entire length of Norway. There are only a few breaks in this barrier—the most significant one being the gap leading eastward to Sweden from Trondheim on Norway's western coast. Further to the east, low-lying areas in Finland and the northern two-thirds of Sweden follow the contours of a gradually receding Baltic coastline. In Norway the lowest-lying areas form a discontinuous narrow strip (strandflat) along Norway's highly interdigitated coast. With the exception of a highland zone in the south of Sweden and a terminal moraine belt along the eastern side of the Jutland peninsula, the southernmost parts of Sweden and all of Denmark lie within 100 meters of sea level. Rugged Iceland consists predominantly of high plateaus and mountains.



Annual Precipitation The inland movement of moisture-laden air masses from the North Atlantic is the principal source of precipitation across Norden. This means that the Atlantic-facing coastal regions of Norway and Iceland, which are backed by high mountains and plateaus capable of producing precipitation by orographic lifting, receive the greatest amounts of rainfall. The low-lying western coasts of Denmark and southern Sweden are also wetter, but less so. Interior areas lie, to some degree, in a rain shadow and receive much more modest levels of precipitation. This is particularly true in the sub-arctic north, where conditions in some areas can be almost desert-like. There are also seasonal differences. Western coastal areas receive the greatest amount of precipitation during the winter when the frequency of eastward moving cyclonic frontal systems is highest. Interior locations, particularly in the north, are wetter in late summer or early autumn when a combination of surface warming and increased humidity produces rain.

of both winter and summer. July temperatures in Stockholm, Sweden's capital, average a comfortable 17 degrees Celsius (62.6 F) while January temperatures average a relatively moderate –2.5 degrees (27.5 F). Further west and closer to the Atlantic at Bergen, on Norway's west coast, the corresponding readings are 14 and 2 degrees Celsius (57.2 and 35.6 F).

On the other hand, high latitude dictates that receipts of solar energy across the region are small. The angle at which solar radiation must travel to reach the earth's surface is low, even in summer. As a consequence, much is absorbed or reflected by the earth's atmosphere and the actual amount of solar radiation transformed into energy is less than the amount transmitted to space from the earth's surface and lower atmosphere. Were it not for the substantial importation of warm air energy from lower latitudes via the sea and the generation of latent energy through the condensation of local moisture surpluses, the region would have a net annual energy deficit. Nonetheless, both flora and fauna must be adapted, especially in the far north, to a brief season of growth and reproduction.

The very fact of high latitude also dictates a marked annual rhythm of daylight and darkness. Nearly a third of the Nordic lies above the Arctic Circle and must endure a prolonged winter period in which the sun is entirely absent or appears only briefly. For much of the remainder of the region, winter daylight is also brief, with the sun lying low in the sky. In contrast, the far north experiences the "midnight sun" every summer and even the more southerly reaches of the region enjoy daylight for all but a few hours of the day during the summer months. This annual rhythm of light and darkness is accompanied by a rhythm of heat and cold. Winter conditions blanket Norden for a prolonged period, in contrast to a relatively short, but glorious summer. The intervening seasons of spring and autumn are especially brief. Indeed, it has been said that there are really three winters-autumn winter, high winter, and spring winter-a kind of distinction normally made only by residents of northerly lands.

The human responses to these conditions are marked. The rhythm of daylight and darkness is a historic, and at times ominous, motif that runs through the culture of the region. It is reflected in the sagas of the pagan past, in which time was calibrated in terms of nights rather than days, and winters rather than summers. Throughout Norse and Finnish mythology, darkness and wintry conditions are associated again and again with the forces of evil and the landscapes of fear. The coming of light and summer warmth marks a traditional time of celebration. Medieval fields were once laid out taking into account the importance of direct exposure to sun and shadow, while the traditional seasonal rhythm of work was geared to frenzied levels of activity during the summer months and more relaxed indoor pursuits over the long winter. The act of marriage was, in fact, reserved in many traditional societies for the shoulder seasons of spring and autumn; the social frivolity associated with the union of couples being quite inappropriate for the hardworking summer months. Even a psychological and physiological response has been observed, in which the incidence of depression and certain forms of disease seem to be linked to the annual cycle of daylight and climatic change.

Differences in weather and climate within the Nordic region depend to a large extent on the interplay of maritime and continental air masses. The driving force in weather is the frequent and persistent invasion from the west of low pressure (cyclonic) systems that develop over the North Atlantic. These systems bring with them moist and relatively warm air acquired from the warm currents of the North Atlantic Drift. Once over the region, they challenge the relatively dry air masses (anti-cyclonic) that emanate from the interior of the Eurasian continent. In addition, there is the more or less constant presence of the cold polar air mass to the north, along the margins of which the invading systems from the west must move and along which stormy weather frequently develops as a consequence of the clash of warm moist air with cold and dry polar air.

The other major factor is the existence of a high elevation barrier that runs the length of the Norwegian side of the Scandinavian Peninsula. The Kjølen range extends for nearly 1,600 kilometers (1,000 miles) at roughly right angles to the prevailing movement of weather systems and rises to heights of roughly 1,800 meters (6,000 feet) in the north and 2,400 meters (8,000 feet) in the south. Because of this barrier, western Norway takes the full brunt of the inland moving Atlantic systems, the effect of which is to reduce greatly the seasonal extremes of temperature along the Norwegian coastal zone. High levels of precipitation are also generated along the Norwegian coast due to the orthographic lifting of moisture-laden air over the mountainous spine of Norway. By the same token, the impact of Atlantic influences is much reduced in the northern two-thirds of Sweden and Finland, where dry continental influences may extend westward across the Gulf of Bothnia to the base of the western mountains for prolonged periods in late winter and early summer. Norway, then, has a reputation for raininess while the northern portions of Sweden and Finland are relatively dry. The southernmost portions of the Nordic region experience the maximum interplay between the oceanic and continental air masses.

The long arm of the Baltic Sea, known as the Gulf of Bothnia, separates Sweden from Finland. The shallow gulf is gradually shrinking due to the post-glacial uplift of the land. The section of the Swedish coastline in this photo features ancient crystalline bedrock, exposed long ago by the denuding action of the glaciers.

Eroding cliffs of stratified sedimentary rock mark the Baltic coast of the large Danish island of Sjælland in this photo, taken on Kobe Bay some distance south of Copenhagen. Although covered at the surface with a thick layer of glacial deposition, Denmark is underlain by deep sedimentary formations of relatively recent origin, which sets it off from much of the rest of Norden where a foundation of ancient and crystalline rock formations are more often the rule.

A line of utility posts stretches across the ice-scoured and exposed rock of the high fjell in western Norway. The landscape is largely barren; the only vegetation comes in the form of small plants that cling to crevices and the small pockets of soil wedged here and there between the rocks.

The power of glacial processes is evident in many Nordic landscape scenes. Here large boulders left on the land by the glaciers may be seen strewn amongst a recently thinned stand of pine trees in western Sweden. An under story of small deciduous trees has established itself beneath the opened forest canopy.

There the uninhibited penetration of Atlantic air eastward brings relatively mild winter conditions and heavier precipitation. Summers are, as a result, both cooler and wetter than would be possible if the area was completely dominated by continental air.

The freezing of parts of the Gulf of Bothnia, the northern Baltic, and the Gulf of Finland also influences the length and severity of winter in the northern interior. The freezing occurs as a function of cold air and the relatively low salinity of the Baltic Sea. The ice, which begins to form in November, eventually expands to a maximum around March and clears in May. At its maximum an unbroken ice bridge stretches between the Åland Islands and the coast of Finland. Most northern harbors are effectively closed for extended periods and even Stockholm and Helsinki may experience short periods of ice blockade. The extensive ice over these bodies of water adds to the area of exposed frozen territory in the north, which helps to chill the air, and greatly reduces the ameliorating influence of incoming Atlantic air masses.

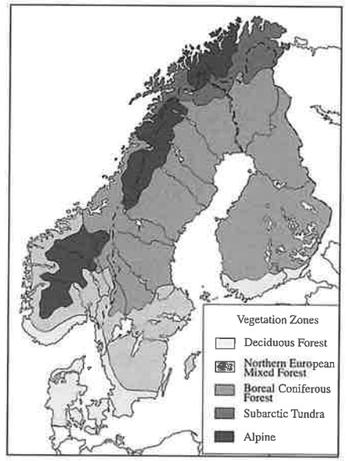
The physical landscape of the Nordic countries is the product of a long and eventful geologic past. In sharp contrast with much of Europe, the region is underlain close to the surface by a massive formation of ancient rock (ca. 600 million years old), principally made up of granites, gneisses, and other hard crystalline rocks. This rather solid mass is known as the Fenno-Scandian shield. It is similar in form and composition to the Laurentian shield in Canada or the Siberian shield in the Russia. In many ways it serves as a platform on which the entire region rests. The shield lies closer to the surface towards the northern and western margins of the region where it is exposed in many places, but it is also hidden by younger geologic formations and deposits as well as by intrusive arms of the sea. A great fault marks the Atlantic boundary of the shield (apparent in the great depths off the continental shelf of western Norway). Within Norden the shield slopes gently downward towards the south and east, eventually disappearing as it meets the younger sedimentary strata of the North European plain. Thus, Denmark and the extreme southern part of Sweden (the plain of Skåne) lie beyond the surface margins of the shield and are chiefly underlain by thick deposits of chalks, sands, and clays laid down by intruding seas during ancient times. A major period of crustal faulting in northern Europe, which developed about 300 million years ago, led to considerable uplifting and depression of individual blocks of the shield in southern Scandinavia. The effects of this faulting may be seen in the rather rectangular outlines of Lakes Vänern and Vättern in central Sweden, as well as in the coastal configurations of the Kattegat and the Gulf of Finland.

The mountainous spine of the Kjølen range is made up of ancient rocks that have been raised up more than once by tectonic forces. Their rounded surfaces and long U-shaped trough valleys and fjords (partially sunken trough valleys) are the product of the extensive glacial erosive action that has occurred since the most recent emergence of the mountains during Europe's alpine orogeny, a period of intense mountain building that began roughly fifty million years ago. In fact, the massive ice sheet that expanded outwards from this mountain system during the Quaternary period defined much of the region's present outline and surface features. At its maximum extent (roughly 14,000 years ago) the ice sheet covered the whole of the region, with the exception of western Jutland (Jylland) in Denmark. The retreat of the ice sheet took several thousand years. Only isolated remnants may be found today among the highest mountains in western and northern Norway.

The effects of glaciation on the region's landscapes are many. One such effect is denudation. The weight and force of the slowly moving ice sheet caused it to erode away much surface material, leaving a denuded landscape with little topsoil and much exposed rock. Large areas, especially in the mountainous west and in the north, are zones of denudation. A second effect is deposition. Glacial deposition takes a number of forms. The glaciers, for example, deposited morainic materials scraped free from the denuded zones over large parts of the region, often in the form of meandering belts and ridges (eskers), but also in heavy blanketing layers. The haphazard deposition of such material stands behind the confused and immature drainage systems typical of many Nordic landscapes, particularly in southern Sweden and across Finland's vast central lake plateau. Hummocky terminal moraines mark places where the melting edge of the glacier remained stationary for extensive periods of time. The lee sides of these moraines often give way to outwash plains formed of coarse material borne away from the melting glacier by sheets of melt water. A classic example of this juxtaposition of terminal moraine and outwash may be found on Denmark's Jutland peninsula. The line of low hills (Baltic Terminal Moraine) that follow the eastern coast of the peninsula delimit the maximum extent of the southwestward pushing glacier, while directly to the west lies a broad expanse outwash. The coarse and relatively infertile soils of the outwash, covered by heath land vegetation, were left by the torrents of meltwater that flowed down over the moraine.

During the most recent period of glaciation, the ice sheets reached their farthest extent along the eastern margins of Denmark's Jutland peninsula. Meltwater flowing out from under the edge of the ice pack created a vast outwash plain that stretched across the entire western side of the peninsula. This extensive area of poor, sandy soils came to support a low, brushy "heath" vegetation. Known as the Danish Heath, the area was long neglected and peripheral to intensive agricultural settlement. This ended only in the late 19th century, when an organized effort was mounted, following the loss of Schleswig Holstein to Prussia, to reclaim and settle the barren heath lands of Jutland. Much of the original heath vegetation disappeared under this assault.

Sweden's Ljungan Valley is one of many long river valleys that flow down the long slope from the mountainous backbone of the Scandinavian Peninsula to the shores of the Bothnian Gulf. While the valley is populated, the back-country on either side is blanketed in dense northern coniferous forest.



Vegetation Zones Vegetation in Norden is highly zonal, although gradations are far subtler than they appear on this map. The southernmost stretches of the region, exclusive of Iceland, are home to a regime of deciduous woodland forest cover, which is common to much of north-central Europe. The beech is the most familiar species found there. This purely deciduous zone gives way farther north to a mixed deciduous-coniferous forest; and that in turn shades into a blanketing belt of boreal coniferous forest, dominated by just two species: the Norway spruce and the Scots pine. In the subarctic north, lies a tundra vegetation of lichens, moss and dwarf shrubs. A similar vegetation regime is found above the tree line in the alpine zone of the Kjølen Range. Iceland (not shown here) has few trees, with grassland vegetation in low lying areas, and a mixture of tundra-like vegetation and barren landscapes at higher elevations.

But perhaps most interesting is the long-term effect of the ice sheet's weight. At its maximum the ice sheet reached an estimated depth in some places of 3,000 meters (10,000 feet). The enormous weight of the ice exerted such a downward pressure on the underlying mass of the Fenno-Scandian shield that the shield began to sink. Once the ice began to melt, the depression of the land plus a general rise in sea level due to the vast amounts of meltwater produced from the shrinking ice cap resulted in the complete inundation by the sea of large portions of the region. At one point in time the entire Baltic basin was a huge meltwater lake whose natural outlet to the sea was blocked temporarily by elements of the retreating glaciers. With the removal of the glacier's immense weight, the land surface gradually began to rebound and the postglacial lakes and seas began to recede, a process that continues to the present time. The center of uplift today is most noticeable in the northern portions of the region where the earth's surface is rising at the rate of roughly one meter per century, causing the Gulf of Bothnia to shrink slowly year by year. The line that marks the "upper marine limit"-the maximum penetration of the postglacial seas-is an important determinant of settlement pattern in many parts of Norden. Below this line, many areas benefited while submerged from the deposition of a rich mantle of marine sedimentation or from the resorting of existing glacial deposits by water action. The outcome was a fertile agricultural resource capable of supporting relatively dense human settlement. The upper marine limit lies fairly close to the present day coast in Norway and in Denmark. In Sweden and Finland it often extends far into the interior.

This last period of glaciation also left Norden totally denuded of vegetation. Today's patterns of vegetation, therefore, derive from a gradual recolonization of the region by successive vegetative communities. The most diverse flora is found in the more hospitable environments of the west and the southwest. A gradual diminution in the number of species occurs to the north and northeast, or with increased altitude. Denmark, the southern and southwestern coasts of Norway, and the southwestern margins of Sweden are host to a deciduous forest cover that is common to all of north-central Europe. Although much of this primeval hardwood forest was cleared long ago by human activity, remnants remain in the form of protected woodland estates consisting primarily of beech and oak. Further to the north and east begins a transitional zone in which the beech and oak are joined by other deciduous species, such as maple, ash, and birch, as well as by coniferous pine and spruce. This zone extends northward into central Sweden and along the Norwegian coast as far as Trondheim. It also makes an appearance along the southern margins of Finland. But beyond this zone summer temperatures are simply too cool to allow the growth of many deciduous trees. Although broken nearly everywhere by agricultural clearings, the mixed forests of the transition zone form a fairly continuous vegetative cover. Still further to the north and on the lower margins of the upland regions in the west lies a predominantly coniferous forest of pine and spruce mixed here and there with small stands of birch and alder. This boreal coniferous forest region is poor in species and relatively slow growing, but covers by far the largest portion of the region. Its furthest margins lie in the extreme northern portions of Sweden and Finland. Beyond its margins may be found struggling stands of dwarf birch and vast open tundra landscapes of grass, moss and lichen. Altitudinally, it gives out at roughly 600 meters to be replaced by alpine vegetation and barren rock.

The physical geography of Iceland is remarkably different and must be treated separately from the continental parts of Norden. Geologically speaking, Iceland is the youngest of the Nordic environments. Whereas the geologic construction of the rest of the region dates back hundreds of millions of years, the oldest formations in Iceland are only about 60 million years old. The origins of Iceland are volcanic. The island is a basaltic formation; actually a remnant of a vast basaltic dome that originally extended all the way from the British Isles to Greenland. The dome collapsed leaving a group of small elevated basalt islands which were eventually connected to one another through continued volcanic activity to form a single land mass. Volcanism persists on and around Iceland even today; new eruptions occur at the rate of about one every five years. The island has many hot water springs and natural steam fields, especially in the younger volcanic areas. Glaciation also remains an active force on Iceland. Glaciers cover extensive parts of the island and since the volcanic rock is easily eroded, the effects of glacial movement on the land are especially marked.

Iceland is a landscape still in the making; a landscape that gives the impression of immaturity in the ruggedness of its outline and the presence of strong physical forces at work. The island is devoid of forests. Compared to the rest of Norden, the Icelandic landscape seems naked, especially in the interior. The small number of species and their limited distribution are in part due to natural conditions. Altitude, climate, and glacial activity have done much to hold rapid vegetative advances at bay. But there has also been a human effect. Extensive birch woods and woody scrublands did exist in many coastal areas when settlers first arrived a little more than a thousand years

The beech is the most common tree species to be found in woodlands and groves all across Denmark, as well as in the southern and southwestern extremities of Sweden. The beech was once a mainstay of the forest vegetation that covered these areas, although nearly all of that original "mixed" deciduous woodland has been long since removed. Most examples today, such as this beech woods on the grounds of Denmark's Fredenborg Castle are planted.

This photo taken along the shore of a lake near Gnesta in southern Sweden is an example of the belt of North European mixed forest that extends laterally across the region from southern Norway to southwest Finland. Much disturbed by human activity, it consists of a highly variable mixture of deciduous and coniferous species.

Although found throughout much of Norden, the birch is a particularly common species of the northern coniferous forest. Because it grows farther north and at higher altitudes than most species, it is also a "marker" species for the transitional zones that lie between the coniferous forests and the sub-arctic or alpine vegetations. In these zones, dense tangles of stunted birch, such as in this photo, are often found in sheltered areas.

The origins of Iceland are volcanic, and volcanic formations, both active and dormant, dominate the landscape. This is Hekla, one of Iceland's best-known active volcanoes. Hekla stands 1,520 meters high. Known in early times as the "Mountain of Hell," Hekla has erupted no fewer than 16 times since 1104 and has been responsible for considerable destruction and loss of life due to its location in the southwest near populated areas. The worst explosions occurred in 1300, 1766, and 1947.

ago. These lands were largely cleared by settlers and given over to grazing. Intensive grazing pressure ensured that the land would remain free of woody vegetation and led inevitably to extensive soil erosion in some areas. Only a small part of the original woodland survived the impact of such human activity, although modern reforestation and conservation has increased the vegetative cover.

Territorial and Political Development

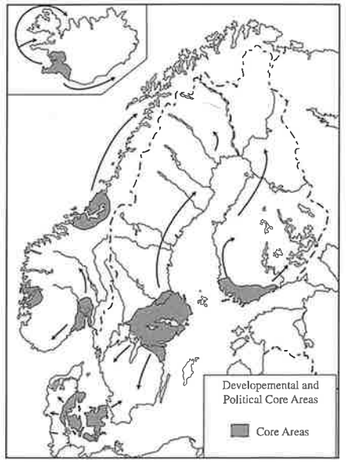
Human occupation of the Nordic lands (excepting Iceland) dates back to the final stages of the Ice Age (ca. 10,000 B.C.). Once the ice began to retreat and vegetation and fauna began to re-establish themselves, people slowly began to enter the region from other parts of Europe. These earliest inhabitants were hunters and gatherers. Immigrants from the south occupied various coastal sites in western Norway, and roamed widely in Denmark and in the south of Sweden. Immigrants from the eastern Baltic occupied Finland somewhat later. As the millennia passed additional waves of migrants reached Norden, often introducing new cultures. The economy became more complex, especially in the south, as agriculture and grazing were introduced. Settlement also began to expand northward along the coasts and into the forested interior.

The region was especially influenced throughout the early ages by the flow of ideas and people from the Germanic areas of central and eastern Europe and, later, from Romanized western Europe. These influences ceased, however, with the chaotic conditions that occurred between 400 and 600 A.D. in association with the great westward migrations of the Germanic peoples and the breakup of the Roman Empire. In the ensuing vacuum an indigenous Norse culture began to emerge, based on an expanding agricultural population with strong links to the sea and a tradition of pursuing far-flung trade connections with the rest of Europe. Over the ages the widely scattered populations of the region became organized into regional groups bonded together by the ties of kinship, tribal loyalty, and long association with place. These groupings recognized a common set of laws and customs that were upheld at regular assemblies, which took place at a specific site known as the *ting*. The many loose and independent tribal confederations of this type were eventually brought into closer political and economic alignments, giving the region a recognizable political and territorial structure by the onset of the Viking Age. As early as the 6th century the *Svear* of Uppland began the conquest of their neighbors to the south, laying the foundations of an early Swedish state by about 800. The Danes, who originally occupied Skåne, moved westward in the 5th and 6th centuries to establish a kingdom on Sjælland and Jutland. In Norway, the many tribes of the southeast were slowly united under one king. At roughly the same time the Trøndelag region became an important nucleus in the north.

The early consolidation of a Swedish state in the Mälar basin of central Sweden was important because it laid the foundations for a trading empire that extended to the far shores of the Baltic and beyond. Enterprising Swedish traders established commercial colonies all around the shores of the Baltic and then advanced southwards along the great rivers of Russia, establishing a base at Kiev. By the tenth century, they were raiding population centers on the coast of the Black Sea, probing the shores of the Caspian Sea, and organizing a trading system that brought exotic oriental goods northward in exchange for such northern commodities as slaves and furs. This eastern Viking trading empire flourished until the 11th century. During this period of Swedish commercial expansion, the many contacts between the Finnish people and the lands to the east were gradually replaced by stronger contacts with Sweden and the rest of Scandinavia.

Meanwhile in the west, organized bands of Norwegian and Danish Vikings began to raid the coastal districts of western Europe. Sporadic raids were followed by larger and more systematic attacks that required fortified winter bases, which in turn led to conquest, colonization, and trade. These western Vikings settled widely in the coastal highlands of western Britain and Ireland, as well as along the eastern margins of England. For a time, a Norwegian kingdom flourished in Ireland and the Irish Sea was virtually a Norwegian lake. By the 10th century the Danes had established themselves throughout the eastern portions of lowland Britain, controlling an area known as the Danelaw. In France, Viking invaders were granted control of the region that eventually became the Duchy of Normandy. These remarkable Viking conquests and colonies in western Europe were, however, short-lived. The far more numerous indigenous populations soon absorbed Viking rulers and settlers alike, but not before they left a cultural imprint on the speech and social structure of these lands. Indeed many settlements in the British Isles and in Normandy still bear Scandinavian inspired place names today.

Of a more lasting nature were the colonizations of the Atlantic islands that lay to the west of the Viking homelands. The Shetlands, the Orkneys, and the Hebrides were settled early in the 9th century by seafarers from the west of Norway and



Developmental and Political Core Areas
The Nordic states essentially grew from specific core areas established in the early Middle Ages or in prehistoric times. The territorial core of the Danish state became centered on the rich agricultural resources and strategic position of the Danish islands, particularly the large island of Sjælland. A Swedish cove developed around the lands held by the Svear tribes in Uppland and the Mälaren lowlands. Meanwhile, Norway developed more than one core. Initially the most important was on the western coast around Trondheim, but power later shifted to the area around Oslo Fjord. The early core of Finland was established in the Swedish settled areas around Turku (Åbo), and later shifted eastward to Helsinki. The southwestern coastal areas around Reykjavik constituted the early settlement core of Iceland.

Early Nordic societies were built around an oral legal tradition, which was recited each year at an assembly known at the "ting." Thingvellir was the site of this annual gathering on Iceland. Here the Law-Speaker stood on the Law Rock (on the left near the flagpole) and repeated the words of the law from memory before the assembled representatives congregated on the slope below. In the background, stretching off to the horizon, is the relatively bleak and rugged topography of Iceland.

became bases for subsequent activity in the British Isles. In addition, there was the discovery of new lands further to the northwest on the Faeroes, which were settled around 800. The discovery of Iceland followed. The island was settled by large-scale migrations from western Norway during the latter half of the 9th century. By the time Viking settlement on Iceland came to a close (ca. 930), an estimated 30,000 people were living there. The westward push did not end with Iceland. In 982 Erik the Red reached Greenland, where Norse colonies were established, although eventually lost. Explorations even extended to the coast of North America, where a brief Viking presence has been documented on the northern tip of Newfoundland.

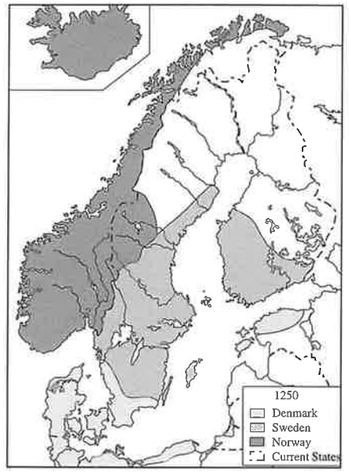
Within Norden the Viking Age left a lasting impression on the human geography of the region. This was a time of expanding population and heightened pressure on the land. Population pressure was certainly a part of the impetus for colonization overseas. It also led to the development of highly formalized patterns of settlement and land use that would underlie rural life in many of the more densely settled parts of the region until early modern times. Viking contacts with the outside world introduced the unsettling influence of Christianity to the pagan Nordic realm. Wealth obtained from overseas expansion and trade fostered greater levels of political organization and administration, and perhaps most importantly, the founding of town life. By the end of the 8th century, the Swedes had founded an important commercial center at Birka. Situated on an island in Lake Mälaren with easy access to the Baltic, Birka enjoyed a brief but glorious career as the trading emporium of the North. Its fortunes declined as the relentless rising of the land cut off its outlet to the sea, but the necessity of such urban foundations is attested to by the fact that its functions were quickly taken over by the better-situated town of Sigtuna. The Danish equivalent of Birka was Hedeby, which occupied a site on the narrow base of the Jutland peninsula capable of dominating the overland trade flowing from the North Sea to the Baltic Sea. Even in Norway, which stood somewhat apart from the main trade routes, small commercial centers were developing at Skiringssal on the west side of Oslo fjord and at Haugesund on the west coast.

The Viking era was followed by the Middle Ages, which witnessed a relentless expansion of agricultural settlement and the consolidation of the three monarchies of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. Royal power was gradually extended until the traditionally independent provinces and districts of each realm were integrated into unified and centrally organized states. There were also significant territorial developments. Swedish power was extended eastward during the 12th and 13th centuries to bring most of Finland under Swedish control. Heavy Swedish settlement occurred in the coastal districts of southwestern Finland. Åbo (Turku) became the capital of Swedish Finland. In Norway the Oslo fjord region began to assert political ascendancy over its northern rival, Trøndelag, and eventually added Iceland to its dominion. Denmark fought the Wends for control of the southern shores of the Baltic and conquered the southernmost portions of the Swedish peninsula and the island of Gotland.

The late Middle Ages saw much of the region fall under German influence but then recover its independence. During this period German princes were typically called upon to settle disputes and the Hanseatic League, an organization of north German merchant cities that sought to control Baltic and North Sea trade, was granted trading privileges throughout the region. Independence gradually re-emerged through local resistance to German political influence in Denmark and Sweden and through the political union of all Scandinavia under Denmark's Queen Margrethe. The Union of Kalmar (1397–1523), however, eventually foundered as Danish and Swedish interests collided, launching nearly three centuries of rivalry and conflict between the two kingdoms.

The Danish-Swedish rivalry divided the Nordic region into two spheres of influence. In the west, Denmark retained control of Norway and her Atlantic possessions and challenged Sweden for control of the southern Baltic. In the east, Sweden controlled Finland and looked to the Baltic and the lands beyond as a zone of expansion. The struggle between the two Scandinavian powers waxed and waned over the 16th century with neither side gaining a clear advantage. The Danes proved to be superior on the seas while the Swedes proved to be a most formidable land power. In the 17th century the Swedes finally gained the upper hand, obtaining decisive outcomes in the Thirty Years War (1618–48) and the Danish-Swedish War (1657–60). In the first, Denmark lost the island of Gotland and the Norwegian-Swedish border provinces of Jämtland and Härjedalen. In the second, she was forced to surrender the rich provinces of Skåne, Halland, and Blekinge, leaving Sweden in control of all former Danish lands east of the Øresund.

By this time Sweden had become a great European power and virtually ruled the Baltic as a private lake. The border of Swedish Finland extended as far to the east as Lake Ladoga in Russia. Sweden in addition administered an array of overseas possessions stretching in an arc from Lake Ladoga in the east to the German principality of Bremen-Verden in the southwest.



Norden, ca. 1250 Norden in the Middle Ages consisted of three realms. Denmark, the oldest of the Nordic kingdoms, had by this time given up its Viking Era control over Norway and large parts of England, and redirected its attention eastward towards the shores of the Baltic. There it extended its influence over parts of what are now southern Sweden (Skåne, Halland, and Blekinge), northern Germany (Rügen, Pomerania, and Mecklenburg) and Estonia. A united Norway had emerged around 1050, which included Iceland in addition to parts of western Sweden (Jämtland). Meanwhile, Sweden had risen from its historic core area in the Uppland and Mälaren districts to encompass much of what is today central Sweden, along with the southwestern portions of Finland.

Norden, ca. 1570 After a period of more than a hundred years (1397–1524) in which all of the Late Middle Ages kingdoms of the north were united under the Kalmar Union, Sweden re-asserted her independence. The region then became dominated by the two rival powers of Sweden and the united kingdom of Denmark and Norway. While Sweden was usually the loser in the series of conflicts that took place between the two realms, she successfully extended the limits of her power to the north and east. Sweden eventually extended her territory to include the entire Bothnian Gulf basin. In the early 1560s, Estonia and Livonia, on the far shore of the Baltic, were added as well.

Nonetheless the Swedish empire in the Baltic was short-lived. In the Great Northern War (1700–21) Sweden lost most of her trans-Baltic possessions and the easternmost part of Finland to Russia. In 1809 the remainder of Finland was separated from Sweden to become a Grand Duchy of Russia. Sweden's final military venture came during the Napoleonic wars when she went to war one last time against Denmark, which had allied itself with France. In the peace of 1814 the Danes were forced to surrender Norway to the Swedes, but the independent minded Norwegians adopted a constitution and forced the Swedes to grant them a limited degree of autonomy even though they accepted the Swedish King as sovereign of Norway.

Although Denmark lost Norway to Sweden in 1814, she retained Norway's former Atlantic possessions. Denmark continued to rule Iceland until 1944, when it became an independent state for the first time since 1262. Greenland and the Faeroes remain under Danish sovereignty today, although both function as autonomous territories. The only other territorial question for Denmark was the emotional issue over the Duchies of Slesvig and Holstein. In 1864 the Danes fought a brief and unsuccessful war with Prussia over possession of these border duchies. In the ensuing treaty Denmark lost one third of her land area and some of her richest farmland (although the northern part of Slesvig was restored to her in a post World War I plebiscite). The defeat had wide repercussions in Denmark, sparking among other things the formation of the Danish Heath Society to reclaim the poor outwash soils of western Jutland in compensation for the loss of farmland in Slesvig-Holstein.

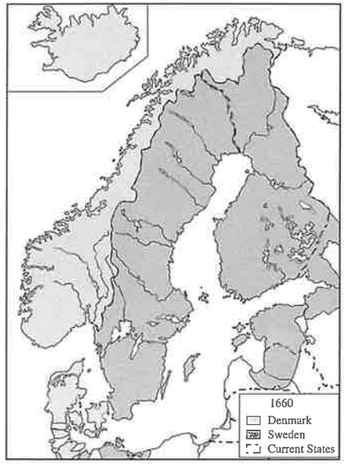
Final independence for Norway and Finland came in the present century. In 1905 the union of Norway and Sweden was peacefully dissolved and these two states assumed their modern borders. The Finnish struggle for independence from Russia, however, was more dramatic. Throughout the 19th century Finland had enjoyed considerable autonomy as a Russian Grand Duchy, but was never free of Russian domination. The Russian revolution in 1917 offered a golden opportunity. Finland declared her independence and fought a war with the new Soviet state that ended in 1920 with Finland retaining the borders of the old Grand Duchy plus an outlet to the Arctic Ocean at Petsamo. In the 1930s Russian demands for strategic Finnish territory in the Baltic (the Åland Islands and the Hanko peninsula) drew Finland into another war with the Soviet Union (the Winter War of 1939–40), in which she was eventually forced to cede roughly twelve percent of her territory. Later, the German attack on the Soviet Union in 1941 offered the Finns an opportunity to regain what had been previously lost. Finland joined

the German attack, but was forced by events to sign a separate peace treaty in 1944. In this peace, Finland was compelled to permanently cede to the Soviet Union most of Finnish Karelia, including the city of Viipuri (Viborg). She also ceded the Petsamo corridor to the Arctic Ocean. Within the ceded territories lived nearly half a million ethnic Finns who had to be resettled within the diminished borders of Finland.

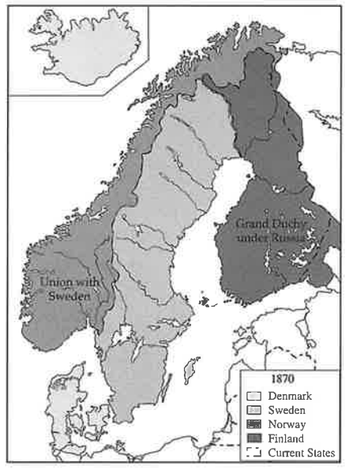
During the first few decades following World War II, the five Nordic States each fashioned their own relationships with Europe and the Super Powers, but at the same time joined together to establish a degree of Nordic unity and cooperation. The policies of each country reflected the special contingencies of living within a region that lay between rival economic and political blocs of tremendous power and influence. One issue was security; the question being whether individual Nordic states should pursue a policy of neutrality, or opt for membership in the western NATO alliance? Another issue was European supranationalism. Each of the Nordic countries faced the problem of fashioning a suitable relationship with the then emerging European Community (EC), a supranational organization of western European states that sought during the 1970s and 1980s to break down barriers to movement and trade among its members, while moving towards ever greater levels of political and institutional integration.

Throughout the postwar years Sweden steadfastly maintained her longstanding policy of neutrality. She alone among the Scandinavian States avoided war or occupation during World War II. Although membership might have offered tangible economic benefits, she also refrained from joining the EC mainly because the organization embodied certain supranational political entanglements that might have compromised her neutrality. She did, however, become a charter member in 1960 of the British sponsored European Free Trade Association (EFTA) along with Denmark, Norway and eventually Iceland (1970). The EFTA established a free trade area among its member states and was especially attractive to the Swedes because no supranational authority or common tariff provisions against nonmember states was required. The traditional close ties between the Nordic countries and Britain gave it added attraction, although Britain eventually joined the EC. Sweden remained officially aloof of the EC throughout this period, although she did negotiate preferential trade agreements with the organization.

Finland's situation was politically delicate. She had to steer a careful course in international affairs lest she provoke strong reactions from her eastern neighbor to whom she was tied by treaties of friendship and mutual assistance. In particular, the



Norden, ca. 1660 By the early 1600s Sweden had become a great European power, fighting successfully in Russia and Poland and extending the limits of Swedish power north to the Arctic Ocean, well eastward into Russia, and down along the Baltic coast as far as Riga. Swedish military prowess during the Thirty Years War (1618–1648) also led to the acquisition of possessions in northern Germany (Lower Pomerania, Wismar and Bremen-Verden), while a series of contemporaneous conflicts between Sweden and Denmark resulted in the transfer to Sweden of Danish possessions in southern Sweden as well as the province of Jämtland from Norway. By 1670 the Baltic Sea had virtually become a Swedish Lake.



Norden, ca. 1870 The map of 1870 reflects the momentous territorial changes of the previous century and a half. Most of the acquisitions accumulated by Sweden during her era as a great power were gradually erased during the 1700s. Sweden suffered additional territorial losses during the Napoleonic wars of the early 1800s. War with Russia in 1808–1809 culminated in the loss of Finland, which became an autonomous Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire. After the loss of Finland, however, Sweden switched sides and received compensation for doing so in the peace of 1814. Denmark was obliged in this agreement to give up Norway to Sweden, but retained possession of Greenland, Iceland and the Færoes. Sweden and Norway entered into a union, which included a degree of constitutional autonomy for Norway. The final chapter leading up to the political boundaries depicted on this map was a war between Prussia and Denmark (1864–1866), in which the Danes lost possession of Schleswig, Holstein, and Lauenburg.

Soviet Union was watchful that the Finns did not commit themselves to any exclusive economic or political relationship with the West. Finland became an associate member of EFTA in 1962 with Soviet approval, but had no direct links to the EC. Finland's efforts to steer a neutral course, during this period, were often given special understanding and acceptance in Sweden, which altered her own policies from time to time out of consideration for the Finnish position.

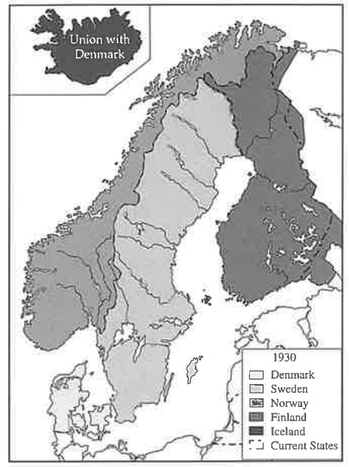
Denmark and Norway were early members of the EFTA, but were later attracted toward membership in the EC as it became increasingly clear that the trade benefits of membership might well outweigh the benefits of exclusion. In addition, both nations were already militarily allied with other nations on the continent through their membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and were less concerned than Sweden about the prospect of gradual political integration with western Europe. Denmark took full membership in the EC in 1972. Norway nearly joined, but drew back at the last moment fearing the active competition with the protected Norwegian agricultural and fishing industries and the uncontrolled investment in Norwegian natural resources, chiefly oil, that membership might entail. Norway nonetheless did negotiate a trade agreement with the EC. Iceland also remained a member of EFTA along with Sweden and Norway, but was also a member of the NATO alliance.

Thus, the age-old split in orientation between Denmark-Norway-Iceland and Sweden-Finland remained a feature of post-World War II foreign relations. But in many ways this division was more apparent than real. This was largely due to the long strides made after the Second World War in the arena of intra-Nordic cooperation. While some form of pan-Scandinavian unity had been a dream since the mid–19th century, the idea never received real political support until the latter part of the 20th century. A seminal step in that direction was taken with the establishment of the Nordic Council in 1952. The Nordic Council was organized to provide an inter-parliamentary forum in which representatives from the Nordic countries could discuss common problems outside the realms of foreign policy and defense. A further step was taken in 1971, with the creation of the Nordic Council of Ministers, which brought together Nordic government ministers responsible for specific policy areas, such as culture, education and environment, for the purpose of defining common goals and initiatives.

In addition to fostering a wide range of cooperative projects, the work of the Nordic Council and Council of Ministers was, and continues to be, instrumental in advancing the idea of a Nordic regional identity. This was an idea that seemed especially relevant and useful during the post-World War II decades, because it allowed the Nordic countries to see themselves and their values as being different from Europe. Indeed, Nordic identity during this period, according to Danish political scientist Ole Wæver, was often "about being *better* than Europe." The Nordic way seemed to offer viable alternatives to seemingly insolvable European tensions over security, social justice, and economic development; it made a virtue of being peripheral to the continent.

The events of the last decade or so have brought a range of entirely new political and economic realities to both Europe and Norden. First, the events of 1989 brought the long post-World War II confrontation between East and West to a close; opening the possibility of greater cooperation between the Nordic States and their former socialist neighbors across the Baltic Sea, as well as the possibility of forging new relationships with the continent. Second, the post-war dream of European supranational integration came of age as a powerful new reality in European affairs. During the 1990s the old EC became the European Union (EU), and grew to include a total of fifteen countries. By all indications its influence will continue to widen. As many as a dozen or more additional members are likely to be admitted sometime early in the present century. During the most recent enlargement of the EU from twelve to fifteen members, which took place in 1995, Sweden and Finland chose to join Denmark as full members. Although Norway (after rejecting membership at the polls) and Iceland have remained officially outside, the integrating pull of the EU and its policies now has an undeniable effect on the entire Nordic region.

These changes have, in some ways, called into question the future of Nordic identity and unity. Concerns have been voiced that Nordic cooperation will lose its importance now that three of the five Nordic countries have become EU members, and that the opening of new relations with adjacent areas around the Baltic and Barents Seas will add complicated new dimensions to Nordic cooperation. Some have even pointed to signs of a crisis of confidence. Growing integration with western Europe threatens to reduce the sense of Nordic distinctiveness. It replaces the belief in a Nordic alternative with a sense that the region has now become peripheral to a European core, and as such is no longer in a position to set its own agenda. The opening of formerly socialist Europe to the West, and the new emphasis on cross-border regional ties with the East that has accompanied this development, also places a strain on traditional conceptions of Norden as a region. Indeed the Baltic has emerged as an attractive new focal point for regional identity and cooperation,



Norden, ca. 1930 The map of 1930 depicts the political situation that existed between the two world wars. By this time there were four independent Nordic states. Norway and Sweden had dissolved their union in 1905, and Finland had achieved its independence from Russia in 1918. Although independence would not come until 1944, Iceland enjoyed an elevated status during this period due to the arrangements of its "union" with Denmark in 1918. In the spirit of national self-determination that flourished after World War I, a number of outstanding boundary disputes were resolved. A 1920 referendum resulted in the return of the predominantly Danish-speaking portions of northern Slesvig to Denmark. In the same year the League of Nations awarded the Åland Islands to Finland, although they retained their Swedish language and were allowed a certain measure of autonomy. The International Court of Justice in The Hague awarded Greenland, which had been claimed by both Denmark and Norway, to Denmark in 1933. At the end of World War II, Finland would be forced to surrender the Finnish-speaking portions of Eastern Karelia to the Soviet Union, along with a couple of sizeable strips of border territory in the far north.

A sense of Nordic identity and cooperation has been an important aspect of modern life for all inhabitants of the region. The official symbol of the Nordic Council and Council of Ministers since 1984 has been a stylized blue swan with eight wing feathers. The eight feathers represent the five Nordic countries of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden; plus the three autonomous regions—the Færoes, Greenland and Åland. An adaptation of the Nordic swan has also been used since 1989 as an environmental label on consumer products. The icon is the work of the Finnish artist, Kyösti Varis.

or at the very least as an eastward extension of the Nordic realm.

The recent attractiveness of the Baltic as an alternative regional focus lies in the fact that it both represents something new and dynamic, and something nostalgic. It fits into the current penchant, encouraged by the EU itself, for creating new cross-border regional groupings, and especially with the expectations that such regional groupings be informally organized—that is, based on networking between cities, business elites, and other special interests, rather than on formal agreements between states. In contrast, the state-based style of cooperation we associate with Norden and the Nordic Councils somehow seems a part of an older, and vanishing Europe. The Baltic also be alluring in that it tends to be rather romantically portrayed as a region possessing a certain historic cultural unity, recalling the days of Viking, Hanseatic, or Swedish hegemony in the region. This kind of nostalgic view has been quite consciously, if somewhat superficially, promoted.

While such strains have had their effect, Nordic identity remains strong. The Nordic Council and Council of Ministers continue, as they have in the past, to be tireless in their efforts to promote Nordic cooperation. They have also taken an important role in helping to foster Baltic Sea cooperation. By the mid–1990s it had become commonplace to think of Nordic cooperation as resting on not one, but three pillars. These included the traditional pillar of inter-Nordic cooperation, but also the pillars of cooperation with the European Union and cooperation with the so-called "adjacent areas" of the Baltic States, northwestern Russia (including St. Petersburg and Kaliningrad) and the Barents Sea. Indeed, a current policy theme among the Nordic states is to find new ways to improve relations and linkages with the adjacent areas, treating them more as equal partners than has just recently been the case. The Nordic countries have also been vocal advocates for the early admission of the Baltic States into the EU. In this sense, they have tried to remain a driving force in the future configuration of the Baltic region. At the same time, the Nordic countries have continued, in their dealings with the EU, to accentuate the differences that distinguish the region from other parts of Europe. The Danes in particular have a long established reputation for being somewhat contrary participants in the "European Project," while in Sweden and Finland the levels of public support and enthusiasm for EU membership and for certain EU policies in particular have at times been something less than overwhelming. In arenas of traditional Nordic concern, such as environmental policy and social justice, the three Nordic members of the EU have made a point of working together to bring their collective influence to bear on policy decisions in Brussels.

Population

By European standards Norden is a sparsely populated region. While the region as a whole accounts for roughly eighteen percent of the European land mass, including European Russia, the people of this region constitute just four percent of the European population. Only Denmark, with 123.4 people per square kilometer, approaches the kind of national population densities that are commonplace nearly everywhere else on the continent. With densities of less than 20 per square kilometer, Sweden, Finland, Norway and Iceland (19.7, 15.3, 13.8 and 2.7 respectively) appear at first glance to be grossly underpopulated. The discrepancy between Denmark and the others, however, is more a reflection of the vast and relatively empty interior spaces of the latter four than an indication that they lack concentrated populations. In fact, the coastal zones, interior plains, and valleys of these countries have long been well populated. Nonetheless, only a handful of administrative districts containing the largest urban places may be thought of as really densely populated. Few agricultural districts in Norden achieve densities of more than 50 people per square kilometer.

It is also important to recognize that the Nordic population is highly urbanized. The proportion of residents who live in urban places (more than 2,000 population) is greater than seventy-five percent in all states. At the same time, one needs to recognize that Nordic urbanization is relatively recent, much of it taking place only during the last century or so. The majority of the region's urban inhabitants is only a generation or so removed from the land, a fact that accounts in part for the nostalgic attraction the countryside often holds for urban residents. The region contains six major urban agglomerations: Copenhagen (København), Stockholm, Helsinki (Helsingfors), Oslo, Göteborg (Gothenburg), and Malmö. In one sense, Copenhagen, Malmö, and nearby cities in Denmark and Sweden are increasingly seen as one immense urban region straddling the Øresund, sometimes referred to as Ørestad. Taken together these half dozen major urban agglomerations account for roughly a quarter of the entire Nordic population.

Demographically, the Nordic states would be considered to possess mature populations, a condition that is generally applicable to all of Europe. Age-sex distribution pyramids for the these states show high proportions of senior citizens, low proportions of minor aged children, and a relatively even sex ratio.

The Viking past is often visible on the Nordic landscape. At Anundshögen, in Sweden's Mälaren Basin, are some of the region's largest burial mounds and ship tumuli.

These Sami (Lapp) women, dressed in traditional garb, are engaged in the tourist trade in North Norway. Descendants of nomadic peoples who have occupied the northern extremities of Norden for thousands of years, the Sami have today replaced their traditional reindeer herding economy for a highly varied engagement with the modern economies of the Nordic countries. Many aspects of traditional Sami society and culture are, however, highly valued and maintained.

For a variety of reasons the Nordic peoples enjoy a long life expectancy. As a consequence, the proportion of population over 65 years of age is among the highest in the world and becoming higher. At the same time, fertility levels are among the world's lowest, barely sufficient, except in the case of Iceland, to replace the current population. Population growth rates in many areas are more dependent on immigration than natural increase.

Historically, the Nordic population has experienced long periods of sustained growth. By far the greatest occurred during the late 18th and the 19th centuries, when declining death rates were greatly exceeded for an extended period of time by a high birth rate. Under the impetus of this rapidly accelerating population growth the region's population grew to exceed five million for the first time in 1815. An additional five million was added by 1875, effectively doubling the size of the population in the space of just sixty years. Massive population growth during this period was an important factor in effecting significant structural changes in the Nordic societies and economies. The inability of land resources to accommodate new households led to the rapid expansion of landless classes in many areas. It also played a role in fueling mass emigration to America and other overseas destinations, particularly in the most impoverished agricultural regions in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. By the end of the century, rapidly falling birth rates began to dampen the rate of population increase; a condition that persisted until the years after World War II, when there was a resurgence of births. The postwar baby boom was followed by a renewal of the downward trend in fertility, especially in Denmark, Finland, and Sweden. Postwar fertility rates have remained high longer in western Norway and Iceland but have been subject to the same general trends as in the rest of the region.

From an ethnic standpoint, the populations of the Nordic countries have always been quite homogeneous, with the exception of Finland where a sizable Swedish minority was established in the Middle Ages. Today Iceland, Finland, and Norway remain remarkably homogeneous, although in the latter case a sufficient number of third world immigrants have entered the country in recent decades to begin to bring the issue of multiculturalism to public attention. Even in Sweden and Denmark, both of which have experienced the influx of substantial numbers of labor migrants and refugees since World War II, the dominant group still accounts for roughly ninety-five percent of the population. Sweden has traditionally had a large Finnish minority, especially in the north. During the 1970s she also allowed relatively large numbers of foreigners into the country. Most came to satisfy shortages of labor in the Swedish economy, and were from other Nordic countries, especially Finland, although large numbers also came from Yugoslavia, Greece, Italy and Turkey. The percentage of foreign workers in the Swedish labor force was as high as five percent in the 1970s, before tighter restrictions stemmed the flow of labor immigration. New waves of immigrants have arrived since the 1970s, the majority of which have been admitted for political reasons from such diverse places as Iran, Chile, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Bosnia and Kurdistan. The growing significance of these elements in Swedish society, particularly in some urban areas, has forced the Swedish government to come to grips with the reality of a more pluralistic society, adopting new social policies to meet its needs. Denmark too has sizeable minority populations of former labor migrants, principally from the other Nordic countries, and from Yugoslavia and Turkey. Like the Swedes, the Danes have also taken in groups of asylum seekers over the years from such places as Vietnam, Kurdistan, and Sri Lanka.

One particularly longstanding ethnic issue affects the three countries of Sweden, Norway, and Finland: the cultural and economic survival of the Sami (Lapps). The Sami are a historically independent population within the region, who have occupied the sparsely populated expanses of the far north since early times. The ancient Sami economy was nomadic, recognizing no international boundaries. Today the population has become more sedentary, even though the Sami were granted the privilege of moving back and forth across the borders of the three countries with their reindeer herds in 1968, but only a small proportion of Sami follow the reindeer today. Most now earn a living in mining, fishing, agriculture, or in the tourist industry; many have even become urbanized. Industrialization and encroaching modernity from the south are rapidly changing traditional Sami culture. Indeed, the intrusion of modern markets and technology has even made reindeer herding a lucrative and highly organized industry. Yet efforts are being made to perpetuate Sami culture, the most effective being the conscious use of their own language and literature. Samic (Lappish) belongs to a linguistic family known as Finno-Ugric and is quite unlike Swedish or Norwegian. There are roughly 60,000 Sami; 40,000 live in Norway, 15,000 in Sweden, 4,000 in Finland, and perhaps 2,000 in Russia.

This rolling morainic landscape comprises much of Fyn (Funen), Denmark's third largest island. Often referred to as the "Garden of Denmark", the island's fertile clay loams support a prosperous mixed-agricultural economy based on sugar beets, grains, gardening and dairying.

Economy

The Nordic countries are among the world's wealthiest. All have modern industrial-service economies that have expanded rapidly over the past century, especially in the decades following World War II. The national product in each of these countries is

The exploitation of resources of various kinds has played a major role in the economic development of the region. The Great Pit at Falun remembers the role of copper and other minerals in the industrial development of Sweden. Owned and operated by Stora Kopperberg—founded in 1288 and recognized as the oldest company in the world—the great mine located where this pit stands today produced two-thirds of the world's copper during its heyday in the 17th century. The gaping pit is the result of a massive cave-in of underground galleries, shafts and chambers that occurred in 1687.

sufficiently high to support both a high standard of living and extensive outlays for government services and social security. Indeed, over the past twenty-five years the Nordic countries have been leaders in the development of the modern social welfare state. Current national expenditures on social security programs, such as family welfare, health, education, old age, worker's disability, and unemployment, for all countries average roughly twenty percent of gross national income. In 1960 the average was only about ten percent.

The industrial revolution came late to this part of Europe. Most of the national economies were still essentially agricultural until late in the nineteenth century. The Nordic countries were remote from the industrial countries of western Europe, lacking in many raw materials, capital, home markets, and above all energy. Without coal, there could be no large industrial complexes like Germany's Ruhr valley or the Black Country of the English Midlands. Industry took root only here and there, chiefly where raw materials could be exploited. Thus many of the early industries in Denmark were established in towns where local agricultural surpluses could be processed for export. The rise of the timber industry spurred the so-called industrial breakthrough in Norway, Sweden, and Finland, and that was only done with liberal infusions of foreign capital and the lure of foreign markets. Later industrial expansion added other forms of industry, such as shipbuilding, brewing, and textiles, but for the most part the nineteenth century industrial economy of the region was highly dispersed geographically and largely restricted to the primary processing of raw materials.

The 20th century saw the rise of entirely new industries. While the industrial plant remained highly dispersed, the new industries were distinguished by the fact that they were based as much on superior engineering and design expertise as on local availability of raw materials. The Nordic countries have been especially adept, over the past century, at singling out strategic products in which they might enjoy an advantage on the international market. Fabricated metal products and machinery of all kinds are the most important manufacturing product in all countries except Iceland, followed by chemicals and paper products. Finnish plants produce a major portion of the world's paper making machinery. Sweden is known for its beautiful ornamental glass, its electronics and communication equipment, and quality automobiles. Norway specializes in chemical products and plastics, offshore oilrigs and drilling equipment, Denmark in machinery, food, drink, and tobacco. Most recently, these countries have adapted well to the demands and opportunities of a technology-driven globalizing economy, adding research parks and "silicon valley" developments to the fringes of many major towns and cities.

Nonetheless, primary industry remains important. The fishing industries in Norway, Iceland, and Denmark are among the largest in the world. The size of the Norwegian catch is unsurpassed by that of any other European country. The bulk of the catch is exported, about eighty percent as processed animal feed or oils. While catches rose through the 1960s and 1970s, serious declines in the stocks of herring, mackerel, and cod have occurred in the North Atlantic and the North Sea during recent decades. Falling catches have jeopardized the health of the industry and have made Norway a champion of international protection measures. The forest industry in Sweden and Finland is important, benefiting from the relative accessibility of the forest resource and from high levels of capital investment. Sweden also relies heavily on the mining of iron ore for domestic and foreign use. Agriculture is highly productive by all international standards. Productivity per agricultural worker for all countries is among the highest in the world. Most farms are highly mechanized. Agriculture directly employs only a small portion of national labor forces even though agricultural products are often a high percentage of gross national product. Denmark grows enough food to feed an estimated population of fifteen million. Nearly two-thirds of all Danish agricultural produce is exported, accounting for roughly a quarter of all Danish exports by value. Yet Danish agriculture employs only seven percent of the labor force. In all the Nordic countries government policy supports the rationalization of agricultural production and attempts to create and protect markets both at home and abroad, although Sweden's and Finland's recent accession to the EU has meant that agriculture in these two countries has been forced to accept new levels of competition from other countries within the EU.

The Norwegian economy has undergone tremendous change over the last two decades due to a series of offshore oil discoveries beginning in 1968. By the mid–1970s it was clear that Norway possessed major reserves of high quality oil and natural gas on her continental shelf. The country, which previously lacked significant fossil fuel reserves of any kind, became self-sufficient in energy by 1975. Industrial investments have skyrocketed, especially in the Stavanger and Bergen areas. The Norwegian government has tried to take a go-slow policy, resisting the temptation to develop the oilfields rapidly. Although not entirely successful, the policy was designed to avoid high earnings and uncontrolled investments that might wreak havoc on prices and wages and foster a concentration of development in

Visible on the far side of the Øresund from the Swedish city of Helsingborg is the coast of Denmark at Helsingør. The 70-mile long strait, the principal and shortest shipping route connecting the Kattegat with the Baltic Sea, has long been one of the most heavily used waterways in the world. Here at its narrowest point, the Danish coast is just three miles away. For more than four centuries, from 1429 to 1857, a toll was levied on ships passing through the strait from the Danish fortress of Kronberg at Helsingør.

Medieval open-fields, with their characteristic "ridge and furrow" pattern of raised agricultural strips are well preserved at this Danish open air museum at Hjerl Hede on the Jutland peninsula. The long strips were individually owned, but communally worked, by the inhabitants of the nearby village. During the 18th century, enclosure eliminated most of the open-field landscapes in Denmark.

the southwest that might seriously disrupt the social and economic balance of the country.

Rural Settlement and Landscapes

Until the latter half of the 19th century society and economy was essentially agrarian. The proportion of the region's population that lived and earned its livelihood in a town or city never exceeded ten percent. Even in relatively recent times the attachment to the land and to a not very distant rural past has colored society even though the bulk of the population now lives in urban places. People in the Nordic countries still value the countryside as an idyllic retreat from the demands of urban life. They still regard the rural landscape, with its highly distinctive and historic settlement patterns, as an expression of regional or national identity.

The emergence of a humanized rural landscape dates from medieval times. By that time most areas of favorable terrain, soil, and climate across the region had been or were being cleared and settled. Many areas already had dense populations. Aside from the heath lands of western Jutland, much of Denmark was heavily settled, as was the plain of Skåne and the Mälaren Basin of central Sweden. Pockets of dense settlement could be found in Norway in the Lista and Jæren districts near Stavanger, at scattered points along the west coast, on both sides of Oslo fjord, and along the lower reaches of many of the interior valleys of eastern Norway, such as Gudbrandsdal. Coastal districts in both Iceland and Finland were also well settled and settlement was penetrating into the forested interior and the north of Sweden.

Farmsteads in medieval Denmark were clustered together to form large agricultural villages. The villages were surrounded by large open fields, which were laid out in strips. Each household normally held a great many strips scattered about the village lands. Agricultural work was organized communally out of practical necessity. Plowing, for example, required the use of a heavy plow and a large team of oxen or horses, which no individual peasant could afford to maintain. Similarly, no peasant could reasonably choose to plant a different crop from that of his neighbors, since the village fields were divided into individual fields through which an agreed sequence of crops were rotated. An early feature of field organization in Denmark was the *solskifte*-a system by which individual strips in the open fields were allotted according to the position of farmhouses in the village relative to the passage of the sun. Versions of this system also appeared in eastern and central Sweden by the high Middle Ages and in Southwestern Finland somewhat later.

As population grew, Denmark's more fertile eastern half became increasingly packed with villages. New villages were established through the clearing of local woodland and the plowing up of common pasturelands. Between the 9th and the 13th centuries 3500 new villages were established in this way. The peasantry of the old villages was largely free from feudal restraints, but the clearing of new land and the establishment of new villages were instrumental in introducing feudalism into Denmark. Much of the clearing was undertaken by local lords or by the medieval church, both of which established manors on the new lands and made serfs of the new inhabitants. By the end of the Middle Ages approximately one-third of the land was in the hands of the nobility. Another third was in the hands of the church. The proportion in the hands of independent taxpaying peasants was only about one-eighth. Tenant and landless classes were an ever present and often seminal feature of Danish agricultural society from the Middle Ages to early modern times.

In Sweden, too, the medieval agricultural landscape was organized predominantly into nucleated agricultural villages and open fields. But here the basic resource of good arable land was not as abundant. The best agricultural soils were concentrated on the clay and loam soils that lay below the highest marine limit. The lands of many agricultural parishes were predominantly forest and waste. Their inhabitants faced a perennial problem of finding sufficient land for an expanding population. By the 16th century backcountry forest meadows, previously used for summer grazing, were being permanently settled in many areas, often as individual farms. The rural economy in such areas was often more oriented to animal husbandry than crop cultivation. This expansion is clearly marked in Sweden by place names ending in *-torp* (new settlement) and *-ryd* (forest clearing). The settlement frontier was also pushed vigorously to the north as strings of individual farms were pioneered along the major river valleys flowing into the Bothnian Gulf. In Finland the situation was similar to that in Sweden, although the prevalence of individual farms was much greater, except in the extreme southwest.

The agrarian population of both Sweden and Finland largely escaped the yoke of feudalism, as it was known elsewhere in Europe. The peasantry who made up the backbone of the agrarian population never lost their free status, even with the emergence of a noble class. At the close of the Middle Ages, the proportion of land held by the peasantry in Sweden remained as

Historic windmills line the roadside on the Swedish island of Öland. Windswept and almost barren, this long and narrow island just off the Baltic coast of southern Sweden was one of the poorest of Sweden's traditional provinces, but due to its location astride the coastal trade routes of the western Baltic it occupied a strategic position in the frequent wars between Denmark and Sweden.

Long contested by Denmark and Sweden, the plain of Skåne is—as evident in this photograph—particularly endowed with rich agricultural resources. A part of Sweden since it was relinquished by Denmark in the Treaty of Roskilde (1658), Danish influence is still visible on the landscape in the form and structure of the whitewashed farm buildings. Note that settlement is dispersed—the old village lands having been enclosed sometime near the end of the 18th century.

high as one-half. Although there were many reasons for this, some credit must go to the vastness and relative poverty of the country. There was always a reserve of unoccupied land, which made it difficult for great landlords to reduce the peasantry to serfdom. Great population increases in the 18th and 19th centuries, however, did contribute to a growing proletarianization of the agricultural population in many areas. In addition to the old landholding peasant class, there emerged a number of new classes. One was the crofter class *(torpare).* Crofters were tenants who occupied extremely small holdings carved from the outer fringes of peasant lands in return for which they provided the local peasant proprietor with specified forms of labor. Farther down the economic ladder were a number of completely landless classes.

The old medieval pattern of villages and open fields that originally characterized much of Denmark, Sweden and Finland has not persisted to modern times. Concerted efforts were made, as early as the 17th century, to break up the old villages and to move farmsteads out onto individual plots carved from the old open fields—a process known as enclosure. The aim was to free individuals from the rigid and often restrictive bonds of communal village agriculture, as well as from the inefficiencies of a land system that divided holdings into vast numbers of parcels scattered about the village lands.

The enclosure process began in the south of Jutland, where examples of reorganized settlements date back to 1710. Danish landlords with large holdings began to break up and enclose village lands on their estates in the 1760s. Parliamentary laws passed in 1781 sped the process. In Sweden an early attempt was made to reduce the number of parcels on village lands when a parliamentary act was passed in 1757. The *storskifte,* the first compulsory enclosure law, was passed in 1772. Progress, however, was slow and large landowners in Skåne independently began to emulate the more ambitious example of their compatriots in Denmark. Their efforts were soon followed by codification of new enclosure laws in 1807 and 1827 and the eventual dissolution of villages across much of Sweden. In Finland the process began later, with the most serious efforts at enclosure following measures passed in 1881 and 1916. The enclosure of village lands in these parts of Norden resulted in a rural settlement pattern that is largely dispersed, with the exception of a few areas where enclosure was never pursued or completed. Extensive cultivation of natural meadowlands often followed enclosure. Lands once reserved solely for the maintenance of livestock were freed up for cultivation with the introduction of modern animal feeds.

The rural landscape of medieval Norway and Iceland was largely devoid of the great agricultural villages and large open fields so characteristic of Denmark and large parts of Sweden and Finland. The basic unit of agricultural life was the isolated farm holding centered on the *tun,* a cluster of buildings that housed the people and animals associated with the farm. Rugged topography certainly played a role here. As a rule, farms were individually sited up and down the great valleys, along fjords and coastlines. Subsequent divisions of existing farms into multiple farm units *(bruk)* often created small clusters of farmsteads, giving the impression of hamlets, but no formal village structure was ever established. Households depended on a mixture of farming and animal husbandry, supplemented in coastal areas by fishing. Crops were typically raised on the infield *(innmark).* The infield was a fenced in area of crop fields and meadows near the farmstead that was planted without fallow or rotation and fertilized with the dung of livestock grazed on the outfield *(utmark)* or on the high meadows and slopes of the mountainous terrain *(setergrend).* In addition to summer grazing the high meadows were a source of hay and other forage. The *setergrend* was often quite extensive and required that a portion of the farm household actually spend the summer in the company of the animals at a small settlement located there. These seasonal habitations *(meter)* near the summer meadows constituted a secondary and semi permanent outer zone of settlements.

In Norway the peasant farmer class did suffer somewhat from the introduction of a feudal system. The majority was reduced to tenant status by the high Middle Ages, but they also retained much of their freedom since the conditions of tenancy did not include labor on the estates of the nobility or the church. The proportion of land that remained in peasant hands by the end of the Middle Ages was roughly a quarter. Economic losses resulting from the Black Death of the fourteenth century, however, severely reduced the power of the nobility. The repopulation of Norway after the Black Death solidified the independence of the Norwegian peasantry. It also began the relentless process of subdivision that parceled the old farms into multiple farm units. Limited quantities of good agricultural land and rapid population increases in the 18th and 19th century eventually led to a division of rural society between the landed peasant class and a growing mass of people (crofters, servants, and laborers) who contributed their labor and skills to agricultural production but lacked access to the land. The latter part of the 19th century also saw attempts to halt the process of subdivision that rendered many Norwegian farms virtually unworkable.

This photo, taken in autumn on one of the many thousands of lakes that make up the Finnish lake plateau region, is fairly typical. A small farm occupies the shore of the lake. Stacks of recently cut hay dot a field that was undoubtedly wrested, only with great effort, from the grasp of the ubiquitous forest and rock.

This photo is taken at the seaward entrance to Balsfjorden, one of the many "u-shaped" glacially-carved valleys that lead inland toward the interior high fjell country of western Norway. The scene is typical of the fjord landscapes found up and down the length of the country. Note how settlement clings to the strandflat, the narrow zone of arable soils along the water's edge. Most of this narrow coastal resource was uplifted from the sea in post-glacial times and has played a critical role over the ages in providing a basis for human settlement along the exposed western coast of Norway.

Further changes in the rural landscapes of Norden have been associated with 20th century modernization. Farming has become more specialized; resulting in regional concentrations of certain production activities and fewer production units overall as noncompetitive operations have ceased to exist. There has also been a retreat of the farming frontier. Marginal areas have been abandoned in most of the countries. The loss in farmland has been least in Norway, where permanent arable land has always been in short supply (only 3% of land is permanent cropland), and greatest in Sweden and Finland where there was much colonization of marginal lands in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The only large-scale colonization of agricultural land since the middle of the last century has been the resettlement of tens of thousands of Finnish refugees from Karelia, a province lost to the Soviet Union after the Second World War. While many Karelians were settled in Finnish towns and cities, a majority were given land in central and southern Finland, either on the fringes of existing settlements or in totally new settlements carved from woodland and waste. In all the Karelian resettlement process added some 900,000 acres to the Finnish agricultural land base.

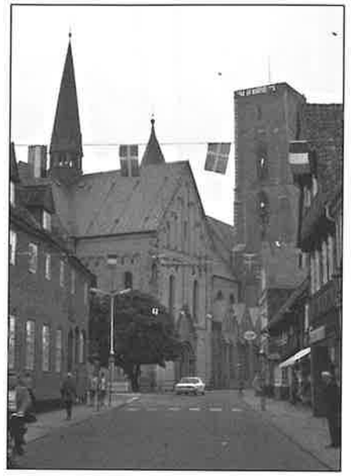
Development of Towns and Cities

Aside from the Viking entrepots at places like Birka and Hedeby, the Nordic region lacked the ancient urban foundations of western Europe. Nonetheless, a modest network of towns began to emerge by medieval times, although the process was slower and more hesitant than that which was going on elsewhere in Europe. The origins of most of these towns were associated directly with the interests of Church and State. Some places became important as centers of ecclesiastical administration. Others were defensive points or natural crossroads that attracted the attention of secular powers bent on consolidating and organizing the realm. Such settlements often became the scene of market fairs and a limited amount of craft production. Few Nordic medieval towns were very large. Linkages with the local populace were often weak; indeed trading privileges were most often held by foreigners. But the towns established at this time represent a tenuous continuation of the commercial traditions established during Viking times and constitute the foundations of a modern urban system.

Many towns were built around foundations laid by the Church. The Church was a territorial organization that divided space into a nested hierarchy of administrative districts centered on cathedral towns. In Denmark, bishoprics were established by the end of the 15th century at Viborg, Ringsted, Ribe, Slesvig, Århus, Odense, and Roskilde; and at Lund in Danish Skåne. Sweden originally was divided into six episcopal sees, centered at Skara, Linköping, Eskilstuna, Strängnäs, Västerås, and Sigtuna, the last of which eventually lost its ecclesiastical function to Uppsala. Later a seventh bishopric was added at Växjö. The ecclesiastical center of Swedish Finland was at Åbo (Turku). Norway witnessed the growth of ecclesiastical centers at Nidaros (Trondheim), Bergen, Hamar, Stavanger, and Oslo; centers in Iceland were established at Skálholt and Hólar.

At the same time, secular powers were instrumental in establishing towns at militarily strategic places and at places with obvious economic potential. Many towns grew up around royal castles and fortifications, or near royal residences, or at key crossroads or sea crossings. Nyborg on the Danish island of Fyn, for example, was originally a castle built to dominate the flow of traffic across the Store Bælt. Kalundborg performed the same function for the shortest crossing between Sjælland and Jutland. The town of Kalmar in Sweden, with its great castle, markets, and courts is one of dozens of more or less evenly spaced centers originally founded for defensive and administrative purposes. Others were simply market towns that emerged because of an especially accessible site and the good fortune to win special commercial privileges from the crown. The endings *-køping or -köbing* on the names of towns denote historic market privileges. The State as a rule was eager to foster trade wherever possible, granting license to establish trading centers in particular to the merchants of the hanseatic towns of northern Germany. Many towns had long associations with the Hanseatic League. Indeed, the town of Visby on the island of Gotland enjoyed preeminence for quite some time as the major trading entrepot of the entire Baltic region. Copenhagen (København), Bergen, and Trondheim were also important centers in the Hanseatic trade.

Finally, the rise of some towns was associated with the early development of local resources, such as minerals, fish, or furs. The exploitation of copper and iron contributed to the establishment of towns in the Bergslagen region of central Sweden, where these minerals were mined and smelted from early in the Middle Ages. The copper mine at Falun (founded 1347) dates back to 1284 and was the largest single European producer until as late as the 17th century. Arboga and Västerås enjoyed prosperity as major handlers of iron produced in the Bergslagen region. Silver was produced at Sala in Sweden from around 1500 and from Kongsberg in Norway by the early 1600s. Bergen's early commercial importance was derived in large part



Ecclesiastical foundations were essential to the establishment of most important medieval towns in Norden. The town of Ribe, one of Denmark's oldest, was first mentioned as early as 862. It became a bishopric and an important center by 948. The Romanesque-style cathedral dates from 1122 and still dominates the historic center of the city today.

Established by German merchants who settled there as early as the 10th century, the town of Visby on the island of Gotland became one of the great hanseatic entrepots of northern Europe, reaching the height of its power and wealth during the late 13th century. Remarkably preserved, with medieval walls, churches and buildings, the "city of roses and ruins" was designated a protected monument as early as 1810. In 1995 it became a UNESCO World Heritage site. This photo features a ruined section of the city's 3.6 kilometer long 13th century wall, replete with 27 extant towers.

from its control of a lucrative trade in dried fish collected from the fishing settlements of western Norway.

The great capitals owed their rise, at least initially, to the State's preoccupation with promoting long distance trade. Copenhagen occupied a favored site for such purposes. Under the auspices of royal power it developed early trade connections with the many north German towns anxious to extend their commercial activities into the Baltic and beyond. German merchants established themselves in Copenhagen and soon made it the center of trade moving both through and across the Øresund. In fact, the Øresund, with the rich agricultural provinces of Sjælland and Skåne to either side, became the commercial core of the Danish kingdom. Fortresses at Helsingør (Denmark) and Helsingborg (Sweden) controlled the flow of trade between the Baltic and the North Sea; the famous dues paid by passing ships were collected at Krogen (Kronborg) castle near Helsingør. Stockholm also got its start as a trading city, when merchants from Lübeck won a royal charter to establish themselves there in 1252. The German trading community used Stockholm's strategic site at Lake Mälaren's outlet into the Baltic to control the export of Swedish iron, butter, grain, and skins to various German Baltic ports and to control the import of manufactured goods from Europe into Sweden. The commercial power of the town grew until it completely dominated the trade of both Sweden and Finland. Oslo too sheltered an early hanseatic trading post and took hold of the trade of eastern Norway, although the west remained firmly under the control of Bergen until early modern times.

Although many towns were established during the Middle Ages, they grew slowly during the centuries that followed. By the middle of the 17th century there were only three urban places in Scandinavia with a population of more than 5,000 souls-Copenhagen (ca. 30,000), Stockholm (ca. 25,000), and Christiania (formerly Oslo, but renamed after the Danish king, Christian IV; ca. 5,000). As in much of western Europe, the Renaissance and Baroque eras (1600–1800) were a time when capitals moved ahead in population, while the many ecclesiastical and market towns grew slowly. But it was also a time when towns were subjected to radically new ideas in town planning and architecture that transformed their form and appearance. Streets, squares, and defenses were reorganized in precise geometric shapes and forms, while public buildings of elaborate proportions and decoration were erected to grace the fabric of the new baroque city and legitimize the power of the great monarchs. These developments swept through all of Europe and had their greatest impact on the Scandinavian capitals.

Denmark's Christian IV was especially enamored of these new ideas. He entertained a variety of schemes to improve the layout and appearance of Copenhagen. Streets and squares were laid out along the lines of models developed in France and the Netherlands and an ambitious building program adorned the city with new churches, palaces, and other public buildings. A new town, named Christianshavn, was founded on a nearby island, laid out in a rectangular grid, and linked to the old city by bridge. A great citadel protected the entrance to the harbor and the city was encompassed by massive fortifications. Christian's Copenhagen became a model of the new baroque style and a symbol of the city's dignified place among the great capitals of Europe. Christian IV was also responsible for the new fortified town of Christiania, built just to the west of the old medieval town of Oslo in the aftermath of a disastrous fire in 1624.

In the 17th century Stockholm too began to sport an appearance befitting the place it had acquired as a great European power. The old city, which had been confined largely to a small island in the waterway that linked Lake Mälaren with the sea, was expanded to include new districts on the larger land areas nearby. The new districts were laid out in a rectilinear plan with wide streets and squares. Like Copenhagen, the city skyline was transformed with the turrets and spires of new churches and palaces, but unlike the great Danish city, Stockholm had no need for extensive fortifications given its naturally protected site amidst the confusion of its great archipelago.

Strategic military planning in an age of elaborate fortifications and professional armies gave birth to a whole new series of towns founded solely for defensive reasons. Garrison towns sprang up across Scandinavia wherever strategic defense dictated a need. Sweden employed Dutch engineers to design a baroque bastion and port on its west coast at Göteborg in 1621 and opened a new naval base at Karlskrona in 1680. In like fashion, Kristiansand was founded at the southern tip of Norway in 1641 to consolidate the Dano-Norwegian grip on the shipping routes between the North Sea and the Baltic.

Other new towns began to emerge in response to growing trade and the constant need for greater local administration, especially on the frontiers of colonization in the northernmost and interior provinces of Norway, Sweden, and Finland. Over the period 1600–1800 a whole new system of small market towns with special trading and customs privileges was added. The largest number was founded along the shores of the Bothnian Gulf. Most bear the name of the river at whose mouth they were sited (Umeå, Skellefteå, Luleå, Kemi, Oulu). These were small places. Most had populations of only a few hundred, or

Stockholm's great square, Stortorget, was the focal point of the medieval town. Founded in 1252, Stockholm grew up on an island situated at the point where Lake Malär empties into an arm of the Baltic, known as Saltsjön. Strategically situated to control the trade of Sweden's interior, the town became a base for German merchants from Lübeck, who built their trading houses around this square and on the narrow streets that radiated outward from it to other parts of the island. Like many historic city centers in Norden, the square and its environs are today legally protected from change.

The Norwegian city of Trondheim was long important as a trade and shipping center. These historic warehouses along the shore of the River Nidelva are a reminder of that fact. Most of these structures date from the 17th century, their predecessors having been destroyed by the Swedes in 1658. A plan in the 1930s to tear them down and replace them with modern structures was fortunately never carried out.

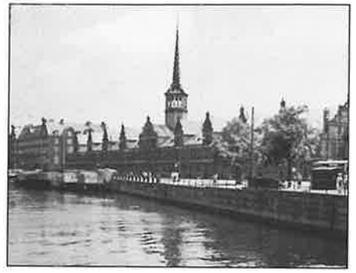
perhaps a thousand. They were often totally lacking in urban appearance by European standards. Small and rustic, with structures of wood and resembling farm buildings, many were scarcely distinguishable from their rural surroundings. Nonetheless, their emergence is significant. It heralds the rise of the North as an important element in the economies and politics of the region's states.

By 1800 a reasonably developed Nordic urban hierarchy could be identified. At the top were the two great capitals of Copenhagen and Stockholm, with populations of 101,000 and 76,000 respectively. By this time Copenhagen was commercially the more important of the two, with international entanglements on a vast scale. Within the Nordic region, the primacy of these two cities was totally unchallenged. A truly marked descent in population size was necessary before a second rank in the hierarchy could be identified at the level of Bergen (17,000) and Göteborg (13,000). Bergen's position in 1800 stems from the stranglehold the city held on the trade of western Norway dating back to medieval times, while Göteborg's position was attributable to the fact that she acquired many of the international commercial contacts that might have made Stockholm the commercial equal of Copenhagen. Farther down the hierarchy were a mixture of major regional administrative centers, military bases, important ports, market towns, and cathedral and university towns. As capital, Åbo (Turku) was the most important city in Swedish Finland, although the loss of Finland to Russia in 1809 would eventually result in the loss of ministries and university to the new capital at Helsinki. All in all, there were seventy-two towns and cities with populations of more than 1,500 souls: twenty-eight in Sweden, nineteen in Denmark, fourteen in Norway, ten in Finland, and none in Iceland, where only Reykjavik possessed the privilege of being called a town.

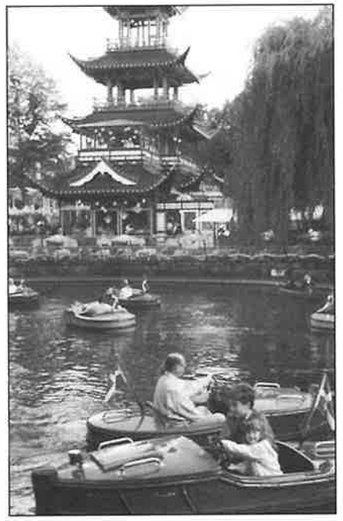
For much of Europe, the rapid industrialization of the 19th century was a catalyst for change. It transformed longstanding economic and social systems. It also wrought momentous changes in the size and structure of towns and the urban systems of which they are a part. This is also true for Norden, although the magnitude and direction of change varies somewhat from the experience of Britain, France, Germany, and the Low Countries. Industrialization occurred much later in and often at a lesser scale or intensity than was the case in western Europe. As a consequence, the industrial expansion of nineteenth century towns and cities was not always as extensive. In addition, much of the early industrialization in the region was, as we have seen, associated with the exploitation of natural resources. The rise of resource extraction industries, such as lumbering and mining, often occurred in remote frontier regions and fostered the development of new industrial boomtowns where little prior urban development existed.

The Nordic experience was perhaps closest to that of western Europe in Denmark. By 1900 an influx of industry and new industrial workers had swelled the population of Copenhagen to nearly half a million. The old defense systems were dismantled in order to allow the city to grow. New districts contained factories and housed workers in large tenements, much as they did in other great European cities. The city was home to a wide range of industries, although it was best known for shipbuilding and brewing. Shipbuilding was a natural specialty, given the location of the city astride the busy maritime traffic of the Øresund. Brewing developed out of the annual surplus of barley that flowed into the city from the surrounding countryside. Outside the capital, other towns developed industrial specialties. Helsingør became one of the leading new industrial cities, specializing in textiles and shipbuilding. Århus was known for its shipbuilding and engineering. Others took advantage of the rich agricultural produce of the Danish countryside. Roskilde, for example, became an important processor of animal meats and skins. Ålborg gained an early reputation for the production of liquor, tobacco, and margarine.

While new industry in nineteenth century Denmark was drawn to existing centers where there were concentrations of capital, labor, and transport, in other parts of Norden it was often based on the exploitation of raw materials. The industrial breakthrough in Sweden and Finland is most frequently associated with the rise of the saw milling industry. To be close to sources of raw material and power, mills were drawn first to waterpower sites in the forest districts. Later, when the introduction of steam power freed the industry from fast water locations, the mills moved to sites near the coast that combined access to the large floatways with access to the shipping lanes for the export of forest products and the importation of coal to power the mills. Sundsvall, on Sweden's Bothnian coast, became the center of an enormous saw milling and wood-processing (pitch, tar, resin, and later paper) district during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Other Bothnian ports in Sweden and the port cities of Finnish Ostrobothnia, especially Kemi and Oulu, experienced prolonged boom periods associated with the rise of the saw milling and pulp milling industries. Iron deposits provided a basis for further resource-based urban development in the north. In 1878 a new innovation in steel making, the Thomas-Gilchrist process, made the region's



By the end of the 16th century the city of Copenhagen was flourishing as a great center of royal power and trade. Under King Christian IV (1588–1648) the city underwent considerable redevelopment. Built in 1619, the Børsen, or Stock Exchange, is a reflection of the city's newfound wealth and commercial power at that time. The structure stands along the canal that bounds the north side of the island of Slottsholmen—the site of the castle built by Bishop Absalon to found the city in 1167—proudly displaying its Dutch Renaissance style gables and stately grace to passers by.



Copenhagen's Tivoli, one of the best-known of the world's urban pleasure gardens and parks, was opened to the public in 1843. Designed by the Danish writer-architect, Georg Carstenson, the park was built on the old southern ramparts of a rapidly expanding and industrializing city. This photo shows a portion of the old rampart moat that was preserved within the park as a lake for boating.

heretofore unused phosphoric ores worth working. Mines were opened to exploit the large ore bodies known to exist in Swedish Lappland. By the end of the nineteenth century, railroads connected shipping ports at Luleå on the Bothnian Gulf and Narvik in Norway with the center of the new mining district at Kiruna.

Elsewhere, 19th century industrial development was responsible for the selective expansion of capital cities, key market towns, ports, and regional centers. In Norway, most development was concentrated in the south. A number of established towns of the Oslo fjord region (Tønsberg, Halden, Sarpsborg, Fredrikstad) prospered during this period, primarily from expansive developments in saw milling, shipbuilding, and whaling. Oslo, in particular, benefited from its role as the center of the east Norwegian timber trade. By 1900 it had eclipsed Bergen as the country's leading port. It was also the country's largest industrial center and focus of an expanding rail system. Farther south along the coast, shipbuilding and iron working provided Kristiansand and its neighboring towns with a vigorous industrial base. Textiles, metalworking, and engineering became important employers in selected Swedish regional centers. Linköping, Norrköping, and Borås were home for the manufacture of woolen and cotton goods. Malmö, Helsingborg, and Göteborg were known for engineering and shipbuilding and Jönköping became the "matchstick capital" of Sweden. Stockholm was the largest Swedish industrial center, specializing in engineering and textiles. In Finland, the most common 19th century industry was wood processing and was attracted chiefly to the ports. As the new capital of a Russian dominated Finland, Helsinki enjoyed preeminence, developing an extensive industrial quarter on the city's east side. Meanwhile the interior city of Tampere underwent extraordinary development as a textile center due to a special arrangement whereby the Russian authorities permitted Tampere to manufacture cotton and woolen goods for the Russian market.

Wherever towns expanded in the 19th century there were significant changes in internal structure and appearance. The carefully planned building efforts of the Baroque period were replaced by more rapid and uncontrolled growth. In the larger cities, industries quickly colonized vacant space along waterfronts or near places where rail lines reached the edge of built up areas. Workers' housing took the form of closely packed tenements in the industrial suburbs of the larger cities or as shantytowns attached to the fringes of both towns and cities alike. The segregation of rich and poor became more marked. Residential Helsinki, for example, was clearly differentiated by the turn of the century between the poorer working class district,

with its railroads and factories, in the east and the better suburbs in the west. Construction of buildings of all types was more substantial. After the disastrous fire of 1888 the center of Sundsvall was stylishly rebuilt in stone and brick-earning the city the sobriquet "stone city" *(stenstan)*. The entire 19th century core of Oslo became a densely packed stone city, ringed by parks and open areas. Similar building efforts transformed the centers of other cities.

For all of Norden, the most intensive period of urbanization has occurred over the past century—a time when the growth of urbanized population vastly outdistanced the rural in both absolute and relative terms. Denmark, Sweden, and Norway have led the shift to a more urbanized society. Iceland and Finland have followed. The urban populations of the first three surpassed the rural for the first time during the post World War I building boom of the 1920s. The same thing happened in Finland and Iceland during the 1930s. In the aftermath of World War II a massive flight to the cities drove the proportion of urbanized residents in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway to greater than eighty percent by the late 1950s; a proportion they have more or less maintained since then. Iceland followed suit by the 1970s. Only Finland's level of urbanization has remained lower.

Following World War II all of the Nordic countries experienced acute housing shortages, especially in the major cities. Rapid urbanization created difficult problems for urban governments charged with shaping the urban environment and providing adequate urban services. Governments responded by entering into a period of intense urban planning aimed at guiding urban development. The planning experience in the Nordic countries during this period is generally viewed as an enlightened example of how to provide for the needs of a modern urban society. The most salient features of the Nordic experience-early anticipation of and planning for key problems such as transportation, overcrowding, and loss of green space-are apparent in the late 20th century development of the region's largest conurbations.

The key to the planning of Copenhagen's post World War II development was a regional plan first published in 1949. This so-called "Finger Plan" attempted to coordinate planning among the twenty-nine municipalities in the Copenhagen region so as to provide a framework by which the city might grow. The central idea was to focus development along five existing rail lines (*S-bane*) radiating out from the capital. Green wedges would be preserved between the rail corridors, thus giving the city the appearance of an open hand with extended fingers. Efforts were

Sergelstorg is the heart of Stockholm's modernistic, and often controversial, redevelopment during the 1960s and 1970s of the city's business district to the east of the central station on Norrmalm. Set against modern concrete and glass buildings, the upper level of the square supports a traffic circle and monumental glass obelisk. The lower level contains shops and boutiques and has become a favorite meeting place.

During the decades following the Second World War, modern urban design and architecture played an important role in the expansion of Nordic cities. Tapiola, developed near Helsinki in Finland, was one of the early and model examples in Europe of a planned "new town" development. The idea was to create entirely new satellite towns that could be linked to, but remain separate from, major urban agglomerations. The Tapiola model featured dispersed residential areas and experimentation in modern functionalist architecture.

also aimed at the rehabilitation of blighted areas in the city proper and the expansion of harbor and transportation facilities. In 1960 the original plan was modified to direct more development to the south and west, thereby preserving access to recreational areas along the Øresund shore to the north of the city. While not completely adhered to and not without its critics, the Finger Plan provided the foundation for many of the decisions that shaped the city during its postwar expansion.

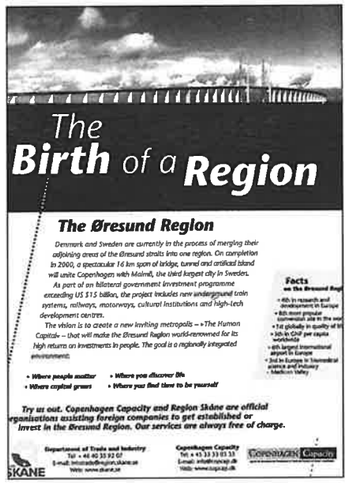
In Stockholm steps were taken to provide for orderly growth as early as 1904 when the city began to purchase extensive tracts of surrounding land. A number of garden cities with low-density single-family housing were established outside the city in the 1910s. The new suburbs were connected to the central city by an extension of rail lines and were regarded as model suburban developments. Additional land was purchased in the 1930s to be used for recreation. These actions proved fortunate during the expansive pressures of the post World War II era since they provided municipal authorities with an unusually large land base and a progressive tradition of suburban expansion. Nonetheless, postwar planning abandoned the idea of low-density garden suburbs in favor of high-density developments, built around service centers connected to central Stockholm by rapid transit lines. The new suburbs were intended to be semi-independent satellites, each possessing a degree of commercial, cultural, and economic self-sufficiency but still tied to Stockholm for high order goods and services. They were also designed to be models of then current ideals in landscape architecture. Apartment blocks and towers were built to blend into the landscape. Pedestrian and vehicular traffic were separated wherever possible. The decision to go with compact and quickly built apartment block housing was in part a response to dire forecasts in the middle 1940s estimating a need to accommodate as many as 400,000 new residents in the greater Stockholm area in the space of just twenty-five years.

In addition to a tightly controlled suburban expansion, Stockholm engaged in a massive redevelopment of the commercial center of the city, razing large numbers of older buildings to make way for a stylishly modern array of traffic-free pedestrian malls, shops, movie theaters, and office towers. As in the Copenhagen experience there have been serious shortcomings. Not everyone has been enamored of the emphasis on apartment block construction in the postwar years. Single-family housing has become increasingly more common. Nor has everyone been pleased with the concrete, steel, and glass appearance of Stockholm's business district. Incorrect assumptions about the need to accommodate automobile traffic and parking have also marred the redevelopment of the city center. But on the whole Stockholm can be seen as a city that anticipated many of the problems of modern urbanization and planned for them in a positive fashion. Its aesthetically pleasing suburban developments were long seen as models for urban new town expansions the world over.

One final example of the way in which planning has played a major post-war developmental role is Helsinki. As the administrative, cultural, and industrial hub of Finland, Helsinki experienced exceptionally rapid growth in the present century. In 1900 the Finnish capital had a population of fewer than 100,000. Today there are nearly twelve times that many living in the metropolitan area. Planning traditions date back to the early 19th century, when, following a disastrous fire, the layout of the central city was altered to employ rectangular street patterns. Since the city is built on a series of irregularly shaped peninsulas it was necessary to change the orientation of the grid from one district to another, often leaving green wedges in between districts where they abutted one another. Thus a tradition of separating districts with open space was established early. In 1918 a plan was adopted that was to serve as a basic guide for the development of the city right up to the present time. The plan envisioned a semicircular arc of low-density garden suburbs, roughly 10–15 kilometers north of the city. The suburbs were to be separated from the city and from one another by wedges of forestland and open water. As in the case of Stockholm, modern renditions of the plan substituted high-density developments and provided for high-speed transportation access to the city center, but the basic spatial relationships between suburbs and city continued to be observed. While current developmental plans seem to be taking new directions, suburban Helsinki remains one of the best examples of planned postwar development in Europe.

The urban hierarchy in Norden today is topped by two first rank cities of more than one million population: Copenhagen and Stockholm. Copenhagen, however, is clearly in the ascendancy due to its role as the focus of a rapidly emerging "Øresund region" that takes in the Swedish cities of Malmö and Helsingborg, the Danish city of Helsingør, and a host of smaller towns and cities. With the recent completion of the Øresund Link—a sixteen kilometer long, four-lane highway and double-track electrified railway crossing of the strait via tunnel and bridge—the surrounding urbanized agglomeration, with its aggregate population of roughly 3.5 million, is quickly emerging as the major urban focus for the entire Nordic region. Uniquely placed, it is also being promoted as the major gateway to emerging

Like so many cities today, Oslo has transformed its old waterfront warehouse district into a fashionable modern development of hi-tech shopping and tourism, known as Aker Brygge. In the background are the twin towers of Oslo's Rådhus, the distinctively modern City Hall built in 1950 to celebrate the city's 900th anniversary.



This advertisement, which appeared in 2000 to herald the "Birth of a Region," refers to the new regional construct now surrounding the shores of the Øresund. The new region, tied together by the recently completed Øresund Link—a combination bridge and tunnel transport link between Copenhagen and Malmö—is already emerging as the premiere economic pole of Nordic Europe. Promotional efforts stress the region's high quality of life, environmental awareness, educational achievement, and high-tech sophistication. Tossing all modesty to the winds, the advertisement reminds readers that the region is: "4th in research and development in Europe, [the] 8th most popular convention site in world, 1st globally in quality of life, 5th in GNP per capita worldwide, [the] 6th largest international airport in Europe, and 3rd in Europe in biomedical science and industry."

Baltic markets, as well as one of the EU's model urban hubs, exemplary for the careful attention that has been devoted to environmental and infrastructure issues by the joint Danish-Swedish Committee that oversees its development. Indeed, the considerable international collaboration entailed in making the Øresund region one of Europe's most important when it comes to economic growth (eighth largest GNP in Europe) and the environment has been supported financially through EU grants. The EU has also designated the region as a model region for greater employment.

Today's rapidly globalizing economy has forced most major cities, world-wide, to think seriously about how best to position themselves competitively to participate in and benefit from the striking global revolutions in communications, finance, trade and tourism that increasingly define our world. As they compete for a place in this new world, cities have become visibly self-conscious about their image. This has generally translated into a heavy new investment in infrastructure, institutions of education and research, office space and housing, as well as the enhancement and showcasing of heritage attractions and environmental amenities. The advantages of locating in or visiting cities have become things that are actively commodified and sold on the world market.

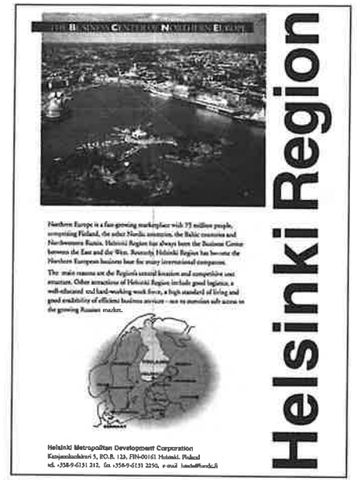
The major cities of Norden are no exception to this unabashed promotion of image. Copenhagen and the Øresund region promotes itself, as we have seen, by emphasizing the advantages it has to offer in terms of centrality, communications, employment, education, research capacity (particularly in terms of technology), environmental cleanliness, and quality of life. Stockholm prides itself on its clean environment (slogan: Europe's greenest and cleanest city) and its efforts toward building an ecologically sustainable society (recipient of the first European Sustainable City Award in 1997); as well as its cultural and historical heritage (named Cultural Capital of Europe in 1998) and its innovative excellence and leadership in the so-called TIME industries (Telecommunications, Information technology, Media and Entertainment). Helsinki styles itself as the "center of the emerging marketplace known as the New Northern Europe, consisting of the Scandinavian countries, the newly independent Baltic States, and north-western Russia," and boasts of its excellent infrastructure and world-class telecommunications system, heritage and culture (European City of Culture in 2000); and the spaciousness and natural beauty of its coastal environment. Oslo claims to be one of the top centers of technological research activity in Europe, on par with high tech clusters in Germany and France. And not to be outdone,

Göteborg extols the virtues of its world-class port facility, the plethora of internationally well-known companies that constitute the city's economic base, and its central location and communications net, all of which when taken together make it "the gateway" to the region.

The kinds of promotional claims being made here are, in one way or another, universal to most cities and towns across the region. Norden today is a predominantly urbanized society that prides itself on the attractive surroundings—economically, socially and environmentally—in which the majority of its citizens lives and work. As with so many other things, the urban environments of the region are emblematic of a common Nordic identity and way of life.

CONCLUSION

Together the Nordic countries comprise one of Europe's most distinctive regions. The distinctiveness of the region derives, as we have seen, from a combination of such things as geographic location and environment, certain common threads of history and culture, and an institutionalized tradition—especially in the recent past—of cross-border unity and cooperation. What does the future hold for this region? Current trends are encouraging. There is evidence that as Europe continues to become more integrated, and as the power and sovereignty of individual states decline accordingly, regional associations may become increasingly important actors in European affairs. If this holds true, Norden, with its strong traditions of collective identity and action, may be especially well prepared, in this changing European environment, to both maintain its individuality and prosper.



This promotional advertisement, put out by the Helsinki Metropolitan Development Corporation, portrays the city of Helsinki and its hinterland as "The Business Center of Northern Europe." Like many Nordic cities, Helsinki has recently worked hard to promote itself as the economic hub of a new northern European economy, set to profit from the breaking down of barriers between East and West, and from the growing involvement of Nordic countries in a rapidly integrating Europe. Helsinki is here depicted (see the map inset) as the center of a Nordic-Baltic marketplace of 75 million people; and as blessed with "good logistics, a well-educated and hard-working workforce, a high standard of living and good availability of efficient business services—not to mention safe access to the growing Russian market."

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Only two comprehensive English-language regional geographies of the Nordic states have been published since the early 1970s—Uno Varjo and Wolf Tietze (eds.) *Norden: Man and Environment* (Berlin and Stuttgart, 1987) and Brian John, *Scandinavia: A New Geography* (London, 1984). While more recent treatments of individual countries and topics may be found; there has regrettably been nothing new for more than a decade in the way of a comprehensive treatment of the entire region. The other relatively recent work is a historical geography. It also differs from the more traditionally organized works above in that it treats the region systematically, rather than country by country. This highly interpretive, but solid historical treatment of the region's development, is W. R. Mead's *An Historical Geography of* Scandinavia (London, 1981).

Among the older works, Brian Fullerton and Alan Williams' *Scandinavia: An Introductory Geography* (New York, 1972) is a very thorough county-by-country treatment of Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Norway that emphasizes economic development. Vincent Malmstrom's *Norden: Crossroads of Destiny* (Princeton, 1965) is a dated but useful political and cultural geography of the five Nordic states. The classical treatments of the region are: W. R. Mead, *An Economic Geography of the Scandinavian States and Finland* (London, 1965); Axel Sømme, ed., *A Geography of Norden* (Oslo, 1968); and Andrew C. O'Dell, *The Scandinavian World*. Although very much dated, each of these books has much to offer.