

ignore state institutions and instead build its own culture, outside official structures. An alternative cultural matrix did emerge in Kraków as part of a mass proliferation of unofficial networks in the 1980s, but was more problematical in Leipzig. Rather than attributable to racial stereotypes—rebellious Poles and obedient Germans—the real cause of difference was geo-politics. Leipzig did not need to forge an alternative cultural matrix since one already existed on the other side of the inner German border.

The author contrasts these three stages most admirably. Hopefully, he is now engaged in a much-needed sequel to show how post-communism brought in new restrictions while inherited culture was often sidelined to public regret.

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***Balancing Between National Unity and “Multiculturalism”: National Minorities in Lithuania and Finland 1918–1939.*** Ed. Karl Alenius and Saulius Kaubrys. On the Boundary of Two Worlds series, vol. 47. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2022. xii, 264 pp. Appendix. Bibliography. Index. Tables. Maps. Hard bound.  
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The reconfiguration of eastern Europe after World War I left virtually all the area’s new national states with the difficult problem of “national minorities.” Not only had democratic constitutions created the national *majorities* that now dominated these states, but the League of Nations kept a watchful eye on the treatment of *minority* populations, seeking to ensure that their guaranteed “rights” were respected. Two of these states were Finland and Lithuania, and the book under review deals with their experience with minorities during the interwar years. The analysis is exhaustive and valuable, since both authors are skilled historians and furnish their audience with historical information rarely found in English anywhere else, especially about the regional and local society. The book does not seek to contribute to a theory of comparative analysis but rather positions the two accounts side-by-side within chapters dealing with such traditional themes as the imperial heritage (from the Russian empire for both, Chap. 1), demography (Chap. 2), politics (Chap. 3), education (Chap. 4), the economy (Chap. 5), and religion (Chap. 6). Both authors clearly faced considerable quantitative obstacles: Lithuania had only one interwar census (1923) while Finland had three (1920, 1930, 1940), but the Finnish enumerations recorded only preferred language and “no other ethnically related issues” (28). Consequently, both authors had to draw on many non-census sources: governmental reports, local and regional surveys, academic studies, newspapers, and individual assessments.

At the beginning of the interwar decades, the proportion of the titular population in both countries was overwhelming: Lithuania, with its 2.1 million people, included about 84% who self-identified as Lithuanians, while Finland with its 3.15 million in 1920 had about 86% “ethnic Finns,” a problematic category, to be sure. In both cases, the proportion of “national minorities” in the interwar period in both countries remained relatively stable, perhaps 14–16%, though there was considerable external and internal migration, producing mixed categories. In any event, most political leaders in both countries throughout the period came from the titular majority, whose continuing assignment became the reduction of ethnic frictions that might threaten national unity. Both countries had one numerically prominent “national minority”—Jews in the Lithuanian case and Swedish-speakers in Finland—as well

as a collage of lesser ethnic groupings (Poles and Germans in Lithuania, the Sami (Lapps) and Russians in Finland). Because independence had come quickly in 1918, neither country was gifted with a “transition period” to learn the rules of the “new game” (249), that is, how to balance the desires of the titular population to create a nation state worthy of its name with the rights of the minorities as promised in the early constitutions.

It is often tempting to write about “national minorities” as if each espoused a uniform ideology, but the authors avoid this intellectual trap adeptly, showing clearly that that was not the case, even with such minorities as the Sami in Finland, whose numbers were comparatively small. The most satisfying part of the book is precisely this, that the authors take great pains to differentiate subsets of minority populations with respect to their publically stated ideas, their economic situations, and the extent to which those among them included both those who were satisfied with their lives and those constantly demanding the enlargement of their “rights.” The result is a differentiated minority landscape, encompassing much more than crude census categories. In Finland, the Swedish-speakers of the Åland Islands yearned for Sweden far more than did those of the western mainland, and in Lithuania the Polish minority had some elements that looked to Poland more than to the temporary Lithuanian capital of Kaunas. The Swedes in Finland were hyperactive politically, especially through their political party, the *Svenska Folkpartie*, while the reindeer-herding Sami in the north had minimal political influence. In Lithuania, Jews were represented in almost all the parliaments of the period, while the Russian Old Believers and the small minority of Germans were relatively inactive politically. In Finland conservative politicians worried that minorities lacked “the Finnish mind” (141), and in Lithuania similar eugenicist notions could be found, especially in the 1930s. The unity of the state, however, prevailed, even when requiring intellectual compromises. Judging by participation in the political and economic domains, large proportions of each national minority in the two countries created niches for themselves, and some, such as the Swedish-speaking citizens of Finland, could even be said to have thrived.

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***Geographies of Nationhood: Cartography, Science, and Society in the Russian Imperial Baltic.*** By Catherine Gibson. Oxford Studies in Modern European History.

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. xvii, 288 pp. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Plates. Photographs. Maps. \$100.00, hard bound.

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Catherine Gibson’s *Geographies of Nationhood* represents a stimulating contribution to a growing body of research dealing with the cultural history of cartography. The book is a study of what the author calls the “ethnographic mapping” of the Baltic regions of the Russian empire, from the mid-nineteenth century to the Treaty of Versailles. It is organized chronologically around a core of five chapters, each of which offers a highly detailed examination of a particular map or series of maps. The particular selection of maps she has assembled is decidedly heterogeneous. They were produced variously by scientific bodies in the imperial center, provincial administrators, local mapmakers, military and political authorities based in western Europe, and even by ordinary farmers providing rough pencil sketches of their farmlands. Throughout the work, Gibson takes a constructivist approach. She seeks to unpack how the maps in question shaped the particular interests, biases, and agendas of their creators,