

Capitalism and its “Others”: Socialism

What are range of types of governments/economic arrangements confusingly referred to as “socialism”:

- 1) Communist countries – Soviet Union and satellites – centralized authoritarian governments and centralized planning; (Verdery refers to these as “state socialist” societies)
- 2) Market-based democracies w/ strong welfare states – Nordic countries
- 3) Marxist movements in formerly colonized regions in post-independence period of 60s-70s that followed still other logics

Scandinavia

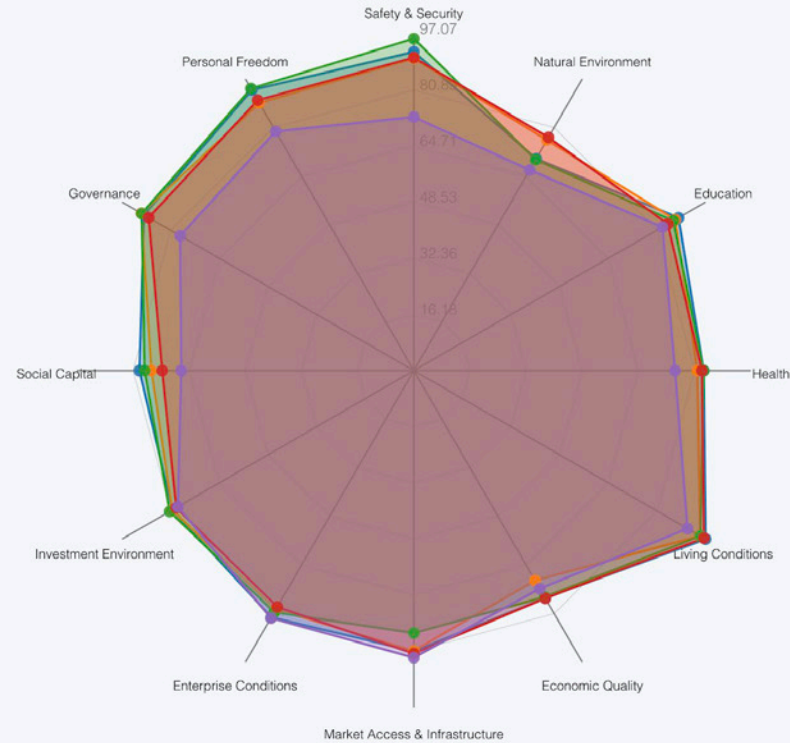


NORDIC COUNTRIES (Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, sometimes Iceland)

- MARKET-BASED DEMOCRACIES
- NO CENTRAL PLANNING
- HIGH RATES OF PERSONAL FREEDOM AND GOOD GOVERNANCE
- STRONG SOCIAL SUPPORT NETS

Add country for comparison

- Selected countries
- Denmark
 - Finland
 - Norway
 - Sweden
 - United States



How to read this graph:
 When comparing multiple countries on a spider chart, data points that appear further away from the center represent a better performance to the points that are closer to the center.

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Perceptions of Nordic Countries in US and Vice Versa

Will Ferrell Super Bowl Ad

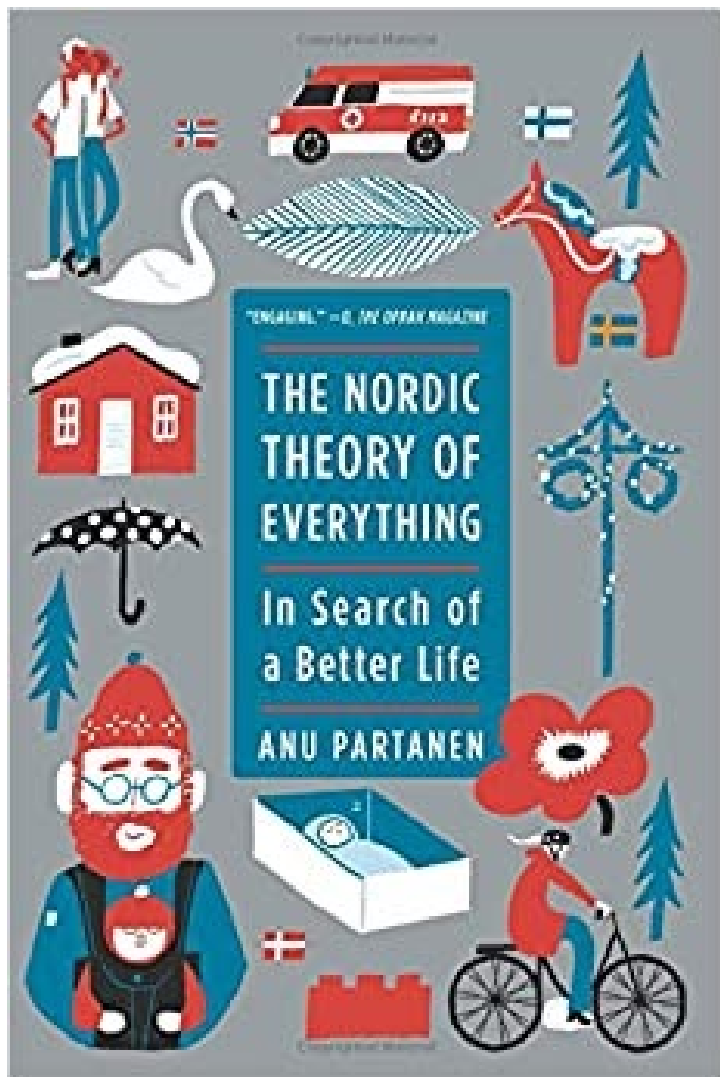
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mdsPvbSpB2Y>

Norwegian response

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ml3JQa1ynDw>

Trump's suggestion that the US needs immigrants like Norwegians

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6qMRdG_1Jxs



Partanen, Anu. *The Nordic Theory of Everything: In Search of a Better Life*. Harper Paperbacks, 2017. © Harper Paperbacks. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.

The Nordic Exceptionalism: What Explains Why the Nordic Countries are Constantly Among the Happiest in the World

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Martela, Frank, Bent Greve, et al. "The Nordic Exceptionalism: What Explains Why the Nordic Countries Are Constantly Among the Happiest in the World." Chapter 7 in *World Business Report 2020*. © Sustainable Development Solutions Network. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.

World Happiness Report, 2020

United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network

Partenan's argument:

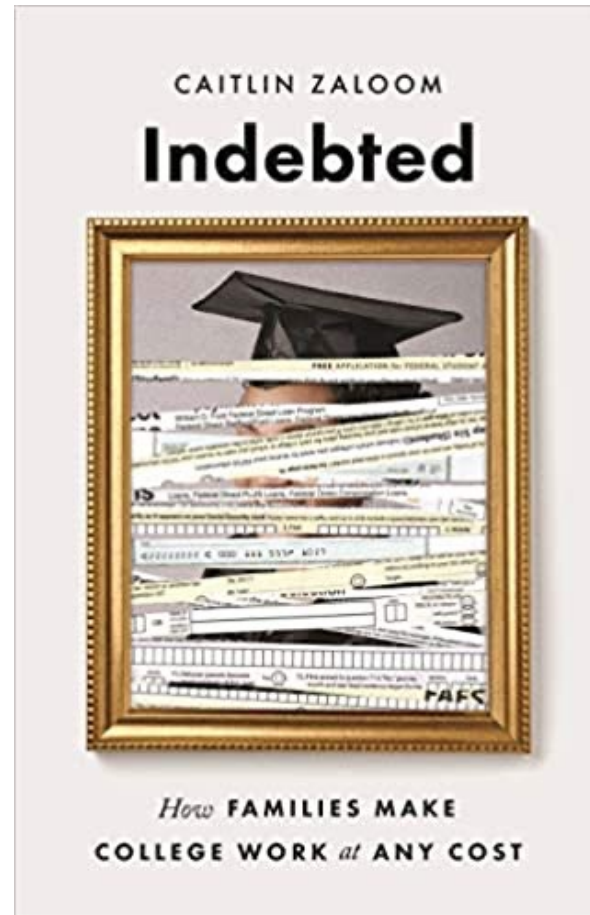
-contrary to assumptions, Nordic policy choices are not collectivist in orientation but instead aim for what she sees as "true" individualism; supports ability of individuals to be free and autonomous in way that allows for stronger social bonds

Topics explored:

- education
- healthcare
- taxes

EDUCATION:

- not paid on basis on local taxes but national
- Finnish schools some of best in world (took US education reform ideas of project-based learning; teachers trained through apprenticeships; teaching well-respected, desired occupation; teachers not trained in segregated teachers colleges)
- free tuition – students arrange education path independently of parents and have subsidized housing; ability to attend college not based on parents' means



Zaloom, Caitlin. *Indebted: How Families Make College Work at Any Cost*. Princeton University Press, 2019. © Princeton University Press. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.

Contrasts Nordic model with that in U.S.

Chapter on Nordic Exceptionalism in World Happiness Report (2020):

- looks at “myths” about Nordic countries, i.e. that unhappy, bad weather, high suicide rates (note: contentedness with life course not same as experience of strong positive emotion)
- assumptions elsewhere that Nordic experiences not relevant for other countries because small and homogenous (no longer true, comparable levels of immigration; immigrants surveyed also display high levels of contentment);
- assumption because Norway “rich” in natural resources can afford welfare state; but did not start off wealthy – instead policy choices

- Are Nordic countries different because of cultural or policy differences?*
- no comparable history of slavery or feudalism compared to other European countries; less inequality to begin with
- long history of policies that minimize labor conflict
- report concludes policy/institutional differences that generate positive feedback loop

WHY LESS CONFLICT btw LABOR AND EMPLOYERS IN SWEDEN?

- Sweden – “corporatist” model of dealing with “Labor Question”
- Bodies that included equal numbers of representatives of business and workers, with neutral leader; states should have strong ongoing neutral role in mediating
- Labor exchanges – help workers find work and employers find labor; key question would they provide “scab” labor during strikes?: yes, but would have to tell laborers they were being used for that purpose

Possible topics for final papers

- Pandora papers/tax havens
- Facebook papers
- debates over UBER and gig economy jobs in CA
- contingent faculty in academia
- debates over franchising
- Fast Food Forward/Fight for \$15
- Amazon warehouse jobs

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21A.461 What is Capitalism?
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