Jordbær *(Opening Reflection)*

Come the summer solstice, *jordbær* are ubiquitous across much of the Nordic region. *Jordbær* is the Danish and Norwegian word for "strawberries" – literally, "berries of the Earth." Graduating students are greeted with a bowl of *jordbær* in celebration. Construction workers snack on fresh-picked *jordbær* on the train after work. Fancy cakes in bakery windows feature sliced *jordbær* as adornment. Children nibble on *jordbær* while riding in the family cargo-bicycle as their parents pedal. A simple pleasure, broadly shared.

Several summers ago, when my children were very small, my family was enjoying one of Copenhagen's many lovely public parks when a nearby group got up to leave. Before departing, they offered us their extra *jordbær*. I would hesitate to accept such an offer from strangers in the US, but it felt right to trust them. We shared *jordbær* on the lush green grass that late afternoon.

Jordbær in the Nordic region are much smaller than their American counterparts – those supermarket giants available year-round – but they offer a deeper, richer flavor. There's a quiet humility in the Nordic *jordbær*'s simplicity and naturalness. Modest in size, yet reliably good – perhaps not unlike the Nordic nations.

The *jordbær* is a fitting symbol of Nordic capitalism.

Nordic capitalism is built around making everyday life good for the We of society through systems that expand individual freedom and increase the likelihood that everyone has the opportunity to flourish. The elements of Nordic capitalism are not necessarily exceptional on their own (though many increasingly are) – they are just consistently good. This book explores those elements – a robust business sector organized for long-term value creation grounded in stewardship, stakeholder cooperation, and good governance; workplaces where employees are treated with dignity; effective labor unions; universal education rooted in critical thinking; efficient healthcare systems; subsidized childcare; efficient public transportation systems;

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welcoming public spaces; excellent public libraries; a commitment to democratic participation, with efforts to ensure high voter turnout and a genuine representative democracy; and policies that internalize negative externalities, such as carbon taxes, aligning markets with sustainability goals – to show how Nordic societies have used the tools of democracy and capitalism to build systems where prosperity is broadly shared.

The result is not luxury for the few, but reliable well-being for the many – a quiet form of abundance made possible through deliberate democratic design and the efficient functioning of capitalism.

The Nordic *jordbær* is not remarkable because it is rare or exclusive – it is exceptional because it is reliably good and widely shared. Nordic capitalism follows the same logic – consistently good elements, broadly accessible, create something exceptional at the societal level: an economy that works for more people and lays a promising foundation for realizing sustainable capitalism.

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