



THE NORDIC SECRET

A European story of beauty and freedom

How do societies go through major technological, economic and structural changes peacefully?

The ways in which Denmark, Norway and Sweden went from feudal agricultural societies to industrialized democracies were exceptionally peaceful. In the process, they climbed from the bottom of the European economy around 1860 to the very top as of the 1930s and they have remained prosperous and progressive ever since. Finland made a similar journey after 1918 in just 30 years.

The Nordics also invented Scandinavian design and are often ranked among the world's happiest peoples.

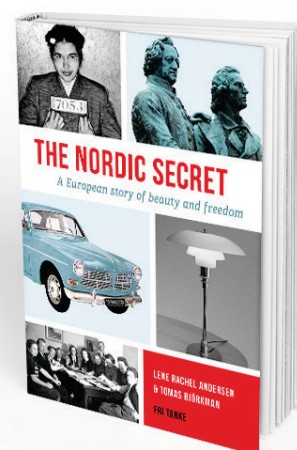
The Nordic Secret explores how the Nordic countries invented a new kind of education among the farmers and workers and thus developed everybody's potential. The inspiration came from the German concept Bildung, which can best be translated as formation, cultivation, enculturation and moral and emotional development. In the Nordic countries, Bildung was turned into folk-Bildung; the peaceful Nordic transition began in a farmhouse.

As new technologies and globalization are revamping our societies again, the two authors, Danish Lene Rachel Andersen and Swedish Tomas Björkman, suggest that we have much to learn from the past, and they explore how we can approach human development and meaning-making today.

Andersen and Björkman make the point that increasingly complex technologies and ever bigger societies have always posed a challenge to societal stability and to our meaning-making, and throughout history this has forced us to create new narratives and new cultural codes.

The cultural codes explored in The Nordic Secret are indigenous culture, pre-modernity, modernity, post-modernity, and meta-modernity. The latter, the authors see as a viable framework for meaning-making in the globalized future. Andersen and Björkman see metamodernity as an integration of all the previous codes in one meta-code that allows us to enjoy the intimacy and spirituality of the indigenous, the religious and existential embeddedness of pre-modernity, the science and democracy of modernity, and

the relativizing de-construction and irony of postmodernity. All of it taken together offers important answers to what it means to be human, and we must enjoy all the codes if we are to find both meaning and purpose in the globalized, digitized 21st century.



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