



Written by [Nilai Lee](#) on September 2, 2019

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## Do It Like Denmark?

No, we don't want to turn America into Venezuela! Why can't you silly conservatives understand that when we say we want socialism, we mean that we want to turn America into Denmark, Norway, or Sweden? Duh!

Why? Because Scandinavia is awesome! It's the Place That Makes Socialism Work™. Free healthcare, free childcare, free college education, free retirement, strict gun control, very low crime, great track record on gender equality and LGBT rights, and most people are atheist or agnostic. No one is rich, no one is poor. What could be better? It's a virtual paradise on Earth, brought to you by socialism.



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Really? If all you know about Scandinavia are the above-mentioned claims, keep reading, because you might just be in for a rude awakening.

**Taxes:** The people of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway pay for their social programs through high taxes. Not only that, but the taxes fall mostly on the middle class.

The top effective income tax rate in Denmark is 55.9 percent for 2019. But only the rich pay that much, right? Well, not really: Everyone earning more than approximately \$7,000 a year (that's poor people) in Denmark pays nearly 20 percent of his income in taxes, including an eight-percent tax for healthcare, etc. And that top bracket of 55.9 percent isn't exactly Elizabeth Warren's "ultra-millionaire" tax either: It kicks in at the equivalent of \$77,000 a year. Solidly middle-class people in Denmark can expect to pay nearly 40 percent of their income in taxes.

And that's just *income taxes*. Don't forget about the VAT (Value-added Tax); it's essentially a sales tax of 25 percent on everything, even food. Yes, you read that right: Everyone, even poor people, pays a 25-percent tax on food. The VAT is truly a *regressive* tax, i.e., it affects lower-income people more than high-income people because lower-income people spend a bigger percentage of their income buying necessities. Norway and Sweden have a 25-percent VAT, too, but they give the poor a break and tax food at "only" 15 percent and 12 percent, respectively.

It's true that average wages are higher in Scandinavia than in many parts of the United States. But this, coupled with the high taxes, makes just about everything a lot more expensive. For instance, few people go out to eat, as restaurants are too expensive. Or how about this: Say you want to buy a new car as a reward for landing that dream job after you graduate from college. You'll pay a 180-percent tax on that new car in Denmark. You're welcome.

But Scandinavian countries must have really high corporate taxes, right? Not true: All three have lower corporate taxes than the United States (if you count state corporate taxes). So yes, the taxes really do



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fall on the workers, not the wealthy.

**Healthcare:** Healthcare is free in Scandinavia because the government is so smart they just “figure it out,” right? Wrong! Obviously, it’s not really “free.” It’s paid for by taxes. And everyone pays for healthcare, not just “the rich.” OK, but at least everybody gets *great* healthcare coverage! Well, not quite. Everybody gets coverage, but it’s not all that great. The *quality* of care is good, but the service is terrible.

Here’s what a native Swede named Klaus Bernpainter said about his healthcare:

For non-emergency cases in Sweden, you must go to the public “Healthcare Central.” This is always the starting point for anything from the common flu to brain tumors. You must go to your assigned Central, according to your healthcare district. Admission is by appointment only. Usually they have a 30-minute window every morning, when you call to claim one of the budgeted slots. Make sure to call early or they run out. Rarely will you get an appointment for the same day. You will be assigned a general practitioner, probably one you have never met before; likely one who does not speak fluent Swedish; and very likely one who hates his job. If you have a serious condition, you will be started on a path of referrals to experts. This process can take months....

This healthcare “bread line” is where people die. It happens regularly that by the time a patient gets to see an expert, his condition has progressed beyond remedy. It also happens frequently that referrals get lost....

The emergency room is a different experience altogether. Unless you are suffocating or are hemorrhaging profusely, you should expect to wait 5-7 hours to see a doctor. You can only hope for this “high” level of service if you arrive on a workday and during office hours. After hours, or on weekends, it is worse. Doctors are mostly busy filling out forms for the central health care authorities, scribbling codes in little boxes to report services rendered, instead of seeing patients. There have been cases reported where patients have seen a doctor immediately, but such cases are rare.

It is important to plan any major health problems you intend to have outside of June, July, and August, because in the summer months, hospitals are virtually shut down for vacation.

Long wait times plague government-run medical systems, and Denmark, Sweden, and Norway are no exception to this rule. Sweden, for example, has thrown a lot of money at its healthcare system to alleviate the long wait times, but to little avail. Here’s some more food for thought: More than five percent of Swedes and nearly a quarter of Danes purchase *private* health insurance to supplement their UtopiaCare. Wouldn’t Bernie Sanders make that illegal?

**Education:** The idea behind “free” college is that everyone can now get a college degree, and thus everyone will be catapulted into the middle class. The thing is, if everyone has a college degree, a college degree is essentially useless; it’s basically the new high-school diploma. Not only that, but statistics show that even though college is “free,” not everyone in Scandinavian countries goes to college. It’s about the same rate as in other developed countries. In fact, few kids from poor families go to college, even though it’s “free.”



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Surprisingly, “free” education is actually very expensive. Scandinavia at one time offered free college to foreign students, but Denmark and Sweden had to stop doing this because they couldn’t afford it. Funny how that works. Norway still offers its “free for foreigners” program, but they have a way to pay for it that you probably won’t like.

**Environment:** Scandinavian countries are world-renowned for protecting the environment. But what might upset a lot of people is the fact that Norway funds its generous welfare state with its state-run oil industry. Yep, you read that right. When you’re enjoying that “free” healthcare with long wait times and that “free” education in Norway, you can feel good knowing that Big Oil is paying for it! And Denmark gets a lot of its energy from coal and oil, not just from those pretty wind turbines off its coast.

So the bottom line is that the socialism in Scandinavian countries isn’t all rainbows and unicorns like many Americans think. The middle class and poor pay the taxes (including that 25-percent tax on food in Denmark), corporations get a break, the healthcare isn’t all that great, and the country with the biggest welfare programs pays for it with oil money.

Do you really want this in America?

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