

# Getting to Denmark

From Francis Fukuyama to N.F.S. Grundtvig

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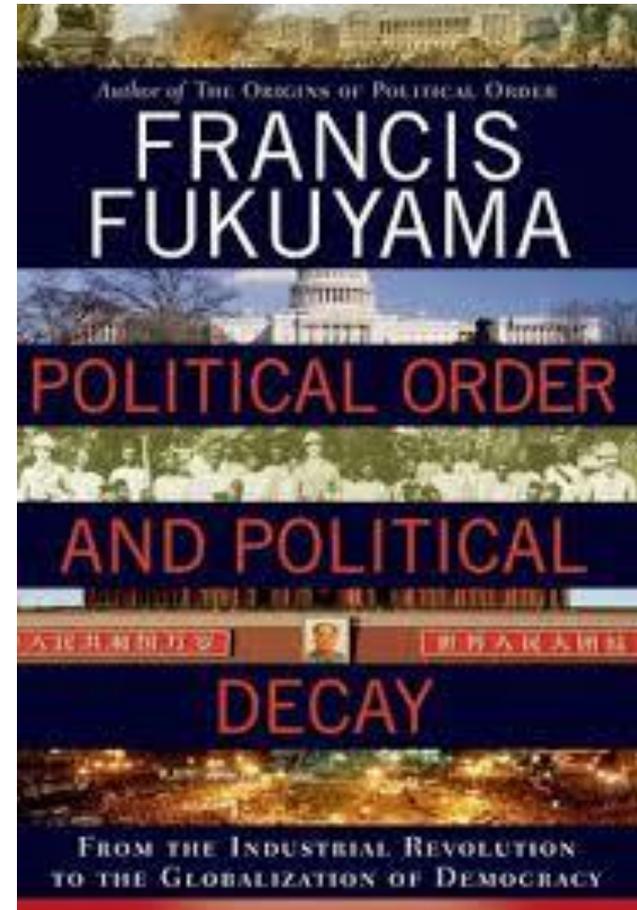
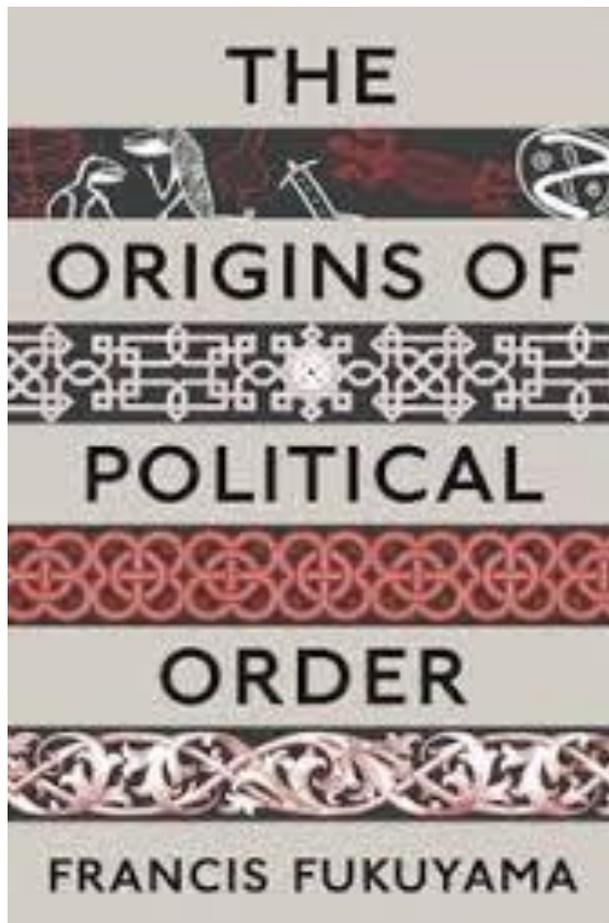
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# Getting to Denmark

“The problem of creating modern political institutions has been described as the problem of ‘getting to Denmark’ (...) For people in developing countries, ‘Denmark’ is a mythical place that is known to have good political and economic institutions: it is stable, democratic, peaceful, prosperous, inclusive, and has extremely low levels of political corruption”. (Fukuyama 2011:14).

# Francis Fukuyama



# The political Order

“I believe that a political system resting on a *balance* among state, law, and accountability is both a practical and a moral necessity for all societies”.

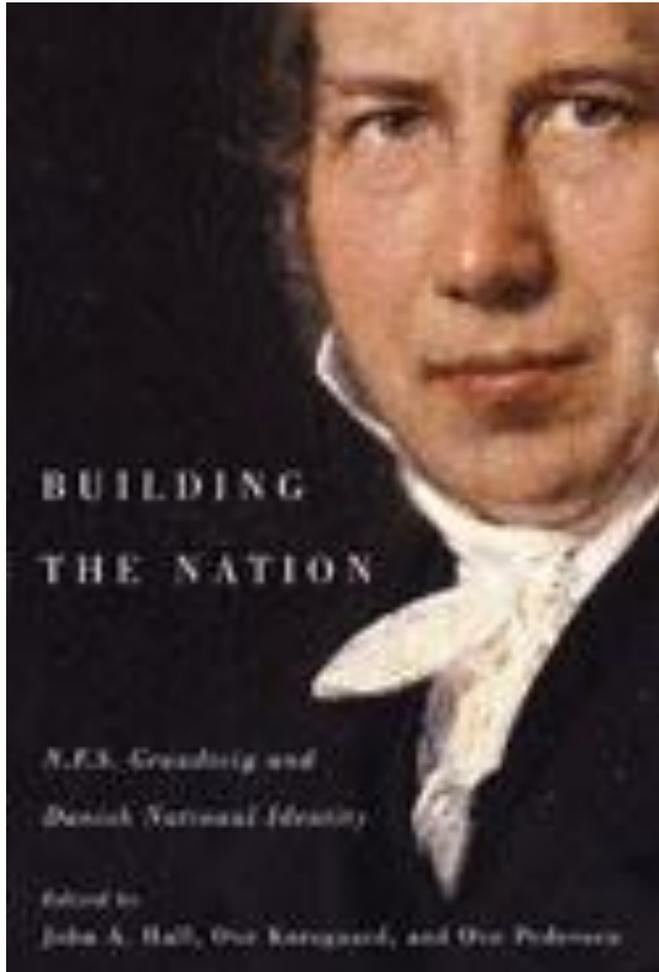
- “For better or worse, there is no alternative to a modern, impersonal state”
- “The rule of law is critical for economic development (and) the unalienable rights of individuals. ”
- “Democratic participation is more than just a useful check on abusive, corrupt, or tyrannical government. political agency is an end in itself, one of the basic dimensions of freedom that complete and enrich the life of an individual”. (Fukuyama 2014:37)

# Nation building is critical to the success of state building

”Nation building in contrast to state building requires the creation of intangible things like national traditions, symbols, shared historical memories, and common cultural points of reference. National identities can be created by states through their policies on language, religion and education. But they are just as often established from the bottom up by poets, philosophers, religious leaders, novelists, musicians, and other individuals with no direct access to political power”.

Fukuyama: Political order and Political decay 2014:185.

# *Building the Nation. N.F.S. Grundtvig and Danish national Identity (2015)*



“The significance of an individual like N.F.S. Grundtvig must be seen in terms of the building of a modern Danish nation, which was, in turn, critical to the success of the modern Danish State”.  
(Fukuyama: “Nation-building and State building”, 2015).

# Building national identity

“The fact that many contemporary new democracies seem to see no way of building strong national identities remains one of their great weaknesses.”

Fukuyama: “Nation building and State Building.” *Building the nation. N.F.S. Grundtvig and Danish national Identity*, 2015.

# Successful and not successful - according to Fukuyama

## **Successful**

- Tanzania
- Indonesian
  
- Denmark

## **Not successfull**

- Kenya
- Nigeria

# Imposing national identity in Indonesian

”Despite the clear limits to the radius of the national identity that the Indonesian state has been able to impose, however, the government has been able to achieve a remarkable degree of national integration for a region that was not remotely a single nation one hundred years earlier. Indeed, Indonesian identity by the 1990s had become sufficiently secure, when the country as a whole transitioned to democracy.”

Fukuyama: “Nation building and State Building.” *Building the nation. N.F.S. Grundtvig and Danish national Identity*, 2015.

# National identity

“In the Indonesian case, authoritarian power was necessary to produce a national culture. The Danish case is interesting because a strong national identity emerged as the result of a bottom-up process in a country that was liberal and democratizing.”

Fukuyama: “Nation building and State Building.” *Building the nation. N.F.S. Grundtvig and Danish national Identity*, 2015.

# Grundtvig 1783-1872

“People! What is meant  
by a people?”

(Grundtvig 1848)



# People: from the excluded to the constitutive political subject

“Every interpretation of the political meaning of the term *people* must begin with the singular fact that in modern European languages, *people* also always indicates the poor, the disinherited, and the excluded. One term thus names both the constitutive political subject and the class that is, *de facto* if not *de jure*, excluded from politics”.

(Giorgio Agamben: *Homo Sacer* 1995:176).

# *The People's High Schools*

- Askov High School was established in 1865 and became the leading High School in Scandinavian
- The Grundtvigians can be regarded as the peasantry's cultural vanguard
- National identity and skill training
- Norway, Sweden, Finland

Askov High School around 1890



# National identity as a bottom-up process

In Denmark national ideas were spread to the peasants by the so called grundtvigian movement and the People's High Schools, that exerted increasing influence, making their mark on the development of civil society in the form of free schools, free churches, and free organizations. In the Grundtvigian self-understanding, freedom and voluntary service are two sides of the same coin. In the final count, freedom cannot be *guaranteed* by the state, but must be *ensured* by the people.

# The father of Western adult Education

“The Danish folk high-school movement (...) has led to Grundtvig being called ‘the father of Western adult education’ and interest in Grundtvig and the folk high-school movement has extended to developing countries as well”.

(Max Lawson: "N.F.S. Grundtvig". Published in *Prospects: the quarterly review of comparative Education*, vol. XXIII, no. 3/4, 1993, p. 613–23).

# Ten years of the Grundtvig programme

“N.F.S. Grundtvig was a man of many talents. But for us, he was first and foremost an educator - the father of Danish folk high schools. His vision was for a unique school that would serve people of all ages and all social backgrounds. He understood the life-long and life-wide dimensions of learning. He knew that learning enriched life; that life enriched learning; and that education was a path to active participation in society and the community. That is why even today Grundtvig remains the greatest mentor for adult learning. His legacy lives on in Denmark, and across Europe, through our adult learning programme”.

(Androulla VASSILIOU Member of the European Commission responsible for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, September 2010).

# “Getting to Denmark”.

- “The problem is that Denmark did not get to be Denmark in a matter of months or years. Contemporary Denmark gradually evolved modern institutions over the course of centuries”.
- Francis Fukuyama: Political Order and Political Decay 2014:316.