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Author(s): Nathan Beck-Samuels

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The Nordic Theory of Constitutionalism: The Origins of the Nordic Social Contract

By Nathan Beck-Samuels

Preamble

Scandinavia is one of the happiest regions in the world thanks in part to its generous welfare systems. Alongside public policy, Finnish journalist Anu Partanen, together with Swedish historians Henrik Berggren & Lars Trägårdh, argue that this success is due to the unique *Nordic Theory of Love*: that crafting an autonomous citizen shapes a much happier society. This short article analyses the historical development of the *Nordic Theory of Love*; introducing the concept to the sphere of legal studies to further understand the social contract theory. The article finds that the constitutional relationship between the individual and the State developed much stronger in Scandinavia than in other Western societies enabling the success of the Nordic model.

Scandinavia consistently leads as one of the happiest regions in the world. An annual report published by the Wellbeing Research Centre at the University of Oxford has found that the Nordic nations, Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland, consistently rank in the top ten of countries in their *World Happiness Report*.¹ The report finds that the Nordic nations score particularly high in social trust and benevolence due to their high-quality health, education, and social support systems as well as in traditional economic indicators such as in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita.² As of 2024, Finland is the happiest country in the world for the seventh consecutive year followed immediately by Denmark, Iceland, and Sweden. Norway follows closely behind in seventh place. By comparison, industrialised European nations continue to fall far short of the Nordic nations on the World Happiness Report: Germany, France, and Italy all feature between twenty-second and fortieth place respectively.³ The United Kingdom fell from twentieth to twenty-third. The United States recorded their lowest ever position on the table at twenty-fourth in 2024.⁴ Indeed, the Wellbeing Research Centre noted in their findings that none of the large industrial powers ranked in the top twenty for the first time since their inaugural report in 2012.⁵ A number of academic studies, reports, articles, and policy analyses have attempted to understand why the Nordic nations continue to dominate and excel in economic and social indicators. The unique social, economic, and political models that Nordic nations have developed, such as their expansive welfare systems and progressive education policies, are often cited as significant factors to their success.

In her book, *The Nordic Theory of Everything*, Anu Partanen draws on her experience living in the United States and Finland as a journalist to highlight the different policy approaches taken by each country to address

¹ John F. Helliwell et al., *World Happiness Report 2025* (Wellbeing Research Centre, 2025), 16.

² *Ibid.*, 25-30.

³ “WHR Dashboard 2024: Rankings”, World Happiness Report, accessed April 11, 2025, <https://data.worldhappiness.report/table>.

⁴ Nicole Brown Chau, “2025 World Happiness Report shows U.S. in lowest-ever spot on the list”, *CBS News*, March 5, 2025, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/2025-world-happiness-report-us-lowest-ranking/>.

⁵ Helliwell et al., *World Happiness Report 2025*, 20.

education, health, family, and government policy issues, in an attempt to explain the success of the Nordic nations. Partanen argues that the Nordic approach of creating the autonomous, self-sufficient, and independent citizen—a concept Partanen names the “*Nordic Theory of Love*”—shapes a much happier, healthier, and progressive society.⁶ Drawing from the works of Swedish historians, Henrik Berggren & Lars Trägårdh, and their original theory of *The Swedish Theory of Love*, Partanen draws attention to the important Nordic value of individualism—the ability to be independent and self-sufficient from other members of society.⁷ The Nordic value of shaping autonomous citizens enables individuals to prioritise and form relationships in society based on genuine, authentic connection founded on equality rather than by obligation or necessity. Human relations are driven purely by love. To be dependent on other members of society, whether be that a friend, family, or strangers, either through societal or financial motive, can lead to inauthentic and unequal relationships. The Nordic nations execute the *Swedish Theory of Love* through a series of extensive welfare systems orchestrated by the State, such as that of providing universal access to healthcare, childcare, education, and social security benefits. Such policies enable Nordic citizens to fulfil their lives independently from relationships that could otherwise impede or coercively shape their lives. The *Swedish Theory of Love* enables Nordic societies to enjoy far more independence and freedom than the likes of their American and English counterparts who are steeped in unhealthy family, employer, and government relationship dependencies—for example, being reliant on the family to finance a child’s tertiary/quaternary education or relying on your employer to access healthcare. Partanen argues that the approach of the *Nordic Theory of Love* creates a happy society where real connections dominate the social sphere and is one of the core elements that underpins the success of the Nordic model.⁸ At a time when industrialised, high-income nations are slipping on the World Happiness Report and witnessing growing social, economic, and political challenges, perhaps the concept of the *Swedish Theory of Love* can provide guidance as to how Western societies could shape healthier, happier, and more prosperous societies in the future.

Whilst the original *Swedish Theory of Love* has been examined through social, cultural, and political lenses, little analysis has been conducted from a constitutional perspective. Indeed, a core element of the *Swedish Theory of Love* is the relationship between the individual and the State. What are the dynamics of the social contract in Sweden, and Scandinavia more broadly, that enables the citizen to be independent yet have significant trust in the State? How does this compare with the social contract theory traditionally explored in other democratic societies? This short article attempts to introduce the *Swedish Theory of Love* into the sphere of constitutional studies and legal history. The aim of this article is to contribute to discussions surrounding constitutionalism and the social contract theory to further understand the dynamics of the relationship between the individual, society and the State from a unique Scandinavian perspective. The article also expands on the works of Berggren & Trägårdh, and Partanen, whilst consulting prominent political philosophers, including Locke, Montesquieu and Kant. Attention will be focused on the development of concepts surrounding individualism and how it became a central factor in

⁶ Anu Partanen, *The Nordic Theory of Everything: In Search of a Better Life* (Duckworth Books, 2018), 50.

⁷ Originally published in Swedish in 2006 as “Är svensken människa?” (lit. “Is the Swede Human?”).

⁸ Partanen, *The Nordic Theory of Everything*, 50-53.

developing the Scandinavian constitutional relationship between the individual and the State – and indeed the success of the welfare systems as currently witnessed in the Nordic nations.

A central element to the understanding of the *Swedish Theory of Love* is the concept of individualism, in particular, the relationship between the individual and the State. Modern concepts of individualism developed amongst philosophers during the Period of Enlightenment between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. A focus on the relationship between the development of the individual with that of the role of the State helped to develop the concepts that would quickly become the bedrock of constitutional theory such as that of liberty, civil rights, the right to self-determination, and the rule of law.⁹ For example, the seventeenth century English philosopher, John Locke (1632-1704), had significant influence in the early development of individualism with his argument that individuals possessed natural rights to life, liberty, and property. Locke theorised that these natural rights are protected by a law of nature—a naturally occurring moral code that influences how individuals interact with each other—where consent (a social contract) was given to a government in order to protect these rights.¹⁰ Locke believed that the collection of individuals could denounce and remove a government if it did not protect these natural rights.¹¹ Locke's revolutionary belief in a naturally occurring moral code emboldened the idea that individuals were separate rational agents and thus able to think, act and endeavour independently of each other and with the State. It was this thinking that influenced the works of French philosopher, Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu (1689-1755) and his belief that, in order to safeguard these individual rights and liberties from a tyrannical, absolute government, its political powers needed to be separated into three branches—that of the Executive, Judiciary, and Legislature. As theorised in his work, *The Spirit of Law*, there needed to be in government “three sorts of power: the legislative; the executive in respect to things dependent on the law of nations; and the executive in regard to matters that depend on the civil law” for the very reason that “when the legislative and executive powers are united in the same person...there can be no liberty”.¹² Only by taming the powers of the government through a system of checks-and-balances, argued Montesquieu, could individual freedoms, natural rights, and liberties be protected under a social contract.

Concepts of individualism in the form of freedom, natural rights and liberties, under a restricted government were emboldened through a series of revolutionary constitutional documents that cemented the social contract between the restricted State and the empowered individual under the rule of law. One of the most prominent documents to champion these ideas was that of the American Declaration of Independence (1776). Influenced by the works of those such as Locke and Montesquieu, the Founding Fathers, in rejection of the British

⁹ Renowned Greek philosopher Aristotle addressed earlier concepts of individualism in the context of an individual's relationship with wider society in his work *Politics*. However, Aristotle emphasised the development of the individual in the context of the collective good of society and the role of the State in shaping its citizens – an approach that significantly differs to ideas of individualism developed during the period of Enlightenment; Gregory R. Johnson, “The First Founding Father: Aristotle on Freedom and Popular Government”, in *Liberty and Democracy*, ed. Tibor R. Machan (Hoover Institution Press, 2002), 30; Antony Alcock, *A Short History of Europe: From the Greeks and Romans to the Present Day* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), 3.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 144; Locke's argument was influenced by, and further developed on, the work of Thomas Hobbes with his concept of the ‘Leviathan’ written in 1651 that introduced the political concept of a Social Contract between the State and its subjects.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 164-165.

¹² Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of Laws: Volume I*, trans. Thomas Nugent (The Colonial Press, 1899), 151-152.

Crown, famously declared, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.”¹³ Furthermore, these enlightened concepts would be ingrained in the US Constitution in 1787 as featured in the first three Articles which separate the powers of government, constitutionally solidifying the relationship between the individual and the State, whilst protecting the idea of individual rights under the rule of law. As discussed by one of the Founding Fathers, James Madison, in *The Federalist Papers*, “the preservation of liberty requires that the three great departments of power should be separate and distinct.”¹⁴ The solidification of these rights in the US Constitution arguably shaped the cultural, political and economic landscape towards limited forms of government in the United States since its founding in 1776. Other notable constitutional documents that emboldened individual rights and freedoms under the rule of law (albeit not universal) were that of the French *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* (1789), and later the 1804 *Code Civil des Français* (Napoleonic Code).¹⁵ As demonstrated by the works of Locke, Montesquieu, and the formation of the US Constitution, limiting the power and reach of government was central to the protection and encouragement of individual rights in the development of a social contract between the individual and the State during the eighteenth century.

In the case of Scandinavia, Swedish historians Berggren & Trägårdh argue that the case of limited government to develop and protect individual liberties does not apply to the historical development of individualism in the making of the social contract in Scandinavia, particularly in Sweden. As highlighted in their analysis of Swedish society in *The Swedish Theory of Love*, Scandinavian societies were not exposed to behaviours of rebellion against authority, as witnessed in other European societies and in the United States during the eighteenth century. As Berggren & Trägårdh analyse, “the contrast is clear when Sweden is compared to other Western countries where the state attracts far greater suspicion and where relations between state, society, and individual have evolved in far more conflictual fashion”.¹⁶ Indeed, concepts of individualism as explored by Locke and Montesquieu, for example, emerged during an uncertain political environment in Europe between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: power struggles between the Church, the aristocracy, and the State, merged ideas of individual rights with opposition towards authority, a rejection of autocracy, and decline of feudal society.¹⁷ A political structure in the form of a three-estate system where the clergy, nobility, and commoners - but not the peasantry - held significant representation in political decision-making had shaped Europe in the lead-up to the Period of Enlightenment. This was demonstrated noticeably with the *Ancien Régime* in France, for example. As noted by Gosewinkel, “pre-revolutionary French society was based on legally entrenched inequality. French Absolutism had largely destroyed the institutions of parliamentary representation, so that there was no living, locally rooted

¹³ Thomas Jefferson et al., “The Declaration of Independence (1776)”, in *The Constitution of the United States* (Penguin Books, 2007), 45.

¹⁴ James Madison, “The Federalist, 47: The meaning of the maxim, which requires separation of the departments of power, examined and ascertained”, in *The Federalist Papers*, ed. Lawrence Goldman (Oxford University Press, 2008), 239.

¹⁵ Lynn Hunt, “The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, August 1789: A Revolutionary Document”, in *Revolutionary Moments: Reading Revolutionary Texts*, ed. Rachel Hammersley (Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 79-80.

¹⁶ Henrik Berggren & Lars Trägårdh, *The Swedish Theory of Love: Individualism and Social Trust in Modern Sweden*, trans. Stephen Donovan (University of Washington Press, 2022), 18.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 18-21.

tradition of participation in fundamental political decision-making.”¹⁸ This lack of political participation from the peasantry would contribute to the fall of French feudalism in 1789 with the French Revolution. Whilst England never formulated a three-estate system – despite its Parliament being organised into three Houses in the form of the Commons, Lords Temporal and Spiritual—Scotland held a three-estate system, known in Old Scots as the *Thrie Estaitis*, until 1690.¹⁹ The social contract between the individual and the State was therefore shaped – as we have seen – with emphasis on protecting individual rights and freedoms in the form of limited government. This influence would later feature prominently in the United States following its declaration of independence from the British Empire in 1776, where rejection of the British Crown fuelled the belief that State interference in the private sphere would significantly harm individual freedoms.

As highlighted by Berggren & Trägårdh, the nobility in Sweden never reached the same degree of power in society as witnessed in other European nations, enabling the State and the individual to mould a stronger social contract. By the turn of the seventeenth century, a four-estate political representation in Parliament (*Rikens ständer*) enabled the peasantry (*Bönderna*) to significantly contribute to political decision-making and to form alliances with the King on common interests.²⁰ The *Bönderna* and the King were both heavily suspicious of the nobility; the *Adeln* had political motives to limit the power of the King and embrace serfdom.²¹ Alliance between the *Bönderna* and the King strengthened further following the ‘*reduktion*’ initiated by King Charles XI of Sweden in 1680 which reclaimed assets from the nobility to enhance the Crown’s financial position and absolute authority, greatly diminishing the power base of the nobility and developing a powerful, centralised State.²² As Berggren & Trägårdh recount, the representational ability of the *Bönderna* to exhort political influence, and the diminishing role of the nobility, resulted in the “democratization of noble privileges”, where it was “intended to make the aristocracy and the people into equals by abolishing all privileges and special rights. As a result, rights-based thinking has only a weak foundation in the Swedish tradition.”²³ Trust between the *Bönderna* (society) and the State (institution) would again be strengthened in 1866 with the replacement of the four-estate system to a bicameral parliament (*Riksdag*).²⁴

Similar characteristics were observed in other Scandinavian societies, demonstrating a comparable political and social environment that significantly differed to that experienced across Europe. In Norway, for example, freeholding peasants held a degree of political influence in local/national assemblies throughout modern Norwegian history, and privileges of the already diminutive nobility were gradually abolished following the 1821 *Adelsloven* (Nobility Law).²⁵ As part of the Kingdom of Sweden between 1150 to 1809, Finland inherited a similar

¹⁸ Dieter Gosewinkel, “The Constitutional State”, in *The Oxford Handbook of European Legal History*, ed. Heikki Pihlajamäki, Markus D. Dubber, and Mark Godfrey (Oxford University Press, 2018), 952.

¹⁹ David Ditchburn & Alastair J. Macdonald, “Medieval Scotland, 1100-1560”, in *The History of Scotland: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, ed. Robert A. Houston and William W. Knox (The Folio Society, 2006), 266.

²⁰ For information, the four-estate political representation included the Nobility (*Adeln*), Clergy (*Prästerna*), Burghers (*Borgarna*), and Peasantry (*Bönderna*).

²¹ Berggren & Trägårdh, *The Swedish Theory of Love*, 23.

²² Hywel Williams, *Cassell's Chronology of World History: Dates, Events and Ideas that Made History* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005), 279.

²³ Berggren & Trägårdh, *The Swedish Theory of Love*, 24.

²⁴ Joakim Nergelius, “The Rise and Fall of Bicameralism in Sweden, 1866-1970”, in *Reforming Senates: Upper Legislative Houses in North Atlantic Small Powers 1800-present*, ed. Nikolaj Bijleveld, Colin Grittner, David Smith, and Wybren Verstegen (Routledge, 2020), 216.

²⁵ David Redvaldsen, “‘A Mere Ribbon of Silk?’ The Abolition of the Norwegian Nobility 1814-1824”, *Scandinavia* 54, No. 1 (2015): 94-96; Copyright © The Author(s) CC BY 4.0

four-estate system (known as the *Säättyvaltiopäivät*), where the peasantry held national representation in the Diet of Finland. This continued under the Russian Empire's annexation of Finland in 1809 until the system was replaced by a unicameral parliament (elected by universal suffrage) in 1906.²⁶ The close alliance between the individual and a centralised State in Swedish history (and in other Scandinavian societies) significantly altered the nature of the social contract in Sweden in comparison to traditional European political thought.

Ideas of individualism in Sweden would thus be developed in the context of a social contract built around egalitarianism, a centralised State, and with a strong emphasis on societal consensus rather than striving for individual freedom and liberty from a potentially aggressive form of government, as we have seen in other European societies. Whilst incorporating the works of Locke and Montesquieu in the form of constitutionally protecting individual rights and the separation of governmental powers, the social contract in Sweden merged individual rights and freedoms with that of a supportive State – rather than suspicion in the State – that not only protected individual autonomy but encouraged it.²⁷ Such a notion would embrace the works of German philosopher, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831), and his belief that the State was essential to the fulfilment of individual freedom. Rather than impeding individual freedom as envisaged by Locke and Montesquieu, Hegel believed that the State embodied the will of society in the form of individual rights and freedoms through its institutions and rule of law.²⁸ As a result, the State was the highest expression of freedom and that citizens could only fulfil their freedoms through the system and help of the State—an idea which presented itself in Sweden with the close relationship between the *Bönderna* and the King (State) throughout Swedish history.²⁹

However, Hegel's belief in a strong State does not entirely explain the Swedish national character and social structure in the development of individualism. The close relationship between the individual and the State is further bonded by a unique social character: that individual autonomy is heavily valued in Swedish society. To explain this unique character, Berggren & Trägårdh consult the ideas posed by Prussian philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). Expanding on the works of Locke and Montesquieu, Kant further explored the role of the law

Andreas Holmsen, "The Old Norwegian Peasant Community: Investigations undertaken by the institute for comparative research in human culture, Oslo", *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 4, No. 1 (1956): 21; Ingrid Semmingsen, "The Dissolution of Estate Society in Norway", *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 2, No. 2 (1954): 168, 175; Iceland provides an interesting case in comparison to Norway and Sweden. Under the rule of Denmark prior to the Period of Enlightenment, Icelandic peasants were not politically represented in the Icelandic Parliament (*Alþingi*). However, both the State and the aristocracy acted as representatives for peasantry interests. As highlighted by Júlíusson, "the state hindered the aristocracy in exploiting the peasantry excessively, and vice versa, the strong Icelandic aristocracy hindered the state in penetrating society for taxing purposes." As a result, the peasantry in Iceland developed a bond with both the State and the aristocracy in this regard; Árni Daníel Júlíusson, "Peasants, Aristocracy, and State Power in Iceland, 1400-1650", *The CAHD Papers* 2 (2007): 8.

²⁶ John Saari, "Finnish Nationalism Justifying Independence", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 232, no. 1 (1944): 37.

²⁷ The Swedish Constitution comprises of four Constitutions (instead of a single Constitution as found in the United States) comprising of the Instrument of Government (1974), Act of Succession (1810), Freedom of the Press Act (1949), and the Fundamental Law on Freedom of Expression (1991). Fundamental rights and freedoms are protected under the 1974 Instrument of Government. However, the Constitution does not explicitly separate governmental powers in the traditional sense. The Constitution operates a Monistic approach where the *Riksdag* (representing the citizen) is the primary centre of power that can hold the Government accountable. The Judiciary is independent and can uphold Swedish Law, however it is not designed to dominate the *Riksdag* or Government; "The Constitution of Sweden", Regeringskansliet, accessed July 5, 2025, <https://www.government.se/contentassets/7b69df55e58147638f19bdfb0984f97/the-constitution-of-sweden>.

²⁸ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, trans. S.W. Dyde (George Bell & Sons, 1896), 248-254.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 248-249.

of nature in the social contract and, specifically, how a naturally occurring moral code dictated the relationship between an individual and the rest of society. Kant concluded that there was a paradox with the law of nature: that whilst individuals had the natural tendency to interact with society there existed a continuous struggle to this natural urge that prompted an individual to seek isolation from society.³⁰ Whilst an individual wanted to participate in a functioning society, Kant believed that individuals were inherently asocial when in the pursuit of their own individual interests. Kant referred to this ambiguity as '*die ungesellige Geselligkeit*' or the 'unsocial sociality of man' (also referred to as 'asocial sociability').³¹ Berggren & Trägårdh argue that asocial sociability is a central factor to understanding the creation of the Swedish welfare state and a society built on individualism. The paradox that is the *ungesellige Geselligkeit* opens a gap in the relationship (social contract) between the individual and society; a gap which, in the case of Sweden, is filled by the State in the form of providing a social security net.

The close relationship between an autonomous individual and a centralised State in Swedish society, mixed with the Swedish character of asocial sociability, would give rise to what Berggren & Trägårdh term '*Statist Individualism*' – a social contract between an independent, autonomous individual and a State which interferes in society in order to protect and support the social rights, freedoms, and autonomy of its citizens.³² Although in direct contrast to the works of Locke and Montesquieu, who believed that an interfering State in society restricts individual freedom, *Statist Individualism* endorses the idea that State interference in society does not necessarily diminish individual freedom but can greatly advance it when exercised correctly. As stated by Berggren & Trägårdh, when the State “guarantees social rights to the individual, citizens can be free and autonomous in their dealings with the relations of power that govern both the market and the family.”³³ The presence of an interfering State in Swedish society has enabled citizens to facilitate and embrace individualism – addressing the Swedish paradox of asocial sociability – where the State acts as a mediator between the individual and its paradoxical relationship with the rest of society. This is what enables the individual to create genuine and authentic relationships with both other members of society and with the State and underpins the success of the *Swedish Theory of Love*. *Statist Individualism* would later materialise in the form of the Swedish welfare state where the *Riksdag* would gradually introduce universal welfare provisions throughout the twentieth century to shape the independent, autonomous individual with a State that, not only supported their welfare, but guaranteed a citizen's social rights and freedoms.

Berggren & Trägårdh, alongside Partanen, argue that the success of the Nordic model in social and economic indicators is due to the Nordic value of individualism. The ability to be autonomous and independent from other members of society enables citizens to develop authentic and genuine connections and thus create a happier, healthier, and more progressive society. From a constitutional perspective, the *Swedish Theory of Love* provides an interesting case in the study of constitutionalism and the understanding of the social contract theory. As we

³⁰ Berggren & Trägårdh, *The Swedish Theory of Love*, 13.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. x; Immanuel Kant, “Idea of a Universal History on a Cosmo-Political Plan”, in *The London Magazine Vol. X.*, ed. J. Scott and J.C. Taylor (Baldwin Printers, 1824), 387.

³² Berggren & Trägårdh, *The Swedish Theory of Love*, 31-32.

³³ *Ibid.*, 32.

have explored, traditional approaches to individualism during the Period of Enlightenment focused on the development of the individual with that of the role of the State in the shape of a social contract. This was represented in the form of natural rights to life, liberty, and property, as hypothesised by Locke, and the separation of governmental powers in order to safeguard these natural rights, as theorised by Montesquieu. These revolutionary ideas would form the bedrock of constitutional theory between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; solidifying ideas of individual rights and freedoms under the rule of law and protected by a government with limited powers—as demonstrated by the American Declaration of the Independence in 1776 and the development of the US Constitution in 1787. However, as highlighted by Berggren & Trägårdh, the traditional approach to individualism—that of a limited, restricted government to protect individual liberties—does not strictly apply to the development of the Swedish social contract. As demonstrated throughout Swedish history, the peasantry (*Bönderna*) was able to contribute to political decision-making in Parliament and form alliances with the King on common interests against the nobility, forging a close relationship between the individual and a supportive, centralised State. This encouraged the social contract to be shaped on societal consensus and a supportive State that, not only protected individual rights and freedoms, but greatly encouraged it, as reinforced by Hegel and his belief that the State was essential to the fulfilment of individual freedom. Tied with the uniquely Swedish characteristic of asocial sociability, as explored by Kant with his theory of *ungesellige Geselligkeit*, the Swedish social contract would be founded on the basis of *Statist Individualism*: that of an independent, autonomous individual and a State which interferes in society, through a series of universal welfare systems and social security benefits, to protect and support the rights, freedoms, and autonomy of its citizens. Such an approach significantly differs to that traditionally theorised during the Period of Enlightenment and, not only expands our scope and understanding of the social contract theory but helps us to understand the success of the Nordic welfare system and, indeed, *The Swedish Theory of Love*.

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