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Bulletin

All students of Scandinavian Studies and friends are invited to attend the **Departmental Award Ceremony** on April 25th at 5:00 PM in Lucy Ellis Lounge in the Foreign Language Bldg. Outstanding students and scholarship recipients will be honored, and the Scandinavian Club will be recognized. All officers and award recipients should plan to attend.

Congratulations to **Sarah Pudell**, who received the award for “Excellence in Continuing Swedish” and to **Dane Jorgensen**, who was recognized for “Excellence in Beginning Swedish.” This award is based both on superb grades and extra-curricular involvement in department and Scandinavian Club activities.

Congratulations are due to **Jenny Haare** for receiving the “Anna Jensen Memorial Scandinavian Award” for study abroad in Sweden ($1,500.00).

Congratulations go out as well to **Brigette Ruhland** and **Cathy Selen**, who will each receive an award for study abroad in Sweden as part of a grant from the Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation for study abroad in Sweden ($750.00).

Congratulations to Swedish language student **Bergen Basset** (SCAN 494) on receiving an internship with the U.S. State Department in Washington for 10-weeks this fall. Bergen is a MA student in EU studies, and her internship will be with the Office of Nordic and Baltic Affairs. Bergen will be putting her knowledge of Swedish to good use, conducting research on current events, writing and editing summaries of news for internal briefs for senior officials, and other various duties. **Lycka till, Bergen!**

The field trip to “**Scandinavian Chicago**” will be during the day of Saturday, April 16th. Carpools will leave from Champaign-Urbana in the morning, visit IKEA, the Swedish American Museum (in Andersonville) and conclude with dinner at Tre Kronor (in North Park). If you plan on attending, contact Melissa Boban melboban@gmail.com ASAP, so that dinner reservations can be made.
A veritable smörgåsbord of Scandinavian course offerings awaits you next fall. Many SCAN courses are Gen Ed requirements and are cross-listed in a variety of other departments, so this could be a very practical detour in your college studies. Courses include:

**SCAN 101:** Beginning Scandinavian I (Swedish)
12:00-12:50 PM – MTWR

**SCAN 103:** Intermediate Scandinavian I (Swedish)
1:00-1:50 PM – MTWR

**SCAN 225:** Vikings to Volvos: Scandinavian Culture
10:00-10:50 AM – MWF

**SCAN 251:** Viking Mythology
11:00-11:50 AM – MWF

**SCAN 252:** Viking Sagas in Translation
2:00-2:50 PM – MWF

**SCAN 490:** Films of Ingmar Bergman
3:00-4:50 PM - MW

For a complete catalogue, go to: http://www.germanic.illinois.edu/scandinavian/courses/

Club T-Shirts are being ordered!!
Contact Melissa Boban melboban@gmail.com for ordering information
Shirts will cost around $12.00.
Hemlandsnytt

JOBS: Employment Services forecasts that more jobs will be available within the private sector. The unemployment is steadily falling and more and more businesses are looking for personnel. “We expect that 100,000 more jobs will be filled within two years,” says Employment Services Chief Analyst Clas Olsson.

BRITISH PRAISE: The image of Sweden is changing. From the melancholy and high-tax society, the picture has emerged of a country that has fared better in getting out of the economic crisis than its European neighbors. “There is a news curiosity about Sweden,” says Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt, who recently was in Britain to tell how Sweden survived. During two days the prime ministers from the Nordic countries and the Baltic states met with British economic experts, headed by British Prime Minister David Cameron. The British politicians, both left and right, have taken great interest in Sweden’s economic reforms, which have succeeded when those in other countries have not.

GREEN: On Apr. 9, Preem will launch its new eco-diesel, mixed with refined pine oil from the Swedish forest, produced by the Sunpine factory in Piteå. “Evolution Diesel” will be the first fuel of its kind in the world – a green diesel of the environmental classification 1,” says Preem CEO Michael G. Löw. It can be used for any diesel engine.

MORE PRAISE: In January, there is a large annual sports gala in Sweden. Ingemar Stenmark, who ruled the ski slopes a year ago, was celebrated at this year’s gala. The organizers surprised the legend by having two of his greatest rivals, the brothers Phil and Steve Mahre, show up on the stage to present Ingemar with the honorary prize. He was very moved to receive the prize from the brothers. Phil said that Ingemar is the greatest of all time, and Steve said that everybody chased Inemar and even the Olympic Committee tried to find someone who could beat him. Ingemar Stenmark must be regarded as the greatest skier ever.

FIGHT: Eva Gabrielsson, the long time partner of the late Swedish novelist Stieg Larsson, has written her version of their life together. Millennium, Stieg and Me is a slim memoir published in France, Sweden and Norway with a co-author, the French journalist Marie-Francoise Colomani. Ms. Gabrielsson claims that Larsson wrote slightly more than 200 pages of a sequel to his three-part Millennium series, shortly before his death in 2004. She has been seeking the legal authority to finish it, but Larsson’s family has refused. Gabrielsson has been locked in a bitter dispute with Larsson’s father and brother over the rights and income deriving from his works. She and Larsson lived together for 32 years, but because they were not married and he left no will, she has no legal rights to his estate.

Seize a Semla

Semlor are best described as cream buns with almond paste. But a semla is more than just a bun. It’s a Nordic cultural tradition – and like many other traditions, its roots are religious. In olden days, when Scandinavia was Catholic, the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday and the start of Lent was Fettisdagen, or “Fat Tuesday,” as we know it. People ate heartily to prepare for 40 days of deprivation before Easter. Swedes marked the day with a semla, a wheat flour bun filled with almond paste and whipped cream, often plopped into a bowl of warm milk. Today’s Swedes find no reason to restrict semlor to one Tuesday a year, so they begin appearing in shops as early as Jan. 1, which happily turns Fat Tuesday into Fat January, February, and March! You can find the recipe for this spring treat on page 7 of this newsletter.
In the year 2007 there were 9,829 people admitted into prisons in Denmark (Lindstrom 560). Today, in the United States of America, there are roughly 2.3 million people incarcerated. Although, the U.S. only counts for 5% of the overall world population, its prisoner population accounts for one fourth of the world’s prisoner population (Lyptak 1). Meanwhile, other developed countries around the world manage to maintain lower prison populations. The Scandinavian region of nations is an example of other, well-developed nations, that do not seem to share America’s predicament with incarceration. One cannot blame the staggering statistic above on the relative sizes of the two countries (Denmark only having a population of 5,529,270, while the U.S. has a population of 307,006,550). The statistics show a disconnect between the U.S. and Scandinavian incarceration practices. The U.S. incarcerates 751 people for every 100,000 citizens. Sweden, with a population of 9,302,123, locked up just 82 people for every 100,000 citizens in 2007 (Pratt 275). Are the American people simply more criminal than the Scandinavian populations? What are the factors that allow Scandinavian countries to enjoy such low incarceration rates, and why is the United State’s so high?

This essay will attempt to analyze why fewer people are going to penitentiaries in Scandinavian countries, and why fewer are returning to prison after release. The answers to these queries can be found inside Scandinavian prisons and outside of them. All of the factors that go into why persistent and vast incarceration occurs must be accounted for. One must look at the difference between the criminal justice systems that place the inmates in the prisons. One must also ask how crimes are evaluated. The perceived role of prisons between the U.S. and Scandinavian countries is also important. Why is one system returning so many while the other system returns fewer convicts? Finally, the factors that go into why people are committing the crimes in the first place need to be uncovered. Multiple journal articles, studies, newspaper articles, and books have gone into the information in this research paper. Sweden and Denmark will be the bases of most of the research involving the Scandinavian prison systems, although other Scandinavian countries may be referenced throughout the paper.

According to John Irwin and James Austin’s book, America’s Imprisonment Binge, in 1990 roughly 475,000 people were sent to prison. 70% of those that did not get sent for parole violations were convicted for nonviolent crimes. The overall average of the 475,000 people convicted received a sentence of 6.25 years. These crimes involve petty theft, drug possession, drug trafficking, and other offenses of that nature. The Dispositions of Felony Convictions also states that, in 1990, the average prison sentence for burglary was 74 months, larceny was 50 months, and assault was 89 months (Austin 26). When compared to Scandinavian prison sentencing, these numbers are very different. Going back to the 9,829 people incarcerated in Denmark in 2007, 30% received sentences lower than 2 months, 28% received sentences between two and 6 months. These sentences, although, are fixed sentences, unlike the American version, where an inmate might only serve 25 months of the 6.25 years sentence (Lindstrom 260). Drug sentencing is another important difference that makes up for much of the discrepancy between the prison populations.

Sweden, in terms of Scandinavian standards, is said to have a very ‘tough-on-drugs’ outlook. They categorize the offences as minor, ordinary, and serious. A minor violation will result in a fine. A minor violation could include 0.5 grams of cocaine, .04 grams of cocaine, and cannabis up to 50 grams. An ordinary offense may result in up to three years in prison for having 51 grams-2kg of cannabis, 6.1 gram of amphetamines. Finally, an example of a serious drug amount would be 250g of amphetamines and could result in two to ten years in prison (Lafreniere). Sweden has taken this approach since 1968 and the Narcotic Drugs Act passed. Conversely Denmark once had a loose policy on drugs. They even allowed for open cannabis market until 2003 when the Danish Peoples Party shut them down. Now they are taking on their version of “The War on Drugs” calling it “The Fight Against Drugs” (Vibeke). In the US the average person in prison serving for drug trafficking is in for 66 months. In 1990, 52.6 percent of people in a correctional facility, including jail awaiting trial, were there for the equivalent amount of a marijuana smoker (Austin 34).
The philosophy regarding the role of prison is very different between the Scandinavia and that of the United States. The prison systems have a different structure and a different set of goals. Unlike the U.S., Scandinavian countries use smaller prisons. Most hold one hundred inmates or less; the largest prison is Sweden and holds 350 inmates. This allows each prison to have a healthier officer-prisoner ratio, which is typically 1:1 (Pratt 120). Meanwhile, in the United States, nine state facilities reported overcrowding by nearly 150%. Unlike Sweden and Denmark where each inmate gets a cell to themselves, in the U.S. many facilities are doubling up cells intended for one. The solution was to make mega-prisons that could hold 5,000-10,000 (Austin 67-68).

Sweden’s prisons, however, were meant to perform a completely different task than those in America. Swedish Prison Treatment Act of 1974 explicitly explains the goals of the Swedish correctional system. In this act, four specific goals or principles are laid out. First, imprisonment is a last resort and fines of community work should always be administered first. Second, normalization is a necessary component of rehabilitation. Third, the prisoner should be placed as close to where their family is as possible. Finally, all parts of the criminal justice system should work with the inmate to see through a successful sentence (Lindstrom 564). These four principles say a great deal about how the Swedish penal system operates, along with how other Scandinavian penal systems work. The first statement does not need much elaboration, but the second statement touches on a hallmark of the Scandinavian prison system.

Normalization is the idea that prison life should resemble life on the outside as much as possible. This is done so that the prisoner is can maintain self esteem and maintain skills that he or she will need when it comes time for that prisoner to be released. For instance, a person in prison in Denmark will most likely not be wearing a uniform. They wear their own clothes, their cells contain their own items, and officers do not wear military style uniform. Prisoners also have the right to vote, which is very different from America (Rentzmann 60). The environments of the prisons themselves have stark differences from those in America.

In Sweden and Denmark, a person may be sent to a closed or an open prison based on how much of a threat that person is perceived to be. Closed prisons are the more supervised and rigid of the two. It contains what Americans would be used to in a prison. There are controlled exits, high walls surrounding the building, and at one maximum security prison in Sweden there is an electric fence. Once on the inside, though, it is amazing how self-sufficient the inmates are. There are large common rooms where inmates can even cook for themselves. Certain inmates, at lower security prisons are permitted to go to a local shop for groceries. At maximum-security prisons conjugal visits are the norm. Families are even allowed to stay for the weekend (Pratt 122). Open prisons are also a Scandinavian ideal. An open prison is a prison with literally no walls. In these prison systems prisoners are allowed even more visits from family. These visits can occur up to two to three times a week. Just as visitors can come in, prisoners can get permission to leave the prison during the day. This allows the prisoner to acquire a job, and or hold a job while in the penitentiary. Another interesting aspect of open prisons is that more responsibility is placed on the inmate to perform duties that they would normally not have to at an American style prison. Many times, the inmates are responsible for buying their own food at the prison shop with money they earned from their jobs in the prison. They are responsible for cooking the food and cleaning up after. Most large prisons perform the duty of doing the inmates’ laundry, but in open prisons the inmates are in charge of it themselves. These open prisons are used for low risk convicts, but more importantly, they are used to help inmates that are about to get out become more accustom to what the real world is like (Rentzmann 62). Having an inmate prepared for their release is an important aspect of a correctional facility.

If an inmate is not emotionally prepared for the outside, than there is a serious risk for re-arrest. The numbers for re-arrest in the United States is extremely high. In 1983 the U.S Department of Justice performed a follow up study on 108,580 inmates that had been released from state penitentiaries. 63% of the inmates were re-arrested for a felony within three years of release. Another study by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency found that 70% of the inmates released from California and Illinois were arrested for a felony within three years of their release. In the same study it was shown that in Illinois, the rate of arrest declined by 64% after the first year out (Austin 120). As the inmates get farther from the release date they are exponentially less likely to be incarcerated again. Why is there such a large recidivism rate? What are some underlying causes for recidivism all together?
Although recidivism is much lower in Scandinavian counties, it still does exist. The existence of recidivism can tell more about why prison rates are so high in the U.S. as well as explain more about criminals themselves. According to and interview done by BBC news on Anne Broendum, a lawyer for the governor’s office in Copenhagen, the recidivism rate for Denmark was as low as 27% in 2003 (BBC news). In 1997 a study by The Swedish Probation office showed that 32% of released prisoners re-offended in the same year of release. The decision was to study how the living conditions of convicts related to their recidivism rate and overall criminal behavior. The data for the survey was collected during the spring of 1997. 411 inmates, 362 of which were male and 49 of which were female, were interviewed (due to loss of records and death 323 males and 47 females were left). Questions were asked regarding the inmates’ family situation, financial situation, educational background, and other things related to living conditions. In 2000, records were recovered from the Prison and Probation Service in order to see who reoffended. Out of the 323 men, 44% of them were re-arrested with 38% receiving another term. Out of the 47 females, 34% reoffended with 23% of them receiving another term (pg 64). When looking at their living conditions and how it related to their recidivism you can see that there is a moderate to strong relationship. 56% of the inmates that reoffended had sub-par financial and housing conditions. Only 35% of them had been through a decent amount of schooling (pg 67). This study indicates that no matter how forward thinking the correctional system might be, recidivism and vicious cycles of incarceration can still exist.

It is true that Sweden, Denmark, and all of the Scandinavian countries have a fewer people imprisoned relative to their national populations that the United States, but the causes of crime are similar. People living in poor conditions, with less education, opportunity, and social stability are more likely to get trapped in the system. In the U.S. the number of people living in poverty from 1980 to 1988 went from 26 million to 32 million. In 1987, 27% of families were single-parent houses predominantly headed by the mother. These numbers continue to inflate today, as well as our prison population (Austin 10). There are vast differences between the national identity between the U.S and Scandinavian countries. A country like Sweden, which supports unemployment with 80-90% of what a person would be making with a salary, have impeccable welfare systems. Sweden is known as folkhemmet or the “Peoples’ Home” (Pratt 278).

To truly understand the complexities of comparing prison populations between countries, one must look deep within the prison and within society. Many judicial and societal factors contribute to why one nation may have an extremely high prison population, while another may have a low one. These comparisons suggest that harsh prison sentences put people in jail for long periods of time. The “fragmenting of prisoner society, the general physical and social isolation of prisoners…” keep them in the system, and social inequalities hinder even the greatest criminal justice and correctional states from eliminating crime and recidivism. The Scandinavian prisons allow inmates to grow and look toward the future of their release. An inmate under any social circumstances has a better chance of rehabilitation in a Scandinavian prison than in almost any other in the world, including the United States.

Bibliography


Irwin, John, and James Austin. It's About Time: America’s Imprisonment Binge. (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1994)


Semlor

Fat Tuesday Buns - A Swedish Lenten Dessert

Melt the butter in a saucepan, pour in the milk and warm until lukewarm (99° F). Crumble the yeast in a bowl and stir in a little of the warm butter-milk mixture until the yeast is completely dissolved. Add the rest of the butter-milk mixture, salt, sugar, cardamom and most of the flour (save some for the rest of the baking). Work the dough smooth and shiny. It should let go from the edges of the bowl. Allow the dough to rise under a baking cloth for 40 minutes. Sprinkle flour over a baking board and place the dough there. Make the buns by rolling the dough against the baking board in your cupped hand. Put the buns on a baking tray with oven paper and allow them to rise for an additional 30 minutes. Preheat the oven to 440° F. Brush the buns with the beaten egg and bake them for about 10 minutes in the middle of the oven. Let them cool on an oven rack under a baking cloth. Cut off the very top of each bun, and carve out some of the center (like a Jack-o-lantern). Crumble up the insides and set them aside for the filling. Crumble in almond paste, mix with the insides and dilute with some milk to a rather soft mixture. Put this filling back into the buns. Whip the cream and put a large dollop in every bun. Put the tops back on and then sift some confectioners’ sugar over the top. (Yields 16-20 buns)

Recipe Submitted by Mark Safstrom

Calendar of Events

Conversation Hour
Weekly, Wednesdays 3:30-4:30 @ Espresso Royale on Goodwin & Oregon

Happy Hour
Join The Scandinavian Club every week for drinks and socializing
Tuesdays at 5pm at Murphy’s Pub

The Final Film Night
Tuesday, April 19th  7:00 PM - 9:30 PM

“Arn: The Knight Templar”
(Arn: Tempelriddaren)
Peter Flinth (2007)
An epic tale of a Swedish Knight sent to the Holy Land who returns to help his family fight for the crown. (Swedish language)
Lucy Ellis Lounge (room 1080) in the Foreign Languages Bldg.