

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR WHOM? – THE EUROPEAN  
SOCIAL MODEL IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE**

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The world experiences an epoch – making advancement of free market economy. Militant individualism and anti – institutionalism threaten the achievements of welfare politics. The topic of social responsibility seems to separate the free world on both sides of the Atlantic. The US is departing from their welfare traditions and is about to replace social by penal policy.

The European Social Model is a peculiar and complex phenomenon. On the one hand it seems to be of rather residual character, on the other it is used by European politicians as a kind of mantra. Nevertheless it could inspire disappointed people across the European Union and become a major means of cohesion.

Looking at the European Social Model from an outside perspective it is easy to perceive. From an inside position the picture is ambiguous. There is no compelling clarity and hence a single definition not readily recallable. We are rather facing a jungle of different concepts, terms and experiences. Only with great difficulties it is possible to cluster them to models. Which of these models should be used in order to develop a strategy of welfare revival depends on its capacity to secure the position of the citizens respectively to promote global competitiveness.

The Nordic model appears to deliver most effectively along these postulates.

**WHICH TYPE OF CAPITALISM IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE?**

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The demise of the Soviet Union and thereby of the socialist alternative at the end of the 1980s revealed the diversity between the capitalist market economies themselves. The globalization and the Europeanisation process advanced in the 1990s have drawn renewed interest in the persistence of national specificities with regard to capitalist systems and their institutional arrangements. The product of this interest is the body of literature in comparative political economy and sociology known as “varieties of capitalism” approach. In the most influential contribution by Peter Hall and David Soskice, two ideal types of capitalism – liberal market and coordinated market capitalism – are distinguished. Bruno Amable, combining deductive ideal typologising and inductive statistical classification techniques, discovers 5 types of capitalism – Asiatic, Continental European, Market-Based, Mediterranean, Social-Democratic.

The available work on varieties of capitalism is focused on the advanced capitalist market economies. According to influential view, postcommunitic capitalism is distinctive type of capitalism, including several distinctive subtypes, e. g. “capitalism from without”, “capitalism from above”, “capitalism from below” (Ivan Szelenyi). However, as comparable statistics on the postcommunitic countries are increasingly available, and the transition turmoil settles down,