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The Narcissism of Minor Differences: How America and Europe Are Alike

Peter Baldwin

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There is much heated rhetoric about the widening gulf between Europe and America. But are the US and Europe so different? Peter Baldwin, one of the world's leading historians of comparative social policy, thinks not, and in this bracingly argued but remarkably informed polemic, he lays out how similar the two continents really are. Drawing on the latest evidence from sources such as the United Nations, the World Bank, IMF, and other international organizations, Baldwin offers a fascinating comparison of the United States and Europe, looking at the latest statistics on the economy, crime, health care, education and culture, religion, the environment, and much more. It is a book filled with surprising revelations. For most categories of crime, for instance, America is safe and peaceful by European standards. But the biggest surprise is that, though there are many differences between America and Europe, in almost all cases, these differences are no greater than the differences among European nations. Europe and the US are, in fact, part of a common, big-tent grouping. America is not Sweden, for sure. But nor is Italy Sweden, nor France, nor even Germany. And who says that Sweden is Europe? Anymore than Vermont is America?
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"A must-read...filled with intriguing facts that add nuance to what can often be a black-and-white debate."
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