



WHY NATIONS PROSPER

A PERSONAL EXPLORATION BY
HENRIK EKLUND

Continue Learning

Books to Read

[*How Nations Win: Creating Prosperity through Freedom, Order, and Innovation*](#) — Henrik Ekelund

Expanding on the ideas explored in *Why Nations Prosper*, Ekelund examines how Freedom, Order, and Innovation work together to create the conditions for lasting prosperity—and what happens when those forces weaken.

[*The Wealth of Nations*](#) — Adam Smith

One of the foundational works of modern economics, Smith's landmark book explores how trade, specialization, competition, and individual economic freedom contribute to the creation of wealth and prosperity.

[*Open: The Story of Human Progress*](#) — Johan Norberg

Norberg explores how openness to trade, ideas, innovation, and exchange has helped societies advance throughout history—and why maintaining that openness remains important to continued progress.

[*Free to Choose: A Personal Statement*](#) — Milton Friedman and Rose Friedman

The Friedmans explore how economic freedom, individual choice, and voluntary exchange can expand opportunity and contribute to prosperity, while examining the appropriate role of government in a free society.

[*Progress: Ten Reasons to Look Forward to the Future*](#) — Johan Norberg

Using historical evidence and global data, Norberg examines dramatic improvements in areas including poverty, health, life expectancy, literacy, and living standards, offering a broader perspective on the extraordinary gains in human well-being.

[*The Mystery of Capital*](#) — Hernando de Soto

De Soto explores why capitalism succeeds in some countries but struggles in others, focusing particularly on the importance of property rights and legal institutions in allowing people to turn assets into economic opportunity.

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[Capitalism and Freedom](#) — Milton Friedman

Friedman examines the relationship between economic and political freedom, arguing that competitive markets and limited government can help protect individual liberty while creating conditions for economic prosperity.

[Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty](#) — Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson

Acemoglu and Robinson examine why some countries become prosperous while others remain poor, arguing that inclusive political and economic institutions play a critical role in determining a nation's long-term success.

Films to Watch

[Commanding Heights: The Battle for the World Economy](#)

This PBS series traces the global struggle between government-controlled and market-oriented economies and the rise of globalization. It provides valuable historical context for *Why Nations Prosper's* exploration of economic reform, free markets, trade, and the changing role of government.

[The Ascent of Money](#)

This documentary series explores the history of money, banking, credit, and financial markets and their role in shaping societies. It complements *Why Nations Prosper's* examination of how access to capital, investment, and functioning financial systems can support innovation and economic growth.

[The Pursuit](#)

Economist Arthur C. Brooks travels around the world exploring poverty, opportunity, and the conditions that enable people to improve their lives. Its focus on human well-being makes it a natural companion to *Why Nations Prosper's* broader question of what prosperity means for individuals and communities.

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[Poverty Inc.](#)

This documentary examines the international aid system and asks whether traditional approaches to fighting poverty can sometimes undermine local entrepreneurship and self-sufficiency. It offers another perspective for discussing how institutions, markets, and economic opportunity can contribute to sustainable prosperity.

[Trailblazers: The New Zealand Story](#) — Free To Choose® Network

Johan Norberg explores New Zealand's transformation from economic crisis to renewed prosperity, examining how economic reform, international trade, and greater economic freedom created new opportunities for individuals and businesses.

[Economic Freedom in Action: Changing Lives](#) — Free To Choose Network

Through personal stories from Zambia, South Korea, Slovakia, and Chile, this documentary explores how greater economic freedom can affect entrepreneurship, self-reliance, and opportunity in the lives of ordinary people.

[When China Opened Its Economy](#) — izzit.org®

Explore how China's shift toward greater economic freedom, international trade, and private enterprise helped fuel extraordinary economic growth, while considering the challenges that may affect the country's future prosperity.

[Markets Without Borders](#) — izzit.org

Economist Hernando de Soto travels to Tanzania and Peru to explore how property rights, rule of law, and access to formal economic institutions can expand opportunity and help people participate more fully in the economy.

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Places to Explore

Vietnam

Hanoi

Discover Vietnam's vibrant capital, where historic temples, bustling street markets, traditional neighborhoods, and a growing modern city come together.

Mekong Delta

Journey through a lush landscape of rivers, rice paddies, floating markets, and farming communities in one of Vietnam's most important agricultural regions.

Ho Chi Minh City

Experience Vietnam's dynamic commercial center, known for its lively streets, historic landmarks, thriving food scene, and unmistakable entrepreneurial energy.

Botswana

Okavango Delta

Explore this spectacular inland delta, where winding waterways, wetlands, and abundant wildlife create one of Africa's most extraordinary safari destinations.

Chobe National Park & Chobe Region

Experience Botswana's renowned wildlife up close in a region famous for its large elephant herds, river safaris, and sweeping natural landscapes.

Gaborone

Discover Botswana's capital, a growing city where contemporary African culture, local markets, museums, restaurants, and nearby nature reserves offer a different side of the country.

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Chile

Santiago

Explore Chile's cosmopolitan capital, where historic neighborhoods, museums, markets, restaurants, and dramatic views of the Andes come together.

Chile's Wine Country

Travel through picturesque valleys and vineyards to experience the wineries, landscapes, food, and winemaking traditions that have earned Chile an international reputation.

Viña Concha y Toro

Visit one of Chile's best-known wineries to explore its historic vineyards and cellars.

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