

Nation Building: Big Lessons from Successes and Failures

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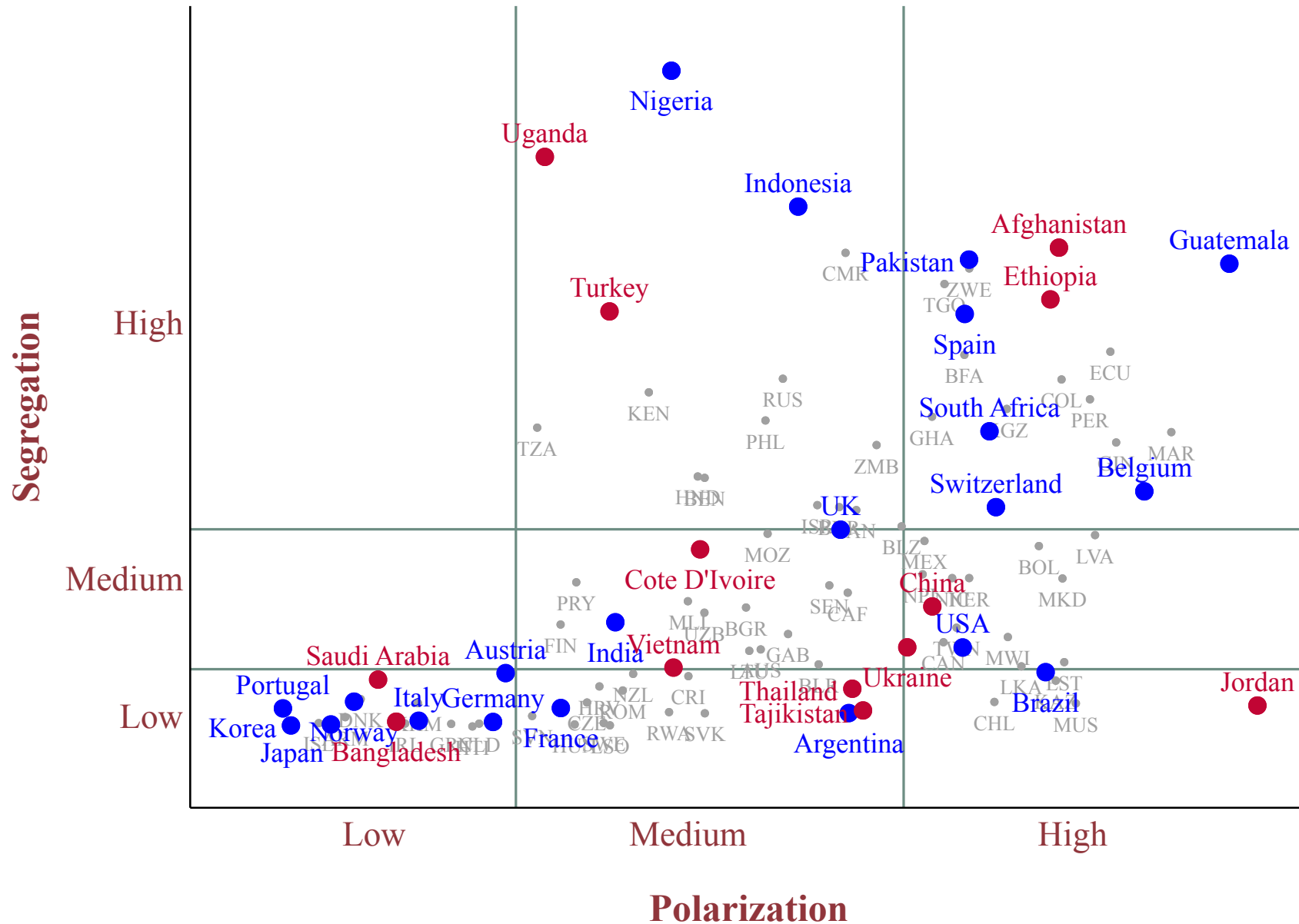
Why and what?

- Throughout history, philosophers and politicians: **social cohesion is crucial for stability, security, and development**
 - **Social cohesion** – degree to which members of a society have a common identity and a shared sense of responsibility for the well-being of all
- Empirical revolution => new literature on nation building
- The book relies on the recent advances in political economics to answer **the central questions**:
 - Which policies are adequate to build social cohesion in which circumstances?
 - What are the perils of social cohesion and pitfalls of building it?

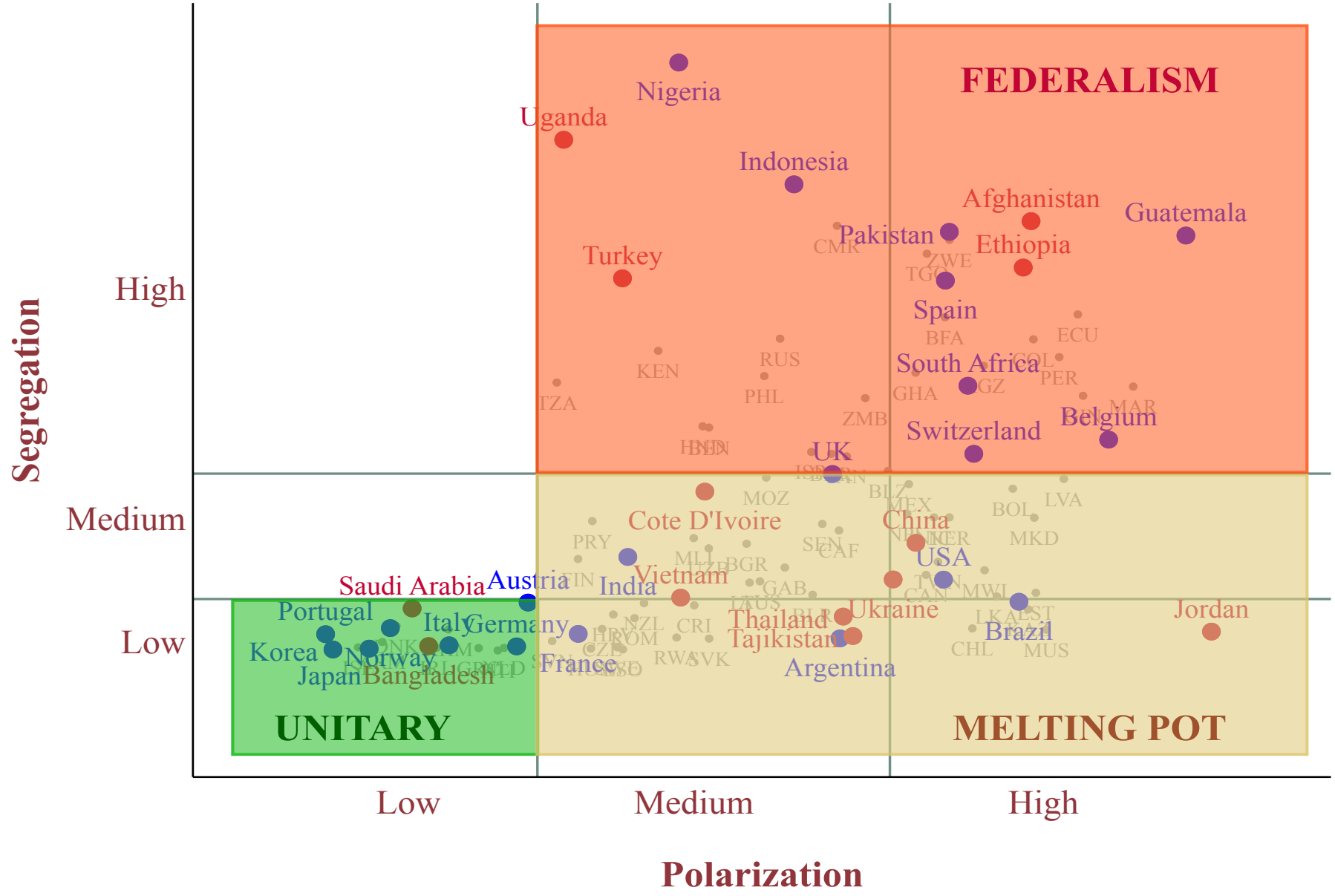
Complex multifaceted phenomenon

- Many internal and external factors matter for NB, the individual chapters describe them in great detail
- The introductory chapter focuses on 2 aspects of ethno-linguistic diversity:
 - **Polarization** -- reflecting potential salient antagonisms within society
 - Large polarization eases the emergence of social identity driven by social comparisons, in which people see the society divided into “us” vs. “them”
 - **Segregation** -- the extent to which different groups within a country live in separate areas
 - Large segregation increases the threat of secession
 - It reduces contact between different groups, diminishing inter-group trust and cooperation

Modern countries on the 2 axes



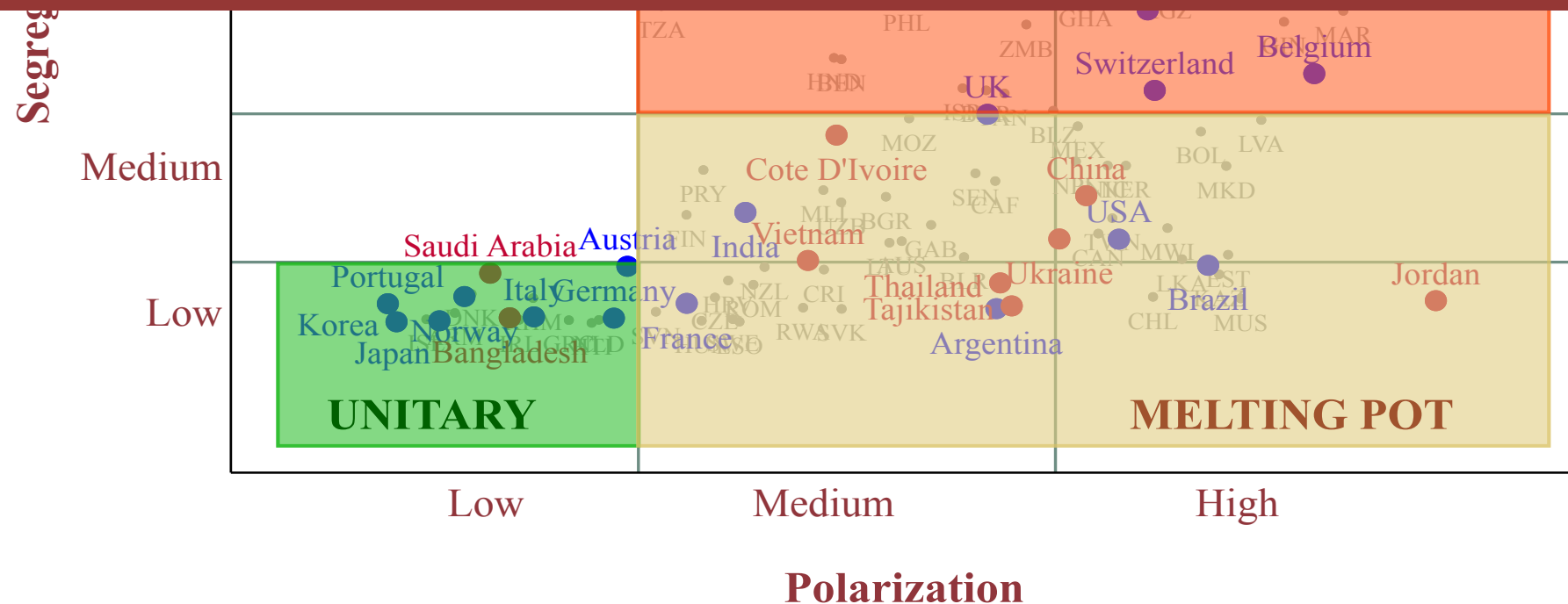
Three groups by nation-building strategies



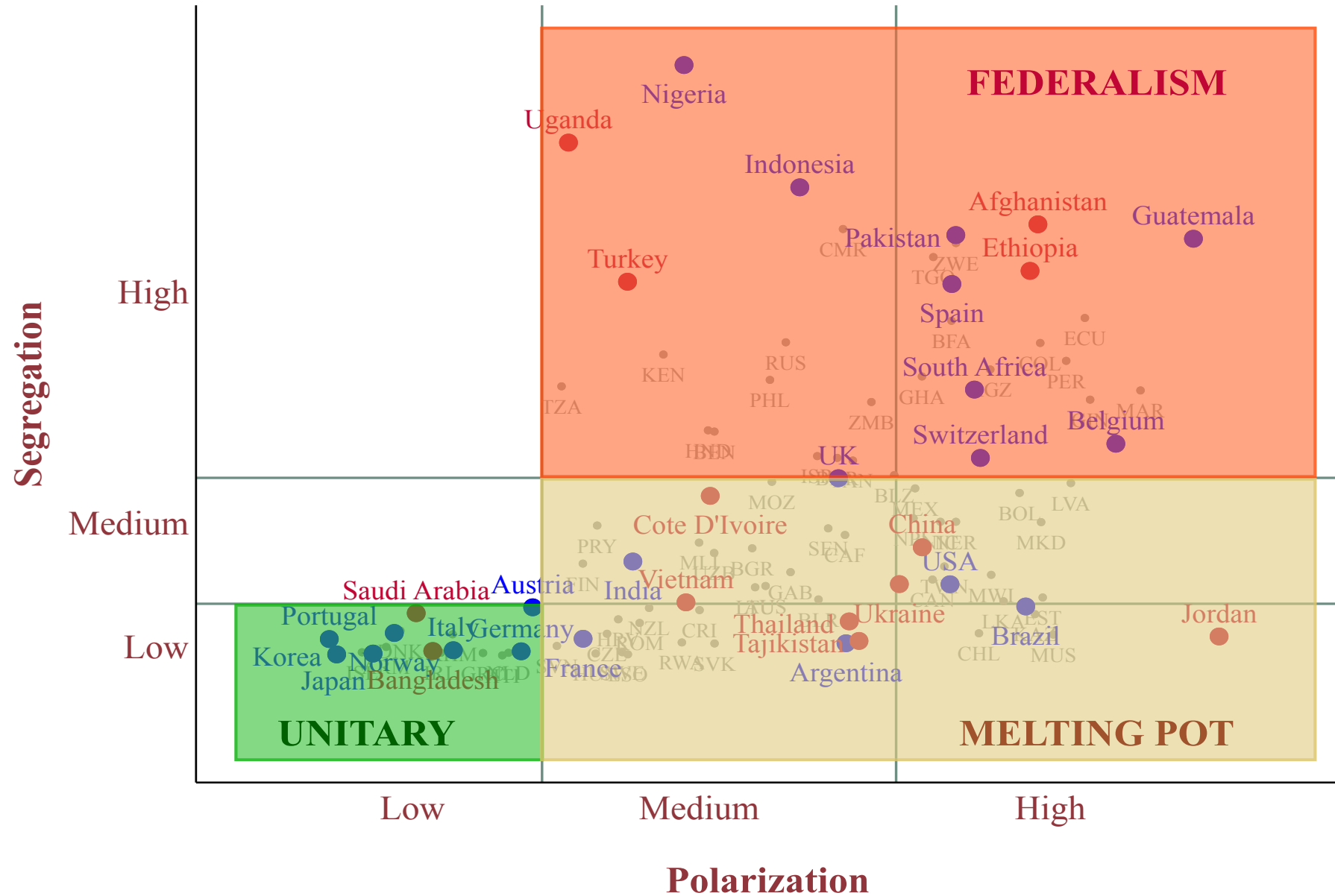
1. Low – Low: green segment

Homogenous countries

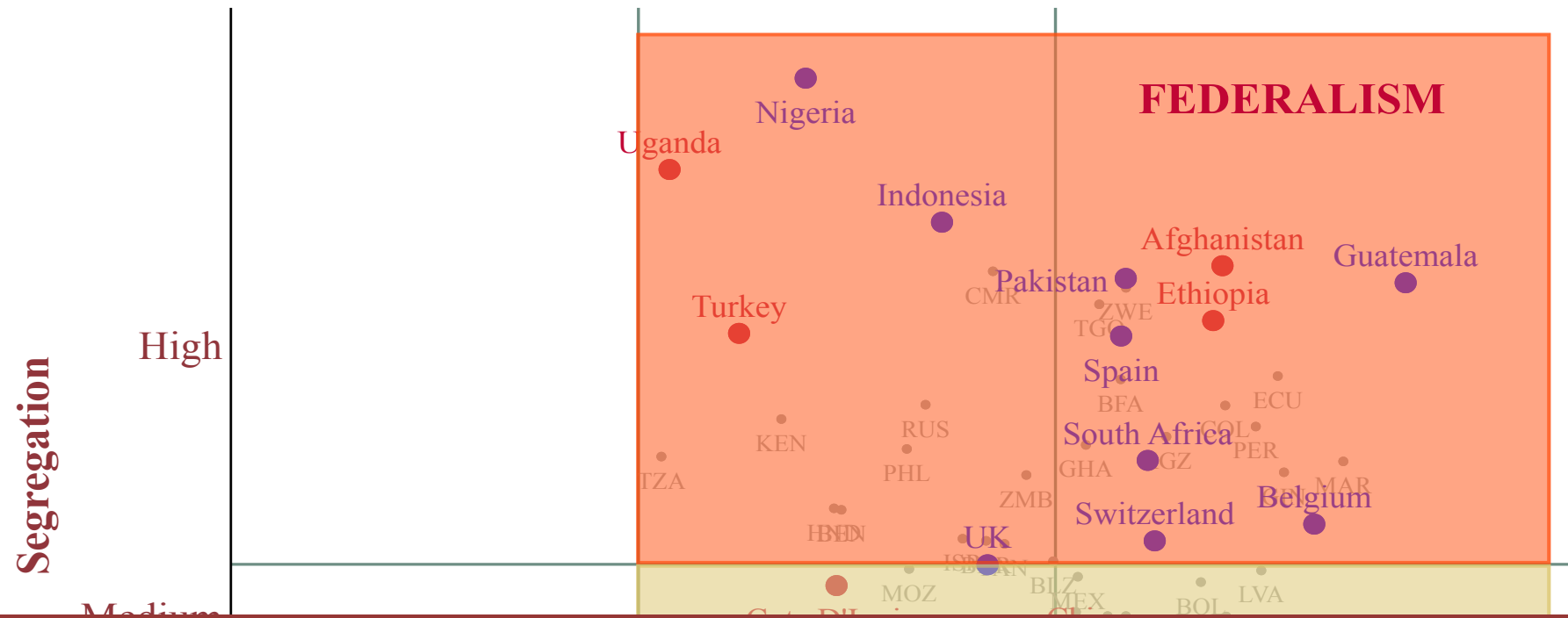
- Can build national identity around common culture (language and history), a task easier than for diverse countries
- Danger: aggressive nationalism
 - All countries with large-scale fascist movements before WWII were in this corner
 - Germany, Italy, Japan, and Austria
 - Totalitarian regimes could use unity to motivate the population to go to war
 - Highlighting the importance of democracy which eliminates such a risk
- Countries in this corner can focus on building a unitary democratic nation



2. High segregation: pink segment



2. High segregation: pink segment

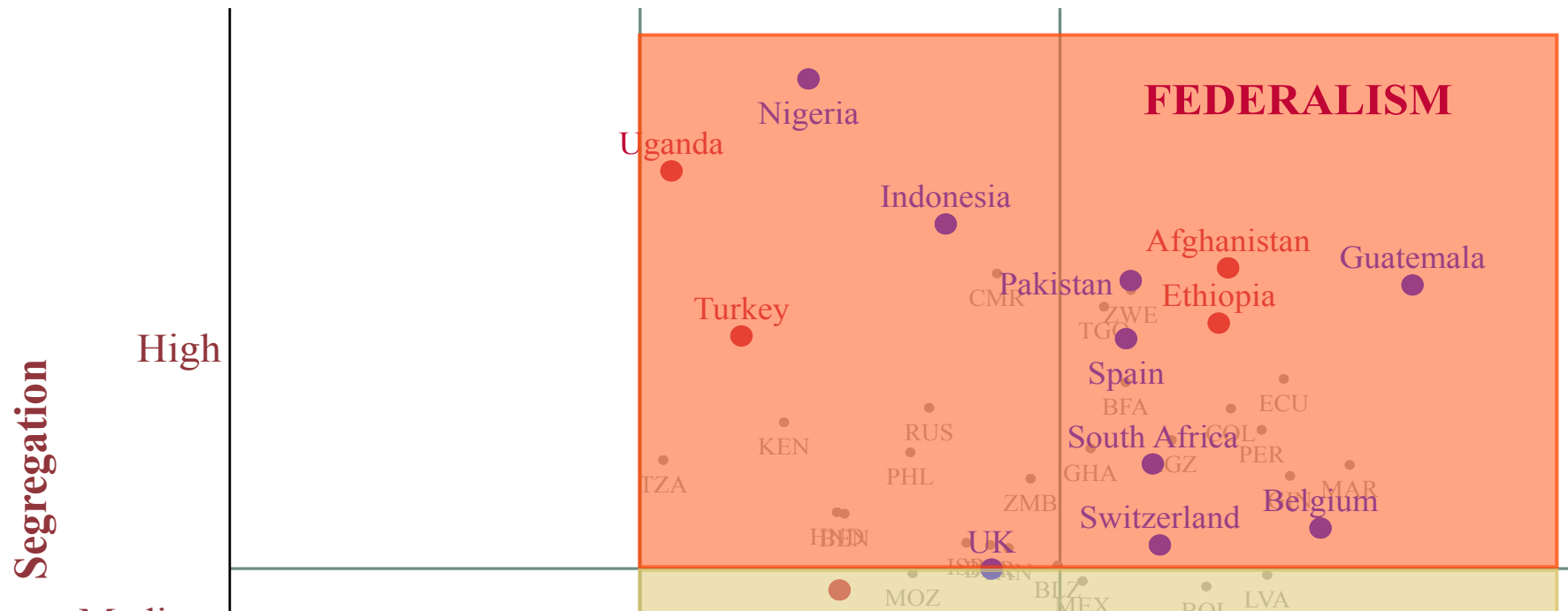


Homogenous regions, populated by different groups

- Strong regionalist identity => a possible rejection of a national identity
 - Risk of separatism, civil conflicts, up to a break-up:
 - Yugoslavia, USSR (wars, LT instability) vs. Czechoslovakia (peaceful)
- Switzerland is a show case: secessionist wars of the 19th century ended with a consensus on new constitution based on power sharing and federalism
 - Nation building is based recognizing and embracing differences

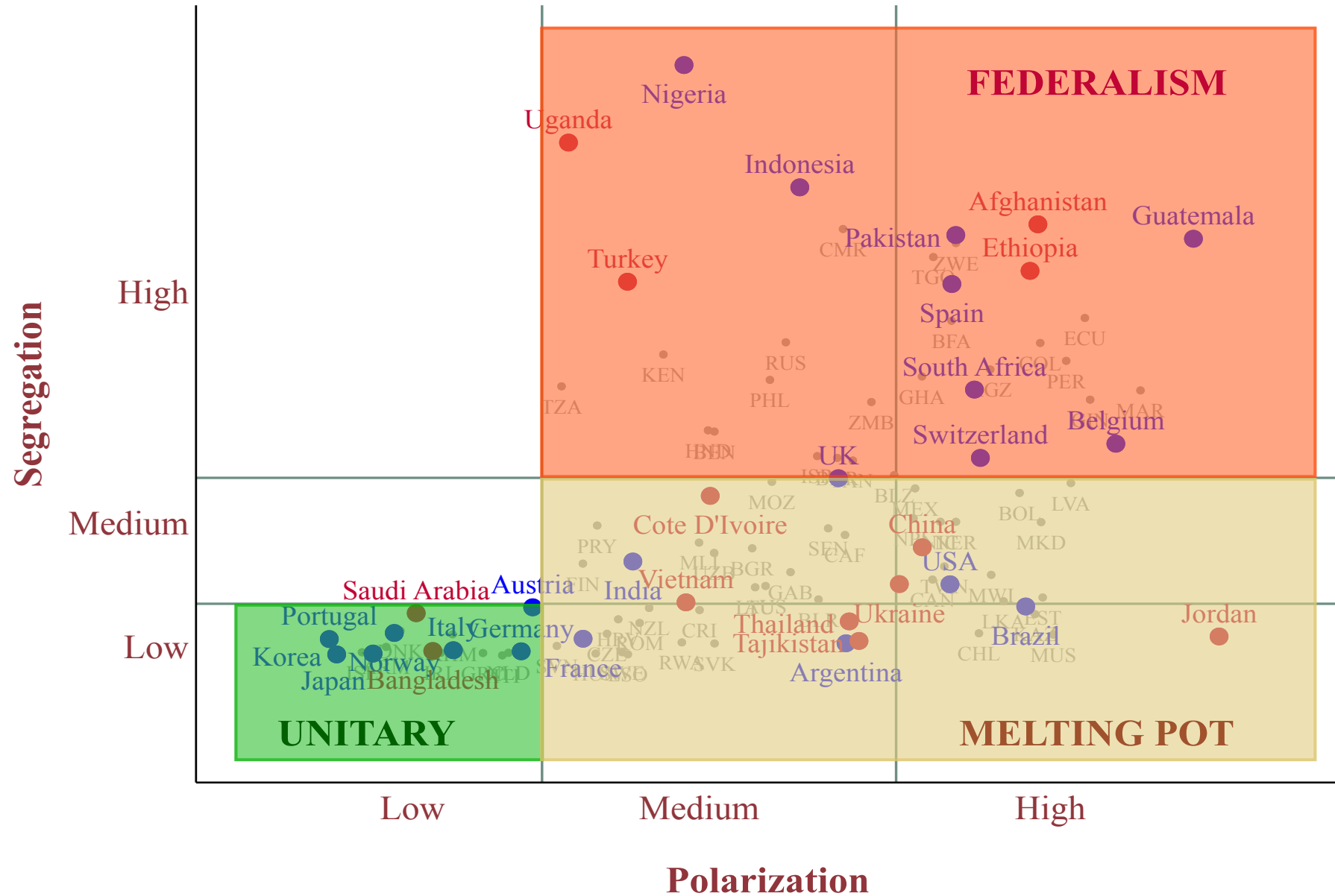
Polarization

2. High segregation: pink segment



- This is typical for democracies in that corner:
 - E.g., the UK, Spain, post-Apartheid South Africa, and Belgium
 - Many problems driven by segregation (ethnic tensions and misgovernance), but power sharing helps to prevent worse outcomes
- Illustrated by autocracies: no power-sharing institutions
 - Often, ethnic tensions explode into full blown wars: (Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Uganda)
 - Autocratic strategy: forced assimilation, but it is very costly for minority and can backfire (e.g., Bismarck's Germanization and Atatürk's Turkization)

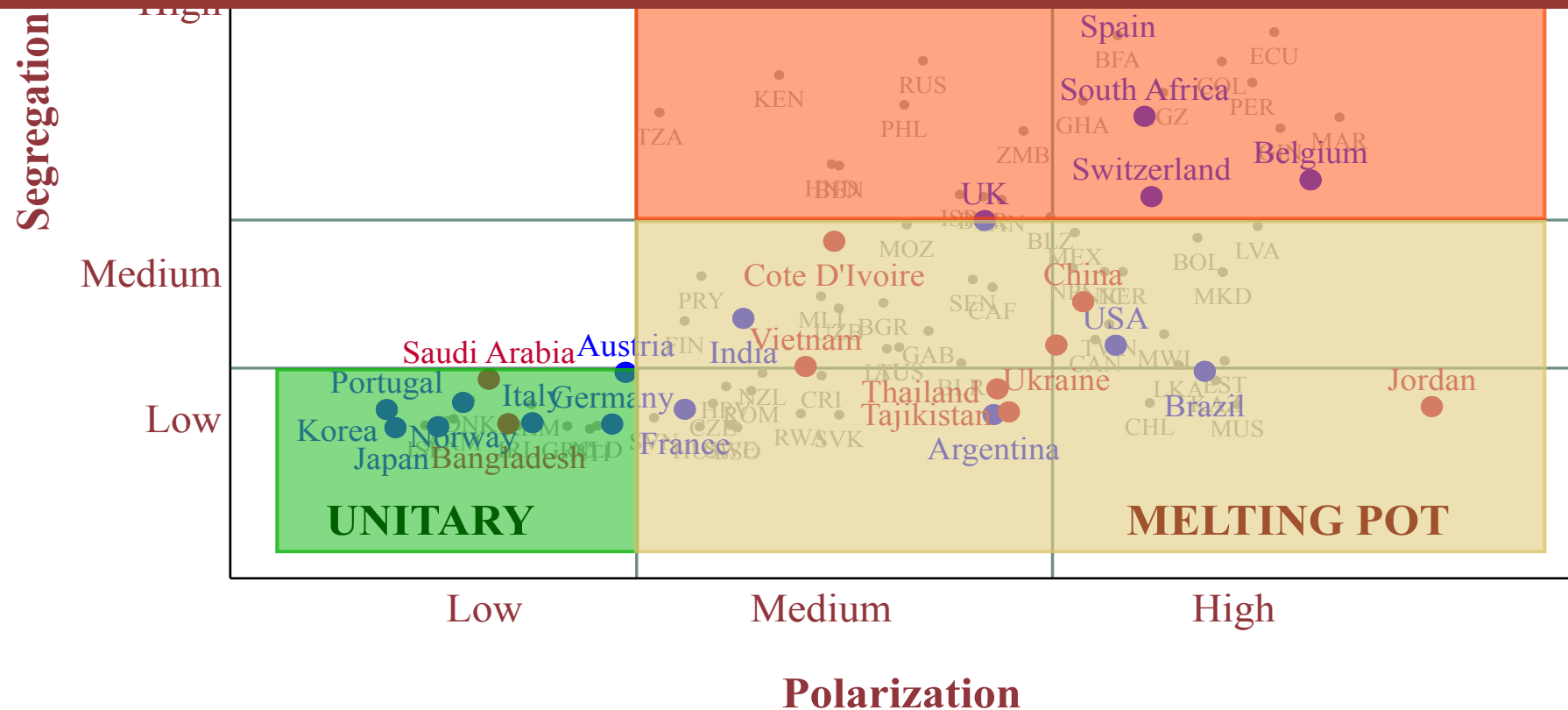
3. Low segregation, high polarization: yellow



3. Low segregation, high polarization: yellow

Inherent ethnic divisions without geographical dimension

- Different groups live in close proximity
- There is only one option to avoid conflict: the Melting Pot Strategy
 - make the ethnic differences less salient by fostering non-group identity
 - Democracies and autocracies use public education and propaganda, focusing on shared positive history or common external threats
- Opening to immigration actually can make that strategy easier by reducing polarization



Overall

- None of these three nation-building strategies (driven by polarization-segregation initial conditions) are easy; each can fail / backfire
- The book chapters describe concrete examples of the perils, the costs, and the benefits of each of them