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Formal and Informal Work in Denmark**

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Layout: Inge Merete Ejsing-Duun

Print: Uni-Print, AAU  
Aalborg 2007

ISBN 978-87-92174-39-0

ISSN 1398-3024-2007-56

**The Social Democratic Model:  
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The Danish society is characterised by a strong work orientation and has traditionally been so. If Max Weber (1905) was right in his historical thesis on the affinities between protestant ideas and ethical precepts for ‘*lebensführung*’, Denmark indeed proves his point that work would be regarded as a calling – something which has value in itself and does not need reference to external reasons or values. Today, the general attitude – among politicians as well as the population – is that work is an absolute key factor for building up identity, developing self-esteem and being integrated in society. The strong Danish work orientation is clearly visible if we compare different European countries with respect to dominant attitudes towards working, even when this is not an economic necessity.

**Table 1:** *Work orientation. Question: “Thinking of work in general how much do you agree or disagree?” (PDI)*

	<b>DK</b>	<b>Germany</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>Spain</b>	<b>Poland</b>
“I would enjoy having a paid job even if I did not need the money”	60.7	46.5	25.6	14.2	48.9

**Source:** ISSP 1997, Question “Q22”

Table 1 shows that in countries with low levels of labour market participation people seem to have an instrumental approach to wage work, whereas in countries with high participation rates people tend to be able and willing to work formally, even though they do not need the money. In Danish debates on labour market policies the core argument is not so much that working is economically beneficial or necessary for society (although this argument surely does appear) but more often it is that work is fundamental for individuals’ identity-formation, personal well-being and sense of belonging to the community.

One particular characteristic of the Danish society is a very high labour market participation among women. This tendency was initiated in the 1960’s where a number of interrelated factors caused the the female participation rate to increase rather rapidly, and it has been raising ever since (only interrupted shortly in times of economic recession). During the 1960s high demand for labour and low unemployment coincided with the ideological commitment to gender equality and the development of a ‘universal welfare state’ with extensive childcare, education and transport facilities. In those hay days of the optimistic welfare state an expansive public service sector offered accessible jobs for women – in education, social work, childcare, healthcare and the like. While risking to overstate the case, one could say that care work was taken over by the welfare state but remained to a considerable degree womens work – now carried out as paid work (Boje, 1996: 20). The result was that the gender segmentation became very visible when comparing the public sector and the private sector. There was – and still is – a majority of women employed in the public sector.

The big-scale entry of Danish women into the labour market was no doubt also caused – or perhaps rather paralleled – by a transformation in attitudes towards women and work and towards women's position in the family in general. Whereas the majority of women by the mid 1960s believed that the housewife should be responsible for the housework and minding the children, only one out of four was ready to support this opinion in 1987.

**Table 2:** *The proportion of women who fully agree with the following statements (1965 and 1987).*

	1965	1987
“Married women should not work, if the effect is that a man becomes unemployed”	82%	19%
“It is the task of the housewife to take care of the children and do the housework”	80%	26%

**Source:** Togeby (1989)

From Table 2 it is quite clear that women’s role perception has changed radically between 1965-87. In the 1960's, women considered themselves to be assigned to a marginal or subordinate position in the labour market and vis-à-vis the male breadwinner. By contrast, in 1987 (most) women considered themselves to be on equal footing with men, both with regard to wage labour and with regard to the division of housework. What took place could be described as a kind of ‘cultural revolution’, which meant that women came to believe that the struggle for jobs and career was not reserved for men but just as much *their* struggle. Perhaps we can say, to borrow loosely upon Bourdieu’s (1990) concept, that the women developed a particular historical *habitus* which would prove decisive for their work orientation. The new moral and intellectual dispositions and aspirations of women no doubt had a profound impact, not only in relation to family life and the composition of the labour force but also in relation to the public sector and general welfare policies (Jensen, 1996). Hence, one of the effects was a fast growing demand for child care institutions which were provided by local governments, who would employ women to mind other women’s children.

The high labour market participation on the part of women is thus one major factor to explain the fact that Denmark has a high labour force participation rate and employment rate compared to other European countries. However, when women joined the labour market they were adding to an already high level of labour market participation. One factor to explain this is the cultural orientation characterised by a strong work ethic, already mentioned. Another important factor is active labour market policies which have been in operation since the early 1960’s seeking to recruit and keep people in the work

force through a number of active measures. These include generous (comparatively) unemployment benefits which should make it possible for people to stay longer in the working force without facing deteriorating living conditions in the case of unemployment. It also includes an active public employment service which seeks to assist people in finding jobs and works to enhance the mobility of the work force – professionally as well as geographically. Thus, part of Danish labour market policies consists of regulations which are aimed at creating higher mobility on the labour market (transport subsidies and exchange of information about job-availability in different parts of the country). Labour market policies and the concrete measures are to a high extent the result of corporatism, i.e. the state working together with labour market organisations representing both the employers and the employed. This cooperate model has a long tradition in Denmark. That the trade unions in this way play an active part in creating and defining training or education services brings legitimacy to the system vis-à-vis its users.

However, active labour market policies could not prevent the general economic crises from affecting employment rates from the mid 1970s onwards. From around 1975 until late 1990's Denmark experienced high levels of unemployment, including high levels of long-term unemployment, which had not yet been known under the welfare state and which caused much debate. In an effort to combat unemployment the 'active-side' of labour market policies was more emphasized, particularly from the late 1980s and onwards. A number of adjustments were made in social policy regulations which meant that more people were to undergo 'activation' (job-training and various courses) in order to maintain their entitlement to public support. Thus 'Law for active social policies' passed in 1998 entails that recipients of welfare benefits – including people less than 25 years of age – are obligated to undergo activation. The possibilities for exemption were hereby reduced. It is still, however, the local government who decides if recipient should be sanctioned and which form the activation should take.

In sum, at least four general factors can be pointed at to characterize the arrangement of work and welfare in Denmark: a traditionally strong cultural work-orientation – perhaps we can even talk about a particular Danish version of Webers protestant work ethic; an early entry of women into the workforce resulting in a comparatively high participation rate even today; the co-existence of a new pro labour-market attitude among women and an expanding public care sector, which provided a high proportion of female jobs in the 1960s and still accounts for the relatively strong gender segregation in the Danish labour market; and, finally, the existence of pro-active labour market policies which use various different measures to recruit and keep people in the work force, in recent years making more use of so-called 'forced activation'.

## Undeclared work in Denmark

'Black activities' is a subject which has received quite a lot of attention from Danish politicians and in the media during recent years. The concept refers to a number of illegal activities such as tax evasion, the selling goods without VAT registration and – which is our particular concern here – undeclared work. Compared with other European countries the share of undeclared work in Denmark is quite low. The government currently in office has nevertheless put a strong priority on fighting it. It has carried out campaigns against 'black work' as it is termed – both in the form of raids against restaurants, bars, kiosks, construction sites and greengrocers (where the undeclared activities are most frequent) and in the form of information campaigns directed at the general public. Such campaigns seem to be needed, since there exist a gap between the definition of undeclared work in the Danish tax legislation and the opinion of the Danes. In this respect it is telling that whereas the Danish Tax authorities turn their blind eye to non-declared income under 140 Euro per year, 45% of the Danes find it acceptable to have an undeclared income of 140 Euro per month (Viby Mogensen et al. 1995; Juul, 2002: 326). Furthermore 82% of the Danes do not regard work exchanged on friendly terms with no money involved as undeclared work, and in this respect even some of the political parties agree.

The table below shows the results of a direct questionnaire based study of the extent of undeclared work in percentage of GNP.

**Table 3:** *The amount of undeclared work as percentage of GNP*

Year	1980	1982	1984	1986	1988/89	1991	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
% of GNP	-	1,7 <sup>1</sup>	2,4 <sup>1</sup>	2,8 <sup>1</sup>	3,3 <sup>1</sup>	3,3 <sup>1</sup>	3,4 <sup>2</sup>	3,1 <sup>2</sup>	2,6 <sup>2</sup>	2,7 <sup>2</sup>	3,0 <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> **Source:** Viby Mogensen (2003). Data are produced by calculating the mean of every three years. The percentages correspond with respondents aged 18-66.

<sup>2</sup> **Source:** Pedersen (1999). The percentages correspond with respondents aged 18-74. From 1994 a new way of questioning has been introduced which according to the researchers of the Rockwool foundation may have lead to registration of more people conducting undeclared work and thus in more hours registered.

According to these data, during the past 20 years a relatively low but generally increasing share of the economy falls under the category of undeclared work. Yet, rates were peaking in the middle of the period during a downward trend in the Danish economy. As noted, we need to be aware of a new way of questioning which was introduced from 1994 and which seems to have lead to a registration of more people conducting undeclared work and therefore more hours being registered. If we look at the number of *persons* involved in undeclared work a quite similar picture appears. Again, due to methodological reasons the data have to be divided into two periods, namely 1980-1994 and 1994-2001 (because of a more direct way of posing questions introduced in the surveys since 1994).



**Table 4:** *Percentage of the Danish population performing undeclared work.*

	1980	1984	1986	1988/9	1991	1993	1994a	1994b	1995	1996	1997	2001
Pct.	8	13	14	12	14	13	15	28	23	22	27	20

**Sources:** Viby Mogensen et al. (1995); Pedersen (1998); Pedersen (2003).

**Remarks:** from 1980-1994a the numbers are referring to data based on *indirect* questions. Includes 18-74 year old respondents – though, 1980 includes only aged 20-69. From 1994b-2001 numbers are referring to 18-74 year olds and data are based on *straightforward* questions.

If we leave aside the methodological considerations, it is clear that there was an increase in the number of people who are active in the informal sector in the 1980s and in the beginning of the 1990s, whereas we see a decrease from the mid 1990s and onwards. Most likely, this can be explained as a result of enhanced control measures on the part of the authorities (rather than being caused by a certain change in public opinion) and to some extent as affected by the introduction of the so-called home service scheme (cf. below).

On the other hand, looking at the average amount of *hours* spent on undeclared work there has been a steady increase during the period 1980-2001 – from 11 minutes in 1983 to 49 minutes in 1994, and peaking at 1 hour and 4 minutes in 2001.<sup>1</sup> If we take the the above listed rate of undeclared work into account the period since 1994 is particularly interesting as it shows that *more and more hours are allocated on less and less persons*. Thus, the period shows an increase of 3-4% in the amount of undeclared work as a share of formal work (Viby Mogensen, 2003: 543).

### **Undeclared work – size and patterns**

The distribution of undeclared work across the different productive sectors has been quite stable during the 20 years under survey. Making up for around 50% of all black activities, the service sector is clearly the main sector of undeclared activities as far as employment rates are concerned. Included in the service sector are such activities as childcare, cleaning, hairdressing and gardening, which are normally performed by people with few professional skills and/or women. Wages for these two groups are generally lower than for men and skilled workers, and they are the dominant groups in the second most important sector with respect to informal work, “Building and Construction”. For this reason, it is very likely that this sector accounts for the highest share of BNP.

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to figures from Pedersen (1998: 87; 2003: 12) calculations are based on survey material from the Danish Data Archive: DDA 0659; DDA 1478 and DDA 2303.

**Table 5: Undeclared work and sector, pct.**

	1980	1984	1986	1988/9	1991	1993	1994a	1994b	1995	1996	1997	2001
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	-	-	-	14	20	11	14	-	8	6	5	*
Manufacturing	-	-	-	6	4	5	6	-	3	3	2	*
Building and construction	-	-	-	29	23	33	29	-	32	37	36	*
Services, repair work, trade ect.	-	-	-	49	50	48	47	-	50	48	51	*
Other	-	-	-	3	3	3	4	-	6	6	7	*
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Remarks and sources:** see table 4.

As regards the regional distribution of undeclared work, there is on average a higher level of undeclared work west of the Great belt than east of it (where the capital is located). The differences varies, however, between the different surveys, as can be seen in table 3.7. If we look more closely at the regional divisions, it turns out that west Jutland shows the highest level of undeclared work, whereas the suburbs of Copenhagen shows the lowest level. It is difficult to give well-founded explanations for these regional differences. For want of certain causes we can point to historical traditions – in particular, perhaps, the so called ‘trailer-economy’, a culture of bying and selling and getting things done without declaring it which is said to to dominate in countryside areas of Jutland. Whether this tradition is really at work or whether we need to explain by other factors is, however, hard to say.

**Table 6: Undeclared work and region, pct.**

	1980	1984	1986	1988/9	1991	1993	1994a	1994b	1995	1996	1997	2001
Copenhagen (the capital)	8	7	11	10	12	16	9	25	18	18	26	*
East of the Great Belt	9	12	11	10	12	11	12	27	18	18	32	*
West of the Great Belt	8	15	15	13	16	15	17	29	26	24	29	*
<b>All</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>20</b>
Total number of N	3,077	3,065	1,544	4,493	1,545	1,070	1,754	2,027	963	3,674	1,920	1,796

**Remarks and sources:** see table 4.

Looking at the kind of people who performs undeclared work, three characteristics are particularly evident: during the entire twenty-year period, the most active are a) males, b) 18-19 years of age, c) skilled workers. Furthermore, and especially noteworthy, is that in Denmark the unemployed are less involved in undeclared work than persons who are employed. One reason for this surprising fact, however, could lie in the sensitivity of this is-

sue. As unemployed persons who undertakes undeclared work are cheating the system in a double sense (the tax authorities *and* the unemployment funds) they might understandably be more nervous of getting caught than everybody else, and for this reason they might be more liable not to answer the anonymous questionnaire completely honestly (Pedersen 1998:81). In addition to the figures presented below a statistical regression analysis has been carried out in 1996,1997 and 1998. This study ascertains that the categories of male and skilled wage earner are the most significant when it comes to undeclared work. It also shows that for males the length of education and the size of formal gross income have a significantly negative effect on the level of undeclared activities (Pedersen 1998: 83; Pedersen 1999:7).

**Table 7:** *Type of workers performing undeclared work, pct.*

	1980	1984	1986	1988/9	1991	1993	1994a	1994b	1995	1996	1997	2001
Male	11	18	17	17	18	21	20	37	32	29	37	29
Female	6	9	10	7	10	7	9	20	13	15	18	12
18-19 years	-	31	31	25	24	32	31	54	35	39	35	42
20-29 years	10	21	22	19	25	22	24	44	34	34	44	27
30-39 years	9	15	15	16	18	22	21	36	28	26	33	25
40-49 years	8	10	10	9	11	10	11	27	24	23	28	22
50-59 years	7	7	5	8	8	8	11	19	14	15	21	16
60-69 years	7	7	7	4	3	8	7	12	12	10	11	12
70-74 years	-	4	7	2	4	1	4	7	8	5	5	6
Self employed	7	12	14	8	8	16	15	37	19	25	32	28
White collar	8	11	11	11	11	15	14	25	22	19	25	18
Skilled worker	14	25	31	36	39	29	33	57	49	38	47	29
Unskilled worker	6	16	15	14	18	22	20	32	25	28	35	29
Unemployed	8	17	17	17	17	11	17	32	14	21	20	10
Retired	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	12	10	10	10
Student	10	28	24	19	29	19 <sup>3</sup>	19 <sup>3</sup>	46 <sup>3</sup>	35	31	35	25
Other	9	7	8	4	6	3	6	28	11	11	15	-
<b>All</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>20</b>
Total number	3,077	3,065	1,544	4,493	1,545	1,070	1,754	2,027	963	3,674	1,920	1,796

**Remarks and sources:** see table 4.

Danes involved in undeclared work do not seem to be motivated by political considerations, i.e. performing undeclared work as a protest against high levels of taxation on personal income or to show resistance against the extensive welfare state. On the contrary, numerous surveys have shown that Danish people are in general highly supportive with respect to the welfare state and its institutions. Persons performing undeclared work likely do so because they see an opportunity to add some extra to their personal income, in particular by avoiding to pay top-level taxes. Traditions such as helping neighbours, relatives and friends without seeing any need to declare it are probably also of importance. However, to do undeclared work is not an option open to everybody. First of all, one needs to either have a job which holds the possibility to do extra hours without declaring or to be part of a social network which gives access to a purchaser of this kind of work. It has been

observed that the frequency of undeclared work among unemployed persons is lower than is the case for employed persons, and this seem to support the assumption that access to do undeclared work often presupposes social contacts (made more easily by people in employment than by people out of work). However, if unemployed persons perform undeclared work they can – *and do in fact* – spend more hours doing it than people who are in employment.

This circumstance is of particular relevance to the debate on immigrants and their labour market participation. Whereas most (native) Danes perform undeclared work as a *supplement* to their formal employment immigrants are often involved in undeclared work on a more or less *fulltime* basis. Therefore, as a general statement we can assume that native Danes and immigrants perform undeclared work for different reasons. In the first case, the reasons stated above are probably the most important, whereas, in the second, doing undeclared work would often be a strategy to get work at all. Thus, immigrants looking for work have to deal with a number of structural and cultural barriers such as low level of formal qualifications, a high minimum wage, limited social networks and discrimination on the labour market (Rezaei, 2003). Rather than being caused by a some sort of common cultural disposition we should probably see the existence of undeclared work among immigrants as an expression of their limited possibilities on the labour market and therefore, more broadly, as a product of insufficient social integration.

### **Family based childcare**

In Denmark – as in most other European countries – there has been a historical move towards more and more formalised childcare. This historical development has meant that today the level of family based informal care is relatively low. Even during recent years there has been a continuing move towards higher levels of formalised childcare. Hence, the proportion of children between 0-9 years enrolled in day-care institutions rose from 54% in 1990 to 76% in 2000. Nowadays almost all children (91% in 1999) between 3-5 years are enrolled in day-care institutions.

Paralleling this development, the amount of formal employment in care professions has increased dramatically. In 2000, about 88.000 persons were employed in childcare institutions, while about 120.000 were employed in elderly-care institutions. Proportionally, in 2000, about 7,75% of total employment was to be found in the care sector. Corresponding with this development, the proportion of caring parents in part-time employment has declined.

**Table 9:** Working hours for women in employment with small children (0-6 years), 1974-1996. Pct.

	<b>1974</b>	<b>1985</b>	<b>1996</b>
Less than 25 hours weekly	35	18	5
25-35 hours weekly	24	29	20
36 hours and above	41	53	75
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Nygaard Christoffersen (1997)

As it appears from table 2.3, the proportion of women with small children working “short part-time” has declined from 35% in 1974 to 5% in 1996. Congruently, the number of women working full time (36 hours and above) went up from 41 % in 1974 to 75% in 1996. The structural changes in the balance between formal and informal work is also manifest in the prevalence of relatives caring for children. Between 1965-1989, the proportion of children between 0-6 who were cared for by their grandparents fell from 11-5% (Nygaard Christensen, 1997). Today, this kind of childcare is no longer a widespread phenomenon.

Compared with other European countries Denmark has the most equal distribution between men and women when it comes to the amount of time spent on housework (Lausten & Sjørup, 2003: 18). Danish women spend more time away from home working than women in other countries, and they also spend less time on housework comparatively. Correspondingly, Danish men spend less time away from home working and are more active in housework than men in other European countries. Nevertheless, there is still a gender-based difference with respect to housework in Denmark – and this is also the case for childcare. On average Danish men spend 15 minutes per day on childcare while women spend around 30 minutes. One has to bear in mind, of course, that this is an average covering the Danish population in general – parents as well as adults without children. If we look at all adults who have children (of all ages) in their household, there is also a gender difference when it comes to the time spent on care. On an average day 60 pct. of the men and 74 pct. of the women are involved in family based care-activities. The men spend 1 ¼ hour while the women spend 2 hours a day. We see the most important difference – with respect to the use of time – in childcare. Here, the men spend 1 hour per day while the women spend 1 ½ hour per day. The proportion of women who picks up and brings children to childcare institutions and leisure-time activities are also higher than the proportion of men – 32 pct. versus 23 pct.

**Table 10:** *Time used for care for women and men with children. Pct. and Hours: minutes.*

	<b>Prop. of men active in caring</b>	<b>Men: time spent for care</b>	<b>Prop. of women active in caring</b>	<b>Women: time spent for care</b>
Care	59,5	1:17	74,2	1:59
To pick up and bring children to kinder gar- den	23,0	0:48	31,9	0:56
Care for children	52,7	1:01	70,3	1:33
Family care	4,6	0:27	5,9	0:24

**Source:** Lausten & Sjørup (2003).

In Denmark publicly funded provision of social care rests with the municipalities / local governments. As regards the care of children, the municipality is required to provide the necessary number of day-care facilities either in the form of day-care institutions or privately based child minding, but it is not an obligation for the municipality to secure absolute coverage by public child-care. None the less, the coverage provided by (public??) childcare facilities has increased since the mid 1985s. One explanation for this is probably that most local authorities consider the provision of day-care facilities a pre-condition for attracting (young) taxpayers to the municipality.

**Table 11:** *Coverage of childcare. Pct.*

	<b>1985</b>	<b>2001</b>
0-2 years of age	42.5	56.6
3-6 years of age	59.7	92.4

**Source:** "Statistisk tiårsoversigt" (1996; 2002)

The municipality can freely choose to either concentrate on day-care institutions or privately based child minding. This means that the relative share of day-care institutions of total day-care facilities often varies between areas (between municipalities and even within municipalities). Economically, it is an advantage for the municipality to provide child minding, as private based child minding do not involve the expenses otherwise required for building and running public institutions.

**Table 12:** *Composition and number of places of child care facilities.*

	<b>1985</b>	<b>2001</b>
Vuggestue (Day-care institution for children less than 3 years of age)	21,730	18,944
Child-minding (all children between the age 0-6 are enrolled in child-minding)	58,218	79,119
Boernehave (Day-care institution for children between 3-6 years of age)	93,803	128,257

**Source:** "Statistisk tiårsoversigt" (1996; 2002)

**Table 13:** *Public expenditure on formal day care (mainly childcare) as a percentage of GDP 1980-1997. Pct.*

	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>
Denmark	1.42	1.78	2.03
Finland	0.58	1.12	1.08
Germany	0.26	0.27	0.41
Spain	0.02	0.01	0.11
United Kingdom	0.30	0.96	1.24

**Source:** OECD socx 2000.

**Remark:** Data for Poland not available.

For decades, welfare state policies have implicitly or explicitly supported the transition from informal care work to formal care work. However, in recent years some redirection has taken place, as new semi-formal forms of childcare are being promoted by welfare state programs supporting parents as care providers. In these reforms support has been introduced to compensate close relatives who chose to care for their children or sick relatives in their own homes. This objective has been translated into legislation by two main principles. (1) If a person wishes to die in his/her own home, a closely related caregiver is entitled to compensation for loss of income. The care-compensation amounts to 1,5 times sickness benefit. (2) A municipality can (since July 2002) support parents economically, if they decide to care for their children themselves (applies to children from 24 weeks of age until 6 years) instead of using public day-care facilities. This type of compensation is given for a maximum of three children per household. Moreover, the compensation must not exceed 85% of the costs of one care provision, and the compensation can be granted for one year.

Another important factor is the Danish parental leave legislation which means that Denmark is one of the countries spending the most on maternity and parental leave.

**Table 14:** *Public expenditure on maternity and parental leave as percentage of GDP 1980-1997. Pct.*

	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>
Denmark	0.25	0.48	0.58
Finland	0.27	1.05	0.79
Germany	0.12	0.24	0.25
Poland	-	0.31	0.32
Spain	0.06	0.07	0.12
United Kingdom	0.09	0.07	-

**Source:** OECD socx 2000.

Since the early 1980s, the maternity leave has been 18 weeks, granting women the right to take leave four weeks prior to birth and 14 weeks after. In 1984 a paternity leave of two weeks was introduced along with a parental leave scheme of 10 weeks. If the husband and

wife choose not to share parental leave, the mother is entitled to take all 10 weeks. Benefits, i.e. maternity, paternity and parental benefit, amount to a maximum of DKK 2.546 (in 2002) a week. The benefit is paid by the employer and reimbursed by the municipality. However, most employers pay a benefit equivalent to the previous salary. Such payments are regulated by collective agreements.

By 2002 the maternity leave scheme, the parental leave scheme and the leave for childcare scheme was merged into one scheme. Benefits continuously constitute a maximum of DKK 2.546 a week. Basically, the reform meant a prolongation of the parental leave schemes. Today, parents are eligible for 32 weeks of parental leave. Thus, the maternity leave scheme and the parental leave scheme covers the period until the child reach 46 weeks of age.

When trying to explain the size and patterns of family based childcare several different factors must be taken into account. Firstly, there is a cultural orientation which promotes womens rights to participate in the labour market and emphasizes gender equality with respect to the distribution of household tasks in the family. In Denmark, the male-breadwinner model is definitively not a general ideal any more and the conception of the housewife as being essentially responsible for running the home is also coming to an end. Nevertheless, surveys show that women on average still spend more time taking care of the children and doing housework. This indicates that in spite of the progressive image and various government initiatives there is still a process at work which to some extent socialises boys and girls to have different attitudes towards housework (Lausten & Sjørup, 2003: 28). Secondly, one clearly has to take the institutional welfare-arrangements into account as a framework providing specific conditions for the pattern of family-based childcare. As mentioned, the public spending on childcare is comparatively high in Denmark making possible a high coverage of childcare throughout the country. This facilitates womens participation on the labour market and likely contributes to a situation where only very few women combine a part time job with minding their children. In 1997, for instance, only 9 % of all women worked less than 15 hours a week. The government supported maternity leave schemes undoubtedly play an important part influencing parents' decisions concerning the length of the absence from the labour market. But when it comes to question of men taking maternity or parental leave there is a certain discrepancy between the objectives of the scheme and the legislators intentions and the actual practice in Danish families. Hence, in recent years there has been a debate whether the decisions of parents concerning maternity leave is a gender issue which is a legitimate subject of political debate and regulation.



## Family based elderly care

As in most European countries the proportion of elderly people in Denmark is growing larger – a development which has been going on for several decades now. When people leave the workforce they are entitled to a basic pension<sup>2</sup> which is sponsored by the state and which is not (yet) graduated according to any private fortune or additional income that the person might have. The state also provides home help for people in need of assistance in their daily lives and public old-age home for persons who are no longer capable of taking care of themselves. These expenses are growing and for this reason there has been much debate as to whether the Danish society can afford the so-called ‘burden of the elderly’ in the years to come.

**Table 15:** *The proportion of elderly people in the population. Pct.*

	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2003
80 years and older	2.8	3.2	3.7	3.9	3.9	4.0

**Source:** Statistics Denmark, “*Statistisk Årbog*” various years.

In Denmark there are two options when it comes to the care for senior citizens who are not fully capable of taking care of themselves: (1) ‘home help’ and (2) residential home or ‘old people’s home’. The municipality is obliged to offer “*home help*”, i.e. personal care and assistance with practical tasks in the home to people who are suffering from a reduction in their functional capacity (physical or mental). If the elderly person lives together with a partner or other family members the municipality is also obliged to provide relief in the form of “home help”. It is the local authorities who decide if a person is entitled to ‘home help’ and how many hours per week the person shall receive. This means that the municipality has a considerable autonomy when it comes to decisions on the amount of help which a particular individual will receive. For this reason there can be considerable discrepancies between municipalities as to the extent of “home help”. The municipality bears all wage costs for “home help” (some of the costs may be reimbursed by the county). However, the municipality may charge for wage costs in connection with a so-called “food-service-scheme”. The “food-service-scheme” delivers daily meals to elderly people who participate in the scheme.

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<sup>2</sup> *Old age pension* is a citizen right in Denmark. The old age pension is composed by a basic amount (DKK 54.204), a supplement amount, and a personal amount. The supplement and personal amount is in principle means tested. However, since the late 1960s occupational pensions have come to play an increasing role in the overall “pension-package”. The occupational pension is dependent on your “life-income”. That is, if you leave the labour market for shorter or longer periods, your “life-income” will be reduced, and your pension will be reduced accordingly. On the other hand, occupational pensions will make inroads into the supplement and personal amount.

**Table 16:** *'Home help' in 1990 and 2001*

Year	67-79 years		80+ years	
	Clients	Coverage	Clients	Coverage
1990	69.646	13.6	75.495	39.2
2001	65.134	13.4	106.609	49.9

Source: Jensen, Larsen & Stoltenborg (2003)

In 2002, the costs for home help were DKK 13 billion and the number of staff was 95.000 people in full time employment. Until 2002, home help was a strictly public affair provided exclusively by the municipalities. As off 2002, a reform was implemented which gave a person who has been granted "home help" the right to freely choose whether he/she wants to make use of the municipality or a private contractor. So far, however, only a small part of the home assistance is done by private firms.

**Table 17:** *Public expenditure on home help services for the elderly and disabled people as a percentage of GPD 1980-1997. Pct.*

	1980	1990	1997
Denmark	0.56	0.64	0.38
Finland	0.07	0.27	0.25
Germany	-	0.02*	0.12
Spain	-	-	0.04

Source: OECD socx 2000.

Remark: \* = 1991.

Remark: Data for Poland and United Kingdom not available.

It is almost impossible to calculate the costs for residential home and/or old people's home because the costs for residential homes and old people's homes are distributed on several different accounts and in different ways in each municipality. Nevertheless, OECD has made an attempt to do so. Please note, first, that expenditures in the table below include public expenditures for 'disabled people' in all age categories, and second, that 'Residential home' in the table above most probably is what we have termed 'old people's home'. This also explains the decline in public expenditures between 1990-97.

**Table 18:** *Public expenditure on residential care for the elderly and disabled people as a percentage of GPD 1980-1997. Pct.*

	1980	1990	1997
Denmark	1.79	1.94	1.20
Finland	0.41	0.63	0.55
Germany	0.21	0.26	0.49
Poland	-	0.24	0.30
Spain	-	-	0.09

**Source:** OECD socx 2000.

**Remark:** Data for United Kingdom not available.

Generally speaking, elderly care does not take place in families anymore in Denmark. That this is so is a result of historical developments which have been under way since the early 1960's and which had caused dramatic changes in family structures. In 1962, 18% of older people above the age of 70 lived together with their children. In 1988 the figure was only 4% (Nygaard Christensen, 1997). These changes are obviously intertwined with new cultural orientations.

**Table 20:** *“Let's suppose you had an elderly father or mother who lived alone. What do you think would be the best if this parent could no longer manage to live on his/her own?”. Pct.*

	Men	Women	All
Myself or one of my brothers or sisters should invite my father or mother to live with one of us	7.0	10.9	8.9
I or one of my brothers or sisters should move in with my father or mother	1.4	0.8	1.1
One should move closer to the other	8.4	9.7	9.0
My father or mother should move into an old people's home or a nursing home	33.7	30.8	32.2
My father or mother should stay at home, and receive visits there, as well as appropriate health care and services	43.7	42.7	43.2
It depends (Spontaneous)	4.1	4.0	4.1
DK	1.8	1.2	1.5
<b>Total (N=1010)</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Eurobarometer 50.1 (autumn 1998), Q.36 – according to Pfau-Effinger in “xxx” (2003).

Table 20 reflects present day attitudes towards elderly care and the obligation for taking care for an old parent. As it appears from the survey, only very few people would actually be willing to cohabitate with their parent in case of this parent no longer being able to live on his/her own, Thus, it has become an integrated part of the Danish culture that care for the elderly is to a large extent an obligation of the public sector.

**Table 21:** “For each of the following areas, please tell me if you think it should be taken care of more by local/ national government, by private companies or by associations? - *Elderly care*”. Pct.

	<b>Denmark</b>	<b>Germany<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>GB</b>	<b>Spain</b>	<b>Finland</b>
Local/ national government	86.9	50.5	83.0	75.9	89.4
Companies	9.7	11.5	2.4	5.3	4.0
Associations	1.8	31.8	5.5	9.8	2.1
DK	1.6	6.2	9.1	9.0	4.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
Number of N	1,010	1,037	1,039	1,000	1,026

**Source:** Eurobarometer 50.1 (autumn 1998), Q.40.1 – according to Pfau-Effinger et al. (2003).

<sup>1</sup> = West Germany

In recent years, however, initiatives have been made to facilitate care giving between family members. The social law states that if a person wishes to care for a closely related who has suffered from a considerable and permanent reduction in his/her functional capacity, this person can be employed by the municipality to care for the chronically sick person. The person who is employed in this way receives a wage of DKK 14,875 per month (the employment relationship is super annuable). The employment relationship can last up to 6 months. Preconditions are that (1) care takes place in a private home, (2) that the alternative is to place the chronically sick person in a residential home and/or old people’s home, (3) that both parties agree upon the employment relationship (i.e. the municipality can veto any decision). [måske et tal på, i hvilket omfang denne ordning benyttes?].

## **Voluntary work**

In Denmark voluntary social work has a long tradition mainly going back to religious societies and philanthropic organisations in the 19<sup>th</sup> century who were carrying out voluntary work among the growing pauperised population in the big cities. During the hay days of welfare planning in the 1960s and 1970s voluntary work was by and large looked upon as an old relic from the past – something done by ‘hat-wearing ladies’ who were well-intentioned but had no professional expertise and therefore did not represent a serious contribution to the solution of welfare problems. From the early 1980s, however, a vigorous attack on universal welfare state policies, big state institutions and experts who were said to turn their clients into passive objects was launched. One of the results of this critique was a stronger and much more positive focus on voluntary social work and voluntary organisations as active participants in Danish social policy. During the 1980s a number of public funds were established which had as their objective to stimulate and support voluntary social work, voluntary organisations and local initiatives (SUM, PUF and the like). This political strategy has been very visible in Danish social policy ever since and still is –

one important reason being that it has been supported from all parts of the political landscape. But let us turn to some of the available data.

During the two decades dominated by the positive social policy discourse on voluntary work there has been an increase in the number of voluntary workers (table 4.1):

**Table 22:** *Share of voluntary workers in Denmark 1981-1999. Pct.*

Year	1981	1990	1993	1996	1997	1998a	1998b	1999
Pct.	17	26	28	45	44	34	39	38

**Sources:** 1981, 1990 and 1999 = European Values Survey; 1993, 1996, 1997 and 1998a = Various Danish surveys according to Koch-Nielsen and Clausen (2002); 1998b = Torpe (2000).

Although the surveys suffer from some methodological problems with respect to the collection of data (especially in 1981 and 1993), it is evident that there has been a development towards more people carrying out voluntary work resulting in a figure of around 40 pct. of the population today. These data, however, only tells us about the involvement in voluntary work in general and we therefore need to look at the distribution of voluntary work on different types of activity.

**Table 23:** *Participation in different kinds of voluntary work. Pct.*

Voluntary work in...	Pct.
Sports, culture and other leisure time activities	18
Church, elderly, youths and other social activities	12
Politics, labour unions and other similar activities	11

**Source:** Koch-Nielsen & Clausen (2002).

It follows from table 23 that sports and culture are the most dominant kinds of social work whereas the two other categories account for an almost equal share, that is 11-12 %, of the population.

Despite of the strong attention in public debate and social policy reforms voluntary social work is still only a supplement to public welfare service – as indicated by the data above. The stated objective in social policy programs has not been to *replace* public welfare services by voluntary social work but rather to stimulate the development of alternative and supplementary initiatives which would reach marginalised people who have turned their back to the public welfare system. That voluntary social work is not there to replace public welfare services is a point which is often emphasized by voluntary organisations themselves. Their motive for carrying out social work has to do with what they believe

to be the special characteristics of voluntary social work – characteristics which makes voluntary work radically different from public social work (Gruber & Villadsen, 1997). Thus, voluntary social work is held to be characterised by value rationality – i.e. that organisational activities are thought of as having a value in themselves – as opposed to the instrumental rationality which is held to dominate public welfare institutions. The voluntary organisations emphasize that by using voluntary workers they have a special ability to meet the clients ‘on their own terms’ and establish trustful relations with the most marginalised people. The public sector on the other hand is held to be characterised by a need to register and categorize the clients precluding the establishment of trustful, personal and equal relationships between socialworker and client. Finally, voluntary social organisations stress that using voluntary workers rather than professionally employed personel makes it possible for them to quickly adjust to new circumstances and develop new social work methods. These arguments have evoked a great response in the Danish social policy debate and some people have suggested that the public sector should take pains to learn from the way things are done in ‘the voluntary world’. The concept of a ‘welfare mix’ encapsulates the idea that the different sectors (state, civil society, market) all have a part to play in procuring welfare and social policy solutions.

If we look at who is carrying out voluntary work there are certain general characteristics. Men are more active in voluntary work than women, and it is people between 35 and 54 who are most active. As regards profession people in higher white collar jobs constitutes the biggest proportion of those involved in voluntary work. These observations are confirmed by the European Foundation Survey in their survey on the extent of voluntary work.

**Table 24:** *The extent of voluntary work. Men/women (all). Pct.*

	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>All</b>
Once a week or more	9	6	8
Once or twice a month	8	11	9
Once or twice a year	13	13	13
Age 15-24	17	26	-
Age 25-34	28	29	-
Age 35-44	37	35	-
Age 45-54	38	28	-
Age 55-64	21	26	-
Age 65+	10	0	-
Working part time	25	33	-
Not working part time	30	28	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>

**Source:** *European Foundation Survey 2000 – according to Kilpeläinen (2003).*

**Remark:** *Employed only (family workers included) and workers temporarily absent from their jobs.*

**Remark:** *'Once a week or more' includes 'everyday for one hour or more', 'everyday or every second day for less than one hour' and 'once or twice a week'.*

Other background characteristics can be summarised in that the typical Danish person involved in social work is full time employed, has a higher education, has a family, and lives in the provinces. Of particular interest is that voluntary work is not primarily done by people who have the most spare time available – which one would perhaps expect - but rather by people who are already active in their jobs and families. Another noteworthy thing is that young people show a very low level of participation in the voluntary work. In nordic research on voluntary work attempts have been made to explain these characteristics by the individual motives as well as the social circumstances of the voluntary workers. On the one hand researchers have pointed to the impact of *the social arena* to explain why voluntary work is more common among the groups who have the most resources – especially in terms of education and employment. In Sweden, Grassman (1993) suggested a connection between peoples accesses to social arenas (e.g. workplaces and other communities) and participation in voluntary work. On the other hand, but based on the first one, a second theory concerning *lifecycle* was formed. This theory emphasizes that peoples' access to various social arenas differs between different stages in life. Elderly politics, for instance, is obviously not as interesting to a young person as it is to people of higher age (Anker & Koch-Nielsen, 1995). The concepts of social arena and lifecycles might in this way explain some of the characteristics of the typical voluntary worker (full time employed, having a family, has a higher education, aged 35-54). To explain why men are more active than women we probably need to take the distribution of household tasks and the responsibility of child minding into account as this still leaves men more time to engage in spare time activities such as voluntary work.

If we look at voluntary work in different sectors of society (as introduced in the table above) and compare it with other European countries the following picture emerge.

**Table 25:** “Have you done any voluntary activity in the past 12 months in any of the following areas? Voluntary activity is unpaid work, not just belonging to an organisation or group. It should be of service or benefit of other people or the community and not only to one’s family or personal friends.”. All (men/women). Pct.

	Denmark	Germany	GB	Spain	Poland	Total
Political activities	4 (4/4)	4 (6/3)	4 (3/4)	4 (5/3)	5 (6/4)	<b>4 (5/3)</b>
Charitable activities	11 (10/12)	9 (8/10)	24 (19/27)	13 (12/15)	32 (31/33)	<b>16 (14/17)</b>
Religious/church activities	7 (8/7)	9 (8/9)	13 (9/16)	11 (8/13)	17 (17/17)	<b>11 (10/12)</b>
Other voluntary activities	22 (26/20)	16 (20/12)	19 (18/20)	10 (11/9)	15 (17/13)	<b>15 (17/13)</b>

**Source:** ISSP 1998, Question “Q16” (v32-v35) – according to Jensen & Rathlev (2003).

**Remark:** Data for Finland not available.

**Remark:** Table pct. contains ‘yes, once or twice’, ‘yes 3-5 times’ and ‘yes, 6 or more times’.

**Remark:** ‘Can’t choose’ and ‘no answer’ have been recoded as ‘missing’ and left out of the table.

As we can see, Denmark comes in at the lower end as regards ‘charitable activities’ and ‘religious/church activities’, but on the other hand this country shows the highest proportion involved in ‘other voluntary activities’ such as sports, culture and other leisure time activities. For all the countries in the survey the lowest participation is in the category ‘political activities’ while ‘charitable’ and ‘other voluntary activities’ show the highest participation. Denmark shows no significant gender differences although men are more active than women in the category ‘other voluntary activities’. For all the countries there is a gender differentiation in that men are more active in ‘political activities’ and ‘other voluntary activities’ while women are most active with respect to ‘charitable activities’.

The strong emphasis on voluntary work – and voluntary social work in particular – which has been at work during the last two decades raises a number of questions. First of all, concerns have been raised that a more intensified cooperation between public authorities and voluntary organisations might jeopardize the special qualities which are held to be immanent in voluntary work.<sup>3</sup> Some people have put forward a scenario in which voluntary organisations come to play a role as ‘entrepreneurs’ carrying out tasks decided by public authorities. As a result, the organisations lose their touch with the grassroots and become more and more hard to distinguish from public institutions and their professionalised methods for social work (Udvalget om frivilligt socialt arbejde, 1997). Another legitimate question has concerned the delegation of public finances and the emergence of new decision-making authorities vis-à-vis social clients. With more public resources being delegated to private, voluntary organisations a new sort of quasi-public institutions emerge which are

<sup>3</sup> Some researchers have stressed that the latest social policy reform has made regulations in the field of voluntary work more restrictive. The organisations are increasingly required to provide a high degree of formalisation as regards their administration and their objectives in order to maintain public grants (Henriksen and Ibsen, 2001).



outside of formal parliamentary control and which are not subject to the regulations of general social law (the principle of equal access to public services, for instance). Furthermore, new authorities are being created who will make choices concerning social clients. For instance, nowadays a voluntary social worker in a shelter or a drop-in centre will in some cases be the one who makes choices concerning which clients to send to drug treatment, job training or to participate in various courses. Which regulations make sure that classic welfare state principles of equal access and equal treatment are maintained in these new quasi-public institutions which are often run by voluntary workers? Civil society and its organisations are not just domains of equality, solidarity and freedom, as pointed out by Kaare Nielsen (1993). Local communities contain their own forms of domination – petty racism, bullying, drug related crimes and violence etc. – and a relevant question is what measures should be taken to keep these forms of domination in check (Villadsen, 2004: 264).

To explain the particular pattern of voluntary work in Denmark we need to look at both the institutionalised welfare state, the social organisation of families, the labour market and the local communities and we need to investigate peoples' motives for being involved in social work. With respect to the welfare state Denmark is characterised by high degree of institutionalised welfare (childcare, care of elderly people etc.) and voluntary organisations generally keep away from areas covered by public services. Compared to the rest of Europe it is phenomena characteristic of the Nordic countries that voluntary organisations do not offer their services in areas which are covered by public welfare services (Henriksen and Ibsen, 2001). This has traditionally been a fundamental standpoint of the voluntary social organisations and it seems to reflect the general attitude of the Danes. Thus, most of the population believe that care is the responsibility of the national or local government – only 2.3 pct. think that the provision of child care should be provided by associations and only 1.8 pct holds this opinion with respect to elderly care. That this is so probably is part of the explanation for the different levels of participation in different kinds of voluntary work. Hence, participation in voluntary charity activities is comparatively low whereas participation in sports and other leisure activities is higher. The gender division (men being a bit more active than women) is likely partly to be explained by the distribution of household tasks where women still take a bigger share than men. Also the fact that sport and leisure activities constitute the biggest proportion of voluntary work should probably be taken into account when explaining the greater involvement of men in voluntary work. In general it seems, as mentioned, that it is the persons who are already most active (with respect to the labour market and family life) who participate in voluntary work. Again, this indicates that social networks play a part when people decide to get involved in voluntary work. Voluntary work can hardly be planned 'from above', and this constitutes a governmental problem for politicians and social policy planners. How can we stimulate a domain which sensitive and vulnerable with respect to traditional forms of state

planning and involvement? It is in the light of this (liberal) problem of government that we should see public funds for experimental social work and temporary arrangements to stimulate voluntary activities without tying them permanently to public institutions.

## **Conclusion**

When trying to explain the size and patterns of informal work several social institutions and their mutual interrelations must be taken into account. It is a large and complex analysis and any 'findings' that might be procured must be treated rather as theses than as verifiable facts. In this article the most important social institutions and arrangements have been described in order to embark on this task. The Danish society has been described as characterised by a strong work ethic and since the 1960s the women have to a very high extent endorsed this work orientation. This early entry of Danish women is probably the most important single factor to account for the high labour market participation in Denmark.

Another factor is active labour market policies which seek to recruit and keep people in the labour force by employing various measures to strengthen the mobility and flexibility of the workforce – such as, for instance, professional training, transport allowances, a country wide employment service etc. By virtue of its institutionalised care sector (in particular a high coverage of childcare and care for the elderly) the welfare state makes facilitates a high level of participation in the labour market on the part of women. At the same time this care sector has been the very place where a lot of the women found jobs in the 1960s and onwards. Roughly speaking, care work to a large extent remained women's work but now carried out as paid work in public welfare institutions.

The extensive welfare state also necessitates a high level of individual taxation, which in Denmark has led to a high top-level taxation (68%) on personal income. Taking the level of taxation into consideration one would perhaps expect the incentive to carry out formal work to be weakened, since both buying and selling of undeclared work is relatively cheaper than formal labour. However, in the Danish case the extent of undeclared work is less than one could expect in these circumstances. Undeclared work seem to be mostly done by people in employment who use it as a supplement to their regular income and as way to avoid paying top-level taxes. Having a job seems to some extent to be a precondition for getting access to undeclared work, since there is a low frequency of undeclared work among unemployed people. This indicates that access to social networks plays an important part if we are to explain the extent of undeclared work among different segments of the population.

Formal labour market participation and involvement in social networks are also of importance when trying to explain who participates in voluntary work (men, aged 35-49, fulltime employed, having family has the highest participation). When looking at the profile of voluntary work in Denmark it seems obvious that the institutionalised Danish

welfare state constitutes a framework strongly influencing the size and pattern of social work. Most importantly perhaps, the extensive public care sector has meant that voluntary organisations could legitimately restrict their activities in this area and only provide supplementary services. This demarcation between voluntary social work and professionalised public services will no doubt receive even more attention in the years to come as politicians and planners look more and more towards civil society and its presumed potentials and hidden energies in their attempt to find ways of renewing the Danish welfare model.

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