

# Exploring the culture of denmark sociology essay



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My great, great grandfather, Paul Christian Lautrup, a single, caucasian man of 35, migrated from Denmark to the United States. He came from a wealthy family originating in the Danish culture and was educated to become an architect. He was expected to continue in the occupation that his nuclear family had persuaded him to train for in order to be kept in the family will. If he were to move away and not pursue the career that had been expected of him, he would be removed from the family will and lose all his inheritance.

Against his family's wishes, he chose to leave Denmark to escape their career demands and to pursue his own interest. He moved to the United States in 1880 to follow his dream of becoming an actor. He made Washington DC his home, where he met his wife Delia whom he had 6 sons with. Unfortunately, he did not succeed in becoming an actor and settled for becoming an architect in the US. This is rather ironic, because he ended up moving away from Denmark and losing all his inheritance only to become an architect in another land. (Lautrup, Paul).

Denmark is a small nation nestled within the Scandinavian countries located on the European continent. Denmark, also known as the Kingdom of Denmark, has a tiny population of roughly 5.3 million citizens with only a 69km land border that is shared with Germany; this is the only land connection that Denmark has with Europe through its only peninsula and largest region, called Jutland. Also, Denmark's main realm has 5 major islands, which support most of Denmark's population, accompanied by 406 minor islands. Only around 90 of the 406 minor islands of Denmark are known to be inhabited. Also, Greenland and the Faroe Islands are part of the Kingdom of Denmark. (Bendure, Glenda, and Ned Friary)

They are both located in the Atlantic Ocean and considered to be autonomous regions within the Kingdom of Denmark; both have very small populations under 100, 000 citizens. Copenhagen is the capital of Denmark and is the nation's largest city. Copenhagen is also the biggest and most modern city in all of Scandinavia. Scandinavia includes the countries of Sweden, Norway and Denmark. Over 70% of Denmark's population lives in an urban environment, while most of the population consists of people of Danish ethnicity, although there are a growing number of immigrants from Asian and African nations. (Bendure, Glenda, and Ned Friary)

The North Sea is to the west of Denmark and the Baltic Sea is to its east. Denmark is separated by its northern, neighboring, Scandinavian nations of Norway and Sweden by the Kattegat and Skagerrak straits. Sweden, the second closest neighbor to the Danes is cut off from Denmark by only 5km of water named the Oresund strait. Denmark's climate is humid and chilly during the winter, with an average temperature of 34 degrees F and during the drier, summer months, the temperature averages 72 degrees F. (Bendure, Glenda, and Ned Friary)

Denmark has gently rolling hills with fertile soil that are at a close range to sea level with no true mountains throughout the nation. There are many lakes, rivers, streams and moors, which create an ideal environment for agricultural prospects. There are no extreme changes in climate due to the Gulf Stream that flows up from the south over Denmark's western borders. Since the land is accessible to the sea, it is a prominent supplier to the ship industry in Northern Europe. Denmark has no point on its land that is more than an hour's drive from the sea. There are numerous bays and inlets,

which creates gainful opportunity for their prosperous shipping industries.

(Bendure, Glenda, and Ned Friary)

Some especially important Danish landmarks include: The Tivoli Park, the most popular amusement park in Denmark, Fredericksborg Castle, and The Royal Theater. Hans Christian Andersen, known for his fairytales with relatable moral teachings and Karen Blixen, known for short tales and life memoir are among many famous writers of Danish literature. Soccer is Denmark's national sport, but sailing, cycling and rowing are also Danish favorites. The national language is Danish, although, many Danes can speak English and/or German at least on elementary levels. (Bendure, Glenda, and Ned Friary)

The Krone is the source of Denmark's monetary exchange and the Euro has not yet been accepted, due to the nation's suspicions that switching over to the Euro will have a detrimental effect on their beloved social welfare system, which the citizens of Denmark take great comfort in. Denmark maintains the oldest continual monarchy in Europe and the second oldest in the world. Queen Margrethe II is the current Queen and head of the constitutional monarchy in Denmark. She is only the second queen to rule the monarchy throughout the entire history of Denmark. The Danish community is very proud of their form of government, their royal family and their Dannebrog, which is their national flag. Danes are not a people who are easily insulted, but one way to offend them would be to criticize anything concerning their Dannebrog, royal family or form of government. (Bendure, Glenda, and Ned Friary)

The subsistence strategy relied upon most in Denmark today is information. Higher education, the promotion of environmentally green solutions, literature and the fine arts are all very important to the Danish people. (Bendure, Glenda, and Ned Friary) Over 77.3% of the jobs held by Danes are part of the information subsistence strategy through service-related jobs. (CIA – The World Factbook) Since education is paid for by the heavy taxes the Danish people submit to, it is financially obtainable for anyone with high enough scores to continue their education into any of Denmark's universities. There are 5 universities for the citizens to choose from which include: Copenhagen, Roskilde, Odense, Aalborg and Aarhus Universities. Queen Margrethe II and her son, Crowned Prince Frederik are graduates of the elite Aarhus University. Danes also have the option of continuing their education by attending community colleges or vocational technical schools. Some of the occupations that Danes are going to school for include: maritime studies, nursing, physicists, architects, social services, literature, history, religion, photography, teaching or various other information service occupations. (Bendure, Glenda, and Ned Friary)

These jobs all rely on technology and tools such as computers, cameras, high-tech printers, internet connections, satellites, sterilized medical equipment, body-image scanners, reference texts, cell phones, writing utensils, specialized uniforms and printers are just a few examples of the many advanced tools that are necessary for these various fields of information subsistence strategies. For example, a teacher would use tools such as a blackboard, a computer projector, chalk, erasers, videos, books and printers in order to relay information to teach her class a particular

subject. Of course, these types of tools and technology are used all over the nation in rural and urban areas, but perhaps slightly more in the densely populated regions. Division of labor can be divided up in a number of ways in regards to the information subsistence strategy.

For example, a dean of a college may oversee that the college professors are following the guidelines for teaching classes from the code of ethics in their employee handbooks. The professors oversee the progress of skills and information learned by his/her students. The students attempt to maintain good grades in their class by completing all their schoolwork to the best of their ability. Division of labor usually depends on the socioeconomic status and education acquired.

However, in Danish society, social caste or social status does not create an obstacle in regards to whom can do what type of career. The citizens have a silent understanding amongst one another that every individual within the nation is important and should not be treated differently whether the citizen is a doctor or a trash man. The opportunity to pursue an information career is equally welcome to men and women; gender does not hinder occupational roles in Danish society. (Bendure, Glenda, and Ned Friary)

The second most important subsistence strategy amongst Danish society is industrialism in which some 20. 2% of the population is employed. (CIA – The World Factbook) Some examples of the products manufactured are ships, boats, ceramics, silverware, furniture, chemicals, paper, fish products, dairy products, canned ham, electronics, textiles, concrete, marine engines, radio and communication equipment, toys, glass, pharmaceuticals,

agriculture/forestry machinery, electrical products and diesel engines. Most of the industrial facilities that produce these Danish goods are located in more urbanized areas throughout the country. Many of these products require special skills used by laborers that have been trained at either a vocational school or through a type of apprenticeship training program paid for by the Danish government. Particular tools and equipment are necessary for creating these products that can include: pulleys, compressors, mixers, castes, hammers, nails, scissors, ovens, kilns, saws, test tubes, Bunsen burners, beakers, glue, electrical wiring, assembling machines, counting machines, computers, charts, slicing equipment, turbines, converters, nets, sails, anchors, food processors, milking machines and generators. (Bendure, Glenda, and Ned Friary)

For instance, if a plant is producing paper products, large, metal rollers, would need to be used in order to press the paper into the desired thickness. Also, mixers would be used to stir and prepare the paper pulp in order to pour it into the appropriate screening containers. A specialized machine would be necessary to wrap the finished paper product for distribution and sale. Distribution of labor depends on experience, skill level and seniority of the workers involved in the particular industry. Owners of factories and heads of departments oversee the quality and efficiency of production, which is reported from the supervisors. Supervisors organize, direct and monitor manual labor workers in their duties. Manual labor workers attempt to create products at a company-desired rate and quality, while not bearing the responsibility of their overseeing their co-workers.

The third of the most important subsistence strategies used in Denmark consists of agriculture. The main products grown in The Kingdom of Denmark include: sugar beets, barely and wheat, grains, rapeseed, fruits, vegetables and flowers. (Bendure, Glenda, and Ned Friary) Agriculture is most commonly practiced by only 2. 5% of the population and is normally achieved in rural areas of the country. (CIA – The World Factbook) Training apprenticeship programs and information passed down through family generations are used to teach agricultural methods. (Bendure, Glenda, and Ned Friary)

Some technologies used for agriculture include items such as combines, separating machinery, generators, irrigation systems, planting machinery, tractors, plows, fertilizing distributors, storage units and computers for analyzing crop quantity and quality. Irrigation systems are used to water the large expanse of crops, plows are used to till the land for preparation of planting seeds and computers are used to keep record of seasonal harvest yields and perhaps even profit margins. There are over 60, 000 family-owned farms in Denmark (Bendure, Glenda, and Ned Friary) and the division of labor is shared by the family and or corporation that own the farms along with the hired employees who are used for cleaning and fixing equipment, sorting crops, running machinery, irrigation and maintaining the health of the crops.

The family or corporation of the agricultural operation oversees the employees or hires a supervisor(s) to ensure that the agricultural laborers are working efficiently. The supervisors or owners of a farm may calculate the quantity of crop and the value it yields per season. The agricultural land



owners or supervisors also may keep track of the laborers improvement or lack of effort on the job. The farm laborers will tend to any manual labor that the agricultural operation needs completed while only having to be responsible for their individual production. The division of labor in agriculture is based mostly on skill, seniority and ownership.

The fourth most important subsistence strategy in Denmark is pastoralism of which is included in the 2. 5% of the nation's population that maintains a career in agriculture. (CIA – The World Factbook) The animal goods raised and produced in the Kingdom of Denmark include: canned ham, butter, cheese, fish oil, fish meal and milk through the use of fish hatcheries and typically family-owned farms. As in the agricultural subsistence strategy, pastoralism is either passed down through families or learned through an apprenticeship training program. (Bendure, Glenda, and Ned Friary) Some tools used for pastoralism include: fences, watering/feeding troughs, barns, herding rods, milking machines, slaughtering equipment, medical tools, labels, hoof clippers, lead ropes, halters, hoses, generators, heaters and computers.

Fences are used to keep the livestock confined to a desired location, animals are put in barns to protect them from predators and the occasional harsh outdoor elements and heaters may be used in the barns to keep a sustained temperature that is more suitable for the livestock's health. As in the agricultural subsistence strategy in Denmark, the division of labor amongst workers in pastoralism is based on skill level, seniority and ownership. For example, the owner of a herd of swine may hire a supervisor or herd manager in order to keep track of the manual laborers and also the

efficiency of herd quality, health and maintenance. The owner of the swine operation may calculate yearly profits, upkeep costs and decide what to pay employees based on their skill levels. The employees without management skills, the hired hands or basic herd tenders will be responsible only for the safety, feeding and order of their set group of livestock that they are to have authority over.

Denmark has a centralized political organization and maintains a constitutional monarchy as a political model. A constitutional monarchy can only be led by offspring of the current king or queen after he or she is deceased. It is a requirement for the king or queen of Denmark to be a member of the national church. A single-chamber parliamentary runs hand-in-hand with the constitutional monarchy. The prime minister, currently known as Lars Lokke Rasmussen, leads Denmark's political organization with the indirect support of all 179 parliament members and direct assistance from the cabinet ministers who lead numerous political departments throughout the nation. Voting age in Denmark is 18 and all parliament members are elected for a term of 4 years, unless state minister forces a new election before the 4 years is completed. It is the duty of the members of parliament to come to consensus on decisions to enact or not enact new legislation and the duty of the prime minister to carry the decision to action, however new legislation cannot be enacted fully until Queen Margrethe II writes her finalizing signature on it. There are typically around 12 political parties that make up the single-chamber parliamentary system of the Danes. The top 2 of these major political parties consist of Social Democrats and Liberals-a right-of-centre part. Social Democrats seem to be the most

popular considering the fact that they are tied heavily to the belief that all Danish citizens should be granted security by maintaining the comforts of social-welfare programs, but of course, these are safety features only made possible by very high taxes to the Danish people. (Bendure, Glenda, and Ned Friary)

The royal constitutional monarchy headed by Queen Margrethe II has control of the executive powers, while legislative powers are for the most part, granted to the parliament and judicial powers are carried out by the courts of Denmark. Denmark's military branches include: a home guard, an air force, a navy and a national rescue corps. Military members are usually enlisted for 4 months to a year of service. During war times, the Danish military acquires 58, 000 members, but during peace times, there are roughly fifteen thousand participating members. The Danish military ranks are usually based on mandatory enrollment in order to be ready when an emergency arises.

Denmark's police force has about 10, 000 law enforcement officers who are known for their more civilized, calmer approaches to domestic disputes by using advanced communication skills and maintaining close, positive relationships with the overall communities they work in. (HOG, ERLING, and HELLE JOHANNESSEN)

One form of internal political control in Denmark is the enforcement of laws through the judiciary court systems. Although, crime in Denmark is very low and it is not normal for a Dane to even consider breaking the basic laws of the land. An example of externalized political control would be the decision

of the Danish Parliament to not accept the Euro as Denmark's new currency, even though Denmark is a member of the European Union. Internalized political responsibilities of Denmark's parliament involve the maintenance of social welfare programs that protect all Danish citizens regardless of socioeconomic status. The externalized responsibility of the parliament consists of maintaining peaceful political connections with the European Union and other nations in regards to preserving a secure way of life for its citizens and also keeping a cohesive relationship with national allies for added protection. After all, Denmark is a very small nation and it would be beneficial to preserve as much peace with as many nations as possible.

(Bendure, Glenda, and Ned Friary)

The economic system of Denmark is based on negative reciprocity due to the use of capitalism throughout the nation. Capitalism is used by the Danes to generate profit through sales of products from private businesses and corporations to customers. Redistribution is also used throughout the Danish culture in the form of health care and educational needs. Danish pay high taxes that allow them to enjoy the freedoms of free health care and education of any type. This allows the Danish citizens to give and take as they need, for example, all citizens are taxed regardless of how much income they generate, but it is possible that not all of them will use the free education opportunities or the free health care services during their lifetimes. (Bendure, Glenda, and Ned Friary)

Market exchange is also used through capitalism in Denmark in regards to having the freedom to set up a private business and gain profit from it without limit, which is a prime example of capitalistic market exchange.

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Denmark uses both socialism and capitalism, but the predominant economic system would have to be capitalism. This is true, because Danes are free to pursue their own interests through careers that will allow them to generate profit without limit to the individual. Although, socialism is prevalent in the way Denmark controls and maintains social welfare for the citizens in order to provide free and easily accessible, equal-quality health care and education to all Danish citizens regardless of social or economic status, gender, religion or ethnicity. (Bendure, Glenda, and Ned Friary)

The primary economic sector, which involves extraction of resources from the land, also known as mainly agriculture in Denmark, makes up 2. 5% Danish employment. (CIA – The World Factbook) A few of Denmark's exports consist of canned ham, butter, cheeses, beer and processed fish products of which are brought forth through agriculture, pastoralism and industry. (Bendure, Glenda, and Ned Friary) The nation's secondary economic sector, which involves processing of goods, also known as industry makes up 20. 2% of the Danish workforce. (CIA – The World Factbook) Denmark manufactures machinery, chemicals, furniture, electronics of which are exported all over the world. (Bendure, Glenda, and Ned Friary) The tertiary economic sector, which involves services, makes up 77. 3% of the working Danish population. (CIA – The World Factbook)

A few of Denmark's popular service industry jobs are found in the fields of architecture, nursing, teaching, physics, environmental science, literature and social sciences. Denmark enjoys the highest Gross Domestic Product in Europe and maintains one of the highest standards of living for its citizens compared to all nations in the world. Unemployment is very low and over

half the country is employed with the reassurance that health care and education will not be a challenge to pay for. Denmark relies heavily on the income from its exports and puts a great deal of value on maintaining its social welfare programs. (Bendure, Glenda, and Ned Friary)

Denmark's most common religious organization is Evangelical Lutheran, of which over 90% of Danish citizens belong to. Evangelical Lutheran is a denomination that is part of a national church, supported by the state called the Danish People's Church. Only about 5% of Danish people actually attend church weekly; most Danes only participate in church services during important religious holidays such as Christmas or Easter. Evangelical Lutheranism is a monotheistic religion, which means that they worship only one god. (Bendure, Glenda, and Ned Friary)

Other religious organizations that exist in Denmark consist of Catholicism, Judaism and Islam, which also practice monotheism. Also, a small percentage practice forms of religious organizations such as Buddhism, Sikhism and Hinduism, which promote polytheism, the worship of many gods. It is ironic that the overall Danish society does not have a strong faith in the god or gods of their religious choice, yet at birth most of the country is automatically enrolled as a member of the national church, also known as the Danish People's Church. Their enrollment is expected unless they belong to a religion other than Evangelical Lutheran. It is a requirement that the current king or queen of Denmark be a member of the Evangelical Lutheran religious organization. (HOG, ERLING, and HELLE JOHANNESSEN)

Danish churches are typically located in close proximity to all Danish towns and are encompassed by graveyards. Evangelical Lutheran religious organizations have sermons and worship in churches on Sundays. Their ceremonies include a minister, a servant, an organist and a cantor. Evangelical Lutheran important ritualistic ceremonies include: weddings, confirmations, funerals and baptisms. It is expected that most Danish churches have fairly low attendance rates during Sunday services. (HOG, ERLING, and HELLE JOHANNESSEN)

Throughout the Danish social organization, monogamy, the practice of marriage to single spouse, is the most accepted and nationally predominant form of union. Marriage is important in regards to the most common form of religion in Denmark, Evangelical Lutheranism, yet because Danes are not known for being highly involved in the practices of their religious organizations, there is a loose view on marriage and when it should be chosen, if at all. It is common for a Dane to cohabitate for years, have offspring and not be married until many years after. Therefore, it is not uncommon for Danish households to have illegitimate children born outside of wedlock. (Bendure, Glenda, and Ned Friary)

If Danes do decide to marry, it is usually not until they are in their very late twenties or early thirties. Danes do not participate in arranged marriages, an event where parents choose a marriage partner for offspring, instead, single Danes choose their own marriage partners through the anthropological term love match. Endogamy, marriage created within one's own organized cultural group, is practiced in Denmark as well as exogamy, marriage outside one's own organized cultural group. Most often, Danes marry other Danes of

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their own ethnicity, yet those who choose to marry outside of Denmark or one's ethnicity is not condemned within the Danish societal organization.

(Bendure, Glenda, and Ned Friary)

Post-marital residence, pertaining to where a bride and groom reside after their marriage ceremony, only pertains to the Danish societal organization in the sense that marriage partners typically practice neolocal forms. A neolocal form of post-marital residence can be defined as the event of taking residence in a home that is set apart from the married couple's families.

Other forms of post-marital residence, such as patrilocal, the act of a married couple living close to or with the married male's family of his father, or matrilocal, the practice of both marriage partners residing with or in close proximity to the married female's family of her mother, are not commonly practiced. Marriage in modern Denmark societal organization, is not required, nor is it a high priority. (HOG, ERLING, and HELLE JOHANNESSEN)

Therefore, post-marital residence is not of great importance, It is only on a neolocal sense, considering that Danes learn to be very independent at a very early age, while maintaining a close-knit family on an emotional level. The most important family type for Danes is the nuclear families containing dependent children, a wife and a husband. Even though the idea of marriage in the Danish societal organization is very loose and laid-back, out of all couples living together in Denmark, most of them are in fact married.

Extended family, consisting of aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents and other individuals with marriage or blood relating them, are also important, but not as high a priority as the nuclear family. Most Danish nuclear families are small, having two or less dependant offspring. Privacy is valued greatly

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by Danes, especially when it comes to the nuclear family's home. It is rare for a Danish family to invite a guest to their home whom they have not known for a great while. (Bendure, Glenda, and Ned Friary)

Each of the nuclear family members generally has their own private room in the home along with the rooms for meeting, such as the kitchen and larger family rooms. In Denmark's societal organization, descent is traced by using a lineage, which is used by connecting all ancestors back to a single, original ancestor. Descent in Denmark is traced in this way, because last names are important links to ancestry. Although last names are taken from the male within a married couple, patrilineal descent, tracing only by acknowledging male individuals as ancestors, is not used, because all genders are included when tracing Danish ancestry. (Bendure, Glenda, and Ned Friary)

When referring to kin, relatives connected by marriage or blood, Danish citizens value ties with both the mother's and the father's side of the family, which is called bilateral kinship. Bilateral kinship is important for Danes, because both nuclear and extended family, regardless of mother or father's side, builds a cohesive unit of strength emotionally, sometimes financially and offers support that is not commonly expected outside of family ties. National polls and summaries do not generally include information in regards to socio-economic classes, instead Denmark's citizens are divided up into 5 social layers. These social layers consist of subcategories within each layer. (HOG, ERLING, and HELLE JOHANNESSEN)

The first social layer consists of corporate owners, employees of the educational system and anyone that has over 50 workers. The second social

layer involves academically professional owners of businesses, agricultural owners with at least 4 employees and corporate owners that have over 6 workers. The third social layer includes small business owners, individuals with employment that calls for special skills and agricultural owners with a limit of 3 workers. The fourth social layer is made up of employees containing academic training, owners of small plots of land and experienced employees. The fifth social layer consists of employees with no special skills or experience. (HOG, ERLING, and HELLE JOHANNESSEN)

Denmark, as a social organization, is very tolerant of other people's ways of perceiving life and is considered to be outgoing and well-educated. Danes are very accepting of homosexual marriage and equality of the sexes.

Denmark was the first European nation to allow for legal gay marriages within its borders offering homosexuals the majority of rights granted to straight married couples. Danes are very conscientious when it comes to preserving a clean, toxic-free environment. (Bendure, Glenda, and Ned Friary)

A recent news article summarizes a protest put on by Greenpeace activists at the Environment Ministry in Denmark. This article was used for this research paper, because Danes are very involved in environmental policies in regards to keeping the planet as clean and sustainable as possible. The article was personally interesting, because Denmark is one of the most environmentally conscious nations on the planet and I was curious to see how they react to the disposing of harmful waste products. The Greenpeace activists were protesting the transport of a poisonous pollutant called HCB from an Australian company named Orica. The Kommunekemi in Nyborg, <https://assignbuster.com/exploring-the-culture-of-denmark-sociology-essay/>

Denmark is one of a small number of countries in the world that is able to incinerate the hazardous carcinogen, HCB. The Greenpeace activists argued that hazardous waste materials should be incinerated closer to the point to which they are processed. This is just one of many examples of the Danish culture's desire for a cleaner and greener planet. ("Greenpeace Goes Aloft to Protest Transport from Down Under")

Danes are also known to love their most famous amusement park, Tivoli. This amusement park is located in Copenhagen and is the most popular attraction in Denmark. The park was built in 1843 and maintains a décor and cuisine that is based on the historical, traditional Danish culture of the time the park first opened. Some Danes pay the park's entry cost just to eat at a few of the thirty-seven restaurants within the park. The park has roller coasters, games, gardens and various amusements and entertainment. ("Copenhagen, Denmark")

Danish people are in love with the concept of social gatherings combined with eating and the two almost always go hand-in-hand. It is customary for a Danish household to always have tea, chocolates, pastries and cheese just in case guests arrive unexpectedly. Their meals often consist of three or more courses and it is considered a crime to oneself to not savor and take time to enjoy one's meal. Danes love rich, whole foods of which often include broiled or marinated fish, thick and creamy cheeses, hearty breads, substantial gravies and delectable deserts.

Hot tea is often served with milk and honey and it is customary to leave the last bit of food in a main communal dish when eating. This is a symbolic

action of politeness to show that nobody is selfish or rushed during the meal. The Danish culture is known for being one of the happiest cultures on earth. They are generally friendly, warm and open to communication with strangers. Recently, Denmark has incorporated many American concepts, products, stores and fast-food conveniences into their societal organization. Unfortunately, they are also gaining a few of the health problems that are associated with the introduction of American culture into their nation. However, despite the Dane's cultural borrowing, they still have a strong sense of uniqueness through a proud society that shows compassion for its citizens and welcomes visitors. (Waldron, Julie)