

Danish Welfare Reform and Lutheran Background in the Mid-Twentieth Century

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In the interwar period, the role of the public authorities and voluntary social work in welfare provision was changing in Denmark. The debates on the changing relations shed light on the role of Lutheranism in Danish, and to a great extent generally in Nordic, welfare modernity.¹ In this article I argue that the diverse attitudes of Nordic and Danish religious movements have, despite differences and ambivalences, shown considerable adaptability to public social reform. The necessity to adapt is, of course, mainly due to the constraints of socioeconomic development, but theological depositories² also played a significant role. The concept of depository aims at finding a more precise function for cultural content in social debate, implying that material, socioeconomic phenomena and constraints must be

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1. An excellent guide to Danish welfare history in this period are the second and third volumes by Jørn Henrik Petersen, Klaus Petersen, and Niels Finn Christensen, eds., *Dansk Velfærdshistorie* (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2011 and 2012 respectively).

2. The term "depository," as used in this context, stems from several theoretical and methodological discussions with Prof. Bo Stråth, my first important point of reference in Nordic history, now also joined by Henrik Stenius, Niels Finn Christensen, and Pauli Kettunen. Bo Stråth's inspiration comes most probably from Michael Freedman's writings on liberalism.

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accorded a prominent position, albeit without simply ignoring the role of superstructural factors, such as religion.

The concept of “depository,” as Bo Stråth puts it, is here used to indicate how arguments from discourses and ideologies of various provenience are stored and then, in political debates, selected and combined in a rich variety depending and contingent on the context. The idea is not that there would be separate depositories for socialist, liberal, or Christian arguments, among others; instead, there is one big depository with arguments from all these strains used within a certain historical or national or regional context.³ The concept of depository is also useful since it communicates a certain degree of “autonomy of the cultural,” i.e., that culture is not a sheer product of material determinants. But it also emphasizes that cultural elements cannot determine, for example, socioeconomic realities, which remain the most important factors in social development. Rather, depositories can be defined as the “cultural material”—traditions, religions, national narratives, etc.—which a certain polity at a given historical moment is at all able to mobilize when debating the measures and the reforms socioeconomic realities (correctly so or not) suggest to parties, trade unions, political or intellectual elites, and other sorts of groups or organizations. To put it more clearly in this case: the state initiative for welfare reform was caused by compelling material needs of various sorts, such as the failures of the market’s “invisible hand,” together with the unemployment and the increasing poverty of the 1930s.⁴ This initiative had to deal with the already existing, religiously motivated and independent social work—in other words, with depositories of a religious sort.

Now, if in some central tradition belonging to a certain polity, the mobilized cultural “depositories” are suitable for the discursive context brought about by concrete needs and sociopolitical solutions that can strengthen the acceptability of a certain political measure or reform. I argue that Nordic Lutheranism, albeit possibly less

3. Bo Stråth has discussed Freeden’s work in the “Festschrift” in his honor: Bo Stråth, “The Liberal Dilemma: The Economic and the Social, and the Need for a European Contextualization of a Concept with Universal Pretensions,” in *Liberalism and Ideology: Essays in Honour of Michael Freeden*, ed. Ben Jackson and Marc Stears (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). As to Freeden’s own conceptual view on ideologies, see Michael Freeden, *Ideology: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

4. For a good outline of the socioeconomic situation in the Nordic countries in the interwar period, see Ola Honningdal Grytten, “Why was the Great Depression not so Great in the Nordic Countries? Economic Policy and Unemployment,” *European Journal of Economic History* 2 (2008): 369-93 (accessed February 28, 2013, <http://www.nhh.no/Files/Filer/institutter/sam/Discussion%20papers/2006/24.pdf>). For a more comprehensive Danish economic history, see Svend Aage Hansen, *Økonomisk Vækst i Danmark, 1914-1983* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1983).

prominent in the Danish debate than religion is in other social historical contexts, can help to explain why the initiative of voluntary welfare religious organizations always ended up adapting to the expansion of public initiatives in welfare provisions and institutions.⁵ This happened even though the revivalist religious sector of Nordic popular movements—which between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries played a major role in building Nordic and Danish participatory democracy—contained the potential to oppose the expansion of a governmental role in welfare provision. Some important groups and leaders of the revivalist part of the popular movements believed, as will be shown, in self-organization, as well as in the importance of religious voluntary motivation, along with religious preaching, in social work. If opposition to the state initiative proved weaker than its potential, it was possibly *also* because, more generally and diffusely, the Lutheran identity of Nordic religious depositories rendered the expansion of the governmental role in welfare institutions acceptable to the majority of the Danish members of the state Church.⁶ This happened thanks to the base of Lutheran theology and ethics, which was important given that by then Lutheranism had been the very cornerstone and the most legitimate source of Danish religious common sense for four centuries.

This article attempts to find the source of this contribution and proposes the theology of Danish Professor N. H. Søe (1895–1978) as a possible example of the use of the Lutheran depository providing sociopolitical elasticity in modern Nordic Lutheranism. Along with Søe, the interpretation of the Danish theologian, priest, and philosopher K. E. Løgstrup of modern Lutheran social ethics seems very important regarding the preconditions for the adaptability of voluntary religious welfare initiatives in public welfare institutions. However, Søe's contribution takes a more central position here because he elaborates a modern version of Lutheran categories that, although rooted in very sophisticated theology, serves as

5. A sociohistorical and quantitative piece of research largely used in this text is Peter Bundesen, Lars Skov Henriksen, and Anja Jørgensen, *Filantropi, selvhjælp og interesseorganisering, frivillige organisationer i dansk socialpolitik 1849-1990'erne* (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2001). On the complexity and ambivalences of this adaptation see Nils Gunder Hansen, Jørn Henrik Petersen, and Klaus Petersen, eds., *I himlen således også på jorden. Dansk kirkefolk om velfærdsstaten og det moderne samfund* (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2010).

6. In 2008, 82 percent of the population were members of the National Church. In 1970, the percentage was higher: about 95 percent of the population. This percentage had remained very constant for decades until then and did not begin falling before the 1970s. Danmarks Statistik, *60 år i tal* (2008), 18.

authoritative support for a highly diffuse and shared notion of religious ethics.⁷

In a sense, what came about was a successful and innovative use of religious heritage, which can help to explain how Lutheran tradition can facilitate reform. Nevertheless, many elements in the more recent views of religious popular revivalism (i.e., stemming from the second half of the nineteenth century) contained the potential of opposing welfare reform, unless, of course, they adjusted to the new reality of more state intervention and regulation *also* in the specific field of voluntary religious work. Importantly, as will be shown, this intervention was fairly gradual as far as voluntary organizations were concerned, which, according to some scholars, also contributed to the tendency to adapt.⁸

This brings to the surface the important concept of hegemony. The concept originates in the theories of the Italian politician and political theorist Antonio Gramsci, and means that structural economic necessities, along with the measures intended to achieve a solution to these necessities, are, when successfully hegemonic, accepted *also* on the grounds of prevailing and to some extent shared values or convictions, i.e., depositories.⁹ In other words, a state of hegemony means that, when dominant, a certain kind of government or socioeconomic regulation is not simply based on submission to brute force, but is also “legitimate” and “convincing.” Mere violence is in other words not hegemonic. Hegemonic legitimation needs a shared sense of the notion that adopted solutions are rational *vis-à-vis* material, socioeconomic, or geostrategic needs. Naturally, even dictatorship, such as the fascist or Soviet regimes in interwar Europe, may be hegemonic, in the sense that they, for a certain period at least, can make very excessive use of violence or censorship appear convincing and legitimate. The accelerated construction of welfare states propelled by the Great Depression of the 1930s was also endowed with hegemonic

7. Nils Hansen Søe was a prominent figure in Danish academic life in theology: from 1939 he was professor in ethics and philosophy of religion at the University of Copenhagen. His work (N. H. Søe, “Det kristne syn paa ordningerne,” *Teologisk Tidsskrift for det danske folkekirke*, 1935) will be discussed below. K. E. Løgstrup was minister and professor at Århus University and then at Marburg University. On his theoretical and theological contribution to the construction of the modern Danish welfare state, see Jørn Henrik Petersen and Lis Holm Petersen, “Naestekaerlighed og velfaerdstat,” in *13 vaerdier bag den danske velfaerdsstat*, ed. Jørn Henrik Petersen, Klaus Petersen, and Lis Holm Petersen (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2007). Løgstrup’s probably most relevant work in this context was *Den etiske fordring* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1956).

8. Bundesen, Skov Henriksen, and Jørgensen, *Filantropi*, show, in my opinion convincingly, the qualitative and quantitative features of this adaptive tendency.

9. For a good, recent work in English, see Peter D. Thomas, *The Gramscian Moment: Philosophy, Hegemony and Marxism* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009).

sense. The depository role played by theological and ethical categories in Lutheran tradition—and its accordance with civic and not only with more restricted communitarian, voluntary virtues—rendered the process, if not entirely consensual, at least more smoothly hegemonic. 115

Hegemony is not simply domination, nor within the realm of sheer material need. In order to be established, welfare hegemony must first of all be motivated by the structural layers of society—i.e., the Great Depression; requiring more planning, more quantitative efforts regarding unemployment benefits, or more health care—but it also needs the superstructural layers of society, such as the religious acceptance/legitimation of state intervention in welfare provisions. In this sense Lutheranism and its basic theological and ethical categories fulfilled some kind of “bedrock” function in Nordic societies. By this I mean that the Lutheran depository is a cultural and/or ethical aspect which—being undeniably constitutive of a very deep, rooted, and participated institution, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark—appeared as the element of legitimating continuity in a context of obvious change. Religion can motivate voluntary work, but it can equally motivate impersonal solidarity among citizens through the state in a changing society where new social needs required new welfare institutions and increasingly massive state regulatory and/or funding intervention. 120 125 130 135

Based on this theoretical background I operate methodologically on the assumption that (a) the structural layer, i.e., socioeconomic and geostrategic factors, economic depression, urbanization, etc., have provided impetus, showing the limits of welfare provision as hitherto built and funded; and (b) these compelling structural necessities were hegemonic also because the superstructural layer, as an innovative version of Lutheran ethical categories, provided a source of potential elasticity. The dynamics of voluntary religious social work performing adaptivity seems to be present at least from the 1930s and onward starting from the reforms of 1933. Resulting factors are described below. 140 145

A Seminal Reform of the Danish Welfare State in 1933

Danish Social Democracy had, until around 1930, only formed governments either in a coalition led by Social Liberals (*Radikale Venstre*), or rather briefly, as in 1924, with not much impact.¹⁰ This 150

10. In the 1920s none of these Social Democratic governments succeeded in lasting very long, and moreover did not reverse the public budget downsizing and liberalistic hegemony of the decade. A typical example is the budget austerity lines followed by social democratic minister of the economy, Carl Valdemar

seems even more important if we consider the political context of the 1920s. The battle for more socioeconomic regulation and welfare provision was by no means over. On the contrary, in this decade the Liberal party, *Venstre*, had succeeded in cutting welfare state provisions. The aim of this party was to curtail the expansion of public expenditure and state functions that had taken place as an outcome of the war regulations throughout Europe at least since World War I. Since 1920 state expenditure had therefore shown a tendency to diminish, effectively counteracted only after the social reform of 1933. 155 160

However, since the electoral campaign of 1929, the Social Democrats had advocated more state interventionism in social policies and openly opposed the deregulation pursued by the Liberal governments. The social democratic plans, for example, begun by social minister Steincke were not yet pursuing a welfare system on the base of universalistic social rights and provisions, but rather ensuring that as few people as possible in need of welfare benefits were obliged to resort to the marginalizing low-level provisions guaranteed by the municipalities. Consequently, as many as possible had to be included in the system of social insurance, and the means to achieve this became state funding to different welfare institutions including health care, social insurance, the *Sygekasser* (sickness funds), and voluntary insurances like union-managed unemployment "kasser" following the so-called Ghent model.¹¹ Of course, voluntary organizations, not least those with their roots in the different religious movements, would also, and more massively than hitherto, be included among the recipients of state funding. Importantly, in this respect, the four pillars of the 1932-33 reform—public social care, general insurance, unemployment insurance administered by the unions, and job seeker's offices—followed a differentiated strategy as to the regulation and funding of these institutions. While, for example, the sickness insurance completely lost its member-based nature, the Ghent system and the religious voluntary associations preserved it more or less intact. 165 170

The partnership between the state and the voluntary organizations was mainly regulated in paragraph 300 of the new welfare legislation.¹² This regulation implied an exchange of information between

Bramsnæs, who showed a remarkable inclination to implement public budget cuts. See Hansen, *Økonomisk Vækst i Danmark*, 43-45.

11. Jacob Christensen, "Socialreformen 1933: principiel reform eller administrative omlægning," in *Den Danske Velfærdsstats Historie, Antologi*, ed. Niels Ploug, Ingrid Henriksen, and Niels Kærgård (Copenhagen: Socialforskningsinstituttet, 2004).

12. Bundesen, Skov Henriksen, and Jørgensen, *Filantropi*.

public authorities and the voluntary organizations on matters such as personal files, which was important both from a statistical point of view and regarding the selection of single potential recipients and their entitlements. Another important point in this part of the new welfare legislation was the possibility for public decision-makers to assign social tasks to voluntary organizations. By virtue of this, the state financial support was often increased as a result of the reform, which rendered many organizations better able to pursue their objectives.

The partnership with the public authorities contained in the reform was strengthened, but it was not a real break from established practices; this kind of public-private funding partnership had already been necessary in previous decades due, for example, to the structural push influence of the long transition from agrarian communities to an industrial-urban society, and the Depression of the 1930s rendered it even more necessary.

These elements of a “seamless change in continuity” were in my view extremely important since they were compatible with the “missionary attitude” toward individual spiritual rebirth present in the associations stemming from or influenced by the Danish home mission movement (*Indre Mission*). But they might also be welcomed by other religious movements motivated by the “social regeneration” theology advocated by Bishop Ammundsen and the Social Christians (*Kristelig Sociale*) in the journal *Maalet og Vejen* (The Destination and the Way). In spite of ambivalences and complaints, *Indre Mission* could perceive the reform of 1933 as a more systematic guarantee that the religious piety of voluntary associations could still play an important role in social work. The *Kristelig Sociale*, on the other hand, could see in the reform the dawn of a new age in which social distress would be eliminated, and, as an ultimate result, an evangelical era on earth would come about.¹³

The “Social Question” and Religious Voluntary Work

Scholars dealing with the study of voluntary welfare organizations hold that in Denmark the state and the voluntary sphere of welfare society have undergone several degrees of integration, going from “separated autonomy” to “separated dependence” to “integrated autonomy” and, at last in several cases, to “integrated dependence.”¹⁴ According to this interpretation, separated autonomy characterized

13. Ibid. Also see Lars Skov Henriksen and Peter Bundesen, “The Moving Frontier in Denmark: Voluntary-State Relationships since 1850,” *Journal of Social Policy* 33 (2002): 605-25.

14. Bundesen, Skov Henriksen, and Jørgensen, *Filantropi*, 25.

the age of the shared concept of the deserving and undeserving poor, where the latter were taken care of by the residual public welfare provisions (in exchange for the loss of civil rights) and the deserving were taken care of by the voluntary and often religious organizations. Therefore until about the beginning of the twentieth century, the two spheres were ostensibly functioning in parallel, i.e., with little integration. 230

The degree of integration increased during the following decades in a process of accelerating continuity after the social reform of 1932–33 brought about by Social Democrat K. K. Steincke as Minister of Social Affairs. We will now address the religious motivation of voluntary welfare work to define the role of the religious element in the evolution from “separated autonomy” to the integration of the public sphere and the voluntary organizations. 235

Kirkens Korshær (the crusade army of the Church, hereafter the Church Army) was one of the many associational outcomes of the Danish Home Mission and its Pietistic/puritan version of Lutheranism. In the early phases of its existence, the Church Army was a subject of heated debate within Danish Pietism. The debate went approximately as follows: should the preaching of the Word be the only central element of “*homemission-like*” voluntary action, or should the actions of social work become just as much part of the aims and activities of this religious tendency? This debate is very seminal for several reasons, which is described more systematically after presenting some basic facts. 240 245 250

Until Harald Stein took the leadership of Home Mission in Copenhagen (1879), the aims of the Home Mission in the capital of Denmark were very similar to those in more rural areas, inspired solely by the preaching of the Word. As Vilhelm Beck, the main leader of Danish Home Mission in the first decades, put it, the activity of the movement in Copenhagen should be “The Word and salvation of sinners—the Word in order to make people gather around Jesus. All the rest is minor things, although they may be important minor things.”¹⁵ However, Stein favored the more social work-oriented approach, which in those decades was perceived to be more widespread abroad than in Denmark. For Beck, however, Stein represented a largely negative attitude, since it implied the “priority of the so-called ‘deeds of love,’” and was less inclined to the Home Mission’s way of working with the laity. 255 260

This caused a rift between the Home Mission in Copenhagen and the rest of the Home Mission.¹⁶ The charismatic influence exerted by 265

15. Helge Lundblad, “Ny testamentets kristendom skal blive til! Indre Missions syn paa kirken,” in Hal Koch, *Ett kirkeskifte. Studier over brydninger i dansk kirke- og menighedsliv i det 19. Århundrede* (Copenhagen, 1960), 273–74.

16. Lundblad, “Ny testamentets kristendom,” 274.

Beck was able to curb the tendency of the Copenhagen groups, but the structural impact of heavy urbanization was so relentless that the question inevitably surfaced again.

The communitarian control and the popularity of Home Mission ministers in rural areas, generally perceived as more authentically pious than the other more mainstream ministers belonging to the State Church of Denmark, probably convinced Beck that mere proclamation of the Word could also bring about social regeneration by means of counteracting individual moral misery. Faith in the rebirth of individuals resulting from the preaching and then from the inner experience of the Word had, of course an impact in (carrying out) social work. Moreover, the Home Mission in Sweden was convinced that sin was the root of all poverty and outer measures could not possibly solve the problems of poverty.¹⁷ Nonreligious philanthropy was in fact criticized as a form of ineffective hypocrisy: the owners of industrial plants were funding all kinds of philanthropic institutions while simultaneously being the source of poverty, i.e., only in order to assuage their own consciences.¹⁸ This radical quest for spiritual rebirth was, ironically, in some respect parallel to the socialist critique of liberalistic ideology: the latter, with its elitist paradigms, practiced residual "hypocritical" philanthropy, while neither solving the social question at its very roots, nor (so far) including the working class in stable political and social rights. The fact that the kind of regeneration the Inner Mission sought was not of the secular-political but of an inner and spiritual kind had nonetheless an antielitist aspect since it was (a) open to anybody who profoundly accepted the implications of the Word, irrespective of status, knowledge, and wealth, and (b) capable, according to Pietistic convictions, of generating individual and collective emancipation from need and misery. This is at least one of the reasons why religious revivalism, being open to participation and self-redemption, was an emancipating element, although in an ambivalent way, since it was not capable of concrete social reform alone, especially when opposing totally secular political measures.

The religious part of the Nordic popular movements, as part of a complex and diversified process of participation, had its roots, or at least found a useful example in German socially oriented Pietism and Anglo-Saxon Methodism.¹⁹ But the examples coming from England and Germany, i.e., from societies undergoing major

17. Elisabeth Christiansson, *Kyrklig och social reform. Motiveringar till diakoni 1845-1965* (Skellefteå: Artos & Norma, 2006), 45.

18. *Ibid.*, 44-50.

19. John Wesley, *La perfezione dell'amore. Sermoni*. A cura di Febe Cavazzuti Rossi; introduzione di Paolo Ricca; note introduttive ai sermoni di Richard P. Heitzenrater (Torino: Claudiana editrice, 2009).

industrialization and urbanization earlier and on a much greater scale than Denmark, could not but end up showing that mere preaching was simply not enough in metropolitan contexts where the working classes manifested an increasing indifference to preaching. The latter was especially a concern shared by the *Kristeligt Sociale Forbund* and its journal "*Maalet og Vejen*," which feared that, without addressing the social question, the Church of Denmark as a folk church would continue to repel the working class, thereby becoming a class church. It was therefore necessary to strike a balance in which proclaiming the Word, while still a priority, was not exclusive but conducive to social work and a better contact to rapport with the urban masses, then effectively competing with the socialist secular approach to social problems.²⁰

After a few more years of internal debate in 1912, a voluntary association dedicated to urban social work was established: the Church Army. The model chosen for the foundation of the Church Army, as suggested above, was reminiscent of much of the Anglo-Saxon approach: (a) Methodism as to the concept "the church must go to the people, not the people to the church"; (b) the use of emotionality (an aspect many did not relish in the traditional Church of Denmark); and (c) the Salvation Army as to the use of organization and the visibility of uniformed militancy. The main person behind the foundation of the Church Army was H. P. Mollerup; for him it was necessary to generate a more "militant experience" out of the spiritual rebirth like that typically pursued by Pietistic movements.²¹ Those approaching the Church Army because of the social activities themselves were more exposed to an experience of rebirth in faith just because concrete voluntary action (either as recipients or as volunteers) kept their relation consistent for a longer time.

The organizational development generated by these intuitions and novelties led to separation from Copenhagen's Inner Mission (1929). From 1929 the Church Army had several hundred members (of whom only 20 percent were at least partly paid up members). Its strength, among other things, came from the fact that the clergy of the national Church could serve as pastors in their parish only one Sunday per month, and the rest of the time were allowed to work for the Church Army if they were members of it. On top of this independence, the economic depression of the 1930s rendered social work more explicitly crucial than before: the basic aims of the organization (1930) were formulated as: "... out of the Danish People's Church exerting a preaching and social work," while formerly social work had mostly

20. P. Lindhart, *Vækkelser og kirkelige retninger i Danmark*, 3rd rev. ed. (Århus: Forlaget Aros, 1978), 136.

21. Lundblad, "Ny testamentets kristendom," 275.

been concealed under the evangelization of city slums. The Church Army focused now on testing the goodwill of the unemployed, according to the principle "help to self help." In collaboration with the public authorities, the Church Army provided small jobs so the unemployed could receive a (low) salary plus, when necessary, hostels, also provided by the organization.²² 350

The collaboration with public authorities became much more systematic, however, after the social reform of 1933. Under the new social legislation, the cooperation between public authorities and voluntary organizations was regulated and systematized, which caused not only positive reactions within the Church Army. This is quite noteworthy because of course, it was understood that the growing needs generated by the global depression had to be jointly met by both public and secular authorities. Again, the impact of structural realities on the purposes of the voluntary religious organizations was inevitably heavy, and this impact urged them to modify, if not their aims, at least their practices; hence, a higher degree of distinction from mere preaching and a higher degree of integrated cooperation with state authorities. On the other hand, however, a permanent Pietistic "spiritual" interpretation of the causes of poverty had by no means vanished within the organization. The members of the Church Army still thought that the main reason poverty and world crises occurred had to do with a failure to focus on Jesus. There were, in other words, several elements of continuity with the original views of Home Mission. Still, the social work of the organization prospered, especially in the field of so-called inner city mission consisting of many social and even spare-time activities of which preaching, reading the Bible, and hymn singing were very important components, as well as social work in the form of kindergartens, housing, food, and jobs in collaboration with public authorities, including the prison mission in the form of preaching and providing pastoral care for inmates in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice. The ambivalence between acceptance of more public regulation/collaboration and the tendency to safeguard Pietistic purposes, motivations, and causal explanations for poverty was resolved in favor of collaboration with the public authorities. 355
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Yet it is noteworthy that this outcome was also possible because no public takeover of welfare work took place.²³ True, Steincke's

22. Lone Klok, *Socialpolitisk Avantgarde Eller Lappeskrædder? Kirkens Korshær 1912-1919* (Århus: Aros, 1981), 21.

23. No "colonization" took place according to the categories used in Bundesen, Skov Henriksen, and Jørgensen, *Filantropi*, 15. In their conceptualization, the authors refer to other scholars representing the different and opposing options of this debate. In favor of the noncolonization view are, among others, Stein Kuhnle and Per Selle, "Government and voluntary organisations: A Relational

legislation brought about tighter regulation, and the material impact 385
of the crisis had actually facilitated a convergence between public and
private social initiatives: the social situation of the 1930s (and after
World War II) was so serious that the voluntary sector would have a
hard time if left on its own. But on the other hand, out of the six
million Danish crowns the organization had raised by 1937, five 390
million were from private donations and one million from agree-
ments with public authorities. The distinct voluntary and Pietistic
character of the Church Army was in other words not brutally "colon-
ized" by the public secular sphere because, among other reasons,
there was at that time no deliberate universal welfare plan. The 395
same applies to other important religious organizations active in
the field of voluntary social work.²⁴

Another example of noncolonized partnership is unemployment
insurance according to the Ghent model, which maintained (and 400
continues to maintain) their original feature of voluntary and trade
union-led organization. Here, too, public financial resources fueled
a spontaneous outcome of this popular movement from the nineteenth
century. Again, not in order to colonize it, but in order to support it. For
decades, a growing percentage of governmental support did not
prevent these welfare institutions from becoming a means of strength- 405
ening the unions, and thereby increasing an independent and system-
atic source of critical standpoints in society totally capable of being
used against governmental measures and policies.²⁵

Perspective," in *Government and Voluntary Organisations*, ed. Stein Kuhnle and Per Selle (Aldershot: Avebury, 1992), 1-6. The idea of reciprocal influence between state welfare institutions and voluntary organizations was advocated in Denmark by Kurt Klaudi Klausen, "Et historisk rids over den tredje sektors udvikling i Danmark," in *Frivillig organisationers velferd - alternativ til offentlig?*, ed. Per Selle and Stein Kuhnle (Bergen: Alma Mater Forlag, 1990). The opposite view, advocating a "colonization" of the voluntary organizations by public authorities and regulations, is represented by the Norwegian scholar Håkon Lorentzen in his *Frivillighetens integrasjon* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1994).

24. The organizations are the Blue Cross (Blå Kors), a temperance organization also mostly influenced by the Home Mission (Bundesen, Skov Henriksen, and Jørgensen, *Filantropi*, 143-44), and the Christian Student Settlement. Here, too, we observe an increasing partnership with public authorities but not colonization after 1933. Even after WWII the nature of the decidedly independent and religiously motivated organization of the Christian Student Settlement appears resilient in terms of membership and private cofunding (Bundesen, Skov Henriksen, and Jørgensen, *Filantropi*, 232-49). This partnership is not to be found in other and different organizations characterized by an absent or a much fainter religious nature: here we can talk about a state "takeover" after the social reform of 1933 (Bundesen, Skov Henriksen, and Jørgensen, *Filantropi*, 55, 192-93, 415-18).

25. Per H. Jensen, "Grundlæggelse af det danske arbejdsløshedsforsikringsystem i komparativ belysning," in *Arbejdsløshedsforsikringsloven 1907-2007*,

What we observe in the case of the religious voluntary organizations mentioned above is, at any rate, an interacted and negotiated changing hegemony and not mere governmental colonization of voluntary social work. This solution permits the survival of the tension between voluntary welfare activities and the Pietistic faith in the supremacy of the Word and of spiritual rebirth as a solution to all need and misery. At the same time, this surviving tension is elaborated without producing too deep rifts, nor too serious opposition to an increasing public role. But how could such elaboration take place? Supposedly, as far as I can see, in three ways:

- (1) As already mentioned above, one could discover that voluntary social activities could be an additional opportunity leading the volunteers or the recipients of voluntary action to experience new and profound faith;
- (2) A reconceptualization of religious motivation: instead of conceiving of "the Word" as the direct panacea for misery and poverty through spiritual regeneration, "the Word" could become a means of recruitment for voluntary associations and an incentive for daily social work;
- (3) The religious background and its values need not be limited to the subjective experiences mentioned above. They could also fuel social critical standpoints. A voluntary religious and socially active association can in other words also use its basic values and its daily chances to observe the flaws in contemporary society and then become part of the public social debate.

From the empirical research we can see that the factual evolution has been very like the one described in 3 above. According to Danish scholars Bundesen, Skov Henriksen, and Jørgensen, for example, during the mid-twentieth century, the Church Army developed what they call "critical platforms," i.e., elaborated their peculiar religious approach as a pattern for social critique. Instead of the purposes of the 1930s when they were concentrating on Jesus, they generated an approach in which religion allowed the organization to play a new role: "The Church Army increasingly became a socially critical organization . . . their argument became more secular. It was the modern society with its chain gang production that caused all misery in terms of lack of housing, family problems, and segregation."²⁶ As to the Christian Student Settlement, again a similar

Udvikling og perspektiver, ed. Jesper Hartvig Pedersen and Aage Huulgaard (Copenhagen: København, 2007), 41.

26. Bundesen, Skov Henriksen, and Jørgensen, *Filantropi*, 442-47.

evolutionary mechanism can be empirically observed. The same applies to the Blue Cross (*Blå Kors*) temperance movement, an example we will use below.

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Lutheran Basic Categories in Religion and the Institutional Public Sphere

The basic theological dimensions of the complex problems within the welfare partnership strategy may help us to understand the ways in which public and private responsibilities were accepted in Denmark. On the one side we find positions that, as indicated by Karin Lützen,²⁷ remain ambivalent as to the increasing effects of urban modernity, and of welfare modernity in particular. One point of their critique is the fact that the welfare state, especially after WWII, limited the influence or at least the quantitative importance of religious voluntary social work. As Aud V. Tønnessen²⁸ puts it, this has to do with whether one should conceive of the Church as a mainly preaching body, shaping conscience, or as mainly based on personal religious "activist" commitment. More precisely, according to the more Pietistic, or puritan, tendency, the preaching Church should not only aim to shape conscience, it should also aim to motivate pious "militant" minorities committed to religious voluntary work, which then must absolutely remain central since this is the best way to render God manifest in the world.

On the other side, we have a merely, or mainly, preaching (state) Church, shaping hearts so that, as Martin Luther put it, "A good tree produces good fruits."²⁹ Now, "good fruits" does not necessarily imply voluntary commitment. The ethical fruits generated by preaching may equally well be more silent, and/or, for example, be exerted through a loyal attitude toward the fiscal implications of citizenship at the base of the modern welfare state. The difference between, on the one hand, visible and committedly voluntary value of the Word and, on the other, the diffuse value of the Word is the very heart of the matter. As noted the problem is that structural transformations and expanding state policies challenged voluntary work repeatedly so that from the religious point of view an element of "theological elasticity" is needed to be coherent, innovative, and adaptive at the

27. Karin Lützen, *Byen tæmmes. Kernefamilie, sociale reformer og velgørenhed i 1800-tallets København* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1998).

28. Aud V. Tønnessen, "Velferdsstat og kirkelig diakoni i Norge etter 1945. Kritikk og fornyelse," in *Velferdsstat og kirke*, ed. Jens Holger Schjørring and Jens Torkild Bak (Copenhagen: Forum for Europæisk Kirkekundskab, 2005).

29. Luther Works, LW31: 361. *Luther's Works*, American ed., ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955-1986).

same time. The thought of N. H. Søe is, in my opinion, fruitful in order to detect this element.

According to "Lutheran orthodoxy," basically, preaching within the terms of the Lutheran state Church was the very core of the process of "*contritio peccati*," i.e., the focusing of the believers on their own individual impossibility to merit salvation.³⁰ Only through this dual process of preaching and through the related experience of impossible merit could they prepare for "*gratis*," godly grace, as the only possibility of salvation. This, to be sure, was the opposite of passively awaiting this grace since one's unworthiness could actually be experienced and thereby become a precondition for godly grace *if an ethical effort was persistently pursued*. At the same time, this did not entail a tangible, emotional "rebirth" in the Pietistic and "activist" sense of the word.

Besides, the core of this concept is that all moral spheres of existence could be used in this sense: one need not be an active *diakon* or voluntary social worker to experience *contritio peccati*. Provided the Church preached and effectively represented the values of the holy scriptures, all spheres of public life and society could function as a possible environment for this Christian and existential experience. What is even more important, this more fundamentally Lutheran vision offered a different ethical approach to the social question than the one stating that secular and political problems—both at the individual and at the social level—needed, as we have seen the Swedish Home Mission stating,³¹ real internal Christian change to be solved. In fact, this other and more orthodox approaches claimed that no possible knowledge of Christian improvement could be verified so that it could generate positive social change.

30. Here I follow the suggestion of Jens Glebe Møller, "Melanchtons naturretslære og føderalteologiens gerningspagt," *Dansk Historisk Tidsskrift*, 1961–1962, in examining the authoritative heritage of Philipp Melancton (alias P. Schwarzerd) in his work *Loci praecipui theologici*, 1559) as to the Lutheran idea of "law." For Melancton, largely as recommended by Luther himself, law has three uses: (1) *usus civilis vel politicus*, preventing or reducing sinful behavior by legal and secular means; (2) the proper theological and evangelical use of the law (*proprium et praecipuum/usus theologicus*): here the aim of the law is a manifest accusation of our incapacity to be virtuous, and therefore our need for the grace of God. We are not accused by the law in order to be lost, but in order to be saved (*accusari nos, non ut pereamus, sed ut misericordiam quaeramus*) (p. 406). This is where we also experience *contritio peccati*, e.g., the necessity of continuously endeavoring to live a righteous life in evangelical terms, only to find that we can never do so satisfactorily. This endeavor implies an inner ethical urge to live according to evangelical law since only by endlessly trying our best can we experience the insuperable limits of our own bodies and at the same time the need for external grace to be saved. Indifferent quietism, i.e., the passive hope of salvation by unmerited grace, is thus far from this *contritio peccati*.

31. Christiansson, *Kyrklig och social reform*.

Theologian Søe³² uses orthodox Lutheranism to describe this important side of the human condition pointing out “the orthodox Lutheran doctrine of *hemisphaerium inferius*, in which the natural human being can somehow bring about the ethical good, and *hemisphaerium superius*, which is totally beyond the reach of human strength” According to him, it is vain to expect any certain knowledge and evidence of spiritual Christian improvement in the hemisphaerium inferius since “everything in the hemisphaerium inferius is characterized by exteriority, superficial righteousness.” Only in the hemisphaerium superius, i.e., the place where the grace of God has seized human beings, there can be any “correspondence with the will of God.”³³ Practically, there is no possible evidence that even apparently very ethical behaviors in the secular sphere can achieve God’s approval, or an improvement in this direction. In a way, in hemisphaerium inferius the ethical behavior of heathens and atheists can be just as good as that of baptized Christians; however, only the latter can rely on the grace given in the hemisphaerium superius.

However, the ethical advantage of Christians comes about in another way since they are aware that God created the universe and therefore also human society. This entails that Christians are more likely to be coherent as to the fact that they believe in God as the Creator. Now, this means that there is not just an ethical behavior related to the “second use of the law,” thus to *contritio peccati* and grace, but also an ethical behavior related to the belief in creation. God has not just a will as “savior” (albeit individual believers never have irrefutable evidence of this), but also a will as “creator,” aimed at good earthly harmony, or at least a decent maintenance of the beings and society created.

Sometimes, Søe admits, God uses pain as an experience of faith and as proof of human frailty or need of unmerited grace. But this does not entail that human beings may inflict this pain either on themselves or on other created creatures. God as Creator wishes the well-being of all human beings. For that sake we must find the most apt means “. . . as when we serving our next must build a house, and in order to serve properly must study what has to do with architecture. It is a Christian duty, but of course it does not mean that our knowledge of the will of God can proceed from such studies.”³⁴

From an ethical point of view, it is possible to state that, in this modern version of Nordic Protestant orthodoxy, the notions of secular effectiveness and Christian ethics appear mutually compatible, and therefore:

32. Nils Hansen Søe, “Det kristne syn paa ordningerne,” *Teologisk Tidsskrift for det danske folkekirke*, Sjette Bind (1935); 241-73.

33. *Ibid.*, 258.

34. *Ibid.*, 273.

- (1) Fiscal loyalty for the social purposes of the state, unlike voluntary social work, implies solidarity to "the unknown brethren," i.e., it could be seen as an act of solidarity as good as personal commitment *just because* it involves personal ethics, although not personal experience. Moreover, the fact that virtue, even civic virtue, must be enforced by the state, is perfectly compatible with a state of "precarious righteousness." Lutheran ethics is so constantly pointing at: yes, we can be good citizens and believers if taxpaying to welfare is enforced, but would we help if it were up to us to choose? 555
- (2) The fact that this fiscal loyalty and solidarity are politically enforced render them less "heroic" but, since the results are a form of diffuse and massive social solidarity which no *diakoni* or philanthropy alone would ever achieve, it is consistent with the preaching and ethical role of the Church. Fiscal loyalty proves to be very effective, as we have seen in what Søe refers to as "maintaining the created society in good humane conditions."³⁵ 560
- (3) Thirdly, "care for the created world" can also mean that Christian personal commitment, i.e., voluntary Christian organizations, can use their work not just as a means for or proof of tangible conversion (urban Home Mission) or as a means of paving the way for "the advent of Christ" (*Kristelig Sociale*), but also as a source of social critique of what welfare policies have (and have not) achieved. 570 575

As Løgstrup put it, this had to do with the fact that human experience was that of being "intertwined" with other fellow humans. This meant that one then necessarily had to cope with this fact and therefore take care of the aspects of other people's lives to which we are exposed.³⁶ Now, voluntary social work is surely a remarkable way of showing an awareness concerning existential intertwining, but fiscally funded welfare state and fiscal loyalty was another way to connect with one's fellow human beings. Actually the ethics of universal intertwinement was in a way even more logically implemented through taxation and public redistribution of funds. 580 585

Søe's idea of "basic" Protestantism shows a modern welfare state to be a consistent sort of Lutheran moral category. This category seems able to function as the "bedrock" to which different interpretations of Nordic Protestantism could resort when trying to find a new, adaptive coherence for their religious motivation in the context of increasingly public expanding welfare hegemony due to new structural needs. 590

35. *Ibid.*, 262.

36. Petersen and Holm Petersen, "Naestekaerlighed og velfaerdsstat," 120-22.

Lutheranism can in this sense be defined as a “depository” providing elasticity to the plastic process of welfare hegemony. Elasticity, meaning coherence without rigidity, is historically of course more unproblematic than ideological, theological, and eventually institutional and sociopolitical rigidity. This is also the case when elasticity is fundamentally also compatible with the inclusion of “militant” minorities, for example Pietistic movements, even though it remains clear which are the more central and which are the more peripheral interpretations of religious and welfare hegemony in a given context. 595 600

As to qualitatively and quantitatively differentiated inclusion, the main point is likely the following: for any religiously motivated voluntary work there is an option to remain “religious” and at the same time adapt to the new structural and sociopolitical push of welfare state construction. Therefore the religious sentiment as a diffuse phenomenon was mostly not viewed as being contradictory to the expansion of the welfare state, both in general and within the specific field of the growing role of the state in partnership with voluntary associations. Importantly, this was not only true in the interwar period; it was also even more true in the latter phases of welfare state expansion after WWII. The next paragraph provides some examples. 605 610

Structural Change and Adaptive Religious Voluntary Views

The complex interaction between socioeconomic change, welfare hegemony, and religious motivation continued and even accelerated in the decades after WWII. When Mollerup succeeded in founding and later consolidating the Church Army as an autonomous and social work-centered organization stemming from the Home Mission, he nonetheless retained some of the basic Pietistic views. For instance, the theology of rebirth, interpreted in the context of social work, became that of reconstruction (*genrejsning*), for example, providing small jobs in so-called job centers (*arbejdscentrale*) influenced by a morally elevating context to stimulate the needy to seek their own improvement.³⁷ This, albeit in a more socially concrete form, nonetheless resembled the Pietistic theology of rebirth, a point from which the Church Army moved further away after WWII. This happened by virtue of Harald Hald’s so-called crusade theology (*korshærsteologi*). This theology implied closer linkages to the mainstream Church of Denmark, while the links to the Home Mission’s Pietistic rebirth theology grew more loose. From a practical point of view, this meant that social work was increasingly focused on housing, the growing 615 620 625 630

37. Bundesen, Skov Henriksen, and Jørgensen, *Filantropi*, 99-105.

problems of family life due to the anxieties of a posttraditional, metropolitan society, and the care for the social outcasts, the latter expressed by the motto “the Church on the furthest outskirts of society.”³⁸ 635
 This derived from a critique of consumerist materialism, which again was seen as a cause of manifold distress. This approach allowed a view in which social critique, theology, and social work converged, and became more inclined to provide care as an end in itself than to achieve moral individual “reconstruction” and its various implications. 640

Care came therefore long before the call for spiritual rebirth, which could, when excessively emphasized in social work, even make marginalized people feel judged, so they eventually turned away from the activities of the Church Army. As Hald wrote: “Whores tremble 645 while thinking of the glances their more honorable sisters cast at them, and keep far away, . . . if this happens what you achieve is just a bourgeois Church, whose only natural attitude is indifference.”³⁹
 To revert to one of the main points of this article, one could in other words be both the subject and/or the object of Christian solidarity 650 even if no spectacular signs of rebirth were given (i.e., signs measurable according to a strict moral standard). For example, an alcoholic needing care and attention could at the same time be a good believer, convinced that exactly his or her existence showed the necessity of practicing *contritio peccati*, i.e., the experience of the limits of one’s 655 virtues without the undeserved grace of God. The concept of religious volunteers in social work became therefore more “roomy,” more open to all sorts of experiences and needs. The element of “elected few” (which in sociology of religion theoretical terms could be called the *spirit of sect*),⁴⁰ initially motivating the Church Army as a product of 660 the Home Mission’s Pietistic roots, was now more relegated to the background. Rather, a more fundamental Lutheran Nordic theological and ecclesiological view is preferable. The fact that soon after

38. Klok, *Socialpolitisk Avantgarde*, 26-37.

39. Bundesen, Skov Henriksen, and Jørgensen, *Filantropi*, 104.

40. Maria Luisa Maniscalco, *Spirito di setta e società* (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 1992), esp. 43-49. “Spirit of sect” should not necessarily be interpreted as mere “fanaticism” but simply as the idea that some groups perceive themselves as closer to the place where the “spirit” manifests itself. The aim of practicing or showing this manifestation in terms of (or as the result of) social work is a big part of both *Ger-ningsmissionens* and, in a very different way, of the *Kristelig Sociale*. The “church” is instead the institution believing and practicing the idea that the spirit remains “remote” from the Word. This is closer to Søe’s idea of “emispherius superius” described above and implies that the “preaching church” cannot by itself achieve the manifestation of the spirit, although it can be a mediating institution in this respect; see also Bo Stråth, “I fondamenti normativi del welfare scandinavo,” in *Welfare scandinavo, welfare italiano*, ed. Paolo Borioni (Roma: Carocci, 2005).

WWII the Church Army stopped using uniforms also seems to confirm that the organization no longer felt a necessity to stress their militant "electedness," i.e., some sort of God's cutting edge able to penetrate the world and its deformities.⁴¹ 665

The example of the Blue Cross, which was specifically committed to alcohol problems, widens the description of the transformation of voluntary religious work. After the step represented by systematized public-private partnership consequent to the reform of 1933, several innovations influenced this voluntary association. After the (incidentally Danish) discovery of antabus in 1948, this particular field of social work underwent an increasing process of medicalization. As Bundesen, Skov Henriksen, and Jørgensen suggest, if previously the main environment of the Blue Cross had been the Temperance Movement, the National Church, and the Home Mission (albeit in a position of organizational independence), later medical doctors and the public health organization formed the environment. Yet the special voluntary and religious features of the organization remained consistent, and even after the hospital reform in 1960, its "anti-addiction houses" were financed by public authorities just like similarly conceived departments in public hospitals. Moreover, medical procedures for the cure of the addicted were significantly and similarly standardized and professionalized in both voluntary/private sector and public branches. The difference between the two institutions was therefore more motivational and organizational than functional, and it was recognized and appreciated as such. The Christian element in these institutions⁴² persisted, despite the increasingly regulated partnership, in an at least twofold sense, although some changes did, of course, come about. 670 675 680 685 690

First, the voluntary element was retained by the free associational nature of the Blue Cross. In the 1970s there were still some five thousand members and over 120 local sections. These were active, for example, in raising money for opening new antiaddiction centers. In the mid-1970s, 300,000 Danish crowns were collected to found and fund a new center in Egåhus. Fund-raising also took place (and continues to take place) through so-called secondhand shops, collecting resources and at the same time capable of functioning as contact places.⁴³ 695 700

41. The concept of "Soldiers of God" and its Calvinistic roots is fruitfully mentioned in Josef Lorz and Erwin Iserloh, *Storia della Riforma, History of Reformation* (Bologna: Mulino, 1974; original *Kleine Reformations-geschichte*, 1969).

42. Especially "afvænningshjem" directly providing therapy against addiction, but also "nathospitaller" where one could work and live normally in the daytime but then sleep and be treated at night, or "plejehjem," where, after successful treatment, one could live together with other former alcoholics.

43. Bundesen, Skov Henriksen, and Jørgensen, *Filantropi*, 155-58.

Second, along with other sorts of therapy (work, antabus, psychotherapy, etc.), a more specific and less measurable form of therapy was provided at the Blue Cross centers: “environmental therapy,” still in use, is the most interesting example. It implied that not direct preaching and more or less “forceful” conversion, but simply the availability of an atmosphere imbued with religious convictions and attitudes, could become a matter of meditation and an example for people experiencing difficulties with themselves.⁴⁴ 705

The religious identity of associations like those examined here, in my opinion, thanks to the more ample theological tools provided by more mainstream Lutheranism, have been reconceptualized. This reconceptualization has produced instruments like Hald’s crusade theology, environmental therapy, critique of social conditions and of their causes, plus various other instruments able to render these associations and their identity adaptive rather than reactive and nostalgic. 710 715

Concluding Remarks

What has been repeatedly called the “structural” push towards a more active state in this article also includes a complex interplay between the economic model, social actors, and welfare institutions. Several reasons, including the Ghent Model (the insurances of the unions) are in my view central—for example, the labor movement was strong enough to bargain in a situation of “parity” with their counterpart, more easily achieving high salaries.⁴⁵ 720

To be sure, another extremely important factor of welfare hegemony construction was linked to the geostrategic context in which Denmark (like but even more so than the other Nordic countries) was trapped. The decidedly meager military resources Denmark could count on in the Baltic area could hardly suggest protectionist and/or colonialist strategies. This, then, was financially compatible with a relatively early increase in the funding of the welfare system. Yet, as Bo Lidegaard has shown, there is even more to it than this. Welfare hegemony was also constructed as a “means of national survival”: “The basic idea was that the internal construction of the state had to be so strong, and every citizen’s relation to the nation so 730 735

44. Ibid., 152-56.

45. Pauli Kettunen, “The Power of International Comparison,” in *The Nordic Model of Welfare: A Historical Reappraisal*, ed. Niels Finn Christiansen, Klaus Petersen, Nils Edling, and Per Haave (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2006), 59-60.

definite, that even foreign military occupation or nationalistic German propaganda would be unable to expunge it."⁴⁶

Within all this structural change, the majoritarian and more institutional Lutheran underlay has functioned as a depository of theological elasticity, thus facilitating the transformation of the role of religious motivation in the welfare state. Moreover, this fundamental Lutheran depository, with its basic theological and ethical categories, was probably also some sort of authoritative bedrock that the different interpretations and embodiments of religious social attitudes could rely on, while undergoing a transformation and differentiation of their position in the changing welfare hegemony from prevailing voluntary work to prevailing taxation.

As to the latter, this article has explored views that certainly had a more comprehensive influence on the Danish Church as a "roomy" institution. This is very important because it accounts for a more silent but more massive Lutheran underlay, not only allowing the permanence of different religious interpretations (like those analyzed above) in the Church of Denmark, but also functioning as a bedrock for the Nordic religious mentality as a whole. There is, in other words, a Lutheran definition of the relation between the individual and public institutions in general, which somehow remains relevant for the bulk of the Nordic population and which widens the concept of possible Christian ethical behavior while welfare state hegemony is enhanced, and the regulating and financing role of the state increases.

In my view it is justifiable, in the eyes of the vast majority of Nordic people, that Christian ethics is to be found in the increasingly "secular" welfare state even though it becomes increasingly clear that neither the rebirth of preaching attempted by the Home Mission's organizations, nor the total evangelical regeneration through social means advocated by the *Kristelig Sociale* are the purpose and even less the possible outcome of welfare state reform. My interpretation explains two things: (1) why the majority of the people ultimately came to think that there is not only a disciplinary, but also an ethical element in fiscally contributing to welfare state provisions (while high taxes are for whatever ethical purpose unthinkable, for example in US Protestantism), i.e., without direct personal, voluntary commitment; and (2) why voluntary organizations keep finding new ways of conceiving and practicing voluntary, personal, Christian

46. Bo Lidegaard, "Velfærdsstaten som en dansk overlevelsstrategi," in *13 Historier om den danske velfærdsstat*, ed. Klaus Petersen (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2003), 151. On the Swedish part of the debate, see Paolo Borioni, *Svezia* (Milano: Unicopli, 2005).

commitment while the role of the public authorities keeps growing and to some extent can seem to reduce the space occupied by other actors. 775

Lutheran theological categories and the resulting ethical underpinnings, in other words, helps us to explain why, under the impact of material, structural realities, welfare hegemony meets more an element of adaptation than an element of rigidity in religiously motivated voluntary organizations. In fact, as we have pointed out several times and from several perspectives, a possible problem of ambivalence regarding modernity (and welfare modernity in particular) persists in voluntary religious organizations. Social Democratic decision-makers solved the paradox in the reform of 1933 through a pragmatic approach (increased public role, *but* through partnership). The Lutheran underlay, I think, also helped to solve the paradox with more elasticity than rigidity in the years that followed. 780 785