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Forced Labour, Workhouse-Prisons And The Early Modern State: A Case Study

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Studies of the origins of institutionalised poor relief and state work schemes before 1650 have been hampered not only by a lack of detailed evidence, but also by a degree of inconsistency in nomenclature at the time caused by changing and overlapping practical functions. Poor relief and institutional assistance, public works projects, the disciplining of beggars and idlers, and the punishment of genuine delinquents, can tell us a great deal about overall social priorities and prejudices in the early modern period - provided we can determine the precise historical context and usage of each. The purpose of this paper is to apply some of the findings of recent comparative European work to specific evidence regarding forced labour schemes and workhouses in Denmark, in the hope of encouraging further discussion of the issues raised.

We know that the first institutional houses of correction in Europe were created in England after the middle of the 16th century, starting with the London Bridewell of 1555. Others followed in various provincial English cities over the next decades, and the idea spread to the continent with foundations in Amsterdam in 1596, then other Dutch cities, Copenhagen in 1605, and some north German cities from 1608. In France, a brief experiment along similar lines in Paris in 1612 was taken up more durably in Lyon in 1614. Its new Hospital, despite its name, from the start set a clear precedent for the internment and punishment of beggars. The general hospitals that were sanctioned by the French government in legislation from 1656/1662 onwards were likewise regarded by most contemporaries as penal rather than charitable institutions.

The original purpose of the house of correction was to remove beggars, idlers and vagrants from especially the urban scene. It is not surprising that early local experiments in England, and in particular the summative legislation at the end of Elizabeth's reign, coincided with periods of severe economic instability. Similarly, in the 1690s, when much of Europe suffered some of the worst harvest failures and hardship for years, there was a wave of new incorporated bridewells in England (Bristol 1696, followed by a dozen others until 1712), whilst in Denmark there was a flurry of new legislation and commissions of enquiry from 1697 right through to the substantive legislation of 1708. We should not, however, reduce reform initiatives simply to knee-jerk reactions to particular crises: the value of charity, the preservation or consolidation of social stability, the effective harnessing of available human resources, and the fear of epidemic disease all remained policy-issues of prime significance. Throughout the eighteenth century, when surviving historical evidence is more substantial, we can readily discern a complex interrelationship between the ideas of moralists and social observers, the practical needs of local authorities, the often belated and futile efforts of legislators, as well as the emergent precision of economic theoreticians, in producing a wide range of responses to contemporary problems of work and destitution - from Mandeville's provocative *Fable of the Bees* (1714/23) or the published debates of the Patriotic Society in Hamburg in 1725, to the general interest in bigger public works projects in France and elsewhere from the 1760s onwards.

That said, it would be misleading to suggest a general consistency of purpose in the regulation of the poor across Europe. At least by the eighteenth century, institutions clearly covered a wide variety of purposes. At one extreme were the estimated 1970 open workhouses in England - helping perhaps as many as 90,000 individuals find work on an increasingly voluntary basis - and the voluntary "ateliers de charite" in France which carried little social stigma and were designed essentially as an aid to honest survival. At the other were the rather less numerous and much more grim houses of correction, "depots de mendicite" and "Zuchthausen" designed to force able-bodied idlers to work and, increasingly, to discipline troublemakers. Everyone eventually came to recognise the need for organised labour schemes to reduce idleness; but not everyone agreed on the level of compulsion that could or should be built into the system, let alone the financial basis on which it should be operated. Despite persistent indications to the contrary, many organisers, often flying in the face of economic logic, still clung to the old hope that some kind of workhouse might become, if not financially self-supporting, then at least as minimal a public burden as possible [1].

In 1991, P. Spierenburg published an innovative comparative study of workhouses and forced labour schemes in early modern Europe, with particular emphasis on Dutch and north German evidence. One of the particular strengths of this work was the attempt to remove the confusion in nomenclature which has bedevilled historians. Spierenburg suggested that we need to distinguish between a range of institutions: (i) jails (in existence since time immemorial, and designed primarily for the temporary detention of debtors, political opponents, and others who were not put to work); (ii) poorhouses, almshouses and hospitals intended primarily for those incapable of looking after themselves (nominally within a charitable framework, but rarely effectively separating women and children from other categories; yet occasionally maintaining some recognisable medical justification, ranging from the isolation of victims of leprosy or the Plague to the more recognisably modern clinical functions of the infirmaries of later 18th-century Edinburgh and Vienna); (iii) workhouse-prisons (houses of correction, where beggars, vagrants and delinquents would be forced to work by way of punishment and discipline); and (iv) "voluntary" public works projects (like the French 18th-century "ateliers de charite", designed to alleviate unemployment in non-punitive ways during periods of economic difficulty). There was, of course, significant and at times deliberate overlap and between these different categories - clearly observed in the hard-pressed French general hospitals already mentioned. Equally, some institutions evolved towards clearer differentiation: Gilbert's Act of 1782, for example, encouraged existing trends towards the devolution of work schemes into the local economy. The enlightenment also brought changes in thinking about unemployment and correction: a gradual recognition that idleness was not necessarily wilful, and that self-discipline might be fostered more effectively under a liberal regime than under degrading and humiliating discipline. Such ideas were not adopted universally or immediately. But even if many institutions continued to serve several functions in tandem, and sometimes to confuse them, Spierenburg's categorisation should help focus attention on the historical reality and context of forced labour and correction in early modern Europe [2].

However, it is essential to put these institutions in a broader context, in at least two ways. On the one hand, the house of correction was the moderate end of a system of punishment intended to control a wide range of "anti-social" behaviour, ranging from minor immorality to full-scale capital crime - with a variable area in between where the boundaries were regularly redefined. As we shall see, those admitted to the house of correction had rarely had any kind of legal hearing, but were committed usually at the request of local officials or reputable individuals. For harder criminals, the major colonial powers increasingly turned to deportation or (where appropriate) hard labour in the galleys. This option, however, was not used on a significant scale by the Danish monarchy: criminals were dealt with domestically, and the house of correction was (as we shall see) paired with a much harsher punitive labour scheme for serious offenders.

No less important, compulsory labour in the early modern period was not merely an instrument of punishment. In most parts of Europe, and especially in rural society, forced labour of some kind was a normal burden borne by everyone. It could take many forms. Military conscription, naval impressment and

the hiring out of conscripted troops as mercenaries to another state were common practice. It was but a short step from militia service to compulsory labour on fortifications and military transport duty, or to the *corvée* (conscript labour) used to build royal roads all over Europe. In many parts of rural Europe, peasants also provided compulsory transport and hospitality services for the crown, its administrators and its military - demands which were variable, unpredictable, and sometimes arbitrarily iniquitous. Only urban communities had any scope for buying their way out of such mandatory service (and even they might not avoid military garrisoning). In Denmark, not even the comprehensive reforms of the late 1780s and 1790s ended these forms of compulsory service: whilst demands in Denmark were hardly on a scale comparable to the forced labour extracted by, say, Peter I for St. Petersburg, they represented a continued object of resentment and hardship for the ordinary rural population.

Poor Laws And Institutionalisation In Copenhagen

Like most European states, Denmark had a long tradition of legislation regarding begging and vagrancy - which no doubt had as little practical impact there as in the rest of Europe. Beggars were in 1587 enjoined to carry a distinctive mark on their clothing. Municipal laws, such as that for Copenhagen in 1663 and the major law of 1683, tried to regulate the collection and distribution of voluntary donations in order to clamp down on the public nuisance of street begging and vagrancy. Orders insisting that beggars who were visibly disfigured be taken to the Plague House suggest that much of the legislation (at least before the rudiments of community health became accepted) was more concerned with appearances than with the reality of helping the unfortunate. However, the recurrent promulgation of orders against anyone obstructing the arrest of vagrants or aiding their escape from institutions - let alone attacking the poorhouse officials and "beggar kings" themselves - points clearly to the kind of resistance to internment so familiar also from the history of the French poor laws during the reign of Louis XIV.

As elsewhere in Europe, the notion of using the labour-potential of able-bodied beggars and vagrants became a prominent part of government policy early on. A house of correction of sorts was founded in Copenhagen in 1605: apparently it was reasonably large, for an instruction of 1621 ordered the apprehension of 50 individuals who had been temporarily released from the institution during the Plague of 1619 and had failed to return on its re-opening in 1621 [3]. The following year this house of correction was also allocated the function of looking after minors below the age of 16 - children who, under ostensibly separate administration, were to be trained and disciplined away from begging into useful manual occupations. In 1662, after the chaos of the mid-17th century, the composite house of correction was revived, although efforts were made to ensure a separate orphanage. By the end of the century there appear to have been three recognisably distinct institutions in Copenhagen dealing with the poor: the Conventshus (Silkehus) which admitted Copenhageners who were homeless, handicapped or otherwise "worthy" recipients of temporary institutional relief; the hospital (Wartou) for the old and crippled who could no longer look after themselves; and a composite house of correction (with the Spindehus and Rasphus for women and men respectively) which doubled as a "plague house" for the physically disfigured and, alarmingly, still seems to have adjoined the institution for children [4].

In the course of the 18th century, the Copenhagen system appears to have continued to evolve towards the proper separation of distinctive categories of detainees, but exactly what this meant in practice is uncertain. The detailed working-papers of the reform commission of 1707-08 indicate that it was still the intention of the authorities to have separate provision for children under 16, and to lay down a clear system of care and training for them designed to ensure that they would become economically independent and productive too. At the same time, efforts were made to extend the whole poor-relief system nation-wide, beyond the scope of the provincial hospitals that existed. Back in 1683 an ordinance on begging had enjoined local authorities to set up local work schemes (on woollen cloth, leather, and hemp) in order to absorb the unemployed. Where such schemes were not available, vagrants were now to be sent to the Copenhagen house of correction for training and/or disciplining for as long as necessary.

To rely on the stated intentions of legislators is clearly not sufficient in itself, but the records for individual institutions in Copenhagen from before 1790 are very inadequate. How the mandatory labour of this composite system actually worked in practice, and what impression (if any) it made on begging and vagrancy, is therefore difficult to establish. Already in 1670, the Copenhagen house of correction had been given a priority right to supply the militia and the navy with cloth and finished "uniforms". It seems this policy was designed to provide a guaranteed market for the low-quality products made there, in the hope of ensuring financial viability. By 1702 some central government officials clearly hoped that workhouse schemes could solve the overall problem of underfunding in the whole poor relief system of Copenhagen. Yet a commission of that year, instructed to examine the relief system with particular regard to the lightly disabled and able-bodied unemployed, found that several institutions were very short of funds. They noted that the house of correction was so underfunded that its mandatory labour scheme was hampered. The commission therefore turned to various funding alternatives, including special taxes and a compulsory poor rate. Such radical fiscal and financial innovations, however, proved too much for the government.

It is not possible to reconstruct the actual budget of any part of this relief system (except perhaps some of the out-relief funded from public charity). All the indications are, however, that the financial problems identified by the commissioners in the Copenhagen house of correction were systemic and chronic. An entrepreneur of Flemish descent, Anthonius de Pauw, had in 1699 been given a 10-year lease of part of the building in order to set up a cloth manufactory using the labour of the inmates. It appears that he had originally offered to employ up to 1000 individuals: at one stage he actually employed at least 240 of them. However, in so far as his profits could cover only two-thirds of the cost of upkeep for each inmate (2 mark rather than 3 mark per person per week), he soon fell foul of the overseers [5]. The outcome of this particular dispute is unknown, the records of the resulting lawsuit between the overseers and de Pauw having been destroyed. But, judging from the protracted deliberations of another high-profile poor-law commission of 1707-08, the whole system of relief, poor rates, provision for children, and compulsory labour was thoroughly unsatisfactory.

As previously, the explicit intent of the legislation which emerged from this commission in 1708 was to provide consistent national guidelines for relief, to strengthen the mechanisms for social discipline, and (as stated rather optimistically) to "abolish begging". But the new poor-laws, although much more detailed than earlier legislation, probably had no greater impact. In 1709 Denmark became involved in the Great Northern War against Sweden, and in 1711 Copenhagen was struck by a severe Plague epidemic which led to the suspension of all services. However, the Copenhagen house of correction was revived after the war, and in 1719 its contract to supply the army with cloth was renewed. It seems that in the 1730s and 40s, perhaps in connection with the establishment of provincial houses of correction (to which we shall return), the Copenhagen house of correction could re-organise its institutional provision for male and female vagrants. But in 1778, when institutional provision in the capital was again taken up for detailed consideration by a reform commission, little seemed to have changed: the commissioners considered getting at least some of the 519 recorded inmates of the city's main Hospital to work, in the hope of adding to the unsatisfactory productive output of the 313 regular inmates in the house of correction - which still had 11 infants on its register. The house of correction not only lacked yarn and other raw materials, but also suffered the usual and persistent financial shortfalls so familiar from similar institutions all over Europe.

Yet another commission was established in 1787 to re-examine begging in Copenhagen and in the provinces. Like that of 1707-08, it was aware of the need to provide support for those experiencing temporary hardship, in particular the unemployed who risked long-term destitution and begging. Now, however, the ineffectiveness of the house of correction was openly recognised, and the option of outdoor relief through voluntary labour schemes was pressed as a better alternative. The commission also examined the needs of the sick, the handicapped and institutionalised children separately, backing up its conclusions by means of an impressive array of statistics and local reports. Using the results of the comprehensive national census of 1787, the commissioners, with a precision and concern for empirical detail typical of late eighteenth-century administrators, concluded that extreme poverty afflicted 6.25% of the urban population and 4.56% of the rural population [6]. As a result of this commission's recommendations, another series of reforms were implemented in

Copenhagen over the next few years, and nationwide by 1802-03. Much of this legislation was no more than another attempt to implement existing policies, but it seems that a serious effort was at last made to separate children from other types of institutional inmates, and to segregate into a separate House of Improvement (Forbedringshuset paa Christianshave) those first- or second-time offenders who might realistically benefit from fixed-term corrective detention.

Houses Of Correction In Provincial Denmark

As in the rest of Europe, therefore, central government thinking on relief, unemployment and corrective labour did begin to change during the enlightenment period. What effect such changes of perception may have had on the daily realities of life, however, are not readily detected in those institutional records that are substantial enough to allow detailed analysis. The Copenhagen house of correction is not well-represented in extant archival material, and was in any case, as we have seen, part of a larger and sometimes confused system. We are more likely, therefore, to find reasonably representative material when we look at provincial institutions.

No permanent workhouses or houses of correction appeared to have been in operation in provincial Denmark until well into the eighteenth century. The first was on Moen in 1739, followed by the towns of Stege in 1742, Viborg in 1743, Odense in 1752, and elsewhere. Since the state maintained alternative provision for the worst categories of offenders (to which we shall return), the provincial institutions were not meant to house branded criminals. They could serve as a temporary (voluntary) refuge for hardship victims and unemployed. But their primary function was to concentrate on the usual range of "scroungers", persistent undisciplined beggars, vagrants and idlers: individuals presumed amenable to betterment and discipline. The Odense foundation document states categorically that its purpose was

"to frighten all those who enjoy vagrancy and dissolute behaviour, and repel them from a province where they risk losing their liberty, and where the authorities will endeavour with all the means at their disposal to force them to do that which they most of all dislike, namely to earn their own bread and subsistence by means of honest work..." [7]

As for Copenhagen, it is doubtful that any of the 18th-century provincial houses of correction came even within sight of being economically self-sufficient, especially given the generally stagnant economic environment. Accordingly, they had to be allocated funding from charity and municipal resources, and were also given fiscal concessions. The Odense workhouse clearly operated at a loss from the very start. An attempt to rent out the labour potential of the inmates to a private franchise met with no result: there was no-one prepared to take on the risk. A typical account of 1775 indicates that the Odense house of correction had a recurrent annual budget deficit of about 30%, and that the work of the inmates accounted for only 40% of the (inadequate) income of the institution [8].

The social balance-sheet, however, is more complex. Understanding deviant, unacceptable and insubordinate behaviour in the early modern period evidently requires proper contextualisation not only of municipal and seigneurial disciplinary powers, but also of the civil and criminal judicial machinery and the complex sentencing procedures of the period. More detailed work has been done in this area for France and England than for the Scandinavian countries, so conclusions are necessarily tentative. However, the well-preserved and detailed admission protocol for the Odense house of correction illustrates the complex and at times conflicting pressures and attitudes brought to bear on deviants within a local community [9].

This institution admitted 893 people during the period 1752- 90, from the town itself and the surrounding province. Of these, 25 were admitted out of their own volition (usually because of total destitution, vulnerability, ill-health, or because they hoped to learn a trade), and these were therefore free to leave when they wished. Another 30 were admitted as youngsters in order to learn a trade, and some of these would have been relatively free. Nearly 100 inmates (two thirds male) were under the age of 15: most of them were either with their parents, or were committed on their own because of begging. However, 12 children were committed by their own father or mother for the explicit purpose of chastisement or correction, or by a single father who could not look after them himself. These children, like the rest of the inmates, were effectively there as prisoners.

The great bulk of those admitted were clearly under duress, incarcerated by the local authorities, a landowner, neighbour, or in some instances by a relative or spouse. Only rarely (in 19 cases) is there any indication in the admissions protocol that any formal hearings or legal judgment had been pronounced - though occasionally the nature of the offence (murder, infanticide, giving birth in secrecy, or other capital crimes) must have required some formal hearings. Relatively few (30) of the inmates were there for civil offences like debt. By contrast, a great number fit perfectly into the mould for which houses of correction had always been intended: begging (172), vagrancy (114), dissipation and drink (71), and immorality (59) - individuals who were not usually a significant threat to their surroundings, but regarded as a nuisance in need of control. Although no consistent information is available regarding the duration of detention or terms of release, it is likely that these inmates would be kept for a relatively short period of time - some had clearly been there before.

In the present context, however, other categories of inmates may be more significant. A few (15) were admitted for reasons of ill-health, mental or physical handicap, or attempted suicide, but their conditions are so variable, and their cases so exceptional (there was also a hospital in the town), that it would be unsafe to draw clear conclusions regarding the institution's general policy. Three significant groups of inmates remain. A surprisingly large number (131) had been interned as punishment for acts of insubordination, ranging from peasant resistance against a landowner or tax-collector, to breach of contract and other acts of defiance: here the house of correction was evidently being used as a moderately severe form of retribution by the offended party. A second group (49) consisted of individuals who were not guilty of major capital offences but were regarded as violent or dangerous, some as abusive husbands or even arsonists: here we are dealing with protective detention and possibly punishment. Finally, a group of 51 had been admitted for what can best be described as petty crime, including theft, aiding desertion, and fraud: simple punishment for individuals who had committed a single relatively minor criminal offence. The Odense house of correction, it seems, was typical of the society it served: a dumping-ground for beggars, whores and drunkards, a place of last resort for the destitute and unemployed, a prison for petty offenders and deviants, and a place of work for some unfortunate youngsters. That a not insignificant number either tried to escape, or committed suicide before or after admission, may be regarded as some evidence either of the social strains under which these individuals lived or of the reputed or real severity of the regime of the house of correction. Indeed in 1765 some inmates attempted to burn down the whole institution.

The Hard Core: Labour Camps And Penal Servitude

So far, the discussion has centered on institutions that were relatively commonplace, serving the daily needs of a society which was never torn by deep social confrontations, but constantly irritated by minor offences and disruption. As in the rest of Europe, the responses of the authorities ranged from supposedly voluntary work or shelter to a combination of detention and corrective-cum-religious discipline, often administered in tandem. The Danish houses of correction, judging from surviving evidence, did not change character much during the early modern period, and continued to house men, women and children more or less at random. They obviously never achieved the stated aim of eliminating begging and vagrancy: nor, predictably, did they begin to achieve financial self-sufficiency. Yet, since no major social disturbances occurred in 18th-century Denmark, and what remained by way of beggars and vagrants were accepted with apparent equanimity by those who had to foot the bills, one could argue that the prison-workhouse combination served some purpose.

One category of outcasts, however, remains to be discussed: the hardened and allegedly dangerous criminals against which the house of correction did not provide adequate security. In a state governed by a traditionalist and centralising absolute monarchy, problem cases would inevitably be referred to Copenhagen. The Copenhagen house of correction appears to have served in this capacity in its early days, before provincial institutions were created. But in addition, as mentioned, the state had occasional recourse to hard punitive labour schemes for serious offenders. Men could be used for military construction work (for example the building of the garrison town at Fridericia in the later 17th century), and since at least 1620 had also been used as chained labour in the Bremerholm naval dockyards in Copenhagen. The main hard-core detention centre, however, was the Stokhus (the Copenhagen prison), reorganised in 1741 and continuing in operation until the creation of Vridsloeselille prison in 1860.

The records for the Copenhagen Stokhus are not as full as one might wish [10]. However, certain aspects are immediately striking. For a start, the admission protocol describes the inmates as "slaves". Slavery as such of course did not exist in Denmark, and is nowhere recognised in law. The use of the term as a short-hand for the inmates of the labour camp is therefore all the more revealing. Although the inmates, military and civilian alike, are divided into "honest" and "dishonest" categories, the conclusion that the Stokhus was an institution of unparalleled penal servitude seems inescapable.

Many of the "honest slaves" were male offenders from all over the country, typically in the ageband 20-40: soldiers and sailors who had deserted or had been found guilty of extreme violence, civilians who had committed capital offences but had had the penalty reduced, peasants who had fallen so foul of their seigneur that the local house or correction was not deemed sufficient, but curiously (given the category "honest") also individuals guilty of serious fraud or heavily in debt, and soldiers who had committed theft, others caught stealing wood from forests or infringing the controversial hunting rights of the nobility, and serious offenders against sexual morality. The terms they were expected to serve varied surprisingly. A few were allocated short sentences of some weeks, perhaps because they were in fact minor offenders of the kind that could just as well have ended up in the normal house of correction. The majority, however, were clearly regarded as serious offenders who (even after the penal reform of 1789) carried very long sentences of heavy penal servitude, sometimes for decades or for life. They appear also to have been the target for severe, sometimes recurrent, corporal punishment, the grim details of which are not readily intelligible from the abbreviations used in the protocol.

The "dishonest slaves" were mostly thieves, but included some murderers and frauds. They were nearly all branded and beaten, and then committed to forced labour for life. That it really was a life sentence is clear from the register of inmates, which has a column for "circumstances and date of exit": most entries are blank, but of those that are not it appears that some succeeded in escaping, a few were transferred to local house of corrections, whilst a few either wilfully or accidentally drowned in the harbour.

The point of the apparently rather fuzzy distinction between "honest" inmates and the rest need not perhaps concern us here: they all seem to have committed a serious and identifiable crime carrying a heavy penalty (often a commuted death sentence). The majority had no prospect whatever of rehabilitation or improvement, so their labour could not be deemed to have any "corrective" function. The Stokhus was the early modern equivalent of a long-term jail, yet it, too, was designed to extract as much as possible from its inmates.

There are a number of conclusions that can be drawn from this brief survey of workhouses and detention centres in early modern Denmark. First of all, it will be apparent that the confusion in nomenclature which Spierenburg has sought to address is not just the result of lack of precision amongst historians engaging in comparative work, but well grounded in the empirical evidence of the period. Neither the central government nor local authorities in early modern Denmark seem to have had the means or the inclination, until late in the day, to examine the underlying causes and typology of anti-social behaviour, vagrancy and petty crime. They recognised that all-purpose institutions were not ideal, and lamented the potential corruption especially of children, but seem to have been unable to implement the necessary institutional changes. In this respect, they hardly differed from their counterparts in most other parts of western and central Europe, where similar institutions were proliferating. Likewise, they eventually came to appreciate that selective labour schemes were essential - but (perhaps less surprisingly) never saw a way of achieving even modest success within a stagnant economy. Improvement, punishment and protective detention were dispensed within one set of institutional parameters, and only the traditional "worthy poor" (the sick, handicapped and ill) had much chance of being treated differently. Hospitals were gradually becoming more common and perhaps more medically orientated; and, at the other end of the scale, forced labour camps continued in use. But in between was the multi-purpose institution whose defects, at the end of the day, were not sufficiently acute to turn recurrent careful commission work into everyday reality. In any case, as long as social stability remained largely undisturbed, the real financial burden of significant reform might well have been deemed unacceptable both for the state and for its subjects.

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Notes

1. The literature is very large, but see notably J.S. Taylor, 'The unreformed workhouse 1776-1834', in *Comparative Development in Social Welfare*, ed E.W. Martin (1972), 57-84; J. Innes, 'Prisons for the poor: English bridewells, 1555- 1800', in *Labour, Law and Crime*, ed F. Snyder & D. Hay (1987), 42-122, who notes that there were probably at most 170 houses of correction in England in the later 18th century, and never more than 19 in the United Provinces; O. Hufton, *The Poor of Eighteenth-century France* (1974), 227-42; R.M. Schwarz, *Policing the Poor in Eighteenth-century France* (1988), who suggests, pp.166-77, that there were on average 3- 4000 inmates in houses of correction in England and Wales in the early 1770s, roughly proportional to the 10-12000 in the French depots at the same time; T.M. Adams, *Bureaucrats and beggars: French social policy in the Age of Enlightenment* (1990); W. Olejniczak, 'Working the body of the poor: the ateliers de charite in late 18th-century France', *Journal of Social History* 24 (1990-91), 87-108; M. Lindemann, *Patriots and paupers: Hamburg 1712-1830* (1990). Some historians have argued that workhouses may also have had a role in the development of early capitalism, or at least as a tool for keeping down wages: such arguments may be relevant in the case of England, but clearly have little persuasiveness in the context of a much more backward and stagnant economy like that of 18th-century Denmark.
2. P. Spierenburg, *The Prison Experience: disciplinary institutions and their inmates in early modern Europe* (New Brunswick, 1991), 1-11 and passim.
3. F. Dyrland, *Tatere og Natmandsfolk i Danmark* (1872; reprint 1974), 41-54; and O. Olsen, *Christian IVs Tugthu* (Historiske Meddelelser om Koebenhavn, IVR3 (1951-54), 257- 356; reprinted 1978).
4. This is the way the system was described by Bishop Borneman, in his memo of 11 march 1707, submitted to the 1707- 08 poor law commission (Rigsarkivet Public Record Office., Copenhagen: Danske Kancelli, Koncepter og Indlaeg for Ordinance of 24 Sept. 1708).
5. The origins of this entrepreneurial disaster are summarised in a series of administrative interventions: Rigsarkivet, Danske Kancelli, Sjællands Tegnelser, from 14 Sept.1703 to 23 Jan.1706.
6. Rigsarkivet, Danske Kancelli, D74 and F81; see also H.Chr. Johansen, *En samfundsorganisation in oprud 1700-1870: Dansk socialhistori*, vol.4 (Copenhagen, 1979), 289-97.
7. H.Chr. Johansen, *Naering og bystyr* (Odense, 1983), p.117.

8. Johansen, op.cit., 128-9.

9. The following discussion is based primarily on a database of the admission protocol (preserved in Landsarkivet for Fyn: Odense Tugthus). For a fuller discussion of how the database was constructed, and the broader conclusions that might be drawn from it, see E. Mawdsley & T. Munck, *Computing for Historians: and introductory guide* (Manchester, 1993), 152- 65; and T. Munck, 'Social identity and community in eighteenth-century urban Denmark', in *Social and Political Identities in western History*, ed. C.Bjoern et al. (Copenhagen, 1994), 128-44.

10. The surviving records for the Stokhus are now in Landsarkivet for Sjaelland, registered in *Koebenhavns politi- or domstolsarkive*, i-ii (Copenhagen, 1975-76). See also the provisional archival register for *Faengselsarkiver* (Copenhagen, 1965).

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