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Gender differences on sub-national level

Promotion of gender indicators in Danish Municipalities

Note by the Statistics Denmark¹

Summary

This paper presents Statistics Denmark's preliminary contemplations on developing indicators on gender equality at municipality level. It is meant to act as a means for discussion on how to create gender indicators and as to which indicators to select for local analysis.

I. Introduction

1. We have been inspired by our Northern neighbors Statistics Norway who are publishing gender indicators on municipalities annually. Since the level of gender equality is quite similar in the Nordic countries it has seemed obvious to use some of the experiences from Norway. Naturally, we also use other sources and especially the newly launched Gender Equality Index from the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) has also inspired us in the work on possible indicators. At this point it is important to stress that Statistics Denmark has not yet made any indicators and have not yet started a dialogue with the municipalities on this issue.

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II. Example from Norway

2. Statistics Norway has developed a set of twelve indicators on gender equality at municipality level in order to assist the municipalities in monitoring their progress on gender equality. It is described in an article by Kristin Egge-Hoveid from Statistics Norway where some of the regional differences in gender equality also are described.

3. The indicators are split up in two groups. One focus is on the institutional and structural framework for gender equality in the municipality – such as share of employees in gender balanced work places or share of preschool children in day-care institutions. The other focus is on women and men's local conditions such as the gender gap in employment, gender gap in part-time employment, share of fathers using a larger part of the parent leave or share of women in local government. The indicators has a value between 0 and 1 where 1 would indicate complete equality. This could be that there are 50/50 men and women in the local authority, that men and women have the same proportion with tertiary education or that there are as many women as men in management. The further away from 1 means the greater gap between men and women.

4. It is stressed in the article that the gender equality index does not measure the level of living conditions but only measures to which degree the resources are shared equally. There is no obvious connection between the degree of welfare and gender equality.

5. After a description of some of the regional differences and similarities in gender equality the author comes up with some interesting perspectives for further discussions on the value of gender equality on regional level. Is gender equality e.g. of the same value if it is due to a larger share of the men working part-time because local conditions? Or if the gender equality on income is high due to lower average income among the men? Or if the share of men in the female dominated sectors is higher than average because of the local labour market being dominated by these sectors or vice versa. These are important questions to ask both when choosing which indicators to develop and when analyzing the results.

III. Gender equality index from EIGE

6. In EIGE's report "Gender Equality Index Report", from 2013, they describe the different indicators they have decided to use when measuring gender equality in the EU. The indicators cover work, money, knowledge, time, power and health. One of the indicators in the domain on work is labour market segregation. The indicator on segregation is based on the gender gap between the proportion of men and women employed in the two economic activities, which corresponds to the most feminized sectors: Education and Human health and social work activities. Denmark has the third widest gender gap with 29 percentage points following Sweden and Finland with respectively 33 and 30 percentage points. As Denmark and the other Nordic countries are known to have some of the societies with the highest level of gender equality it might come as a surprise that these countries have the highest gender gaps on the segregation indicator. However, it can actually be explained by women's high labor market participation which is connected with the women leaving the roles as primary caretakers in the homes and thereby to the creation of jobs in the care-taking sector. When women no longer spend most of their time taking care of children or elderly in the homes these functions are transferred to the caretaking institutions such as nurseries, kindergartens and homes for elderly people.

IV. Focus areas in Danish Law on Gender Equality at municipality level

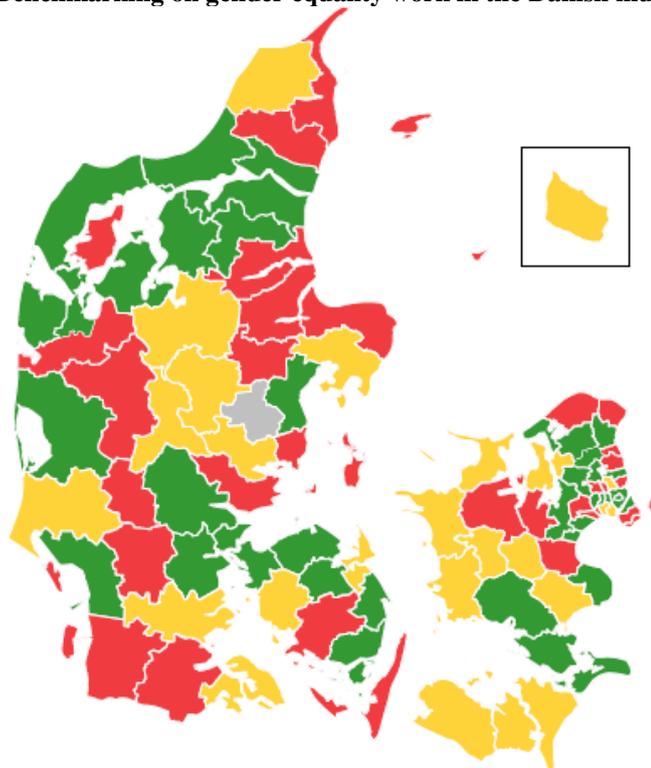
7. Gender equality between men and women is a general principle and objective of Danish policy as it is stated on the homepage of Ministry of Gender Equality and Ecclesiastical Affairs. The Gender Equality Consolidation Act reads: “The purpose of this Act is to promote gender equality, including equal integration, equal influence and equal opportunities in all functions in society on the basis of women’s and men’s equal status”.

8. According to the act public authorities such as municipalities are obliged to promote gender equality and incorporate gender equality in all planning and administration. At least every second year the municipalities shall submit a report on gender equality among the employees of the municipality. Such reports shall include information on:

“(i) whether the ministry, the institution or the undertaking has formulated a policy on gender equality and if so, the detailed contents of such policy;
(ii) the gender distribution across job categories; and
(iii) any other matter deemed to be of importance for an evaluation of the efforts made by the ministry, the institution or the undertaking in respect of gender equality.”

9. The latest published reports are from November 2011 which resulted in an overall report on gender equality in the municipalities which was released in spring 2012. There is a great difference as to how much focus municipalities put on gender equality. In the report the municipalities have been categorized in three groups according to how much they are working goal-oriented and systematically with gender equality and to which degree they have created visible results. There is no obvious relationship between the municipalities with the highest and lowest ranks on focus on gender equality and the usual pattern in the distribution of e.g. unemployment, income, educational attainment and other welfare indicators throughout the country. I.e. it is not necessarily the municipalities with the highest income groups and lowest unemployment rates which score the highest points in the gender equality report - nor the other way around.

Figure 1.
Benchmarking on gender equality work in the Danish municipalities 2011



Source: ligestillingidanmark.dk

- Working goal oriented and systematically with gender equality and has created visible and specific results
- Working less systematically with gender equality and/or has achieved some results
- Working in slight degree with gender equality and/or has created few or none results

V. Focus areas on gender equality in Denmark

10. In the gender equality report from the Minister of Gender Equality and Church 2013 the minister states that Denmark has come far in the work on gender equality but that it is important to realize that the challenges today not necessarily are the same as those 20-30 years ago. Gender equality is about expanding the rights and possibilities of the individuals for the benefit of both the individual and the society. The policies on gender equality should match the societal challenges of today. This means that in a Danish context there should according to the ministry among other be a focus on:

- 1) boys' drop-out rates,
- 2) the segregated labour market and
- 3) the effort to raise the proportion of women in management.

1) Boys' drop-out rates

11. Whereas 69 % of the 25 year old, women had completed a youth education (upper secondary school or vocational training) only 65 % of the men had in 2013. At this age 15 % of the men and 9 % of the women had at one time started a youth

education but subsequently dropped out without starting at a new education (Statbank.dk AFGANG03). Generally boys do not succeed as much as the girls in the Danish educational system. Especially in the transition from the lower secondary school to youth educations as well as in the transition to youth educations and in the transition onwards the boys fall out of the educational system. Among the graduates from upper secondary school in 2006 29 % of the women and 37 % of the men had not started a tertiary education after three years (Hutters and Brown, 2011). In several reports and discussions on boys' drop-out rates there is a common agreement that part of the problem is that the Danish school system is accommodated much more to the girls learning styles. However, in Hutters and Browns report on the missing boys in the educational system, they also point to young men and women having different expectations as to how a "normal life course" is and how the individual should live their lives. The young women perceive education as an important factor to attain social mobility to a higher degree than the young men. Young men can to a higher degree see other ways of social mobility such as being entrepreneurs and going up in the world through hard work.

2) The segregated labour market

12. The segregation in the labour market in Denmark is often described as the greatest single factor which contributes to the gender pay gap. Furthermore the segregated labour market affects the young men and women when choosing education narrowing in their possibilities of pursuing a career which suits them.

13. While Denmark in general is in the better end of EIGE's gender equality index it shows that 44 percent of employed women work in the feminized sectors Education and Human health and social work activities. This is the highest proportion of women working in these sectors among the EU-countries. To comparison only 12 percent of the employed men work in Denmark in these sectors.

3) Women in management

14. The Danish women have the highest employment rates in EU together with Finland, Sweden and Cyprus according to EIGE's gender index for 2010. Women from these four countries had a participation of 48 % using the indicator on full-time equivalent participation compared to the average of 41% in all of EU. Denmark also has a growing number of women with tertiary education and a larger proportion of women than men have attained this educational level. Still only 7 % of the members of top management in Danish listed companies are women (Ministry of Gender Equality and Church). A new law which came into force 1 April 2013 makes private companies and public institutions commit themselves to focus on policies to raise the proportion of women in management.

VI. Gender differences in Danish municipalities

15. In Denmark there are as in other countries local differences concerning any aspect from employment rates, level of educational attainment, divorce rates, age of first marriage etc. In this section we will show some of the differences concerning three potential gender

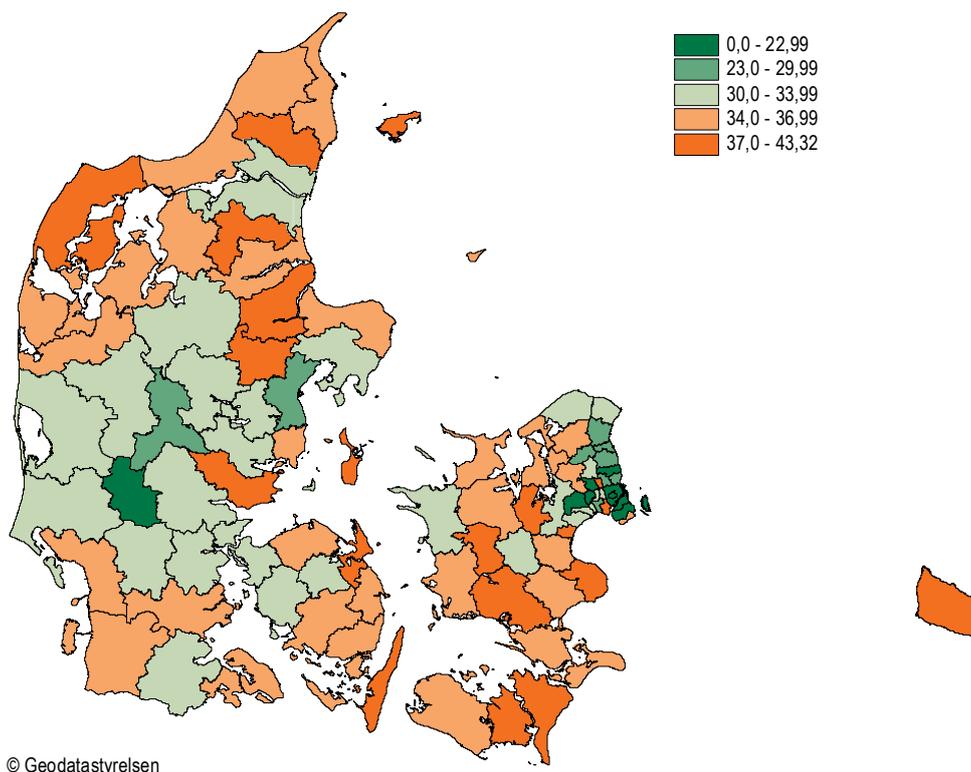
indicators namely segregation in employment, employment rates and educational attainment.

A. Segregation

16. Figure 2 shows the regional differences in the gender gap on segregation. 24 of the 99 municipalities have a gender gap towards men of 37 percentage points and more. As the numbers are based on the workplace municipality and not the address of the employed persons the regional differences also could reflect the regional structure of industries. However it is worth noting that the municipalities with the highest gender gap on segregation also have the highest proportion of women in Education and Human health and social work activities, all higher than the average of 44 in 2013. In the 11 municipalities with the lowest gender gaps on segregation we also find some of the lowest proportions of women in the feminized sectors with a particular exception of Frederiksberg, a municipality in the Copenhagen area, which also have the highest proportion of employed men in these sectors.

17. When considering the usefulness of this indicator on a regional level it should be considered to combine it with an indicator which only measures on the proportion of women and men employed in the Education and Human health and social sector in the municipal workplaces. As the municipalities are obliged to report to which extent they work on gender equality in the municipal workplaces these two indicators would work well together when analyzing the level of gender equality and monitoring the progress.

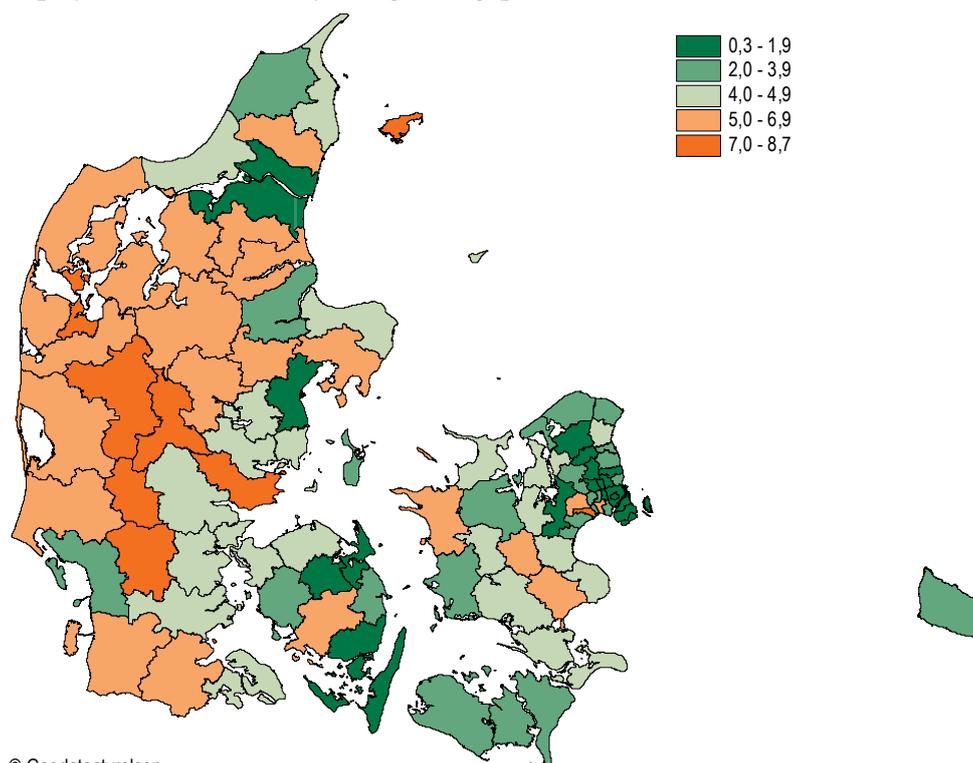
Figure 2.
Segregation in employment, workplace municipalities, gap towards men, 2013



B. Employment

18. The labour market participation and the gap between the proportion of men and women in employment are indicators which are in EIGE's gender index and the gender index on municipalities made in Statistics Norway. Age groups differ between the two indexes as well as how the participation is measured but both are concerned with the full-time/part-time issue. The gender gap between 16-64 year old men and women is 3 percentage points in all of Denmark in 2013. This gender gap covers all from two municipalities in the north of Zealand with no gender gap at all to a municipality in the south-western part of Denmark with a gender gap of 9 percentage points. Figure 3 shows the variety of gender gap in employment rates throughout the country. There is no clear pattern between the employment rates and the gender gaps. In the area of Copenhagen the low gender gap goes together with high employment rates of both men and women whereas in the southern part of Zealand the low gender gap covers the fact that employment rates are low for both men and women. As in the Norwegian report it is clearly necessary to analyze the different indexes together in order to establish an understanding of whether a municipality scores high on the gender index is due to a high level of gender equality or due to generally low welfare conditions for both men and women. As the understanding could also help municipalities to find out which focus areas on gender equality will best help raising the level of welfare in general in the municipality.

Figure 3.
Employment rates of 16-64 years, gender gap towards men, 2013



C. Educational attainment

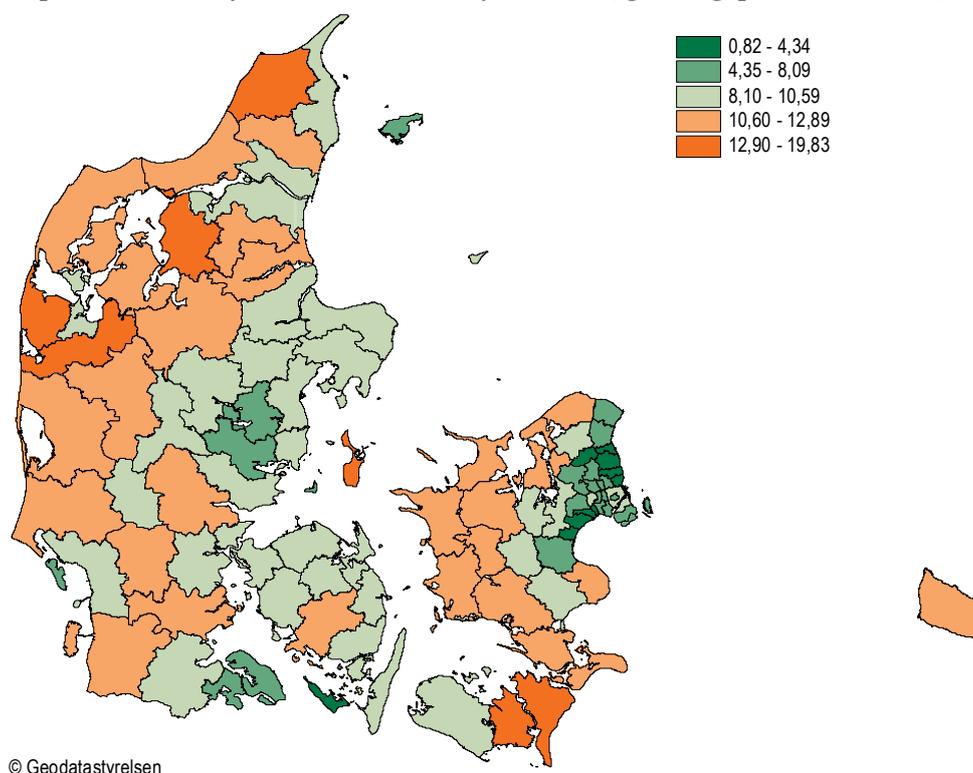
19. The proportion of men and women with a tertiary education has changed during the last decades. 1996 was the first year where more women than men were attending university and since 1994 a larger proportion of women than men in the age 30-64 years have completed a tertiary education. In 2013 the gender gap on tertiary education was 10

percentage points in all of Denmark. When looking at the distribution of educational gender gap throughout the municipalities it is clear that the women's educational advantages in educational status is not reflected equally with lower gender gaps in employment rates.

20. Measuring the proportion of tertiary education for men and women is probably more useful on a national level when analyzing the effects of more women with tertiary education on e.g. women in boards and gender gap. However, in Denmark many men choose a vocational education where women would choose a short cycle tertiary education. Vocational educations give access to job sectors which often are male dominated and with higher wages than short cycle tertiary educations. When measuring the gender gap in educational attainment at regional levels it would probably be more useful for understanding the local gender pay gap to have an indicator on the gender gap in proportion of men and woman with vocational or tertiary educations.

Figure 4.

Proportion of 30-64 year old with a tertiary education, gender gap towards women, 2013



21. As municipalities are responsible of the primary and secondary schools it would also be useful to have an indicator measuring the gap between the proportion of boys and girls transition to youth educations after secondary school.

VII. Objectives for Danish Municipalities

22. When choosing the relevant indicators we should look at two perspectives: 1) the areas which the municipality has/can have direct influence on such as proportion of boys drop-out rates and proportion of men employed in female dominated local work places, and 2) the areas which describes the general domains on gender equality such as the gender gap on income or labour market participation of the citizens.

23. One of the issues to deal with when working with indicators at the municipality level is the aspect that the inhabitants are not only affected by the framework of the

municipalities they live in but also the framework of their work place which often is in a different municipality. We know from the income statistics that while the inhabitants of one municipality might have an income above the average while employed in other municipalities whereas the people employed in this municipality have an income below the average (Statistics Denmark 2013). For some of the municipalities it is also an aspect that young women move away in order to study other places to a higher degree than young men. In some cases the women do not return leaving the municipality with a gender imbalance among the younger groups. The demographic stratification should therefore also be considered as a background information when analyzing the gender equality at regional level.

24. It is clear that there are issues which make sense to have in a gender equality index at national level which are not so relevant at the regional level. As this is the very preliminary inquiries into working with gender equality indicator for municipalities we will not come up with any lists of possible indicators at this time. We will continue the work investigating the indicators in both the Norwegian index and EIGE's index and analyze the usefulness of these. In the process we will contact municipalities and make more research as to which areas the municipalities themselves can point to for their work on progress on gender equality.

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