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# Spatial assimilation? The development in immigrants’ residential career with duration of stay in Denmark.

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**Abstract**

*Many studies have shown that immigrants’ residential situation differs from natives and that other factors than housing needs and financial situation influence immigrants’ options and choices concerning housing and neighbourhood. Among others it has been indicated that immigrants could have a stronger preference for renting, because of insecurity about their future situation, and that especially newly arrived immigrants live in immigrant dense, so-called multi-ethnic, neighbourhoods. The spatial assimilation theory claims that during the course of time immigrants will move to other kinds of housing and neighbourhoods. In this paper the difference over time between immigrants’ residential careers and Danes during the years after their arrival is examined. The hypothesis tested is that immigrants’ residential situation gets closer to comparable Danes during the course of time. It is a longitudinal study based on data from 1985 to 2008 on Non-Western immigrants in Denmark. The results show that Non-Western immigrants steadily increase their presence in social housing and multi-ethnic neighbourhoods during their first ten years of stay; then it stagnates, and after 15 years of stay declines. Part of the initial increase in the frequency of living in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods can be ascribed to the increasing concentration of ethnic minorities in neighbourhoods instead of individual choice among immigrants. The study confirms spatial assimilation, but the change is not dramatic within the 24 years contained in the study.*

# Workshop WS-13 Migration, Residential Mobility & Housing Policy

## Introduction

This paper is based on data on how Non-Western immigrants have settled in Denmark during a 24 year period from 1985 to 2008, which has made it possible to follow their residential careers over time.

As discussed in the theoretical section below the literature on the settlement of immigrants especially have revealed two distinct residential patterns: an overrepresentation of immigrants in rental housing (and in some countries especially social housing), and a tendency to segregation and concentration of ethnic minorities in parts of the cities. The question is how these patterns evolve and change over time. The hypothesis has been put forward that especially newly arrived immigrants have stronger preferences for living in rental housing and in neighbourhoods with countrymen or other minorities but that these preferences is weakened the longer they have stayed. Another kind of explanation is that new immigrants have fewer options on the housing market because of lack of knowledge and resources, which limit their options to certain parts of the housing market and certain neighbourhoods where access is easier. In both cases it must be expected that immigrants’ settlement pattern changes during their time of stay after arrival from living in rental housing to other kind of housing and from staying in neighbourhoods with many ethnic minority residents to other parts of the cities.

Two questions are thus examined in the paper:

1. To what extent have immigrants coming to Denmark settled in rental housing (social housing) after their arrival and how has this been changing with the duration of their stay? Does the frequency of staying in social housing decline after some years of stay?
2. Are immigrants often settling in neighbourhoods with a high concentration of ethnic minorities (called multi-ethnic neighbourhoods) after their arrival and does this decline later after some years of stay?

The analyses in the paper are focused on the connection between duration of stay and immigrants’ settlement in respectively social housing and multi-ethnic neighbourhoods defined as having more than 20 pct. Non-Western ethnic minorities (immigrants and descendants) among the residents.

During the period 1985- 2008 there have been marked changes in the character of immigration to Denmark and ethnic segregation and concentration has evolved over the years. The development in immigration to Denmark and the formation of multi-ethnic neighbourhoods is described. Also housing and integration policies have had some changes, which have influenced immigrants’ settlement pattern. These changes will be described and their influence will be discussed.

**What determines immigrants’ residential career?**

The factors determining immigrants’ housing situation and spatial location can be divided into special preferences among immigrants and special conditions for them on the housing market.

Special residential preferences among immigrants

Housing preferences and housing choices of ethnic minorities can to a great extent be expected to have the same explanations as those for other citizens. That is, they depend on family situation, economic resources and local housing market possibilities. But evidence shows that the housing situation of ethnic minorities in most countries diverges much from that of the native population (se for example Özuekren and van Kempen 2002, Musterd 2005, Johnston et. al. 2002, Finney 2002, Fong and Chan 2010). These differences cannot be fully explained by lower incomes and education among immigrants (Flippen 2001, Alba and Logan 1992, Sinning 2010).

One of the important aspects of immigrants’ residential careers is the changes that occur over time in their preferences for where to locate in the city, called their ‘spatial assimilation’, which again have an influence on their housing choice. The ‘*spatial assimilation theory*’ (Massey and Denton 1985) is based on the notion that members of some ethnic minorities have special settlement preferences or behaviour that are connected to their special situation as immigrants. Some studies (Zavodney 1998, Jaeger 2000, Bartel 1989, all cited in Damm 2002) show that it is important for immigrants' housing choice if there are many other residents of the same origin and ethnic social networks in the neighbourhood. Authors (Peach 1998, Murdi 2002) have argued that for new immigrants, moving to neighbourhoods with many countrymen – called ethnic *enclaves* - is part of a strategy for survival and integration in their new country. Ethnic enclaves in Europe are most often found in immigrant dense neighbourhoods with many different ethnic groups. Some of the arguments for this strategy are that immigrants often have family or friends in the enclaves, who they want to live close to. Some have shown that an ethnic network in the enclave can improve the ability of the members of the group to find a job (Portes 1998, Damm 2014). Often there are also local shops that purchase consumer goods from the homeland. Moreover, this can reduce the costs of using ethnic goods and services (Chiswick and Miller 1995). Finally, the feeling of security and safety in a well-known social and cultural environment can be important.

The preferences for ethnic minorities to move to neighbourhoods, where they find ethnic enclaves, are expected to depend on the extent to which they are integrated in the new society. New immigrants and less integrated ethnic minorities have a greater need of the support they can get from networks in the enclave, which influence their housing choice. A Danish study (Skifter Andersen 2012) based on survey data has showed that preferences for living close to family and friends is an important factor explaining why immigrants move to immigrant-dense neighbourhoods, and a clear connection was found between data representing social integration (language proficiency, labour market participation and social network) and preferences among immigrants for living in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods.

On the other hand some of the residents in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods, which during the course of time get a stronger position in the new country, could change their preferences in favour of moving away from these neighbourhoods. Studies of such neighbourhoods (Skifter Andersen 2010, Peach 1998) show that even if the share of ethnic minorities remains constant or increases there are many ethnic minorities moving out of the neighbourhoods and being replaced by others.

It has been shown (Kauppinen et. al 2014) that immigrants in the Nordic countries much more seldom than natives move into homeownership and that this cannot be explained by differences in background variables like income, employment, age, urbanisation and family situation and family and income changes. As discrimination of immigrants by banks in the Nordic countries must be expected to be low[[1]](#footnote-1) it was concluded that one must expect that immigrants more often will have a preference for renting. An explanation could be that preferences among households for owner-occupied housing are very much determined by their expectations of the future as is described in the literature on housing demand (Artle and Varaiya 1978, Carliner 1974). If people have strong expectations of staying in a certain city and of a stable and perhaps increasing income, the preferences for homeownership will be higher. Immigrants more often have more uncertain expectations about their future employment and income, and about whether they will stay in the country and therefore are more reluctant to invest in homeownership.

The special conditions for immigrants on the housing market

In parts of the housing market, good contacts to persons or institutions are decisive for access to dwellings. In Denmark this especially concerns private landlords. It is also important to have good knowledge on the possibilities and rules on the housing market, which also often demands good language skills or good access to advisers. Besides the disadvantage of lower incomes, immigrants can have special difficulties on the housing market, which could be increased or lessened by different elements of housing policy. If the housing market is more difficult to see through it is likely to make it more difficult for immigrants with a limited knowledge of the host society to act on the market and find good solutions to their housing needs (Søholt 2007, Søholt and Astrup 2009a).

Some studies (Aalbers 2002, Andersson 1998, Søholt and Astrup 2009a, Molina 2010) have concluded that discriminatory practices on the housing market also are found in Europe, where especially social and private landlords to some extent exclude ethnic minorities from their housing. The extent to which discrimination occurs can depend on the way housing tenures are regulated and supported through housing policy (Skifter Andersen, Søholt and Magnusson Turner 2013).

Preferences for living in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods have importance for which tenures and dwellings immigrants try to get and which dwellings they can get access to. In different countries multi-ethnic neighbourhoods have been established in different tenures depending on how easy it has been for immigrants to get access to these kinds of housing. In some countries it has happened in private rented housing, in others in social/public housing and sometimes it has been owner-occupation. Neighbourhoods with less attractive housing dominated by an easy-to-access tenure make the basis for an initial influx of immigrants (Scaffer and Huang 1975, Bleiklie 1997, Søholt 2007, Søholt and Astrup 2009a). When the presence of ethnic groups become very visible, segregation processes called ‘White flight’ and ‘White avoidance’ may begin to appear. In the US it has been observed that Whites ‘flee’ when the share of Black residents in their neighbourhood exceeds a certain proportion of the population (Wright et. al. 2005). In recent years, there has been a tendency to replace the concept of ‘White flight’ with the more general ‘White avoidance’, meaning that natives tend to avoid moving to neighbourhoods with many immigrants or special ethnic groups (Clark, 1992; Quillian, 2002, Bråmå 2006, Bolt et al 2008). As a consequence of these processes it is easier for immigrants to get access to these neighbourhoods, which often are dominated by certain tenures, and prices/rents tend to be lower. This improves the competition of rented housing in these areas compared to owner-occupied dwellings and could reduce immigrants’ incentives to move away. The study of Kauppinen et. al. (forthcoming) shows that living in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood strongly reduces the probability of moving into homeownership.

## Data and methods

In Denmark researchers have the possibility to create their own databases inside the national statistical organisation, Statistics Denmark, where all public registers can be used as sources. Moreover, Denmark has a special housing and building register, which make it possible at any point in time to connect data on the population with data on their housing conditions and tenure.

For this study a database were constructed with data on the whole population and their housing from 1985 to 2008. The data contained information on ethnic minorities 15+ years and on a seven per cent sample of Danes. This made it possible to construct data on immigrants’ situation at arrival to Denmark and the development over years in in their residential situation.

Moreover, it has been possible to construct data on the neighbourhoods where people have been living during the period. Denmark has in the study been divided into 9.000 neighbourhoods with in average of about 600 inhabitants. This division was constructed in an earlier project on segregation (Damm et. al. 2006) based on the following principles: the cities were first divided in accordance with physical boundaries like railways, big roads, space used by industrial purposes and empty spaces. These bigger areas were again divided in a way so that different tenures were divided as much as possible. This means e.g. that bigger social housing estates are separated from neighbourhoods with other tenures. Aggregate data on the population and housing in these neighbourhoods were constructed for the years 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005 and 2009. Especially the proportion of residents belonging to different ethnic minorities (immigrants and their descendants) was calculated.

The analyses in the paper are concentrated on immigrants 15+ years, who are not living with parents and who were coming to Denmark in the period 1985 to 2008 from so-called Non-Western countries. These countries are defined as being outside Western Europe (the old EU, Switzerland etc.), North and South America, Australia and New Zealand. The new EU members from Eastern and Central Europe are included in Non-Western immigrants, as all Asia and Africa. In the statistical analyses they have been divided into four groups: 1. Eastern Europe, 2. Middle East and North Africa (all the Muslim countries from Afghanistan to Morocco. 3. Other Africa and 4. Other Asia.

The analyses in the paper focus on the connection between duration of stay and staying in respectively social housing or multi-ethnic neighbourhoods with more than 20 pct. Non-Western ethnic minorities (immigrants + descendants in all age groups) among the residents.

## Immigration to Denmark

For centuries there have been different kinds of immigration to Denmark from other European countries, but it was never felt as something that should need special integration initiatives. In connection with the high economic growth in the 1960'ties Danish firms actively searched for labour in countries like Italy, Portugal, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Pakistan and Morocco. In this period it was very easy for foreigners to get permission to come to the country and search for work. This was changed in 1973 when the upcoming economic crisis and increasing unemployment motivated the government to make a stop for immigration of migrant workers. It was expected that the labour immigrants would return to their home country in case of unemployment, but they did not. Instead most of them had their family moved to Denmark by family reunification, which was granted them in the legislation.

Denmark also felt it as a responsibility to receive refugees. The country received refugees from Chile and Vietnam in the 1970'ties and from Iran, Iraq, Lebanon (Palestinians), and Sri Lanka in the 1980's. Besides these groups refugees from Yugoslavia and Somalia appeared in the 1990'ties. Also these groups had in many cases family reunification with their relatives from the homeland, which was granted them since 1983.

The number of residence permits in connection with family reunification was increasing in the 1990'ties from about 5,000 in the beginning of the decennium to 11.000 in 2001 (Figure 1). Of these 6.400 were persons who were reunified with other immigrants, while 4,600 were unified with people of Danish origin.



Figure 1 All residence permits in Denmark 1993-2008 (Source: Statistics Denmark )

After 2001 the total number of permits given in connection with family reunification dropped to 3,500 in 2005. Reunification with immigrants dropped even more and was only 550 in 2008. This was the results of new immigration policies introduced by a new wright wing government in 2001, who had as one of its main objectives to reduce the number of immigrants from third world countries. New rules for family reunification were introduced. One should be older than 24 to be unified and there was a rule that the family as a whole should have greater affiliation to Denmark than to any other country. In practice this rule is difficult to enforce and the administration of it concerns many conditions like how long time each of the couple have lived in Denmark, if they have other family in the country or in other countries, if they have work or education in Denmark, how well they speak Danish and how long time they have spent in other countries. Moreover, the person living in Denmark must have a minimum income which is judged to be big enough to support a family and his dwelling must have a certain minimum size.

Moreover, the 'de-facto' rules, meaning that everyone who appeared inside the borders had the right to apply for asylum and stay until their case was solved, were abolished. Residence permits for asylum had a peak with 20,000 in 1995 because of many refugees from Bosnia, but after this the level in the last part of the 1990'ties stayed at about 5,000 per year increasing to 6,300 in 2001. After 2001 the number of refugees given asylum decreased year after year to about 1,000 at the lowest level in 2006.

After 2001 the Danish unemployment rate dropped and there was a beginning shortage of labour in certain sectors of the economy. Therefore immigration of skilled labour came on the political agenda. In 2002 a 'green card' arrangement was introduced which made it easier for immigrants coming to work in certain sectors in accordance with a 'positive list'. After 2007 it was possible for everyone to come and work in Denmark provided that they would get a certain income. Immigrants with certain qualifications can get residence permit for a period of six months to seek employment. These rules were further developed in 2008 to make it possible for Danish firms to recruit labour from other countries. The income limit was reduced and the green card arrangement was extended.

Of even greater importance was the extension of the EU with countries from Central Europe in 2004. In the first place immigrants from the new countries as a transitional agreement were covered by the general rules for labour immigration. These rules were relaxed in 2008 and from 2009 citizens from the new EU countries are free to seek employment in Denmark. As residence permits in connection with education also were extended, this meant that immigration to Denmark after a short fall in 2003 increased very much in following years. The total number of residence permits increased from 30,000 in 2003 to 70,000 in 2008.

At the same time as the reasons for immigration to Denmark have been changed there has also been a shift in the national composition of immigrants. The most important immigration countries outside Europe and North America can be divided into 'labour immigration countries' and 'refugee countries'. The most important of these labour immigrant countries have been Turkey (32,000 immigrants in the period 1980-2008), Pakistan (17,000) and Morocco (5,500). Immigration from these countries started already in the 1960'ties, but after 1973 almost all has been as family reunification except from Curd refugees from the Eastern part of Turkey. Until 1984 the number of refugees coming to Denmark was quite small. In 1985, however, about 4,000 Iranian refugees came to the country followed by 2,500 Palestinians from Lebanon in 1985. In the following years the total number of immigrants from the seven countries fluctuated around three to four thousand people. Immigration from Somalia increased to a peak of 2,000 in 1996 followed by a steep decrease in the following years. Immigration from Iraq especially came after 1992 and peaked in the last part of the 1990'ties. The Afghans came after the NATO invasion in 2001. Immigration from all the countries has been diminished since 2001. Besides these refugee countries there has also been a stream of refugees from the former Yugoslavia in the middle of the 1990'ties. 24,000 refugees were received in 1995 to 1997.



Figure 2 The development in immigrants and descendants in Denmark (Note: Descendants are defined as persons born in Denmark with both parents being immigrants. Source: Statistics Denmark)

The number of immigrants and descendants in Denmark increased from 150,000 in 1980 to 490,000 in 2009 (Figure 2). Some of these immigrants are permanent settlers while others are only temporary in the country.

Immigrants from the Middle East (North Africa and Western Asia) more often have stayed in the country why their number have been steadily increasing over the years from 20,000 in 1980 to 160,000 in 2009. The number of immigrants from other African countries rose from 2,200 to 33,000 in the period. Also the amount of immigrants from Eastern and Central Europe and from Eastern Asia has been increasing, but in recent years this to a greater extent are people who seek work or education. Many of these immigrants can be expected to leave the country again and cannot be seen as permanent settlers in the country. This is even more pronounced for immigrants coming from the Nordic Countries, from Western Europe and from North America etc.

As a result the proportion of immigrants in Denmark has risen to about 10 per cent. A little less than half of are immigrants from non-European countries and about 1 per cent is from Eastern and Central Europe.

Table 1. The proportion of immigrants in Denmark 2010

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Proportion of population born outside the country, % | 9.8 |
| Immigrants from Eastern and Central Europe, % | 0.8 |
| Immigrants from non-European countries, % | 4.5 |

Source: Statistics Denmark

## The family situation at the time of immigration

Different immigrants are in very different positions when they arrive. Besides their education and ability to get work it is also important for their housing options how they came to the country and their family situation. Especially immigrants who have come by family unification has another situation because they move together with a family that has been established earlier in the country and who already has performed the first steps in a housing career. In Figure 3 is shown to what extent Non-Western immigrants (including Central and Eastern Europe) 15+ years old have come by themselves as a single person or a family, or have been unified with someone already living in Denmark. The last group is divided into unification with parents, with other immigrants or with Danes.

Figure 3. The development 1985-2008 in way of immigration and family situation at the arrival for Non-Western immigrants 15+ years old. (Source: Data base on the population in Denmark 1985-2008)

There have been some significant changes over the years. Except for 1995, where a large number of families came from Bosnia, single immigrants have been the largest group, especially after 2000 where labour migration and students have been dominating. Family unification with other immigrants has been the second largest group, but not after 2002. Quite a lot of Non-Western immigrants have been unified with Danes. Unification with parents has increased steadily over the years and is the second largest group at the end of the period.

## Policies regulating the location of immigrants and their access to social housing

Location of refugees with residence permit

Asylum seekers, who have obtained residence permit, have since 1990 been allocated to Danish municipalities in accordance with a quota system for regions that tries to make an equal distribution of immigrants to municipalities, not only for spreading the costs of integration but also to avoid geographical concentrations of immigrants. The refugees are forced to stay in the selected municipality at least for three years if they want to receive public support. The local authorities are obliged to assign a dwelling for the incoming refugees. They must assign to a permanent dwelling and they most often use their power to assign dwellings in social housing. There are no demands on the size and quality of the dwelling

An evaluation of the effects of the arrangement for the location of refugees (Pohl Nielsen and Blume Jensen 2006) has shown that the rules have resulted in that many more municipalities have received refugees. And since the approval of the 'law on integration' in 1998 an increasing number of refugees choose to stay in the municipality where they were placed. However, many refugees still chose to move from the smaller towns to more urbanised areas with higher concentrations of immigrants. Another study (Skifter Andersen 2006a) has shown that this applies for all immigrants. It also showed (Skifter Andersen 2006b) that the main reason for these moves were an expectation of better opportunities for getting employment, but also that some immigrants wanted to move closer to family and friends in the cities.

Rules for access to social housing

Social housing in Denmark is organised as non-profit organisations. In principle access to social housing is organised by help of waiting lists for every estate or organisation and there are no restrictions on the income level of the applicants. But many exceptions to this have been introduced in the last 15 years. Local authorities can dispose of up to 25 per cent of vacant dwellings, which they often have used to house refugees. As a result of the growing problems in the 1990’ties with deprived estates a system called flexible allocation was introduced around 1998, which allowed special waiting lists for house hunters who were more attractive for the organisations, e.g. people in work, students or old age pensioners (Friedberg and Lausten 2004). As problems continued to increase, especially in Copenhagen, special rules were introduced for the most problematic estates, where local authorities were allowed to control every application. They were not allowed to sort out immigrants as a specific group, but only those without work as welfare recipients. There is no research on how these two systems have been used but it can be assume that local housing organisations and local authorities has used them to reduce ethnic concentrations in some neighbourhoods. The fact is, as is shown below, that the rapid growth in the number of neighbourhoods with high concentrations of Non-Western immigrants declined somewhat.

Another rule, which have been favourable for immigrants, is the so-called ‘internal waiting list’. People living in a certain estate or housing organisation, can apply for a new dwelling inside the organisation, if they leave the present one. An evaluation of this in 2004 (Skifter Andersen 2004) showed that this system much more often were used by immigrants to make a housing career. The importance of this system, however, has declined multi-ethnic neighbourhood in pace with the use of the more selective systems mentioned above.

But in general it can be said that immigrants, compared to many other countries (Skifter Andersen, Søholt and Magnusson Turner 2013, Skovgaard Nielsen et. al. (forthcoming)) have had a very easy access to social housing.

## Immigrants position on the housing market in Denmark

Denmark has a relatively large social housing sector, which is relatively easy to get access to, even if some waiting time occurs in the bigger cities. In Table 2 is shown how Non-Western immigrants and descendants 15+ years are distributed on housing tenures.

Table 2. Danes and ethnic minorities from Non-Western countries 15+ years distributed on housing tenures 2008 (%)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Owner-occupied detached | Owner-occupied flats | Co-operatives | Social housing | Private renting | Not a self-contained flat | All |
| Danes | 60 | 4 | 6 | 15 | 14 | 1 | 100 |
| Ethnic minorities | 20 | 5 | 5 | 54 | 14 | 2 | 100 |
| Overrepresentation of ethnic minorities % | -67 | 25 | -17 | 260 | 0 | 100 |  |

Note: Ethnic minorities includes descendants 15+ years, but this is a relatively small group. Source: Data base on the population in Denmark 1985-2008

The dominating majority of ethnic minorities is located in social housing in Denmark, while relatively few have obtained homeownership. The proportion of all non-western immigrants and descendants living in social housing rose from about 38 % in 1985 to 60 % in 2001. In the following years the proportion declined somewhat to 54 % in 2008.

The proportion of ethnic minorities in private renting is on average the same as for Danes, but taking into account that ethnic minorities have much lower incomes than Danes it can be shown that they are quite underrepresented. In Skifter Andersen (2010) it is thus shown by a statistical analysis that when controlling for background variables like income, employment and family situation Non-Western immigrants in Denmark is nearby 60 % underrepresented in private renting. There has not been made proper studies of the reasons but it can be assumed that the main reason is discrimination from private landlords (see Skifter Andersen, Søholt and Magnusson Turner 2013).

## Immigrants’ settlement in social housing over time after arrival

One of the hypotheses to be examined in this article is: Social housing is an important sector for immigrants to make housing career in the first period after immigration but later it loses its importance as immigrants in pace with their economic and social integration get a wider range of options and are more confident on the future in Denmark. When looking at the connection between time of stay and the average proportion of immigrants in social housing it looks like that this hypothesis to some extent can be accepted. Figure 4 shows the average proportion of immigrants living in social housing depending on how long time they have been in Denmark. Only immigrants that are not living with parents and have not been unified with family at the time of immigration are included.

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Figure 4. The connection between the average proportion of Non-Western immigrants 15+ years living in social housing and years of stay depending on period of immigration for immigrants that have not had family unification. (Data base on the population in Denmark 1985-2008)

It can be seen that settlement in social housing, independently of period of immigration, has increased very much during the first five years. This has especially been the case for immigrants arrived in the first half of the 1990’ties. Hereafter the increase slows down and after 7 years it has begun to decline a little. Immigrants who have come after 1996 have not at the same speed increased their settlement in social housing in the first years after arrival and this tendency is even more pronounced for immigrants who have come in the last years. Those who came in 2005-08 thus much more seldom have settled in social housing and the increase over time is lower.

These average figures can be influenced by differences in background factors across the different periods and arrival times. Also the conditions on the housing market changed to some extent over time. To control for this a statistical model (logistic regression) has been constructed comparing immigrants with Danes concerning their presence in social housing. Moreover models were constructed comparing different immigrant groups.

In the first models the frequency of living in social housing for immigrants, who have not had family unification, was compared to the frequency for Danes. Immigrants were divided into 5 groups in accordance with length of stay at the current year: 0-1 year, 2-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years and 16-24 years.

In the model the following control variables were used:

* Age: 17-29, 30-44, 45-59, 60-
* Sex
* Family situation: single without children, single with children, Couple without children, couple with children, complex households
* Size of family: number of persons
* Employment situation: on pension, on welfare, on unemployment benefit, student, employed
* Household income: grouping in income quintiles
* Urbanisation: The capital region, three largest provincial cities, other cities larger than 10.000 inhabitants, other.
* Time period: 1985-87, 1988-92, 1993-97, 1998-2002, 2003-06, 2007-08

The analysis was run for three different groups: 1. All Non-Western immigrants (excluding family unified), 2. Immigrants coming from ‘refugee countries’ and 3. Immigrants arrived single without family. We do not have data in the database identifying refugees, so we have chosen to incorporate all immigrants from certain countries with many refugees in Denmark[[2]](#footnote-2) . The dependent variable is ’living in social housing or not’. Immigrants are divided into groups after their duration of stay and Danes are a reference group in the regression. The control variables are not interesting as they mostly depict the pattern of Danes.

Table 3. Results of logistic regression (Odds ratios) comparing frequency of living in social housing for Non-Western immigrants 15+ years, who have not been family unified, with the frequency for Danes.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **All** | **Refugees** | **Arrived single** |
| **Years of stay** | Odds ratios | | |
| 0-1 years | 1.9 | 3.4 | 1.2 |
| 2-5 years | 5.0 | 8.4 | 3.1 |
| 6-10 years | 9.4 | 13.4 | 7.1 |
| 11-15 years | 9.5 | 12.1 | 8.7 |
| 16-24 years | 7.1 | 7.9 | 7.2 |
| Nagelkerke R2 | .307 | .316 | .246 |

Note: Only immigrants not living with parents and who have not been family unified are included. The dependent variable is living in social housing or not and Danes are a reference group. All coefficients are significant below 0.001

The regression shows the same pattern as the figure above. Just after arrival the frequency of living in social housing is not much higher than for Danes compared with later in their stay. The frequency then increases with length of stay until after 10 years stay where it stagnates. For immigrants having been more than 16 years in the country the frequency is then getting lower.

Refugees, who are a more vulnerable group, have more often stayed in social housing even after controlling for background variables, but also for this group it has declined after 10 years of stay. Immigrants, who have arrived single, were less often staying in social housing in the first years but have after 10 years increased to nearby the same level as the average. Some of these immigrants have probably had relatives coming to family unification.

Comparison of immigrant groups

To get more insight into differences between different immigrant groups three models only containing Non-Western immigrants have been constructed including variables on their background. Besides the control variables described new variables are:

* Country group: East European, Middle East and North Africa, Other Africa and Other Asia
* From refugee country?
* Situation at arrival: Arrived alone, arrived as single parent, arrived as couple without children, arrived as couple with children, family unified with parents, family unified with another immigrant, family unified with a Dane, arrived with parents.

The three models have three different selections of immigrants: 1. All Non-Western immigrants including those who have come before 1985 (data on situation at arrival are missing). 2. All Non-Western immigrants who have arrived after 1984. 3. All Non-Western immigrants arrived after 1984, who have not been family unified when they came and who do not stay with their parents. The duration of stay groups are compared with the frequency of living in social housing for immigrants just arrived (sty 0-1 year).

Table 4. Results of three logistic regressions (Odds ratios) on factors determining when Non-Western immigrants 15+, not staying with parents, have been living in social housing 1985-2008.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | All immigrants | Arrived after 1984 | Arrived without  family unification | Danes |
| **Duration of stay (ref: 0-1 year)** |  |  |  |  |
| 2-5 years | 1,73 | 1,58 | 2,05 |  |
| 6-10 years | 2,21 | 2,06 | 2,94 |  |
| 11-15 years | 2,06 | 2,04 | 2,75 |  |
| 16+ years | 1,79 | 1,79 | 2,10 |  |
| **Country group ( ref: Other Asia)** |  |  |  |  |
| Eastern Europe |  | 1,02 | ,96 |  |
| Middle East and North Africa |  | 1,56 | 1,20 |  |
| Other Africa |  | 1,49 | 1,44 |  |
| **Situation at arrival (ref.: arrived alone)** |  |  |  |  |
| Arrived as single with children |  | 1,21 | 1,10 |  |
| Arrived as couple without children |  | 1,20 | 1,13 |  |
| Arrived as couple with children |  | 1,33 | 1,14 |  |
| Family unified with parents |  | 1,48 |  |  |
| Family unified with immigrant |  | 1,89 |  |  |
| Family unified with Dane |  | ,69 |  |  |
| Arrived with parents |  | 1,34 |  |  |
| **Coming from refugee country** |  | 1,90 | 2,22 |  |
| **Period (ref.: 1985-87)** |  |  |  |  |
| 1988-92 | ,98 | ,86 | ,75 |  |
| 1993-97 | 1,23 |  | ,84 | 1,04 |
| 1998-02 | 1,57 | 1,11 | ,96 | 1,05 |
| 2003-06 | 1,49 |  | ,91 | 1,07 |
| 2007-08 | 1,35 | ,85 | ,75 | 1,02 |
| **Women?** | ,77 | ,80 | ,91 | ,82 |
| **Age group (Ref.:15-29)** |  |  |  |  |
| 30-44 | ,84 | ,92 | 1,07 | ,95 |
| 45-59 | ,86 | 1,13 | 1,33 | ,88 |
| 60- | ,76 | 1,56 | 1,87 | ,54 |
| **Family type (ref: single without children)** |  |  |  |  |
| Single with children | 2,35 | 2,32 | 2,10 | 2,88 |
| Couple without children | ,98 | 1,01 | 1,00 | ,51 |
| Couple with children | 1,27 | 1,21 | 1,36 | ,44 |
| Complex household | ,74 | ,61 | ,59 | ,32 |
| **Size of family: number of persons** | 1,27 | 1,17 | 1,15 | 1,02 |
| **Employment situation (Ref.: Employed)** |  |  |  |  |
| On pension | 2,11 | 2,08 | 1,91 | 2,20 |
| On welfare etc. | 1,50 | 1,19 | 1,19 | 1,43 |
| On unemployment benefit | 1,63 | 1,46 | 1,42 | 1,41 |
| Student | 1,10 | 1,02 | ,99 | ,71 |
| **Household income quintiles (Ref.: Quint 5)** |  |  |  |  |
| Quint 1 | 3,37 | 2,34 | 2,82 | 4,96 |
| Quint 2 | 3,75 | 2,84 | 3,51 | 4,32 |
| Quint 3 | 2,93 | 2,45 | 2,98 | 3,49 |
| Quint 4 | 2,17 | 1,88 | 2,12 | 2,43 |
| **Urbanisation (Ref.: towns < 10.000 inh.)** |  |  |  |  |
| Capital Region | 2,03 | 1,91 | 1,74 | 4,11 |
| Three biggest provincial cities | 5,29 | 5,16 | 4,89 | 4,20 |
| Other cities and towns > 10.000 inhabitants | 4,05 | 3,79 | 3,49 | 3,30 |
| Nagelkerke R2 | ,206 | ,294 | ,318 | ,195 |

Note: All shown coefficients are significant on the 0.05 level.

In all three analyses the probability of living in social housing increases for those who have been longer in the country in the same way as for Table 3. The stagnation after 10 years is more pronounced. The pattern is thus the same for all Non-Western immigrants, even when including those arrived before 1985, as for immigrants without family unification. But for the last group there is a bigger difference between the first years in the country and later.

Looking at all immigrants arrived after 1985 it can be seen that family unification results in a higher probability of living in social housing, probably because their partners and parents in the country more often are living in social housing. Only if immigrants are unified with a Dane the odds ratio is lower. For immigrants without family unification singles have the lowest probability while couples with children have the highest.

There are some differences between the country groups. Among immigrants without unification those coming from East European less often live in social housing, while immigrants from Other Africa do it most often.

Among all immigrants arrived after 1985, and especially those without unification, older people more often live in social housing than the youngest. It is also seen that families with children more often settle in social housing than those without children. This is the opposite than the pattern found among Danes where families with children mostly have homeownership and very seldom live in social housing.

It should be assumed that the most vulnerable families with the lowest income would be the most overrepresented in social housing. This is very apparent for Danes with different incomes in the table. But it is not so clear-cut for immigrants. Looking at the differences between the income groups (quintiles) it is seen that quintile 2 has the highest probability and the differences between groups are smaller than for Danes.

## Settlement in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods

Already back in the 1970’ties immigrants in Denmark begun to concentrate in certain parts of the cities. In the first years they settled in the older parts with cheaper deteriorated private rented housing. As the immigrant population grew and many of these neighbourhoods had urban renewal, immigrants more and more settled in neighbourhoods in the suburbs with social housing. In Figure 5 is shown the development in the number of neighbourhoods having more than 20 per cent residents coming from Non-Western countries.

Figure 5. The development in the number of multi-ethnic neighbourhoods with more than 20 per cent residents being Non-Western ethnic minorities (immigrants + descendants). Source: Data base on the population in Denmark 1985-2008.

Partly because of the increasing number of immigrants and their descendants, the proportion of ethnic minorities increased much in some neighbourhoods. The number of neighbourhoods with more than 20 per cent ethnic minorities from Non-Western countries increased from 60 in 1985 to nearly 900 in 2008. But it can be seen that the fastest growth took place in the 1990’ties. After 2000 it slowed down, especially after 2005.

In 1985 only half of the dwellings in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods were social housing. In 2008 it was 70 per cent. But it must be expected that the actual concentration in social housing estates is higher because some of the designed neighbourhoods could contain other tenures with few ethnic minorities.

The proportion of all non-western immigrants living in these neighbourhoods rose from about 11 % in 1985 to 46 % in 2008. This development is illustrated in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Proportion of ethnic minorities from Non-Western countries living in neighbourhoods with more than 20 per cent residents being Non-Western ethnic minorities (immigrants + descendants)

The proportion of Non-Western ethnic minorities living in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods grew very fast in the 1990’ties and stagnated after 2000. Actually there was a small decrease from 2005 to 2008.

The connection with duration of stay in Denmark

As more and more neighbourhoods in the course of time exceeded the chosen limit on 20 per cent it should be expected that the proportion of immigrants living in such neighbourhoods would be steadily increasing with the duration of their stay in Denmark. In Figure 5 is shown the development with years of stay of the average proportion of Non-Western immigrants 15+ years, not staying with parents, living in neighbourhoods with more than 20 per cent ethnic minorities.

Figure 7. The average connection between proportion of Non-Western immigrants 15+ years, not staying with parents, living in neighbourhoods with more than 20 per cent ethnic minorities and years of stay, for immigrants arrived in different time periods.

It can be seen from the figure that, as expected, the proportion living in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods has increased much in the first years after arrival. This is especially the case for those arriving in 1992-96, where many asylum seekers arrived. The ‘older’ immigrants, who came 1985-87, were much slower to be settled in multi-ethnic neighbourhood, which to a large extent can be ascribed to that much fewer neighbourhoods had reached the 20 % limit in the first years of their stay in Denmark.

But the remarkable result that can be read from Figure 5 is that after ten years of stay the increase slows down and after 15 years the proportion in multi-ethnic neighbourhood is stabilised, even if more and more neighbourhoods have become a ‘multi-ethnic neighbourhood’.

To control for differences between periods of time, and for other background factors, some logistic regressions have been made in the same way as those made above for living in social housing. Especially important here is that the models control for differences between time periods, where the number of multi-ethnic neighbourhoods differs. As for social housing statistical models have been constructed to examine which background factors have been important for if Non-Western immigrants have settled in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods with more the 20 per cent Non-Western ethnic minorities.

The increase in immigrants’ presence in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods during the first 10-15 years can be a result of two different developments. It can be because immigrants move to multi-ethnic neighbourhoods in these years, or it can be because they are staying in a neighbourhood where the proportion of immigrants is increasing. We can examine to what extent the development is a result of moves by only examining those immigrants who have moved within the year before. We have therefore constructed six models.

Three models for immigrants concerning all, both moved and not moved, and have, as for social housing , three different selections of immigrants: 1. All Non-Western immigrants including those who have come before 1985 (data on situation at arrival are missing). 2. All Non-Western immigrants who have arrived after 1984. 3. All Non-Western immigrants arrived after 1984, who have not been family unified when they came. The fourth model concerns Danes living in multi-ethnic neighbourhood. Finally there are two models with only immigrants who have moved within the year before. One with all who have arrived after 1984 and one only including those not family unified. The results (odds ratios) are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. . Results of five logistic regressions (Odds ratios) on factors determining when Non-Western immigrants 15+, not staying with parents, and recently moved immigrants have been living in neighbourhoods with 20+ per cent Non-Western ethnic minorities 1985-2008.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **All** | | | | **Moving families** | |
|  | All immigrants | Arrived after 1984 | No family unification | Danes | Arrived after 1984 | No family unification |
| **Duration of stay (ref: 0-1 year)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2-5 years | 1.53 | 1.41 | 1.71 |  | 1.36 | 1.59 |
| 6-10 years | 2.07 | 1.92 | 2.49 |  | 1.62 | 1.94 |
| 11-15 years | 2.14 | 2.11 | 2.64 |  | 1.64 | 1.93 |
| 16-24 years | 2.02 | 2.01 | 2.36 |  | 1.46 | 1.56 |
| **Country group ( ref: Other Asia)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eastern Europe |  | .85 | .83 |  | .78 | .74 |
| Middle East and North Africa |  | 1.15 | .84 |  | 1.17 | .90 |
| Other Africa |  | 1.18 | 1.12 |  | 1.22 | 1.19 |
| **Situation at arrival (ref.: arrived alone)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Arrived as single wit children |  | 1.10 |  |  | 1.14 |  |
| Arrived as couple without children |  | 1.18 | 1.11 |  | 1.13 | 1.13 |
| Arrived as couple with children |  | 1.28 | 1.14 |  | 1.20 | 1.10 |
| Family unified with parents |  | 1.54 |  |  | 1.62 |  |
| Family unified with immigrant |  | 1.78 |  |  | 1.93 |  |
| Family unified with Dane |  | .69 |  |  | .83 |  |
| Arrived with parents |  | 1.29 |  |  | 1.38 |  |
| **Coming from refugee country** |  | 1.34 | 1.68 |  | 1.36 | 1.71 |
| **Period (ref.: 1985-87)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1988-92 | 2.05 | 2.36 | 2.84 | 3.24 | 2.36 | 3.01 |
| 1993-97 | 4.03 | 4.52 | 5.37 | 6.73 | 4.59 | 5.63 |
| 1998-02 | 7.63 | 8.14 | 10.03 | 12.99 | 7.14 | 8.94 |
| 2003-06 | 8.94 | 8.94 | 11.30 | 17.50 | 8.54 | 11.71 |
| 2007-08 | 10.02 | 9.53 | 11.93 | 19.48 | 9.83 | 13.55 |
| **Women?** | .80 | .77 | .87 | .79 | .77 | .85 |
| **Age group (Ref.:15-29)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 30-44 | .77 | .83 | .94 | .90 | .86 | .96 |
| 45-59 | .75 | .88 | 1.01 | .71 |  | 1.12 |
| 60- | .71 | 1.11 | 1.26 | .36 | 1.41 | 1.62 |
| **Family type (ref: single without children)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Single with children | 1.53 | 1.39 | 1.33 | 1.76 | 1.34 | 1.30 |
| Couple without children | .98 | .95 |  | .58 | 1.09 |  |
| Couple with children | 1.14 |  | 1.10 | .48 | 1.12 | 1.14 |
| Complex household | 1.13 |  | .99 | .61 | 1.01 | .96 |
| **Size of family: number of persons** | 1.30 | 1.23 | 1.20 | 1.01 | 1.13 | 1.12 |
| **Employment situation (Ref.: Employed)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| On pension | 1.57 | 1.59 | 1.55 | 1.63 | 1.49 | 1.44 |
| On welfare etc. | 1.41 | 1.27 | 1.29 | 1.45 | 1.14 | 1.21 |
| On unemployment | 1.51 | 1.37 | 1.31 | 1.45 | 1.36 | 1.34 |
| Student | 1.02 | 1.01 | 1.08 | .78 | .93 |  |
| **Household income quintiles (Ref.: Quint 5)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Quint 1 | 2.86 | 2.03 | 2.27 | 4.19 | 1.87 | 2.05 |
| Quint 2 | 3.05 | 2.30 | 2.62 | 3.68 | 2.19 | 2.46 |
| Quint 3 | 2.36 | 1.91 | 2.17 | 2.84 | 1.87 | 2.14 |
| Quint 4 | 1.80 | 1.56 | 1.73 | 2.10 | 1.57 | 1.73 |
| **Urbanisation (Ref.: towns < 10.000 inh.)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Capital Region | 18.46 | 17.24 | 15.72 | 41.07 | 16.98 | 15.45 |
| Three biggest provincial cities | 20.38 | 17.82 | 17.18 | 23.39 | 19.96 | 20.07 |
| Other cities and town > 10.000 inh. | 12.01 | 10.88 | 9.84 | 18.24 | 11.24 | 10.48 |
| Nagelkerke R2 | .249 | .278 | .280 | .212 | .250 | .261 |

Note: All shown coefficients are significant on the 0.05 level.

As shown the number of multi-ethnic neighbourhoods have increased much over time. The odds ratios for the different periods of time show as expected, everything else being equal, that the probability of living in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods increases much over time, especially until 1997. In the last three periods the increase is much smaller.

The probability of living in multi-ethnic neighbourhood increases until 11-15 years of stay and then declines. This pattern is found for both recently moved immigrants and all. By comparing the results for immigrants arrived after 1984 in column 2 and 5 it is seen, however, that the increase is lower for moved families than for all. The odds ratio for the groups who have been 11-15 years in the country compared to the newly arrived is 2.11 for the whole group and only 1.64 for recently moved. The differences between the two groups increase with length of stay and are greatest for those who have stayed more than 16 years. For those arrived without family unification the relative difference is even larger. This indicates that part of the increase in the frequency of living in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods can attributed to the increasing concentration of immigrants over the years in some neighbourhoods. Moreover, the chosen frequency of living in multi-ethnic neighbourhood, which is indicated by recently moved immigrants, shows a greater decrease after 11-15 years.

It could be assumed that the results are sensitive to the, somewhat arbitrary, definition of multi-ethnic neighbourhood. We have thus made some regressions based on another definition. The results for multi-ethnic neighbourhoods with more than 40 % ethnic minorities are shown in Table 6.

Table 6 Results of logistic regressions (Odds ratios) for living in neighbourhoods with *40+* per cent ethnic minorities.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Arrived after 1984 | No family unification |
| **Duration of stay (ref: 0-1 year)** |  |  |
| 2-5 years | 1,45 | 1,84 |
| 6-10 years | 1,97 | 2,69 |
| 11-15 years | 2,14 | 2,81 |
| 16-24 years | 2,02 | 2,47 |

The odds ratios for the 40+ neighbourhoods show the same development with years of stay and by comparison with Table 5 it is seen that the differences are small. In general the odds ratios for the 40+ neighbourhoods are a little bigger indicating that these neighbourhoods have a greater attraction on immigrants.

As for living in social housing the general level has been a little higher for those who came without family unification. Refugees have more often settled in multi-ethnic neighbourhood, especially those who came without family unification.

Immigrants coming from Other Africa most often have moved into multi-ethnic neighbourhood. We know from other studies (Skifter Andersen 2006a) that especially Somalis very often live in these neighbourhoods, and they are the most important ethnic group in this country group. East European immigrants less often have lived in multi-ethnic neighbourhood. Also Other Asians more seldom have lived there. This can partly be explained that many in this group have been family unified with Danes, and that these families seldom have settled in multi-ethnic neighbourhood. Among those, who were not family unified, immigrants from Other Asia rate second among the four groups. Also for immigrants from Middle East and North Africa there are quite a big difference between those who are family unified and those who are not. Like it was shown above for moving into social housing family unified immigrants from these countries more often have moved into multi-ethnic neighbourhoods.

In many ways the odds ratios for the control variables resemble those found for living in social housing. But it does not seem to be so that immigrants living in multi-ethnic neighbourhood have lower incomes and less employment than immigrants in social housing in general. As an example it can be seen that the odds ratio for income quintile 1 compared to quintile 5 is 2.03 for living in multi-ethnic neighbourhood, while it is 2.34 for living in social housing. For Danes income plays a stronger role than for immigrants. Among recently moved the effect of income is even lower. Also employment decreases the frequency of living in multi-ethnic neighbourhood more for Danes than for immigrants. This can partly be explained by that multi-ethnic neighbourhoods also contain other tenures, but it is fair to say that it is not only the most marginalised immigrants that have settled in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods. As for social housing it is not the lowest income groups that are most overrepresented but the quintile 2 group.

As for social housing there is a marked difference between Danish and immigrant households, where Danes in the neighbourhoods most often are singles.

## Conclusions

Two main questions have been examined in the paper:

1. To what extent have immigrants coming to Denmark settled in rental housing (social housing) after their arrival and how has this been changing with the duration of their stay? Does the frequency of staying in social housing decline after some years of stay?
2. Are immigrants often settling in neighbourhoods with concentrations of ethnic minorities after their arrival and does this decline later after some years of stay?

The residential pattern for immigrants in Denmark has been very much a result of the general conditions for immigrants on the housing market. Immigrants have had quite an easy access to social housing if they have been willing to stay on waiting lists for some time, while private renting has been a more closed sector for them (Skifter Andersen, Søholt and Magnusson Turner 2013, Skovgaard Nielsen 2014) except for dwellings lacking amenities. For immigrants in Denmark rental housing has thus been synonymous with social housing. Over the years an increasing part of Non-Western immigrants have settled in social housing and more than half of all ethnic minorities 15+ years lived in social housing in 2008. Part of an explanation is that local authorities have used their right to allocate some dwellings in the sector in advantage of refugees. Moreover, parts of the social housing sector have quite large dwellings, which have been suitable for larger immigrant families. Internal waiting lists have made it easier for them to do their housing career inside social housing. In general the statistical analyses show that immigrants living in social housing are not concentrated to the most vulnerable groups but that many families with better incomes and employment situation are living in the sector.

The figures of how immigrants’ housing average situation changes after arrival show a fast increase in their settlement in social housing in the first years. This was especially the case for immigrants who arrived before 1997, where the proportion staying in social housing after six years of stay reached a peak of nearby 70 % in average. After six years of stay the proportion living in social housing has begun to decline slowly and for those who have stayed more than 20 years the proportion have felled to 60 %. For later immigrants the rate of settling in social housing has been slower. This has partly been due to that the composition of immigrants has changed since 2001 with much more labour and student immigration.

The statistical analyses of factors explaining immigrants’ frequency of staying in social housing compared with Danes, controlling for differences in income, family situation etc., showed that just after arrival immigrants’ frequency of living in social housing is not much higher than for Danes. The frequency then increases with length of stay until after 10 years of stay where it stagnates. For immigrants having been more than 16 years in the country the frequency is then getting somewhat lower.

Refugees, who are a more vulnerable group, and family unified immigrants (but not unified with Danes) have more often settled in social housing than immigrants without unification. Among immigrants without unification those coming from Eastern and Central Europe less often live in social housing, while immigrants from Other Africa do it most often. For all the groups there is the same development where their presence in social housing has declined after 10 years of stay.

Immigrants’ settlement in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods has been closely connected with their moves into social housing. And the factors explaining this resembles the factors explaining staying in social housing but not entirely. There are some differences. In average more and more immigrants have been settled in multi-ethnic neighbourhood with duration of stay; simply because the increase in the number of ethnic minorities in the country has increased, which has created more neighbourhoods with many immigrants. For the whole immigrant population the proportion staying in multi-ethnic neighbourhood with more than 20 % ethnic minorities increased very fast in the 1990’ties, but stagnated after 2000 and fell after 2005. This development can be ascribed to the active housing allocation policies performed by local authorities since 2001.

The statistical analyses, controlling for the differences between periods and background factors, shows that immigrants settlement in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods have increased much during the first 10 years of stay, then stagnating and after 15 years falling. Part of this increase is explained by that some immigrants have stayed for a longer time in neighbourhoods that have experienced an increase in the concentration of ethnic minorities. In this case the development is not a result of a choice of multi-ethnic neighbourhoods. The analyses of the development for recently moved immigrants show however that there has been the same kind of development for these, however at a lower level.

Refugees have more often settled in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods, especially those who came without family unification. In many ways the results resemble those found for living in social housing. But it does not seem to be so that immigrants living in multi-ethnic neighbourhood have lower incomes and less employment than immigrants in social housing in general. It is fair to say that it is not only the most marginalised immigrants that have settled in multi-ethnic neighbourhood.

The final conclusions of this study is that signs can be found in Denmark of that immigrants after more than 15 years of stay begin to change their residential situation towards the situation of comparable Danes. The large overrepresentation in social housing tends to decrease and the presence in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods diminishes somewhat. In this way the study confirms that a kind of spatial assimilation has taken place. The effect is not large, but perhaps it would increase much with increasing duration of stay after more than 24 years, which we do not have data on. It can be discussed if 15 years is a long or a short time. However, the case of Denmark is very much influenced by the favourable conditions made for immigrants in the social housing sector, which must have diminished their incentives to move into homeownership, as shown in Kauppinen et. al. (forthcoming) and to spatial assimilation.

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1. A Danish survey among moving ethnic minorities by Skifter Andersen (2006b) showed that only seven per cent have had troubles getting mortgages. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Among refugee countries are chosen: Iraq, Lebanon (Palestinians), Iran, Somalia, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan [↑](#footnote-ref-2)