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The mixed population of Denmark

immigration and national identity

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Oral presentation

ABSTRACT to NSA2018

Session 1: Nordic welfare states and immigration

The Mixed Population of Denmark – immigration and national identity

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In this paper we discuss contemporary narratives in Denmark about immigration, national identity, and the underlying idea about a specific Danishness. We look into the relation between the composition and magnitude of the immigrant groups and the attitudes expressed through public and political statements. Immigrants and descendants living in Denmark form very diverse groups, due to their country/culture of origin, their basis for residence in Denmark and the duration of their stay.

January 1st 2018 the population in Denmark consisted of 5,781,190 inhabitants of which 10.2 percent were immigrants and 3.1 percent were descendants born in Denmark by immigrants.

The identification of and the statistics concerning *immigrants* and *descendants* are produced in the official national statistics solely from population register data regarding place of birth and citizenship of the individuals and their parents if included in the register. This classification covers the period back to 1980. Register data regarding conditions among immigrants arriving to Denmark before that date can therefore only be identified if the individuals were living in Denmark 1980 or later.

The public discourse uses similar terms. However, the use of the denominations in the discourse is not in accordance with the terms used in the official statistics. The public discourse tends to focus on Muslim immigrants. However, religion, culture, and national origin are often confused. Basically, we address the problems that emerge from discussing immigrants as one uniform group instead of recognizing their different cultural backgrounds.

Keywords: Immigration, Population composition, Religion, Prejudices, Toleration