

## DESCENDANTS FROM AFRICAN COUNTRIES IN DENMARK: TERRITORIAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS OF SETTLEMENT IN THE 2010s TO EARLY 2020s

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*Denmark is one of the most attractive European countries for immigrants due to its high level of socio-economic and political development. However, an increase in the migration burden has led to a tightening of the country's migration legislation, aimed primarily at limiting the flow of migrants from non-Western countries, preventing segregation, and ensuring the successful integration of migrants into the host society. This study aims to analyse the distribution of immigrants and their descendants in Denmark, focusing on migrants from African countries (Somalia, Morocco, Egypt, Ghana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Eritrea) between 2010 and 2023. The authors examine legislative changes in Danish migration policy and analyse data from the Danish Statistical Office regarding migration trends and the geographic distribution of both the native population and individuals of foreign origin across second-level administrative units (communes). The research methodology employs the Herfindahl–Hirschman index to assess the degree of territorial concentration of people of African descent, alongside the Ryabtsev index to measure the similarity between the settlement patterns of migrants and their descendants from Africa and those of Denmark's indigenous population. The results indicate a decrease in the territorial concentration of the African population in Denmark, as well as a convergence between the settlement patterns of African migrants and Danish-origin residents. However, the intensity of these processes varies significantly based on immigrants' status, duration of residence in Denmark, and the size of specific African diasporas. Despite the observed deconcentration and increased settlement integration, the African population, particularly individuals of Somali and Moroccan descent, continues*

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*to exhibit high levels of territorial exclusion and segregation. Their settlement patterns are often concentrated in ‘vulnerable residential areas’, which still reflect significant socio-spatial disparities.*

**Keywords:**

Denmark, immigrants and their descendants, Africans, refugees, settlement, vulnerable residential areas

**Introduction**

In recent years, Europe has experienced a significant surge in immigration. However, this influx is not evenly spread across the continent. Immigrants tend to cluster in the largest urban centres, and in these areas of high migrant concentration, the rise of segregated neighbourhoods has become an increasing concern [1–6]. These neighbourhoods often grapple with low socio-economic status, elevated crime rates, and challenges in providing effective public services.

Following the European migration crisis, the trend of emerging migrant enclaves in the suburbs of major European cities intensified, driven by a rise in the number of asylum seekers and undocumented migrants from developing countries. Lately, there has been a particularly notable increase in migration to the EU from Africa — a region characterized by rapid population growth, severe economic challenges, and political instability. As a result, European governments now face the challenge of ensuring the equitable distribution and effective integration of individuals whose social norms and cultural backgrounds differ from those of the host societies [7–9].

Denmark is one of the most attractive EU countries for immigrants due to its high levels of socioeconomic and political development. Between 2010 and 2023, the number of migrants in Denmark increased from 428.9 thousand to 724.7 thousand,<sup>1</sup> accounting for 12.1 % of the country’s population. However, despite this growth, Denmark was significantly less affected by the European migration crisis compared to its neighbours, as reflected in the number of asylum applications received. At the height of the migration crisis (2015 and 2016), when EU countries collectively received 1.228 million and 1.221 million asylum applications, respectively, Danish authorities processed only 20.9 thousand and

<sup>1</sup> FOLK1C: Folketal den 1. i kvartalet efter område, køn, alder (5-års intervaller), herkomst og oprindelsesland, *Danmarks Statistik*, URL: <https://www.statbank.dk/FOLK1C> (accessed 25.03.2024).

6.2 thousand applications (1.6 % and 0.5 % of the EU total).<sup>1</sup> Denmark's relatively low intake of refugees, compared to the European average, can be attributed to its strict immigration and integration policies, which have been among the toughest in Europe for asylum seekers in recent decades.

Many aspects of Denmark's migration policy, particularly in relation to asylum procedures and border control, have been integrated into the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, which took effect in June 2024.<sup>2</sup> These policies have also been adopted by other European countries [10–12]. This context defines this study's focus: measures taken by the Danish authorities to prevent the segregation of migrants from non-Western countries<sup>3</sup> and their descendants,<sup>4</sup> as well as to support their integration into Danish society. These efforts include programs for resettling refugees and eliminating migrant ghettos in urban areas [13–15].

The study seeks to explore how African immigrants and their descendants were distributed across Denmark between 2010 and 2023. It specifically examines changes in Danish migration policy aimed at reducing migration pressure and promoting a more balanced geographic distribution of foreign-born residents. It also identifies settlement trends among African immigrants and their descendants, including their spatial distribution in relation to the Danish population.

## **Materials and methodology**

This study draws on a broad range of scholarly and analytical works examining the characteristics of Danish migration policy. The first group of studies deal with the development and evolution of Denmark's migration legislation, which aims to both restrict migrant inflows and stimulate migrants' integration

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<sup>1</sup> Asylum applicants by type, citizenship, age and sex — annual aggregated data, *Eurostat*, URL: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/633be081-5709-475f-80f4-3210837e981c?lang=en> (accessed 25.03.2024).

<sup>2</sup> What is the New Pact on Migration and Asylum of the EU? *European Commission*. URL: [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/new-pact-migration-and-asylum\\_en](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/new-pact-migration-and-asylum_en) (accessed 25.03.2024).

<sup>3</sup> Denmark's Statistical Office categorizes countries into two groups: Western and non-Western. Western countries include all EU countries, as well as Andorra, the Vatican, the United Kingdom, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway, San Marino, Switzerland, Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. Non-Western countries encompass all others (Indhold, *Danmarks Statistik*. URL: <https://www.dst.dk/da/Statistik/dokumentation/statistikdokumentation/befolkningen/indhold> (accessed 10.04.2024)).

<sup>4</sup> According to the definition by Denmark's Statistical Office, the category of "immigrants and their descendants" refers to the foreign-born population. An immigrant is defined as an individual born abroad, whose parents were both born outside of Denmark and do not hold Danish citizenship. A descendant is defined as an individual born in Denmark to parents who are neither Danish citizens nor born in the country (Ibid.).

[16–18]. The second group of studies discuss the spatial distribution of refugees within the country [19–21] and the challenges associated with Denmark’s refugee resettlement policy. These challenges include the low retention of refugees in rural areas [22; 23] and the spread of socio-spatial and ethnic segregation to small and medium-sized towns [24; 25]. Finally, studies in the third group examine Denmark’s approach to managing the migration crisis, with a particular focus on how these strategies have been applied or referenced by other Scandinavian countries [26–30].

The study uses official data from Statistics Denmark on migration patterns and directions to the country, and the distribution of native and foreign-born residents across administrative divisions.<sup>1</sup>

To analyze changes in the settlement patterns of immigrants from African countries<sup>2</sup> and their descendants in Denmark at the second-level administrative divisions (municipalities), the study employs the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI). This index measures the degree of concentration of foreign-born residents and tracks its changes over the period 2010–2023. The index ranges from  $10,000/N$  to  $10,000$ , with lower values indicating a decrease in territorial concentration and higher values, an increase:

$$HHI = \sum_{i=1}^N S_i^2,$$

where  $S_i$  is the share of the  $i^{\text{th}}$  municipality in the total number of immigrants and their descendants in the country, %;

$N$  is the number of municipalities where the share of immigrants and their descendants exceeds 0.

To analyze the changes in the settlement patterns of migrants from African countries between 2010 and 2023, driven by the European migration crisis and Danish policies, the Ryabtsev Index of structural shifts ( $I_r$ ) is used:

$$I_r = \sqrt{\frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (k_a - k_d)^2}{\sum_{i=1}^n (k_a + k_d)^2}},$$

where  $n$  is the number of municipalities;

<sup>1</sup> Borgere, *Danmarks Statistik*. URL: <https://www.statbank.dk/20021> (accessed 20.03.2024).

<sup>2</sup> The research uses the six largest African-origin groups by population — migrants from Somalia, Morocco, Egypt, Ghana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Eritrea — as a case study.

$k_a$  is the share of each of the  $n$  municipalities in the immigrants from African countries and their descendants;

$k_d$  is the share of each of the  $n$  municipalities in the population of Danish origin.

The Ryabtsev Index ranges from 0 to 1 and uses a value scale [31] that allows for a qualitative interpretation of the interconnected changes in settlement patterns at the municipal level in Denmark, comparing the settlement patterns of immigrants from Africa and their descendants with those of native Danes.

### **The evolution of Denmark's migration policy**

In the decades following World War II, Denmark's migration policy was notably welcoming to both labour migrants and refugees. Denmark was the first country to ratify the 1951 Refugee Convention. In 1956, the Danish Refugee Council was established, partly in response to the increasing number of refugees from Hungary following the Hungarian Uprising. In 1983, Denmark adopted the Aliens Act, one of the most liberal in Europe [32; 33]. As a result, migrants arriving in the country could not only expect asylum but also acquire legal rights to family reunification, financial and housing support from the state, language training, and employment [17; 34]. Asylum seekers were allowed to choose their place of settlement, which led to their concentration in large cities with better employment opportunities.

The adoption of the Aliens Act, during the Iran-Iraq War and later the Somali Civil War, resulted in a sharp increase in the number of asylum seekers. For instance, before its adoption in 1982, fewer than 300 asylum applications were submitted, but by 1986, the number had risen to 9,300.<sup>1</sup> The Danish Refugee Council was unable to provide housing for all applicants in the capital region or other major cities. To reduce the risk of marginalization in urban ethnic ghettos, a decision was made in 1986 to distribute refugees across administrative-territorial units, taking into account population size, available housing, job openings, and other factors [20; 21]. However, this initiative did not include sanctions for refugees who chose secondary migration within the country.

The Integration Act of 1998<sup>2</sup> marked the beginning of a stricter phase in migration policy, followed by the creation of the Ministry for Refugee, Immigra-

<sup>1</sup> Asylum Applications in Industrialized Countries: 1980-1999 (Nov 2001), *UNHCR*, URL: <https://www.unhcr.org/media/asylum-applications-industrialized-countries-1980-1999-nov-2001> (accessed 02.04.2024).

<sup>2</sup> Lov om integration af udlændinge i Danmark (integrationslov), 1998, *Retsinformation*, URL: <https://www.retsinformation.dk/eli/lta/1998/474> (accessed 02.04.2024).

tion, and Integration Affairs in 2001. The Integration Act<sup>1</sup> introduced financial sanctions for migrants who refused to participate in integration programs, shifted the responsibility for integration to the country's municipalities, and restricted the possibility of refugee relocation during the program [35].

Subsequent restrictive trends intensified: in 2002, the Start-Help program was introduced, replacing social assistance for refugees with a new benefits scheme aimed at facilitating their entry into the labour market. This program reduced social assistance payments for newly arrived refugees by 40 %, extended the time required to obtain residence permits from 3 to 7 years, and introduced a requirement to pass a basic Danish language exam<sup>2</sup> [36].

The European migration crisis led to a rise in asylum seekers, prompting Denmark to tighten its migration policy. Amendments to the Aliens Act gave the police the power to confiscate valuables and money from asylum seekers to cover their accommodation costs. Additionally, the amendments expanded the practice of granting temporary protection status,<sup>3</sup> increased the period during which refugees cannot apply for family reunification from 1 to 3 years, and proposed extending the period required for obtaining permanent residence from 3 to 6 years. The bill also included a 10 % reduction in financial benefits.<sup>4</sup> Denmark, as stated by Prime Minister M. Frederiksen,<sup>5</sup> aims to adopt a “zero asylum seekers” policy.<sup>6</sup> So in 2022, the country announced a reduction in the UN refugee intake quota from 500 to 200 people. In 2019, amendments were made to the Aliens Act, the Integration Act, and the Repatriation Act, shifting the focus from integration to repatriation.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This law does not apply to citizens of countries that are members of the Nordic Council (Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland) and the European Union.

<sup>2</sup> LBK nr 608 af 17/07/2002, *Retsinformation*, URL: <https://www.retsinformation.dk/eli/lta/2002/608> (accessed 02.04.2024).

<sup>3</sup> Temporary protection status is granted for 1 year with the possibility of extension for a two-year period if the asylum seeker still requires protection.

<sup>4</sup> LOV nr 102 af 03/02/2016, *Retsinformation*, URL: <https://www.retsinformation.dk/eli/lta/2016/102> (accessed 02.04.2024).

<sup>5</sup> Danish prime minister wants country to accept ‘zero’ asylum seekers, *The local*, URL: <https://www.thelocal.dk/20210122/danish-prime-minister-wants-country-to-accept-zero-asylum-seekers> (accessed 01.04.2024).

<sup>6</sup> However, the Danish government's efforts to limit the acceptance of asylum seekers do not apply to those displaced from Ukraine: Gill, J. 2023, Denmark's ‘zero asylum’ policy reversed for Ukraine, *Context*, URL: <https://www.context.news/socioeconomic-inclusion/denmarks-zero-asylum-policy-reversed-for-ukraine> (accessed 01.04.2024).

<sup>7</sup> LOV nr 174 af 27/02/2019, *Retsinformation*, URL: <https://www.retsinformation.dk/eli/lta/2019/174> (accessed 02.04.2024).

The Danish government continues to implement a policy of distributing migrants across the country through a municipal quota system: each year, authorities determine the number of refugees to be distributed among municipalities, based on population size and the municipalities' ability to facilitate migrant integration<sup>1</sup>. These measures aim to prevent the enclave formation of migrant populations and the creation of ethnic ghettos [15], which, since 2021, have officially been referred to as *udsat boligområde* — “vulnerable residential areas”<sup>2</sup>.

The Danish authorities are addressing this issue through the “One Denmark without Parallel Societies — No Ghettos in 2030” program,<sup>3</sup> which bans the placement of migrants and their descendants from non-Western countries in “vulnerable residential areas”. The range of measures includes restrictions on social benefits and family reunification programs. In some cases, more drastic measures are being implemented to address social exclusion in urban residential areas. These include reducing the proportion of social housing, where many migrants reside, to 40 % of the total housing stock. The plan involves restructuring this housing into spaces for young people and nursing homes, as well as demolishing buildings and improving the surrounding area. Residents affected by these changes will need to find new housing either within the municipality or elsewhere.<sup>4</sup>

### **Changes in the settlement of African and local populations in Denmark in 2010 – 2023**

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Migration from Africa to Denmark before the 1990s was relatively low in intensity, with the number of immigrants from the region and their descendants totalling just under 11,000 people. The migration flow mainly consisted of labour migrants and their families, as well as students from North and East Africa.

African migration to Denmark intensified in the early 1990s, mainly due to migrants and their families fleeing war-torn Somalia. By 2000, the number of immigrants from Africa and their descendants had grown to 35,900, with more

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<sup>1</sup> Visiteringskvoter, *Udlændingestyrelsen*, URL: <https://us.dk/tal-og-statistik/visiteringskvoter> (accessed 03.04.2024).

<sup>2</sup> 2021/1 LSV 23, *Retsinformation*, URL: <https://www.retsinformation.dk/eli/ft/202113L00023> (accessed 02.04.2024).

<sup>3</sup> Æt Danmark uden parallelsamfund, *Regeringen*, URL: <https://www.regeringen.dk/aktuelt/tidligere-publikationer/%c3%a9t-danmark-uden-parallel-samfund/> (accessed 02.04.2024).

<sup>4</sup> Hvad betyder det at være et omdannelsesområde? *Danmarks Almene Boliger*, URL: <https://bl.dk/politik-og-analyser/temaer/parallel-samfund/hvad-betyder-det-at-vaere-et-omdannelsesomraade/> (accessed 02.04.2024).

than 40 % of them being Somali (Table 1). Later, after the introduction of the Start-Help program in 2002, the flow of refugees from Somalia — and to a lesser extent from Morocco, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Ghana — almost entirely stopped. Before the European migration crisis, the growth of the African population in Denmark was linked to increased labour and educational migration, family reunification, and high birth rates among migrants.

Table 1

**Number of African migrants and their descendants in Denmark, 1980 — 2023**

Country of origin	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2023
Somalia	133	531	14,856	16,831	21,072	21,416
Morocco	2,104	4,267	7813	9831	11,659	12,243
Eritrea	0	0	122	343	7,025	8,222
Ghana	158	394	1,031	1,908	2,936	3,521
Democratic Republic of the Congo	15	43	172	729	2,580	3,267
Egypt	852	1,154	1,641	2,014	2,595	2,841
<i>Total</i>	5,617	10,835	35,895	49,743	70,212	77,155

*Source:* Compiled by the authors based on: FOLK2: Folketal 1. januar efter køn, alder, herkomst, oprindelsesland og statsborgerskab, *Danmarks Statistik*, URL: <https://www.statbank.dk/FOLK2> (accessed 10.04.2024).

By 2010, the distribution of migrants from African countries and their descendants in Denmark was highly uneven. The high spatial concentration of migrants can be attributed to the significant proportion of labour migrants and students, as well as the arrival of many refugees before 1998, when Denmark's migration policy became stricter (Table 2). In 2010, 53.8 % of African migrants lived in the four largest municipalities—Copenhagen, Aarhus, Odense, and Aalborg — while only 20.7 % of the native population resided in these areas. There were also notable differences in the degree of territorial concentration depending on the time of migration, the size of the diaspora, and the reasons for migration.

Table 2

**Indicators of territorial concentration of African migrants, their descendants, and native Danes across municipalities, 2010 — 2023**

HHI by population group	2010	2013	2016	2019	2022	2023
Morocco	2693.9	2530.8	2365.7	2221.8	2082.4	2011.5
Somalia	1429.9	1401.9	1253.4	1347.3	1377.5	1392.7

The end of Table 2

HHI by population group	2010	2013	2016	2019	2022	2023
Egypt	1557.9	1595.7	1553.5	1512.9	1429.2	1298.1
Chana	1151.6	1208.2	1099.0	948.9	823.8	780.6
Democratic Republic of the Congo	356.0	300.4	266.0	314.0	313.1	303.6
Eritrea	1533.3	1039.5	208.2	207.7	203.9	199.3
All Africans	1306.8	1242.6	1007.7	946.4	895.5	862.8
Danes	207.5	215.9	222.5	229.1	232.4	233.4

Source: Compiled by the authors based on: FOLK1C: Folketal den 1. i kvartalet efter område. køn. alder (5-års intervaller). herkomst og oprindelsesland. *Danmarks Statistik*. URL: <https://www.statbank.dk/FOLK1C> (accessed 10.04.2024).

In general, Moroccans, Somalis, and Egyptians, who were the largest and longest-established African groups in the country, had the highest territorial concentration rates. The migration flows from Morocco and Egypt, primarily driven by labour and educational migration, led to a high concentration of migrants from these countries in the most economically developed and densely populated areas of Denmark. For instance, about 82 % of all Moroccans in Denmark lived in the Capital Region (Hovedstaden), with 50.6 % concentrated in the municipality of Copenhagen. Aarhus, Odense, and Aalborg accounted for another 7.2 % of Moroccans. For Egyptians, these figures were slightly lower: 71 % of the community resided in the Capital Region, and 37.5 % lived in Copenhagen. Somali migrants, largely refugees and their families, were more evenly spread out, with 65.8 % living in the four largest municipalities. However, unlike the Moroccan and Egyptian communities, the Somali population was not predominantly concentrated in the capital. Only 26.7 % lived in Copenhagen, while Aarhus hosted 22.9 %, Odense 10.5 %, and Aalborg 5.7 %.

As a result of Denmark's policies toward migrants and their descendants, the African-origin population has become less concentrated geographically, despite overall growth. The Herfindahl-Hirschman Index for the African population decreased from 1,306.8 to 862.8 between 2010 and 2023 (Table 2). This shift was mainly driven by a decline in concentration in the largest municipalities: Copenhagen's share of African settlements dropped from 32.5 % to 25.3 %, Aarhus from 12.7 % to 11.3 %, and Odense from 5.5 % to 5.1 %. In contrast, Aalborg's share increased from 3.2 % to 3.9 %.

The most significant decrease in concentration was observed among Eritreans, whose index dropped from 1,533.3 to 199.3. As of 2023, Eritreans in Denmark exhibited a lower level of residential concentration than the country's native population. At the same time, the Eritrean population grew at the highest rate, mainly due to an influx of refugees<sup>1</sup>, whose distribution across the country was a managed process. The process of deconcentration was largely facilitated by a reduction in the share of Eritreans in Copenhagen and its two neighbouring municipalities, Herlev and Gladsaxe, where their combined share dropped from 51.1 % to just 4.4 %!

The number of people from the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Denmark increased nearly 4.5 times in the given period due to a rise in forced migration. However, their settlement patterns saw a smaller decline in territorial concentration, as many initially lived in temporary centres in small municipalities. Their further deconcentration was driven by redistribution from these smaller areas rather than a decline in the largest municipalities. For instance, the proportion of Congolese residents dropped significantly in Vesthimmerland (from 9.2 % to 2.1 %), Tønder (from 5.2 % to 0.6 %), and Skive (from 3.8 % to 1.6 %).

Despite efforts to resettle Moroccans, Egyptians, and Somalis—both through government programs and their own relocations—their concentration in certain areas remains extremely high. The gradual deconcentration of Moroccans and Somalis has been associated with a declining share of the Capital Region municipalities (primarily Copenhagen) and the municipalities of Frederiksberg, Albertslund, and Ishøj (all in Hovedstaden), as well as Ringsted (Zealand). Among Egyptians, the most significant declines occurred in Frederiksberg and Gentofte (both in Hovedstaden), as well as Roskilde and Holbæk (both in Zealand).

The distribution of Africans across Denmark shows not only a decrease in spatial concentration but also a convergence between the residential patterns of newcomers and native populations (Table 3). Between 2010 and 2023, the difference level for the entire African population decreased from very significant to significant [31]. However, structural differences remain more pronounced for African immigrants and their descendants compared to Denmark's foreign-born population overall. In 2023, the Ryabtsev Index for the latter was 0.295, indicating a substantial difference.

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<sup>1</sup> A larger number of applications was submitted only by citizens of Syria.

Table 3

**Differences in settlement patterns of native Danes and African immigrants across Danish municipalities, 2010 – 2023**

Year	The Ryabtsev Index by migrants and their descendants from Africa and Danes settled in the communes of the country						
	Ghana	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Egypt	Morocco	Somalia	Eritrea	All Africans
2010	0.549	0.488	0.597	0.699	0.543	0.605	0.535
2011	0.542	0.499	0.597	0.693	0.543	0.573	0.531
2012	0.554	0.496	0.592	0.684	0.539	0.544	0.522
2013	0.543	0.444	0.587	0.678	0.528	0.509	0.510
2014	0.549	0.414	0.575	0.672	0.512	0.422	0.499
2015	0.541	0.394	0.580	0.664	0.501	0.299	0.469
2016	0.521	0.385	0.575	0.659	0.495	0.325	0.453
2017	0.499	0.365	0.572	0.653	0.496	0.340	0.440
2018	0.498	0.344	0.568	0.646	0.499	0.336	0.435
2019	0.488	0.345	0.559	0.640	0.502	0.342	0.427
2020	0.480	0.324	0.552	0.634	0.502	0.343	0.422
2021	0.477	0.320	0.551	0.630	0.503	0.332	0.418
2022	0.467	0.317	0.545	0.627	0.503	0.329	0.411
2023	0.459	0.302	0.525	0.621	0.504	0.318	0.402

*Source:* Compiled by the authors based on: FOLK1C: Folketal den 1. i kvartalet efter område, køn, alder (5-års intervaller), herkomst og oprindelsesland. *Danmarks Statistik*. URL: <https://www.statbank.dk/FOLK1C> (accessed 10.04.2024).

The settlement patterns of African migrants and native Danes have become more similar due to both government efforts to distribute refugees and migrants' self-relocation. However, the pace of this process varied. Eritrean and Congolese migrants, whose numbers grew the most due to forced migration, showed the greatest convergence with Danes. For Eritreans and Somalis, similarities peaked during the 2015–2016 migration crisis but later declined as migrants gained more choice in where to live. In contrast, for Moroccans, Egyptians, and Ghanaians, the shift toward a more even distribution was slower and more consistent.

Despite the decreasing territorial concentration and the increasing similarity between African migrants' settlement patterns and those of native Danes, these differences remain significant, indicating a high level of segregation, particularly among Moroccans and Somalis. Their concentration in “vulnerable

residential areas” hinders successful integration into Danish society and has negative consequences for these communities. These groups have high levels of criminalization [37], and this issue is especially pronounced among the second generation of these diasporas. According to the crime index used by Statistics Denmark,<sup>1</sup> Somali migrants ranked second and Moroccan migrants eighth in 2022. Among Danish-born Somalis and Moroccans, crime index values were even higher, placing them third and fourth among the most criminalized population groups. Additionally, migrants from these two countries exhibit some of the lowest employment rates among the working-age population, including Danish-born men aged 20–40.<sup>2</sup> The poor socioeconomic conditions in areas with high concentrations of Somali and Moroccan migrants and their descendants have led Danish authorities to classify most of these neighbourhoods as “vulnerable residential areas”.

## **Conclusion**

The decades-long increase in the number of migrants from non-Western countries has led to significant changes in Denmark’s migration policy. One of the main reasons why Denmark moved away from its once highly liberal migration model in the 1980s was the sharp increase in the number of asylum seekers from war-torn Somalia in the early 1990s. Tightening restrictions in Denmark’s migration legislation involved reducing social benefits, increasing control over integration and readmission programs, and complicating residence permit procedures. A major step toward a more even distribution of refugees across the country was the introduction of quotas for their allocation among municipalities, along with economic sanctions for migrants who moved independently. As a result, Denmark’s migration policy has shifted from being one of the most liberal in Europe to one of the most restrictive, aiming to deter asylum seekers.

The settlement patterns of Denmark’s largest refugee groups from Africa and their descendants reveal several key trends. Between 2010 and 2023, territorial concentration declined across Danish municipalities for both African migrants as a whole and each specific ethnic group. Differences in settlement patterns among African-origin populations stem from factors such as their legal status, length of stay in Denmark, overall diaspora size, and other variables. Eritrean and Congolese migrants are the most evenly distributed across the country, largely due to state-managed resettlement policies, as their numbers grew alongside the tight-

<sup>1</sup> *Indvandrere i Danmark 2023*, *Danmarks Statistik*, P. 119, URL: <https://www.dst.dk/pubfile/47883/Indv%202023> (accessed 10.04.2024).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* P. 47.

ening of migration laws. In contrast, Moroccans, Somalis, and Egyptians — who arrived earlier and in greater numbers — continue to show extremely high levels of concentration despite some decline.

Between 2010 and 2023, the settlement patterns of African migrants and their descendants became more similar to those of native Danes at the municipal level. Eritreans and Congolese have settlement structures most aligned with the Danish population, while Somalis, Moroccans, and Egyptians show the greatest divergence.

Overall, through its adjustments to migration policies, the Danish government has managed to reduce the spatial concentration of the African population while continuing to address segregation in vulnerable residential areas, which remains a focus of the government's *One Denmark without Parallel Societies — No Ghettos in 2030* initiative.

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