

STUDY OF ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN DANISH FILM 2018

Summary

The study examines ethnic diversity in Danish film, as it appears behind the camera, in films and among audiences. The diversity in Danish film is compared to the current demographics of Danish society as a whole.

In most of the report, the group of “new Danes” (immigrants or descendants of immigrants) is organised by origin from Western or non-Western nations, respectively. Per 1 January 2018, new Danes constitute 13.3% of the population, including 4.8% of Western origin and 8.5% of non-Western origin. The share of new Danes is greatest in the younger part of the population, particularly the 26-36-year age group. A greater share of new Danes resides in the Capital Region and near major cities than in rural areas.

The share of new Danes employed in the film industry has risen significantly since 2012, especially in the areas of production and post-production. The ethnic diversity among film industry employees remains slightly lower than in other industries in Denmark overall. However, the share of new Danes employed in the film industry is higher than in the Danish culture industry as a whole.

Behind the camera, there is major variation among the ethnic diversity in the various occupations. Among employees on films that have received production support in the period, the share of new Danes is highest among directors of photography. In feature films, the share of new-Danish DPs and screenwriters is even significantly above the average of Danish industries overall. The share of new-Danish directors of feature films in the period is on a par with the national average.

Film schools have likewise seen a significant increase in the share of new-Danish students in recent years. The independent, community-based schools are seeing an influx of new-Danish students of non-Western origin.

In terms of feature films, a much greater number of new-Danish actors appear in lead roles than in the last reporting period. On the other hand, the share of new-Danish actors in supporting roles has declined slightly. The share of new-Danish lead characters of non-Western origin in Danish features has increased since the last reporting period. In feature films released in 2015-2017, however, the share of new Danish actors and characters remains lower than in the rest of society.

In documentaries, the share of principal and other characters corresponds to the national average. Despite an overall drop in the number of new Danes participating as characters in documentaries, the number of new-Danish characters of non-Western origin remains slightly above their share of the population as a whole.

In terms of audiences, in the cinema or on digital platforms, new Danes are more active than the population overall. The share of new Danes watching Danish films has more than doubled since the last reporting period and is approaching the national average. The present study indicates that, despite the increasing diversity in the Danish film industry and the film education system, a large share of the new-Danish film audience still finds that Danish films do not reflect the nation's ethnic demographics, and that new Danes continue to be stereotypically represented in Danish films.

Danish Film Institute
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Further information:

Kirsten Barslund
Project Coordinator
kirstenb@dfi.dk
Tel. +45 3374 3526

DFI
DANISH FILM INSTITUTE