

Abstract

This dissertation examines the use of middle names in 19th Century Denmark and how such usage relates to geography and demographics. Middle names are defined here as names that take the typology of a surname but appear between the first name(s) and the surname in the full name (onomastic profile) of an individual.

The data set comprises all names registered in the digitized version of the Danish census from 1880, pertaining to nearly 2,000,000 individuals. As the data are extensive and non-uniformly presented, a systematic method was established whereby name components can be typologically identified through a combination of mechanical and manual processes.

Thus, it has been possible to identify middle names, or the absence of middle names, in more than 98 % of the onomastic profiles listed in the census. Middle names are found in approximately 6.2 % of the registered names. The survey addresses the establishment of principles regarding the lemmatization and categorization of middle names.

Middle names have a long and varied history in Denmark, though until the 19th century their use was almost exclusively among the higher social classes. The relationship between the more widespread use of middle names and the profound societal upheavals during the 19th century required investigation. To examine this, three research questions have been posed: (1) what names are used as middle names in the census; (2) how are middle names used; and (3) are there indications of an established relationship between the use of middle names and individuals' sense of identity, the nature of which relationship can be expected to change over the course of the 19th century due to societal changes?

By considering these questions relative to a number of geographical and demographical aspects (such as gender and age), a thorough insight is provided into Danish usage of middle names during the 19th Century.