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Nation-State Size, Ethnic Diversity and Economic Performance in the OECD

My remarks begin by noting two theoretical traditions, exemplified by Peter Katzenstein and Ernest Gellner. The former noted that small size encouraged consensus given vulnerability to international forces; the latter stressed that such fears were often felt by nations as much as by states. Early research on Denmark was much helped by these perspectives. But my talk focuses on two more recent pieces of research. First, some basic statistical exercises do show that small nationally homogenous nations perform well economically. Second, a set of interviews in 2012 in Denmark--the first of four countries to be studied in my

current research project--suggest mechanisms that explain this result. A word of warning is in order. Small size and national homogeneity can help establish success but (1) there are some exceptions to this rule, and (2) no claim is being made that this is the only route to success—and absolutely no policy calling for ethnic simplification is being advocated or endorsed.