
RADICAL COMPETITORS TO THE RADICAL RIGHT

Explaining the Political Fragmentation of the Far Right in Denmark

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Abstract

For two decades, the far right in Denmark was represented solely by a populist radical right party, the Danish People's Party. With a steady growth in every election since its founding, the party eventually became a major actor in Danish politics. Even with a change of leadership, the party continued to dominate the right-wing. When the Danish People's Party became the country's second largest political party in 2015, it was considered a populist triumph. Few far-right parties in Europe have had as much success in winning direct influence over policy output. Now, five years later, the Danish People's Party has lost three-quarters of its voter support. By adopting tougher positions on immigration, the two mainstream parties, the Social Democrats and the center-right Liberal Party, managed to win back some of the voters who previously left them for the Danish People's Party. This thesis, however, takes a closer look at why voters went the other direction, to the party's two new radical competitors on the far right. The party is currently polling below the New Right, which in just a couple of years has managed to draw level with the Danish People's Party on the right-wing by challenging the established party on immigration. Meanwhile, Rasmus Paludan's Hard Line party won nearly two percent of the vote on a policy platform that included a ban on Islam and the forcible deportation of all non-Western residents. What has caused this political fragmentation of the far right? And what is it with these new rivals that make them so appealing to voters and enable them to compete with, and even outflank, the established far-right party in elections?

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List of Abbreviations

- A** The Alternative [Alternativet]
Left-wing
- K** Conservative People’s Party [Det Konservative Folkeparti]
Centre-right
- DF** Danish People’s Party [Dansk Folkeparti]
Far-right
- RV** Danish Social Liberal Party [Radikale Venstre]
Centre-left
- SK** Hard Line [Stram Kurs]
Far-right
- LA** Liberal Alliance [Liberal Alliance]
Centre-right
- V** Liberal Party [Venstre]
Centre-right
- NB** New Right [Nye Borgerlige]
Far-right
- FrP** Progress Party [Fremskridtspartiet]
Far-right
- EL** Red-Green Alliance [Enhedslisten]
Far-left
- S** Social Democrats [Socialdemokratiet]
Centre-left
- SF** Socialist People’s Party [Socialistisk Folkeparti]
Left-wing

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Introduction

Radical right-wing parties are becoming increasingly influential in Western Europe and have managed to establish a lasting presence in national party systems. Parties belonging to the far-right party family, such as the Northern League in Italy, National Rally in France, the Freedom Party in Austria, and the Danish People's Party, have had a significant impact on policymaking since their initial electoral breakthrough in the 1990s. Some of these parties have even assumed office or lent their support to minority governments.

The far-right party family is the fastest-growing party family in Europe and arguably the most studied of them all (Mudde, 2016, p. 2). Researchers have made significant progress in understanding and identifying the factors that influence electoral success of the party family. The literature on the far right now covers a wide range of topics, from definitional disagreement about the party family, to causes and consequences of the parties' rise, and their impact on democracy. The lasting electoral success of far-right parties shows that they can no longer be considered outsiders of the political system, but established competitors. Moreover, their electoral growth has been accompanied by an increase in their number. In recent years, we have witnessed a fragmentation of the right-wing of the political spectrum in several countries, with new far-right parties emerging and successfully challenging, in some cases even outperforming, the more-established far-right party. This development reflects a far-right scene in transition, and which has not yet decided on its destination. Consequently, the simultaneous fall of the established far-right and rise of new far-right challengers has received little scholarly attention.

Multiple cases of fragmentation of the far right have been observed in Europe over the last few years. In the Netherlands, where the Dutch far right had primarily

been represented by the Party of Freedom, the newly established Forum for Democracy emerged from the sidelines and stunned the political establishment. The party, led by Thierry Baudet, a charismatic Latin-quoting, philosophy-reading intellectual-turned-politician, surged past anti-Islam firebrand Geert Wilders' party and became the largest party in the Dutch Senate in their first ever local elections in 2019. In the United Kingdom, the UK Independence Party (UKIP), a populist challenger to the mainstream, suffered large losses to The Brexit Party (now Reform UK) in the 2019 election. The party, which was then headed by former UKIP leader Nigel Farage, embraces the same Eurosceptic agenda as UKIP. On the Italian right, far-right challenger Brothers of Italy has surged from eight to 18% in the polls in the past year, while Matteo Salvini's more-established Northern League has tumbled from over 35 to around 23%. And in France, the former vice president of the National Rally, Florian Philippot, left the party to form his own nationalist party, The Patriots. Philippot is considered to have been a key architect in softening the racist image of the National Rally (Ivaldi, 2016, p. 225). Now he seeks to challenge his former employer by vowing to take France out of the EU and quit the euro. The phenomenon also extends well beyond European borders. For instance, in Australia, far-right extremism is currently seeping into the mainstream from beyond the fringes of society, as support for newly formed far-right parties such as One Nation and the Conservative National Party is rising (Hutchinson, 2019).

Arguably, one of the most surprising examples of far-right fragmentation happened in the 2019 general election in Denmark. Only four years after the Danish People's Party experienced its largest success, the party suffered a severe setback, losing well over half of its support. Voters fled in all directions. By coopting key aspects of the far right's nativist agenda, the then-governing Liberal Party and the main opposition party the Social Democrats managed to win back left-leaning anti-immigration voters who had previously left them for the Danish People's Party (Jupskås, 2019). Even more surprisingly, a significant number of its supporters turned their backs on the party in favor of its new far-right competitors, the more extreme Hard Line and New Right, which offer even more radical positions. According to polls, more than half of Hard Line's voters and almost two-thirds of New Right-supporters voted for the Danish

People's Party in the previous election. Even though the Danish People's Party has by no means imploded, the fragmentation of the Danish far right becomes nonetheless puzzling as one of Europe's most successful right-wing populist parties suddenly meets challenge from two new radical hardliners.

The proliferation of far-right parties has made the far-right party family larger and more heterogenous (Mudde, 2016). Through an in-depth study of Denmark, where the most recent election displays a clear fragmentation of the right-wing political spectrum, this thesis seeks to uncover important differences between parties belonging to far-right party family. The Danish People's Party, once itself a political outsider, is now contested from the outer periphery by two new radical competitors partly competing for the same electorate. The following question will serve as the overall research question for this study:

What has caused the political fragmentation of the Danish far right?

The thesis builds on many of the same theories that were developed to explain the initial breakthrough of the far right but develops a new framework that is more adequate to explain the relatively new phenomenon of emerging far-right challengers. The empirical analysis applies a multi-method approach to identify and test key demand-side and supply-side factors that might contribute to the fragmentation of the far right in Denmark. In order to narrow the scope of the study, the main research question has been broken down into three more detailed sub-questions, each studied with different approaches in the analysis. These sub-questions aim to shape the structure of the thesis and to guide the analysis.

The first sub-question focuses on the demand-side of far-right politics, asking: *Has there been a change in voters' attitudes toward immigration and the political establishment prior to the 2019 election?* This question will be answered by looking at voter attitudes by means of opinion polls and surveys.

The second sub-question asks *Has the Danish People's Party shifted in its spatial placement over time, prompting a spatial opening for New Right and Hard Line to enter?* Inspired by Cas Mudde (2007), I distinguish between two aspects of the supply-side; that external to the parties and that internal to them. The main part of the empirical analysis

concerns external supply and examines political opportunity structures in order to answer this question. To account for this potential spatial shift, I use expert survey data to observe changes in the position of the Danish People's Party over time and conduct a dimensional analysis of the Danish People's Party, New Right and Hard Line in the 2019 election to see whether the two new challengers hold a unique spatial position on the Danish right-wing in the wake of the established far-right party vacating its position.

Finally, internal supply-side factors will be examined, and the third sub-question asks: *Did the far-right challengers succeed in communicating their party's message in the media?* To boost their visibility and mobilize their voter base, media attention is essential in the early stages of a new party. The analysis takes a closer look at the party leaders' ability to attract media attention during the election campaign.

So far, the scholarly literature on the far right has mainly addressed the parties' success and failure by focusing on either demand-side or supply-side factors. Although some analyses include both, many ignore the interaction between them (Golder, 2016). Building on the interplay between popular demands and party supply, this study takes a different approach and examines both political attitudes of the voters, as well as the far-right challengers programmatic supply and patterns of competition with the established far right. By doing so, the thesis seeks to offer a nuanced and multifaceted account of far-right fragmentation.

1.1 Contribution of the Thesis

The far right is gaining substantial political influence. The electoral growth of the parties, as well as their recent participation in, or support of, government coalitions demonstrate that far- parties have become a force to be reckoned with. Even when they are not formally in power, the far right continues to shape patterns of political competition and the political debate by dominating both the political and media agenda.

This master's thesis seeks to contribute to the existing research in several ways. Firstly, the study sets out to provide a better understanding of the mainstreaming of established far-right parties and the normalization of far-right politics. With many

established far-right parties now leaving the political margins for the political mainstream, the distinction between the two becomes increasingly blurred. This ‘new mainstream’ is very much a reality that established parties have to deal with in the years to come, as challengers of today might become allies of tomorrow. Furthermore, studying the mainstreaming of the far right is important because of the broader societal consequences it may have. For instance, it can provide legitimacy to radical views as radical stances are placed at the center of the political debate (Bischof & Wagner, 2019). This paper contributes with insight on the impact of far-right mainstreaming that can inform future research on political competition and right-wing fragmentation. By offering new knowledge on far-right mainstreaming, the study provides a novel contribution on a phenomenon that has only recently increased in importance.

Secondly, a review of the literature reveals a lack of academic attention to the rise of new far-right parties competing for right-wing voters within the same national political system. Previous studies have offered cross-national comparisons of far-right parties or focused mainly on competition between mainstream parties and the far right, thus treated members of the far-right party family as unitary actors in order to compare and contrast them with their mainstream competitors (e.g., Adams et al., 2006; Bale, 2003; Caiani, 2018; Meguid, 2005). This thesis recognizes the heterogeneity of far-right parties not only *between* countries, but also *within* a country, accounting for differences in extremism and policy stances between more moderate far-right parties and the more reactionary extremist right parties. New patterns and developments of the contemporary political landscape might be missed if dynamics between different actors on the right-wing are left unexplored. This current research is useful because it draws on theories of party competition and political opportunity structures to examine competition between far-right actors situated within the same ideological and political space.

Finally, while much research has addressed the media politics of far-right parties in general, little is known about the visibility and coverage of new far-right challengers, which are now becoming increasingly relevant. This study sheds light on the importance of media in the emergence of non-established far-right parties.

In the remaining part of this introduction, I will first navigate the different terminology used to describe the far-right party family and further define and elaborate on the concepts of ‘fragmentation’ and the ‘far right’. I will then explore the political development in Denmark in order to argue that we are witnessing a fragmentation of the Danish far right. Finally, I describe the contours of the Danish party and electoral system, with emphasis on the recent years leading up to the 2019 general election, and introduce the three parties that will be examined in this thesis, and take a closer look at their origin, organization and electoral appeal.

1.2 Conceptualizing the Far Right

The far-right landscape comprises all actors who are positioned further on the right than the mainstream right-wing. However, definitions of the far right vary widely, and terminology remains contested.

The categorization of parties into the broader families to which they belong has become a common approach in comparative studies of political parties. Scholars have traditionally assigned parties to party families based on their ideology, historical links, transnational connections, or party name (Mair & Mudde, 1998). Some of the most well-known party families include communist, socialist, social democratic, conservative, Christian democratic and liberal party families. In the 1980s, radical right parties started to emerge in Western Europe. The rise of these new right-wing parties sparked a debate on how to categorize this group, which unlike other traditional parties, did not seem to adhere to a single foundational doctrine. On the contrary, these parties frequently avoid international associations and links with other political parties, and reject employing similar party names (Zaslave, 2009, p. 309). Despite the near consensus on which parties should be included in the party family, there seems to be a lack of a shared definition among scholars (Rydgren, 2007). Different labels such as ‘(populist) radical right’ (Mudde, 2007; Rydgren, 2007), ‘extreme right’ (Arzheimer, 2009; Bale, 2003; Carter, 2005) and ‘far right’ (Golder, 2016) have been used interchangeably in the literature to refer to the same parties.

Part of this conceptual indistinctness might reflect changes within the movement itself. German political scientist Klaus von Beyme (1988) identified three

chronologically and ideologically different waves of far-right politics in postwar Europe. In his 2019 book *The Far Right Today*, Cas Mudde adds another one and breaks down the history of the far right into four waves. The first wave, beginning with the end of the Second World War, was characterized by marginal neo-fascist parties at the fringes of the political arena. It was followed by a second wave (1955-1980), defined by a revolt against urbanization and the development of the welfare state. The third wave in the 1980s saw the successful rise of radical right parties, like France's National Rally and the Flemish Block in Belgium, and their entrance into national parliaments. Finally, the current fourth wave, which took off at the turn of the century, has brought the mainstreaming and normalization of the far right. While the far-right phenomenon is roughly the same as in the third wave, at least in ideological terms, the political context in which it operates has changed dramatically – partly because of the actions of the far right, but mainly because of actions and developments outside of its direct impact (Mudde, 2019, p. 163). Defining crises of the twenty-first century, such as global terrorism, the financial crisis and the refugee crisis, have ushered sociocultural issues to the heart of the political debate. In the wake of these events, we have seen far-right ideas be openly debated, and as a result, far-right policies have gradually been adopted by mainstream parties.

Although there are disagreements surrounding the different definitions of the far right, a majority of scholars seem to agree on two points. Firstly, most concur that the concept of the far right primarily describes an *ideology* (Eatwell, 2000; Minkenberg, 2000; Mudde, 1995). Some authors include behavior, organization or electoral base when characterizing the parties, but others argue that 'these traits should be seen as 'secondary' as they are informed by, and thus follow from, ideology' (Carter, 2018, p. 161). Secondly, most academics agree that this ideology is part of the broader *right* (Carter, 2018; Mudde, 2019). The left-right division has traditionally been defined in terms of traditional economic policies, with the right supporting a free market and the left supporting a more active role of the state. In new efforts to define the left-right political distinction, many have drawn on the works of Norberto Bobbio (1996), who states that attitudes toward political (in)equality are what distinguish the left from the right. Being more egalitarian, the left strives to reduce social inequality. By contrast,

the more inegalitarian right believes that most inequalities are natural and does not consider it the state's responsibility to reduce these social inequalities.

Having established that the far-right party family consists of a distinct group of parties that share a right-wing ideology, the next question that presents itself is: What characterizes this ideology? Rather than reviewing each separate definition in turn, the discussion highlights the characteristics that are mentioned most often, and on this basis, proposes a minimal definition of the far right. Identifying core traits provides a better understanding of what unite these parties and what separate them from other party families.

Far-right parties can take numerous shapes and forms and their ideology is expressed in many different ways. Over the last few years, the literature has made significant progress in identifying the ideological commonalities that make this a coherent party family. Scholars frequently distinguish between parties that are either *radical* or *extreme* in their ideology. What separates the two is their attitude toward democracy.

Radical right parties typically compete in elections and operate within democratic institutions. They accept the concept of democracy, but challenge some liberal aspects of modern democracies, most notably pluralism and minority rights (Norris, 2005; Rydgren, 2007). Radical right groups tend to adhere to a core ideology that includes nativist, authoritarian and populist elements (Mudde, 2007). Moreover, they favor cultural and ethnic homogeneity and often target those perceived to have contributed to national and political decline: corrupt or liberal elites, as well as immigrants or ethnic and religious minorities (Henderson, 2020).

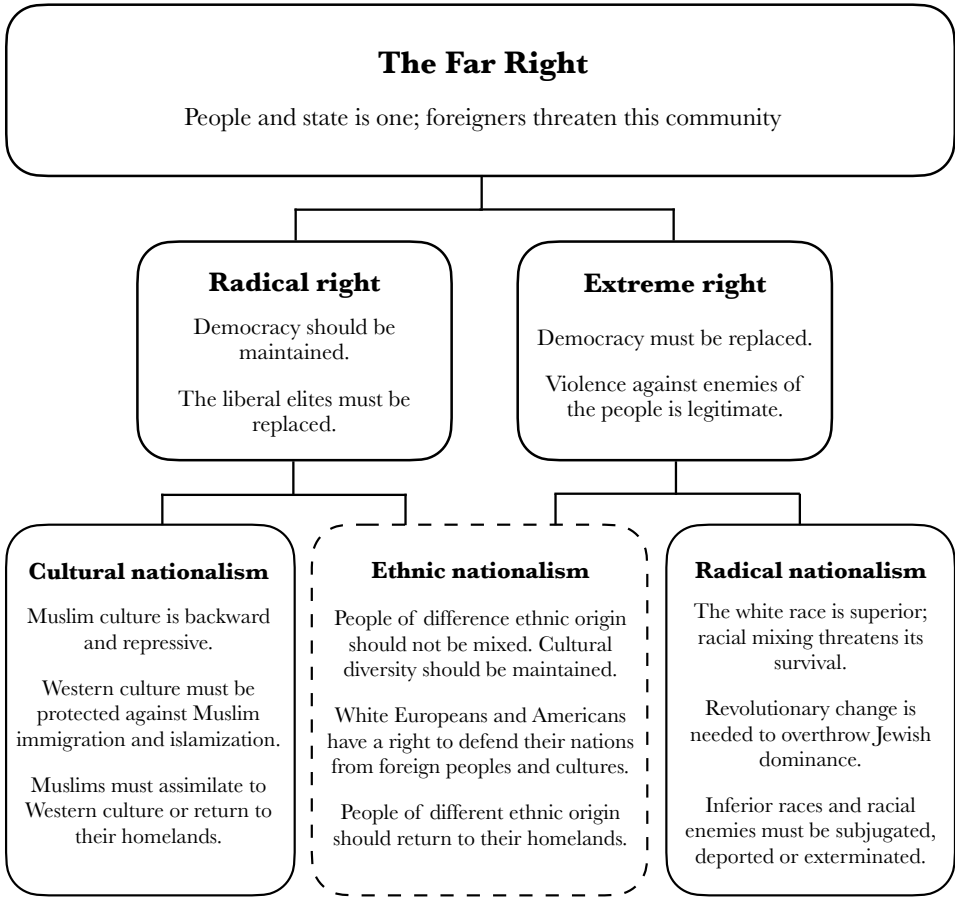
While sharing a xenophobic stance and a hostile attitude toward minorities, the *extreme right* parts ways with the radical right in its opposition to constitutional democracy and in its endorsement of violence. The extreme right typically rejects basic features of democracy, that is, popular sovereignty and majority rule. In addition, the parties (or groups) are often openly racist, have clear ties to fascism and legitimizes use of violence and aggressive tactics to achieve their goals (Halikiopoulou, 2018). Out of the two subgroups, the radical right is the most widespread and electorally successful. Parties like the Austrian Freedom Party, the Italian Northern League and the Danish

People's Party all accept procedural democracy and distance themselves from racism and fascism. Even though the extreme right tends to be anti-democratic, not all extreme groups reject party politics. The best example of an extreme right actor operating within the realm of electoral politics is the Greek Golden Dawn. The party was formed as a violent movement and has been labeled fascist or neo-Nazi. Furthermore, some parties fall between two stools, although they are clearly far right. This is most notably the case for the British National Party and The Movement for a Better Hungary. Standing in the middle we can also find groups that operate between radical and extreme right by subtly accepting violence without explicitly calling for it.

Although the distinction shows that the far-right movement is highly diverse, even within the two factions, the parties share many ideological features and political issues.

Central to the far-right ideology is *nationalism*, defined as a political ideal that 'aspires to a congruence between state borders and the boundaries of the national community, so that the national group is contained in the territory of its state and the state contains only that nation' ("nation-state", 2020). There are different varieties of nationalism, and it is not always easy to distinguish between them. Bjørgo and Ravndal (2019) separate the radical nationalism of the far right into three branches: racial, ethnic and cultural nationalism. Racial nationalists see the white race as superior and fight for a society based on ideas of racial purity. Inspired by fascism and National Socialism, they tend to regard non-white people as ultimate enemies of their people, that should be deported or exterminated. Ethnic nationalists claim that people of different ethnic origin should not be mixed. Foreigners should therefore return to their homelands. Finally, cultural nationalism is typically represented by radical right parties against immigration and Islam. Because these parties favor exclusion on cultural rather than ethnic or racial grounds, this type of radical nationalism is more likely to accept assimilation or integration of different ethnic groups. According to cultural nationalists, someone with a migrant background might still become a member of the nation after assimilating. For ethnic and racial nationalists, this is out of the question. The common goal for all of them, however, is to achieve a monocultural state.

FIGURE 1.1. Conceptualization of the Far Right.



Source: Originally developed by Berntzen (2018), revised in collaboration with Bjørgo and Ravndal (2019), and conceptually based on Mudde (2000) and Teitelbaum (2017).

The term ‘nativism’ is frequently used to separate the exclusionary nationalism of far-right parties from that of mainstream parties. Nativism combines nationalism and xenophobia in that it calls for states to be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group – “the nation” – and considers non-native elements (persons and ideas) to be fundamentally threatening to the homogenous nation-state (Mudde, 2007, p. 19). Some far-right parties’ nativism is biologically or culturally racist, implying a natural hierarchy among groups (Golder, 2016). However, many far-right parties have adopted an ethnopluralist form of nativism in order to be able to mobilize on xenophobic and racist views held amongst segments of the population without being labeled racists (Rydgren, 2005, p. 427). Contrary to traditional racism, ethnopluralism is non-hierarchical, but claims that different ethnicities are incompatible and need to

be kept separated to preserve their unique national cultures (Taguieff, 1988). When translated into programmatic positions, nativism leads to anti-immigration stances, and in recent years, to anti-EU and anti-Islam stances (Akkerman et al., 2016, p. 5). The criticism of Islam stems from the belief that Islamic ideals are incompatible with Western liberal values such as democracy, equality and autonomy, whereas Euroscepticism is based on the view that European integration threatens national sovereignty and the nation state (Bertoncini & Koenig, 2014; Betz & Meret, 2009).

Authoritarianism indicates that far-right parties hold an authoritarian position in sociocultural politics. More specifically, the parties prioritize to value-laden topics such as national identity, law and order, and immigration policy. In attempts to extract a description of an authoritarian ideology, scholars often refer to Bob Altemeyer (1981), who bases his definition of authoritarianism on social psychology. For Altemeyer, right-wing authoritarianism is characterized by conventionalism, submission and aggression (1981, pp. 147-148). Elizabeth Carter (2018, p. 169) argues that one can find manifestations of conventionalism in politics that safeguard and promote traditional social norms and values. Political views that may be indicators of this may be the parties' desire to protect traditional family structures or their opposition toward the outgroup's rights, often religious ones. Evidence of submission, she claims, is somewhat more difficult to observe, but can be visible in the way the parties talk about the values of order and discipline, and the duty to respect authorities and the state. Combined, this underscores far-right parties' vision of a society maintained and protected through discipline and strong leadership. Finally, aggression can be identified in moral, social, political and legal punitive measures. These measures include condemnation of and discrimination against those who threaten the unity of society, and a strict law and order policy.

Xenophobia is the most often mentioned trait in the definitions of the contemporary far right (Carter, 2018, p. 165) and has by some been highlighted as the main characteristic feature (e.g., Husbands, 1981). Being defined as 'the fear or hatred of foreigners', the term is closely linked with the previously mentioned ethnonationalism – some even calling ethnonationalism a form of 'collective xenophobia' (Geiss, 1988, p. 33) – as it links a positive attitude toward the ingroup with

a negative attitude toward outgroups. Because parties expressing xenophobic attitudes are likely to hold anti-immigrant positions, some scholars have labeled them ‘anti-immigration parties’ (e.g., Fennema, 1997; Van der Brug et al., 2005). However, Rydgren (2008, p. 740) separates xenophobes from racists and immigration sceptics by noting that ‘racist voters are probably xenophobic and immigration sceptics as well, but xenophobic voters are not necessarily racists and immigration sceptics are neither necessarily xenophobes nor racist’.

Another term that has made its way into the literature of the far right is *populism* (e.g. Betz, 1994; Taggart, 2000). The populist label was quickly attached to many of the far-right parties that emerged in the 1980s and 90s, and the current discussion of concept is still is strongly colored by these parties even though populist parties can be anywhere on the political spectrum. Mudde (2004, p. 543) describes populism as a ‘thin’ ideology that views society as being separated into two groups, the ‘pure people’ and the ‘corrupt elite’, and which argues that politics should reflect the general will of the people. As a thin-centered ideology, populism is often combined with other political ideologies such nationalism or socialism (Stanley, 2008). In other words, populism can be understood as either an ideology or a specific political form or rhetorical style. The recent growth in electoral support for populist parties across Europe, as well as the increasing opportunities they have gained to obtain entry into governments, has brought into question the compatibility of populism and democracy. As populists present themselves as the only true representatives of ‘the people’, they frequently disregard the rights of people who are part of the outside group, usually immigrants or other minorities. Moreover, populists’ claim to exclusively represent ‘the people’ questions the legitimacy of competing political actors and thereby the notion of a pluralist society. Both the rejection of pluralism and the stigmatization of outsiders challenge liberal democracy. In addition, research show that populist governments are more likely to inflict serious damage on democratic institutions than non-populist governments (Kyle & Mounk, 2018). However, most populist actors mobilize within a liberal democratic framework (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017, p. 2). Thus, populists are not anti-democratic, they are anti-liberal democracy. Because the radical right and the extreme right have fundamentally different perspectives on democracy, the extreme

right can never be populist, whereas the radical right can be, and very often is (Mudde, 2018).

From this review of more recent definitions of the concept, I advance a minimal definition of the far right as an ideology that encompasses nationalism, authoritarianism and xenophobia. Individual actors might have additional ideological features, but all far-right parties, both radical and extreme, tend to share at least these three features.

Having extracted the characteristics of the far right, the next section examines its heterogeneity and considers how the array of new far-right parties might suggest an undergoing a process of fragmentation.

1.3 Conceptualizing Fragmentation

Political party systems across Europe have fragmented the past decades and electoral volatility has increased. In political terms, fragmentation can be defined as the degree to which votes are scattered across minor parties (Coleman, 1995). It concerns the proliferation of new parties and the willingness of voters to vote for them.

Fragmentation is an important dimension of political party systems, but it can also be regarded as a multidimensional concept, as various forms of fragmentation may occur in different arenas.

Many seem to speak of the far right as a homogenous entity, identical within space and time. But as we have established, the far right is extremely heterogenous. Despite sharing a common core ideology, the far right should be viewed as a continuum, ranging from anti-liberal democratic radical-right actors to anti-democratic extreme right ones. Moreover, far-right actors take on multiple organizational forms. This heterogeneity within the far right is nothing new. There have always been a lot of different actors on the right. Alongside far-right political parties, there are also extra-parliamentary groups and social movements that aim to mobilize public support. Without the need or interest in expressing electorally palatable views, these groups reflect a more heterogenous array of right-wing views than the parties (Kaplan & Weinberg, 1998, pp. 55-56). For example, in recent years, rallies held by the anti-Islam movement Pegida, the rise of anti-immigrant vigilante

groups and citizen street patrols, and the rapid spread of the Identitarian movement, have demonstrated how far-right ideas are increasingly being spread across different groups, both geographically and ideologically. In addition, contemporary far right politics ‘blurs the distinction between different modes of political participation, as right-wing groups combine conventional party membership and unconventional (if not violent) forms of activism, left-wing issues and extreme right ideas, as well as traditionalist imageries and pop culture symbols’ (Castelli Gattinara et al., 2020, p. 45).

Far-right fragmentation can also be used to describe the fragmentation that is happening *within* certain groups. For example, political parties may include fragmented sub-factions, or ‘parties within a party’. In the US, the friction between hardline conservatives and more libertarian types opened up a deep divide within the Republican party in 2009. The movement, which came to be known as the Tea Party, advocates for a smaller government, lower taxes and significant budget cuts. Because of the dominance of the two-party system in the US, the Tea Party is not an independent political contender in the traditional sense. Rather, it has been labeled ‘the far right of the Republican coalition’ (Jacobson, 2011, p.1) and can thus be considered an example of intra-party fragmentation.

In other words, far-right fragmentation can be manifested by the spread of far right on different arenas, both outside of the party system and within the parties themselves. However, this type of fragmentation is not the main objective of this study. Instead, this thesis emphasizes fragmentation in the electoral arena. More specifically, it seeks to draw focus to what has emerged as a new phenomenon; fragmentation of the far-right vote and the fact that there is not only one, but several parties situated on the far right contesting elections. In the electoral arena, all parties have the same goal: to win as many votes as possible (Bardi & Mair, 2008, p. 158). Therefore, an increase in the number of parties in the electoral arena may lead to a more fragmented electorate. This is the case in Denmark, where three parties all belonging to the far right are now partly competing for the same voters. In such a fragmented structure, far-right parties can become highly influential even if they receive only a minor percentage of the vote.

On the basis of this review, fragmentation of the far right is in this thesis defined as changes in the political landscape as demonstrated by a declining support for established far-right parties and the simultaneous emergence of, and increasing support for, new far-right challengers.

1.4 Developments of the Danish Party System

Denmark is a parliamentary democracy with a four-year electoral term, although the prime minister can call an early election if she or he wishes. Due to a proportional electoral system, low threshold for representation, and manageable requirements for being eligible to stand for election, the Danish party system has been rather open and supplemented with various parties over the years (Green-Pedersen & Kosiara-Pedersen, 2020, p. 214). New parties have emerged, and semi-old parties have disappeared. The ‘four old parties’ (The Social Democrats, the Liberals, the Conservatives, and the Social Liberals) have historically formed the core of the Danish party system. With two very brief exceptions, all Danish governments have been led by prime ministers from one of these parties. However, in recent decades, the quadropoly have declined in strength and given way to a much more fragmented party system. Although several Western European democracies have witnessed a decline in support for the oldest parties, this development has been especially pronounced in Denmark (Hansen & Kosiara-Pedersen, 2017). The balance among the old parties and success of the new have led to a change in the composition of the party system. While the old parties were placed in the center, the new ones are ideologically skewed toward the ends of the political spectrum (Kosiara-Pedersen & Kurrild-Klitgaard, 2019, p. 64).

The 2019 general election saw the emergence of three new parties competing with nine existing legislative parties. The three parties were all right-wing parties. The most extreme in its anti-immigration positions was Hard Line, followed by New Right. The third party, Klaus Riskær Pedersen, named after its founder, had a more social liberal profile. Even in multiparty Denmark, 13 parties vying for electoral support represent a more fragmented field than any since the so-called ‘landslide election’ of 1973. Then, the number of parties represented in parliament doubled from five to ten, drastically altering the party system (Elklit & Pedersen, 2003; Bischoff, 2020). Ever

since, the number of contesting parties at general elections has usually fluctuated between nine and eleven.

The Danish electoral system, laws for ballot access, and rules for media access and financial support create favorable conditions for new parties (Bischoff, 2020, p. 82). Denmark has one of the lowest electoral thresholds in Europe, requiring only 2% of the national vote for representation in the Danish parliament, *Folketinget*. At the 2019 election, this low threshold was high enough to bar Hard Line from gaining representation, yet low enough to let New Right win four seats with just 2.4% of the votes. Moreover, the recent digitalization of registration has made it easier for new parties to gain ballot access. The electoral system requires new parties to collect approximately 20 000 voter signatures in order to stand for election. This is a considerably higher number than other countries' requirement for supporting signatures. Hence, some have argued it could be deemed an additional electoral threshold (Elklit, 2020). However, a digital system for the handling of supporting signatures was implemented in 2016, which made the swift registration of Hard Line possible. The party was formally granted ballot access in May 2019, merely a month before the election.

As previously mentioned, the formation of new parties is nothing new in Danish elections. That three new parties formed for one election is, however, unusual. Two of them being on the far right, even more so.

The Parties

The Danish People's Party (*Dansk Folkeparti*) is the most electorally successful far right-wing party in Denmark. Since its emergence on the political scene in 1995, the party has found a permanent place in the Danish party system. The Danish People's Party's influence on other political parties, which gradually have become much more anti-immigrant than before, has transformed it from being a small party on the fringes with minimal impact to becoming one of the most influential parties in Danish politics. By shifting the political discourse in Denmark on immigration and Islam, the party's previously condemned policies 'have not only become fully normalized, but also much more widely supported in society' (Bergmann, 2020, p. 150).

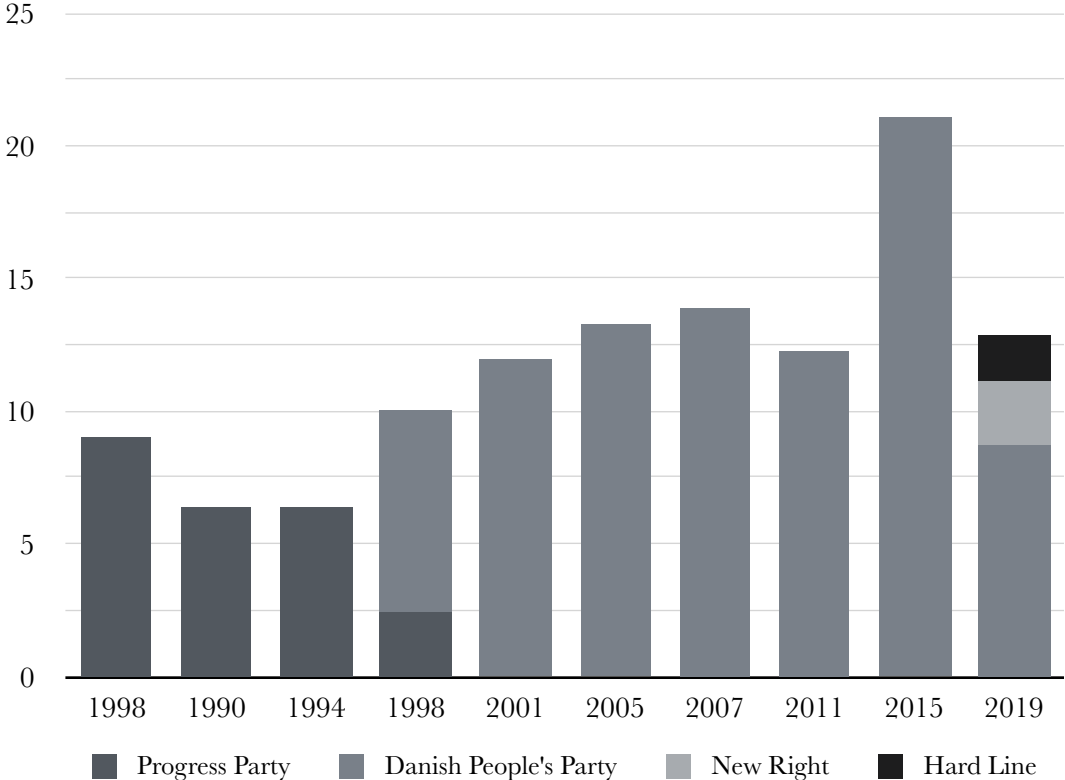
The Danish People's Party was founded by a splinter group of the Progress Party (*Fremskridtspartiet*), which during the 1970s ran on a populist anti-tax and anti-bureaucracy platform. In the late 1980s, the Progress Party also adopted anti-immigration as a key issue and became a mouthpiece for the skepticism against immigrants and refugees that arose in parts of the Danish population. Pia Kjaersgaard rose to prominence and became a leading figure of the Progress Party in the mid-1980s, even stepping in as a temporary replacement for party leader Mogens Glistrup while he was imprisoned for tax evasion in 1984. Kjaersgaard belonged to a pragmatic faction of the party that wanted to ease its strong tax cut demands in order to gain governmental influence. This entailed cooperating more closely with other parties, something Glistrup, who headed the more fundamentalist faction, had strongly opposed. When Glistrup returned to politics after serving his sentence, the charismatic Kjaersgaard had built a strong platform within the party and was reluctant to give up her position as party leader (Rydgren, 2004). After several years of grueling power struggles, Glistrup was expelled from the Progress Party in 1990. Nevertheless, the strife between the two wings continued, and when Kjaersgaard's faction was voted down at a party congress in 1995, she left the party along with three other members to form the Danish People's Party. The new party's policies were not fundamentally different from the Progress Party's. However, the Danish People's Party radically toned down the tax protest element of its predecessor. Instead, it focused on its flagship issue: strict immigration and integration policies.

With the exception of a minor setback in 2011, the party enjoyed considerable electoral success in its first six general elections, gaining more votes for each election. Its electoral success culminated at the general election in 2015, where it ended up as the second largest party in parliament and the largest in the center-right bloc.

Throughout the process of acquiring mainstream acceptance, the Danish People's Party firmly kept up its anti-immigrant rhetoric. Though considered a charismatic figure by many, Pia Kjaersgaard's was also a controversial politician whose rhetoric generated polarized feelings and divided opinion (Meret, 2015). When Kjaersgaard resigned voluntarily in 2012, she passed the baton to another party co-

founder – the more rhetorically restrained but still very popular – Kristian Thulesen Dahl.

FIGURE 1.2. Vote Percentages of Far-Right Parties in Denmark, 1988-2019.



New Right (*Nye Borgerlige*) was founded in 2015 by former conservative politicians. Party leader and co-founder Pernille Vermund had previously served on a municipal council and made an unsuccessful bid for a parliamentary seat in 2015 for the Conservative People’s Party. In her view, the party had started to move too far to the left and no longer represented traditional conservative values (Andersen, 2015). After clashing with the party majority over Denmark’s EU membership, Vermund left the party along with a fellow Conservative to form a new party that, according to her, represented true conservative values, which the other conservative parties sitting in parliament supposedly had abandoned (Panagiotopoulos, 2017). New Right’s main political message relates to immigration, combined with an economic platform based around tax cuts and a small public sector. These appeals mostly seem to resonate with men, who according to demographic analyses make up a large majority of the party’s

potential voters. More specifically, the party attracts middle-aged, white males who are reasonably wealthy and in possession of a university degree (Epinion, 2018; Møller Hansen, 2018). Thus, the party seems to follow in the footsteps of other female-led right-wing parties in Europe who also have a clear predominance of male voters, such as Marine Le Pen's National Rally in France or Giorgia Meloni's Brothers of Italy. However, Pernille Vermund herself claims that it is not a question of the party leader's gender, but due to the themes that the party addresses – a smaller public sector and a strict foreign policy – which generally appeal to the masculine segment (Andersen, 2016).

Hard Line (*Stram Kurs*) is almost exclusively associated with its founder Rasmus Paludan and his anti-Islam activism and rallies. The practicing lawyer has a mixed political background of affiliation with different parties. In 2017, he became a member of New Right, where he was nominated as a party candidate for the local elections in Copenhagen. However, his New Right membership was short-lived as he was excluded on account of his extreme views and statements (Bischoff, 2020). During the same period, he was active in the anti-Islam movement For Freedom, previously known as Pegida. At one of For Freedom's demonstrations, Rasmus Paludan, echoing Enoch Powell's infamous speech, stated that mass migration had transformed Danish streets into 'rivers of blood': "Our streets and alleys will be turned into rivers of blood. And the blood of the foreign enemies will end up in the sewers where the foreign enemies belong", he said in the speech, adding that "they [immigrants] are primitive pitiful wretches, whose death at this time will be both necessary and lawful" (Karker, 2019). Shortly after this speech, he was no longer welcome in New Right, and in 2017 he founded his own party, Hard Line. During the final phase of the 2019 election campaign, Hard Line oscillated around the threshold, and for a while, the party looked as if it might win seats in parliament. Nevertheless, with 1.8% of the votes, the party ended up just below the electoral threshold. Like New Right, the party mainly attracted male voters, most of them single, in the age cohort 30-55 and with low income and education (Ambrosius, 2019).

1.5 Outline of the Rest of the Thesis

This first chapter has outlined the main puzzle – the fragmentation of the Danish far right – and the contributions made by this thesis. It has also reviewed some widely used definitions of the far right in order to advance a minimal definition of the concept. Finally, a brief overview of the political development in Denmark has been presented, including an introduction to the three parties that will be studied in the analysis.

The structure of the rest of the thesis is as follows: Chapter 2 provides the theoretical framework of the analysis. The main purpose of the chapter is to lay the foundation used throughout the thesis. To do so, I will present different theories on the emergence of new parties in general, and far-right parties in particular, and emphasize the theories that are considered to be most relevant to explain this newly observed phenomenon, where far-right challengers emerge and contest the established far right. Chapter 3 then discusses the data and methodology, and the limits and advantages to the approaches used in the analysis. Chapter 4 commences the empirical phase of the thesis and allows for the theoretical framework to be tested. The chapter starts with an analysis of demand-side factors. This is followed by the first part of the external supply-side, which examines theoretically selected aspects of the Danish People’s Party’s ideological development the past decade. The second part of the external supply-side analysis examines New Right and Hard Line’s ideologies as well as all three parties’ policy positions in the 2019 election. An internal supply-side analysis that focuses on party leadership and the media, more specifically on the ability of the far-right challengers to attract media attention, brings the chapter to an end. Chapter 5 provides a discussion that connects the results from the demand-side with the supply-side and examines the findings with reference to the theoretical framework of the thesis. A conclusion follows that summarizes the main empirical findings.

2

Theoretical Framework

This chapter will present different theories on the rise of new parties in general, and far-right parties in particular. Special emphasis is placed on theories on new party emergence and the dimensionality of electoral competition in the political space. The discussion also examines demand-side and supply-side factors for parties' electoral success.

When explaining the rise and fortunes of far-right parties, scholars often differentiate between demand-side approaches and supply-side approaches, where voters represent the demand-side of political competition, and parties characterize the supply-side. Most of the early literature on far-right success was centered on demand-side explanations and bottom-up preference change: New popular preference generate new party alternatives (Kitschelt, 2018, p. 166). In the 1990s, supply-side explanations became more prominent. They ask how the competitive strategies of the mainstream parties made it possible for far-right actors to exploit new preferences in order to establish new parties. According to Koopmans et al. (2005, p. 154), these are two competing theoretical perspectives; 'one that focuses on grievances and ethnic competition, and the other that stresses opportunities and institutional frameworks'. Others argue that they should be seen as complementary theories, rather than competing ones (Golder, 2016; Fennema & Van der Brug, 2007). This paper adheres to the latter. The political space in which party competition occurs consists of two components, voters *and* parties. Therefore, it seems reasonable to take into account both demand and supply-side factors in order to determine whether explanations for the fragmentation can be found within the parties themselves and the political space

they compete in, if it is a logical consequence of ongoing political fragmentations of voters, or both.

2.1 New Party Emergence

The question of why new parties emerge in well-established party systems has attracted increasing scholarly attention as challenger parties may be important forces of change. In particular, the emergence and electoral success of new far-right parties has motivated much of the recent research. In an era of political fragmentation, new parties potentially play a more significant role. As several have argued, established parties may lose touch with their electoral base if left unchallenged (e.g., Katz & Mair, 1995; Mair, 1995). New parties broaden the range of political options available in a party system by bringing latent interests and issues to the agenda. In addition, their organizational structure and means of mobilization may ‘shed a fresh light on the political culture’ (Krouwel & Lucardie, 2008, p. 278). Even if a new party is not successful, its mere appearance may influence existing parties’ behavior and policies (Harmel & Svåsand, 1997). For instance, established parties might adopt the ideas of new parties if they gain traction after being tested in public debate.

New political parties have been studied intensively in political science since the 1970s. In 1985, Klaus von Beyme claimed that most of the new parties had an ideological identity that lied outside the established party families, as most were environmentalist or nationalist radical right parties. However, the rapid emergence of far-right parties that ensued eventually made up a distinct, but diverse, far-right party family in which many new parties now emerge within. In contrast to established parties, new far-right parties are assumed to take a non-centrist stance and emphasize issues that depart from the traditional class cleavage (Adams et al., 2006; Meguid, 2005). This has led scholars to argue that the appearance of new issues, or the established parties’ neglect of relevant issues, causes a mismatch between voter preferences and party offers (Harmel & Robertson, 1985; Hug, 2001). As a result, voters might turn to new parties who claim to offer representation on these issues and bring change to the political arena. Others claim that errors committed by the existing parties in the party system, such as political scandals, leave voters dissatisfied and open

to alternatives (Mair, 2011). Some authors have explicitly considered the possibility that new parties enter the political scene on a territory already occupied by established parties, instead of on a new issue (see Lucardie, 2000; Krouwel & Lucardie, 2008; Rochon, 1985; Sikk, 2011). Rochon (1985, p. 421) introduces a typology for understanding the goals of new parties and distinguishes between *mobilizers* and *challengers*. Mobilizers seek to mobilize voters on a new issue, emphasizing how their new politics differs from the politics of the established political parties. The electoral success of these parties depends mainly on demand-side factors: If established parties underestimate new demands, new parties may take over. In contrast, challengers contest with the established political parties for an already-mobilized part of the electorate and call into question the legitimacy of an established party by claiming that they have abandoned the policies or ideology that the party used to stand for (Rochon, 1985, p. 421). The success of challenger parties can be attributed to supply-side factors and political opportunity structures, for example the position of other relevant parties.

Building on Rochon's typology, Lucardie (2000) labels the former *prophetic parties*, the latter *purifying parties*, and adds two new categories: *prolocutors* and *personal vehicles*. According to Lucardie, prolocutors seek to represent a particular social group that has been neglected – or perceived by the group itself to be neglected – by the established political parties, without making explicit reference to an ideology. This party often disappears from the scene as soon as it has managed to put the interests of its supporters on the political agenda (Lucardie, 2000, p. 176). Finally, personal vehicles (or idiosyncratic parties) do not fit very well in either of the other categories. Instead, they reflect the party founders' personal preferences and ideologies. These types of parties 'often show a high level of personal ambition of particular leaders and tactical motivations, possibly combined with ideological motives' (Krouwel & Lucardie, 2008, p. 284).

2.1 Demand-Side Explanations

Demand-side explanations set the stage for the potential rise of far-right parties by examining the perfect breeding ground. The demand-side encompasses traits,

experiences and attitudes that may predispose voters to support a far-right party (Arzheimer, 2018).

The attitudinal characteristics of far-right voters have been the focus of many empirical studies on the individual-level literature on the far right. Findings from scholars who have explored voter attitudes suggest that a vote for far-right parties can be broken down into four clusters of attitudinal positions: anti-immigration attitudes, favorable in-group attitudes, authoritarian attitudes and political dissatisfaction (Billiet & de Witte, 1995; Mudde, 1999). All these attitudes tend to play a role in far-right voting. However, Lubbers and Scheepers (2000; 2002) highlight anti-immigrant attitudes and political distrust or dissatisfaction as the most important ones. They find that people who perceive immigrants as a threat are more likely to blame these out-groups, and, as a consequence, are more likely to vote for far-right parties. In a similar vein, those who are dissatisfied with or feel distrust toward the government are likely to cast a protest vote, and because far-right parties tend to position themselves as protest parties, these parties stand out as an appealing alternative.

During the mid-1980s, immigration emerged as one of the core issues of the far right in Western Europe, making anti-immigrant sentiment the single most important attitudinal driver of far-right support (Arzheimer, 2018). Today, it has become an issue that most parties address. Many scholars have used the term ‘anti-immigrant parties’ to describe far-right parties due to their anti-immigrant rhetoric and their ability to mobilize grievances over immigration (e.g., Fennema, 1997; Ivarsflaten, 2008). Rydgren (2007, p. 250) notes that even if not all voters who hold anti-immigration attitudes vote for a new far-right party, most voters who do vote for such parties hold such attitudes.

Another prominent theory regarding demand-side explanations of far-right success emphasizes resentment, suggesting that electoral support for the far right mainly comes from dissatisfaction and distrust toward politics and political parties. The meaning of political trust and distrust can be distilled to the concept of positive or negative expectations (Bertsou, 2019). Miller and Listhaug (1990, p. 358) write that trust ‘reflects evaluations of whether or not political authorities and institutions are performing in accordance with normative expectations held by the public’. In other

words, trust is present when voters share a perception that the decisions politicians make are for the benefit of democracy, even if they do not agree with all the decisions that are made. Distrust, on the other hand, is based on negative expectations toward the actions and intentions of politicians. In the presence of distrust, politicians' intentions are questioned, and their decisions challenged. Researchers claim that this growing political alienation found in many Western European countries have created an audience receptive to anti-system and anti-establishment messages, and thus provided an opportunity for far-right parties to mobilize protest voters (Rydgren, 2008, p. 251).

The relation between distrust and protest voting has been well established (e.g., Arzheimer, 2009; Mudde, 2007). Protest voting is defined as 'a vote primarily cast to scare the elite that is not policy driven' (Fennema & Van der Brug, 2003, p. 58). Accordingly, a party choice that is motivated primarily by distrust in politicians and political institutions qualifies as a protest vote. Hooghe and Dassonneville (2018, p. 126) argue that if voters become more distrustful between two elections, it increases the probability of voting for a protest party: 'As levels of political trust are deteriorating, not only do protest parties benefit electorally from the fact that the pool of low-trusting voters is growing, but the voters who are becoming less trusting are also more likely to vote for protest parties'. The two scholars call this a *spiral of distrust*, where distrust and protest voting enforce each other. Evidence for the protest theory can be found in features such as the declining share of the vote going to most mainstream parties (Eatwell, 2003). The hypothesis also renders support in several studies that demonstrate how voters who lack trust and confidence in the principal actors of political representation, that is, the mainstream political parties, are more likely to vote for the far right (Lubbers et al., 2002; Norris, 2005). Betz (1994, p. 419) presents one of the most compelling versions of this argument, writing that 'by appealing to lingering sentiments of powerlessness, to widespread alienation from the political process, and to growing resentment against the prevailing political system, radical populist right-wing parties present themselves as the true "antiparty parties"'.

Overall, the scholarly evidence suggests that far-right voters tend to hold anti-immigrant positions, anti-establishment attitudes, and lower levels of political trust

(Arzheimer, 2009; Kehrberg, 2015; Lubbers & Scheepers, 2000; Lubbers et al., 2002). Each of these motivations can result in a breeding ground of support for far-right parties. The demand-side analysis in this thesis takes into consideration possible attitudinal changes in the Danish electorate to determine the causes for the fragmentation of the far right, examining whether there has been a change in voters' attitudes toward immigration and the political establishment.

2.2 Supply-Side Explanations

Whereas demand-side explanations help us understand what kind of policies and parties the voters want, the supply-side translates this demand into practical party politics (Mudde, 2007, p. 202). The conceptual framework presented by Mudde in *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe* (2007) distinguishes external and internal supply-side factors. The former relates to political opportunity structures, while the latter has to do with the characteristics of the parties. Before presenting the various supply-side factors believed to be important for the rise of new parties, and particular far-right parties, I want to briefly point out the fuzzy borders between external and internal supply when studying fragmentation. Because it involves examining both the declining support for far-right parties and the simultaneous emergence of new far-right challengers, the connections between the various supply-side factors may partly overlap and influence each other; the strategies of the Danish People's Party are external to New Right and Hard Line, and the strategic choices of the new parties are external to the Danish People's Party. A party's mainstreaming is dependent on the actions taken by the party itself in an active attempt to move away from its niche appeal. However, in this study I regard it as an exogenous opportunity structure and therefore include the possible mainstreaming of the Danish People's Party in the external supply-side analysis. This is because I consider the emergence of new parties to be more important than the decline of the Danish People's Party in explaining far-right fragmentation. Moreover, in the internal supply-side analysis, I examine the extent to which the far-right challengers succeeded in communicating their party's message in the media. Because decisions on the selection and prioritization of news are made by journalists and editors, or so-called 'media gatekeepers', some might argue

that media exposure should be considered an exogenous factor – i.e., conditions that are out of the hands of the parties themselves. While I acknowledge the role of journalists as gatekeepers for the far right, I follow more recent research that resist overemphasizing the behavior of the media, ‘to avoid depicting far-right actors as ‘hapless victims’ of external circumstances’ (Castelli Gattinara & Froio, 2019, p. 739). In other words, I regard media coverage as a function of the mobilization strategies of the far-right challengers.

The highly complex interaction of external and internal supply-side factors is also acknowledged by Mudde (2007, p. 303). Although they cannot be distinguished so neatly in practice, he recognizes the practicality of differentiating the external and internal supply-side for the purpose of analysis.

2.3.1 External Supply

Herbert Kitschelt, a highly influential scholar in the field, has in collaboration with Anthony J. McGann produced one of the most comprehensive studies explaining the emergence of the far right in Europe: *The Radical Right in Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis* (1995). Influenced by this seminal study, the political opportunity structure of far-right parties is seen by many as one of the most important explanatory factors that accounts for the electoral success – and failure – of the far right (Arzheimer, 2009; Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; Carter, 2005; Norris, 2005). The concept of political opportunity structures was originally developed as an approach of new social movements to denote the extent to which a political system is open to a political entrepreneur (Arzheimer & Carter, 2006). In more recent years, the term has made its way into political science and more recently been applied to the study of the far right, notably through the works of Kitschelt and McGann, as well as Rydgren (2005). Political opportunity structures are defined as ‘consistent, but not necessarily formal or permanent, dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure’ (Tarrow, 1994, p. 85). Hence, the concept of political opportunity structures emphasizes conditions external to the parties, in contrast with the more actor-oriented internal theories.

According to external supply-side explanations, successful mobilization is first and foremost the result of institutional and political constraints and opportunities (Muis & Immerzeel, 2016). Studies on the impact of the institutional framework assess whether the political system or electoral rules affect the success of new parties. Several studies have found that proportional electoral systems are favorable to the entrance or success of political parties on the rise (e.g., Tavits, 2006). As previously mentioned, the proportional electoral system and low electoral threshold in Denmark has created favorable conditions for new parties. However, the fact that a low electoral threshold might be necessary for new parties to enter the party system does not ensure it is also a sufficient condition for their success. Opportunities associated with electoral systems and threshold are likely to benefit all kind of new parties. In addition, the institutional framework is a rather fixed structure and will not prove useful when examining the factors that might explain fragmentation of the far right in Denmark. In contrast to the institutional context, party system variables vary from one election to the next. Therefore, the political context, such as the positioning of the parties within the policy space, might yield more explanatory power. As far-right parties are first and foremost political parties, their key context is the competitive political arena of party politics (Mudde, 2007, p. 237).

Policy Space

The debate on the positioning of far-right parties and its interaction with other parties in the policy space has a strong presence in the far-right literature (Arzheimer, 2009; Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; Lubbers et al., 2002; Kitschelt & McGann, 1995). Parties have positions on a wide range of political issues, and the idea of spatial representations of parties' policy stances is to 'summarize these complex policy preferences and depict the arena in which party competition takes place' (de Lange, 2008, p. 51). To make it possible to systematically compare the different parties' policy positions, spatial theory conceptualizes the political competition by providing simplified issue dimensions on which the parties take position. According to Sarah de Lange (2008, p. 51), the idea is that issue dimensions 'capture latent lines of conflict and add to these the notion of intensity, i.e., parties can take a range of positions on a dimension that reflect the

extent to which they lean more toward the one or the other extreme of the dimension'. In general, parties within the far-right party family tend to occupy distinct positions on major ideological dimensions.

According to the classic spatial argument developed by Anthony Downs (1957), political competition takes place in a dimensional structure in which parties choose policy positions to minimize the distance between themselves and the voters in order to maximize the number of votes. In other words, the political parties maneuver policy spaces strategically in order to win elections. The spatial metaphor provides not only the possibility to pinpoint political interests, but the observation of spatial shifts can serve as measures of difference between particular parties within the party system (Pytlas & Kossack, 2015).

Talking about party competition in terms of spatial ideas has become a universal phenomenon of modern politics (Stokes, 1963). In their elaboration on political competition, Benoit and Laver (2006) present basic concepts of the spatial or dimensional understanding of political competition. The two scholars note that the very notion of space and position implies distance, and this allows us for an imagination of the grade of difference between particular parties (Benoit & Laver, 2006, p. 11). Distance further implies movement, meaning that positions move either closer together or further apart. This movement is possible to be measured based on a particular benchmark, such as a unidimensional axis or multi-dimensional policy spaces. Downs' theory on political competition unfolds along a general one-dimensional left-right axis. The political conflicts over the economic matters, such as the state's involvement in the economy, were assumed to be fundamental in the formation of party system characteristics for much of the 20th century. Thus, a simple one-dimensional economic ideological space has been the default in addressing the behavior of political parties. However, the debate on the dimensionality of the political competition in Europe has intensified (De Vries & Marks, 2012, p. 186). Some scholars argue that the use of a single dimension is 'a gross oversimplification' (Laver & Hunt, 1992, p. 15) and that it may fail to account for differences between parties on the right. As Benoit and Laver (2006, p. 13) point out, the left-right distinction fails to distinguish between parties who promote a conservative position from those who promote a classic

liberal position. For instance, it is possible for a party to hold left-wing positions on socioeconomic issues and right-wing positions (i.e., authoritarian) on cultural issues. Moreover, the emergence of new policy issues has made citizens more concerned about sociocultural questions. It has been widely argued that the economic development of the last decades has resulted in a decline in cleavage-based voting (see Inglehart, 1990), and that more value-oriented issues have been gaining salience (Green- Pedersen, 2007; Kriesi, 2010). As a result, focus has shifted toward a two-dimensional policy space, consisting of an economic and a sociocultural issue dimension.

The Two-Dimensionality of the Policy Space

Mudde (2007) hypothesizes that issue ownership on the *sociocultural dimension* is important in explaining party competition between the far right and the mainstream. For instance, the issue of immigration has traditionally been seen as one that right-wing parties not only emphasize, but also claim ownership of (Bale, 2008; Mudde, 2007). On this issue, far-right parties tend to take a radicalized stance. In a similar vein, because the central message of far-right parties is mainly focused on sociocultural rather than economic issue dimensions, some argue that far-right parties only compete with their mainstream competitors on their own core issues – specifically on immigration and monoculturalism. As a result, they consider the position of parties on a non-economic sociocultural dimension to be the most important (Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; Lubbers et al., 2002). Contrarily, others argue that that the *economic dimension* of party competition is crucial for the political opportunity structure of far-right parties and that it is important not to disregard the parties' economic platform despite their emphasis on cultural issues (Kitschelt & McGann, 1995). However, the relationship between far-right parties and economic policy is the subject of a large debate. Rovny (2013) finds that far-right parties do not actually compete with mainstream parties on the economic dimension in order to gain support. Instead, they adopt strategic position blurring on economic issues to appeal to a wider audience. Parts of the literature claim that economic policies and economic concerns are not core issues for far-right parties or their supporters, and that we should examine the

economic agenda of far-right parties through the perspective of their core ideology (Otjes et al., 2018). In this respect, economic policy is a secondary concern for the parties, as their economic policy positions become instrumental to achieving other goals (Rydgren 2004 p. 127). Mudde (2019, p. 101) states that most support for far-right politics is explained by the sociocultural translation of socioeconomic concerns. He also observes how the centrality of nativism to far-right parties significantly impact their economic programs. When applied to the welfare state, this nativist interpretation promotes an economy that favors natives and that is protected against ‘alien’ influences (Mudde, 2007, p. 132). This is supported by Otjes et al. (2018) who find economic nativism to be the most important unifying factor for far-right parties. In addition, the scholars conclude that Western European parties on the far right ‘have developed a distinctive economic policy which is primarily derived from their core ideology and which is independent from traditional left-right economic issues’ (Otjes et al., 2018, p. 286).

Whether economic issues are a secondary concern or not, they are becoming increasingly salient for these parties. Today, the far-right party family ‘spreads a significant part of the whole dimension between the two poles of laissez faire and state economy’ (Mudde, 2007, p. 123). Some place them on the economic right (Kitschelt & McGann, 1995) while other studies find these parties to be moving further to the left on the economy (Lefkofridi & Michel, 2014). The uncertainty concerning the economic policy positions of the far-right party family stems predominantly from the variation between far-right parties across countries. Also, far-right parties have adopted different economic positions throughout the decades.

In sum, the growing salience of issues like globalization, immigration and integration has created a fertile breeding ground for new political currents and led to changes in the policies of traditional parties. To accommodate this change, more recent studies focus on the interplay between the economic and the sociocultural dimensions as part of the political opportunity structure (e.g., Kitschelt, 1994; Kriesi et al., 2006; Marks et al., 2006).

Convergence and Mainstreaming

The degree of convergence in political space can also have an impact on the political opportunity structure for new parties. Various studies have shown that far-right parties are more successful when mainstream parties converge on centrist positions. In their seminal work, Kitschelt & McGann (1995) found that a contributing factor to far-right parties' emergence and subsequent success is the political opportunities that arise from the convergence of mainstream parties in the political space. In general, there seems to be an agreement among scholars that when mainstream right and mainstream left parties move closer together on the left-right socioeconomic dimension, it creates opportunities for challengers to mobilize on alternative cleavage dimensions, including the sociocultural (Rydgren & Van der Meiden, 2019, p. 446). In addition, several studies have found that mainstream party convergence benefited the entrance of radical new parties (Abedi, 2002; Carter, 2005; Van der Brug et al., 2005).

Kitschelt's theorization is largely inspired by Downs' (1957) conceptualization of the political space. Following Downsian logic, the vote-maximizing logic of political parties will force far-right parties to abandon the narrow or radical profiles of which they were first founded. Because the distribution of the electorate within the space is dependent upon the attitudes of the voters, parties reposition to maintain their vote-share (de Lange, 2007, pp. 412-415). However, whereas Downs explored simple two-party competition, Kitschelt's point of departure is a two-dimensional competitive space where he locates both voters and political parties. He argues that the proximity of all parties in an issue space makes voters indifferent between the alternatives. Because convergence depoliticizes the economic policy dimension, voters are more likely to vote for parties that compete on an alternative policy dimension. In other words, if a new competitor politicizes a second dimension with radical policy stances, and this second dimension resonates with demand-side preferences, new parties are likely to become electorally successful (Kitschelt, 2018, p. 171).

The convergence between mainstream parties and the far right has been labeled 'mainstreaming'. In *Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties in Western Europe: Into the mainstream?*, Akkerman, de Lange and Rooduijn (2016) make an important theoretical contribution to this recent political transformation of far-right parties. The authors

provide a description of far-right parties' behavior according to their goals and positions and argue that a growing intolerance against immigrants and increasing populism have driven these parties from the right-wing margins toward the center.

A wider definition of the concept of mainstreaming indicates a dual process that takes place in two opposite directions, referring to both the *accommodation* to the far right by mainstream parties, and the *moderation* by the far right toward mainstream parties (Van Spanje, 2010; Wagner & Meyer, 2017). In this paper, I follow the narrow definition of mainstreaming provided by Akkerman et al. (2016, p. 7) as 'a process in which radical parties change to become more like mainstream parties'. According to the scholars' mainstreaming hypothesis, far-right parties have mellowed their programmatic positions, broadened their scope of issues and toned down their populist stance in order to move into the mainstream and potentially enter national office. In the empirical analysis of this study, I examine the moderation of the Danish People's Party. More specifically, I expand on the work of Akkerman et al. (2016) and assess the Danish People's Party immigration position and economic profile in order to determine whether there has been a mainstreaming of the Danish People's Party, and how this has influenced the competition with its new challengers on the far right

2.3.2. *Internal Supply*

Both the social and the institutional context undoubtedly offer opportunities and restraints for new far-right parties. But, regardless of how fertile the breeding ground is or how favorable the political opportunity structures are, these conditions merely present far-right actors a series of possibilities of which they need to exploit. In other words, parties are not by-products of forces outside their own control. Instead, they largely shape their own fates (Berman, 1997; Goodwin, 2006; Mudde 2007). In the literature on the far right, researchers have attached growing importance to party-centric factors and provided an extensive range of possible internal supply-side explanations (e.g., Carter, 2005; Eatwell, 2003; Lubbers et al., 2002; Mudde, 2007; Veugelers 1999). The most mentioned and highlighted explanations involve the parties' ideology, the strength of their organization and the ability of the leaders to set the agenda and mobilize voters.

Ideology

The theory of Kitschelt and McGann (1995) underlines the importance of ideological and strategic appeals made by the parties themselves. According to the two scholars, if voters are dissatisfied with the choices offered by the established mainstream parties, they may turn to a far-right party. This is especially true if there has been a closure of the gap between the center-left and center-right on major economic policy issues. However, for Kitschelt, the contemporary right is not just conditioned by the actions of its mainstream competitors ‘but also by the capabilities and choices of the incipient rightist entrepreneurs and parties themselves’ (Kitschelt & McGann, 1995, p. 3). The most important thing that parties can do through their own actions is to find a beneficial position in the policy space. They have to find their own ‘winning formula’ necessary to attract far-right support. Thus, the success and failure of far-right parties is largely determined by their own strategic actions and their ability to formulate and communicate a political ideology that speaks to their potential electorate.

During the emergence of far-right parties in the 1990s, Kitschelt presented the idea of a winning formula that attributes the success of these parties to a combination of ‘extreme and economically rightists, free-marketsteering as well as politically and culturally authoritarian positions’ (Kitschelt & McGann, 1995, p. vii). A similar argument was developed by Betz (1993, p. 423) who argued that a defining feature of far-right parties was their pronounced neoliberal program. However, Kitschelt (2004) modified his standpoint in later works claiming that the political transformation in Western European party systems since the 1990s has led many far-right parties to abandon their neoliberal economic stance for a more centrist position. This idea is supported by Sarah de Lange (2007), who in her comparative study based on Kitschelt’s newest theory found that the National Rally, the Flemish Block and the Dutch Lijst Pim Fortuyn all had taken an economic position closer to the center, but that their stance on the authoritarian dimension still remained present. These findings suggest that the combination of leftist economic position and nativist cultural position could represent a ‘new winning formula’. Voters with lower socio-economic status are now overrepresented among the far-right electorate, and, according to Kitschelt (1995), a vote-maximizing logic would stimulate parties to adapt their economic stance

to more cater to, and reflect the interests of, its electoral base. To the extent that most of their potential voters combine culturally conservative and economically left-leaning attitudes, it is therefore rational for far-right parties to move programmatically in this direction (Harteveld, 2016). This combination of anti-immigrant attitudes and center/leftist positions on welfare issues is known as ‘welfare chauvinism’ and is typical for many modern anti-immigration parties.

Organization

Besides ideology, organization has been proposed as an important factor for the success of the far right. Some scholars argue that a well-developed party infrastructure is critical to its electoral success (e.g., Art, 2011; Betz, 1998). The organizational strength of a party is determined by the size of its membership, its organizational extensiveness as captured by its local presence, the professionalization of its central organization, and its effectiveness in fostering a grassroots base (Norris, 2005; Tavits, 2012). Several studies provide evidence of a direct link between strong party organizations and the success of far-right parties. For instance, Betz (1994) cites party organization as one of the most important determinants for electoral success. However, a party’s organizational strength might not only be the cause of its electoral success, but it can also be a consequence of it. The growth of membership and improvement of an organization often lag behind success, instead of the other way around (Muis & Immerzeel, 2017, p. 916). In line with this argument, Ellinas (2009, p. 219) argues that a strong party organization is more important in explaining the persistence of far-right parties after their initial breakthrough, as it takes time to develop strong party organizations. In the earlier phases of party development, it is more essential for the parties to spread their message to the broader public in order to bring in new voters. For this purpose, charismatic leadership can be beneficial.

Leadership and Media Attention

Far-right parties tend to favor strong or charismatic leadership, leading some scholars to claim that a party’s leadership may be responsible for party performance in elections (e.g., Eatwell, 2005; Lubbers et al., 2002). A key problem with studying charismatic

leaders is the vagueness of the term. Whereas some associate charisma with the managerial style of National Rally's Marine Le Pen, others consider her provocative father Jean Le Pen to be the epitome of a charismatic leader. In other words, charisma can take various forms. Robert Eatwell (2018, pp. 253-254) argues that charismatic leaders are characterized by radical missions and personal presence. Following this wide definition, all three far-right party leaders in this study can be considered charismatic leaders. Although charismatic leadership qualities can benefit both new and old parties, many scholars highlight the importance of the leader in a party's breakthrough phase, where their main role is to develop the message of the party, communicate it and draw attention to it (Harmel & Svåsand, 1993; Mudde 2007).

For party leaders to boost their party's visibility and mobilize their voter base, media attention is essential. Research shows that far-right parties clearly benefit from media attention, and that this attention is far more important to new parties than established ones (Bos et al., 2010; van Spanje & Azrout, 2020). Media access also provides political newcomers with the means to make themselves known with little organizational effort (Ellinas, 2009). However, new parties have a more difficult time gaining media attention than their established counterparts. Because leaders of new parties do not have the kind of media access that leaders of established parties have, their ability to get their message across in the media depends largely on their newsworthiness. As a result, many leaders of far-right parties tend to spread controversial messages or employ populist rhetoric in order to draw media attention (Bos, 2012). By exploiting their outsider position, their news value can become very high.

As a complement to existing theories on political opportunity structures, Koopmans and Olzak (2004) introduce the notion of *discursive opportunity structures*, defined as 'the aspects of the public discourse that determine a message's chances of diffusion in the public sphere' (Koopmans & Olzak, 2004, p. 202). Originally developed to explain social movement appeal and mobilization success, the core premise of discursive opportunity structures is that mass media discourse informs actors about the likelihood of certain action forms succeeding. The two scholars assume that actors have a 'keen interest in following the reactions in the media to their

own actions and see media coverage and political response as a measure of success' (Koopmans & Olzak, 2004, p. 202). Applied to the case of far-right mobilization, far-right party leaders are presumed to act in ways that they believe will draw attention to their party's cause. According to Koopmans and Olzak, discursive opportunities for actors consist of three elements: visibility, resonance, and the nature of reactions in the public debate. Visibility is the extent to which an actor or a message is covered by the mass media. Resonance depends upon the degree to which an actor or a message provokes reactions. So whereas an actor or a message gaining visibility in the media is a necessary condition for public impact, the degree of resonance is presumed to determine the extent of its impact. The third element concerns the degree to which such reactions are supportive. There is still limited research on whether it matters if the media adopts a negative or positive frame in its coverage. However, Koopmans and Olzak (2004, p. 374) argue that any publicity is good publicity and that both positive and negative reactions tend to improve discursive opportunities by creating either dissonance or consonance. This mirrors Ellinas' (2010) argument that for a new party, any attention is important since they might lack the resources to make their existence or political project known to the public in any other way.

Extending the notion of discursive opportunities to the impact of online social networks, social media can function as an amplifier that reinforce representations in traditional media (Wahlström & Törnberg, 2021, p. 769). Whereas the actions of traditional media gatekeepers produce Koopmans and Olzak's visibility mechanism, social media provide a potential source of higher resonance as it enhances reproduction of a message. Additionally, political actors can increase visibility themselves by using their social media platform to post messages that provoke reactions.

To sum up, internal supply-side factors consider parties to be 'shapers of their own fates' and focuses on the parties' own strategies (Muiz & Immerzeel, 2017). Hence the internal supply-side analysis takes a closer look at the two challenger parties. Both parties had newly emerged and contested general elections for the first time. Therefore, in line with scholarship that consider leadership and media attention to play critical roles in the early stages of party development, I examine the party leaders'

ability to garner attention in both traditional media and social media in the campaign period.

3

Data & Methodology

The point of departure for this study is to examine the causes of the political fragmentation of the far right in Denmark. The empirical analysis applies a multi-method approach in order to investigate both demand-side and the supply-side factors that might contribute to this far-right fragmentation. This chapter will outline the methodological framework and discuss the advantages and limitations of each approach to explain why the methodological choices made in this thesis are useful in answering the research question at hand.

A single-case design provides the basis of this study. The most recent election in Denmark displays a clear fragmentation of the right-wing political spectrum and make it an interesting case for examining the phenomenon of far-right fragmentation. Robert Yin (2009, p. 14), one of the most prominent advocates of case study research, defines the single-case study as an ‘an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident’. Unlike more generalizing methods, single-case studies allow in-depth, multifaceted explorations of the complex nature of a specific phenomenon. Through the application of multiple qualitatively research methods, this study aims to offer a nuanced account of far-right fragmentation.

The advantages of using multiple methods are many. It offers a more comprehensive approach to the phenomenon under study as it has the potential of gaining knowledge about different aspects of it. As a result, it might offer an overall better and more complete explanation. Furthermore, as argued by Mingers (2001, p. 241), ‘different research methods focus on different aspects of reality and therefore a

richer understanding of a research topic will be gained by combining several methods together in a single piece of research or research program’.

3.1 Measuring Voter Attitudes

The analysis starts by taking a closer look at the demand-side and examines whether there has been a change in voters’ attitudes toward immigration and the political establishment, both of which are claimed to play an important role in far-right voting (Lubbers & Scheepers, 2000; 2002). This provides an overview of the context in which support for the far right in Denmark has grown and stabilized. For this analysis, I rely on secondary analyses of existing surveys. The Danish National Election Study (DNES) has conducted surveys of the voters' attitudes and behavior after each general election since 1971 and represents one of the most established data surveys available for the observation of opinions of the Danish electorate. The election survey thus provides unique data to shed light on the development of Danish voters' political attitudes in these specific areas. Voter responses from 2001 to 2019 will be examined, with an average of 2400 respondents each year. It should be noted that the 2019 election survey has been completed but not yet been published as of June 2021. However, some figures containing numbers from the 2019 study have been published as part of DNES’ overview presenting the development of Danish voter attitudes from 1971-2019 (Stubager et al., 2020). Because I find these results too important to disregard, I have decided to include the numbers from the unpublished survey as an indication of the direction Danish politics is headed. Moreover, observing the development between the two latest elections is essential in understanding the recent fragmentation.

3.2 Measuring Policy Positions in Political Space

The main part of the empirical analysis concerns external supply and the testing of the convergence thesis; that is, the possible spatial shift of the Danish People’s Party. By spatial shifts, I refer to the classical notion of changes in spatial positions and the distance between parties, as elaborated in the previous chapter. The main goal of this analysis is to demonstrate a shift in the established far-right party’s positioning and to

link this shift to the emergence of its two new competitors in the lead-up to the 2019 general election. In particular, if New Right and Hard Line hold a unique spatial position on the Danish right wing in the wake of the established far-right party vacating its radical position. The first step examines whether the Danish People's Party has changed its positions over time and offer several explanations for the changes that have occurred. The systematic analysis of the mainstreaming of the party's positions is based on data from six waves of the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) and the explanations take a more qualitative approach, using a wide range of media sources, such as election debates, speeches, newspapers and Internet sites, to assess the party's goals and strategies. In the second step, a dimensional analysis is being conducted to gain an understanding of the overall positions of the Danish People's Party, New Right and Hard Line in the 2019 election. In contrast to many research papers that quantitatively analyze secondary data from the Manifesto Project Database (MPD), formerly known as the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP), this analysis relies on primary data by developing a fine-grained coding scheme to analyze the parties' manifestos.

3.2.1 Dimensionality of the Political Space

The first step toward selecting suitable data for measuring policy positions is to establish what policy dimensions make up the policy space that will be analyzed. Policy preferences can be described in terms of both issue *salience* and *position*. That an issue is salient refers to the emphasis that the party places on an issue, whereas the party's position indicates its particular stance on that issue. For example, most parties are concerned with the economy, but can hold opposing views ranging from socialist ideas to free-market capitalism. Positions of political parties can be compared on multiple issue dimensions, but not every dimension is equally important to parties. Some issues are more salient than others. In other words, parties attribute more weight to the dimensions they feel very strongly about than to dimensions they do not feel that strongly about, and the political space comprises only those policy dimensions to which parties attach importance (de Lange, 2008, p. 52). The positions parties choose to take on these policy dimensions give insight to the differences between parties' policy

stances. Moreover, because parties either move toward each other or away from each other, ‘changes in party positions provide indications of changes in the relationships between parties’ (de Lange, 2008, p. 52). This means that parties will try to highlight the issue they claim to have ownership over and which they have a reputation of performing well on.

A broad ideological bundle like the general left-right dimension undoubtedly attracts the most attention when measuring party position. However, specific issue domains have become increasingly important in determining dynamics of party positions as we have witnessed the emergence of new cleavages that do not always overlap with the left-right divide (Kriesi et al., 2012; Ruedin, 2013). As mentioned in the previous chapter, scholars argue that the traditional left-right dimension no longer explains as much as it used to. To better understand parties’ political position and their strategies, studies have more frequently included a second dimension made up of various non-economic issues. Scholars have referred to this other dimension of politics as either materialist-post-materialist (Inglehart, 1977), liberal-authoritarian (Kitschelt, 1994), new politics (Hildebrandt & Dalton, 1978), GALTAN (Hooghe et al., 2002), or winners vs. losers of globalization (Kriesi et al., 2006). Multiple researchers highlight the important role of this non-economic dimension in political competition (e.g., Marks et al., 2006; Kitschelt, 1992). In a study by Kriesi et al. (2006), the scholars find strong support for two-dimensionality and indicate that the political space is defined by an economic (left-right) dimension and a cultural dimension that relates to parties’ position on sociocultural issues. However, the diversity in the content and meaning of the sociocultural dimension make it much more complicated than economic left-right politics, hence the competing names listed above. Marks et al. (2006, p. 157) state that that in some countries, the dimension ‘is oriented around environmental protection and sustainable growth; in others, it captures conflict about traditional values rooted in a secular-religious divide; and in yet others, it is pitched around immigration and defense of the national community’. In other words, the issues that make up the sociocultural dimension vary and do not always form a coherent and distinctive dimension. The most widely used conceptualization of this cultural dimension is the distinction made by Hooghe, Marks and Wilson (2002) between

Green/Alternative/Libertarian parties and Traditional/Authoritarian/Nationalist parties (GALTAN). Although this dimension covers a wide range of issues, it is first and foremost concerned with parties' views on democratic freedoms and rights. As members of the far right, all three parties in this study are located on the TAN end of the spectrum. As a result, this conceptualization fails to capture the diverse positions of parties within the same party family and in the area most important to far-right parties, and arguably the most salient topic in Danish politics, namely immigration, which has come to be considered a top-rated policy priority in Denmark (Benoit & Laver, 2006; Green-Pedersen & Otjes, 2019; Thomsen, 2006).

Historically, party competition in Denmark has been predominantly unidimensional and the economic dimension has been very salient in Danish politics (Hansen, 2008; Klemmensen et al., 2007). In recent years, however, non-economic issues have become central to the country's party politics. The conflicts that define Danish party politics are now structured by two dimensions: an economic dimension comprised of issues like deregulation, privatization and the reduction of the tax burden, and a cultural dimension that includes issues like restricting new immigrants and integrating old immigrants in accordance with Western values and norms. The empirical analysis in this thesis will therefore examine the far-right parties' positions on a general economic left-right dimension, as well as on the core issue of immigration. Together, these two dimensions are intended to capture politically salient issues relevant for the far right and benchmark important differences between the positions of the Danish far-right parties.

3.2.2 Expert Surveys

The external supply-side analysis starts by investigating whether the Danish People's Party has shifted in its spatial placement over time in the policy fields of immigration and economy, prompting a spatial opening for New Right and Hard Line to enter. To account for this potential positional shift, the paper will look at the position of the Danish People Party at different points in time. The availability of comprehensive party documents prior to the 2019 election is relatively scarce. Coding leaflets and poster will not provide an accurate estimation of the party's positions as these

documents do not properly detail the party's policies. Therefore, I have decided to use data from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) to observe changes over time.

Estimates of party policy positions obtained from specialists through expert surveys have been increasingly used to provide spatial pictures of party policy and ideology (Benoit & Laver, 2006). Moreover, they have been proven to produce consistent results and be highly reliable in examining party positions (e.g., Rohrschneider & Whitefield, 2012). The assumption is that experts who specialize in party politics know where the parties in their respective countries stand on various issues and dimensions. Danish elections do not have a fixed electoral cycle which means that not all parties put out election manifestos. An advantage of expert surveys is that they allow researchers to obtain a large number of party positions, regardless of whether the party have a manifesto or not. Expert surveys as a method of data collection might also have some disadvantages. One claim is that experts do not necessarily have first-hand knowledge on every party of the party system in question. However, the reliability is strengthened by the fact that the CHES operates on a relatively large scale. Responses to the survey are usually sought from upwards of 40 respondents per country, with the response rate itself usually coming well into double figures (Mair, 2001, pp. 10-11). Furthermore, the experts do not base their judgment on one single source. Rather, they rely on a vast array of sources, including speeches, media coverage of parties, programs and leaflets, voter alignments, and the activities of the parties outside the legislative arena. Kitschelt emphasizes that because expert surveys are based on multiple sources, 'such synthetic judgments may have greater external validity' (Kitschelt & McGann, 1997, p. 64). Although some find the measurement reliability to be limited, multiple studies show that when compared with several independent data sources, expert surveys are reliable and display remarkable agreement among experts about the placement of parties (Hooghe et al., 2010; Steenbergen & Marks, 2007; Whitefield et al., 2007).

3.2.3 Content Analysis of Party Manifestos

Positioning political actors and political parties along a left-right continuum and other policy dimensions has been an important feature of recent empirical research in

comparative politics. Within political science, there are several methodological approaches to estimate the policy positions of political actors. Consequently, there are large scholarly disagreement about how parties' policy positions are most adequately measured. With several methods available for estimating party positions, it is important that researchers make an informed choice (Laver, 2014).

Content analysis based on official party documentation contribute greatly to the examination of party policies. Party manifestos cover the parties' core beliefs and include statements about what the party intends to do if elected to public office. In addition, manifestos are useful as a representation of the official position of a party at a certain point in time (Volkens, 2007). There are several approaches to estimate party policy positions based on party manifestos. Some use automated content analysis by means of Wordscores (Laver et al., 2003) or Wordfish (Slapin & Proksch, 2008), which analyze word frequencies of text documents. Although these frequency-based methods might work for some data, there are case-specific problems for Denmark that make them less suitable when applied to Danish data. For example, Danish manifestos tend to be much shorter compared to the manifestos of many of its Western European peers. Accordingly, it should be difficult for the automated techniques to place the parties correctly on a political dimension (Hjorth et al., 2015). There are also large party-to-party differences between the length of the manifestos. The higher the number of words, the more information can be extracted from a manifest, thus it is problematic if a party's manifesto of 683 words is compared with one of 12 927 (Hansen, 2008, p. 208).

Manual content analysis of party manifestos has mainly been carried out within the framework of the Manifesto Project Database (MPD), and the data collected by the MPD have been widely considered as the most systematic and objective source of information (Gemenis, 2013). The approach developed by the MPD first calculates positions by identifying *what* a manifesto says about particular policy issues. It then looks at *which* position is conveyed through the party's manifesto statements. While the Manifesto Project's database of already coded manifestos might seem convenient to use in this study, it has two limitations that make it unsuitable.

Firstly, the data does not cover New Right and Hard Line, and the most recent elections of interest are not yet integrated into the project. Even if they were, MPD estimates in Denmark have been criticized by researchers as implausible. In a 2008 study, Martin Hansen identifies significant problems with the Danish part of the data. These concern the selection of the manifestos, the coding of the manifestos and the positioning of the parties on a left-right scale. For instance, the scholar observes that large parts of the MPD data in the Danish part of the dataset are based on the coding of various documents other than party manifestos, including advertisements, newspapers, and speeches made by both party leaders and non-party leaders (Hansen, 2008, pp. 208-210). This diverse selection of document sources is considered problematic because it raises the question of how this selection truly represents the policy positions of the party. Hansen also finds that the calculations of left-right positions of Danish parties have generated a distorted picture of the actual positions of Danish political parties and that the parties' left-right scores tend to vary substantially between each election.

Secondly, the project has been criticized for underestimating the salience of immigration-related issues. Though scholars have been able to draw on the MPD to investigate party positions on a wide range of policy dimensions, the matter of immigration – and the large variety of sub-issues that are associated with it – is not part of the MPD (Dancygier & Margalit, 2019). The MPD uses a saliency approach, assuming that 'parties argue with each other by emphasizing different policy priorities rather than by directly confronting each other on the same issues' (Budge & Bara, 2001, pp. 6-7). This means that the MPD approach measures how often parties mention certain issues, rather than their positions on these issues (de Lange, 2008, p. 54). For instance, the dataset's proxy categories (i.e., multiculturalism, law and order, national way of life) reflect the general distinctions between parties' anti-immigration and pro-immigration stances. This dichotomous categorization is too coarse to fully grasp the range of party positions on immigration. According to the coding scheme, a party wishing to limit immigration and a party supporting forced repatriation of all immigrants would be coded the same. In other words, a more nuanced coding scheme is needed to capture the diverse positions in a particular policy area such as

immigration. This is also acknowledged by Budge (2001b), one of the authors of the MPD scheme, who claims that their method might not be suitable for those who want to analyze specific policy areas. In a similar vein, Laver and Garry (2000, p. 622) argue that a fine-grained coding scheme, with specific and detailed categories, is more useful and allows more flexibility for the analysis of the data.

3.2.4 A Confrontational Approach

Both New Right and Hard Line emerged competing on the immigration issue, an issue which was already claimed by the Danish People's Party. To gain an understanding of the competition between these three parties in the 2019 election, an assessment of the parties' positions requires a coding scheme that is sufficiently fine-grained to differentiate between party positions in the policy field of immigration. Based on the foregoing considerations regarding the existing MPD data, this study takes a different approach by using a more refined coding scheme that is specifically generated to analyze the parties' economic and immigration policies, and which guides a more systematic qualitative assessment. Instead of a saliency approach, this thesis uses a confrontational method to estimate the parties' policy positions. This technique, developed by Huib Pellikaan (2003; 2007), stems from the observation that the electoral competition between political parties can be summarized very well by looking at specific issues on which they disagree (Kriesi et al., 2006, pp. 930-931). The theoretical assumption of this approach is that 'issues are generally confrontational and not valence in nature, i.e. parties take up a range of explicit positions on each issue, ranging from fully pro to fully con, without inherent constraints' (Budge, 2001a, p. 86). The confrontational approach focuses on a limited number of specific policy dimensions and works by coding the parties' position on a number of issues that represent these policy dimensions. As there is no inherent true dimensionality for any given political setting, measuring party positions and constructing a political space in which these positions are depicted in a certain election should take into account the political specifics of that election (Benoit & Laver, 2006, p. 110). So although the coding scheme used in this paper builds on various projects which have successfully

implemented a confrontational method (e.g., de Lange, 2007; Gemenis & Dinas, 2010; Pellikaan et al., 2018), it has been modified to fit the Danish context.

The coding procedure proceeds as follows: First, one must specify the number of dimensions on which to position the parties. The point of departure for this analysis is the two-dimensionality of the competitive space. In particular, I examine the Danish far-right parties' positions regarding two policy dimensions: economy and immigration. As mentioned above, the choice for using these two dimensions is based on the notion that during the past decades, economic issues and immigration issues have been the most salient in Danish politics. The economic dimension is related to the traditional left-right economic divide between parties who emphasize the value of free market competition on the one side, and parties who favor state intervention and more equal redistribution of resources on the other. The opposition on the immigration dimension is between the supporters of a heterogenous multicultural society, and those who advocate for a homogenous monocultural society. The dimension measures the parties' stance on admission policies that determine who is allowed to enter the country. This includes terms of admission, immigrant/integration policies, and enforcement policies to either prevent the entry of, or remove unauthorized immigrants (Rosenblum & Cornelius, 2012).

After the selection of the dimensions, issues have to be selected that are representative for these dimensions. In order to choose sufficient issues that together reflect the dimensionality of the Danish political space, I have assessed the conflicts that have dominated the political debate and defined Danish party politics in recent years. On the economic dimension, issues have been selected that are indicative of the socialist-capitalist dimension in order to separate parties who favor the 'political redistribution of economic resources', on the one hand, and those who favor the 'market allocation' of resources, on the other (Kitschelt, 1995, p. 1). Since all three parties share a preference for a monocultural society, operationalization of the immigration dimension was more complex as the issues had to be specific enough to be able to differentiate between the three. Taking this into account, the choice of policy issues for each policy dimension was based on the following four rules: they had to be representative of the dimension on which they were intended to be measured, they

were relevant to the 2019 general election, the text of the party manifestos indicated that they were important to the parties, and they allowed for differentiation between the parties. The number of issues used to operationalize the dimensions are not fixed, and the more issues selected, the better one can differentiate between parties that are ideologically close to each other (de Lange, 2007, p. 89). In this analysis, each of the dimensions consists of eight policy issues (see Appendix A).

Lastly, each party is assigned a score on the selected issues based on statements in their manifesto. For example, when statements in a manifesto predominantly indicate that a party is in favor of more market influence on one of the chosen issues, it receives a positive score (+1) on that issue. When statements predominantly indicate that a party is in favor of state intervention on one of the selected issues, it receives a negative score (-1). In cases of no reference on any issues, or unclear statements, the party is given a neutral score (0). The same approach is then applied to the immigration dimension; a party gets a negative score for supporting the multicultural society, a positive score for supporting the monocultural society, or a neutral score if its manifesto has no clear position on the specific item. The scores of all issues relating to a given dimension are then summarized to establish the party's position on that dimension. Thus, each party for each policy dimension is placed on a 17-point, with a minimum score of -8 and a maximum score of +8.

3.3 Measuring Media Coverage

Finally, the internal supply-side analysis will focus on the leaders of the challenger parties' ability to attract media attention during the election campaign.

As argued in the theoretical chapter, media exposure can go a long way in accounting for how leaders of far-right parties are able to capitalize on the opportunity structures available to them (Ellinas, 2010). According to agenda-setting theory, the media influence the salience of topics on the public agenda. When a news item is covered frequently, the audience will regard the issue as more important (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). In line with this argument, the frequent presence of a party leader in the media gives the impression of political importance. This analysis examines the party leaders' exposure in traditional mainstream media, in addition to their social media

traction. I look at the coverage of six major Danish media outlets, as well as the social media platform Twitter, in the four weeks leading up to the 2019 general election and make a comparison between the prominence of the two new parties' leaders, New Right's Pernille Vermund and Hard Line's Rasmus Paludan.

To be clear, the aim of the internal supply-side analysis is not to assess the influence of party leaders on voting behavior but rather to use media coverage as a proxy to examine the new leaders' ability to draw attention to themselves and their party during the election campaign. Therefore, this study only looks at the amount of attention given, not the framing of the media attention.

Loosely inspired by the discursive opportunity structure provided by Koopmans and Olzak (2004), I look at two aspects of the framework when examining the media attention of the far-right party leaders. The first aspect is *visibility*, which is the amount of mainstream media attention given to each of the party leaders. More than their established counterparts, new parties depend on the media for their electoral breakthrough (Bos et al., 2010, p. 2). New parties, like New Right and Hard Line, cannot rely on reputation and need the mass media to provide them with a stage. Without enough media coverage, chances are high that voters will not be informed about the parties' existence let alone their ideological stance, and electoral gain is very unlikely. Therefore, the visibility of the media appearance of the leaders of these parties are important for their electoral fortunes; the more prominent a politician is in the mass media, the greater the likelihood that voters will know him or her.

In order to compare the amount of media attention given to the new party leaders, I include the leaders of all parties contesting election in 2019. It has been found for established parties that the more powerful they are, the more news media coverage they receive (Hopmann et al., 2011). On theoretical grounds, one can therefore expect the new parties to receive less media attention than the established Danish People's Party.

To measure the party leaders' visibility, I look at the number of times a party leader's name is referenced in mainstream media. I use the media monitor service Retriever to gather data from six major national newspapers and broadcasters in the four-week election campaign leading up to the 2019 general election. For newspapers

(both online and print), I have decided to look at two of the most-read daily newspapers in Denmark, Information and B.T. These two represent both sides of the left-right political spectrum. Even though all of the largest newspapers in Denmark are party-politically independent, some of them still have different ideological leanings. According to Pew Research Center, the tabloid newspaper B.T.'s political orientation is considered conservative, whereas Information is regarded as liberal. The media outlets representing broadcasting is the top two television channels with the highest viewing share, DR1 and TV 2, as well as the radio stations DR P4, which is made up of ten regional stations, and Radio24syv, a privately owned radio station with public service status. The latter ended their broadcasting in October 2019 but was at the time of the election one of the country's largest radio stations in terms of audience share (Kantar Radio-Meter, 2019). Though there has been some criticism of using computer-assisted approaches for analyzing media content, most notably by Althaus et al. (2001), I follow Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart (2007) in believing that it presents an efficient strategy to analyze larger amounts of media coverage over a period of time. Moreover, such an approach is especially suitable as the purpose of the internal-supply side analysis is to only look at the quantity or intensity of coverage, as opposed to the tone or direction of the news.

The second aspect is *resonance*, which is how often party leaders are discussed in social media. This captures their ability to engage others in conversation and attract both positive and negative reactions from the public. Newspapers and public broadcasting are still the dominant sources of news among the Danish population, but for some political actors, access to the established mass media is limited. This rings especially true for many far-right actors who often criticize the mainstream media and communicate through alternative news media. The rise of far-right criticism of the mainstream press has also contributed to media distrust among their supporters. According to a 2017 survey from Pew Research Center, Danes who hold populist views are less likely to trust their public news media than those who do not embrace these views. The same survey also finds that more than a third of the general population believe that Danish news media are doing a very bad or somewhat bad job covering news on immigration. This might lead many to seek out alternative news

sources. Social media sites have exploded in popularity over the last decade. They are becoming central platforms for discussion and social interaction, and increasingly important sources for receiving news. More than traditional media, social media might therefore provide far-right parties with access to a wider audience, or even better, a large pool of potential supporters holding populist, anti-immigration views. Studying the online success of political parties, Larsson (2017, p. 128) finds ‘a tendency for ideologically marginalized parties to gain more traction in novel media spheres than in the coverage curated by established media actors’. As a now-established party, the Danish People’s Party is no longer marginal. However, one would expect social media attention to benefit new, smaller parties like Hard Line and New Right.

For party leaders, being mentioned and discussed in social media might lead to him or her achieve recognition and gain traction. In the analysis, I measure resonance by looking at the number of times the party leader’s names was mentioned by other Twitter users during the campaign period. Initially, I was also interested in looking at the contents of the party leaders’ own posts on Twitter during the election campaign. However, Rasmus Paludan’s Twitter profile was suspended not long after the election, and all of his tweets have since been removed from the platform. Any analysis of his tweet content or retweets is therefore impossible. Nevertheless, previous research has found Twitter mentions to be an adequate metric to measure influence as it indicates the ability of the person mentioned to engage others in a conversation (Cha et al., 2010).

As with traditional media attention, this type of measure says very little about the content of the feedback received in social media. Still, any type of reaction, both positive or negative, will increase a party leader’s chances of obtaining visibility and draw attention to themselves and their party. Even a general mention in a tweet will help leverage the amount of attention given to them, as it allows for their name to potentially spread and reach a wider audience. Moreover, charismatic leaders are almost always polarizing personalities; either you like them, or you hate them.

This chapter has presented a detailed discussion about the methods adopted in this study. By implementing this multi-method approach, I aim to paint a more nuanced picture of the fragmentation of the far right in Denmark in the next chapter.

4

Analysis

4.1 Demand-Side

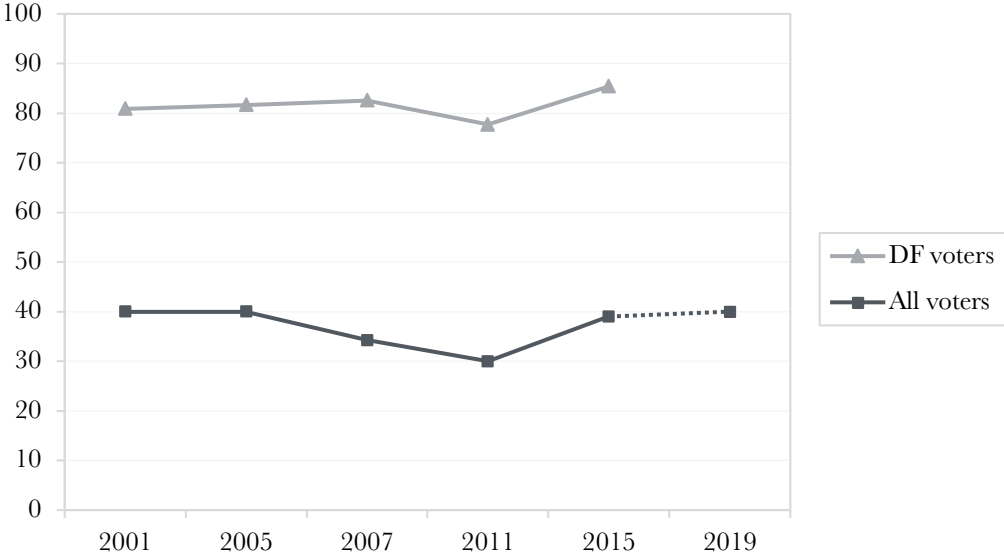
The analysis starts by assessing the demand-side and whether the fragmentation might be explained by changes in voters' attitudes toward immigration and the political establishment. This requires data tracing public opinion to before the electoral breakthrough of the two new far-right parties. Survey data has been collected over an extended period by the Danish National Election Study and the tables below include data from 2001 to 2015, as well as responses from the unpublished results from the 2019 study, which is marked with a dotted line. This time period has been particularly important for the success and consolidation of the Danish People's Party. The general election in 2001 marks somewhat of a turning point in Danish politics. Sociocultural and value-based politics were placed at the core of the political agenda, and immigration became one of the most relevant issues. The election also marked a breakthrough for the Danish People's Party, as it became the parliamentary foundation for the new center-right government. Since then, the party increasingly focused on keeping one foot inside government championing the welfare state and trying to push through restrictive immigration policies, while at the same time keeping one foot out in order to continue to present themselves as anti-elite.

4.1.1 Public Opinion Toward Immigration

Figure 4.1 concerns the need for protecting the external boundaries of the nation and the extent to which Danes view immigration as a cultural threat. Results from the Danish Election Survey show that the percentage of voters who agree with the

statement that ‘immigration constitutes a serious threat to our distinct national character’ has been relatively stable since 2001.

FIGURE 4.1. Attitudes Toward Immigration, 2001-2019.

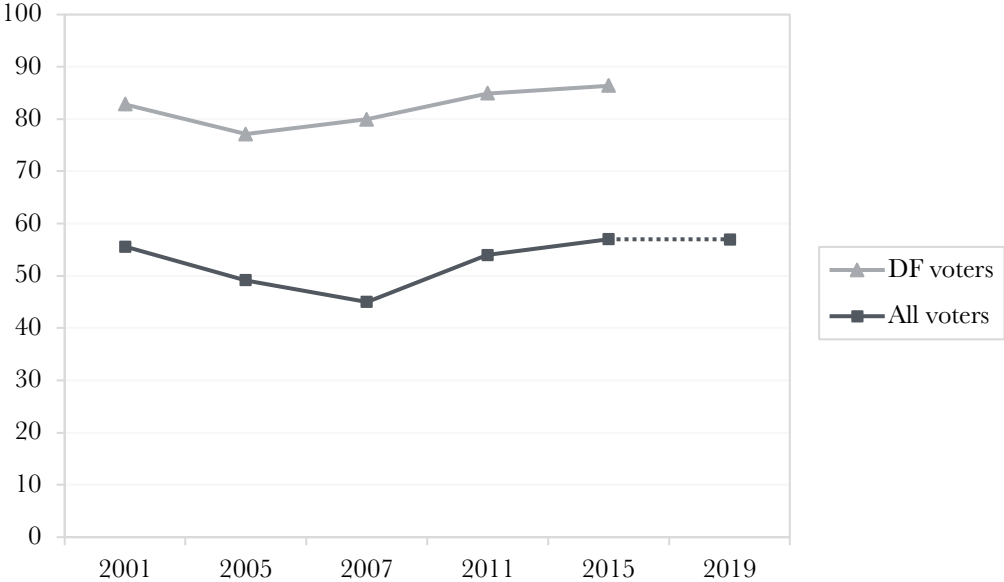


Note: Percentage of survey respondents who agree with the statement ‘Immigration constitutes a serious threat to our distinct national character’.
Source: *The Danish National Election Study, 2001-2015; Stubager et al., 2020.*

The survey also reveals that voters of the Danish People’s Party feel much more culturally threatened by immigration than the overall electorate. In 2015, 85% of the respondents who voted for the Danish People’s Party agreed with the statement. Interestingly, there was a decline in the percentage of the overall electorate who agree with the statement in the period 2001 to 2011, when the Danish People’s Party gave its support to the Liberal- Conservative coalition government. During this time, the party pushed through stricter policies on immigration. After 2011, there is a notable increase in Danes who consider immigration a serious threat, and the concern reached an all-time high in 2015. The same tendencies can be found in a 2017 study conducted by Danish TrygFonden to assess the level of safety experienced in the Danish population (“Tryghedsmåling”). In that survey, two out of three Danes share concerns about increased immigration and failed integration, and immigration was ranked as the second largest concern after welfare (Andersen et al., 2017).

The next measurement, shown in figure 4.2, concerns the nation’s internal boundaries and Danes’ attitudes toward equal social rights for immigrants. In this case, the figure displays the percentage of respondents who disagree with the statement ‘Refugees and immigrants should have the same right to social benefits as Danes, even if they are not Danish citizens’. This number also reached an all-time high in 2015, with more than half of the Danish electorate showing opposition to extensive social benefits immigrants. For voters of the Danish People’s Party, this number was 86%.

FIGURE 4.2. Attitudes Toward Immigrants’ Equal Access to Social Benefits, 2001-2019



Note: Percentage of survey respondents who disagree with the statement ‘Refugees and immigrants should have the same right to social benefits as Danes, even if they are not Danish citizens’.
Source: *The Danish National Election Study, 2001-2015; Stubager et al., 2020.*

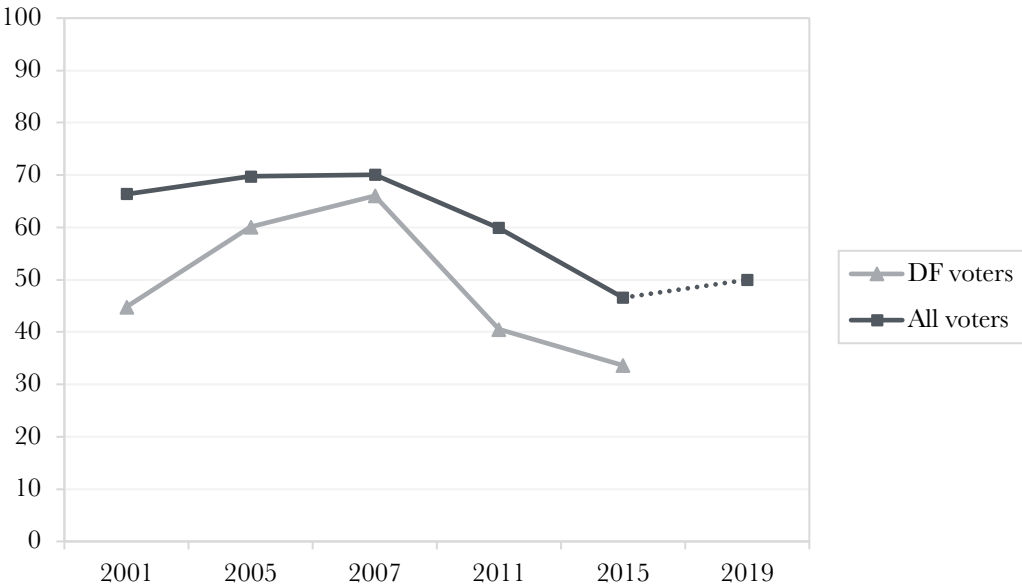
It is important to note that opinions toward immigration can change over time and that different factors can play a role in shaping public opinion on immigration issues. For example, a center-left coalition was formed after the 2011 election, mainly thanks to the renewed importance of socioeconomic matters in the aftermath of the global financial crisis (Meret, 2020). And in 2015, the refugee crisis contributed to a shift in public opinion as immigration and integration policies once again came to dominate the political agenda. This largely benefitted the center-right and the Danish People’s Party, who rallied for even harsher immigration restrictions (Hansen & Stubager,

2017). The comeback of value politics might explain the high scores on opposition to immigration in the latest voter survey from 2015. However, what stands out in both figures is the relative stability over time in Danes' opinions of immigrants. The data demonstrates that negative attitudes toward immigration have been present in the Danish population for a long time. Although the recent surveys show the highest number yet, the public opinion is very similar to that in 2001. Moreover, the figure reveals that opinion toward immigration seems to have stabilized after 2015, thus it fails to explain the fragmentation happening in the most recent election.

4.1.2. Political Distrust

Figure 4.3 indicates that the 2019 general election was held in an atmosphere following years of growing distrust, with more than half of Danish voters showing a low degree of trust in Danish politicians in the recent surveys. The figure displays a significant decline in political trust from 2007-2015, dropping 22 percentage points over an eight-year period.

FIGURE 4.3. Voters' Trust in Danish Politicians, 2001-2019.



Note: Based on the question “How much trust do you have in Danish politicians in general?”. The figure displays the proportion of respondents who have indicated that they either have a "very large" or "fairly large" degree of trust in politicians.
Source: The Danish National Election Study, 2001-2015; Stubager et al., 2020.

According to the survey data, distrust is greatest among lower-educated voters and members of the working class. This group makes up a large part of the Danish People's Party's electorate (Andersen, 2014). The distrust is also reflected in political attitudes, as voters with an orientation toward the far right of Danish politics inhabit a lower degree of trust in the political system and politicians than members of other parties. This indicates that the Danish People's Party not only attract voters with lower levels of political trust, but it also shows that those who vote for the party are more likely to develop even lower levels of political trust. The emergence of new far-right parties means that the Danish People's Party no longer has a monopoly on attracting distrusting voters.

Levels of political trust plummeted up until 2015. If the 'spiral of distrust' hypothesis of Hooghe and Dassonneville (2018) is correct, protest parties like New Right and Hard Line may have benefited electorally from the fact that the pool of low-trusting voters became larger, and that voters who became less trusting are more likely to vote for protest parties. It is well established in the literature that levels of political trust affect voters' party preferences and that a distrusting electorate is often associated with a preference for far-right parties (e.g., Arzheimer, 2009; Miller & Listhaug 1990; Mudde, 2007). Protest voters and many parties on the far right, especially the ones who exhibit populist characteristics, share a fierce criticism of the establishment. Voting for a far-right party may thus appear to be the most appealing electoral alternative for dissatisfied voters, particularly if these parties are successful in portraying themselves as political outsiders. As the Danish People's Party has established itself in the political system and gained parliamentary representation, it has more difficulty presenting itself as an anti-elitist movement and convincing voters of its role as a protest party. Even though the party has remained one step away from formal government responsibility, this distance is challenged because of its important role in shaping the government's policy. In contrast, both New Right and Hard Line explicitly define themselves as protest parties and has managed to establish themselves as political outsiders (Heeger, 2019; Holm et al., 2019). Moreover, voters' trust in the Danish People's Party was challenged by a corruption scandal that dates back to 2016, in which the party was accused of misusing EU funds. At the center of the controversy

was MEP Morten Messerschmidt of the Danish People's Party, who ended up resigning as the party's parliament group leader. The scandal was a hard hit for the party considering its tough stance against fraud and bureaucracy in the EU. Political scandals committed by existing parties in the party system have shown to leave voters dissatisfied and distrusting (Mair, 2011), and the already low levels of trust among the Danish People's Party's electorate combined with the overall negative attitudes toward immigration might have led some voters to withdraw their support and look for other alternatives on the far right.

Although the results show a fairly low sense of political trust over time, it is remarkable that there is a slight increase in trust among the overall electorate in 2019. It falls outside the scope of this study to explain why the electorate seem to have become more trusting, and because the dataset from 2019 is not yet available, it is not possible to assess whether the level of trust also increased among those who voted for the far right. However, the results from the latest survey might imply that distrusting far-right voters had increased opportunity to express their discontent in the 2019 election, as the two new protest parties made their first appearance on the scene around the same time. New Right and Hard Line might have represented the interests of those dissatisfied with the existing party supply and acted as an outlet for discontented voters. Further research is needed once new data is available to assess whether this explanation is plausible.

Based on the available data, however, I find that many Danes hold far-right views, which provides a fertile breeding ground for far-right parties, but there are no significant differences between 2015 and 2019 in the attitudes toward immigration and political trust among the Danish electorate that can account for the fragmentation happening in the most recent election.

4.2 External Supply-Side

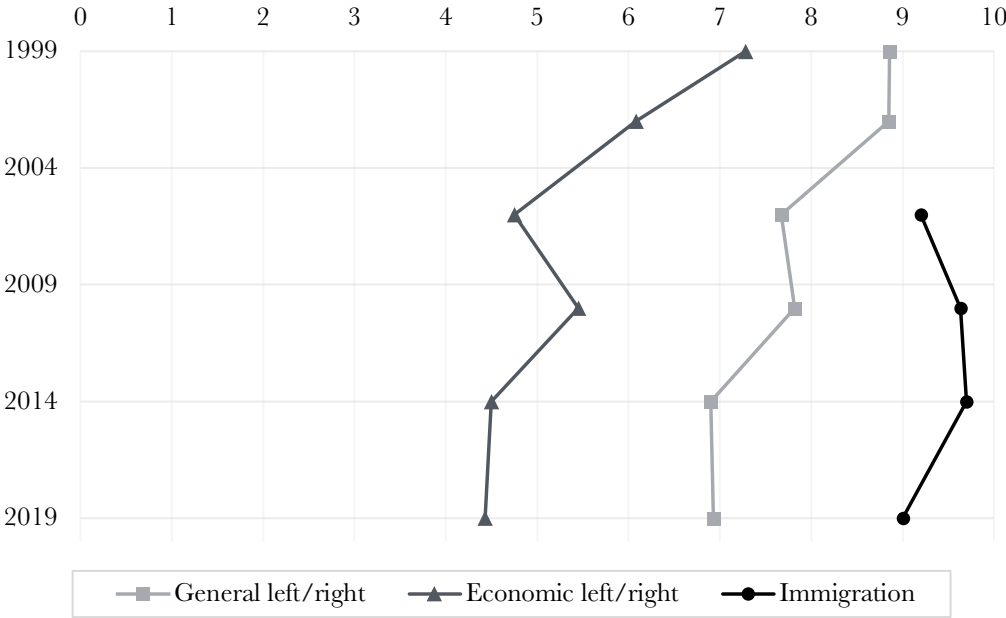
The empirical analysis of the external supply examines the possible spatial shift of the Danish People's Party and the positional placement of New Right and Hard Line. The next section begins with an assessment of the extent to which the Danish People's Party has mainstreamed. This is followed by a discussion of how the Danish People's Party

has shifted its party goals during this period and how this shift relates to its mainstreaming. The discussion delves into some of the central events and developments that have defined the party and will offer several explanations for important changes that have occurred in the years prior to the 2019 election.

4.2.1 Mainstreaming of the Danish People’s Party

Figure 4.4 shows the Danish People’s Party position on the economic left-right dimension and an immigration/integration dimension. The party has moved from a right-wing position on the economic dimension in its early days in 1999, to a position slightly to the left of center at 4.4 in 2019. This means that when it comes to economic policies, the Danish People's Party has moved away from its former cooperation partners in the blue bloc, the Liberal Party and the Conservatives, and closer to the Social Democrats.

FIGURE 4.4. Placement of the Danish People’s Party, 1999-2019.



Note: Position of the party in terms of its overall ideological position ('lrgen'), its position on economic issues ('lrecon'), as well as its position on immigration policy ('immigrate_policy'), which was not included in the survey until 2006; score from 0 – left to 5 – center and to 10 – right.

Source: 1999 – 2019 Chapel Hill Expert Survey Trend File (Bakker et al., 2020).

On the other hand, not much has happened on the immigration/integration dimension. The party fluctuates around 9 as it continues to favor assimilation and restrictive policies on immigration. The most notable change, however, came in the years leading up to the 2019 election, where the party's policies seem to have moderated. The Danish People's Party thus seem to have moved to an area in the political space that has not been occupied by other parties so far, placing itself to the right on immigration and integration issues, and to the left of center on economic issues - an area which the Social Democrats also seems to have been moving toward in recent years. Although the moderation of the party's immigration policies might have been a strategic move made by the party itself, it should be pointed out that this apparent change could also be a result of changes in the experts' perception of party positions. It is not unlikely that the emergence of the two more radical competitors pushed the boundaries in regard to what the experts might consider extreme.

Changes in the Party's Goals and Strategies

Under the leadership of Pia Kjaersgaard, the Danish People's Party proved its parliamentary credibility by providing the various Liberal-Conservative governments with a parliamentary majority from 2001 until 2011. Initially, it was not a given that the party could function as a loyal partner of the minority coalition government. Much like its predecessor, the Danish People's Party was concerned with vote-maximization and taking controversial and radical stances on issues such as immigration, European integration and the welfare state (Bille, 2002). However, the party soon became an important ally. The prolonged collaboration between the governmental parties and the Danish People's Party secured political influence on the party's key issues. By supporting the general economic policies and goals set up by the government, the party received concessions in return, often on non-economic policies, such as stricter immigration and integration policies. Accepting the economic policies of the government left little room for a clear and independent economic profile (Christiansen, 2016), and the economic policies the party chose to support did not always benefit their constituents. An example is the Welfare Agreement of 2006, where the party reached an agreement with the government on a number of reforms on Danish welfare

benefits, including retrenchment of retirement schemes. Nevertheless, the party was not punished by their voters for supporting the government's economic policies. This indicates that economic issues were far less important to their voters than the party's flagship issues (Kosiara-Pedersen, 2020). In addition, Denmark's favorable economic environment at the time provided an opportunity for the party to focus on its sociocultural issues (Ivarsflaten, 2005). After a decade dominated by 'new politics', voters seemed to pay more attention to the economy and the welfare state after 2011 (Stubager, 2013). In 2012, Kjærsgaard resigned and passed the party leadership to Kristian Thulesen Dahl. As a former financial spokesperson and chairman of the finance committee, the new party leader emphasized economic policies and, as the CHES data confirms, took a center-left position on these issues. The Danish People's Party thus broadened its profile to socioeconomic issues while keeping its main emphasis on immigration. By broadening its issue agenda, the party managed to expand its electorate as the move allowed the party to reach out to voters with a leftist economic position and a rightist position on immigration.

The strategy of having one foot in and one foot out allowed the party to retain their radical identity and gain political influence without having to assume responsibility for unpopular decisions made by the government. Government participation was never on the table, although the idea of the Danish People's Party entering government was occasionally aired by members of the government or the party itself, including Pia Kjærsgaard, who once stated that her voters would have a 'natural expectation [for the party to] enter government at some stage' (The Economist, 2006). Kristian Thulesen Dahl, however, was less eager than his predecessor to become a minister. Even when the party became the largest right-wing party in parliament in the 2015 election, its success did not translate into cabinet seats. Instead, the party went for the role of support party, the same strategy it had adopted between 2001 and 2011. This situation underlines one of the challenges that arise by being an anti-elite, established party on the far right, as they find themselves between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand, government participation establishes them as part of the system and the parties find themselves having to demonstrate their purity or risk losing radical voters. On the other hand, if they do not take responsibility and stay

in permanent opposition to reinforce their appeal to disgruntled voters, or their *fundis*, they may alienate the more moderate parts of their base – the *realos* – who might perceive the party as irrelevant in the long run.

Although the Danish People's Party has moved its economic policies from the right to the center-left, the party has largely kept its positions of skepticism toward immigration before seemingly moderating its position before the 2019 election. In recent years, the Social Democrats have hardened their stance on immigration in an effort to lure some of its old voters back from the Danish People's Party. With the Danish People's Party simultaneously moving closer to the Social Democrats on economy, widespread rumors about a potential alliance between the two began circulating. During election campaigns in 2015, Thulesen Dahl had publicly stated that 'the party is open to negotiate with other parties, if that's what it takes to gain greater influence' (Heinskou, 2015), and in the run-up to the 2019 election, Thulesen Dahl invited Mette Fredriksen and the Social Democrats to call him if the election ended with a majority for the red bloc (Dahl, 2018). Up until then, the Danish People's Party would never have supported a government led by the Social Democrats. Nevertheless, opening the possibilities of such new alliances indicated a significant shift in both parties' politics, with the Danish People's Party and the Social Democrats approaching each other on the economic and the sociocultural dimension, respectively. With the differences between the two parties shrinking, this strategic decision might have served as a confirmation of what many far-right voters had started to suspect, namely that the Danish People's Party had moderated its immigration stance. From the beginning, the Danish People's Party adopted a dismissive strategy toward its new far-right competitors, New Right and Hard Line, by regarding them as too extreme and rejecting any form of collaboration between them. That the party suddenly seemed more inclined to cooperate with the mainstream center-left party might therefore have been the last straw for far-right voters who considered immigration the most important issue in the 2019 election.

In conclusion, the Danish People's Party has partly gone through a process of mainstreaming, yet it is still too radical to be considered a mainstream party. The party has broadened its programmatic profile, de-emphasized its anti-establishment position

and put greater emphasis on economic issues. However, it has largely kept its radical stance on immigration. In other words, the party has managed to become mainstream in style, while maintaining the radical core of some of its flagship issue. This is being challenged by the emergence of the new parties, which will be further explored in the next section.

4.2.2 Dimensional Analysis of the Far-Right Parties in the 2019 Election

Having outlined the positional changes of the Danish People’s Party, this next part examines the overall positions of the Danish People’s Party, New Right and Hard Line on economy and immigration in the 2019 election. The scores of the parties on each individual issue are given in Appendix B.

Danish People’s Party

The Danish People’s Party’s 2019 manifesto covers the party’s flagship issues: immigration, the improvement of health care and elderly care, the preservation of law and order, border control and animal welfare. The issue of immigration, which has historically been an important driver of progress and strength for the party, is not more salient than any of the other topics. Instead, issues which until recently have absolutely not been considered to belong to the far-right agenda, such as animal welfare, has taken center-stage. This development suggest that the party has broadened their agenda in order to reach out to voters who do not necessarily have the issue of immigration as their main priority.

FIGURE 4.5. Estimated Policy Position of the Danish People’s Party on Immigration and Economy.



On immigration, the party is still relatively radical. According to the party manifesto, the party intends to strictly limit immigration and advocates for the the repatriation of migrants. However, their proposed immigration policies do not take up a lot of space. And although anti-immigration measures are part of the manifesto, they are not as omnipresent as they previously have been. Instead, the program appears toned down and features no controversial plans.

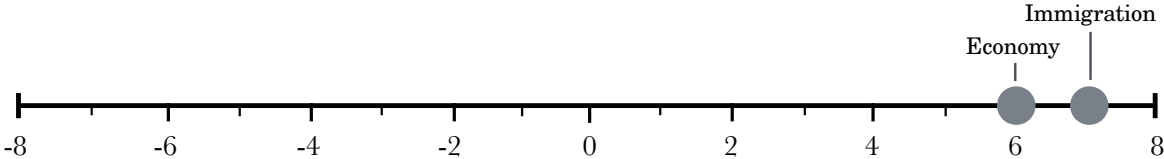
Not unexpectedly, the results show that the Danish People's Party is positioned slightly to the left of center on the economic dimension, as confirmed by the CHES data. The party's manifesto has little specific economic content, suggesting that the policy areas that are not mentioned are of little importance to the party. By muting the salience of economic issues and avoiding presenting a clear stance altogether, the party engages in what Rovny (2013) terms position blurring. Instead, the party choose to focus only on the economic issues relevant to their main base of support. Most of the economic statements made in its manifesto concerns welfare, in particular policies regarding health care and care of the elderly. According to the party, both areas should be publicly financed through taxation. By focusing mainly on welfare issues, the party clearly engage in competition for votes that might otherwise go to left-wing parties, such as the Social Democrats. The party also articulates welfare chauvinism as it aims to limit welfare generosity to immigrants while maintaining principal support for a Danish welfare state that caters to 'deserving' natives. For example, the manifesto states that all Danish citizens should have unrestricted access to welfare services. Benefits for immigrants, however, is conditioned upon previous contribution to the Danish welfare system. In other words, the party demand that immigrants participate in the labor market and pay taxes in order to receive the same benefits as native Danes. The Danish People's Party's combination of anti-immigrant attitudes and center-left positions on welfare issues follows the idea of the new winning formula of the far right (Harteveld, 2016).

New Right

The New Right's party manifesto is comprehensive, covering a lot of different policy areas. It runs to about 10 250 words, compared with 1740 for the Danish People's

Party and 1895 for Hard Line. Whereas the Danish People’s Party address each of its flagship issues separately, the two main themes in the New Right’s political program – an opposition to Islam and an opposition to state intervention – pervade throughout the lengthy manifesto and are reflected in individual policy areas.

FIGURE 4.6. Estimated Policy Position of New Right on Immigration and Economy.



On the immigration dimension, the party is positioned further to the right than its established competitor and outspokenly in favor of the monocultural society. After its founding in 2015, New Right consistently criticized the center-right government for being ‘too soft’ on immigration and for doing ‘too much talking’ (Reventlow, 2017). Accordingly, the party pushes for a more restrictive immigration policy in its 2019 manifesto and offers concrete and specific proposals. During the election, New Right campaigned on ‘three absolute demands’ – a total ban on asylum, no social benefits for immigrants, and the immediate deportation of criminal immigrants – and made it clear that the party’s top priority was stricter immigration policies. With a strong tradition of minority coalition governments, Danish politics are characterized by inter-party compromising. Making non-negotiable demands has therefore been an uncommon practice (Rosendahl, 2019). By putting forth these demands, the New Right attempts to maximize its influence as a small political party. At the same time, the party manages to appeal to dissatisfied voters by pointing out the government’s allegedly lenient immigration policies. This populist rhetoric further strengthens its role as an anti-elite protest party.

In contrast to the Danish People’s Party’s manifesto, which does not explicitly discriminate against Muslims, the New Right is openly anti-Islam, and the party expresses its attitudes toward Muslims and non-Western immigration in multiple policy

areas. For instance, the party wants all schools in Denmark to become free schools (*friskoler*), which are privately run and subsidized by the state, but adds that Muslim schools should not be able to obtain public funding as the religion ‘suppresses the democratic values on which Danish society is based’. Under the topic of security policy, the party highlights the threat of Islam as one of the country’s main threats. New Right also advocates for a complete Danish withdrawal from wars in the Middle East, Asia and North Africa, and labels these conflicts as ‘internal Muslim clashes [that] do not affect Danish interests more than peripherally’.

On the economic dimension, New Right is located near the end of the scale. In contrast to the Danish People’s Party, New Right shows few signs of economic strategy blurring. Instead, the party’s takes a clear right-wing position on economic issues, pursuing a libertarian economic agenda. Its economic policies thus differ greatly from those of the Danish People’s Party. However, there are clear similarities between the New Right and Danish People’s Party’s predecessor, the Progress Party, which also held right-wing positions on both economic and immigration issues.

According to its manifesto, the New Right plans to reform the tax system by lowering the tax burden significantly, reduce welfare benefits (except for early retirement and public pension), as well as shrink the public sector and make the private sector larger by completely removing corporation tax. Offering such definite right-wing stances might be a response to the Danish People’s Party flirt with the Social Democrats, as the two established parties approaching each other on the economic dimension might have left many of the Danish People’s Party’s voters either disappointed or confused about the party’s actual position on economic issues. In addition to competing with the Danish People’s Party for voters on the cultural dimension, the economic position of New Right allows the party to compete for voters with Liberal Alliance, another economically liberal right-wing party. In the 2019 elections, most new New Right-voters came from these two parties.

By proposing neoliberal economic policies and emphasizing harsher immigration regulations, New Right has found an electorally beneficial stance as it seems to draw in many voters who traditionally would have avoided voting for far-right fringe parties. This provides evidence for the original winning formula that

Kitschelt originally attributed the persistent success of far-right parties to in the 1990s, and that he later discarded in favor of the new winning formula that the Danish People’s Party has adopted.

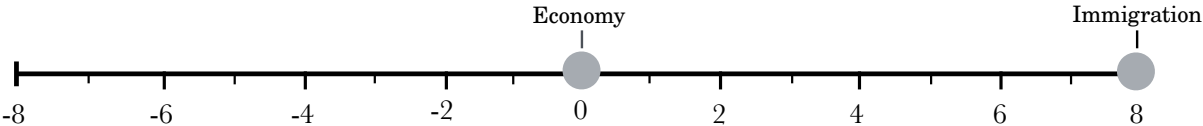
Hard Line

Hard Line finds itself at the center of the economic dimension due to the lack of economic issues in the party’s manifesto. The entire manifesto is devoted to sociocultural issues and all economic stances are therefore coded as 0 (i.e., missing). The party’s economic views seem to be shaped completely by the core element of their ideology which is *ethnonationalist utilitarianism*, defined as ‘the greatest happiness for the greatest number of ethnic Danes’. For example, under the headline ‘Welfare’, the manifesto explicitly states that:

The most important saving on welfare is this: Welfare must only be granted to Danes only. All welfare to non-natives must be stopped. Foreigners must not receive any kind of public welfare services. Access to the health care system must also be reserved for Danes. When you stop all payments to non-natives, this will give huge savings and result in a lot more money for Danes.

The party thus adopts an extreme form of economic nativism. When applied to the welfare state, this nativist interpretation supports an economy that benefits natives and that is protected against foreign forces, which in Hard Line’s case are non-natives.

FIGURE 4.7. Estimated Policy Position of Hard Line on Immigration and Economy.



Out of the three parties, Hard Line pushes the strictest immigration policy proposals in order to achieve a monocultural society, resulting in a position at the extreme end of

the immigration dimension. The most crucial difference between Hard Line and the two others, is the party's understanding of the concept of citizenship and 'Danishness'. The immigration policies sketched out in the manifestos of the Danish People's Party and the New Right distinguish between those born with Danish citizenship, those who have acquired Danish citizenship, those who have a permanent residence permit and those who have a temporary residence permit. In certain cases, the two parties also distinguish between refugees and other foreigners, and between foreigners from Muslim countries and other foreigners. Hard Line's proposals, however, are based on the hard distinction between Danes and non-Danes. In its manifesto, the party presents a rather narrow definition of Danes:

Ethnic Danes have Danish ancestry and Danish mother tongue. A Dane is also characterized by the fact that he or she has had Danish citizenship from birth and has no other citizenship. A Dane is part of and embraces Danish culture and is characterized by the Enlightenment and by Western European and Nordic civilization. Part of Danish culture is the cultural Christian view of life and the recognition of a secular society.

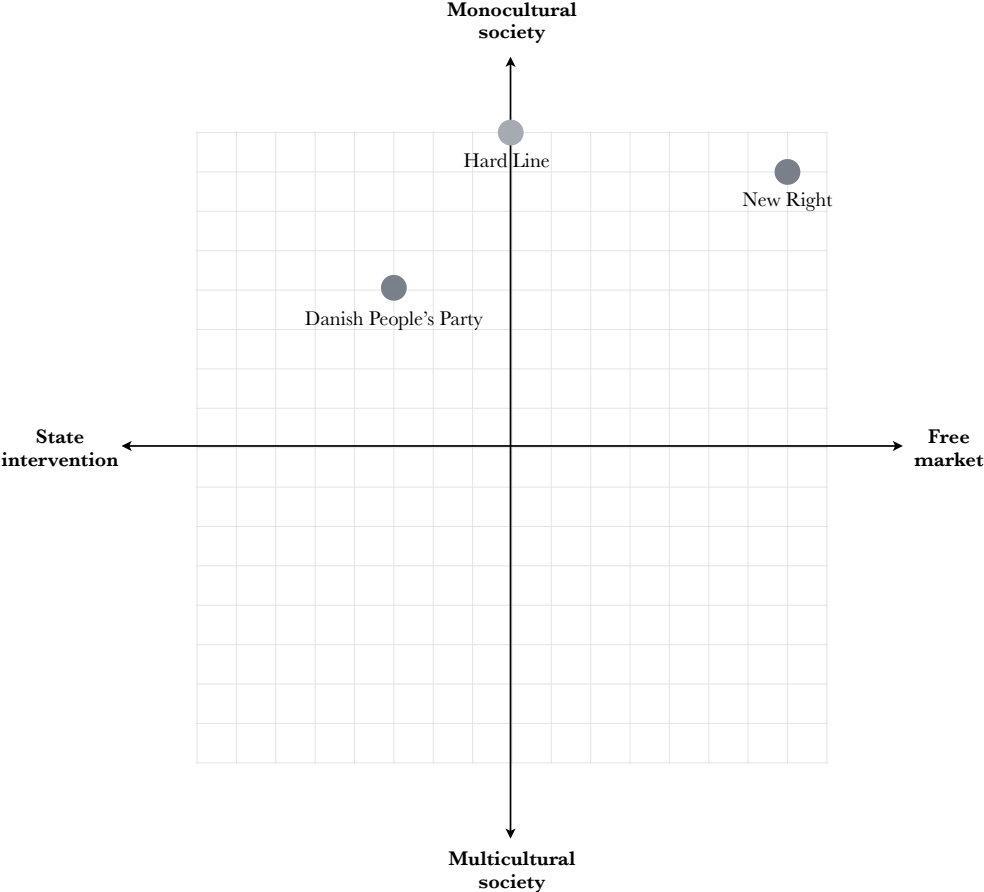
According to the party, Danes who fit this description are the only ones who should be allowed to live in Denmark. Following this line, ethnic and national homogeneity are to be secured through a large-scale deportation program. Hard Line proposes to cancel people's citizenship on the basis of ethnicity, an idea that is outright discrimination. Although the Danish People's Party and the New Right agree with the idea that citizenship can be revoked, they support denaturalization only if the citizen has committed a serious crime and not based solely on the ground of ethnicity. Determining one's ethnicity exclusively on blood and ancestry echoes the ideas of fascism and National Socialism and gives the party a more extreme position than the others.

In terms of ideological classification, Hard Line operates between the *radical right* and the *extreme right*. What distinguishes extremists from radicals, is that extremist parties are inherently anti-democratic and, in some cases, legitimizes the use of

violence or other illegal means to pursue their political aims (Jupskås & Segers, 2020, p. 7). By participating in elections and operating within in a democratic framework, Hard Line accepts procedural democracy. However, although the party does not openly call for violence, party leader Rasmus Paludan has been known to burn the Quran as part of the party’s many anti-Muslim demonstrations, with the purpose of provoking violent reactions (Sørensen, 2019). As a result, these rallies often end in riots.

Based on Bjørgo and Ravndal’s (2019) distinction, the party can be considered ethnic nationalists, who see ethnic mixing and assimilation as harmful and advocate for the remigration of foreigners in order to preserve the nation’s unique norms, cultures and characteristics. Arguably, the party falls into the extreme end of this category, as some of the party’s views clash with basic values on human rights and equality to the extent that they gravitate toward racial nationalism. In contrast, both the Danish People’s Party and New Right are *radical right* parties and represent cultural nationalism by promoting exclusion on cultural rather than ethnic or racial grounds.

FIGURE 4.8. Two-Dimensional Model of the Far-Right Space of Competition of 2019.



Having determined the scores of the political parties on the two separate dimensions, we can now place these parties in a model (Figure 4.8.).

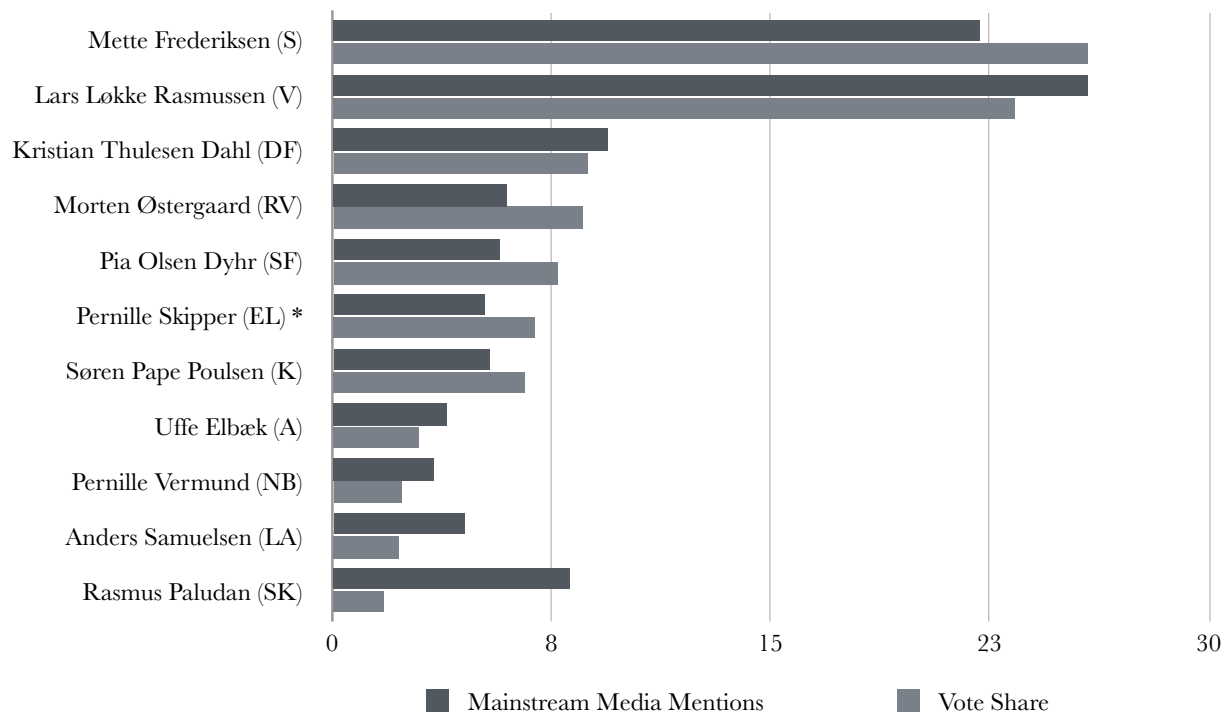
On the surface, there seem to be far more similarities between the parties than there are differences. Generally, they all advocate the need for stricter policies and want more or less closed borders for immigrants from non-western or Muslim countries. They also want a complete stop on asylum. But although all parties are outspokenly anti-immigration, the manifesto analysis of the parties has revealed the fundamental differences that separate them. Whereas the Danish People's Party favors state intervention and the redistribution of resources, New Right combines its opposition to immigration with supporting the idea of free market competition and holds a distinct profile along the horizontal axis. The party positions itself as an unambiguous policy challenger with a well-defined agenda and with no significant competition in the provision of alternative views on socioeconomic issues. As a party whose only agenda is to be extremely tough on immigrants, Hard Line does not produce any natural type of economic policy on traditional left-right issues. Instead, the party's economic policies can best be understood through the lens of its nativist ideological core. In fact, all three parties share a commitment to economic nativism by promoting welfare chauvinism and the restricted access to social benefits for immigrants and non-natives. A closer look at their economic policies, however, shows the complexity of these welfare preferences as they range from inclusion to total exclusion.

As regards immigration, the parties' policies are similar in many areas, but the confrontational approach has revealed the most important issues on which the parties diverge. Both the Danish People's Party and New Right endorse a civic definition of citizenship that permits the acceptance of those who comply to the legal requirements of being or becoming a citizen of citizenship (Kende et al., 2018). In contrast, Hard Line adheres to the concept of ethnic citizenship, which denies acceptance into the national ingroup for people who are ethnically different.

4.3 Internal Supply-Side

So far, the empirical analyses have assessed the mainstreaming of the Danish People's Party, examined the ideologies of the New Right and Hard Line and presented the parties' positions in the 2019 election in a two-dimensional political space. Hence the ideologies of the new parties have largely been discussed already. However, this final part of the chapter includes a more actor-oriented analysis and looks at the ability of the leaders of the far-right challengers to draw attention to themselves and their party. New parties' entrance into the electoral market requires media visibility, and this analysis examines the amount of media attention garnered by the party leaders during the election campaign.

FIGURE 4.9. Mainstream Media Visibility of Danish Party Leaders.



Notes: Percentage of mainstream media mentions in the campaign period (May 5th – June 7th) and percentage of votes in the 2019 general election.

* Red-Green Alliance (EL) operates with a collective leadership, but Pernille Skipper was the party's political spokesperson at the time and functioned as de facto leader.

First, I examine the visibility of the party leaders, that is, the amount of attention the party leaders have attracted in traditional media. In the figure above

(Figure 4.9.), I compare the number of times each party leader was mentioned in the Danish mainstream media in the campaign period with their party's overall vote share in the general election. In order to put the numbers into context, I have included the coverage of all party leaders.

The figure displays the number of times a party leader's full name appeared in mainstream media, as a percentage of all mentions. It is striking how closely the percentage of media mentions and the percentage of party voter support align. This can have numerous explanations, but it seems reasonable to imagine that media attention has at least *some* effect on voter support, as supported by former findings (Bos, 2012). The results show that Kristian Thulesen Dahl received the most visibility in mainstream media out of the three far-right leaders. As the leader of an established party, the Danish People's Party leader is theoretically expected to receive more coverage (Bos et al., 2010; Hopmann et al., 2011). Thulesen Dahl has decades of parliamentary experience and is considered a powerful figure in Danish politics. In the words of Hopmann et al. (2011, pp. 276-277), 'the more powerful you are, the more attention you receive'. In fact, the figure shows that most of the party leaders were covered in proportion with their party's election results. There is, however, one big exception. Hard Line's Rasmus Paludan seem to have attracted a great deal of media attention, given its size. Although his party got the least number of votes out of the 11 parties, he ranks fourth in the amount mainstream media coverage received.

That the leader of a small party like Hard Line managed to generate this high amount of coverage demonstrates Rasmus Paludan's ability to garner media interest. Paludan is a good sell for the media as he knows how to use controversy to maximize his chances of drawing media attention, and his controversial style has undoubtedly attracted wide audiences. During the four weeks of the electoral campaign, the party leader stirred controversy with anti-Muslim remarks and demonstrations, and the attention provided Paludan with recognizability, something other politicians pay a fortune for through advertising.

Paludan's ability to provoke is further illustrated when we examine the resonance of the far-right leaders, i.e., their ability to engage on social media.

Table 4.1 shows the number of times a party leader’s name was mentioned in Twitter posts during the campaign period.

TABLE 4.1. Social Media Resonance of Danish Far-Right Party Leaders.

	<i>Mentions in Social Media</i>
Kristian Thulesen Dahl	184
Pernille Vermund	308
Rasmus Paludan	2433

Notes: References to party leaders in Twitter posts (May 5th – June 7th, 2019).

Both Vermund and Paludan managed to engage more people in discussion in social media than Thulesen Dahl. But Paludan garnered significantly more attention compared to his two competitors. This extremely high resonance in social media might be a result of his frequent visibility in the mainstream media.

As mentioned before, media can make up for smaller or newer actors’ lack of resources. During the campaign period, Hard Line essentially appeared as a one-man band. Because Paludan has no mass party, he lacks alternative resources to communicate his message and is therefore dependent on media attention in order to mobilize voters. Pernille Vermund, on the other hand, is backed by a more traditional party organization. When the election campaign started, New Right had already built an organizational infrastructure and established more effective mechanisms for mobilizing voters. The party quickly formed a membership base and had a network of local branches with party activists doing on-the-ground electoral mobilization, including distributing leaflets, organizing rallies, and other types of campaign work. Nevertheless, this is not to say that media attention is unimportant to Vermund. The party leader has been known to be rather social media savvy and knows how to use it to her advantage (Ringberg, 2019), which might explain why she is able to engage more in social media than in traditional media. But, arguably, Vermund was less reliant on media visibility to spread her party’s message.

After examining the visibility and resonance of the party leaders in traditional and social media, I conclude that both far-right challengers succeeded in

communicating their party's message. The analysis show that Rasmus Paludan was exceptionally good at this. Paludan and his Hard Lind managed to receive more attention than Vermund and her New Right, and a considerable level of coverage when compared to all other party leaders. There are a number of possible reasons for what might have caused this level of media attention, and these numbers do not say anything about the tone or frame of the coverage, nor what issues were discussed in relation to the party leaders. As a controversial figure, much of the publicity that Paludan received was negative. However, negative attention is still attention, and as argued before; attention matters. Especially for new parties who often find it more difficult to garner media attention than established ones.

5

Discussion & Conclusion

This thesis begins by asking what has caused the political fragmentation of the Danish far right. As the analyses has shown, the fragmentation of the far right in Denmark is due to an unfortunate combination of circumstances that together have triggered the perfect storm for the Danish People's Party and created political space for new far-right parties to emerge. The following discussion takes the findings into account and discusses the many circumstances that have led to this.

5.1 Discussion of the Main Findings

The analysis of demand-side factors revealed that variables such as the threat of immigration and political distrust provide few leads to explain the far-right fragmentation as there were no significant changes in these attitudes between the 2015 and the 2019 election. Nevertheless, this is not to say that demand-side factors and voter preferences are unimportant. Naturally there has to be a demand for anti-immigration parties in order for parties like Hard Line and New Right to emerge and gain electoral support, and the analysis reveals that there is indeed a market for anti-immigration programs. Well over 40% of Danes view immigration as a cultural threat. These numbers are almost doubled for voters who support the far right, creating a perfect breeding ground for the emerging challenger parties. In other words, the new parties are likely to have profited from high anti-immigrant attitudes and low political trust, but so should the Danish People's Party. So as necessary as these demand-oriented conditions might be to explain the persistence of the far right, they are not

sufficient if one wants to understand why voters would turn to the more radical far-right challengers instead of voting for the established far right.

The internal supply-side analysis fails to provide an explanation to this question as well. Nevertheless, I find that Rasmus Paludan is exceptionally good at attracting media attention as his party has attracted relatively large amounts of media coverage, given its size. Without the backing of a party organization, the newcomer still managed to receive enough exposure to build his platform and make a mark. Hence media attention goes a long way to account for the party's breakthrough. It does, however, to a lesser degree explain the success of New Right. I argue instead that the main reason for fragmentation of the far right should be seen in the far-right challengers programmatic supply and patterns of competition with the established far-right party. Still, these findings underline both the heterogeneity of the far right, as well as the complexity of far-right fragmentation, as the breakthrough of the two challengers requires different explanations.

Mainstreaming and its Consequences

In the first part of the external supply-side analysis, I examined whether we are witnessing a mainstreaming of the Danish People's Party and conclude that the party has partly gone through a mainstreaming process. In line with Akkerman et al.'s (2016) mainstreaming hypothesis, the party has broadened its scope of issues, toned down its populist stance and, to some extent, mellowed its programmatic positions. The analysis shows that the Danish People's Party has moderated its socioeconomic policies and moved toward the center, and most recently, the center-left. However, both the CHES data and my own analysis of the party's 2019 manifesto demonstrate that the party remains radical on its core issue of immigration. That the party receives a lower score on immigration than its two competitors in the manifesto analysis is likely a result of the party's efforts to appear less radical in order to compete for more centrist votes. But although the manifesto contains no controversial policy proposals, the essence of the party's radical profile is still there – it is just presented in a softer way.

Although the findings show that the Danish People's Party has gone through a process of partial mainstreaming, I expected the party to have moderated more on the

issue of immigration, thus creating an opportunity for new parties to challenge it on the sociocultural dimension. But instead of the new challengers emerging as a result of the Danish People's Party moderating its stance on immigration, it may seem plausible to consider that the party is perceived as more moderate due to the emergence of more extreme alternatives.

A consequence of the Danish People's Party partly mainstreaming is the normalization of the far right in the public sphere. The Danish election reveals that far-right discourse has seeped into mainstream political agendas, as parties on both the left and the right have adopted the far-right's anti-immigrant rhetoric. As the Danish People's Party has become well-established in the political system, its radical stances are placed at the center of the political debate and given some level of political legitimacy. This might explain why the non-established challengers have managed to reach extensive visibility in the media. Moreover, with New Right and Hard Line's more radical and extremist views being publicly and broadly expressed in the media, the parties have pushed the boundaries of what is considered 'acceptable' even further. Relative to the likes of Paludan and Vermund, the traditional far right is starting to look moderate. As a result, the Danish People's Party may now be seen as the more mainstream alternative, even though it still pledges relatively strict immigration policies.

Emerging in the 1990s as a prophetic party that successfully mobilized voters on the new issue of immigration, the Danish People's Party was able to maneuver the Danish far right for more than 20 years without serious competition on its flagship issue. Arguably, the party has not become part of the mainstream, but their anti-immigration policies have. This, in combination with the convergence with the mainstream parties on economic issues over time, has resulted in the party losing its distinct programmatic profile. It is no longer able to present itself as a clear alternative to the platform of the other parties. That the party is now starting to resemble its more mainstream competitors has thus created an opportunity for newcomers with more radical stances.

How the Far-Right Challengers Have Capitalized on the Favorable Opportunity Structure

Out of the two new parties, New Right exploits this favorable opportunity best and is most likely to establish itself as a serious competitor. By attacking the Danish People's Party on their allegedly weak immigration agenda and their cooperation with the mainstream parties, New Right claims to defend and 'purify' the original ideology of its established competitor (Lucardie, 2000; Rochon, 1985). The party has a significantly more radical outlook than the Danish People's Party has ever had, promoting a range of tough demands, such as legal discrimination against Muslims in violation of the Danish Constitution as well as a complete halt to immigration. New Right therefore stood out as an appealing alternative for those who might have been disappointed by the Danish People's Party's pragmatic flirt with the center.

In order to further distance itself from the position of its established competitor, the party ran its election campaign on the basis of an adversarial strategy against the immigration policies approved by the center-right government. Moreover, by taking a right-wing economic stance the party has managed to develop a profile that clearly distinguishes it from the Danish People's Party and allows it to compete for voters with other parties as well. A survey conducted in the aftermath of the 2015 election found that 11% of the Danish electorate consider themselves 'double right-wing', meaning that they lean right on both economic and cultural issues (Nielsen, 2016). Around 90% of voters in this segment voted for either the Danish People's Party, Liberal Alliance or the Liberal Party in 2015 – none of which actually hold right-wing positions on both these dimensions. This means that New Right emerged in a political space not covered by any other parties and created a new political home for a pre-existing group of double right-wing voters.

As of today, Denmark has one of the toughest immigration policies in Europe, and at the time of the election, asylum requests were at their lowest level in ten years and family reunion had dropped significantly. Arguably, it is limited how much more you can do in the immigration area other than to tighten the screw. The successful adoption of the immigration issue by both the left and the right, has resulted in a political landscape with blurred lines and brought other issues to the fore in the parties' pursuit of stronger political profiles. Although New Right's flagship issue is

immigration, the party covers a broad range of other issues in its manifesto that will undoubtedly appeal to a wider audience. In other words, voters might choose to vote for the party not only because of its strict immigration policy, but because it can offer something else as well.

In contrast, the political program offered by Hard Line is a lot narrower. For voters who were disappointed with the immigration policy of the Danish People's Party and did not consider New Right radical enough in its approach to the perceived threat of Islam, Hard Line outbid both parties by pushing the boundaries of Islamophobia and offering even more extreme policies. The party's manifesto is first and foremost directed at stopping immigration and deporting most of the Muslim population in Denmark. Because Hard Line is being supported predominantly on the basis of this all-encompassing issue, it can be considered what Lucardie (2000) labels a 'personal vehicle', referring to the fact that the party is almost exclusively associated with its founder and party leader, as well as a single-issue party. That the party relies primarily on the media to spread its message might present a challenge for the future of the party. The large amounts of media attention might encourage Paludan to avoid establishing a strong party organization and instead continue to rely on the media for spreading his message. However, on theoretical grounds, the party's chances of remaining a player in the Danish Political system increases if it is able to build a stronger organization and become stronger and less leader-oriented party (Harmel & Svåsand, 1993).

Radicalization of the Far-Right Fringe?

Since Hard Line's only agenda is to be extremely tough on refugees, immigrants and Muslims in particular, support for the party is predominantly motivated by preferences for restrictive immigration policies. This is, however, offered by several other parties in the Danish party system. That Hard Line appeals to a minority of voters who think anti-immigration policies can always get harder and more radical prompts the question of whether we are witnessing a radicalization of the right wing of the Danish ideological spectrum, where the most radical members of the electorate have become even more extreme. In that case, the party seemingly supplies an insatiable demand for

restrictive immigration policies. Whereas the Danish People's Party seems to still offer a radical stance on immigration, the new parties have managed to draw in voters by offering even more nativist positions. Thus, it seems that far-right voters in Denmark have become increasingly likely to embrace – or at least be open to – ideas and claims that previously would have been considered too extreme. This raises an issue which should be expanded upon further in future research. Even though the findings from the analysis show that opinion toward immigration was very similar in 2019 compared to 2015, it does not say anything whether these anti-immigrant attitudes have become more or less extreme. It is therefore possible that the new far-right challengers have managed to mobilize and radicalize a right-wing extremist minority. This thesis has demonstrated the diversity of the far-right party family. A more detailed study of the voters who voted for the new far-right challengers could shed light on the diversity of the far-right electorate as well, focusing on the different dynamics leading to radical versus extreme party support.

A New Old Winning Formula

The results from this study reinvigorate the debate about whether far-right parties have discovered a winning formula. Kitschelt's (1995) original winning formula was a party manifesto that combined economically neoliberal and culturally authoritarian appeals. The scholar later revised his winning formula when it turned out to be less suited to explain the rise in support for the far right in the 1990s as they began to adopt a more centrist economic policy stance. When the Danish People's Party emerged, it was the only anti-immigrant party in the Danish party system. The growing success that followed might therefore not be attributed to a winning formula per se, but due to the party's ability to occupy a different territory from that of the other parties. Now that New Right is successfully challenging the Danish People's Party on the platform of the original winning formula, the question presenting itself is whether it makes sense to talk about a winning formula at all. This thesis has shown that the most fertile location for a new challenger party like the New Right will depend on the position and behavior of the other competitors in that particular setting. Thus, it seems that there is not a specific winning formula for far-right parties. These findings confront Kitschelt's more

static understanding of party positioning and party competition. Parties can adjust their ideology over time, responding to what other actors are doing. Rather than attempting to identify a certain policy package that works beneficially, researchers should focus on the parties' ability to transform and develop their agendas in order to reach successful positions over time.

This brings me to another avenue for future research. Upcoming studies should look into the pattern of interaction between the Danish People's Party and New Right now that the latter has entered parliament. It remains to be seen whether the established Danish People's Party will reposition and realign itself to respond to the challenges introduced by its new competitor, and similarly, if the New Right adopts new party strategies. As part of its vote-seeking strategy, New Right rigorously promoted anti-establishment in order to capitalize on anti-party sentiment and attract voters who felt alienated from the political establishment. It will be interesting to see whether office-seeking goals will come to the fore now that it has managed to secure parliamentary seats. Will it soften its anti-elite appeals and open up for cooperation with the established parties, or will it continue to further distance itself from its competitors? Cooperation between far-right parties has been a rare phenomenon in Western Europe, but the fragmentation and the rise of far-right challengers might change that.

5.2 Concluding Remarks

The central research question of this thesis set out to further our knowledge on political fragmentation by exploring possible explanations that led to the decline of the established Danish People's Party and the emergence of its far-right challengers, New Right and Hard Line. The goal of the thesis has been to offer a multifaceted understanding of far-right mainstreaming and its consequences. As an early contribution to the exploration of far-right fragmentation, this study offers an initial rather than a final analysis.

I argue that the Danish People's Party have started to resemble the mainstream parties by broadening its programmatic profile, de-emphasizing its anti-establishment position, and shifting greater attention to socioeconomic issues, and that the new

parties benefited from this moderation by offering more radical positions. However, the analyses also demonstrate that a fertile breeding ground, as well as access to media, provide emerging parties with a series of favorable opportunities, if they manage to profit from them. In other words, the fragmentation of the far right is a complex phenomenon. Additional work will have to be done on individual parties, as well as underlying ideological divisions between voters, to enhance our knowledge and understanding of it.

The findings from this in-depth study of Denmark suggest some important lessons for other countries where similar developments on the right wing have been observed. First, the study has demonstrated the heterogeneity of the far right within a country. The parties have distinct preferences and are able to mobilize different parts of the far-right electorate. Accordingly, future research should recognize these parties' ideological distinctiveness.

Second, the findings suggest that we can expect more fragmentation in the future. Instead of attempting to return to the way things were before the emergence of far-right challengers, or hoping they will somehow magically disappear, established parties need to reassess how they deal with this new reality.

Appendices

Appendix A. A Confrontational Coding Scheme for Estimating Political Parties' Policy Positions for the 2019 General Election

<i>Economic dimension</i>			
		plus	minus
X ₁	Privatization of public utilities (energy, public transport, post etc.)	pro	contra
X ₂	Deregulation/liberalization of health care	pro	contra
X ₃	Liberalization (flexibility and individuality) of pension (retirement) schemes	pro	contra
X ₄	Reduction of the tax burden	pro	contra
X ₅	Privatization/liberalization of welfare and social security system	pro	contra
X ₆	Deregulation/liberalization of the labor market (flexibility, wages etc.)	pro	contra
X ₇	Deregulation/liberalization of the financial market	pro	contra
X ₈	Deregulation of agricultural policy and market orientation	pro	contra

<i>Immigration dimension</i>			
		plus	minus
Y ₁	Limit intake of immigrants/asylum seekers	pro	contra
Y ₂	Integration requirements for residence permit	pro	contra
Y ₃	Limit welfare services to Danish citizens	pro	contra
Y ₄	Forced deportations of migrants who are not accepted	pro	contra
Y ₅	Complete stop on granting asylum	pro	contra
Y ₆	Open to bypass international human rights conventions	pro	contra
Y ₇	Discrimination against Muslims/specific policies re Islam	pro	contra
Y ₈	Revoke citizenship on the basis of ethnicity	pro	contra

Appendix B. Party Scores

	<i>Economic dimension</i>								<i>Total</i>
	<i>X₁</i>	<i>X₂</i>	<i>X₃</i>	<i>X₄</i>	<i>X₅</i>	<i>X₆</i>	<i>X₇</i>	<i>X₈</i>	
Danish People's Party	0	-	0	-	-	0	0	0	-3
New Right	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	+7
Hard Line	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

	<i>Immigration dimension</i>								<i>Total</i>
	<i>Y₁</i>	<i>Y₂</i>	<i>Y₃</i>	<i>Y₄</i>	<i>Y₅</i>	<i>Y₆</i>	<i>Y₇</i>	<i>Y₈</i>	
Danish People's Party	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	-	+4
New Right	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+6
Hard Line	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+8

Appendix C. Party Leader Mentions and Party Vote Share

	<i>Mainstream Media Mentions</i>	<i>Party Vote Share</i>
Mette Frederiksen <i>Social Democrats</i>	964	25.9%
Lars Løkke Rasmussen <i>Liberal Party</i>	1125	23.4%
Kristian Thulesen Dahl <i>Danish People's Party</i>	410	8.7%
Morten Østergaard <i>Danish Social Liberal Party</i>	263	8.6%
Pia Olsen Dyhr <i>Social People's Party</i>	250	7.7%
Pernille Skipper <i>Red-Green Alliance</i>	227	6.9%
Søren Pape Poulsen <i>Conservative People's Party</i>	235	6.6%
Uffe Elbæk <i>The Alternative</i>	168	3.0%
Pernille Vermund <i>New Right</i>	150	2.4%
Anders Samuelsen <i>Liberal Alliance</i>	196	2.3%
Rasmus Paludan <i>Hard Line</i>	355	1.8%

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