EUROPE DESERVES BETTER

A Study of Extremist Parties in Hungary, the Netherlands and Denmark

Philip Lerulf & Jan Å. Johansson

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Table of contents

Foreword

The mission of the OEIC (Organisation for European Inter-state Cooperation) is to develop, promote and disseminate ideas and issues supporting the principles of transparency, subsidiarity, democracy, and diversity within the European Union. Founded in 2010, the OEIC is committed to European cross-border cooperation and believes that the current Union must be reformed due to the erosion of European democracy.

The OEIC conducts research and analysis on current political developments within the European Parliament and its member states. In addition to hosting seminars and other events, the OEIC annually publishes reports and books.

In 'Europe deserves better', we take a closer look at extreme nationalism and study three parties that are expected to win more support in the forthcoming elections to the European Parliament in May 2014 – Hungarian *Jobbik*, Dutch *Party for Freedom* and the *Danish*

People's Party. By describing their history, achievements and setbacks, we hope to contribute to better knowledge that in turn may facilitate an understanding of why these movements are gaining ground and how they should be met.

Philip Lerulf
President OEIC
Brussels, February 2014

Prelude

Almost six years after the Lehman Brothers' crash in autumn 2008, the Euro zone and thus the EU is still mired in a deep political and economic crisis. The situation is difficult and, in many respects, the economy has stagnated. GDP for the 17 Euro zone countries has fallen, and in countries like Greece, Spain and Portugal, the unemployment rate is now at 15-30%. In Spain and Greece, youth unemployment has risen above 50%. The combination of low growth, deep budget deficits and record high levels of debt represents a dangerous cocktail that makes the Euro zone countries very vulnerable. This affects the whole of the EU and the risk of a European financial crisis still exists.

The background to the crisis is complex. To begin with, the current situation is a result of the Euro. A strong exchange rate, low productivity and high labour costs laid the foundations for the growth and competitiveness crisis that resulted in weak

domestic demand in the Euro zone and limited export opportunities for the crisis-hit countries such as Greece and Spain. The crisis is also due to the very high level of public debt accumulation that has been ongoing in the Euro zone and which today ties the hands of many member states and is forcing them to impose harsh cut-backs in the public sector. Thirdly, we are dealing with a banking and financial crisis. Due to a high level of risk exposure in relation to both states and private borrowers in many countries, European banks pose an element of uncertainty that may affect the stability of the entire economy.

It is difficult to find a simple solution to these problems. The Euro zone has so far primarily chosen to tackle the sovereign debt crisis. The crisis-hit countries such as Greece, Spain, Italy, Ireland and Portugal have had tough austerity policies imposed in exchange for loans through the International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank (ECB) and the EU Commission. Lower budget deficits have come at a high price and in country after

country, the crisis measures, ranging from reduced levels of public welfare benefits to pay cuts for state employees, have has a severe impact on growth.

An understandable source of dissatisfaction has been the response to these developments. People who lose their jobs and are forced to watch their children remain in the parental home until well into their 30s and who in their everyday life experience that the social structures around them are being dismantled, obviously find it very difficult to understand how the implemented austerity policy will improve their living conditions and strengthen Europe's economy.

It is on the basis of this difficult situation that the citizens of the EU member states will have to make their choices when a new European parliament is elected in May 2014. Many analysts predict that the election will strengthen the parties that are critical of the idea of European integration, which has resulted both in the failed Euro zone cooperation and which has inexorably

propelled them towards increasingly close political and economic coordination.

Basically, it will be a welcome development if the parties who are sceptical and critical of the EU gain power. Europe's current crisis is the result of a political reluctance to reform the member countries' economic and political system. But to a growing extent, it is also the result of an excessively driven process of political integration in the EU. Although Europe's prosperity is the result of both mutual trade between individual states, who challenged each other in economic and institutional competition, European cooperation is now increasingly being driven in a strong centralist direction. Democracy and market principles are being forced to take a back seat while grandiose plans for a United States of Europe, which can act in tandem with the U.S. and China, are being realised.

Unfortunately, there is a risk that xenophobic and sometimes directly racist forces will play a greater role in European politics. If one looks across EU member states, it is often the

extreme nationalist parties that have been able to formulate the sharpest criticism of supranationalism and centralisation. In country after country, the tendency is the same: the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn in Greece, the National Front in France and the British National Party in the UK.

In this book we will examine three of the most noted extreme parties of recent years: Jobbik from Hungary, the Party for Freedom from the Netherlands and the Danish People's Party from Denmark. By describing the parties' emergence and placing them in a historical context, we hope to contribute to increased knowledge about the basis for their growing support. Answers to questions about which ideas the parties are based on, which policies they pursue in their own countries and what their role is in domestic politics, may help to predict their development in the future. This may in turn help us formulate a policy that addresses their world-view and policies.

Hungary - a sense of history

For a number of reasons, the national parliamentary elections in Hungary in the spring of 2010 deserve a special place in the history books. The Socialist Party MSZP (Magyar Szocialista Párt) lost more than half of its voters from the previous election and recorded its worst performance in two decades. The conservative civic alliance *Fidesz* (Magyar Polgári Szövetség) returned to government after eight years in opposition. Together with the small Christian Democratic Party KDNP (Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt), they won two thirds of the seats in the country's national parliament, Országgyűlés. Once they were in office, their majority was strong enough to implement changes to the country's constitution. 2010 was also the year when Hungary's nationalists enjoyed substantial success. The relatively new party, Jobbik, or the Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom), which

received the support of 427,000 Hungarians and won 14.7% of the votes in the previous year's elections to the European Parliament, advanced strongly and became the country's third largest party. With more than 855,000 votes, or 17%, they succeeded in doing what many others before them had failed to do, to unite the Hungarian extreme nationalist and xenophobic forces under one umbrella.

The strong support for Jobbik caused both surprise and discomfort. The dominant theme in the party's message was to blame Hungary's Roma minority population and hold them responsible for the country's growing unemployment and increasing crime rate. The image of a party, whose political rhetoric and solutions many Europeans hoped had long since been consigned to history, was reinforced by the television footage that was broadcast showing how the Hungarian Guard (Magyar Garda), a group with close ties to Jobbik, held military style marches in Budapest and elsewhere to maintain law and order, as it was described.

In the European media, Jobbik's success was often described in economic and social terms. One was reminded that the former prime minister and leader of the Socialist Party, Ferenc Gyurcsány, had admitted in May 2006 that during the 2006 election campaign, he had embellished the image of the Hungarian economy and lied about the budget deficit, an admission which, according to some observers, sealed the fate of the Socialist Party and paved the way for a protest vote. This explanation sounds plausible. Hungary's economy was already severely strained when the global financial crisis hit in earnest in 2008-2009 and led to unemployment and increased social division, which probably radicalised sections of the electorate. It is also true that Gyurcsány's statement in 2006 led to strong protests and that both Fidesz and Jobbik successfully rallied support for the coming election through the nationwide demonstrations that followed. But none of these explanations provides a satisfactory answer to the question of why almost one fifth

of the voters, many of them young and well-educated Hungarians, chose to vote for a party like Jobbik. In order to obtain a better understanding of the party, its emergence and its successful election results, we need to broaden our perspective. We will begin by looking a little further back in history.

Revanchism and anti-semitism

National chauvinism and xenophobia are not new phenomena in Hungary. The foundations were laid for today's Hungarian society even before the turn of the century, during the unrest that took place between the 1800s and 1900s. Support for left-wing political forces grew across Europe at this time. In several countries, including Sweden, the progressive and non-revolutionary social democrats celebrated their first successes, probably completely unaware of the tremendous significance their movements would have as a political force for change in the new century. Hungarian society also became more liberal. The development in the industrialised areas around the capital Budapest was particularly

marked. Not everyone welcomed the emergence of democratic and liberal values. Leading conservative intellectuals were critical of the change, which they perceived as a threat to the Hungarian nation and its traditional Christian heritage. The distrust of foreign influences spread rapidly in the community and soon politicians and prominent cultural figures participated in maligning foreign businesses, as well as people from other countries or of other beliefs. The nationalist currents continued to gain strength over the coming decades. In hindsight, World War I seems like an inevitable result of the self-interest and chauvinism that had dominated the political agenda in Europe for some time. By the end of the war, millions of innocent civilians were dead and many cities lay in ruins, while the entire continent had suffered countless wounds. One of these wounds, which today still influences politics in Hungary, was the victorious powers' decision to divide up the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Treaty of Trianon, named after the palace

of Versailles outside Paris, where it was signed in the summer of 1920, remains the subject of passionate debates in Hungarian domestic politics more than 90 years later. This is to some extent understandable. With a few simple pen strokes, the lives of millions of people were changed. Hungary was forced to give up more than two thirds of its territory and approximately four million Hungarians suddenly became part of new minority groups in neighbouring states.[1]

Overnight, the geographical and political map was completely changed. The result of the division of Austria-Hungary imposed by the victorious powers, was regarded by many Hungarians as unfair and as an assault on the nation. This was the beginning of a prolonged process of political and social polarisation in Hungarian society. The aversion to foreign influences on society which had characterised public debate in the early 1900s, now increased in intensity and increasingly manifested itself as envy directed against the

[1] Rockberger (2004), p. 237.

Jewish minority.

Anti-semitism was not a new phenomenon in Hungary. Already in the late 1800s, Jews had borne the brunt of a growing dissatisfaction with economic and social developments. But unlike earlier periods, the flow of ideas in the early 1920s also gained support from the broader masses. The ruling politicians allowed themselves to be influenced and in 1921 they adopted rules that restricted Jewish citizens from studying at universities.[2]

When Hungary suffered hyperinflation in 1922-1924, the growing hatred of the Jews began to go hand in hand with a growing anti-capitalism. During the days of the empire, Jews had been attractive recruits as army officers, often as a result of their superior language skills, particularly in German. When the economy weakened, the struggle for jobs intensified. Now the Jews' language skills instead became grounds for discrimination.[3]

The dissolution of the empire was followed by

[2] Pittaway (2009), p. 384

[3] Patai (1996), p. 454.

a period of political turbulence. After Hungary had been ruled by the communist Béla Kun for a short period, the Hungarian Parliament reintroduced the monarchy in 1920. But instead of returning power to Károly IV, who was then living in exile, however, the parliament offered the role of regent to Miklós Horthy, a former admiral and commander-in-chief of the Imperial Navy and the person who orchestrated the dismissal of Béla Kun. Horthy was moderately interested in the offer, at least in public. During the negotiations that followed, the role was granted expanded powers. When Horthy finally accepted, it was a role with far more sweeping powers that he now assumed. The regent would become the commander of its armed forces and at his discretion he could appoint and dismiss prime ministers and appoint and dissolve the parliament. By today's standards, the arrangement would hardly be considered democratic. Socialist and communist parties were banned and the Social Democratic Party and affiliated trade unions were placed under

police surveillance and subjected to harassment. Horthy gave the socialists a sanctuary in the country's cities, but only on condition that they were careful in their political agitation and under no circumstances were they to carry out any activities in rural areas.[4]

Miklós Horthy's decision to appoint Gyula Gömbös as successor to István Bethlen as prime minister in 1932, appears in retrospect as the first decisive step towards a radicalisation of politics.[5]

Gömbös, an outspoken supporter of Benito Mussolini and himself a former paramilitary, would move increasingly closer to fascism over the coming years. Among other things, he declared that he felt that violence was an acceptable part of statesmanship and of the effort to shape the nation's history. After Adolf Hitler seized power in Germany, Gömbös promised in confidential conversation with Hermann Goering that one day he would

[4] Mann (2004), p. 256.

[5] Pittaway (2009), p. 385.

make Hungary into a totalitarian state and in letters to Hitler, Goering described Gömbös as "an ally in racism."[6]

It was not only the political leadership that was radicalised by the economic and social difficulties that plagued Hungary during the depression of the 1930s. Substantial parts of public opinion were also changed. The ideas of National Socialism became widely accepted by the population. [7]

Hungary was actually the only country in Central and Eastern Europe that did not have a democratic system in the inter-war period. But what was it that caused broad occupational groups in the population, from army officers, government officials and small business owners to poor farmers and industrial workers, to align themselves with National Socialism's version of reality? The historian Mark Pittaway, who has analysed the election results in the Hungarian parliamentary elections of 1935, believes that

[6] Mann (2004), p. 243.

[7] Ibid., p. 256.

the support for the National Socialists was a combination of backing for their proposals for agricultural reform, a radical anti-semitism and their extreme nationalist message.

But according to Pittaway, it was not a copy of the German version of National Socialism, but a Hungarian variant he calls Hungarism. It was characterised by the dream of an egalitarian Hungarian society, where farmers and workers jointly supported the nation, as well as an aversion to foreign influences and the conviction that the Treaty of Trianon in 1920 had to be torn up before the country could regain its self-esteem. This Greater Hungarian variant of National Socialism came to be represented by several different parties during the 1930s. The National Will Party (Nemzet Akaratanak Pártja) and the Hungarian National Socialist Party-Hungarian Movement (A Magyar Nemzeti Szocialista party-Hungarista Mozgalom) were among the most prominent of these parties. Despite the rejection of anything that could be considered as foreign and strange, the Hungarian

population was not unaffected by what was happening in other parts of Europe. Many Hungarian seasonal workers who spent part of the year in Germany, where wages were considerably higher, became convinced during the time they spent abroad that the German model could also be used in their home country. The expulsion of Jews from the nearby Austrian province of Burgenland in the spring of 1938, with reduced unemployment as a result, seemed to prove that racist measures combined with social reform policies and the breaking of the large landowners' dominance, could also be a workable solution in Hungary. Miklós Horthy, regent from 1920 to 1944, never regarded national socialism as a sustainable vision. When he received signals before the Hungarian parliamentary elections in May 1939 that the national socialist forces were gaining ground, therefore, he tried various means to prevent the parties from achieving success. The attempt was unsuccessful, however, and Hungary's national socialist and

extremist parties together succeeded in winning the support of more than half of the voters. Support for the political extremism was probably even larger, because only men older than 26 years and women older than 30 years were allowed to vote. [8]

It is worth noting that the electoral support for the national socialist and Greater Hungary parties was particularly high in the poorer parts of the country and in the industrialised suburbs of Budapest, places where the political left had won wide support at the beginning of the century. Now, the extremist parties combined received more votes than the social democrats in the elections of 1939. The single biggest winner among the extreme parties in the parliamentary elections of 1939 was the Arrow Cross Party (Nyilaskeresztes Párt - Hungarista Mozgalom). The party, which had only been formed a short time before the election, received 25% of the vote, not least due to its strong anti-semitic

[8] Ibid., p. 238.

message.[9]

Support was strong among young voters who grew up in the 1930s with parents who had previously voted for the left. It was also often young students who persistently promoted anti-semitic policies. Despite the low percentage of Jews in the Hungarian universities (13%), several protest marches were organised demanding severe restrictions.[10]

Outside of Budapest, in the industrial workers' areas, the Arrow Cross, in coalition with a smaller extremist party, received 42% of the vote. [11]It is noteworthy that the Communist Party, which had been banned by the state, called on its members to vote for the Arrow Cross Party because it was considered to be the most labour-friendly option.[12]

Miklós Horthy, who was obviously under pressure, now chose to speak with a forked tongue. While the regime publicly denounced

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid., p. 254.

[11] Ibid., p. 255.

[12] Ibid.

the National Socialists as extremists, it adapted itself to the political reality. This became particularly evident in relation to the growing anti-semitic sentiments. The Hungarian parliament enacted several anti-Jewish laws from 1938 to 1942.[13]

Jews were forbidden to engage in intellectual occupations. The proportion of Jews in administration and trade was also restricted, first to 20% in 1938 and then to 5% a year later. Even the Jews' political rights and opportunities to engage in commercial activities were curtailed. In the early 1940s, the state forbade Jewish intermarriage and shortly afterwards laws were enacted that allowed the government to confiscate land owned by Jews. The growing feelings of envy also affected other minority groups: discrimination against the Roma population increased in the early 1940s. Support for the national socialist forces gradually eroded as more and more people realised the devastation being caused by World War II.

[13] Pittaway (2009), p. 391.

Many Hungarians were forced to admit that the promise of the extreme nationalist parties to help the poor had not been fulfilled. The poor farming households were especially hard hit by the memory of the fact that instead of receiving help with the provision of their own land, they had been forced out onto the battlefield. The Arrow Cross Party, which had 250,000 members in the years 1939-1940, was significantly smaller in 1944.[14] The party's members of parliament had made numerous political mistakes. Although the Arrow Cross temporarily seized power in Hungary in October 1944 in a coup supported by the German occupying forces, the fate of the party was already sealed. Leading representatives of the Arrow Cross Party foresaw this, and as the Soviet troops approached Budapest in 1945, the focus was to kill as many Jews as possible. Most of Hungary's 600,000 Jews were captured outside Budapest and sent to German death camps. An average of 12,000 people were deported to Auschwitz every

[14] Szöllösi-Janze (1989)

day.[15]

Mass murder also occurred on Hungarian soil. Between October 1944 and February 1945, an estimated 15,000 Jews were killed in Budapest alone. When the consequences of the war were assessed afterwards, it was clear that almost half of Budapest's 200,000 Jews had disappeared. Most of them had been murdered. For the whole country, the figure was calculated to be half a million.[16]

The silence behind the Iron Curtain

As the end of World War II approached, a provisional government was formed in Hungary in January 1945, which signed an armistice agreement with the Soviet Union. The last Germans were driven out of the country and in 1947 Hungary's borders were established, broadly in line with the Treaty of Trianon of 1920. But the dreams of freedom that began to take root around the country at the time would soon be shattered. Due to

[15] Rockberger (2004), p. 267.

[16] Kontler (1999)

Hungary's geographical location, the Soviet Union considered that the country was within its "sphere of influence" and shortly after the war the process began that in a short time would incorporate Hungary into the communist bloc through intimidation and terror.

The Soviet takeover put an end to political debate in Hungary. People who did not share the views of the communist party were persecuted and harassed. A suffocating social climate gave rise to an atmosphere of cynicism and pessimism and fuelled xenophobia and racism.[17]

The silence and the high walls erected against the outside world also had consequences for how the war was explained and depicted. Unlike in the Western European countries, there was never any encouragement to discuss the ethnic nationalism of the inter-war period, which had caused Hungary and its people so much suffering. In countries like Germany, France and Britain, the role of the extreme

[17] Bozóki (2009)

parties was highlighted and discussed. Their ideas were examined in detail and the significance of their underlying way of thinking for the destructive policies they had pursued were discussed in both the media and by politicians. In Hungary and in other countries behind the Iron Curtain, however, there was silence. As soon as World War II was over, it was determined that the official anti-fascist line against Western Europe would be given priority. There was simply no need for any real discussion about what had actually happened.

Many of those who had nurtured the dream of a new Greater Hungary joined the Communist Party. The change of party was not as dramatic as it may seem. The leadership of the Communist Party encouraged the people to regard their fellow human beings primarily as representatives of different groups, rather than as individuals. The social groups that were considered impossible to integrate into society were branded as "class enemies".[18] The

[18] Körösenyi (1999), p. 7

Soviet, class-based rhetoric, with its focus directed particularly against capitalism, corresponded frequently with anti-Semitic ideas which remained strong, despite the events of World War II. [19] The Greater Hungary revanchism was also maintained under communist rule.[20]

In retrospect, it is difficult to understand how the Soviet system could survive for as long as it did. When communism collapsed and the countries behind the Iron Curtain regained their independence after almost half a century under Moscow's control, a new world order was established. Despite the fact that support for the totalitarian and authoritarian communist regimes had never been particularly strong in Central and Eastern Europe, with the possible exceptions of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, democracy got off to a shaky start in several places.[21]

The first free election in Hungary took place in

[19] Pittaway (2009), p. 395.

[20] Ránki (1999)

[21] Bozóki (2009)

1990. A total of 30 parties participated, 12 of them with nationwide candidate lists. The election was an enormous success for the country's centre-right political forces and the newly elected parliament came to consist of 90% centre-right parties. Simultaneously, the old Communist Party was almost completely wiped out. József Antall and his party, the Hungarian Democratic Forum (Magyar Demokrata Fórum), won 43% of the votes and, together with the Smallholder Party (Független Kisgazda, Földmunkás-és Polgári Part) and the Christian Democratic People's Party (Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt), they could form the first popularly elected government for the country in nearly half a century. Despite the similarity of their names, however, the three parties were very different from their European sister parties. For obvious reasons, support from popular movements was almost entirely lacking and loyalty to the political parties was small, as illustrated by the fact that 20% of the members of parliament switched parties

during the first term.[22]

József Antall's centre-right government's time in power was no easy journey. From the beginning, the coalition was plagued by internal contradictions and all three parties contained factions that advocated more radical policies. The transition from a planned economy to a market economy was painful. The country was soon hit by high inflation and the government's tax revenues declined at a rapid rate. The political parties were not unaffected by the increased social polarisation in Hungary. István Csurka, a familiar face in the Hungarian Democratic Forum and one of the party's more radical voices, saw his chance to take advantage of the growing discontent. Csurka, a vocal anti-Semite, founded the Hungarian Justice and Life Party (Magyar Igazság és elet Pártja or MIÉP) in 1993. In the 1998 election, MIÉP gave a voice to those in the population who felt that developments were unfavourable for Hungary and that globalisation was to the country's detriment.

[22] Rockberger (2004), p. 267.

MIÉP obtained 5.5% of the vote and took its place in the national parliament, not least as a result of a well-functioning party organisation with an extensive local presence.

However, MIÉP was not the only party that wished to represent the growing discontent at that time. Even extra-parliamentary groupings with an ultra-nationalist agenda gained ground and throughout the 1990s, various extremist movements, including skinhead groups and explicit neo-Nazi parties like the Szálasi Guard, competed strenuously for support. Most of these groups were short-lived, with the exception of Blood & Honour (Vér és Becsület), which was said to have had 500-600 members as recently as 2005.[23] Over the years, Blood & Honour has existed in several countries and has also been banned in many places, including in Germany.[24]

The then prime minister and leader of the Fidesz Party, Viktor Orbán, worried that the competing factions within the Hungarian

[23] Bernáth, Miklósi, & Mudde (2005), p. 87

[24] Norris (2005)

nationalist movements would undermine the country's political right. He therefore tried in various ways throughout the period 1998-2002, as well as during the election campaign in 2002, to unite these forces under a common party grouping.

The Hungarian election campaign in 2002 was marked by harsh disagreements expressed through demagogic rhetoric. Opportunistic and racist proposals were common on both sides of the political spectrum. In the quest to unify the country's right-wing forces, Fidesz adopted parts of the rhetoric and policies that MIÉP had successfully used to win votes four years earlier. His efforts were not successful. MIÉP repeated the election results from 1998, although the turnout was higher in 2002 and the party's voter support was therefore not enough for the party to pass the 5% threshold.[25] For the next four years, Hungary would instead be led by a socialist

[25] Norris (2005)

government.[26] For Fidesz, the election defeat meant an opportunity for reconsideration. Once again, attempts were made to integrate the voters, who had previously been attracted by more extreme parties, into a broader, tactical coalition. The harsh rhetoric that Viktor Orbán had used during the election campaign was adopted by several representatives of the party and Fidesz presented itself increasingly as the sole legitimate representative of the Hungarian nation.[27]

The heir

In the autumn of 2003, a new party was registered in Hungary, Jobbik - the Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom). Jobbik had been a functioning student organisation since 1999 at the prestigious university of ELTE (Eötvös Lóránd), where it was closely associated with MIÉP. When Jobbik transformed itself into a political party, it attracted Hungarian

[26] Bernáth, Miklosi & Mudde (2005), p. 93

[27] Pittaway (2009), p. 396.

nationalists who felt that MIÉP was following an overly extreme political line.

Three years later, in 2006, Jobbik acquired its current leader, Gábor Vona. For the parliamentary elections in the same year, Vona, a 28-year-old history teacher at the time, opted to form an alliance with MIÉP and the Smallholders' Party, FKgP, which was the last remnants of the farmers' party that had enjoyed great electoral success in the first elections after World War II in 1947, but which played a very marginal role in Hungarian politics after 2000.[28]

Jobbik's first election campaign was a disappointment for the party. Although more than 15 years had passed since the transition from a planned economy to a market economy, the socio-economic situation in much of the country remained extremely difficult. Particularly in rural areas, many

[28] Free elections to the Hungarian parliament were held in October 1945. The Smallholders' Party, FKgP, received 57% of the vote, the Social Democrats and Communists each received 17% and the National Peasant Party received 7%.

people felt that development had simply passed them by. Many people were nostalgic for a time when life was easier and social changes were less intrusive.

It was particularly among these voters that MIÉP, Jobbik and FKgP hoped to find support. According to the tried and tested method, it was decided that for the 2006 election campaign, different groups would compete against each other. Blatant anti-semitic messages were common. For a long time, the coalition appeared likely to win seats in the parliament, but tough internal tensions finally came at a high price.[29] When the votes were counted, it was clear that only 2.2% of voters supported any of the three parties, well below the 5% threshold.

After the election, the 3-party coalition was dissolved. The future of Jobbik also seemed to be bleak for a while. However, the situation changed completely when in May 2006, immediately after the election, it came to the

[29] European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (2009), p. 26

attention of the press that the country's newly-elected socialist prime minister, Ferenc Gyurcsány, has explained during what he thought was a private gathering, that he had lied during the entire election campaign about the difficult state of the Hungarian economy. The news attracted both attention and outrage. In the nationwide protest demonstrations that followed, the leader of Fidesz, Viktor Orbán, demanded that Gyurcsány should resign and suggested that the Socialist Party, MSZP, had used the same underhand and undemocratic practices as the Communist Party had used in 1948.

It is now clear that the Socialist Party underestimated the anger and perseverance of protesters. Dissatisfaction with Ferenc Gyurcsány continued, and in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, it boiled over. Police were forced to intervene against protesters in Budapest and used tear gas grenades, batons and water cannons. The police intervention reinforced the tensions and those who participated in

protests compared the events with the real revolt in 1956, the battle for freedom from communism.[30]

The opposition parties, mainly Fidesz but also Jobbik, managed to successfully capitalise on the growing dissatisfaction with the newly elected government. For the Socialist Party, MSZO, the period up to the election in 2010 turned out to be a hopeless exercise. For Jobbik, on the other hand, the grievances of the protesters had given the party a new breath of life, and 2007-2009 was devoted largely to consolidating the party organisation. The efforts would prove successful. Between the summer of 2007 and March 2008, the number of local party associations grew from almost nothing to 180.[31]

Bartlomiej Pytlas, who researches political movements at the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt an der Oder, compares Jobbik's strategy in 2007-2009 to a pillar

[30] Marsovszky (2010)

[31] Political Capital Institute (2009)

structure. [32] The first pillar represents the battle for the streets. From the very beginning, there was a willingness in the party to become a unifying force for Hungary's extreme nationalist movements. The founding of the Hungarian Guard in 2007 was of crucial significance and was a way to build consensus among a previously disparate collection of political forces. The Guard would also provide Jobbik with increased visibility. The black and white uniformed group had attracted a lot of attention, both in Hungary and abroad, not least because of its military style marches through residential areas with large Roma populations. The initiative was well-organised from the very beginning. The first 56 guard members were sworn in at a solemn ceremony on 25th August 2007 at Hösök tere, just outside the presidential palace in Buda on the western side of the capital. Several thousand spectators were in place and applauded the

[32] E-mail correspondence with Bartlomiej Pytlas, a doctoral student at the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt an der Oder on 16 November 2010.

event.[33] The Guard, which perceives it as its duty to strengthen national defence and maintain law and order in the community, was banned in the summer of 2009 but has since resurfaced in a new guise. The Guard, which has repeatedly been accused of having used violence against individual Roma, had an estimated 3,000 members in early 2010.

Pytlas describes the second pillar of Jobbik's strategy as the struggle to set the agenda. The aim was to take early possession of important issues and claim various historical ceremonies and symbols, perhaps most clearly illustrated by Jobbik's decision to incorporate into the party emblem one of the oldest symbols of Hungarian identity and national unity, the flag of the Árpád monarchy *(Árpádsávok)*. The single most important question that the party had made their own was the issue of the country's Roma minority.

According to Pytlas, the third pillar is about creating a good organisational environment. A functioning party structure is a key to electoral

[33] Marsovszky (2009)

success, but perhaps most of all it is essential for the party's efforts to establish themselves permanently in Hungarian politics.

Full speed towards the best room

In the spring of 2008, the first signals reached the leadership of Jobbik that voters were beginning to become more aware of the party. In opinion polls published in April, Jobbik received around 8% of voter support. At the time, the preparations for the elections to the European Parliament in 2009 were already in full swing. The party's political programme was presented in May of that year. The election Manifesto "Hungary belongs to the Hungarians! Jobbik's programme for the defence of the Hungarian national interest and for the creation of a Europe of nations" was a mixture of sharp EU criticism, a passion for Hungary's independence and the country's Christian traditions, and a hard-line rejection of market economics. The financial crisis probably contributed to radicalising the party's message, and in both speeches and printed election material, the party's

representatives called for a new world order where secure jobs would take precedence over corporate profits.

The party received support for their policies. Although Jobbik stubbornly claimed that the news media excluded the party from election coverage, it received 13.6% of the vote and, with three of the country's 22 mandates, it became the third largest Hungarian party in the EU parliament. Jobbik's progress aroused great attention all over Europe. From being a marginalised party, Jobbik had suddenly become one of Hungary's representatives in Brussels. In the news media, the image spread of a party from a bygone era and accusations of *fascism light* were common.

The figures from the Hungarian election authority show that Jobbik largely sought and found support in the country's poorest areas, areas where usually only a small proportion of the voters used their vote. The election result in Budapest is a good illustration. On the western and more affluent part of the city, Buda, Jobbik received lower support in several

constituencies than the nearly 14% that the party received at national level. On the other side of the river Danube, in the poorer Pest, the situation was reversed. Support for Jobbik was in several constituencies here 5-10% higher than at national level. In some constituencies, Jobbik was even as large or larger than the government party MSZP.[34]

The trend was the same throughout the country. Jobbik won support mainly in relatively poor areas and in constituencies where turnout was traditionally low. The city of Miskolc, located in the north-eastern region of Észak-Magyarország, was one of the cities hit hardest when the Hungarian iron industry rapidly lost its economic importance in just a few years in the early 1990s. Unemployment remained high in the city and when the recession following the financial crisis hit, the population's resilience was limited. Jobbik received the support of 20.9% of the voters in Miskolc. In the constituencies with the lowest turnout of voters, as low as 16% in some

[34] The Hungarian national election committee (2009)

constituencies, Jobbik received up to 33% of the votes.[35]

Bolstered by the election results, Jobbik launched its preparations for the Hungarian parliamentary elections a year later. The party's political programme was fine-tuned and the party organisation was further strengthened. The party presented its 176 candidates on 16th January 2010. The new manifesto was presented to the public and to the media at the same time. "Radical change for national self-determination and social justice" was in a large part made up of promises. In the same way as a year earlier, it was pointed out that the party's policy rested on traditional Christian values. The introduction signalled a conservative approach to the relationship between the state and the individual. However, Jobbik was not a consistent defender of civil society against state interference. Rather, several elements of the programme indicate rather a strong desire to increase government involvement in issues

[35] Ibid.

of energy supply, employment, healthcare and housing. In direct conflict with its Christian values, the party also hit out particularly harshly against the Roma minority.

Radical change and national self-determination

Mistrust of the market economy runs like a red thread throughout the Jobbik manifesto from 2010. The manner in which the financial crisis is described is significant. Jobbik notes that the global economy, based on the free movement of "multi-national capital", has broken down. In order to reverse this trend and bridge the gaps that have developed in society, the party advocates a customised "eco-social national economy" that can serve the interests of the Hungarian people.

Greater Hungarian aspirations

In the section on "Hungarians outside the country's borders, Jobbik alludes to the injustice that many Hungarians still believe was inflicted on the country by the Treaty of Trianon in 1920, which resulted in the division

of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Jobbik writes that the party's political horizons are not defined in terms of its geographic boundaries, but by the "nation's" boundaries. The party claims to have an ambition to create a "Hungarian economic zone", which also includes Hungarian-populated areas outside the country's borders, a clear allusion to the Greater Hungary aspirations that dominated Hungarian politics during the first half of the 1900s. Jobbik writes that it wishes to see a cultural and economic unification of the Hungarian nation.

Through increased regional cooperation, the party wishes to work so that the Hungarian "communities" that are beyond the country's borders will be re-incorporated into and become part of the active Hungarian society. Specifically, it is envisaged that this will be achieved by Hungarian descendants living in neighbouring states being offered dual citizenship. However, this is intended initially to be primarily symbolic and will not provide access to Hungary's social welfare system,

such as the pension system. On the other hand, Jobbik wants Hungary to accept responsibility for the safety of the Hungarian descendants living "in exile" and thus offer these people a legal platform in international courts in the event that their rights are curtailed. The model is an agreement between Austria and Italy, which entails that Austrian descendants who now reside in the Italian region of Bolzano-Bozen can assert their rights with Austria's help. At the end of the section, it is stated that Jobbik wants the Hungarian state to encourage domestic enterprises to invest in projects that can create jobs in Hungarian populated areas outside the country. Jobbik also promised to work for the abolition of the so-called Benes Decrees, a collection of pronouncements that the Czechoslovak prime minister issued during World War II that made it possible to deprive ethnic Germans and Hungarians of their property because they were collectively regarded as collaborators with Hitler's Germany.

State ownership

The election manifesto called for a "potent, active and capable state". This means that the state should own and manage assets that are considered to be of national strategic interest. Land, water and forests are examples, but also "a significant part of the energy sector". The party is also prepared to nationalise assets which are now privately owned, such as water treatment plants and Budapest Airport, which has been 75% privately owned since 2007. To the extent that they are prepared to permit privatisation, it must not be at "predatory pricing." Jobbik expresses a faith in traditional manufacturing industries and also claims to be prepared to provide state funds for research and development in order to create a competitive Hungarian automotive industry.

Taxation policies

Jobbik wishes to broaden the tax base and thereby increase the total state tax revenue. At the same time, the manifesto of 2010 also expresses a willingness to cut some taxes, but

it is unclear which taxes it has in mind. The party would provide for stiffer penalties for tax offenders. One feature of fiscal conservatism shines through when Jobbik wants the state to focus on reducing the national debt and that it wishes to legislate to prevent a government borrowing money for the state's current expenditure.

Labour and employment policies

The apparently strong belief in government central control appears to be most evident in Jobbik's proposals for labour market policy. For example, the Party wishes to increase employment by initiating major infrastructure projects and establishing a work programme to monitor and manage municipal land and public parks. In terms of regulations, Hungarian workers would, at least on paper, have enhanced rights with Jobbik in power. The party wants to increase the power and independence of trade unions and opposes short-term contracts. At the same time, the party would tighten the requirements for eligibility for unemployment benefits. Those

who are unable to find work in the regular labour market, for whatever reason, would only receive financial support from the state in exchange for some form of work effort.

Agricultural policy

In Jobbik's world, agricultural policy seems as much a way to benefit the agricultural industry as a means of achieving higher levels of employment. For example, the party wants the state to take a greater responsibility for supporting the agriculture and food industry. At the same time, efforts to promote alternative methods are justified by the fact that agriculture has traditionally been labour intensive. Poor and destitute Hungarians would have an opportunity to work the land through municipal agriculture programmes. It would be difficult to imagine a more similar modern variant of the Russian system of collective farming.

Agricultural policy is also a battleground for nationalist aspirations. Jobbik writes that Hungarian governments have recently pursued policies that have "betrayed the

welfare of rural areas" and unilaterally favoured agri-business sector. The party wants agricultural policy to "serve the common good" instead. In its election manifesto, Jobbik identified the decisions to privatise much of the state-owned land in the 1990s as the beginning of a "spectacle" that resulted in speculation and led to foreign interests acquiring Hungarian land at prices that were far too low. Jobbik therefore wishes to enact legislation to prevent foreign citizens from buying agricultural land in Hungary.

Climate and energy policy

As already mentioned, Jobbik opposed the privatisation in recent decades of the energy sector, whereby both the gas and oil industries are now owned largely by foreign interests. In addition to an outright nationalisation, the party proposes a state-funded expansion of the country's nuclear power plants, a measure that it believes will reduce consumer prices for electricity in the country. Nuclear power is regarded not only as an energy source, but also as an environmentally friendly form of

energy that reduces carbon emissions.

Transport and infrastructure

The party's ambition to protect the climate and reduce emissions of harmful greenhouse gases is also reflected in the section on transport and infrastructure. Jobbik says it wants to modernise the rail network and help to make it competitive in relation to road traffic, which it believes has reached unacceptably high levels. The only major individual infrastructure project mentioned in the manifesto, which is best described as a state measure to increase employment, is the planned construction of a canal to link the Danube with the tributary Tisza.

Healthcare

Jobbik's distrust of private solutions is clearly expressed in its healthcare policy. The party emphatically rejects any notion of allowing private healthcare companies to buy and operate hospitals. They also have no sympathy for the plans to privatise the national health insurance system. They also strongly object to the privatisation of the country's pharmacies.

The manifesto also implies that Jobbik wishes to reintroduce a state pension scheme.

Housing and family policy

Jobbik wants to build rental apartments for social housing and introduce state-regulated rents. In order to counter the negative development in demographics, Jobbik wants to give tax benefits to large families and thereby promote an increase in birth rates. The party also expresses a desire to reduce the number of abortions, but does not specify whether this should be achieved through legislation.

The Roma

Jobbik's manifesto contains a special section on the country's Roma minority. Under the heading "Gypsy Questions", they describe the high level of unemployment and the low level of education among the Roma as a "time bomb" that threatens to trigger a civil war in Hungary. Criminality is the primary problem that the party identifies within the Roma minority. In order to deal with "gypsy criminality", Jobbik intends to provide the

police with additional resources and to establish a gendarmerie in rural areas. It points out that not all Roma are criminals, but that crime rates in the group are high.

School and educational policy

Jobbik has a problem with the current education policy in Hungary. The party wishes to return to a value and knowledge-based system, as they put it. In such a schooling system, discipline should be valued higher than it is today and the teachers should have greater authority over the pupils. Jobbik wants to make religious instruction or teaching of ethics mandatory and give higher priority in the school curriculum to Hungarian history and culture. The company that produces the course literature in Hungary should be nationalised. Jobbik wants Hungarian colleges and universities to leave the Bologna process, the European coordination system for higher education, and to establish an Institute of Roma methodology in order to find teaching methods that can help raise the educational level of the

country's Roma.

Culture policy

The party's culture policy has clear elements of the criticism of liberal values that strongly influenced Hungarian society in the early 1900s. Jobbik says it wants to create a culture which "finally allows national values." According to the party, the "liberal culture dictatorship", which has characterised Hungary for far too long, should be abolished. Culture should also be again given a role in the small rural communities and there should be better opportunities for civil society organisations in the cultural sector. Jobbik wants to terminate the contracts that the state has entered into with commercial television channels and introduce a new tax on advertising. Government initiatives should be used to promote the production of films that highlight Hungary's historical successes. Jobbik also wants to develop a new form of *public service* that more clearly contributes to the development of a national identity, that can convey a broad range of opinions and

which is capable of providing the people with balanced news reporting.

Justice and crime policy

The party calls for a stricter policy on crime. Tougher, longer sentences and stricter discipline in the country's prisons are proposals for measures. As mentioned earlier, the party wants to take tough measures against "gypsy criminality". The party wants the Christian church to have a greater role in efforts to reintegrate prisoners into society outside the prison walls. The party also proposes that the country's judges should be better paid.

Constitutional issues

Jobbik has major ambitions in these areas and calls for both increased power-sharing and decentralisation of political power. The party wants to introduce a bicameral system and arrange for more referendums. It also wishes to give local authorities greater autonomy. But the decentralisation ideal is not consistent. Jobbik wants the state to take more control over how and to what extent municipal assets

are sold to private companies. The party also wants to help municipalities regain ownership of waterworks, sewerage systems, gas networks and recycling businesses.

Defence policy

Jobbik wants to implement investments in the defence forces, which it believes has been neglected over the last 20 years. The electoral manifesto calls for more ground troops and it seems to indicate dissatisfaction with the fact that NATO membership has to a large extent focused on technical development and peacekeeping efforts. Jobbik does not justify the proposed expansion of the defence forces with changes to security policy in Hungary's neighbouring area. The stated objectives, such as higher wages for military personnel and new investments in armaments, are probably intended as symbolic politics.

Foreign policy

Jobbik calls for a paradigm shift in the perception of the country's relations with the outside world. Hungary and the other countries of Central and Eastern Europe

should develop a common and independent foreign policy while strengthening relations with Russia. The diplomatic efforts should focus principally on China, Japan, Kazakhstan and Turkey. The agreement that Hungary has with its neighbours should be renegotiated. In this way, Jobbik hopes to ensure better safeguards for the rights of Hungarian minorities living in neighbouring countries.

EU

The party's attitude towards the EU can at best be described as lukewarm. The manifesto expresses disappointment that the issue of the rights of Hungarian minorities has not yet been subject to a thorough discussion in Brussels. According to Jobbik, the EU institutions are undemocratic. The financial support that Hungary receives from the EU is not properly structured, since according to Jobbik, most of the money ends up in the pockets of the big multinationals.

International trade

The manifesto also contains a large degree of protectionism. Before the election in 2010, the

party promised to launch a national campaign under the slogan "Buy Hungarian!". Jobbik writes that it wants to reduce trade with other countries by "preventing the dumping of goods on other nations' markets, provided that these in turn show Hungary the same courtesy."

Unrest on the way to Országgyűlés

The election campaign in the spring of 2010 was characterised by promises of change. Following a term of office with a global financial crisis and subsequent fiscal austerity, the electorate were tired of politicians in general and of the ruling Socialist Party in particular. Fidesz made substantial progress and after the second round of voting, it was able to form a majority government with the small Christian Democratic Party, KDNP. The big surprise was Jobbik. The newcomer had doubled its support in just one year and now received nearly 17% of the votes, making it the third largest party in the national parliament,

Országgyűlés.
Recent events should not be underestimated when it comes to understanding why nearly a million Hungarians voted for the party. The reactions and the massive protests that followed the revelation that the prime minister had embellished the economic situation during the 2006 election campaign, contributed to the MSZP losing its mandate after its worst election results in two decades.
There was strong dissatisfaction with the government's handling of the economic downturn in the wake of the financial crisis. Hungary was one of the European countries worst affected by the turmoil on the financial markets in 2008. It was only thanks to emergency loans equivalent to EUR 2 billion from the International Monetary Fund, that the country managed to avoid economic collapse. The loans were contingent upon specific conditions, however, and the Gyurcsány government was forced to implement harsh austerity measures, which meant that the economy shrank, jobs were lost

and the acute poverty that already existed in many places became widespread.

Disappointment and anxiety are typical of what many Hungarians have experienced regarding economic and social development in recent decades. Although it has been 20 years since Hungary made the transition from a planned economy to a market economy, in practice the adjustment was never fully completed. Rather, the transformation process was made permanent as trade was liberalised and the country became part of a global economy.

These changes have had a significant impact on Hungarian society. Many of those who lived and worked during the communist dictatorship have found it difficult to adapt to the changing living conditions. Increased demands for people to arrange their own livelihood and the realisation that the fruits of globalisation are not necessarily harvested and divided equally among all members of society, have exasperated the growing sense of dissatisfaction.

The distrust of democracy and political parties, and not least of politicians, is very high among Hungarians. Confidence in the democratic institutions declined sharply just a few years after the fall of communism. One in three of those polled in 1989 responded that they were satisfied with the new democratic order. But 4-5 years later, that proportion had fallen to one in five.[36] Today, 25 years later, the situation is not much better. In a Eurobarometer survey from 2013, only 20% of respondents said they had confidence in the political parties.[37]

But it is not only in studies of the level of trust in democratic institutions that Hungary stands out. Repeated surveys suggest a widespread sense of impotence. In 1992, only 17% of Hungarians felt that they could influence their lives. One year later, the figure had fallen to 10%. In the rest of Europe, the corresponding figure at the time was 20-40%

[36] Körösényi (1999), p. 18

[37] European Commission (2013)

on average.[38] In autumn 2007, before the financial crisis knocked the wind out of the Hungarian economy, only slightly more than half of those polled responded that they were satisfied with their lives, compared to around 80% in the Scandinavian countries. Their faith in the future was also limited. Only 10% of those polled in the autumn of 2007 responded positively when asked if they thought the economy would improve over the next twelve months.[39] In spring 2013, the proportion who said yes was 17%.[40]

At the end of the 1990s, when Hungary was one of several Eastern European countries who commenced negotiations to join the EU, there were many who placed great faith in the process. A seat at the council table in Brussels would give the country hope and "restore Hungary to Europe". The dream of being part of a larger European community meant far more than just the promise of lowered border

[38] Körösényi (1999), p. 18

[39] European Commission (2007)

[40] European Commission (2013)

barriers and increased trade. Membership also marked the culmination of a long journey away from state socialism to a market economy. The biblical expression of milk and honey (*tej és méz)* summed up the hopes that many Hungarians harboured prior to their entry into the EU.

But for large portions of the population, the future was anything but bright. Today, many Hungarians have experienced a deterioration in their economic and social conditions since communism. Few would say that EU membership lived up to the high expectations of a dramatically improved life for those who, even before EU membership, regarded themselves as losers in the transition to a market economy. [41] Those kinds of expectations were probably doomed to be shattered. After all, the enlargement to the east in 2004 was about making room for 10 countries, whose average per capita GDP was less than one fifth of the average GDP of the 15

[41] Andor (2000)

existing member countries.[42]

It is in the light of this reality that we should see the message of transformation that characterised the Hungarian election campaign of 2010. Fidesz often returned to the need for new ideas and new solutions. As we have seen, Jobbik's description of the causes of the economic and social situation, as well as the solutions it advocated, were significantly more radical. With an election manifesto dominated by demands for greater government power, reduced foreign influence and ownership, and proposals intended to halt globalisation at Hungary's borders, Jobbik aimed to exploit popular discontent. The unemployment rate, which could largely be traced back 20 years, was now blamed on the country's minority groups. By evoking the image of a society in which different collective groups oppose each other, while unabashedly blaming capitalism for the country's weak performance, Jobbik managed to find support both in xenophobic circles and in the anti-

[42] Anell (2009)

globalisation movement.

Throughout the election campaign, Jobbik tried to politicise the fact that large international companies had established operations in Hungary. Senior representatives of the party compared the way the economy functioned with "cowboy capitalism" and criticised the fact that Israeli companies had major interests in the country and that they had signed lucrative contracts with the government. Sometimes anti-capitalism was combined with anti-semitism, such as when Jobbik claimed that 70% of the real-estate projects in Budapest were owned by Israeli companies. The rhetoric was familiar and was reminiscent of how, in flyers and in the political debate, Hungary's Jewish minority were accused in the early 1930s of collaborating with foreign capital interests to engage in ruthless exploitation of the country's economy.[43]

[43] Mann (2004)

Broken dreams

There is no single explanation for Jobbik's electoral success. Like in any political events, there were several factors that contributed to the party's emergence and its increase in voter support. In addition to the poor economic and social factors, there are also reasons to consider an historical perspective. The nationalism that dominated Hungarian politics in the early 1900s never completely vanished. Under communist rule, there was no forum for public debate and dissenting opinions were not accepted.

But even if the silence prevented national chauvinist opinions from being expressed in public, there was nothing to prevent its adherents from remaining faithful to those ideas. Leading politicians partly embraced these ideas and in a variety of ways, the Communists supported the idea of a Greater Hungary. [44] When Hungary eventually regained its independence, the ideal of Greater

[44] Beckett Weaver (2006)

Hungary remained largely intact.
The silence during much of the second half of the century is probably an explanation for why the environment for political extremism is particularly fertile in Hungary. The analysis institute, Political Capital, compiled an annual index of the popularity of extreme political groups in 32 different countries called Derex (Demand for right-wing extremism index).[45] Hungary is highly placed in the rankings. According to the survey from 2009, more than 20% of the Hungarian voters sympathise with opinions which, in combination, can be referred to as right-wing; xenophobia, dissatisfaction with the political system and lack of trust in other people. In the rest of Europe, the figures in most cases are significantly lower. The equivalent measure for Sweden is 0.7% and for Germany it is 2.7%. [46] The support for extreme political views has increased steadily among

[45] Derex is based on compilations of statistical surveys of social attitudes and values conduced every year by the European Social Survey.
[46] Political Capital (2010)

Hungarians since 2003. The proportion that has prejudices against foreigners has increased from 37% in 2003 to 55% in 2007. The study also confirms other studies that indicate a growing dissatisfaction with modern society, from national political bodies to international institutions, including the UN. The image that Derex presents,of a country with growing discontent and distrust, especially against foreigners and foreign influences, is confirmed by other sources. Research shows that there is widespread acceptance in Hungary for xenophobic rhetoric, particularly directed against Roma.[47] This rhetoric is employed by all political factions. While he was in office from 1994 to 1998, the former socialist prime minister, Gyula Horn, regularly described Roma as lazy and as prospective criminals.[48]

The reason that Jobbik stands out and is described as an extremist party is the way in which the party has raised xenophobia to a

[47] Bernáth, Miklósi, & Mudde (2005), p. 93

[48] Ibid.

new level in recent years. Singling out the Roma as a group who are wasting the country's wealth was key feature of Jobbik's message in both 2009 and 2010. When, in its election manifesto of 2010, the party described coexistence and cohesion between the Hungarians and the Roma as one of the most difficult problems facing Hungarian society, it focused on two issues in particular: unemployment and crime.

The tone was often harsh. Jobbik described unemployment which is hereditary among the Roma as a "potential time bomb" that could very well cause a civil war. Criminality was described in similar terms. In an article published on the party's website in late 2009, the party leader Gábor Vona wrote that there was a need to create an environment where Roma can "return to a world of work, education and lawfulness." According to Vona, the Roma, who are not prepared to so, have two options: exile or imprisonment. "We will no longer accept the fact that people devote their lives to getting a free rider or to

criminality", he explained. Ahead of the parliamentary elections in 2010, a torchlight procession was held in the city of Ozd, with leading representatives of Jobbik "in remembrance of the victims of gypsy crime".

The Roma are in a vulnerable position in Hungarian society, as confirmed by external surveys. In a report from 1997, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) expressed its hope that the country's mass media would take greater responsibility for not spreading messages that fuel xenophobia. In a 2009 report, the ECRI praised several of the Hungarian authorities' initiatives to strengthen the position of the Roma. The criticism remained harsh, however, and the ECRI was particularly concerned about Jobbik's emergence and about the fact that anti-semitism and anti-Roma rhetoric was increasingly appearing in newspapers and on the internet.[49]

The attitudes of the country's police force have damaged the judiciary's reputation. A survey

[49] European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (2009)

conducted by the Hungarian Ministry of the Interior in 1997 showed that 54% of the 1,530 police officers who took part believed that criminality is part of the Roma identity. A total of 74% said they believed that the Hungarian population expected the police to be tough on the Roma.[50] Nowadays, the Hungarian police training includes courses in human rights and cadets receive training in how minorities should be treated. Police violence against Roma continues to be reported, however, and studies suggest that the Roma are over-represented among those stopped by police.[51]

Discrimination is nothing new. The Roma have long been in a vulnerable situation. There has been a strong distrust of the Roma during the roughly 700 years that they have had a documented presence in Europe. In Austria-Hungary, the Roma were forcibly assimilated during the 1700s. Roma children were removed from their parents, marriages between Roma were forbidden and those who

[50] Csepeli, Örkény & Székelyi (2009), p. 130–173

[51] Kállai (2009)

defied the ban on speaking Romani were beaten.[52] Xenophobia also encompasses other minority groups. Not least, the Jews are in a threatening situation. The anti-semitism and xenophobia that existed in the early 1900s have survived and spread. While violence directed against Jews seems to be limited in Hungary, vandalism of synagogues and Jewish cemeteries is more common. One of the more notorious attacks took place in June 2005, when 130 gravestones in Budapest's largest Jewish cemetery were desecrated. In another incident, someone painted swastikas and anti-Semitic messages on the fence of a synagogue in the city of Vác, north of the capital. [53]

The breeding ground for anti-semitism is not confined to extremist parties. The Fidesz mayor of Edeleny, Oszkár Molnár, attracted a great deal of attention when, in the autumn of 2009, he accused pregnant Roma women of deliberately harming themselves in order to

[52] Delegationen för romska frågor [Delegation for Roma Issues] (2010)

[53] European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (2009), p. 26

receive state support for their disabled children. Molnár also provoked debate when he declared in a television interview a month later that he was a Hungarian nationalist and did not want foreign interests, especially Jewish interests, having increased influence in the country.[54]

In the early 2000s, attention was drawn to the fact that a commercial radio station, Pannon Rádió, regularly broadcast programmes with attacks on Jews, Gypsies and homosexuals. The Hungarian radio authority issued fines of HUF 2.3 million (or about EUR 7,500) and threatened to withdraw the station's broadcasting license. When the radio authority decided to also review the state radio, it was discovered that the weekly political news programme *Vasárnapi Újság* repeatedly conveyed anti-Semitic and xenophobic messages. The discovery was not considered more serious, however, than that the responsible editor could keep his job.[55]

[54] Lahav (2009)

[55] Bernáth, Miklósi & Mudde (2005), p. 90

Jobbik's critique of popular culture is a clear example of how everything that is foreign is rejected. The party has criticised television broadcasting for shallowness on the grounds that many of the programmes broadcast are cheaply produced copies of vulgar foreign formats. The tone is the same on the issue of modern architecture. A recurring target of Jobbik's criticism is the ongoing transformation of Budapest's cityscape. Party representatives have expressed fear that the recent years' construction boom, which resulted in new office buildings of glass and steel in the city centre, will obstruct the capital's many historic buildings.

A new political force?

Political scientist András Körösényi, who conducts research on voting behaviour, believes that there are three key divisions in Hungarian politics that parties would do well to position themselves around. According to Körösényi, the three key issues are religion, the relationship to the old Communist Party

and the distance between urban and rural.[56]
Unlike most other European countries, divisions based on economic class are not decisive in Hungary, according to Körösényi. On all these issues, Jobbik has managed to adopt advantageous positions. The party has been very careful to emphasise Christian values. Jobbik could also take on the role of an anti-communist and anti-socialist party in connection with the anti-government protests in 2006. In addition, the party has cleverly exploited the differences in living conditions between urban and rural populations and presented itself as the only credible protector of rural dwellers and their interests.
Democracy in Hungary is still young and the political landscape is constantly changing, with large voter movements and shifting majorities as a result. For example, Józéf Antall's party, Hungarian Democratic Forum, was included in the first government after the 1990 elections, but since the 2010 election it has no representatives in the national

[56] Körösényi (1999)

parliament. Over the past twenty years, several extremist parties have rapidly gained ground in Hungary, only to disappear from the political scene shortly afterwards. Jobbik is certainly not guaranteed any decisive role in Hungarian politics in the future. There is also a risk of internal divisions. In early autumn 2011, it was reported that a splinter group within Jobbik had formed a new party. Representatives of the new party, the Hungarian Phoenix Movement (Magyar Főnix Mozgalom), announced that it, like Jobbik, will focus on the country's "gypsy criminality". Extreme forces have historically also had difficulty maintaining power on the few occasions when they have managed to get it. Gyula Gömbös' period as prime minister from 1932-1936 was a disappointment for many of his followers. His attempt to change Hungary into a "purposeful nation state" and restrict the independence of the labour movement and to micromanage the economy was hampered by figures among the political elite who did not share his ambition. However, Gömbös'

decision to transform the ruling party NEP (Nemzeti Egység Pártaja) into a member-based organisation would have a decisive impact on the radicalisation of the political system that subsequently occurred. Among other things, Gömbös made sure that several of his radical friends were given key positions in the new organisation. He also replaced high-ranking officers in the army with people who shared his beliefs, a tactical decision that was to have important consequences during World War II.

At the same time, history seems to show that support for national-chauvinist parties does not depend solely on the prevailing economic situation. Throughout the 1930s, the extremist parties in Hungary maintained their support, regardless of the economic conditions.[57] This complicates the interpretation of Jobbik.

The image of Jobbik as extremely nationalistic and xenophobic is complicated further if one examines its voter base. Despite the fact that the party mainly won support in the poorest

[57] Mann (2004), p. 245.

parts of Hungary in 2009 and 2010, there were also surprisingly many young and well-educated voters who voted for Jobbik, a result that is at odds with previous studies of the electoral base of extremist parties.[58] According to an opinion poll by Forsense, 40% of those under 24 supported either Jobbik or the newly formed green-liberal party Politics Can Be Different (LMP, Lehet Más a Politika). Jobbik won many supporters in the country's colleges and universities, not least among history students at the University of Miskolc and the prestigious ELTE University, where Jobbik originally started as a student organisation. It is also the same institution where the party's female member of the European Parliament since 2009, Krisztina Morvai, was once a teacher.[59]

Many of the country's student unions, especially the faculties in the humanities, are now controlled by students with strong Jobbik

[58] Hainsworth (2008)

[59] Marsovszky (2009)

sympathies.[60] In fact, half of Jobbik's voters in 2010 were younger than 35 and only 10% were older than 55. The strong support for Jobbik among young people is probably due to a growing frustration over high levels of unemployment and dashed aspirations, a relationship that can be seen in many other EU countries. Many young Hungarians also regarded Jobbik as the radical alternative in Hungarian politics. This situation, then, is not unique. The Red Brigades became popular in Italy during the 1960s, not least because of strong support among young graduates who, because of social and economic marginalisation, turned to a radical alternative to the established parties.[61]

Jobbik is an efficient campaign party that has learned from its experiences in previous election campaigns. Political scientist and former Minister of Culture, András Bozóki, who studied the Hungarian parliamentary

[60] E-mail correspondence with László Kürti, Political Science Institute at the University of Miskolc, Hungary, 5 December, 2010

[61] Bergman (2009)

elections in 1998, says that Fidesz made substantial gains because the party managed to meet several of the conflicting expectations of the electorate: friendliness toward the West, criticism of globalisation, the ability to defend the role of the state and to affirm the role of religion in society and to protect the interests of the middle-class.[62] Alongside its 257 local party organisations, Jobbik had a clear and considered presence on the internet in recent years. In addition to traditional forums such as public meetings, posters and advertising on television, radio and in the press, Jobbik was quick to arrange various activities in the social network forums. For example, campaigns were carried out both by email and texting.[63]

Like Fidesz, Jobbik has also laid claim to national symbols in their political propaganda. For example, Jobbik ran a hard campaign in the local elections in autumn 2010. In a campaign film, multinational companies and

[62] Bozóki (2003), p. 436

[63] E-mail correspondence with László Kürti, Political Science Institute at the University of Miskolc, Hungary, 5 December, 2010

banks were singled out as parasites. The party's main election issue was crime, however, especially crimes attributed to the Roma. The country's *public service channels*, both the TV station Magyar Televízió and the radio station Magyar Rádió, however, refused to broadcast the adverts because they were considered degrading and contrary to the channel's rules. Hungary's national election commission initially agreed with the position taken by the TV and radio stations, but the Supreme Court repealed the decision and stated that the principle of equal treatment of the political parties had been breached. Of the 5 largest parties in existence today, Jobbik was also the one that spent the least on television advertising in the 2010 election.

The rhetoric and imagery of Jobbik's propaganda has been harsh from the start. In May 2007 the Party's monthly magazine, which can be purchased in kiosks and supermarkets around the country, featured a poster in large format in which the then current government were likened to

parasites.[64] In a television programme on EchoTV in January 2009, they compared known social commentators like Imre Kertész, Péter Esterházy, György Spiro and the late István Eörsi with rats that should be exterminated. The journalist Sándor Pörzse had his own programme on the same channel for many years. Pörzse had the habit of ending programmes by reading a piece in which he swore allegiance to the Hungarian nation.[65]

Uncertain future

Jobbik's political influence in the Hungarian parliament has been limited during the current electoral term. Fidesz has a strong grip on government power and, since the parliamentary elections in 2010, it has implemented a series of legislative amendments in order to reform and streamline certain social structures, including the healthcare system and the pension system.

[64] *Magyar Mérce* is a monthly magazine published by Jobbik. The reference refers to a poster named "Védekezz a Kártevök", which roughly means "shoot the parasites", which appeared in the May 2007 issue of the magazine.

[65] Marsovszky (2009)

Hungary has also adopted a new constitution during this period. The government has been criticised for not adequately consulting either the political opposition or civil society.

Following the parliamentary elections in 2010, Jobbik has taken a much more critical attitude toward Fidesz than many observers had expected. As early as on the night of the election, party leader Vona promised to "use every parliament tool and all democratic tools outside parliament" to criticise the ruling party and hold it responsible for its policies.

During its first years in parliament, Jobbik has also voted against the current government on several occasions. For example, the party voted no to Fidesz' proposal for a new constitution in April 2011, despite the fact that, in several crucial respects, the basic text is in line with Jobbik policies: protection of Hungarian culture, heavy references to Christianity, opposition to abortion, support for marriage between a man and a woman and the ambition to take responsibility for ethnic Hungarians living outside Hungary. Jobbik

also chose to put forward its own candidate to challenge János Áder from Fidecz in the presidential elections in May 2012. The initiative attracted media attention, but in the end, the party's MEP Krisztina Morvai lost the final vote by 262 votes to 40.

Jobbik's ability to establish itself in Hungarian domestic politics is obviously improved by the party now having a position in the political arena that guarantees state funding, administrative support in parliament and, not least, the media attention that follows from being part of the national assembly. This may in turn generate economic resources, an important consideration for a new party that is aiming for a long-term role. The question about where Jobbik received its financing prior to the European Parliament elections in 2009 soon became the focus of intense media attention in Hungarian. Little is known about it, however. What is known is that Jobbik, as part of the 3-party coalition with MIÉP and FKgP, received minor sums in public support before the 2006 election. Otherwise, the cash

flows have long been unknown. In early 2010, it emerged that ever since its inception in 2003, Jobbik had not complied with the requirements to report their finances. Not once during the seven years had the party published its annual financial statement. Media attention led to a state prosecutor deciding to open an investigation.

Jobbik has the potential to establish itself in Hungarian politics, but it is also possible that, like its predecessors, the party will disappear after one or two terms. A crucial factor will be the extent to which Fidesz is able to maintain voter confidence. The ruling party undeniably raised expectations when, in the 2010 election campaign, it promised that Hungary would create one million new jobs over the next 10 years. These expectations will prove difficult to meet, given Hungary's fundamental structural problems, including high budget deficits on both the national budget and the current account balance, high unemployment and the severity with which the financial crisis impacted on Hungary. This exacerbates the

discontent that has long existed over the development of the country and it benefits the opposition, including Jobbik.

The Netherlands - intolerance in the tolerant society

It became clear on the night of 13th September 2012 that the Netherlands would get a new government. New parliament elections were called after the *Party for Freedom (Partij voor de Vrijheid)*, which since the parliamentary elections in 2010 had acted as a support party for the conservative government formed by the liberal *VVD (De Nederlandse Liberal Partij)* and the Christian Democrat *CDA (Christen-Democratisch Appèl)*, refused to go along with Prime Minister Mark Ruttes' proposed cut-backs in the public sector.

This was a rude awakening for Geert Wilders. In just over two years, the Party for Freedom lost one third of its support and went from 15.4% in parliamentary elections in 2010 to just 10.1%. The election result also meant that Geert Wilders lost his role as king-maker. The Party for Freedom was still the country's third

largest party, but the coveted seat at the negotiating table was lost. A new government would instead be formed by VVD and the Labour Party *PvdA (Partij van de Arbeid).*

The election result was received with shouts of joy. Geert Wilders had been a controversial figure ever since he entered the political scene in the Netherlands. His harsh criticism of Islam and immigration from Muslim parts of the world had certainly gained followers, but had also encountered strong opposition. Was this the end of his political career, many people asked?

The answer is no. Despite the fact that the Party for Freedom is no longer sitting at the cabinet table, Geert Wilders is not finished in politics. As early as December 2012, the Party for Freedom came out on top as the most popular party in an opinion poll, and since then the party has fought for the top spot as the largest party.

This is due, to some extent, to domestic political circumstances. Dutch politics has been characterised for a long time by a

partisan split, protracted government negotiations and recurring government crises that have eroded the electorate's confidence in their elected representatives. With over 10% in the 2012 election and then somewhere between 15% and 18% in the opinion polls from the summer of 2013, the Party for Freedom is likely to remain a key player in Dutch politics for the foreseeable future. The Party for Freedom is capable of regaining popular support again just as quickly as it lost it.

But the future of the Party for Freedom is at least as dependent on what happens in Brussels and on the European stage as it is on events on the domestic scene. The Party for Freedom has managed to position itself as the most EU-critical party in the Netherlands. A successful election campaign in the spring of 2014 can both secure new seats in the European Parliament and ensure the party the time and the financial resources necessary to wait for the next domestic political opening.

To understand the Party for Freedom's

emergence and the support for its policies, the party must be seen in a broader context. Like all extremist parties across Europe, the Party for Freedom incorporates ideas that have a long history. We can start by looking at the situation in the Netherlands in the 1930s.

Nazism withers away

The *National Socialist Movement (Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging, NSB)* was formed In December 1931. The party programme was based largely on a copy of the programme developed by the German NSDAP. The slogans on the abolition of universal suffrage, demands for a strong military defence and strong state leadership, an economy in the service of the "national community" and a system of national labour service were some of the programme's points. At this point, however, there was neither anti-semitism nor a racial doctrine evident in the party's written material.

In the provincial elections of April 1935, NSB received 8% of the vote and was particularly successful in the major cities of Rotterdam,

Utrecht and the Hague. The success was partly the result of the party being perceived as new, and also that it managed to win broad support, a so-called *catch-all effect*. This pattern was particularly prevalent among middle-class voters.

The party built up a stable party organisation before the election campaign. As in many other countries at this time, they had their own uniform, their own salute and their own songs.

At first they were slow to gain support among the workers. It was not until 1935 that the first signs of anti-semitism appeared within the NSB. It was also at this point that party representatives began to show open admiration for Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini. But the radicalisation did not win the support of voters. In the election to the lower chamber in 1937, the NSB received a modest 4.2% of the vote. In two years, voter support had almost halved. The membership numbers also fell. In early 1940, the party had only 29,000 members, compared to 52,000

members four years earlier.
The downward trend was broken by the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands and the takeover of the state apparatus. In late 1940, the membership of the NSB increased to 50,000. The party also had an additional 50,000 registered sympathisers. Approximately 50,000 Dutch people signed up for the German Army, although only slightly more than half were accepted. There were also a number of other voluntary organisations where citizens willingly served the occupation forces. The Dutch police participated actively in the deportations of the country's Jewish minority, and Nazi guilds were formed for various professional groups.
The verdict was harsh. After the German occupation ceased, up to 200,000 Dutch people were arrested, suspected of having collaborated with Nazi Germany. About half were found to be guilty. Many of those arrested were members of the NSB and it is not surprising that in this large group there would be a future attraction to new extreme

political organisations.[66]

The Fascist and national socialist forces disappeared from public political life with the defeat of Nazi Germany. Para-fascist movements were also banned.

SOPD (Stichting Oud Politieke Deliquenten) was the first neo-Nazi organisation which was formed immediately after the war. It consisted of individuals who had previously been involved with the former occupying power. The organisation officially only devoted itself to charity, for example for SS-veterans. After SOPD was classified as a threat to public order, the organisation was banned in 1952.

Several similar organisations and parties followed in the wake of SOPD, but they all appeared exclusively on the margins of Dutch society. The Supreme Court banned the party *NESB (Nationaal Europese Social Beweging)*, among others, in 1955 because it was considered to be harbouring intentions to re-establish the NSB and because the list of

[66] Bauer, & Dahlström(1982); Ignazi (2003), Bosworth (ed) (2009), Moore (2009)

members was basically made up exclusively of Nazis.

The *Farmers' Party (Endoparasites)* was formed in 1958. The party received 2.1% and three seats in the lower chamber in the election of 1963 and received 6.7% in the provincial elections of 1966-1967, more than in local elections, especially in Amsterdam. The success was especially due to the fact that the party had succeeded in uniting the country's small farmers, who felt that they were threatened in different ways by the government's agricultural policy, perhaps mostly in the form of taxation of land holdings. As is so often the case, the new party was an opportunity for people with extreme views to seek a platform.

The Farmers' Party was nationalistic, but not explicitly racist. The electoral success led to gaps in the organisation, however, and to fill all the new electoral positions, the party was forced to accept people with dubious political pasts. A member of the Farmers' Party, who was appointed as a member of the upper

chamber in 1966, soon had to resign when it was revealed that during the occupation, he had been writing in an anti-Semitic magazine and had threatened people with deportation. New investigations placed additional burdens on the Farmers' Party. When it transpired that former members of the NSB had managed to become party functionaries, it was not long before the party disintegrated.[67]

The radical 1970s

In the early 1970s, opposition to immigrants, particularly migrant workers, became an increasingly important issue in the Netherlands. The first modern xenophobic parties appeared on the political scene in connection with the local elections of 1974. Several of the groupings had authoritarian and totalitarian overtones, but they were led by people who were too young to have any actual experience of the Nazi occupation. In 1976, riots broke out in Schiedam, near Rotterdam, after a young Dutchman was stabbed by a

[67] Ignazi (2003); Moore (2009)

Turkish man. The party *NVU (Nederlandse Volk-Unie)* was formed in 1971 and it exploited the incident and spread flyers that further inflamed the situation. However, it has still never been proven that the party participated in the vicious riots that followed.

NVU did not achieve any political success in the general election. The party wanted to unite all the Flemish-speaking people in a large Dutch state, including the northern parts of Belgium, and expel people of other ethnic origins. The policy was strongly influenced by authoritarian, anti-parliamentary and corporatist ideologies. According to NVU, the national parliament would be selected according to corporatist principles. Law and order, security and xenophobia were also the party's message in the local elections.

At this time, there was legislation in the Netherlands that was intended to prevent so-called "treason-oriented political organisations". But the governments that ruled the country in the 1970s did not wish to make use of these laws. An attempt to apply

the law against NVU in 1978 failed when the prohibition that was laid down by the courts in Amsterdam, was rejected by the Supreme Court. As a result of this process, the NVU was prevented from participating in the local elections that year.

The case was an exception. The authorities generally preferred to act against individuals rather than organisations. The main reason was probably that banning parties would give the impression that the state was intolerant of dissent, which ultimately would be likely to lead to accusations that the state was undemocratic. Furthermore, there was probably a concern that a ban would give the movement even more publicity.

The authorities' decision not to take a case against NVU may in retrospect be seen as a successful strategy that prevented the party from taking advantage of the role of *outsider*. The strategy probably also contributed to the failure of NVU to receive support in the national elections of 1981. However, the authorities did not let the party leader Joop

Glimmerveen go free. He was fined for distributing racist and anti-Semitic literature and later he also received a short prison sentence.

In the late 1970s, a space developed in Dutch politics for a less extremist alternative to NVU. When the *Centre Party (Centrumpartij)* was formed in 1980 by former NVU members, it was partly with a new type of message. They distanced themselves from the extreme nationalism that NVU had become known for. The party, which claimed it was neither to the right or left, emphasised instead the importance of preserving the "Dutch culture". The party leader, Henry Brookman, argued that the Dutch government practised a form of apartheid that discriminated against the "white majority". Moreover, he argued that the influx of immigrants eroded society and thereby constituted a threat to Dutch culture.

However, Henry Brookman, who was a senior lecturer on the history of science, did not remain long on the political scene. When his employers, VU University Amsterdam, asked

him to choose between his job as a lecturer and a political career, Brookman disappeared from politics for good. The election results of 1981, when the Centre Party received only 0.1% of the vote, was an expected disappointment.

Although neither NVU nor the Centre Party demonstrably attracted any large groups of voters, the debate in the Dutch media was often focused on these extremist parties. The question of how they should be handled and addressed engaged many voters, and it was discussed whether the parties should be allowed to broadcast advertisements on television and radio.

In the Dutch parliamentary elections of 1982, the Centre Party succeeded in increasing its support, while NVU slowly faded away. After lengthy discussions, the Centre Party was granted the right, in common with all other political parties, to broadcast television commercials. It received 0.8% of the vote and won a seat in the lower chamber.

The party's electoral success led to a heated

debate in the Netherlands and many wondered if this represented a "fascist breakthrough". News media and political commentators said that the party's success was due to increased tensions between indigenous citizens and immigrants, the economic recession and the established parties' inability to offer alternatives.

Large demonstrations were organised when the leader of the Centre Party, Hans Janmaat, took his seat in parliament. At a later date, he was physically attacked. A bomb that detonated at Ajax football stadium in January 1983 was initially linked to a former bodyguard of Janmaat. The bodyguard was soon ruled out of the bomb investigation. The alleged links between the Centre Party and various violent attacks did not damage the party, however, and polls showed that its support actually increased, especially among young white males.

An event occurred in April 1983 that was to arouse strong feelings in the Netherlands. A man of Turkish origin shot and killed six men

in a coffee shop in the small town of Delft in the western part of the country. Before the fatal shootings, the perpetrator is said to have been harassed by one of the murdered men, who supposedly said that although the man of Turkish origin had Dutch citizenship, he would never be a real Dutchman.

The Centre Party was quick to try to exploit the killings politically in an attempt to gain increased support for a less liberal immigration policy. Social problems should be met with harsh laws and a stronger police force, it claimed. Immigration should be stopped and the borders closed. Anti-discrimination laws should be abolished in order to put an end to the oppression of the Dutch people, while at the same time families should be strengthened and the environment should be protected.

The Centre Party increased their support in the local elections that year. The party received 9% of the vote in Almere, a newly built suburban town just outside Amsterdam. Even before the murders in Delft, however,

the Centre Party was increasing its support. The party gained votes from, among others, native Dutch who had moved to Almere from Amsterdam's old quarter. However, one of the two elected councillors defected after only a month. The person claimed that the Centre Party had many former SS members who advocated abortion and sterilisation to curb population growth, especially the high birth rate among immigrants.

The defection attracted great attention and would have been expected to damage the Centre Party's reputation. Even so, the party managed to win 8% of voter support in the district council elections in Rotterdam in March 1983, and a total of seven seats in the local council elections (the party would have gained eight seats if it had enough candidates). The Centre Party's success led once again to demonstrations and party supporters were attacked on a number of occasions. One party member was kidnapped and tied to a concrete block on which the word "racist" was written.

In elections to the European Parliament in 1984, the Centre Party achieved its best result so far: 2.5%. The party's message was "Get the foreigners out of Europe". The same share of the votes in a national election would give the Centre Party 3-4 seats in the lower chamber, but in the elections to the EU Parliament the result was not sufficient to win any seats.

In retrospect, it turned out that 1984 was the peak of the Centre Party's success. The following years saw the party racked by internal conflicts and divisions. Arguments raged about the party's future direction, among other things. Some activists wanted the party to be radicalised more, while others such as the party leader Hans Janmaat were convinced that this would scare away voters and ultimately lead to the party being banned. Many party supporters also experienced that their sympathies caused problems at work, at home and among friends. The conflicts led to Hans Janmaat being expelled from the party leadership. Instead, he joined the *Centre Democrats Party (Centrumdemocraten).*

The extremist parties split

It was clear in the mid-1980s that the extreme forces in the Netherlands were divided. There were a total of four different groups: The Centre Democrats, who recruited members from the Centre Party, who in turn had lost many of its supporters, the remains of NVU and a group that supported Florentine Rost van Tonningen.[68] All groups represented a nationalist line, with more or less racist undertones. Furthermore, they all had members who advocated violence, but this was toned down to the outside world. The Centre Democrats, the Centre Party and the NVU did their utmost to appear respectable. Alleged historical links with fascists and Nazis, however, badly affected the party's reputation.

In 1986, the Centre Party was dissolved.

[68] Florentine Rost van Tonningen was married to Meinoud Rost van Tonningen, deputy leader of the Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging, NSB, and president of the Netherlands National Bank during the German occupation in World War II. After her husband's death, she became an outspoken advocate of national socialist ideas in public debate in the Netherlands. Florentine Rost van Tonningen died in 2007.

Internal divisions and disputes, combined with financial difficulties, eventually became too much for the party to manage. Just a week after the announcement that the party had ceased to exist, however, it reappeared like a phoenix from the ashes, now known as *Centre Party '86 (Centrumpartij '86)* or simply CP'86.

Hans Janmaat, now a member of the Centre Democrats, lost his seat in the lower chamber in the election of 1986, but regained it in the election three years later when his party received 0.9% of the vote. This time there were no demonstrations. The Centre Democrats and CP'86 had seats in a number of local councils from 1990.

Support for the extremist parties could be found primarily among disaffected native Dutch residents of inner-city areas in the country's major cities. They were voters who felt threatened by increasing levels of immigration. However, there was no question of active popular movements. The Centre Democrats and CP'86 together had no more

than 1,500 members. Of these, about 150 were active. None of the parties managed to gain any major successes at the local level, probably as a result of the low number of active members. The two parties' local organisations suffered from internal disputes and a surprising number of the elected representatives never attended the council meetings. It even happened that the elected representatives failed to attend the inauguration ceremonies after the elections.

The Netherlands experienced a high level of social unrest in the 1990s. In the mid-1990s, openly racist and anti-semitic groups appeared in the country. Along with German and Belgian neo-Nazis, these groups worked to develop the skinhead culture and promote neo-Nazi music.

It was also a time when extremist parties experienced increased support. In local elections in 1990, both the Centre Democrats and CP'86 increased their support. In the four largest cities, Amsterdam, the Hague, Rotterdam and Utrecht, the two parties

together received 5-7% of the vote. In the elected assemblies, the other parties boycotted and excluded the extremist parties' representatives from various committees. The established parties also restricted the extremist parties' access to the administrative services provided by the public administration.

Ahead of the local elections in March 1994, the Centre Democrats decided which cities they would contest. In the end, the party only had candidates in 43 of the more than 600 cities and municipalities. In retrospect, it turned out that this was a prudent strategy. By concentrating their efforts, the party managed to reach out to the voters. Where the party fielded candidates, they usually won sufficient support and altogether the Centre Democrats won 77 local mandates. CP'86 took eight seats in the 18 municipalities they contested. In the largest cities, their performance was even better. In Rotterdam, the extremist parties received a total of 13.7% of the vote. Looking only at those municipalities where the Centre

Democrats and CP'86 had candidates, they won 7.4% of the votes.

The election to the lower chamber in May 1994, however, was a setback for the Centre Democrats. The party received only 2.5% of the vote, which was enough for three seats. Internal scandals and attacks in the media undermined the possibilities of success. The results were even worse in the European Parliament elections in June 1994. The party received only about 1% of the vote.

The end of the beginning

Both the Centre Democrats and CP'86 lost ground rapidly. Most of the few remaining members and local representatives subsequently chose to leave the party. The local elections and second chamber elections in 1998 confirmed the decline. * A new election law would also prove particularly devastating for the parties. In order to register a candidate list, they would now need 30 eligible voters to sign the party's candidacy in the presence of local officials. Previously it had been sufficient to obtain ten signatures

collected in whatever way the party in question preferred.

The new law had clear consequences. The Centre Democrats only ran candidates in 22 constituencies. Only two of the party's 77 members were re-elected and CP'86, which was now renamed the *National Peoples' Party (Nationale Volkspartij, NVP)*, lost all their seats. In the elections to the second chamber in 1998, the Centre Democrats received only 0.6% of the votes and lost its three seats. In the European elections a year later, the party again received only 0.6%. Even the NVP lost support and suffered from internal disputes. Under heavy external pressure, including several court cases in which the party was accused of promoting racial hatred, the NVP finally collapsed. In November 1998 the party was forced to dissolve.

In retrospect, it can be seen that there were a number of reasons for the decline of the Centre Democrats and CP'86/NVP. A vocal and persistent anti-racist mobilisation probably contributed to the party's reputation

being degraded. Various legal interventions also made it difficult for the parties to function. Institutional boycotts and exclusions, internal personal conflicts within both parties and poor leadership were also direct causes of the collapse. Other established parties engaged in what can in practice be described as a "sanitary doctrine" against the extreme parties.[69] In this period, it was also considered highly unacceptable to discuss any negative aspects of increased immigration. Hans Janmaat was convicted of making statements about immigrants which in today's political debate, in the wake of the terrorist attacks in the U.S. on 11th September 2001, and the murders of Pim Fortuyn and Theo van Gogh, would be unlikely to lead to legal consequences. Developments abroad undeniably contribute to pushing the boundaries of what is considered acceptable.

There is good reason to believe that the Dutch tradition of long and protracted government negotiations and governments' inability to

[69] Moore (2009); Ignazi (2003)

hold on to power for a full term, have contributed to political fatigue among voters. There is no tradition for bloc politics and it is usually only after the election that the discussion commences about what form the new government will take. "Contract negotiations" between the parties that were most successful determine the composition of the new government. These negotiations tend to be protracted. After the election of 1977, it took seven months of negotiations before a new government could be established. Often, the parties simply agree on the lowest common denominator. This makes the coalition governments vulnerable, and on many occasions they have foundered on single, critical issues before their term of office was completed. There are several examples of this in the last decade alone.

- In May 1999, the government consisting of the Labour Party PvdA (Partij van de Arbeid), VVD and *D66 (Politieke Partij Democraten 66)* chose to step down after D66 had pushed a law proposal that would

mean that government decisions could be stopped through referendums. One of the representatives of the VVD unexpectedly voted against the bill in the Senate, which caused the government to collapse.

- In April 2002, the government consisting of PvdA and VVD collapsed when the much-publicised Srebrenica report was presented. The report laid much of the responsibility on the Dutch government and the country's UN troops for the horrific massacre that occurred in Bosnia in July 1995, when Bosnian Serb forces led by the commander Ratko Mladic captured Srebrenica and murdered 8,000 men and boys. Political vanity, misplaced goodwill and poor military leadership were considered to be behind the Dutch failure to prevent the massacre.
- Another government fell in October 2002, this time consisting of CDA, VVD and the Pim Fortuyn List *(Lijst Pim Fortuyn).* It was primarily internal disputes in the latter party that caused the government's

collapse.

- In June 2006, a government made up of CDA, VVD and D66 collapsed on the question of the handling of Ayaan Hirsi Ali's citizenship. D66 left the government after expressing deep dissatisfaction with the way the minister responsible for integration and immigration had handled the case.
- In February 2010, the government comprising CDA, PvdA and *CU (Christen Unie)* collapsed after the PvdA ministers resigned after much disagreement on the issue of the Dutch military presence in Afghanistan.
- On 23 April 2012, Prime Minister Mark Rutte submitted his resignation after the government made up of VVD and CDA failed to win the Party for Freedom's support for cuts in public spending.

In the early 1990s, the Dutch government had been forced to cut public spending on the country's retirement homes. In response to this, support increased for two explicitly

pensioners' parties prior to elections in May 1994. *General Elderly Alliance (Algemeen Ouderen Verbond)* received 3.6% of the vote and six seats in the second chamber, while the other, *Unie 55+*, which was formed back in 1992, received 0.9% and one seat.

It was not long until the first scandal emerged. A member of the General Elderly Alliance, Theo Hendriks, went his own way and proposed the establishment of emergency camps and "fine vessels" in order to send home all those who had been refused asylum. Hendriks was expelled.

Internal strife undermined the party. In the 1998 election, the party received only 0.6% of the vote. But it was not only newly formed parties that criticised the immigration policies. In the 1998 election, the current ruling party VVD went out and warned that the Netherlands would be flooded by refugees unless immigration was restricted. The Labour Party PvdA simultaneously lost left-wing voters to the *Green Left (Groen Links)* and the *Socialist Party (Socialistische Partij)* as a

result of an unpopular policy of cut-backs.

Enter Fortuyn

While NVU and Centre Democrats lost ground in the late 1990s, a new political party increased its support. *Leefbaar Rotterdam*, *LR*, was a response to a growing popular discontent with the immigrants in Rotterdam and the financial pressures on the education and welfare systems that resulted from increased immigration.

Traditionally, Rotterdam has been a stronghold for the PvdA. NVU and the Centre Democrats had certainly managed to win some support in Rotterdam, but when LR was formed, it was perceived as far more respectable and thus an interesting alternative for disaffected voters. LR was led by the charismatic and media-friendly Pim Fortuyn, who made himself known by warning in several books of an ongoing Islamisation of the West and warning that Dutch culture was under threat.

Fortuyn quickly grained popular support. The coalition government between the liberal VVD

and the social democratic PvdA, whose relationship was already marked by ideological conflicts, contributed to a growing weariness with the established parties among voters. The leader of the PvdA, Prime Minister Wim Kok, had a tendency to try to resolve all conflicts by having round-table meetings. The approach was perceived as a way to undermine the parliament, and ultimately to undermine democracy. Wim Kok was forced to resign and thereby left a vacuum in the PvdA. At this time, there was a growing feeling of dissatisfaction with developments in the country and in the world. The increasing globalisation was regarded as a threat to certain parts of Dutch society, something Fortuyn pointed out and exploited. The terrorist attacks in the USA on 11th September 2001 also contributed to creating a sense of unease.

Fortuyn had a clear message: The Netherlands had accepted as many immigrants as the country could manage and immigration must now be stopped. However, it was not the

immigrants as individuals he had anything against, but the lack of assimilation into Dutch society. He warned that many immigrants brought with them what he considered to be a reactionary Islamic culture that threatened the Netherlands and the country's traditions.

Fortuyn's entry onto the political scene was not without controversy. Although he was expelled from Leefbar Nederlands at a national level, he remained as the party's top candidate in the local elections in Rotterdam in 2002. It was also a successful election for LR, which received nearly 35% of the vote and 17 of the 45 available seats. The message throughout the campaign was that "the boat is full". The party's support was greatest among young unskilled males.[70]

Ahead of the parliamentary elections in the spring of 2002, Fortuyn decided in February of that year to draw up his own list, Lijst Pim Fortuyn (LPF). The list's main message was tougher measures against immigrants who refused to assimilate into Dutch society,

[70] Lundin (2002a)

tougher measures against crime, less bureaucracy, more teachers in schools and reduced waiting times in the healthcare sector. Fortuyn advocated neither deportation of immigrants nor closed borders. However, he wanted to severely restrict immigration from culturally distant parts of the world, mainly Muslim countries. In the final stages of the election campaign, Joao Varela, who was second on the LPF's list and an immigrant from Cape Verde, went out and said that he thought the Netherlands was full. He said that immigrants who had gained a foothold, including many businessmen who had built up their own businesses, regarded immigration as a growing problem that was creating barriers for those immigrants who were willing to blend into society. Pim Fortuyn also advocated that the first article of the Dutch constitution, which prohibits discrimination, should be repealed, because he was afraid that it might come into conflict with freedom of speech.

Before the parliamentary elections of 2002, the established parties were in crisis. Many

voters felt that none of them had been able to solve the problems that ordinary citizens were experiencing in their everyday lives. Voters also found it increasingly difficult to differentiate between the political alternatives, and the boundaries between traditional ideologies appeared to be increasingly blurred. During the election campaign, Pim Fortuyn held no public rallies. The strategy was to exclusively communicate through the media. Since both the CDA and VVD regarded LPF as a potential coalition partner in a centre-right coalition government, they chose to lie low and not portray Fortuyn as a racist or a "right-wing extremist", as is customary when new anti-immigration parties emerge on the political scene.

Nine days before the Dutch parliamentary elections of 2002, Pim Fortuyn was murdered in the street by animal rights activist Volkert van der Graaf. But since Fortuyn's political star was on the rise, the murder only meant that LPF received additional sympathy votes.

Even before the murder, there were signs of

internal discord in the LPF that threatened to undermine the party's future. It is claimed that the academic Pim Fortuyn had complained just days before his death about the lack of competency within the party. It has also been said that he was considering leaving politics, although that obviously could have been part of the internal party struggle.[71]

When the votes were counted, it was clear that the LPF, with 17% of the votes, had become the second largest party, a result which gave them 26 seats in Parliament and meant that the party could form a government with the Christian Democrat CDA and right-liberal VVD. Soon, however, cracks began to appear in the façade. LPF lacked a functioning organisation and had a glaring lack of qualified and experienced politicians who could shoulder the responsibility of government. However, this was not particularly surprising. LPF was Pim Fortuyn's creation and the list's candidates were hand-picked by him and had no experience of

[71] Lundin (2002b)

working together. The candidate list included a former beauty queen, but also businessmen, doctors and journalists. Although there were people who were successful in other professions, they had virtually no political experience. The most serious issue was the personal battles that took place between the party's own ministers. Several of them soon began to openly demand that the voters' fears of globalisation, European integration and immigration should be taken more seriously. Among the demands put forward was that immigrants should swear allegiance before the Dutch flag and learn the national anthem by heart.

Eventually, the situation became untenable. LPF fell apart due to internal discord and the coalition government only managed to run the country for three months. New elections were announced in January 2003. The voters' verdict was merciless. LPF only managed to get 5.6% of the vote and lost ten of its 18 seats. The decline continued in the election three years later, when the party received only 0.2%

of the vote and no seats. LPF officially ceased to exist on 1st January 2008. Since then there have been several attempts to draw political advantage in some way from the founder's continuing fame, but without success.

One of the contributing factors to the success of the Pim Fortuyn List was that it was perceived as an economically rational alternative. The messages about less bureaucracy, more freedom and more actors in the public sector attracted many voters. Political analysts also felt that Pim Fortuyn was significantly better at formulating the problems than he was at proposing workable solutions. The few solutions he presented were often contradictory and it sometimes occurred in debates that he changed his opinion on the spot. A prominent slogan in the election campaign of 2002 was that "16 million Dutchmen are enough".

Although the party's time in the spotlight was short, LPF has had a lasting impact on Dutch domestic politics. The assimilation ideal is now prominent in several parties. Shortly after

Fortuyn's death, during the election campaign in January 2003, almost all of the parties mentioned that it was necessary to punish immigrants who would not adapt to Dutch society and its culture. The social democratic PvdA demanded a reduction in immigration and wanted to allocate more money to strengthen the capacity of the country's prisons, while the liberal VVD for its part, wanted to restrict the possibilities to establish madrasas and argued that immigrants who have not learned Dutch should be forced to leave the country. VVD also claimed that "the boat is full."

Generally, the debate on immigration and integration issues hardened after Fortuyn's death. In Rotterdam, local politicians suggested that it should be possible to withdraw child benefit from immigrants whose children committed crimes or who otherwise failed to meet their parental responsibilities. According to a study based on in-depth interviews and which was featured in the newspaper *NRC Handelsblad* in

December 2002, the voters' policy positions were not based on right-wing or left-wing sympathies, but were primarily based on who they believed could provide the greatest possible security. The Dutch population seemed to want to have a kind of basic security that would protect them against the threats and dangers they perceived in the world: war, concerns about globalisation, a tougher mentality and increasing individualisation. In many ways, it was also a popular revolt against a political elite who had for a long time focused almost exclusively on "Europe" and its future.[72]

Since Lijst Pim Fortuyn disappeared from the political scene, political scientists and political analysts have tried to explain what kind of a party it was. It is true that LPF received some support from the constituencies where NVU and CD had previously been strong. But those votes constituted only a small portion of its support. Pim Fortuyn was subtle in his criticism and was rarely openly racist or anti-

[72] Bøe (2003)

semitic. For him, integration policy was not about race but about culture. In order to convince his harshest critics on this issue, Fortuyn nominated many candidates who were not ethnically Dutch for various local committees and also hired people of foreign descent in the party organisation.

Pim Fortuyn was a skilled communicator and confidently used the media to get his political messages across. In many respects, Pim Fortuyn was his party and it was also the person Fortuyn that many voters cast their vote for. Some observers have regarded this as a sign of problematic and historically stigmatised leader worship. But such an interpretation does not explain very much. In a world dominated by the media, an individual person will often attract support rather than the party and even the established parties increasingly choose to highlight their leaders. The need for a prominent candidate is particularly important for new party formations, something that we have witnessed in several countries in recent years.

The igniting spark

On 13th January 2004, a headmaster was killed in the Hague. The perpetrator, who was quickly arrested, was a student of Turkish descent. A wave of anger and protests swept across the country.

But the murder also revealed cracks in society. In addition to all secondary schools in the Netherlands observing a minute's silence a few days after the attack, about 30 of the young killer's friends demonstrated to support him. They believed that the country's news media had been wrong when the young boy was identified as a criminal. This naturally exasperated the agitated mood.

At the end of that year, another hideous act of violence occurred that would send shivers through the community. On 2nd November 2004, the film-maker Theo van Gogh was murdered very brutally in Amsterdam by a Dutch-Moroccan Muslim. The killer left a 5-page threatening message on a knife in van Gogh's dead body. In the message, the killer

threatened the Western world, Jews and the life of the Dutch-Somali feminist, Ayaan Hirsi Ali. The killer's message also referenced the Egyptian Muslim organisation, Takfir wal-Hijra, and its ideology. The murder of van Gogh made Hirsi Ali go into hiding and over the following months, the Dutch security service constantly moved her from place to place, both inside and outside the country.

Ayaan Hirsi Ali arrived in the Netherlands in 1992 as a political asylum-seeker. Originally from Somalia, she lived for many years with her family in Kenya. In her younger years, Hirsi Ali was a practising Muslim, but in 2002 she became an atheist. She was drawn to politics and often participated in public debates as a sharp critic of Islam. Hirsi Ali and Theo van Gogh produced a film together that criticised the treatment of women in Islamic societies. In January 2003, she was elected to the lower chamber for VVD. Hirsi Ali considered that the Dutch welfare state had turned a blind eye to the abuse that Muslim women and girls were subjected to in the

country and that society thereby contributed to their isolation and oppression. She also made some very strong statements about the prophet Muhammad.

In May 2006, things changed for Ayaan Hirsi Ali. Her Dutch citizenship was questioned after it emerged that she lied in 1992 to increase the chances of being granted asylum. The discovery caused a heated debate, and on 16th May of that year, Hirsi Ali decided to resign her seat in parliament. She explained that she had felt compelled to lie about her identity because of a forced marriage that she wanted to escape from. The question of whether she would keep her Dutch citizenship became a sensitive political issue. At the end of June 2006, the government announcement that she would be allowed to keep her passport. Shortly afterwards, Hirsi Ali left the Netherlands to settle in the United States.

Wilders - the new face of national chauvinism

Several of the events that occurred in the Netherlands in the first decade of the new millennium, turned out to be of major importance for the political development. They probably contributed in varying degrees to pave the way for new extreme and xenophobic forces. The man who would subsequently gain the greatest political benefit from these events was undeniably Geert Wilders. After leaving VVD in September 2004, dissatisfied with the party's positive attitude to Turkish membership of the EU, he has spent the past ten years building up a strong profile in Dutch domestic politics. Mainly the murders of Pim Fortuyn and Theo van Gogh, but also the events surrounding Ayaan Hirsi Ali, have helped to consolidate a negative view of Islam. After a couple of years as a political maverick in parliament, Wilders formed the Party for Freedom (Partij voor de Vrijheid) in February 2006.

Wilders had already become known to a wider audience in connection with the referendum on a new EU constitution in June 2005. Geert Wilders campaigned for a no vote, together with the Socialist Party SP, the two small Calvinist parties, CU and *SGP (Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij)* and what remained of the Pim Fortuyn List. Against all the odds, the no side won and the Netherlands became the second country after France that over a short space of time opposed the plans for a new EU treaty.

The result strengthened Geert Wilders. The field was now open before the elections to the lower chamber in 2006. The Party for Freedom campaigned on a policy that combined market liberalism, a strict stance against immigration and a defence of traditional Dutch culture. The Party for Freedom advocated tax cuts totalling €16 billion, greater decentralisation of the state apparatus, the abolition of the minimum wage and restricting, among other things, government grants to local authorities and

children's allowance.
In its election programme, the Party for Freedom declared that Judeo-Christian and humanist traditions should be regarded as the dominant culture in the Netherlands and that immigrants must adapt to this culture. The party declared that it was also willing to halt immigration from non-Western countries. It was also sceptical about any EU enlargement that would include Turkey. The Party for Freedom also opposed dual nationality for Dutch citizens and the construction of new mosques.
The incumbent government had been dominated by the Christian Democratic CDA, supported by liberal VVD and social-liberal D66. The coalition government had pushed through an ambitious programme of social and economic reforms that led, among other things, to tax cuts, changes in the social welfare system and investment in education. The government had also reduced immigration and introduced compulsory integration courses for all new arrivals.

The policy was not free from criticism, and the trade union movement and others had protested in several demonstrations in recent years. The election campaign came to be dominated by the handling of Ayaan Hirsi Ali's citizenship case. Another issue that received much media attention was the proposal to ban the burqa and niqab in public places.

The election was a major success for the Party for Freedom. Geert Wilders' Party managed to win 5.9% of the vote, which was enough for nine seats in the lower chamber. The newcomer thus became the fifth largest party in the assembly. The party's success did not translate into a seat at the cabinet table, however, and after the usual lengthy negotiations, it was clear that the CDA, PvdA and the Calvinist centrist party CU would govern the country.

Despite the electoral success, the Party for Freedom chose not to participate in the provincial elections of March 2007, which meant that it could not therefore achieve

representation in the upper chamber. Geert Wilders declared that there had not been sufficient time to prepare and that all resources had been used on the elections to the lower chamber in 2006. He assured voters, however, that the party intended to run in all elections organised in the country.

It would take until 2009 before it was once again time for the Party for Freedom to meet the voters. This time it was the Netherlands' 25 seats in the EU Parliament that were at stake. Many voters probably remembered Geert Wilders' stubborn resistance to the European Constitution in 2005. When the votes were counted, it was clear that the Party for Freedom had achieved 17% of the vote and had become the second largest party. The party gained four seats, as well as the new seat that the Netherlands was awarded under the Lisbon Treaty. The election results should be viewed in light of the fact that the turnout was very low, only 36.9%, or half of the turnout for the national parliamentary elections in 2006.

The big breakthrough

Local elections were held in the Netherlands in March 2010. The Party for Freedom chose to put forward candidates in two of the 394 municipalities that had declared elections, the Hague and Almere. Geert Wilders explained the decision not to run candidates in more constituencies with the difficulty of finding good candidates.

The local elections were nonetheless a great success for the Party for Freedom. In the Hague, they became the second largest party after the PvdA and in Almere the Party for Freedom became the largest party with 21% of the vote. With a total of 13,000 personal votes, Wilders himself was elected to the Hague's city council.

In Almere, however, the Party for Freedom's electoral success led to political uproar. The other parties simply united to prevent the Party for Freedom from gaining power. The Party for Freedom in Almere wanted, among other things, to establish a force to carry out street patrols to maintain law and order,

which was otherwise considered to be inadequate.

In local elections in March 2014, the Party for Freedom again only ran candidates in the Hague and Almere. Wilders had already declared in March 2013 that the decision was based on a desire to maintain peace within the party and consolidate the organisation.

In early 2010, Afghanistan was the issue on everyone's lips. The war against the Taliban seemed to be going badly and there were a growing number of soldiers being killed in the NATO-led force. The Netherlands was no exception. PvdA, who governed the country in coalition with CDA and CU, demanded that the Netherlands should withdraw their forces from Afghanistan. It was decided to call new elections after the government was unable to formulate a coherent position.

For Geert Wilders and the Party for Freedom, the news came as a godsend. Opinion polls had recently shown a sharp increase in support. A poll conducted by Synovate in February recorded the party's best ever

results, about 25%.

The Party for Freedom's election manifesto for 2010, "The Agenda of hope and optimism" was marked by a fierce criticism of immigration policy and the alleged influence of Islam in the Netherlands.[73] Opposition to Islam was also the initial point on the list of political messages. Islam, it was argued, could not contribute anything of value to Dutch society, but meant only sharia-fatalism, jihad terrorism and increased hatred against homosexuals and Jews.

The guarantee

The election in June 2010 was a great success for the Party for Freedom. The party increased its support to 15.4%. It was enough to become the third largest party and to achieve a place at the negotiating table when the next government was to be established. The Party for Freedom won over voters from all parts of the political spectrum. About 24% came from the CDA, 23% from SP, 17% from the PvdA,

[73] Partij voor Vrijheid (2010)

12% from the VVD and 6% from the rest. The Party for Freedom also attracted young voters and voters who normally didn't vote. Up to 18% of the party's voters in 2010 had not voted in the election four years earlier.

As VVD also increased its support, it was initially considered that they would form a government with the CDA, which had, however, lost half of its voters. The Party for Freedom was the closest to hand.

As usual, the negotiations were protracted. One of the major points of contention was the prospect of a possible increase in the retirement age. The Party for Freedom promised not to cooperate in raising the retirement age above 65. But they were forced to relent. This was a major symbolic issue.

A new government could finally be presented in October. The Party for Freedom, which did not receive any ministerial posts, became the guarantor for a centre-right minority government and gained support for some of its core issues. Among other things, agreement was reached on texts establishing that the EU

budget must be reformed and that the accounts of Member States' contributions must be more transparent. The programme for government also contained a requirement that the financial burden of responsibility between the then 27 member states must be balanced.

The Netherlands is one of the net contributors and tends to be dissatisfied with any increases in budget allocations. The three parties also agreed that the transfer of competence from the Member States to the EU had reached its limit for the foreseeable future, given the recently approved Lisbon Treaty. It was also agreed not to accept Romania and Bulgaria as members of the Schengen area as long as the countries failed to take a tough stand against corruption.

The social democratic parties, and especially the Christian democratic parties on the continent traditionally tend to be very cautious in their criticism of the EU system. Both the VVD and CDA would certainly have been able to reach some of these agreements

on their own, but it was probably because of the Party for Freedom that the texts were finally included in the programme for government.

In January 2010, Geert Wilders was once again in the political spotlight when criminal charges were brought against him for hate speech. The charges were based on his statements about Islam and Muslims. Wilders was quick to defend his views and claimed that the case was ultimately about the future of free speech in the Netherlands.

The trial quickly became a soap opera in the European media. Several changes of judges and the calling of several surprising witnesses, including Theo van Gogh's killer, featured prominently in the media coverage. The question of whether it was at all reasonable to prosecute Geert Wilders for his statements, and where the line should be drawn between freedom of expression and protection of the freedom of religion, was central to the discussion. Representatives of several extremist parties across Europe took up the

cause for Geert Wilders and defended his freedom of speech. At the end of June 2011, he was acquitted on all five counts of alleged verbal hate crimes. Wilders was believed to have criticised Islam as a religion, not Muslims as a group. This was not considered a criminal act. [74] Wilders does not always practice what he preaches. Despite the claim that the Muslim world should tolerate western freedom of expression and the expectation that he can say what he wants about Islam, he seems to find it difficult to handle criticism directed at him. In February 2011, the same day that he proposed that all those who are a nuisance in Dutch society should be rounded up in container camps, the radio station Vara published a caricature of the Party for Freedom's leader as a camp guard in the process of bringing a group of refugees to the "shower." When Wilders demanded that the caricature should immediately be removed from the radio station's website, the editors announced a contest to see who could draw

[74] Hinke (2011)

the best caricature of Geert Wilders.

An uncertain future for the Party for Freedom

The Party for Freedom's increased popularity seemed to initially remain intact. Unlike in 2007, the party decided to contest the provincial elections in spring 2011, and although its support decreased in percentage terms compared to the parliamentary elections of 2010, the change was marginal.

However, the role as a support party for the centre-right government, which it achieved by the successful 2010 election, was short-lived. In April 2012, the government stepped down after the Party for Freedom refused to agree on spending cuts totalling €16 billion which VVD and CDA had proposed in the budget for 2013. Geert Wilders claimed the measure would impede growth. In retrospect, the outcome was as expected. In the 2010 election campaign, the Party for Freedom had made comprehensive social commitments and had also promised lower taxes. They wanted

instead to cut back on international aid and the EU contribution. It was initially expected that the VVD and CDA would reach a compromise with Wilders. But the negotiations ended with a final decisive meeting. It is difficult to know for sure, but it is assumed that Geert Wilders saw an opportunity for a better relationship with his voters and prospective voters if he left the negotiations. The proposed cuts from the incumbent government were not popular and the Party for Freedom could go to the polls on a wave of protest.

The Party for Freedom's election manifesto of 2012, "Their Brussels, our Netherlands", was a mixture of opposition to the EU and criticism of immigration.[75] The party proposed that the Netherlands should not only leave the EU, but also EMU and Schengen. Instead, the country would apply for membership of EFTA. The role models would be Norway and Switzerland. The Party for Freedom justified its resistance to immigration by explaining

[75] Partij voor Vrijheid (2012)

that immigration would entail "more and more head scarves, more Islam, increased crime and poverty".
Otherwise, the manifesto was very similar to previous election programmes. This included the promise of lower taxes and less government bureaucracy. Among other things, the party calculated that a fifth of the state's civil service could be dismissed. According to the Party for Freedom, immigrants to the Netherlands would only have access to social benefits after ten years as a Dutch citizen. Unemployed immigrants would be deported and Dutch citizens with dual citizenship would be deprived of their voting rights. The Party for Freedom also proposed putting a stop to the immigration of people from Muslim countries. The list of measures against the Muslim population was even longer than this. The party also suggested, for example, that the Koran should be banned, there should be a freeze on the building of new mosques, there should be a general ban on mosques in the country's urban areas, minarets would be

banned and it would be forbidden to wear head scarves in government workplaces. Wilders' hatred of head scarves has a long history. In September 2009, he made a proposal demanding that a special tax should be imposed on Muslim head scarves.

The new elections in the autumn of 2012 were a disappointment for the Party for Freedom. Support for the party fell by a third, from 15.4% to 10.1%. Since they had caused the centre-right government to collapse, renewed government negotiations with the VVD were out of the question. The new government was comprised instead of VVD and the Labour Party PvdA. For a long time it seemed as though the socialist party SP would gain increased support as a result of their harsh criticism of the monetary union and the Party for Freedom would have a reasonable level of success with the same message. But the Party for Freedom lost more support in the election than the polls had predicted and SP also lost 0.1% of the vote. There are several explanations for the Party for Freedom's

electoral successes in recent years, with the exception of 2012. One of these concerns is the Netherlands' place in the world. The criticism of immigration and Islam, which certainly in itself has gained support among many voters, is not only a manifestation of xenophobia and in some cases direct racism, but also to a large extent reflects widespread concern for the future.

This form of dissatisfaction with the situation is not limited to the Netherlands, but can be found throughout Western Europe. The ongoing process of globalisation has continuously challenged established truths and cherished privileges. In order to maintain competitiveness and growth, and to keep pace with the rapidly growing economies, particularly in Asia, the ruling politicians feel compelled to adapt the welfare system. Many citizens in Western societies perceive events as a betrayal and their anger is channelled towards those people who are perceived to have done the least to deserve the state's care, i.e. immigrants and people from other

cultures.
Geert Wilders is well aware of this. The Party for Freedom's refusal to accept the centre-right government's proposed public spending cuts of EUR 16 billion meant that the party lost its role as a support party, but it may well contribute to the long-term strengthening of the party's credibility as a national defender of the welfare state and thus consolidate the party's role as the first choice for dissatisfied voters.
The Party for Freedom's principal competitor for the role as anti-elitism's foremost representative and for the votes of dissatisfied citizens seems primarily to be SP. In the 2006 election, SP managed to gain ground and achieved an election result of 16.6%, which was an increase of 10 percentage points in relation to the previous parliamentary election. The Party for Freedom's large increase in support in the 2010 election meant, however, that protest votes went to Geert Wilders instead. Support for SP dropped to a more modest 9.8%. In new elections held

in 2012, the Party for Freedom lost a third of its voters, while SP remained at roughly the same level. Time will tell which of the parties will prevail.

Unlike in several other countries, the Party for Freedom has never been subjected to any "sanitary doctrine". Even the Pim Fortuyn List avoided being frozen out, at least by the centre-right parties. The Dutch centre-right parties have refrained from labelling Wilders as "extreme right-wing", probably for the simple reason that they do not want the Party for Freedom to be seen as an extreme variant of a too far-reaching, centre-right politics. But the decision may also be based on a strategic trade-off. With growing support among voters, all parties will sooner or later be forced to deal with the changing political landscape and with Geert Wilders' real influence. Ever since World War II, the Netherlands has been accustomed to broadly based government coalitions spanning the traditional blocks.

Whether the Party for Freedom is to the right or left of the centre of Dutch politics is a

constant topic of debate. Of course, the party is extreme from the perspective of its anti-Muslim line and attitude towards human rights. Of that there is no doubt. Geert Wilders certainly came from the right-liberal VVD, but the question is what ideological conviction he holds today. Perhaps the simple answer is that in true populist style, he is content to take positions on issues where he sees a potential for growth in opinion polls. According to several researchers, the Party for Freedom is a mix of right and left. Studies conducted by Paul Lucardie along with his colleagues at the University of Groningen show that the party combines traditional liberal positions, in the sense of criticism against state interventionism and freedom for business, with social security policies that can be described as left or social democratic. The policy, which can be described as "red Tory" or social conservative, is not easy to classify along the usual left-right scale.[76]

An important explanation for why the Centre

[76] E-mail correspondence with Paul Lucardie, 3 February 2014.

Democrats and the Centre Party, which were the predecessors of the Party for Freedom in the 1980s and 1990s, never managed to establish themselves, can be found in the targeted measures implemented by the state. In addition to internal personal conflicts and a persistent anti-racist mobilisation, the parties' eventual collapse was also brought about by legal interventions, institutional boycotts and exclusions.

The Party for Freedom's chances of retaining a place on the domestic political scene will obviously depend on the extent to which their concerns come to dominate events and public debate. Assuming that globalisation continues to challenge the nation-state, then there will continue to be fertile ground for the Party for Freedom and similar movements. Whether the Party for Freedom will remain intact as a party, however, is largely an organisational issue. There is a vital need for a natural regeneration of representatives.

The Party for Freedom is namely in the truest sense synonymous with its founder and

leader, Geert Wilders. The "Grupp Wilders" Foundation, where Geert Wilders is the sole member, was founded in February 2006. The Party for Freedom is the name used externally, but there is no formal party organisation, only an informal network of volunteers. So there are no members, no leadership outside of the parliamentary group, no local branches and no grass roots activities. The finances consist of donations, since there are no membership fees. In this way, Wilders has also ensured protection from internal opposition, conflict, and possible infiltration by neo-Nazi groups.[77] The party is the only party in the Dutch parliament that is organised in this way.

The Party for Freedom believes that taxpayers should not be forced to fund parties they do not support and it has therefore rejected the state aid to which the party is entitled in connection with its seats in the national

[77] E-mail correspondence with Paul Lucardie, 24 March 2011 and Erik Meijer, former member of Socialistische Partij in the EU Parliament, 12 April 2011.

parliament. Instead, it relies on donations. It is unclear who donates its money, however, since the accounts have not been made public. According to one of the most prominent defectors from the Party for Freedom, Hero Brinkman, the party receives a large part of its income from foreign lobby groups. According to the Reuters news agency, the Middle East Forum paid Geert Wilders' legal costs for the high profile court case a few years ago. It is also known that the American conservative writer, David Horowitz, paid a high fee to Wilders for two talks he held in the United States.[78]

So far, the strong focus on Geert Wilders as a person has only been a benefit to the party. Wilders lives under constant threat and has a bodyguard by his side at all times. That is the high price he pays for his commitment, but it is also a factor that strongly contributes to creating a martyr role for him.

Conditions will change, however, as the party grows and gains more representatives. In the

[78] Meeus & Valk (2010)

elections to the lower chamber in June 2010, the party increased its number of seats from 9 to 24, and then fell back to 15 in the elections to the lower chamber in September 2012. Since June 2011, the party has 10 seats in the upper chamber and since March 2011 it has 69 seats in the country's 12 provincial assemblies. In June 2009, the party won four seats in the EU parliament and gained another seat in December 2011 when the Dutch representation was increased by one seat in accordance with the Lisbon Treaty. Altogether, this means that on paper at least, the party has 99 seats in the elected assemblies, not counting the local mandates, whose numbers are insignificant at present. Defecting and excluded members have obviously reduced the number of elected representatives from the party. There are some among the defectors who have launched new parties. None of these has had any success so far. There are those who claim that Wilders, as a result of elections held in 2012, had an opportunity to kill two birds with one

stone and do away with an internal competitor. Hero Brinkman, a former police officer from Amsterdam, was a member of the lower chamber for the Party for Freedom since 2006. He was good at getting media attention and soon created his own political platform. Brinkman also had views on the party's internal organisation. He wanted to move away from "the supporters club" around Wilders and instead build up a serious, functioning party organisation with local organisations, active members and a youth organisation. It was the only way for the party to survive over time, said Brinkman. But Brinkman did not win enough support in the party for his ideas. In March 2012, just before the government crisis, he left the Party for Freedom. However, he declared that he would continue to support the government for which his mandate was crucial in order to maintain its majority. But the government was forced to resign when Geert Wilders withdrew his support in April of that year. Brinkman started his own party, Democratisch Politics

Keerpunkt (Democratic Political Turning Point), but due to the rapidly approaching election, Brinkman failed to get off to a good start. When the election results were added up, his party received only 0.1% of the vote.[79] Regardless of whether the party's representatives strengthen or weaken the party, any further development will require a new organisation. It is a difficult task for Wilders to hold together all these elected representatives and their officials. It may be easy in times of success, but cracks soon begin to appear when there are conflicts between members and in connection with any future electoral setbacks. So far, Wilders has managed to hold the Party for Freedom together by individual representatives leaving the party or being excluded. The drop in support in the elections to the lower chamber in 2012 appears at the time of writing to have been only a temporary setback.

[79] E-mail correspondence with Erik Meijer, former member of the SP in the EU Parliament, 17 & 19 February 2014.

Denmark - to the defence of the welfare state

The parliamentary election in September 2011 marked the end of 10 years of centre-right minority rule. After an election campaign dominated by questions about the economy, employment and growth that was conducted at the same time as the European debt crisis and the popular demonstrations that followed in its wake were dominating the newspaper headlines, it was clear that Denmark would have a government led by the Social Democrats.

But it was not only Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen (Venstre) who had to step aside when the leader of the Social Democrats, Helle Thorning-Schmidt, entered Christiansborg. The change of government meant that the Danish People's Party's (Dansk Folkeparti) role as a support party was over and Pia Kjærsgaard had to resign herself to the fact

that the role of king-maker now belongs to Margrethe Vestager, the leader of the Danish Social Liberal Party (Radikale Venstre).
However, the election defeat did not mark the end of the Danish People's Party. On the contrary. During their ten years in the corridors of power, the party and its representatives gained valuable experience and demonstrated their ability to govern. Although the party leadership had felt compelled to exclude individual members who expressed xenophobic and directly racist opinions, they had managed to achieve growth internally. In September 2012, the party also dealt with one of the most difficult challenges for a new party, when its founder, Pia Kjærsgaard, after 17 years as party chairman, passed the leadership role to the long-time heir apparent, Kristian Dahl Thulesen.

Public opinion looks for a party

The Danish People's Party was formed in 1995. The founders were Pia Kjærsgaard, Kristian Thulesen Dahl, Poul Nødgaard and

Ole Donner, all of whom were until then members of parliament for the Progress Party (Fremskridtspartiet). The formation of the party was the culmination of a nearly decade-long power struggle, primarily between Pia Kjærsgaard and Mogens Glistrup, the party's founder. The arrival of the Danish People's Party was also the beginning of the end for the Progress Party.

The Progress Party's story began more than two decades earlier, in 1972, at a restaurant in the Tivoli Gardens park in central Copenhagen. Mogens Glistrup, who was a tax lawyer by profession, had shaken up the country two years earlier when he stated on live television that for ideological reasons he did not pay tax. The message being broadcast to the Danish electorate by Glistrup and the Progress Party was crystal clear. The Danish welfare state had grown beyond what was reasonable and now it was time to tighten our belts.

The parliamentary elections of 1973, now popularly referred to as the *landslide election*,

resulted in no less than five new parties winning seats in the country's highest decision-making assembly, including the Central Democrats (Centrumdemokraterne) and the Christian Peoples Party (Kristelig Folkeparti). With promises of drastic cut-backs in the public sector, the abolition of the Danish armed forces and greatly reduced taxes, the Progress Party won 15.9% of the votes, a result that was enough to give them 28 seats.

The Progress Party stood for something new and voters flocked to it from all directions. In particular, traditional labour voters were attracted and from the 1980s onwards, the Progress Party was the party with the highest proportion of workers among its voters.[80]

However, the Progress Party's success was not long lasting. Uncertainty was caused by a lack of experience among the party's members of parliament and a weak party organisation with poor support across Denmark. The party also suffered immediately from internal tensions

[80] Meier Carlsen (2009)

and personal disputes.

When the Danish People's Party took its place in the political arena, it appeared at first to be a softer alternative to the Progress Party, which from the mid-1980s had increasingly gone in the direction of being critical of immigration. The ten point list that Pia Kjærsgaard and the other defectors presented contained demands for stricter immigration policies, but was dominated by demands for a stricter crime policy, increased resources for the elderly and proposed changes to healthcare policy.[81]

The Danish People's Party's first meeting with the Danish electorate was in connection with the municipal and regional elections in 1997. Opinion polls at the time signalled that their support was increasing. Although the party was relatively newly formed, the party leadership had managed to find enough local candidates to contest 142 of the country's 275 municipalities. The original 10-point list had now been refined and the party took a clear

[81] Ibid., p. 151.

position against the current immigration policy. In a nationwide campaign during the spring, they criticised the multi-ethnic society under the slogan "Vote Danish!" The message was attractive to many voters and the election was a success for the Danish People's Party. With 6.8% of the total vote, the party won seats in both the municipal and regional councils. In total, the newcomers managed to win eight deputy chairmanships. Support for the party existed across the country.

The success in the local election in 1997 strengthened the party and, naturally, expectations were high for the parliamentary elections a year later. The traditional battle between the centre-right Danish Liberal Party (Venstre) and the Conservative Party on the right, and mainly the Social Democrats on the left, was somewhat overshadowed by the rapid progress of the newcomers. The development left no one untouched. Paradoxically, when the Social Democratic prime minister, Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, pointed out during the election campaign that he regarded the Danish

People's Party as the Social Democrat's main opponents and implicitly expressed the hope that the party would be isolated, its place in the political arena was guaranteed.[82]

The parliamentary elections were a success for the Danish People's Party. Although it is impossible to quantify the impact of Nyrup Rasmussen's highly publicised statement, 1998 was the year when the Danish People's Party became known to a wider audience. 7.4% of the vote was enough for 13 seats in the parliament. In hindsight, it is easy to understand why the Social Democrats were anxious about the advance of Danish People's Party. Many of those who had faithfully voted for the Social Democrats in the past, now felt alienated by the party's development since the 1970s and 1980s and they chose to vote for the new party in 1998. Despite this, the Social Democrats succeeded in holding onto power, albeit by a small margin, in coalition with the Danish Social-Liberal Party.

Nyrup Rasmussen remained critical of the

[82] Ibid.

Danish People's Party and in his opening speech to parliament in 1999, he stated that the newcomer could never expect to be considered respectable, a statement which he was later fiercely criticised for, mostly because it could be interpreted to mean that he rejected the voters' free choice.[83]

Although the elections were over, the Danish People's Party continued campaigning. Under the slogan, "Security now - violence out of Denmark", the party sought to draw attention to the violence in Danish society throughout the autumn of 1998. The campaign, from the political statements of the party's representatives to the distribution of leaflets in the streets, led to an extensive debate that resulted in several other parties rallying behind the Danish People's Party's demands for tougher prison sentences.[84]

In the European debate, the Danish People's Party has become better known for their criticism of immigration policy than their

[83] Meier Carlsen (2010)

[84] Meier Carlsen (2009)

support for traditional welfare policies. There is a widespread perception that the Danish People's Party has contributed to making the Danish immigration policy more restrictive in the 2000s. As we shall see, this is a simplified description. It is reasonable to assume that the party pushed hard to make an impact regarding their special concerns. At the same time, we should not forget that Anders Fogh Rasmussen, prime minister from 2001 to 2009, had been a driving force in efforts to toughen up his party's policies in the area, even before he took over as leader of the Liberal Party in 1998.

It is also important to distinguish between parties and public opinion. On the issue of immigration, it is essential to understand developments over the past ten years. Indeed, there has been a very strong and critical opinion of immigration in Denmark since the 1980s. As early as 1987, before the parliamentary elections, the researchers at the Danish public opinion institutes were aware that an overwhelming majority of the Danish

electorate was critical of the prevailing immigration and integration policies. A full 80% of those asked said that the possibilities for immigrants and refugees to settle in Denmark should be restricted.[85]

The established parties, however, chose to pay no attention. Questions about immigration did not receive any attention in public debate. During the last years of the 1980s and early 1990s, there was virtually no debate at all about immigration and refugee policy. The Social Democrats in particular had no internal debate on the issue. There were evident concerns about where the debate on immigration might lead. At the same time, the silence could not last forever. The gap between voters' preferences and the politicians' prioritised issues gradually created a gap that new political forces would fill. In the elections to the parliament in 1987, it was the Progress Party that successfully exploited the growing popular discontent with the current immigration policy. Fourteen years later, the

[85] Meier Carlsen (2010), p. 196

same role was played by the Danish People's Party.

The Danish People's Party vouches for the citizens

The beginning of the 2000s was a time of change in Denmark. After eleven years with a government led by the Social Democrats, there were many voters who wanted renewal. The Danish centre-right liberals saw the potential prior to the election of 2001. Anders Fogh Rasmussen, who at the time was the newly appointed leader of the Danish Liberal Party, was not sure of achieving an absolute majority. His promise to cooperate with the Danish People's Party if it was necessary in order to form a government would mean a dramatic shift in Danish politics.[86]

It was not just the promise of cooperation after the election that would play into the hands of the Danish People's Party. Anders Fogh Rasmussen had declared early that he intended to adjust the party's immigration and

[86] Ibid., p. 131.

refugee policy in a more restrictive direction. One of the Danish Liberal Party's election posters caused an outcry. The poster, which depicted a group of young people of different ethnicity on the steps of the court where they had been prosecuted and sentenced for the gang rape of a young Danish girl, was perceived as an expression of the party's wish to see tougher measures against immigrants.[87] During Poul Nyrup Rasmussen's time as party leader of the Social Democrats, there had hardly been any discussion in the party about immigration and integration. When the questions were now placed on the political agenda, the labour party experienced internal divisions.[88]

The election was announced in November 2001, just a few months after the devastating terrorist attacks in the U.S., and immigration and refugee policy was to play a crucial role in the entire election campaign. When the votes had been counted, the Danish People's Party

[87] Ibid., p. 160–161

[88] Larsen (2003)

had received 12%. As the leader of Denmark's now third largest party, Pia Kjærsgaard was invited to sit in on the government negotiations with the Danish Liberal Party and the Conservative Party. The result was a centre-right minority government with the support of the Danish People's Party. There were therefore no ministerial posts for the newcomer, but they would have an influence on the policies pursued.

Anders Fogh Rasmussen's promise of a more restrictive immigration and refugee policy led to the parliament deciding in the summer of 2002 to reduce the number of immigrants that Denmark would accept. Foreigners would only be granted asylum in the country when Denmark was forced to grant it by international treaties and conventions. The extensive rule changes were immediately criticised harshly by the opposition, but the UN and the Council of Europe also expressed dissatisfaction. The centre-right government did not waiver, however, and it was not long before leading Social Democrats softened their

criticism. Researchers have argued that the Social Democrats were under pressure because the Danish People's Party were encroaching on their traditional social democratic constituencies and that the party therefore had to make concessions to the newcomer's demands for tighter immigration policies, including making room for more critical voices in their own ranks at the local level.[89]

On everyone's lips

The centre-right minority government, with the support of the Danish People's Party, served its full term of office and in the 2005 elections the coalition was given a renewed mandate. This time Pia Kjærsgaard's party received 13.3% of the vote. In the 2007 elections, the party's support increased to 13.8%. For the past 10 years, the Danish People's Party has purposefully endeavoured to become a party as any other. The party's cooperation with the Danish Liberal Party and

[89] Schierup (1993)

the Conservative Party can hardly be overestimated, and has taught the party's representatives how the parliament works. By supporting all the major agreements of the centre-right government, including the annual negotiations on the state budget, the newcomer has established itself and has been able to maintain the image of the party as pragmatic and responsible.

Criticism of the Danish People's Party has at times been harsh and the party's immigration policy has often been the target. The centre-right minority government's decision shortly after the parliamentary election in 2001 to push through changes in the asylum law and the rules for family reunification has been considered a result of the influence of the Danish People's Party.

At the same time, it is important to remember that the Danish People's Party is a relatively small party. Despite its considerable impact in the media, the party has so far been unable to win more than about 14% of the Danish vote. It has not prevented other parties from

partially adapting their policies, including the Social Democrats, who have tightened their immigration and integration policies. Shortly after the 2001 election, the then newly elected party leader, Mogens Lykketoft, described the centre-right government's immigration policy as admittedly "harsh" but also "fair". His successor, Helle Thorning-Schmidt, who was elected in 2005, secured the post of party leader only after having endorsed the government's restrictive immigration policies and affirmed that the number of immigrants is important.[90] There was no indication after the Social Democrats' victory in the parliamentary elections in 2011 that the party was contemplating any major changes to the Danish immigration policy.

The Danish Liberal Party, but also the Conservative Party, has changed their immigration policy over the past decade. The changes have not been without problems and both of the parties have suffered from internal frictions. In early 2010, a network of

[90] Meier Carlsen (2010), p. 169

Conservative Party members was formed that believed that the party's attempt to match Pia Kjærsgaard should be abandoned. Seven key representatives demanded a new approach to immigration. "We are an informal network of people, who feel that we should no longer compete with the Danish People's Party on who can come down hardest on Muslims", said Peter Norsk.

In recent years, the left-wing Socialist People's Party has moved closer to the Danish People's Party's restrictive immigration policy. In connection with the unrest in Copenhagen in the spring of 2008, when groups of young people of foreign origin burned cars and houses, the party leader Villy Søvndal was very critical of the Islamist organisation Hizb ut Tahir, saying that groups advocating sharia law and the establishment of a Caliphate had no business being in Denmark. Søvndal's statement attracted considerable media interest and in subsequent polls, support for his party increased dramatically.[91]

[91] Meier Carlsen (2010), p. 219

The Danish People's Party has been a successful campaign party since its entry into parliament. Poster and advertising campaigns have been a common feature, even between election campaigns. Ahead of the parliamentary election of 2005, a campaign was carried out called "Fresh wind across the country". The project, which began back in December 2004 and lasted until polling day on 8 February 2005, was intended to present the party as a new and spirited alternative in Danish politics. Senior figures such as Pia Kjærsgaard, Peter Skaarup and Kristian Thulesen Dahl all travelled around the country and managed to get a great deal of media attention through local events and appearances,.

The campaign before the parliamentary elections in November 2007 had a major impact. Like other parties, the Danish People's Party produced a short election film which was broadcast by the Danish Broadcasting Corporation (the Danish national radio and television broadcaster). The film showed

warm and cheerful image sequences from Denmark: happy children, wheat fields, the Danish flag, holiday homes by the sea and so on. Viewers were informed that the Danish People's Party had helped to bring Denmark back on course after the "paradigm shift" in connection with the terrorist attacks of 2001. The scenography shifted dramatically at the end of the film. The idyllic landscape motifs were replaced by a film sequence showing the second aircraft crashing into the World Trade Centre on that fateful morning in 2001, followed by images of angry protesters in the Middle East in the process of burning the Danish flag, the Dannebrog.[92]

In spring 2008, it was time for a new initiative. The Danish People's Party carried out a campaign which called for Muslim headgear to be banned in public places. The party advertised with an image of a burqa-clad woman holding the sword of justice with scales. The Danish People's Party had reacted negatively to a decision by the Danish Judges'

[92] Jøker Bjerre (2009),

Association [Den Danske Dommerforening] which suggested that people working in the courts would be allowed to wear Muslim headgear in the courtroom. The advertisement aroused strong criticism and the Minister for Integration in the centre-right government, Birthe Rønn Hornbech, (Danish Liberal Party), described the Danish People's Party as "fanatically anti-Muslim" in a newspaper column. [93] Paradoxically, the government simultaneously accommodated the Danish People's Party. A hastily established investigation proposed that judges would henceforth be prohibited from wearing religious symbols or costumes. Based on the investigation, a law was passed by a large majority in parliament after the Social Democrats had chosen to support the proposal.

Before the election in 2011, it was again time for a new initiative. Several very strident advertising campaigns were rolled out across Denmark. In addition to individual adverts

[93] Meier Carlsen (2010), p. 177

criticising the Social Democrats and the Socialist People's Party for their proposal for road tolls around Copenhagen, the overall message was that the Danish People's Party was the guarantor of security and calm. Mild close-ups of the faces of party representatives were combined with pointed texts: "Kjærsgaard or chaos. Vote Danish People's Party" and "We trust. Especially the Danes".

The Danish People's Party has also been active in the production of various publications, from books to song pamphlets. On two occasions, the party has even published a version of the Danish Constitution complete with illustrations, historical curiosities and a glossary.

Like other parties, the Danish People's Party has had its fair share of internal tensions and personal struggles over the years. Aware of the importance of cohesion, the leadership has always been quick to act when members have been accused of racist remarks. This has led to the Danish People's Party often being criticised for being a top-down party with a

low tolerance of, and limited space for, internal criticism.[94]

An incident in the late summer of 2006 is instructive. A reporter at the newspaper *Ekstra Bladet* telephoned around to local party representatives and pretended to be a young student interested in applying for membership. The reporter asked if it would be seen as an obstacle if he had or previously had sympathies with the ultra-nationalist and extreme anti-immigrant Danish front or neo-Nazi DNSB. Half of the representatives asked did not think this was appropriate, while the other half thought it was up to the individual if he or she wanted to be connected to these organisations. The Danish People's Party leadership, headed by Peter Skaarup, acted quickly and shortly afterwards he expelled the nine representatives involved. Commenting on the Danish Broadcasting Corporation, Peter Skaarup distanced himself from his colleagues:

We simply do not have room for this kind of

[94] Ibid., p. 156.

thing in the Danish People's Party. Racist, extremist and undemocratic views are contrary to everything that is Danish and therefore also contrary to the Danish People's Party.[95]

Another notable incident occurred in autumn 2006. The member A.C. Winther Hansen was expelled from the Party in September/October after publicly calling for greater openness in the party. Over the years, several of the party's members of parliament have also left the party and continued as independent MPs.

The party leadership has also been careful to exclude people with connections to various extreme groups. A total of 19 members of Dansk Forum were expelled from the Danish People's Party in 1999 after the leadership accused them of harbouring Nazi sympathies. The party's spokesperson on education and culture, Louise Frevert, was expelled in 2005 after she, in her blog, likened Muslims to cancer cells that should be subjected to radiotherapy or be removed surgically. Frevert

[95] Danish Broadcasting Corporation (2006)

denied the allegations and claimed that it was her assistant who wrote the article.

The party leadership acted similarly on a number of occasions and between August 1999 and September 2007, a total of 55 members were excluded as a result of making racist remarks, calling for greater transparency in the party or criticising the leadership.[96]

Although the Danish People's Party is regularly singled out as a party with racist views, they often win their lawsuits. In 1998, the writer Lars Bonnevie was sentenced and convicted for calling Kjærsgaard "openly racist".[97]

But the Danish People's Party has not only lost representatives. The party has also managed to attract people from other parties. In March 2010, Finn Rudaizky, who had represented the Social Democrats in Copenhagen for 12 years, announced that he would stand as a parliamentary candidate for the Danish

[96] Meier Carlsen (2010), p. 157-158

[97] Ibid., p. 159.

People's Party for Elsinore. Rudaizky left the Social Democratic Party in 2005 and became a member of the Danish People's Party in 2008.[98] In March 2010, the Danish People's Party also had their first parliamentary candidates with immigrant backgrounds. Yvette Espersen, born in the UK, announced that she was the party's candidate in Vordingborg on Zealand.[99]

National chauvinism on the agenda

The party's current working programme was adopted in September 2009.[100] The document, which supplements the programme of principles, maps out the party's goals in a number of policy issues as a guide for representatives in their daily work. A review of the programme presents a picture of how the party regards several key issues.

The preamble states that the party stands for common values and shared responsibility, at a

[98] Ritzau (2010a)

[99] Ritzau (2010b)

[100] Danish People's Party (2009)

time when many traditional values are under attack. The debate that followed the publication of the so-called Muhammad cartoons in September 2005 is regarded as decisive proof that Denmark's freedom, and by extension the whole of Western civilisation, is threatened by strong fundamentalist forces.
The Danish People's Party explains that Danish society is based on a set of values: liberty, equality, liberalism, tolerance, diligence and personal responsibility. It is suggested that this is in contrast to what Islam stands for. It is claimed that imams prevent Muslims from integrating into Denmark and one passage mentions that parts of the larger cities' suburbs are ghettos.[101] As a result of immigration, the illiteracy rate in the country has increased and many of those who come from "non-Western" countries are said to be far more violent and prone to commit crime than native Danes. The assimilation ideal is

[101] The term ghetto is also used by the established news media, however, to describe more than thirty socially and economically disadvantaged suburbs around the major Danish cities.

evident. "It is the foreigners who must adapt to Denmark and the Danes - not the other way round" it says.

Constitutional issues

The Danish People's Party is a supporter of the monarchy and says that it wants to work to strengthen the Kingdom of Denmark. The party upholds the Danish constitution, and thus parliamentary rule. The party would allow for more direct democracy, however, and would increase opportunities for citizens to make their voices heard in guiding referendums, both locally and nationally. If at least 50,000 voters demand it, any question would be subject to a referendum.

The party is divided on the issue of centralised versus decentralised power. On the one hand, the party wishes to protect local self-government and opposes government micro-management. On the other hand, the Danish People's Party want to see minimum standards in social areas, ensuring identical public services for all citizens, regardless of where they live in the country. The Danish

People's Party also wants to preserve, strengthen and develop "the national community" with Greenland and the Faroe Islands. At the same time, the party would look positively on requests from Greenland and the Faroe Islands for greater autonomy, although such a development would have to be linked to decreased financial support from the Danish state.

Religion

The Danish People's Party also wishes to defend the constitutional role of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The party is in favour of religious freedom, but does not want any "religious parity". Everyone can belong to the religion of their choice, but it is only the Evangelical Lutheran Church that should be eligible for financial support from the state. The party believes that Islam has created sectarian environments, without solidarity with Danish society and therefore should not be supported. According to the Danish People's Party, "Denmark is the Danes' country" and the party says it will oppose any

attempt to create a multicultural and multi-ethnic society. A multi-ethnic society entails a risk that anti-development, reactionary cultures will break down the hitherto stable and homogeneous Danish society. The party does not reject immigration outright, but believes that too many new people have entered the country in recent decades. Muslims are regarded as particularly difficult to integrate.

Justice and crime policy

The Danish People's Party wants the police to be more visible on the streets. It also wants to increase the resources available to the police intelligence services in order for them to be proactive in the fight against terrorism. Cross-border police cooperation is welcomed, but the party does not wish to see a centralised European police organisation. The Danish People's Party calls for more prisons and custodial institutions. Penalties should also become stricter and the criminal age limit should be lowered to 12 years, except for sexual offences, where the age limit to be

prosecuted and convicted should continue to be 15. It should be possible for persons convicted of violent crimes or paedophilia to be immediately banned from clubhouses and various forms of sports facilities.

Welfare policy

A large part of the Danish People's Party's opposition to immigration seems to be based on a fear that the common, tax-funded welfare systems are not compatible with generous levels of immigration. The party was previously critical of the centre-right government's proposed changes to the pension system, especially regarding the changed rules for the early retirement scheme. The Danish People's Party wants society to show "greater gratitude" towards the older generation "who helped make this country what it is". More resources should therefore be allocated for care for the elderly. The party is sceptical of privatisation of elderly care facilities. In order to achieve a higher standard, the party wants instead to provide minimum levels of service in municipal care of

the elderly. However, the party is in favour of the liberalisation of the Danish pharmacy market and welcomes the free right of establishment. In the long term, the Danish People's Party wants public transport to be free for pensioners.

Globalisation

The Danish People's Party is deeply critical of globalisation and it considers that the free market forces have had too much influence. The reason is, according to the party, that there is an increasing absence of an overarching policy decision. The Danish People's Party wants Denmark, both nationally and through international contacts, to work against the "harmful effects of globalisation". The party wants to reduce the pace of speculation-related capital movements because they increase economic instability, especially in the vulnerable countries. The party also wishes to prevent economically-contingent population movements, which means that the most vulnerable people in industrialised countries lose their jobs as a

result of wage competition. The party believes that the growing economic inequality between countries is due to the lack of opportunities to regulate world trade. They also believe that it is globalisation that is causing the exploitation of people and natural resources in poor countries, where there is no democracy or a well-functioning system of public administration.

International and European cooperation

The Danish People's Party believes that the West should be careful and refrain from using armed force to try and impose freedom and democracy in other countries "outside of our cultural sphere". Despite this attitude, the party is prepared to support NATO and the party supports the fight against international terrorism. Attitudes towards the EU, however, are divided. The Danish People's Party welcomes cooperation in matters of trade, technology and the environment, but does not want to see a collaboration with federal overtones. The party also opposes a common immigration policy. As with other parties that

are critical of the EU, they have a more positive attitude to the United Nations. At the same time, they would like to see deeper cooperation between the Nordic countries.

International development aid

The Danish People's Party is in favour of providing aid for poor countries and would like Denmark to live up to the UN target of spending 0.7% of GDP on aid. Like the Swedish Democrats Party, they want development aid to primarily be used for the prevention of war and other situations that force people to flee.

School and educational policy

Religion plays a central role in the policies of the Danish People's Party. Among other things, they want to make Christian teaching and morning hymns mandatory in both primary and secondary school. The Danish People's Party also wants to see a stronger focus on Denmark in the history curriculum and wants a greater emphasis on Danish works in music education. At the same time, they are against the individual teachers

arguing for a particular religious view. Private schools are welcome, provided they are not opposed to "Danish values" and democratic principles. The party has a traditional view of school. For example, they wish to increase the proportion of compulsory examinations and introduce more work-related training in primary school.

Research policy

Universities should primarily exist for the Danish population. For that reason, the Danish People's Party wants to defend the role of the Danish language in higher education institutions. The party thinks that although it is positive that Danish students spend one or more exchange semesters abroad, they do not want to spend tax money to pay for full educations at foreign universities. The Danish People's Party called at an early stage for quotas in the country's education programmes. If there is a shortage of qualified professionals, such as doctors, the party wants quotas to be used to regulate the number of students from other Nordic countries.

Taxation policies

The Danish People's Party wants to eventually reduce the tax burden, without compromising the quality of public welfare services. However, they are willing to clearly prioritise the welfare state's areas of responsibility. Tax cuts should not affect the "core of welfare", i.e. care of the elderly, pensions, healthcare, education, research and law enforcement. The party also wants to reduce border trade, since the Danes' purchases of mainly alcohol and soft drinks in Germany means that Denmark is deprived of jobs.

Environmental policy

Statements on environmental issues are rather few. The work programme includes criticism of the use of genetically modified crops, known as GMOs. The party says it wants to protect the environment and the climate and to preserve the Danish cultural landscape. The Danish People's Party is opposed to nuclear power and calls for greater investment in organic farming.

Family policies

The Danish People's Party is in many respects a classic conservative value party. This is particularly clear in matters relating to the family. For the party, the core component in society is the traditional family with a mother, father and children. The party does not rule out the possibility that alternative family structures can also provide children with a good upbringing. It believes that the family forms something of a basic framework for many people. The family produces and conveys values. Since marriage is the natural starting point for family life, other forms of family structure should not be favoured at the expense of marriage. The Danish People's Party believes that public childcare is important, but they do not want the policy to play the exclusive role of shaping children's lives. The bonds of family and friendship are also important. Child rearing, development, well-being, diet and exercise habits are the parents' responsibility. There should be policies to support children and adults who are victims of illness, addiction or disability.

Housing policy

The Danish People's Party designate several of the socially and economically disadvantaged residential areas around the larger Danish cities as ghettoes. The party wants to deal with the problems that exist in these areas, including high levels of criminality and sometimes violent protests with stone-throwing against police and the emergency services, by e.g. demolishing apartments and by transforming the social housing into private property. The party is critical of the state regarding the housing sector as a source of tax revenue and it wants to abolish various taxes so that the prices of privately owned apartments around the country will fall.

Defence policy

As previously mentioned, the Danish People's Party are supporters of NATO membership and Denmark's participation in the UN. As part of the party's Eurosceptic attitude, they are opposed to any ambitions within the framework of the EU to build a new, common defence capability. The Danish People's Party

values a close relationship with the United States as a means of "protecting the Western World".

Media policy

The Danish People's Party recognises the importance of a free media to maintain openness in society. However, the party wants the print media to be obliged to publish corrections on the front page in cases where false news was also published on the front page. The party also wants to improve conditions for commercial radio in Denmark and favours local radio stations, so-called grass roots radio stations.

Equality

Gender quotas and affirmative action are methods that the Danish People's Party opposes. The party believes that immigration from mainly Muslim countries has in some cases resulted in oppressive and patriarchal family structures being reintroduced into Danish society. The traditional view of women's role in the family is in conflict with the norms prevailing in Danish society.

Furthermore, the party believes that the distribution of parental leave should not be subject to political decisions. The Danish People's Party opposes that homosexuals should be able to marry in a church. The party is also opposed to gay couples having the right to artificial insemination or to adopt.

Business policy

The Danish People's Party opposes the sale of critical infrastructure and believes that it would be difficult for politicians to manage the development of infrastructure like railways, postal and telecommunications services, the gas grid and various utilities if they are foreign owned.

Agricultural and fisheries policies

Despite the fact that the abolition of the EU's agricultural policy is high on the Danish People's Party's agenda, they also want to provide support for small and medium-sized farms to enable them to continue their activities. A little later in the programme, however, it is specified that Danish agriculture both can and must operate in the free market

without government support. In contrast, the approach to fisheries is not as market-friendly. The Danish People's Party believes that it should be profitable to be a fisherman and that the fishing industry is of vital importance for the survival of many coastal communities.

Labour and employment policies

Gainful employment must be more profitable for the individual than social welfare benefits. The party accepts workforce immigration, albeit at low levels. The Danish People's Party recognises the importance of trade unions for a stable and well-organised labour market. At the same time, it devotes a long section of the party programme to criticising the trade union movement's strong ties to the Social Democrats.

Immigration policy

The Danish People's Party's working programme draws a clear distinction between refugees and immigrants. While immigrants are people who choose to move to Denmark to live and work in the country, refugees are fleeing political, religious or ethnic

persecution, and may therefore be expected to return to their home countries when this becomes possible. The Danish People's Party wants to tighten asylum legislation on a number of points and applies a strict interpretation of the UN Refugee Convention. Conflicts in parts of a country, for example, should not give the right of asylum for nationals from all parts of the country. Moreover, it should be to the asylum seeker's disadvantage if he or she travelled through several other EU member countries on their way to Denmark. Citizens of countries represented in the Council of Europe should not be granted asylum in Denmark according to the Danish People's Party. *

The reasons for granting asylum should also be made more stringent. For example, the Danish People's Party wants rules introduced so that conflicts in one part of a country would not entitle citizens of the entire country to apply for asylum. Asylum seekers should not be allowed to work during the application process. Therefore, there should be no attempt

by Danish society to integrate the new arrivals. Applications for asylum should be rejected in the event that the asylum seeker commits a crime while their application is being considered. If the applicant is granted asylum, he or she must learn Danish by participating an integration programme. If peace is achieved in the home country of the person granted asylum within seven years of the asylum being granted, that person must return home.

The Danish People's Party is fundamentally opposed to the Danish authorities issuing permanent residence permits. The party generally feels that it is also better to assist people in their home countries, rather than the people who are fleeing war and persecution coming to Denmark. Unaccompanied refugee children shall be placed in special orphanages and at age 18 deported back to their home countries. The Danish People's Party argues that refugees returning home, either voluntarily or by police intervention, shall be eligible to receive start-

up funding before returning home, such as financial support for their return or micro-credit to help them start their own businesses. Special return programmes should be established.

The Danish People's Party opposes all forms of special treatment of immigrants. Requirements for halal meat, prayer rooms and requests for leave for Muslim festivals should not be granted. The proportion of students in a class who are not ethnically Danish should not exceed 25%.

The party also believes that the Muslim full veil, like the burqa and niqab, is an expression of women's oppression and should be discouraged and should be prohibited in schools and in other parts of the public sector. Private schools should only be granted financial assistance if they operate within the framework of "Danish values" and Danish culture. It is unclear what this means in practice.

The Danish People's Party also wants to abolish public support for the Danish Refugee

Council. The party supports a green card system based on the American model, where qualified people of other nationalities can apply for and be granted a residence permit for a defined period in order to apply for work.

The spotlight is turned on Islam

Over time, the Danish People's Party has increasingly chosen to emphasise cultural dimensions in their criticism of immigration and migration. The perception that there are insurmountable cultural and religious differences that create tensions was confirmed according to many by the reactions to the publication of the Mohammed cartoons in 2005.

Throughout the crisis, they gave Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen their full support in the defence of freedom of expression, but they also kept a relatively low public profile. The party's representatives were careful to adapt their rhetoric so as not to incur accusations of racism and xenophobia. The party leadership were on their toes. In an

e-mail that was circulated to the party's elected representatives in early 2006, it was highlighted that statements to the media would mainly be directed against Islamism and Muslim fanatics, not Islam as a religion. Meanwhile, their support in the polls reached new heights. However, the population's opinions regarding immigration policy did not change.

The critical attitude seems to be surprisingly stable over time.[102] Like in Sweden, there have been discussions in Denmark for many years regarding the specific costs of immigration. In an attempt to create a balance in the debate, the think-tank Cepos chose to present figures showing what various citizens cost. The Danish People's Party, however, was not content with this. Instead, the party wanted the government to appoint an integration commission to investigate the costs of immigration. As late as the autumn of 2010, before the budget negotiations, this was

[102] Meier Carlsen (2010), p. 172

made an explicit requirement in the negotiations. "We would like to have a report on what immigration costs Danish society. We want facts - not myths and prejudices. What has immigration actually cost Denmark" said the party's Kristian Thulesen Dahl, chairman of the parliamentary finance committee.[103] The centre-right government rejected the proposal, however.[104] Anders Samuelsen, leader of the Liberal Alliance Party, suggested that the government, if a study on immigration costs actually was conducted, should at the same time appoint a commission that could calculate what the Danish People's Party's period as supporting party had cost Danish society in the form of lost growth.

It is meant quite seriously. That is what has stopped the Danish Liberal Party and the Conservative Party from pursuing a truly liberal policy. That has been extremely expensive for Denmark. It was because of the Danish People's Party that Anders Fogh

[103] Albæk (2010)

[104] Lykke Sloth (2010)

Rasmussen converted the Danish Liberal Party into a new social democratic party. This has cost Denmark an incredible amount of money.[105]

Finally, after strong pressure from the Danish People's Party, the centre-right government established a commission to calculate the cost of immigration. However, the new government, led by the Social Democrats, cancelled the commission when they came to power.

In September 2010, Ayan Hirsi Ali was a visitor to the Danish People's Party's annual meeting. Hirsi Ali, the well-known liberal commentator, born a Muslim and raised in Somalia, but now living in the United States, criticised the Danish People's Party during her speech for wanting to ban immigration from non-Western countries. This angered the priest Søren Krarup, the Danish People Party's chief ideologist, who is also one of the party's best-known representatives. It seemed obvious to him that immigrants from radically

[105] Klarskov (2010)

different cultures would be significantly more difficult to integrate into Danish society. According to Krarup, it was not primarily the Enlightenment ideals of freedom and tolerance that were in contrast to Islam.

In an article in *Berlingske Tidende*, Krarup claimed that the criticism of Islam and Muslims in particular, should take its starting point from the Christian values, because the Western world is largely based on Christian values:

Ultimately, the West is the same as Christianity. It is Christianity that is the Western world's essential basis and foundation. But like many people today, she takes her point of departure in the Enlightenment and is therefore alien to Western culture's real content. It is well-intentioned and attractive when she presents freedom and tolerance as the core values of the West, but if she does not understand that this culture is ultimately linked to a Christian's freedom (Luther) and is thereby dependent on the clear, evangelical

distinction between god's kingdom and the emperor's kingdom, then she does not comprehend the depth and dimension of the West's reality.[106]

In the summer of 2010, the Danish People's Party demanded the abolition of the so-called racism paragraph in the Danish criminal code, which forbids people to taunt or threaten people of different ethnicity, faith or sexual orientation. The reason was that the chairman of the Danish Free Press Society [Trykkefrihedsselskabet], Lars Hedegaard, who was himself a member of the party until early 2010, had been accused of violating this paragraph. Hedegaard had made a statement that was subsequently published on a website, where he claimed, among other things, that it was not considered wrong among Muslim men for a father to rape his own children.

Hedegaard's party colleague, Jesper Langballe, was also charged in late summer 2010 for violating the racism paragraph when, in an article in *Berlingske Tidende*, he made

[106] Krarup (2010),

reference to Lars Hedegaard's reasoning about Muslims who rape their own daughters.[107]

Of course Lars Hedgaard should not have said that there are Muslim fathers who rape their daughters, when the truth instead seems to be that they only kill their daughters (the so-called honour killings) and otherwise turn a blind eye to rape committed by uncles.[108]

Pia Kjærsgaard was quick to distance herself from Langballe's statement.

That was stupid of Jesper Langballe. I think he should not have whipped up the debate in defence of Lars Hedegaard and to the detriment of the Danish People's Party.[109]

Langballe's statement caused several members to leave the Danish People's Party. Christian H. Hansen, member of parliament, was the first to leave on 19 January 2010.[110] Shortly after Langballe's article was published, Rikke Cramer Christiansen left her seat in Vyborg city council and Jan Sohn left his seat in

[107] Ritzau (2010c)

[108] Langballe (2010)

[109] *Berlingske Tidende* (2010)

[110] Ritzau (2010d)

Holbæk city council. At the same time, representatives for the government parties, the Danish Liberal Party and the Conservative Party, publicly criticised the law for being too stringent and they suggested a possible review of the racism paragraph. Naser Khader, a spokesman on integration issues for the Conservative Party, was clear in his view.

We should not judge people for what they say, but for what they do. We therefore need to have a discussion of whether this was originally the real intention of the racism paragraph. I think this is a good example of what the racism paragraph should not be used for.[111]

Lars Heedegard was acquitted in court in late January 2011. His statements were certainly racist, but because he did not know they would be published, he could not be convicted under the racism paragraph. Jesper Langballe was convicted, however, and was fined for his defence of Heedegard.[112] The proposal to

[111] Ritzau (2010e)

[112] Ritzau (2011a)

amend the racism paragraph received support from the think-tank Cepos in June 2011, when it argued that the law could be regarded as a restriction on freedom of expression. The Danish Liberal Party and Liberal Alliance have previously expressed their support for reviewing the legislation. [113] However, the Minister for Justice, Lars Barfoed (Conservative), opposed any proposals for amendments on the grounds that it would be contrary to the international agreements that Denmark has signed.[114]

The Danish People's Party has on several occasions contributed to reforming the Danish so-called aliens legislation. In July 2010, the party campaigned to have the age limit for when a Danish citizen would be allowed to bring their spouse into the country increased from 24, as agreed in 2002, to 28 years of age. Kristian Thulesen Dahl, the leader of the Danish People's Party's parliamentary group, argued that the 24-year rule worked against

[113] Arnsdorf Haslund (2011)

[114] Ritzau (2011b)

forced marriage.

The 24-year rule has had a tremendously positive effect against forced marriages and arranged marriages. It would be natural, therefore, to change it to a 28-year rule, so we can be even more successful.[115]

The Danish People's Party demanded in the spring of 2010 that the Danish government, as part of the upcoming package of cut-backs, should terminate the Arab Initiative, which had been an attempt by Denmark since 2003 to encourage the reform process in a number of Middle Eastern countries, including Morocco, Jordan and Yemen.

It is clear that we want influence on the specific savings, and it is equally clear that we want to get rid of the Arab Initiative. We have never believed in it. It is a waste of money.[116]

Nostalgia as nourishment

As the established parties have adopted a more restrictive policy on immigration, the

[115] Ritzau (2010f)

[116] Damkjær (2010)

Danish People's Party has continued to demand new and even stricter requirements. In relation to other Danish parties, it is reasonable to regard the Danish People's Party as an extremist party in this regard.

But although it is extreme on integration issues, the party is very conventional on several other significant issues. For example, the Danish People's Party want all citizens to have equal access to public services, regardless of where they live. The party wants to allocate more resources to the elderly and is sceptical of allowing private enterprises to operate care facilities for the elderly. Tax cuts are welcomed, but only on condition that they are not at the expense of quality in core areas of welfare. The party was quick to criticise Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen after he proposed changes to parts of the Danish pension system in his New Year speech in 2010. If the Danish People's Party could decide, the education system would return to a more traditional structure and more mandatory testing would be introduced in

schools and there would be more time allocated for work-related training in primary school. They would also introduce tougher sentencing and increase police presence on the streets.

Much of the party's policies could just as well be pursued by other parties. One could say that, in many respects, the Danish People's Party advocates conventional welfare policies: progressive tax policies and a high tax level, a negotiation-based labour market model with limited government involvement and a publicly funded welfare sector with equal service for all citizens.

The Danish People's Party regards immigration as an economic burden on Denmark. The idea that migration between countries could have positive results is a concept that the party rarely, if ever, endorsed. For them, immigration is always an economic burden that diverts many resources away from other activities.

According to this explanation, the Danish People's Party almost becomes a product of

the welfare state, the result of an accountant mentality driven to the extreme, where dynamic effects, such as the idea that increased immigration could generate higher tax revenues and thus result in increased resources for schools, health and care services, seem irrelevant. The interpretation is controversial, but does not lack support.

It is important to remember that the Nordic welfare state is essentially a national project. Geographical boundaries and requirements for nationality made it clear at an early stage who had a responsibility to contribute to the common welfare systems, but also who was entitled to share in the welfare benefits.

Because welfare was the result of contributions from all citizens, a clear sense of ownership developed over time. The citizens were proud of their common welfare system and realised that they should not be used unnecessarily. This solidarity and the systems' sustainability required that every citizen contributed according to their best efforts through their taxes, while being frugal in their

own demands on the system.
The conditions for the welfare system changed when immigration to Denmark and the other Nordic countries in the 1970s changed in character from labour force migration to refugee immigration. Increasing numbers of people ended up in situations of isolation and dependency on public services. Whereas immigration had for several decades consisted largely of temporary guest workers, at least of people who intended or were expected to return to their home countries, the proportion of people who found their way to Denmark fleeing war and persecution began to increase in the 1970s. Unlike in the past, there was also a growing number who lacked the skills or productivity required to find and keep a job in the Danish labour market. Large groups of foreign-born residents were thus directed to other forms of livelihood.
As the cost of care increased, discontent also grew among many Danes. Newcomers who were not working were identified as a burden and the news media was quick to promote this

image. A form of welfare chauvinism gained support, a perception that one's own social welfare system was superior to others and that only those persons who could "originally" be classed as Danes were entitled to welfare services.

It is important to emphasise in this situation that the welfare state does not in itself give rise to xenophobia and racism. But it is difficult to imagine the Danish People's Party in a different political context. The redistribution policy perspective that the welfare state has created is a prerequisite for a policy that makes a distinction between different groups.

The journalist Erik Meier Carlsen, with a background in the social-democratic A-pressen, says that it is difficult to ignore the fact that the welfare state is national by nature. Contrary to conventional expectations about people's innate benevolence towards their neighbours, he believes that the promotion of multiculturalism has eroded trust in Danish society and ultimately

threatens to reduce the acceptance of major resource redistribution between different groups in society. [117]

By considering the Danish People's Party as a vulgar proponent of a traditional welfare policy, it is certainly easier to understand developments in the country in recent decades. This explanation is further supported if we examine voter behaviour. Large numbers of voters who traditionally voted for the Social Democrats now support Pia Kjærsgaard. Studies conducted by political scientist Jørgen Goul Andersen show that, since the early 2000s, the Danish People's Party is the largest party among traditional workers.[118]

The anti-immigrant public opinion that has existed for many years in Denmark is often explained as a result of media reporting. The researcher Jacob Gaarde Madsen argued, during the Danish investigation into power structures in 2000, that many journalists were careless in their description of the people who

[117] Meier Carlsen (2010), p. 204

[118] Andersen & Goul Andersen (2003)

applied for asylum and that immigrants are consistently portrayed as "the aliens". [119] Madsen's research findings are worth taking seriously. News reporting can contribute to and reinforce the course of events and processes in society, although it often takes real events for that change to occur. This applies particularly to immigration. When new groups migrate to a country, it is inevitable that residents there will pay attention to the changes. Depending on their social and economic status, the changes will then be perceived as being either positive or negative.

In stark contrast with the general perception, immigration into Denmark continued to increase at a steady pace during the ten years that the Danish People's Party was the support party for the centre-right government. From the change of government in 2001 to 2010, the number of residence permits granted doubled. [120] The single biggest change,

[119] Madsen (2000)

[120] Davidsen-Nielsen (2010)

compared to the previous Social Democratic government's period in power, was that immigration changed character, mainly from refugee immigration to the student and labour immigration that is dominant today.

However, immigration of family dependants from non-Western countries has not declined. On the contrary, it has grown dramatically in recent decades. From being a marginal phenomenon in 1985, the number of dependant immigrants into Denmark in 2010 was 110,000 people. [121] "If it was the government's intention to ensure that fewer foreigners came to Denmark, it has to be said that the mission has failed", says Morten Østergaard, spokesman on migration for the Danish Social Liberal Party in a comment following the publication of the figures in the newspaper *Politiken* at the end of 2010.[122]

The public opinion and the political rhetoric that is critical of immigration is therefore not necessarily associated with the policy that has

[121] Statistics Denmark (2010)

[122] Davidsen-Nielsen (2010)

been implemented. Attitudes also appear to be changing. Danish-Norwegian research shows that while the Danish electorate became increasingly critical in the '80s and '90s of the generous immigration policy, tolerance towards immigrants living in the country actually increased.

The Danish election survey from 1994 and election analyses conducted by Gallup and *Berlingske Tidende* in conjunction with the 1998 election, showed a decrease in the percentage of Danes who felt that immigration posed a threat to the national culture. The proportion of people who fully or partly agreed that refugees and immigrants should have the same rights to social assistance as Danish citizens, also increased from 36% in 1994 to 49% in 1998.

The research institute Political Capital's annual report also offers no support for the idea that the Danes are extreme. Support for the rule of law and its institutions are strong, trust in other citizens is high and conditions favourable to xenophobia are apparently very

limited. According to the survey, only 0.9% of the population actively harbour xenophobic attitudes and mistrust of the system.[123]

The Danish People's Party can be regarded as a result of pre-existing ideas in Danish society. While the welfare state did not cause the creation of the Danish People's Party, the concept of income redistribution that underpins the welfare state is a prerequisite for the party's existence.

Other observers have reached similar conclusions. The author Henrik Jøker Bjerre believes, for example, that the Danish People's Party bases its existence and its policies on the desire to preserve Denmark as the country it is, or rather as it once was. He regards the Danish People's Party as a meta-party which, rather than representing a particular ideology, advocates that the Danish-born citizens should be the ones who shape and determine how Danish society should develop.

This is the party's main strength, according to Jøker Bjerre. Support for Pia Kjærsgaard's

[123] Political Capital (2010)

party is not particularly dependent on the opinions of the political representatives on specific issues. Rather, it is based on the fact that many voters regard the party as a protector of traditional Danish values such as democracy and freedom of speech. The message is that no matter how strange the other politicians' proposals may seem, the Danish People's Party will ensure that the everyday life of "ordinary Danes" will remain almost the same as it ever was.

The Danish People's Party's power is the power of habit, i.e. we want to preserve the relative stability and the codes and meanings we have learnt in life, the feeling of being at home and knowing what you are allowed to do, and the Danish People's Party promises to fulfil that wish.[124]

Other observers consider support for the party as a protest by the underclass.[125] Election analyses in the late 1990s also suggested that the majority of those who voted for the party

[124] Jøker Bjerre (2009)

[125] Meier Carlsen (2009)

had previously voted for the Progress Party and the Social Democrats. This is part of a larger shift in the Danish electorate that has taken place over the last 20-30 years, where particularly the Danish Liberal Party and the Conservative Party led the country in an increasingly centre-right direction.

The parliamentary election of 2001 was the first time a clear majority of unionised workers voted for the centre-right. It was mainly the Danish Liberal Party and the Danish People's Party who drew votes away from the Social Democrats.[126] The image of the Danish People's Party as a centre-right party is not self-evident. Ten years after the Danish People's Party first became a support party for the centre-right minority government, a public debate is still underway about whether the party is to the left or right in Danish politics.

A corresponding discussion concerns the organisation of the Danish People's Party. The journalist and author David Trads believes

[126] Meier Carlsen (2010), p. 163

that we are dealing with a party that has much in common with traditional social movements, where sympathisers take a stand for or against a particular political issue or cause. As examples, Trads mentions the resistance to nuclear power, anti-war demonstrations, campaigns against climate change and support actions in defence of refugees threatened with deportation.

The Danish People's Party is more of a protest movement than a political party. Although the party works hard to look like a normal party, with opinions about business policy, regional development, agriculture and everything else, it is really only when the issue is foreigners or the EU that Kjærsgaard's party has any relevance.[127]

Trads' interpretation is interesting, but is not without its faults. What distinguishes the Danish People's Party is that, despite its stated criticism of a generous immigration policy and a supranational EU cooperation, it has been able to gain influence on several key policy

[127] Trads (2002)

issues over the years. This is not least because of its role as a support party for the centre-right government, but it would be wrong to claim that the party is lacking ambitions on issues other than immigration and the EU.

In *Kampen om sandhederne* [The battle for the truths] (2008) the journalist and author Rune Lykkeberg makes an attempt to understand the Danish People Party's success as a result of growing social and economic inequalities in society. He argues that the "network economy" that has emerged in recent decades, in which education and a network of the right contacts became the route to employment, career and personal fulfilment, has revealed differences in the population. Those who do not have the ability or aptitude to study at higher level and are therefore referred to less creative professions, are beginning to question the concept of the collective society and wish to draw the elite's attention to this by voting for the Danish People's Party.[128] Rune Lykkeberg's thesis is

[128] Lykkeberg (2008)

based on a traditional class analysis.

Marie Fugl, political scientist and an active member of the Socialist People's Party, has a similar interpretation. She argues that, contrary to the commonly held view that voters choose a party based on a rational evaluation of the various issues, the choice is actually mainly about identity. By voting for a political party, the voter simultaneously expresses their own social class affiliation.

Fugl's conclusion is that the Danish People's Party is the political project of the Danish underclass. Her studies show that the party's average voter has the lowest level of accumulated capital, both culturally and financially. This also applies to the party's elected representatives. A survey of the Danish People's Party's candidates before the parliamentary election in 2011 showed that the Danish People's Party had the lowest proportion of candidates with an academic education.[129]

The party that is closest to it on the social

[129] Ritzau (2011c)

scale is the Social Democrats. According to Fugl's analysis, the Danish Social Liberal Party is a truly elite party. While the Danish Social Liberal Party's voters view themselves as tolerant, globally-oriented and objective, the Danish People's Party's voters view themselves rather as "folksy", sociable and as people who put human values first when society is changing far too quickly. The Danish Social Liberal Party's voters describe those who vote for Pia Kjærsgaard's party as intolerant, nostalgic and introspective, while the Danish People's Party's supporters find it rather difficult to make judgements about the people who vote for the Danish Social Liberal Party.

According to Marie Fugl, this has to do with class. Those who vote for the Danish Social Liberal Party know they have a dominant position in society and can also take the liberty to be critical and make judgements of other groups. The Danish People's Party's voters, however, do not think they have enough knowledge and status to comment on the

Danish Social Liberal Party's voters or its leader.[130] Pia Kjærsgaard is perceived as one of their own, an assistant nurse who says what she thinks and has not changed herself in order to fit in, says Marie Fugl in an interview with the newspaper *Flamman*.

Pia Kjærsgaard is not distant and analytical and it is rare that a representative of the underclass achieves as much power as she has. At the same time, I can feel pride in the Danish democracy that it is actually possible that they could come to power as they did. [131]

One party among others?

In the 2011 election, the Danish People's Party lost its role as holding the balance of power in parliament. Pia Kjærsgaard was forced to step back after 10 years as the guarantor of a centre-right minority government with the Danish Liberal Party and the Conservative Party. Instead, the leader of the Danish Social Liberal Party, Margrethe Vestager, became the new king-maker in Danish politics.

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[130] Fugl (2007)

[131] Schön (2010)

When the government negotiations with the Social Democrats and the Socialist People's Party were surprisingly lengthy, it was primarily the Danish Social Liberal Party who managed to gain support for several of their key issues, especially in the economic field. This provided a glimpse of Margrethe Vestager's influence during the new government period.

In hindsight, the election outcome appears self-evident and obvious from the outset, as is so often the case. After a decade with centre-right rule, there was once again a widespread desire for renewal among large sections of the electorate. There were critics on the centre-right who argued that the reform agenda that had brought Anders Fogh Rasmussen to power in the early 2000s, had focused too much on immigration, integration and taxes and too little on the size and role of the state.[132]

During the year preceding the parliamentary

[132] Schjørring (2011)

election, most opinion polls showed a large or fairly large majority in favour of the Social Democrats, the Socialist People's Party and the Danish Social Liberal Party. The election results were extremely even, however, with 43.5% for the left parties and the Danish Social Liberal Party, and 48.9% for the Danish Liberal Party, the Conservative Party, Liberal Alliance and the Danish People's Party. The fact that the Red-Green Alliance (Enhedslisten) received 6.7% of the vote meant that the red block achieved a majority of the seats in parliament. [133]

Their role as a support party for several centre-right governments in the years 2001-2011 meant that the Danish People's Party became an established party in Danish politics. There has been plenty of criticism from political opponents, but through its role as a support party, its senior members have had the opportunity to grow both in experience and in the public eye. For example, over the years the party has held several

[133] Statistics Denmark (2011)

leading positions on parliamentary committees and therefore had spokespersons who featured regularly in the media.

Their period in power has also forced the party to compromise. As recently as May 2010, the party agreed to support the centre-right government's package of cut-backs totalling DKK 24 billion as a result of the financial crisis. The deal, which included a decrease in the maximum period of entitlement to unemployment or sickness benefits from four to two years, received harsh criticism. The government, though perhaps mainly the Danish People's Party, was accused of betraying earlier promises to the electorate. Political analysts, including the newspaper *Politiken*, argued, however, that the agreement was a sign that the party had passed the test and proved that they were ready to govern.[134]

The Danish People's Party also changed their perception of Løkke Rasmussen's much-debated proposal for changes to the early

[134] Brandstrup & Kaae (2010)

retirement scheme. The early retirement scheme is a form of pension which, when it was introduced in 1979, was supposed to make it easier for young people to enter the labour market by giving older workers a chance to retire at age 60. The reform has not had the impact politicians were hoping for. In addition, the payments have become significantly higher than initially anticipated. After initially being highly critical of any adjustments to the system, the Danish People's Party finally agreed to certain changes to the early retirement scheme. In exchange, the party received support for its demands for a tightening of the Danish border controls, a change in the law which was controversial, however, and which the new government promised to repeal after the 2011 elections.[135]

But appearing ready to govern also entails significant risks for a party that has sought to portray itself as an alternative to the establishment, as the Danish People's Party

[135] Ritzau (2011d)

has done to a great extent. Like similar parties in Europe, the Danish People's Party bases many of their policies on opposition to the elite and portraying themselves as the only party that "gives a voice to the people" and "tells the truth" about the problems in society. If voters perceive that the political message is communicated in a better and more credible way by other political groupings, voting trends may quickly turn away from the Danish People's Party.

Despite the election defeat in the parliamentary election of 2011, there is no reason to believe that the Danish People's Party are a closed chapter in Danish politics. Rather, the party appears as the obvious national-conservative option.

The party has learned to attract new supporters from both the Conservative Party, who are struggling to find a coherent ideological narrative after a historically poor election result, and the Social Democrats who, for various reasons, have felt compelled to discard some of their primary reform

promises until further notice. The Danish People's Party lost only a couple of percentage points from the 2007 election and even at this election, Pia Kjærsgaard was one of the politicians who received the most personal votes.

For the Danish People's Party, a term in opposition will probably help to reinforce their role as an alternative to the establishment. Shortly after the elections in September 2011, Pia Kjærsgaard delivered a harsh critique of the Social Democrats for their non-delivery of their campaign promises to implement the phase-out of the early retirement scheme that Lars Løkke Rasmussen had pushed through, but which the Danish People's Party had vehemently opposed for a long time.[136] It is reasonable to assume that the Danish People's Party will continue to primarily criticise the Social Democrats, as that is the party from which it is likely to win over most voters.

At the time of this book going to press, Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt had just

[136] Masri (2011)

reorganised her government after the sudden decision of the Socialist People's Party to leave the 3-party coalition government. Initial opinion polls showed that the incidents led to a substantial decline in support for the Social Democrats. It is still too early to predict whether the Danish People's Party will be able to take advantage of these events. However, the unexpected defection of the Socialist People's Party hardly weakens the Danish People's Party's role in Danish politics and at the beginning of January 2014, Kristian Dahl Thulesen explained that the Danish People's Party is willing to work both with the Social Democrats and with the centre-right Danish Liberal Party.[137]

[137] Termansen (2014).

Europe deserves better

This book has described the emergence of three parties from different parts of Europe. As a result of differing geography and historical circumstances, the political conditions are naturally different in each country. One could also discuss whether epithets like "national chauvinism" and "extremist parties" are applicable to describe all aspects of the parties' policies. But despite several significant differences between the parties, they have surprisingly many characteristics in common. Jobbik, the Party for Freedom and the Danish People's Party have similar and sometimes identical ambitions in several key areas of policy. We have chosen to focus our attention on these.

State ownership and privatisation

Both Jobbik and the Danish People's Party believe that there is an intrinsic value in the state owning natural resources, energy production and infrastructure. Jobbik undoubtedly has the most ambitious

nationalist aspirations. The party wishes to prohibit foreign investment in Hungarian agricultural land. The Danish People's Party is not as clear, but it also opposes the sale of state assets, including the national postal service, electricity networks and the nation's energy production.

Globalisation

Both Jobbik and the Danish People's Party are very critical of globalisation in the sense that national borders are becoming less important and that the laws of the market are taking precedence over political control mechanisms. The opposition to foreign influence differs however. While Jobbik wishes to protect Hungary's economic interests and opposes foreign ownership, the Danish People's Party's opposition is primarily culturally determined and the party is explicitly opposed to a multicultural and multi-ethnic society.

Family policies

The family plays a central role, especially for the Danish People's Party and Jobbik, but the Party for Freedom also wishes to influence

family formation. The specific goals of the parties differ somewhat. While the Party for Freedom believes that the Netherlands already has a large enough population and therefore wants to limit child benefit to a maximum of two children per family, Jobbik is ready to provide tax benefits to large families in order to encourage a higher birth rate in Hungary. The Danish People's Party emphasises the role of the family as an important building block of society, regardless of how it is formed and who is included, but at the same time it opposes allowing homosexuals to marry in churches.

School and educational policy

The similarities between the parties are most apparent in their approach to education. All the parties studied want to enhance the role of history teaching in the school. In Jobbik's case, it is about providing greater scope for studies of Hungary's history and culture. The Party for Freedom calls for a mandatory history curriculum with texts that can convey the country's history to schoolchildren, while the Danish People's Party wants to see a

stronger focus on Denmark in the teaching of history and major elements of Danish work in music education. Both Jobbik and the Danish People's Party want the teaching of religion to be mandatory. The Party for Freedom wants all school buildings in the country to fly the Dutch flag.

Constitutional issues

The three parties are also united in their belief in direct democracy rather than representative democracy. All parties want more referendums to be held in their respective countries. The Danish People's Party goes furthest and suggests that any matter shall be subject to a referendum if it is requested by at least 50,000 voters.

Immigration policy

Both the Danish People's Party and the Party for Freedom are critical of immigration. The resistance to immigration is partly cultural. The Party for Freedom wishes to emphasise the Netherlands' Judeo-Christian and humanist traditions, and stop the construction of mosques and immigration from non-

Western countries. The Danish People's Party has also increasingly turned against Islam over the years. The party certainly claims to support religious freedom, but says there is no "parity of religion". It also wants to preserve the constitutional role of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark. Moreover, there is a clear economic rationale for the three parties' attitudes towards immigrants.

In Hungary, however, immigration is not a high priority. Instead, the Roma minority population and their vulnerability is the basis for the widespread xenophobia. Jobbik's criticism of the Roma is also largely based on this group's poor level of education and weak attachment to the labour market. Even for the Party for Freedom, the economy is a key factor along with the cultural motive. The Party for Freedom proposes an end to continued immigration from Muslim countries and the introduction of requirements for immigrants who wish to access various welfare services. In order to qualify for welfare benefits, a person must have lived and worked in the

Netherlands for at least ten years. Whether this applies to immigrants from every country in the world is unclear. The Party for Freedom also wants to ensure that immigrants bear the costs of the integration measures offered by society.

Common patterns of thought

The three parties have a common perception in several key policy areas. Several of their specific policy proposals are identical. The Danish People's Party, Jobbik and the Party for Freedom all advocate, albeit in varying degrees, a policy that rejects what could be perceived as modern and cosmopolitan. Not infrequently, it is about a deep distrust of international institutions and a strong dislike of the transfer of power from politicians to the market, which is what globalisation has meant in many respects.

This world view is not altogether easy to define according to the usual left-right scale. It is also probable that attempting to place them on such a scale will not contribute to an understanding of the parties. As society

becomes more complex, this dualistic view of politics has lost its constructive role. Numerous lines of conflict are becoming increasingly pronounced: state/individual, urban/rural, environment/industry, free-trade/protectionism, state ownership/private initiatives and EU-centralisation/national sovereignty, to name just a few. The signal colours like red and blue mean less and less as political guides in an increasingly complicated world. The division in the first French National Assembly in 1789, when the revolutionaries sat on the left of the Speaker and the conservatives sat on the right, is simply not adequate any more.

It is also worth mentioning that the left-right scale that is common in Western Europe is not automatically applicable to e.g. Hungarian politics. A Hungarian party with traditional right-wing views on cultural issues may well be a stronger defender of investments in public welfare than a party that is culturally defined as leftist.[138] While the parties that

[138] Körösenyi (1999), p. 55

Hungarians define as being on the left have so far welcomed private welfare solutions and advocated a limited welfare state, parties on the right, such as Fidesz, have in several respects advocated an expanded public sector. The same paradox applies in matters of agricultural policy and natural resources: The left has no difficulty making way for foreign ownership. The right, on the other hand, want everything to remain in Hungarian ownership, from the forests and fields to water supplies and energy resources.[139]

But the fact that it is difficult to classify the extreme parties along the usual left-right scale does not mean that the parties are acting in an ideological vacuum. The national context is crucial for a party such as the Danish People's Party. The conditions are basically the same for Jobbik and the Party for Freedom.

Naturally, the three countries have differing histories and thus the starting point for the three parties also differs. In Jobbik's world, it is the dissolution of Austria-Hungary that

[139] Ibid., p. 58.

forms the basis for everything that has gone wrong. But the list of misfortunes also includes more contemporary changes, from the opening of the financial markets and the privatisation of public services and systems, to the dissatisfaction with the Roma minority population. The Danish People's Party is concerned mainly with the economic outlook for the Danish state and has decided that a large influx of refugees is inconsistent with a generous welfare state.

In the Netherlands, the Party for Freedom reached a similar conclusion. Both the Danish People's Party and the Party for Freedom have increasingly taken an interest in the cultural dimensions of Muslim immigration. Common to all parties is the nostalgia for the past and the conviction that the emergence of an increasingly integrated world is to the detriment of their own populations. Modernity is in stark contrast to the traditional values cherished by all three parties.

This is somewhat understandable. The

national context is crucial, for the simple reason that the nation state is still the primary arena for democracy. The Nordic welfare model is a clear example. The tax-funded welfare systems have never been universal. When combined with a labour market that regulates both the influx of new workers and wage levels, the result is inevitably a closed system at the national level.

However, this is not a system carved in stone. In recent decades, the European states have moved away from the notion of the nation-state as the sole framework for politics and to varying degrees have tried to establish new social and economic systems at a supranational level. But the need for a shared purpose, geographically defined communities and a common unifying concept will not disappear so easily. Many politicians seem to have underestimated the challenge. The efforts to move away from an exclusively national system to a European or international perspective arouse opposition. A political vacuum has opened as the established parties

have continued to push for a loosening of the national framework. This gap is now being filled by national chauvinist and extremist parties like the Danish People's Party and Jobbik. There demands are often the same: opposition to the EU, restrictions on the free flow of capital and restrictions on free trade, criticism of Islam and a positive reappraisal of Christianity, more resources for welfare systems and greater support for indigenous cultural traditions.

From a democratic perspective, there is no reason to question the emergence of new parties. The possibility to form a political party is a fundamental prerequisite for representative democracy being renewed and retaining legitimacy. Concerns arise only when the parties' political agenda challenges our concepts of human rights, the equality of all citizens before the law and attitudes towards openness and mobility. All of the parties studied in this book share a readiness to single out individual groups in society as a problem, instead of changing the political and economic

structures that often prevents people from other parts of the world contributing to and creating a future in Europe. In the case of the Danish People's Party, its opposition to immigration is often defined in cultural terms. For the Party for Freedom, there is no place in the Netherlands for Islam. In Hungary, Jobbik has chosen to make the Roma minority its principal target.

The extremist parties' footprint in the EU Parliament

Jobbik, the Party for Freedom and the Danish People's Party have all been represented in the European Parliament during the current election period 2009-2014. Besides giving parties a platform in Brussels, the seats in the assembly have provided them with an opportunity to influence the policies pursued. However, the impact of these political parties has been limited. Apart from the fact that their small numbers make it difficult for them to exert influence in a parliament with nearly 800 members, their choice not to engage in

the group structure in the parliament has marginalised the parties and limited their opportunities to gain support for their policies.

Jobbik

Jobbik won three of the Hungarian seats in the elections to the EU Parliament. The seats went to Krisztina Morvai, Csanad Szegedi and Zoltan Balczó. None of the elected representatives joined a group during the entire period.

Jobbik's senior representative in 2009, Krisztina Morvai, who has a background in the UNHCR, has been a frequent speaker during the sessions in Brussels and Strasbourg, frequently on issues related to policy on refugees and migration. She has made a total of about 200 comments.

Csanad Szegedi has also been active in the chamber with over 100 comments. Among the more controversial comments are two on immigration and registration of ethnicity on criminal records. At the session in Strasbourg on 13th December 2010, he made the following

comment entitled "Establishment of a network of immigration liaison officers".

Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, the report and the proposal behind it clearly serve, and are intended to prepare, the promotion and facilitation of immigration, which we consider unacceptable. The creation of a network of immigration liaison officers is one more step towards a centralised measure controlled by the European Union that serves the spreading of immigrants and refugees. Furthermore, it is unacceptable that they intend to replace the term 'illegal immigration' with 'irregular immigration,' thereby attempting to further legitimise this otherwise illegal act. The peoples of Europe have had enough of the flood of immigrants, and we would welcome it if the elected Members sitting in this House also acknowledged this. Unfortunately, I can say no more about this report than that it is a caricature of itself. What is embodied in this report is a caricature of the European Parliament

At the session in Strasbourg on 19 October of the same year, he made the following comment entitled "Databases in the EU with data on race and ethnicity."

Ladies and gentlemen, the Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik) proposed as early as 2006 that it should be possible to indicate a person's ethnicity in the criminal records, so that when applicable, attention can be drawn to Gypsy criminals. We still maintain this position. At that time, the left-liberal media said that Jobbik was an extremist party. Four years on, we see lists drawn up in France in relation to the expulsion of Gypsies. We see that in Holland, they are considered a national security risk, and databases are coming to light there, too. Then we can also see that in Finland, the ethnic origin of Gypsy perpetrators is recorded in detention facilities.

And now let me put a question to one of the rapporteurs here, the Slovakian lady who laughed so loudly about the Hungarian victims. I find it extremely hypocritical that

she condemns the data collection on Gypsies, while, as a Slovakian politician, she supports a racist language law that punishes people on ethnic grounds for speaking their mother tongue.

Zoltan Balczó, who in May 2010 gave up his place to Bela Kovacs, became an active member during his brief period in the parliament. Among other things, he was a strong opponent of Turkish membership of the EU, both in speeches on the topic and in a written resolution. Like his party, he prioritised the issue of the Roma. At the session in Strasbourg on 9 March 2010, under the heading "The second European summit on Roma", he made the following contribution to the debate.

Since I am going to speak Hungarian, my mother tongue, instead of the standard Roma term I will use the word Gipsy, which has no pejorative meaning in my language and it is also used in our Constitution.

This item on the agenda is action against the exclusion and discrimination of the Gipsy.

The essential precondition of the solution is the social integration of the Gipsy people. School is an important tool for this. In many cases, there is a reason for separate treatment or positive discrimination if you like, in order to eliminate disadvantages. When they hear this, minority rights activists immediately cry segregation, even though the objective is rapid inclusion.

Generations of Gipsy in certain regions of Hungary have grown up in families living on benefits rather than earning a living. There is no way out without creating jobs. This is why we must break away from neoliberal economic policies. Even the difficult social situation cannot justify the violation of the law. In Hungary, Gypsies are involved in a very high percentage of crime. We have to act against this not only for the benefit of the majority of society, but also for the benefit of the honest Gipsy people. We have never specified genetic or ethnic labels as a reason. So there is no mention of racism, we only mentioned special socio-cultural

circumstances as a background. If we routinely stigmatise persons stating this as racists, we only pursue an ostrich policy.
We need to find the way out together. In order to do this, it is imperative that Gypsies have leaders recognised by their communities and by society as a whole. Indeed, we need a common European strategy, but this should be a strategy which faces all aspects of the issue and intends to find a solution by examining them with honesty.

The Party for Freedom

The Party for Freedom won four seats in the elections to the European Parliament in 2009. When the Lisbon Treaty came into force on 1st December 2011, the party gained an additional seat. The turnover in the delegation has been large and during the previous term of office, several people have come and gone as a result of elections in the Netherlands. Today the party is represented by Lucas Hartong, Patricia van der Kammen, Laurence J.A.J. Stassen and Auke Zijlstra. All are non-affiliated. Daniel van der Stoep, who also has a

seat that belongs to the Party for Freedom, now represents the own party, Article 50.
The Party for Freedom's representatives have kept a relatively low profile during the session. However, they have submitted many questions to the EU Commission. Altogether during the past five years, the party produced almost 800 written questions on issues ranging from alleged corruption scandals in Turkey and human rights in Muslim countries to racism and asylum policy.
This figure does not, however, include Daniel van der Stoep's activities. He has single-handedly made nearly 100 comments in the chamber and submitted more than 100 written questions.
On 19 April 2011, before the session in Strasbourg, van der Stoep wrote to the European Commission on the subject of immigration.
On 1 April 2011, hundreds of immigrants with no prospects broke out of reception camps on the Italian mainland. The immigrants had originally come from Lampedusa, which is

overcrowded. Completely illegally, these opportunists have set off for other European countries, such as France, Belgium and the Netherlands.

1. Does the Commission share the view that, to a large extent, the vast influx of immigrants from North Africa is made up of persons seeking to improve their economic prospects?

2. Does the Commission share the view that a halt must immediately be called to the vast influx of illegal immigrants from North Africa? Can the Commission say what plans it has to bring this about? If not, why not?

3. Does the Commission share the view that these illegal immigrants should be accommodated in their own region and under no circumstances be accommodated in the European Union? If not, why not?

The Danish People's Party

The elections to the European Parliament in 2009 gave the Danish People's Party two seats for Morten Messerschmidt and Anna Rosbach. At first, the two representatives belonged to

the Europe of Freedom and Democracy (EFD) group, but in early March Anna Rosback decided to leave the Danish People's Party and joined the European Conservatives and Reformists Group (ECR). According to her press secretary, the change was for "personal reasons, not political." During her time as a representative of the Danish People's Party in the assembly, a large portion of her speeches in the House concerned climate, support for Western Sahara and violence against women in India.

Morten Messerschmidt is one of the Danish People's Party's promising young politicians. During his five years in Parliament, he has managed to make around 70 comments in the chamber, ranging from the need to reduce the EU's budget, criticism of the European Commission's proposal for a quota on private company boards and criticism of the system of subsidies to EU parties.

But Messerschmidt has also criticised EU labour mobility which he says leads to social tourism. In a written question to the European

Commission on 8 October 2013, signed along with several other members of the EFD group, he demanded answers about how the European Commission regards the concept of social tourism.

The freedom of movement is one of the EU's founding principles and is widely seen as a valuable asset for EU citizens. More than 13.5 million EU citizens are living in another member state. A large number of these citizens move to wealthier member states in order to take advantage of more generous social benefits, especially with respect to education, housing and healthcare. According to Eurostat statistics, the unemployment rate among migrants in member states with generous social benefits is about twice as high as among the national citizens of the same State. The amounts paid in the form of social benefits can differ by more than a factor of 12 within the EU, resulting in a situation where the existing principles of free movement can be abused. Social protection systems are very different in different member states, making

it possible for immigrants from other member states to fraudulently take advantage of host countries' social benefits. The current situation has led to an increasing number of member states receiving a large number of migrants. It has also led to a decline in confidence in the advantages of the right to free movement of labour, which is fuelling demands to take back national sovereignty.

1. Does the Commission accept that the phenomenon of social tourism exists in the EU? If not, how can the Commission follow this up?

2. Does the Commission reconsider its current position and introduce a balanced policy to promote the benefits of free movement of labour, while dealing with the unintended financial burdens EU host countries have to bear?

3. Does the Commission intends to develop a consistent and cooperative approach across the EU to ensure that the abuse of the freedom of movement is minimised and that

it is not used by migrants with criminal intent?

In a debate during the session in Strasbourg the 22 October later the same year Morten Messerschmidt followed up the issue during in a debate on the theme "EU citizens free movement and Member States 'welfare system'.

Mr President! Thank you, Commissioner Andor, for coming and participating in this important debate today. I must admit that I knew we lived far apart, but it is new to me that we are actually living on two completely different planets. However, that must be the conclusion after hearing what you have said.

Freedom of movement is good. Nobody is questioning that, you say. Yes, but what is freedom of movement other than the recent decision of the European Court of Justice, which we are compelled to follow without any democratic debate and without any democratic mandate? What was free movement a year ago is not the same as today in relation to the right to receive

student grants, social assistance and what not - rights to welfare benefits in general. It is not the same as it will be in four years or five years, because the Court constantly moves the limits for what we out in our Member States may reserve for our own citizens.

They say there is no problem. They have had consultancies produce a report that shows - consultancies that over the past six years have received half a billion kroner for services from this house, from your house, from the EU system in general. Pure commissioned work, which only exposes how outrageous is the attitude of your Commission to this problem.

They say that we who point out that we want to keep welfare benefits for our own citizens and ourselves who have paid taxes in our own countries, are just Eurosceptics and populists. Well, if so, then the British government, the Dutch government, the Austrian Government, the German Government are nothing more than populists.

I hope that at some point - perhaps after the next elections to the Parliament, when you are no longer serving in the high office you have today, will be mortified about the manner in which you have handled the freedom of movement and the right to welfare benefits in the EU!

During the 2000s, The Danish People's Party has competed with Folkebevægelsen mod EU (Popular Movement against the EU) to establish itself as one of Denmark's sharpest critics of the EU. But its time as a support party to the centre-right government in 2001-2011 has contributed to a certain displacement. New studies have shown that the party is really not quite so critical of the EU as previously thought.

Rasmus Brun Pedersen and Flemming Juul Christiansen, both researchers at the Institute for Political Science at Aarhus University, note that the Danish People's Party differed little from other parties in the centre-right government in its approach to the EU. Since the party supported the centre-right

government in 2001 in the Danish parliament, the party's elected representatives voted in favour of an overwhelming majority of the proposals that were linked to the EU.

The survey, which is based on a review of 2,057 legislative proposals linked to the EU that were up for consideration by the Danish parliament during the period 1997-2007, showed that the Danish People's Party voted in favour of the majority of these. During the period from 2001 to 2005, the Danish People's Party voted yes to 89.5%, and from 2005 to 2007, the figure was 86.4%.[140]

A constantly changing continent

In recent decades, the world has undergone a profound social and economic upheaval. The oil crisis of the 1970s, the collapse of communism a decade later, changes in populations' migratory patterns, increased competition when trade barriers have been dismantled and financial markets have been opened up to foreign capital, economic progress, especially in the coastal areas of East

[140] Brun Pedersen & Juul Christiansen (2010)

Asia, changes in the Earth's climate, growing tensions in the wake of the war in Iraq, Islamist terrorism in the United States and Western Europe and turmoil in the financial markets are some of the events that have shaped and continue to shape our daily lives and the policies pursued by governments.

None of this has left Europe unaffected. People who previously lived in poverty but without competition behind the Iron Curtain, now find themselves in a constant competition for jobs and economic development. Western Europeans, who just a decade ago proclaimed the end of history and welcomed eternal peace, are now subjected to demands for change and adaptation when globalisation makes itself felt. The result is that previous political and economic privileges are questioned. Maintaining the level of wealth that was previously taken for granted now requires that time-honoured truths must be reconsidered, a trend that is likely to intensify in the wake of the debt crisis now affecting Europe.

In many ways, it is understandable that many people experience the situation as more troubling than the Cold War. When the Soviet Union was in opposition to the West, at least the lines of conflict were clear. There were clearly defined roles and the opinion-forming role of politics was also clear. Now the landscape looks very different. The formal power of politics certainly still exists, but its influence over society and its role in human life has decreased in several respects. Many people have found that earlier certainties are no longer reliable and that "development" in the world of politicians is the same as the loss of opportunities and meaning. There is also an ongoing trend here which simultaneously evokes both hope and mistrust.

One way to understand the emergence of the extreme parties as depicted in this book is to consider them as reactions to what is taking place. The world that grew out of the ruins of World War II created conditions for an exceptional rate of development. Economic growth surpassed all records and optimism for

the future flourished. Growth occurred not only on the financial markets: the domains of politics also grew. In Western European countries, the welfare state, in the sense of a comprehensive tax-funded public sector, became both the means and the goal for all policies in the '50s and '60s.

Development was not consistent however. At the same time as the European countries obtained the resources and opportunities to increasingly provide for welfare for their populations, a process was also initiated shortly after the war ended in 1945 to gradually transfer political power from the national level to the European level. In retrospect, it is possible to understand the ambition. The dream of a united Europe, a political and economic integration which would prevent further conflict on European soil was understandable, given that many of the responsible decision-makers had their own experience of the horrors of two world wars. For many, the nation-state symbolised the cradle of the chauvinism that has caused

such unimaginable devastation in Europe and it was hoped that new wars could be prevented, especially by integrating France and Germany.

It did not take long before European cooperation bore fruit. For a long time, the EU played an important role in efforts to remove trade barriers and promote economic growth. But no matter how successful parts of the project may appear, it is difficult to ignore the growing lack of popular support. European voters have only rarely had an opportunity to express their feelings on the speed and extent of the integration process. Nor has there been any real ambition among the politicians to let Europeans decide how and in what direction the EU should develop. Rather, the architects of the European project established early in the transition process from a national system to a supranational order that a provincial form of internationalism, *Europaism*, was far too delicate to be tested on the people.

When we now see how the distance between politicians and voters is growing in Europe,

the story of how and by what means the EU developed is an important part of the effort to understand what is happening. In their enthusiasm to unite Europe and relegate nationalism to the history books, the legislators forgot one of the most important prerequisites for a functioning democracy - that all politics is ultimately local. This glaring omission is now demanding its price.

In light of this, it would be beneficial for the parties who are sceptical and critical of the EU to gain power. Europe's current crisis is the result not only of a political reluctance to reform the member countries' economic and political system, but to a growing extent also the result of an excessively driven process of political integration in the EU. Although Europe's prosperity is the result of both mutual trade between individual states, who challenged each other in economic and institutional competition, European cooperation is now increasingly being driven in a strongly centralist direction. Democracy and market principles are being forced to take

a back seat while grandiose plans for a United States of Europe, which can act in tandem with the U.S. and China, are being realised.
But for a growing section of the European electorate, it is the extreme parties such as the Danish People's Party and Jobbik who have the solution to Europe's problems. By advocating what can be likened to national parks, communities closed to foreign influence and competition, the parties are holding out the prospect that there is a credible defence against the way society is evolving. If only we were able to close our borders to the rest of the world, we could recreate a society where life seemed simpler and less threatening, is their message to the voters. The risk is obvious that such a policy, rather than making countries richer, would instead undermine the conditions for entrepreneurship and competitiveness. The poverty that would result from this introversion would impact hardest on the very voters who voted for these parties.

This is a development that both EU critics and EU supporters have reason to fear. A fair criticism of the political and economic integration process within the EU must not turn into a repudiation of the vision of a free and open society. Europe deserves better than that.

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In 'Europe deserves better', we take a closer look at extreme nationalism and study three parties that are expected to win more support in the forthcoming elections to the European Parliament in May 2014 – Hungarian Jobbik, Dutch Party for Freedom and the Danish People's Party. By describing their history, achievements and setbacks, we hope to contribute to better knowledge that in turn may facilitate an understanding of why these movements are gaining ground and how they should be met.

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