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European Elections Monitoring Center

Danish Country Report 2019

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Publication date:
2019

Document Version
Early version, also known as pre-print

DENMARK

Membership: **1973**
European area: **Northern Europe**
Population: **5,659,715**
Number of MEPs: **13**
Election day: **May 26, 2019**
Concurrent elections: **Political, general or national**

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ANALYSIS OF THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN

The European elections 2019 became a historic event in Denmark when 66 percent of the Danish voters voted on May 26.th 2019. That was the highest voter turnout since the first European election in 1979

In Denmark the Minister for Economic Affairs and the Interior sets the day for holding the election based on the appropriate rules and regulations of the European Communities, and announces the day for holding the election in the Danish Official Gazette. Denmark constitutes a single electoral area in which all members are elected by proportional representation. Denmark has 13 of the 751 members of the European Parliament (When/if UK leaves EU, Denmark will have 14 of the 705 members). Voting and counting take place in the same polling districts and nomination districts as in general elections. No European Parliamentary elections are held in the Faroe Islands or Greenland, as they do not participate in the European co-operation.

In 2019 Denmark had chosen the 26th of May as the elections day - a Sunday - and all EU citizens above the age of 18 were be eligible to cast their vote. However, non-Danish EU citizens living in Denmark had to register to vote. The rule in Denmark is that you have to register for voting as a foreigner 35 days before the election. (The Danish Minister for Economic Affairs and the Interior). The election campaign officially began on Saturday the 4.th of May at 12:00 pm. when parties were allowed to begin hanging up election poster. In Danish elections political advertisings is not allowed on television. Election posters are allowed with restrictions regarding public safety.

In Denmark the following parties were entitled to stand in European Parliamentary elections: 1) parties which in the general election held at least six weeks prior to the election day obtained parliamentary representation, and which are still represented in Parliament six weeks prior to the election day; 2) parties which in the previous European Parliamentary election obtained representation in the European Parliament, and which are still represented therein six weeks prior to the election day; and 3) new parties having registered with the Minister for Economic Affairs and the Interior no later than twelve noon, eight weeks prior to the election day. The registration form must be accompanied by statements from voters corresponding to at least two per cent of all valid voters at the previous general election, at present numbering 70.380 (1).

In Denmark the political parties are generally divided into two blocks - the red and blue blocks. On the left, the red block include the Social Democrats, Social Liberals, Socialist People's Party, Red/Green Alliance and newly-formed Alternative Party. On the right, the blue block includes the Liberals, Conservatives, Danish People's Party (O), Liberal Alliance (I), and Christian Democrats (K), which have no parliamentary representation today. In EP-election the People's Movement Against the EU also stands for election. In the EP-parliament the Danish parties are largely part of the bigger groups. The European's People Party (EPP) is the conservative party under which the Danish Conservative party falls. Socialists & Democrats (S&D) is the social democratic party, where the Danish social democrats are members and as part of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats of Europe (ALDE), we find the Danish liberal party and also the Danish Social liberal party.

The 2019 EP-election ran almost concurrent with the national elections. The resulted in a hybrid campaign where EU-politics became one of the top issues on the national election agenda and Danish prime minister, Lars Løkke Rasmussen, made it a special point of his own election campaigns, to argue that having two elections at almost the same time, gave the Danes an unique opportunity to debate national and European politics at the same time. The issues at the top of the agenda of both campaigns were immigration and the environment. Most of the Danish parties campaigned on both issues, except for the Danish Peoples party who, in both campaigns, focused on immigration. The result was a big win for the Danish Liberal Party that won four seats, which is one seat more than in the last elections, and the parties that focused on the environment, especially the Danish Socialist party and the Social Liberal Party.

The Danish Peoples Party became the biggest loser of the election, holding on to just one out of a previous four seats. The Danish Peoples Party probably lost both to due to lack of including the environment in their campaign, but probably also because the party has been involved in scandals over its' use of EU funds in recent years. Also the party was, in the national election campaign, under pressure due to the emergence of new fringe parties, who are seeking to outdo it by taking even harder stances on immigration. This probably also influenced the party's European campaign. The People's Movement Against the EU which has consistently held a seat in previous elections, also lost more than half of its vote share and will thus no longer be represented in the European Parliament.

ELECTORAL MATERIALS

Total contents
107

Social contents	Poster and press	Commercials
73	34	0

| Political party	Social contents	Poster and Press advertising	Commercials	Number of seats
Dansk Folkeparti (DF)	33	2	-	1
Radikale Venstre (Rad)	10	7	-	2
Venstre (V)	11	5	-	3
Socialistisk Folkeparti (SF)	Not monitored	12	-	2
Det Konservative Folkeparti (Kons)	5	4	-	1
Liberal Alliance (LA)	6	2	-	0
Enhedslisten (Ø)	8	-	-	1
Socialdemokratiet (S)	Not monitored	2	-	3

Establishing an overview of the activities of the political parties for the election for European Parliament, it is important to remember, that the campaign for European election has been running side-by-side with the campaign election for the national parliament. The camping for the European Election had a solo run for about a week before the national election was announced. Of course, this have had a significant influence on the activities of the political parties, where their activities were a bit higher prior to the announcement of the national election, but also a bit higher in the days right before the European election. It is worth noting, that the amount of press advertising is quite low and predominantly from before the announcement of the national election. This also applies to social content.

Establishing any correlation between activities and number of seats, would of course be impossible with the data present for analysis. However, it is worth noting, that the two right-wing parties, Dansk Folkeparti and Liberal Alliance, had poor election results both for the national elections and European election. Both parties were reduced to half the number of seats in the national parliament as opposed to the term before. This is mirrored in the results for the election for European Parliament, where Dansk Folkeparti, despite being the most active campaigning party social media, only achieved one (they had four seats in the previous term) seat and Liberal Alliance did not achieve election at all. Thus, a political trend is probably present in both elections.

ON WHICH DIMENSION ARE THE CONTENTS FOCUSED ON?

The campaign for the election for the European Parliament has mostly been focused on the European or national/European level. For all parties except Socialistisk Folkeparti, these dimensions account for more than half. Socialistisk Folkeparti has apparently been more focused on the Extra European level, but this party has not been using social media in their campaign. The activities of Socialistisk Folkeparti come from press advertising and posters, typically communicating in a different manner. As such a different pattern could be expected. Dansk Folkeparti, a right-wing party in the ACRE group, has been the most active in the national dimension.

As such it is no surprise that the European elections campaign have been within the European and National/European dimension. The quite low amount of content from the National dimension is however quite surprising. This could partly be because the two campaigns (national and European) running side by side and needing to differ from each other. But it could also be because the European election, turning to themes, has been on issues, that are not exclusively national issues but rather distinctively European issues; environment and immigration.
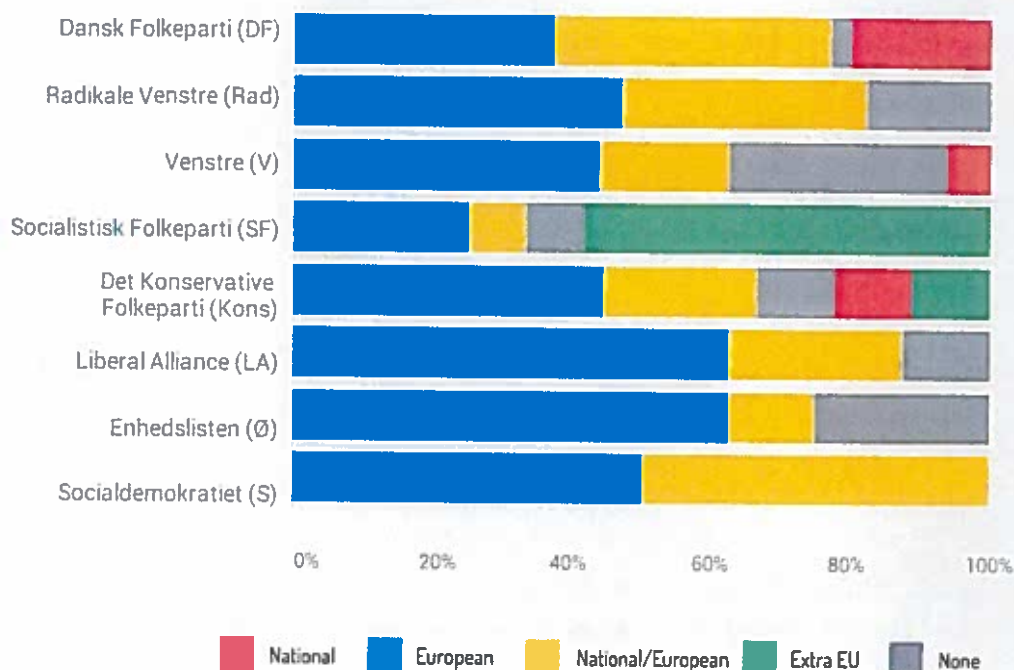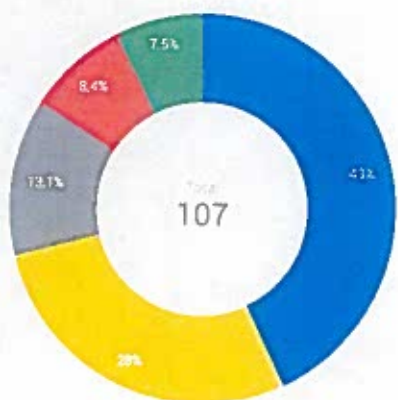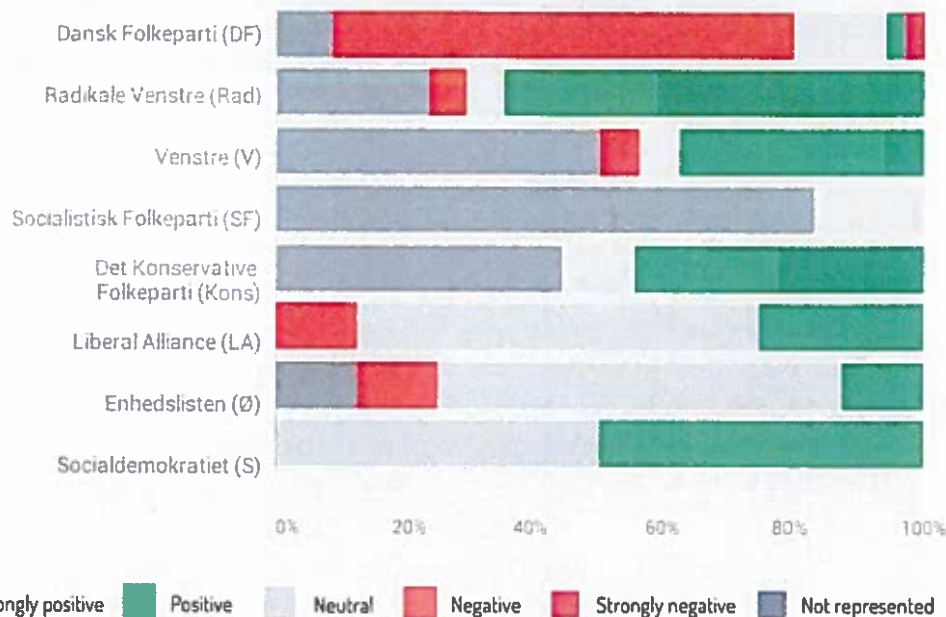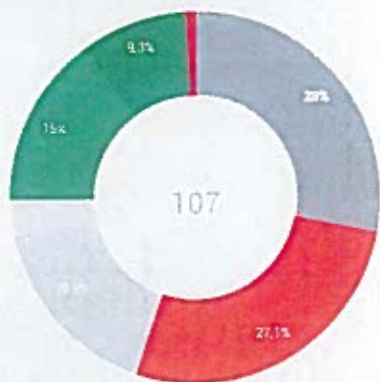

HOW IS EUROPE REPRESENTED?

The European Union is mostly either not represented or represented negatively. However, it is worth noting, that the negativity comes from the right-wing Dansk Folkeparti, and the high amount of non-representation comes from Socialistisk Folkeparti. Both of these parties differ from the other parties, as Dansk Folkeparti has been the most active on social media and Socialistisk Folkeparti has not been on social media at all, but

rather utilized posters and press advertisings.

Turning to the remainder of parties, a more positive trend is appearing where Europe is represented "positive" in around half the instances. It is also worth noting, that in many cases, Europe is represented as something neutral.

Legend: Strongly positive | Positive | Neutral | Negative | Strongly negative | Not represented

MAIN TOPICS OF THE CAMPAIGN

The topics of the campaign should be seen in light of the dimensions of the campaign. The main dimensions were European and National/European.

Turning to the topic most represented it is Europe. Many of the parties have had campaigns that point out, why Europe and the European Union is an important joint venture of nations. However, in many cases the topic has been on Immigration and Environment. This is two distinct topics, that most of the parties link to a European context typically campaigning that these topics are either problems caused by the European Union or that the solution for problems lies in the context of the collaboration of European countries. Labour-market and Economics are also topics that are briefly mentioned. Other topics (Security Welfare, Values etc.) are overlooked. The agreement of the topics could point to a European common discourse of the topics of European campaigning in Denmark.
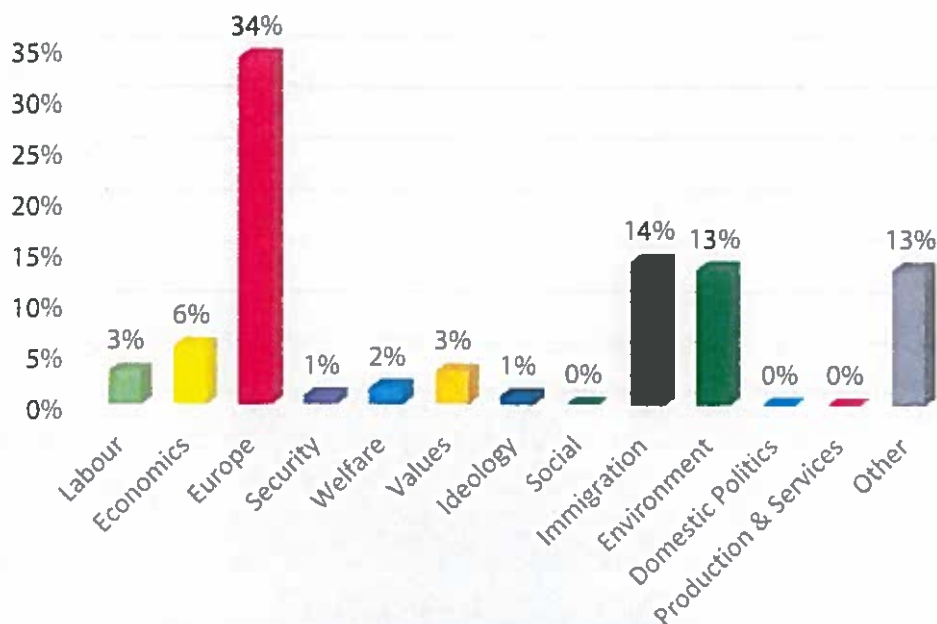

*Multiple variables - the % values could be over than 100%. In the chart are not included the values related to the electoral campaign issues.

NEGATIVE CAMPAIGN

As this is one of the first elections where social content is both utilized by parties and monitored (by means of for instance as this report) it is interesting, that parties do not turn to negative campaigning, even though social media definitely makes this tempting to do.

Danish politicians and political parties have never been known to use much negative campaigning. The campaign for the European election has not been different in this manner. In the few instances where there has been negative campaigning, the target has typically been impossible to place within the target categories. This is evident most of the target of negativity is in the category other. One interpretation of this could be that because Danish parties typically do not use negative campaigning, they do not want to target other parties or politicians in the few instances where they do turn to negative campaigning.
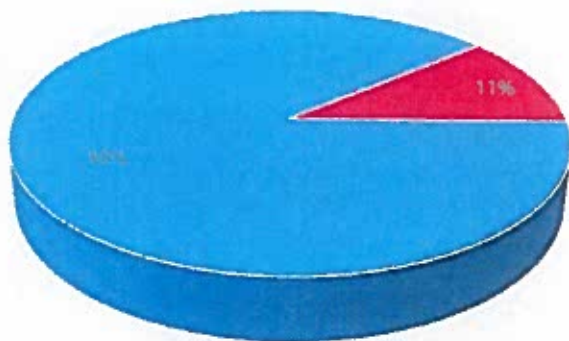
- No Neg   • Neg
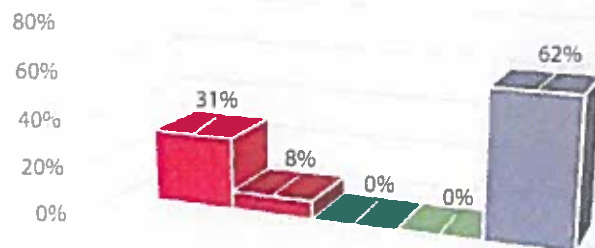
- Foreign Instit. Parties Politicians
- National Instit. Parties Politicians
- Other
- Foreign Media People Associations
- National Media People Associations

SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

| 7 | 569 | 326578 | 12,9 %
percentage of posts on EU campaign topics |

Social content is always subject to many reservations. These reservations also apply here. Especially because Denmark have had two election running side by side.

However, it is clear that social media (here Facebook) was utilized by most political parties but the parties utilized social media to different degrees. The most active party was Dansk Folkeparti followed by Venstre, Enhedslisten and Radikale Venstre. Turning to levels of engagement, Dansk Folkeparti got the most but also the angriest engagement. Venstre got quite a lot of traction in their social media campaign and many ironic/amused reactions to their posts. The campaign of Enhedslisten produced quite a few angry reactions but

also many favourable ones.

Many of the parties (specifically Enhedslisten, Venstre, Dansk Folkeparti and Radikale Venstre) produced several campaign films – some with higher production value than others. Denmark is a country where political advertising on television is not allowed. Video campaigns, commercials with high production value and political content, is thus not usually seen in Denmark. As this is "new" to the Danes, it is interesting that these parties are also the parties with the highest engagement levels, though engagement and election for parliament does not necessarily correlate.
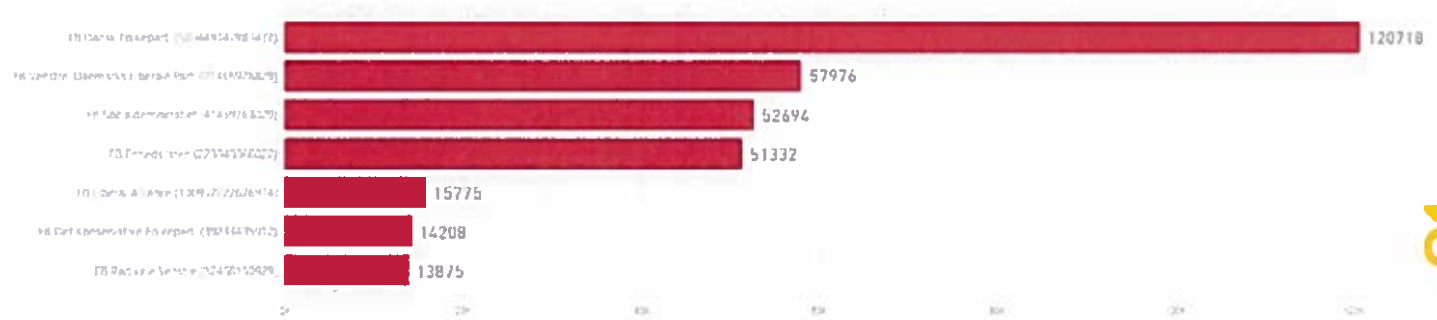
NUMBER OF FB POSTS BY POLITICAL PARTY
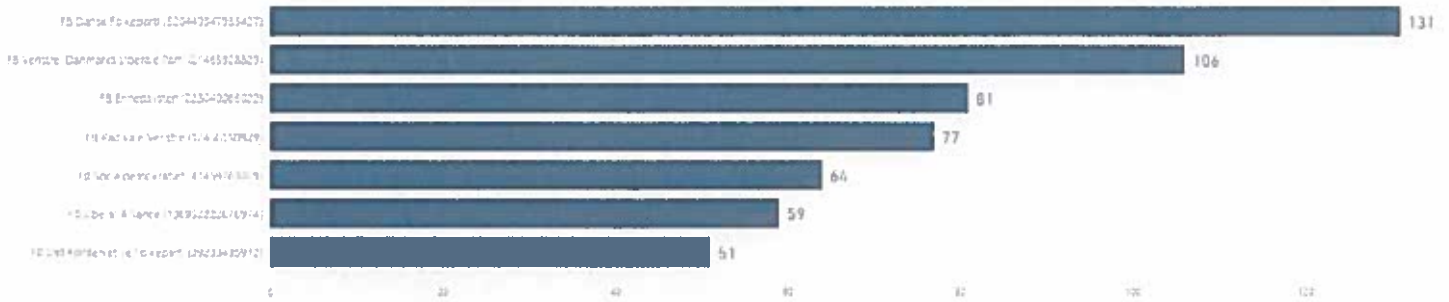
*EEMC research monitored the official FB account of the most political parties in terms of votes.
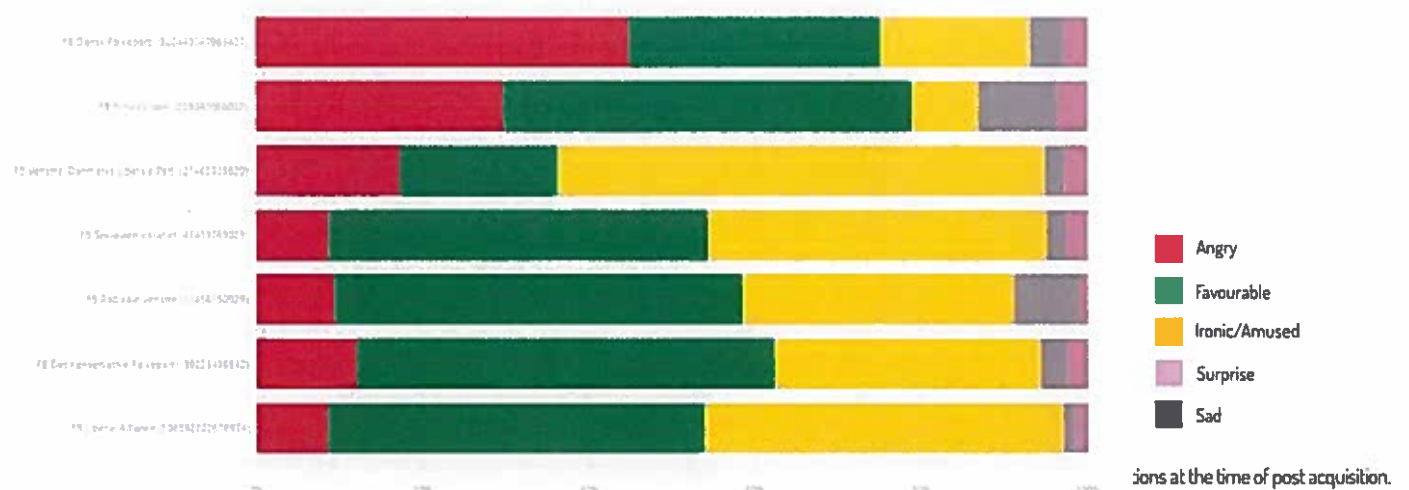
Post published

ENGAGEMENT BY POLITICAL PARTY

*Engagement at the time of post acquisition.

Engagement

REACTIONS BY POLITICAL PARTY

- Angry
- Favourable
- Ironic/Amused
- Surprise
- Sad

:ions at the time of post acquisition.