

Immigration in the Manifestos and Parliament Speeches of Danish Left and Right Wing Parties between 2009 and 2020

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Our aims and method

Immigration is a policy area that often divides parties and public opinion. Therefore, it has frequently been investigated by political scientists comparing policy positions of parties and countries.

- We aimed to determine how 7 Danish right and left wing parties have addressed *immigration* in their election manifestos (2011/2015/2019) and parliamentary speeches (2009-2020) also considering the 2015 refugee crisis.
- We use quantitative methods as proposed by political scientists and content analyses using available NLP tools. These are chosen taking into account the different size and annotations of the two datasets.

Immigration studies including Denmark

- Green-Pedersen and Krogstrup (2008) analyze immigration policy in Denmark and Sweden (1980s-1990s) counting relevant (quasi-)sentences in manifestos. Immigration becomes an issue in Danish politics after popularity of new anti-immigration parties (**party competition**).
- Alonso and da Fonseca (2012) argue that the new focus on immigration by left wing parties in West European countries is not only due to party competition.
- Hagelund (2021) investigates immigration policy changes in Danish, Norwegian and Swedish manifestos and some media after the 2015 refugee crisis. The Danish politicians' focus has been to create support for measures that restrict immigration and reduce the impact of different cultures on the society.

The 7 parties

The Red-Green Unity List (Enhedslisten - EL): the leftmost party

Socialist People's party (Socialistisk Folkeparti - SF)

Social Democratic party (Social Demokratiet SD) the largest party **leading the left wing governments** (2014-2016, 2019-)

Danish Social Liberal party (Radikale Venstre - RV): **centre right party**, currently supports left-wing government.

The Liberal party (Venstre – V). It has been **leading right wing governments** (2009-2014, 2016-2019)

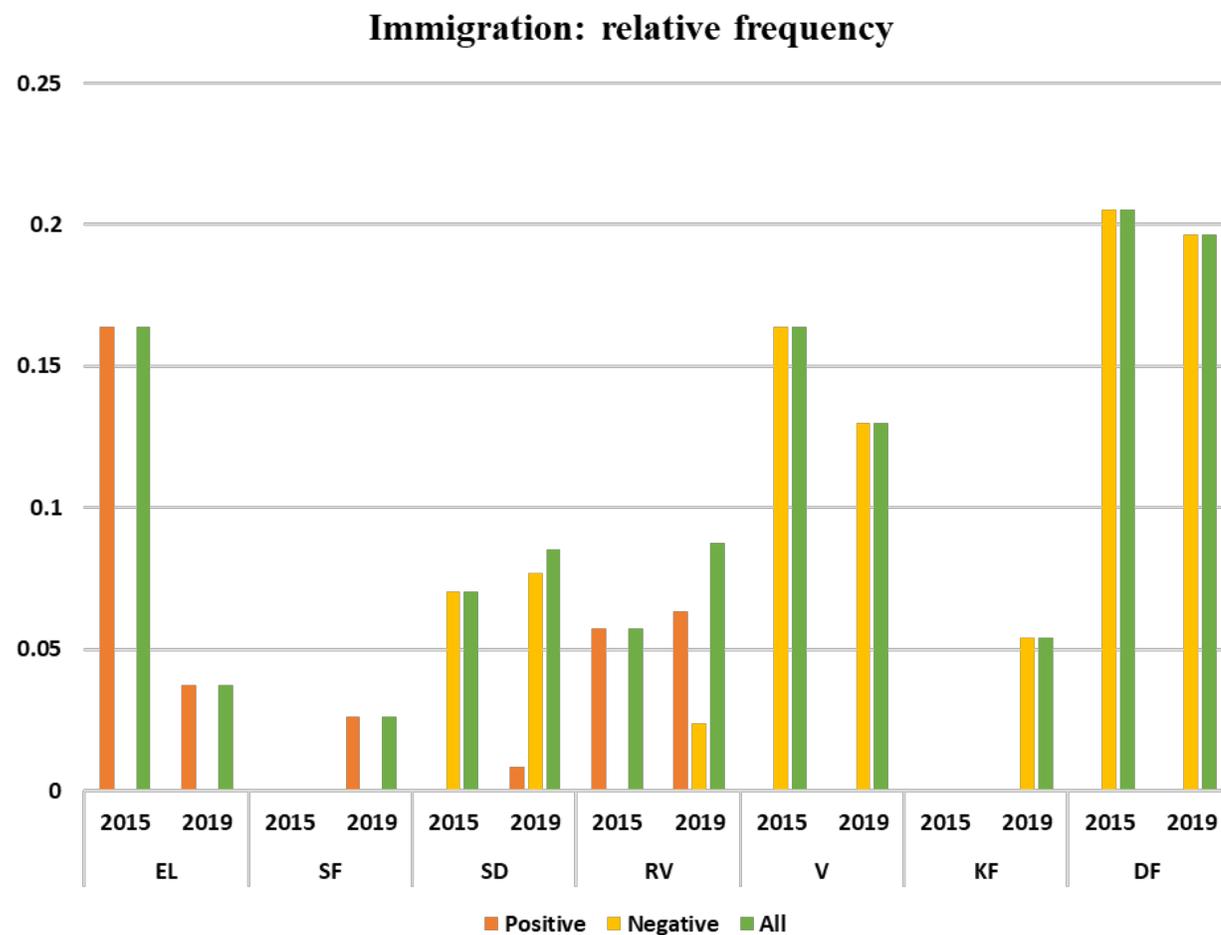
Conservative People's party (Konservative Folkeparti – KF)

Danish People's party (Dansk Folkeparti - DF): strong line **against immigrants**

The data

- Three electoral manifestos for each of the 7 parties (2011, 2015, 2019) with policy areas annotations by the Comparative Manifesto Project. Manifestos are short. Size varies from party to party and year to year. Total words on immigration: 6576.
- The parliamentary speeches (2009-2020) annotated with policy areas by the CLARIN-DK group (Navarretta and Hansen LREC2022) following the Comparative Policy Agendas Project and the Danish Policy Agenda's schemes. 44,460 speeches on Immigration by the 7 parties. Total words: 4,452,71.

Relative frequency of quasi-sentences in manifestos

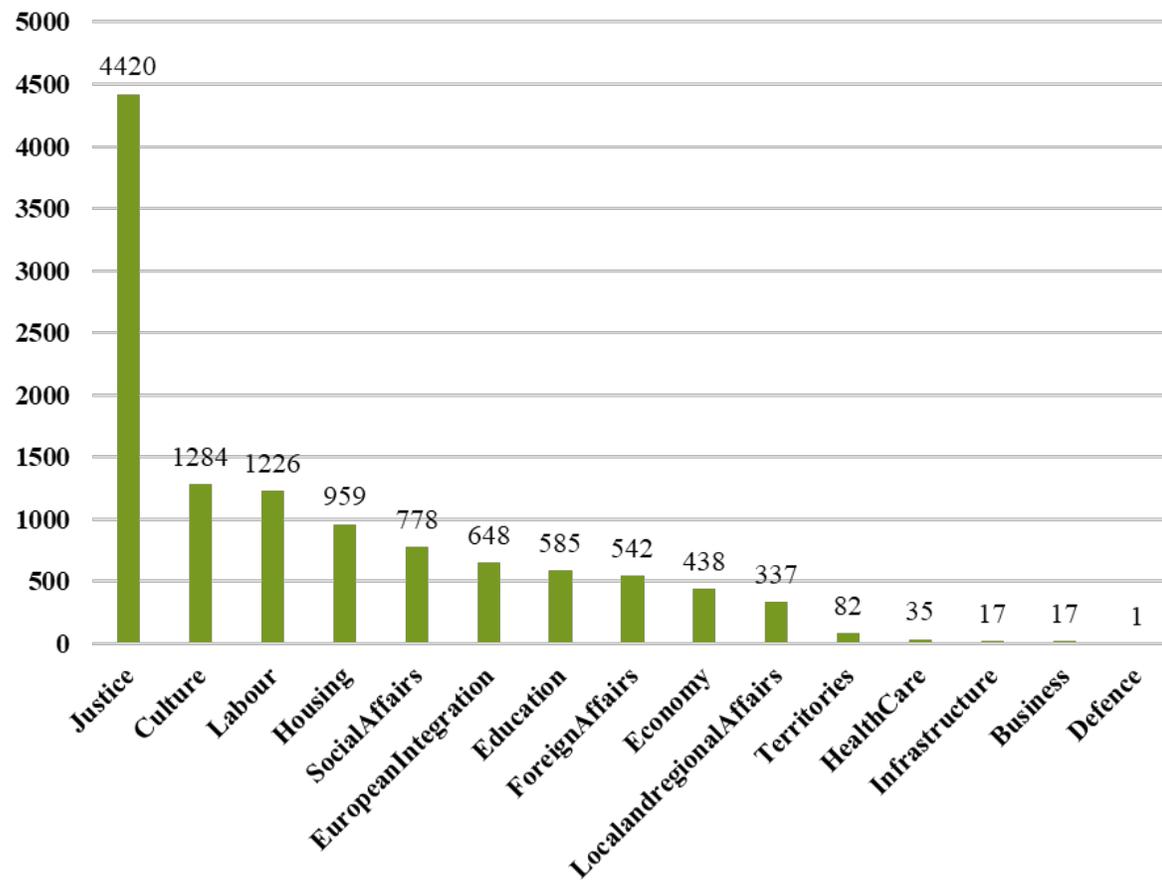


Sentiment analysis vs. policy annotations in manifestos

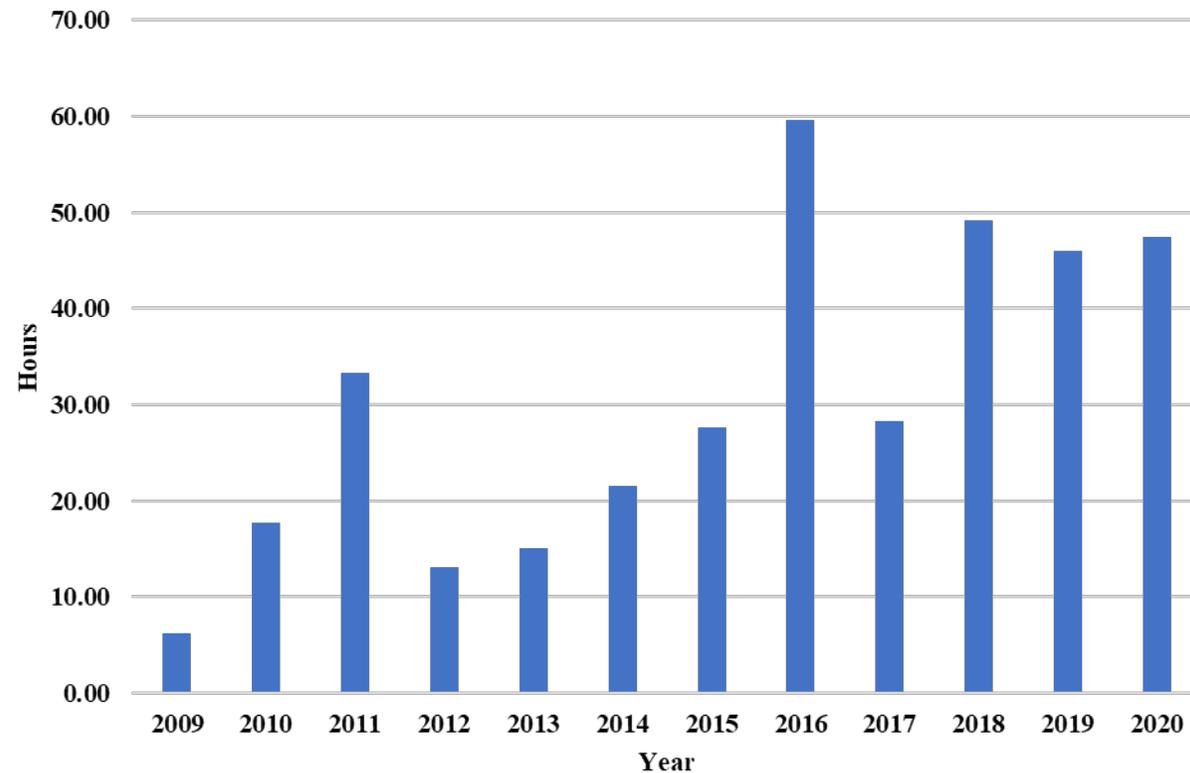
- We run a sentiment analysis tool (Nielsen 2011) on the immigration (quasi) sentences and compared the results with the positive/negative immigration policy annotations by the Comparative Manifesto Project as proposed by Zinn et al. (2016).
- Not surprisingly, comparison of annotations reflects their different types and scope (one sentence vs. more context related sentences/words vs. content) but helps spotting communication strategies, e.g. present restrictive policy positively, or humanitarian policy mixing negative and positive sentences.

Immigration in the parliamentary speeches

Cooccurring Subjects

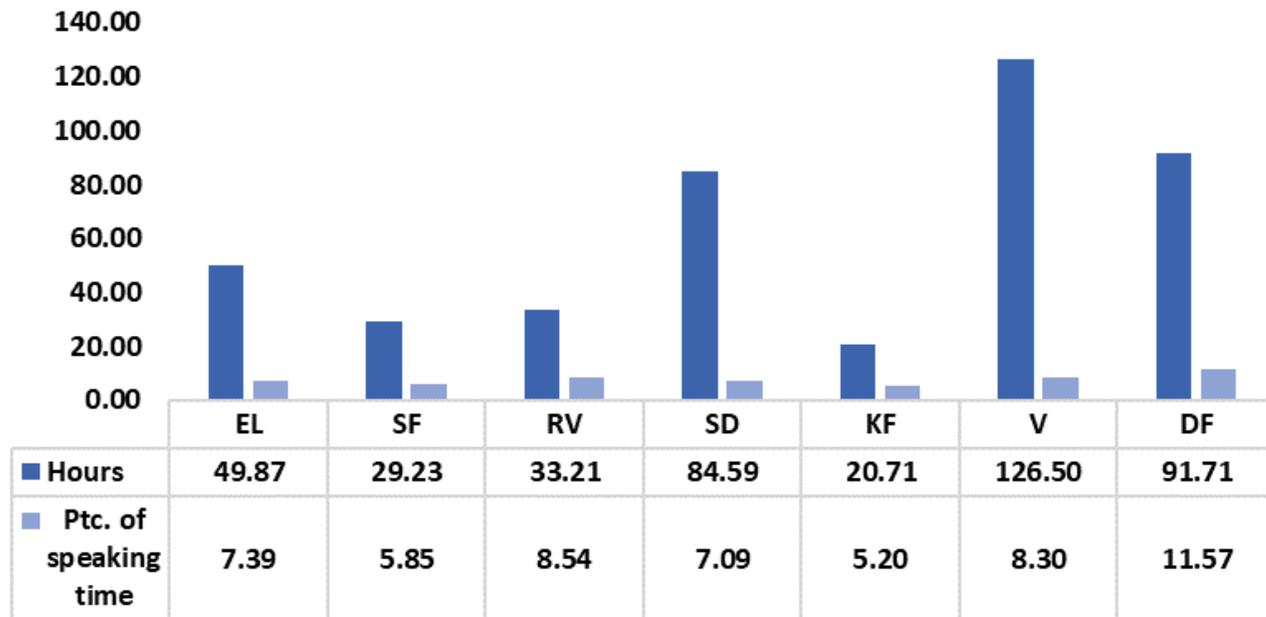


Immigration: hours



Immigration in the 7 parties' speeches

Immigration: time in speeches



Parties with same focus on immigration in manifestos and speeches:

Red-Green Unit List (**EL**), Socialist People's Party (**SF**), Social Democratic Party (**SD**), Liberal Party (**V**), Danish People's Party (**DF**)

Different focus on immigration in speeches and manifestos:

Social Liberal Party (**RV**): Politicians speak relatively much about immigration in the parliament, even though their manifestos do not address the subject much.

Extracting topics on immigration via topic modeling

Topic modeling applied on speeches pre-processes with CLARIN-DK's Text Tonsorium tools (Jongejan 2010). Word representations tested: BOW and TF*IDF values. Best topic groups could be summarized by the following titles:

- 1. *Naturalization process***
- 2. Refugees and legislation*
- 3. Integration*
- 4. *Family and international conventions***
- 5. Local affairs (schools, housing)*
- 6. Immigrants and job*
- 7. *Culture differences, crime***
- 8. *Religion***
- 9. *Radicalization***

Discussion and Conclusions 1

We extended the counting strategy of manifestos' sentences to parliamentary speeches.

Our quantitative analyses show that:

- The importance of *immigration* has grown over the past decade especially after the 2015 refugee crisis.
- Most right-wing parties argued for restrictive immigration policy, and most left-wing parties argued for less restrictive policy, but two exceptions: Social Liberals (centre right) and the Social Democrats (centre left).
- Parties' positions cannot only be explained by left or right wing groups, both party competition and the world situation play important roles.
- While most parties had equal focus on immigration in manifestos and speeches, the social liberals show different behavior.
- Economy is not a main issue in the speeches.

Discussion and conclusion 2

- The comparison of sentiment analysis and policy annotations in the manifestos shows expected differences between the two types of annotations, but also supports the analysis of the parties' communication strategies.
- Topic modeling run on parliamentary speeches returned groups of words showing that the debates focused on integration, cultural differences, religion, terrorism and crime. Human interpretation of results is necessary.
- Both quantitative and qualitative analysis are important. Available NLP tools run on freely available annotated data are useful if you take into consideration their limits.

Future work

- Comparing topic modeling results in debates from different countries.
- Investigating other policy areas and testing more advanced NLP tools.