Antecedents of Realignments and the Case for Secular Realignment in Denmark

A. John Berrigan, National Analysts

This study starts with the premise that political norms and structures determine national electoral propensities toward critical or secular realignments in partisan affiliation. It is hypothesized that historical and structural characteristics of the Danish political system mitigate against rapid changes in partisan affiliations and voting patterns. Empirical evidence is presented to demonstrate that observed changes in the partisan distribution of the Danish vote in 1973 – 1977 resulted from a gradual redistribution of partisan affiliation with origins in the 1950s.

Contrary to the conventional wisdom, the study concludes that a secular, not critical, realignment occurred in Denmark during the 1970s.

Introduction

Much research evidence has been marshaled to argue that voters establish patterns of behavior based upon acquired party preference. Normally, each election is a simple reaffirmation of preference and habit. Occasionally, however, electorates undergo durable changes in partisan voting preferences referred to as realignments. Although realignments are significant due to their impact upon the order of party competition for elected office as well as the agenda and priorities of public policymaking, it is the form of realignments which concerns us here (Arian 1975; Butler & Stokes 1976; Burnham 1970; Campbell 1966; Chambers and Burnham 1967; Converse 1966; Ladd 1970; Key 1955; Key 1959; Macrae and Meldrum 1960; McHale & Shaber 1976; Sundquist 1973; Wildgen 1974).

Realignments may take several forms. V. O. Key coined the term 'critical realignment' to describe an election or closely spaced series of elections in which sharp, durable and profound readjustments occur in the partisan relations of power (Key 1955). Key differentiates the critical realignment from the more protracted, evolutionary process of partisan change called the secular realignment (Key 1959). According to Key, the

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secular realignment is defined by a threshold election which signals a reordering of the electoral partisan affiliations. However, unlike critical realignments, secular realignments do not happen suddenly. There is none of the immediate emotional intensity and polarization characteristic of the critical realignment. Rather, secular realignments occur gradually as converts and new voters disavow the party of their parents.

In 1973, the Danish electorate departed from more than fifty years of partisan tradition. For the first time in the 20th Century, the four major parties lost substantial numbers of supporters. The beneficiaries of this redistribution of the Danish vote were the recently formed Progressive Party and Socialist People's Party.

This paper argues that contrary to appearances, the realignment exhibited in the parliamentary elections of 1973 – 1977 was secular and not critical in form. It is hypothesized that the Danish political system possesses characteristics which mitigate against a critical form of realignment. Factors such as proportional representation, a unitary parliamentary system and a homogeneous electorate combine to foster a stable electoral environment in which a redistribution in partisan affiliation occurs. Empirical evidence is presented to demonstrate that the Folketing elections of 1973 were the product of a secular realignment with origins in the elections of 1957.

Stabilizing Features of the Danish Political System

If electorates behaved similarly despite the unique influence of historical experience, the study of electoral change would be simple. All that would be necessary would be a single national unit of observation upon which hypotheses could be tested and verified. All results could then be presumed to have cross-national validity. However, cross-national studies indicate that variety in historical experience and sequential development have produced differences in political norms, political structures and electoral systems which in turn have affected the character of electoral change in individual nations (Almond & Verba 1965; Lipset & Rokkan 1967; Rokkan 1970). The contrast between the systems of the United States and Denmark illustrates this point.

Commenting upon the dynamics of electoral change in the United States, Walter Dean Burnham attributes the periodic tendency of the American electorate toward dramatic, sudden and durable changes in voting patterns to federalism, separation of powers, the electoral system and the potentially explosive, heterogeneous population base (1970). If historical systemic conditions in the United States contribute to sharp,

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sudden electoral changes, the Danish political system is a study in contrast.

In Denmark, political conflict has historically rotated upon an axis of socio-economic cleavages. At first, rural tenant farmers sought to acquire the right to property ownership, the voting franchise and liberation from oppressive taxation. These tenant peasants were joined by paternalistic, reform-oriented democrats demanding a constitution, representative government and general suffrage. This coalition was opposed by the landed aristocracy who claimed protection for the integrity of hereditary privilege, status and land ownership.

The Constitutions of 1849 and 1866 diffused existing political tensions by providing for both representation and suffrage. Throughout the remainder of the 19th Century, shifting, vague party organizations such as The Right, The Left, The National Liberals and The Friends of the Peasants sponsored candidates for elected office and represented socio-economic clienteles in the national legislature. Elections and representation reduced tension by institutionalizing influence. Each cleavage group found that through the political party they could express demands upon government. When the most immediate demands were met, emotional commitments began to wane. All that remained was the party organization and the residual electoral loyalty of cleavage groups.

The industrial revolution ushered in the last lines of cleavage in the 19th Century. In 1878, two products of industrialism (socialism and the union movement) merged forces to form the Social Democratic Union (SDU). The movement goals were directed toward democratic reforms rather than Marxist revolution. SDU popularity and participation in government required concentration on practical problems of legislative policy-making rather than class conflict, ideological discipline and polarizing polemics. Throughout its history, the owner-worker conflict never crystallized into strict institutionalized segmentation or *verzuiling*. Despite the development of a political party base, both the working class movement and the industrialist business organizations remained open to crosscutting communications, multiple memberships, tolerance and trust in their opposition (Miller 1968).

At the start of the twentieth century, four political parties, representing distinct historical cleavages, emerged as principal adversaries in the Danish political system. The Social Democratic party represented the workers, the Agrarian Liberals based their strength upon the support of farmers, the Conservative party received support from business, while the Radical Liberals represented the small landowners and urban intelligensia. Together these four parties have continued to receive an average

of 90% of the vote in twentieth century elections. Moreover, there is evidence that partisan identification has been uniformly transmitted from generation to generation (Borre 1977). Tempered by time and participation in governing coalitions, partisan cleavage structures have become domesticated. Consequently, Danish elections are devoid of the emotional involvement, ideological polarity and psychic stress characteristic of electoral environments like the United States.

In part, Danish electoral equilibrium is a tribute to the historical compromises of the past; however, electoral stability might also be attributed to the feeling of personal effectiveness shared by individuals and groups alike as the result of the responsiveness of the political system. For example, Burnham attributes the tendency of the American electorate toward sudden electoral conversions to accumulated frustration created by an ineffective, fractionalized government (1970). Unlike the United States, Denmark is not a diverse and divided federal system. Nor is the Danish government ineffective due to reciprocal vetoes arising from the separation of powers. Rather, Denmark is a unitary parliamentary system where one sovereign government controls county and local governments, and directs social and economic development. Responsibility and authority are simple to locate in Denmark: they belong to the majority coalition in the Folketing. The adoption of a unicameral legislature in 1953 all but eliminates legislative deadlocks. In contrast, legislative deadlocks incident to a bicameral division of legislative power often frustrate the majority will in the United States. According to Burnham, continued electoral deadlocks contribute to electoral frustration which results in critical realignments (1970).

In general, the Danish parliamentary system fosters electoral stability because it guarantees minority representation and majority governance. However, the parliamentary formula can produce a veto of another kind: government instability and stagnation which haunted the Weimar Republic and the Fourth Republic in France. Such has not been the case in Denmark. Contrary to conditions in the Weimar and Fourth Republics, there has been continuous stability among the cleavage structures and the four traditional political parties representing those cleavages in Denmark. Regardless of the short duration of majority coalitions, 2.5 years, the four traditional coalitions have maintained an enduring and dominant position in the government of Denmark.

In addition, cabinet formation, policy initiatives and legislative accomplishments have been fairly predictable because the party system is bifurcated on a right to left axis. Those parties in the middle have traditionally supported either the right or the left. Opportunist, centrist

parties such as the Radical Liberals switch back and forth to whichever wing is dominant. Even so, their support can be anticipated. This certainty has reduced the volatility normally encountered in parliamentary systems (Damgaard 1974).

The type of election system employed to structure the selection of representatives also plays a significant role in the propensity toward sudden or incremental change (Rae 1971 and Duverger 1963). The single member plurality system reduces the number of alternatives available to voters. A frustrated minority is provided with only two weak options within the American electoral system, Republican or Democrat. Those seeking reform must contend with decentralized national parties which cannot command executive-legislative partisan cohesion. Moreover, inertia favors the status quo. The discontented are left with three alternatives: advocate internal reorganization of the party, precipitate a bolt to a short-lived, impotent third party, or convert partisan allegiance to the minority party. Although the first two alternatives have been exercised to obtain recognition in the past, only the last has been an effective instrument of change. Traditionally, substantive changes in policy have occurred through a reorganization of the majority-minority configuration of government. The elections of 1980, 1860 and 1932 bear testimony to this political fact of life in the United States.

Proportional representation on, the other hand, tends to be more responsive to the forces of reform. Danish electoral law makes it easy for new parties to participate in elections and proportional representation assures participation in governing coalitions for significant electoral groups. Those who seek reform and find the dominant parties are unresponsive can, via petition, get on the ballot (Miller 1966). Aggrieved electors, frustrated with an unresponsive elite, can, at minimum, vent their frustration by casting an opposition vote. At most, they can expect to win a forum to argue their cause. Erik Damgaard contends that new parties are much more active in the legislative area (1974). They propose more legislation, introduce greater numbers of resolutions and circulate more questions than the traditional dominant parties. But a forum is all the new parties obtain, since the passage of legislation is almost totally dependent upon committee and the final vote of the Folketing. Thus, no matter how many proposals they introduce, the parties are invariably overwhelmed by the traditional party majority. What is central to electoral stability, however, is not that small parties lose in day-to-day combat but that they have the opportunity to participate in a legitimate forum of confrontation. The optimism indicated by the high numbers of legislative initiatives in the face of irrepressible odds supports this point.

Furthermore, the multitude of partisan alternatives encouraged by the proportional representation system produces opportunities for participation in the governing coalition. Such a prospect, fueled by the successful participation of the Justice Party, the Radical Liberals and the Socialist People's Party, promotes hope that through division of the electorate, leverage can be acquired to influence policy change.

The provision of perceived viable electoral and legislative alternatives to the status quo operates in Denmark to reduce frustration tensions characteristic of political systems which experience critical elections. Electoral and legislative participation serves as a constant reminder to the dominant parties that change is necessary. If minor parties continue to gain electoral support over time, the tenuous condition of the governing coalition in a multi-party system will require a response. The reaction of the Social Democrats to the continued electoral success of the Socialist People's Party is illustrative. After ignoring the Socialist People's Party in 1960 and 1964, in 1966 the Social Democrats invited representatives of the Socialist People's Party to participate in the formation of a Socialist cabinet. By 1972 – 1973, the influence of the Socialist People's Party on the platform of the Social Democrats was evident. A program of economic democracy was introduced which advocated worker compensation for short-term illness and greater worker influence in corporate management decisions.

In summary, the Danish electorate is homogeneous. There are no intensely polarized racial, ethnic or regional subcultures (Pedersen 1968). Even traditional socio-economic divisions have been softened by time and political compromise. This sociological stability is reinforced by political structures. As a unitary parliamentary system employing proportional representation, the Danish political system conveys psychic satisfaction to those who seek recognition for their demands. Moreover, the dominance in the twentieth century of four parties linked to fundamental cleavages by generational transmissions identifying cleavage values with particular parties has ensured continuity.

Taken together, these factors contribute to an atmosphere of electoral stability often noted by other investigators. Such an atmosphere is unlikely to be conducive to a radical change in pattern. Like other political systems, short-term partisan deviations stimulated by a particular issue or personality may occur from time to time. But the most likely form of change in Denmark is a secular realignment resulting from the incremental conversions of individual voters and the natural attrition caused by the maturation forces of life and death.

Just as Burnham concludes that the American environment creates

propensities toward critical realignment, so it is maintained here that the Danish political environment fosters gradual change. It remains, however, to empirically verify the parameters of electoral stability and the dynamics of electoral change in post-war Denmark.

Empirical Measures of Stability and Change

Two techniques are used to measure post-war Danish electoral stability and change. The first instrument is a four-dimensional 'fold-over' index designed to examine interparty competition and electoral stability (Berrigan 1972). The second procedure is a varimax factor rotation which is used to test the secular realignment hypothesis.[1]

The units of analyses for both techniques are commune results for Folketing elections 1947 through 1966. Micro-level data were employed because they offer a more precise measure of electoral movement obscured by aggregate national or county data. There is a notable disadvantage to the use of commune level election data. Because Denmark reorganized and consolidated communes and counties in 1970, uniform micro-level measurement before and after 1970 is impossible. Therefore, the precise movement noted in the eight elections from 1947 – 1966 is followed by an analysis of trends apparent in aggregate election returns from 1968 – 1977. Although inferences about a secular realignment are somewhat weakened by a shift in the unit of measurement, the trends noted prior to 1968 when considered in concert with the aggregate outcome of the 1973 election provide substantial evidence of a secular realignment.

To confirm the secular realignment hypothesis, evidence must be presented which shows a gradual decrease in support for the traditional parties of dominance. The indices developed here permit measurement of electoral movement toward or away from the mean. Specifically, the Stability Index requires the calculation of the mean percentage vote for the winning party in each county. This mean is used to locate a base period norm from which individual election deviations are measured. Using an equal interval ordinal scale, nine categories were assigned to each of four dimensions. Three of these dimensions reflect traditional parties (Social, Democrat, Conservative and Left); the fourth dimension is a catch-all category for 'other' party votes.

Index values from 0 to 9 are assigned to each category: Four party = 0; one party = 9; etc. After establishing a mean base period category value, a measure of potentiality is created by calculating the difference between

the mean and ideal index values. The scale is constructed so that this value is always equal to the index value for the county/commune mean. Next, actual moves are computed by subtracting the category value for each election from the mean category value.[2]

The advantage of the Stability Index is that it measures annual electoral change by cumulating all moves made by communes/counties away from the mean. As the Index approaches 0.00, the system approaches complete stability. That is, the annual voting percentage in all commune/counties coincides with the mean commune/county behavior over the base. As the Index approaches 100.00, the opposite condition exists. The system borders on complete electoral instability, as each commune/county moves the maximum distance from its mean behavior.

Because the Stability Index is based upon the electoral performance of the mean winning parties, it provides no direct evidence about the volatility of opposition support. The Competition Index partially compensates for this deficiency by measuring movement toward and away from an ideal four-party parity division of the vote. Thus, as the vote approaches parity, the dominant parties lose support and conversely, as competition decreases, the opposition loses electoral support.

The Competition Index is computed by classifying communes/counties on the competition scale according to the vote of the mean winning party. Each category is assigned an integer value, between 1 and 10, where the ideal category is assigned a 10 and the one-party category receives a value of 0. For each election, each county/commune is assigned an index value based upon electoral voting performance. Annual county/commune values are summed, then divided by the numbers of counties/communes and the quotient is multiplied by the integer value assigned to the ideal four-party category.[3] As the Competition Index approaches 100.00, the system approaches the ideal of four-party competition. Conversely, as the Index approaches 0.00, the system moves away from electoral diffusion.

The indices confirm systemic electoral stability over the base period. Fig. 1 summarizes county electoral movement for each year. Note that the mean score for the base period is only 5.1 with a standard deviation of 1.8. When compared with France and Canada, the relative stability score for Denmark is readily noticeable. The mean stability score for Canada over a similar base period is 27.7, with a standard deviation of 9.4, while the mean score for France is 31.8 with a standard deviation of 9.9. Using the same base period, David Pfeiffer found the American electorate to exhibit patterns of instability similar to France and Canada (1967). The mean for presidential voting was 24.4, with a surprisingly

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high standard deviation of 16.6. The United States, Canada and France are much less stable and more erratic than the Danish electorate. By comparison to Denmark, these nations exhibit a much greater propensity toward critical rather than secular realignment.

Fig. 1. Stability Scores for Denmark 1947 – 1966

Year	Index
1947	7.3
1950	2.2
1953a	3.2
1953s	2.8
1957	6.3
1960	4.7
1964	5.6
1966	7.8
Mean:	5.1
Standard Deviation	1.8

Despite proclivities toward electoral stability, there is evidence of increased competition and impending change in partisan affiliation. Beginning in 1957, the Social Democrats began gradually to lose electoral support. Fig. 2 graphically illustrates the increasing redistribution of the Danish vote: By the election of 1966, the Danish party system is moving

Fig. 2. County Competition Index for Denmark
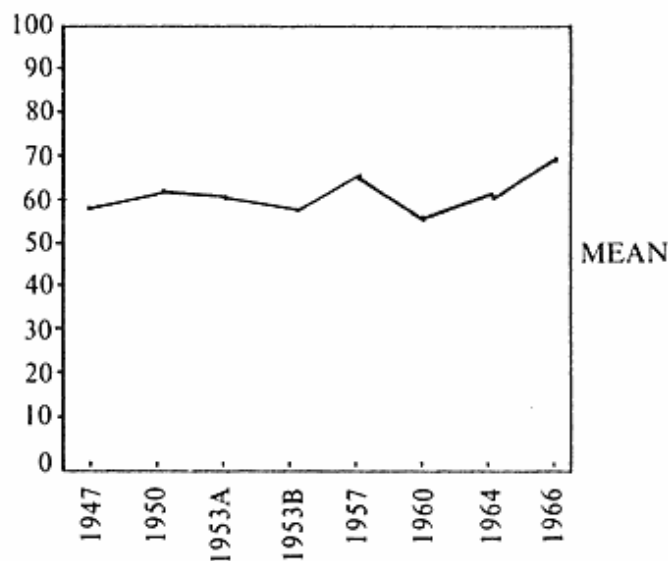
toward the ideal of a four-party distribution of the vote. A comparison with aggregate national voting returns for 1968, 1971, 1973 and 1975 in Fig. 3 indicates that the pattern of redistribution has been rather consistent.

Fig. 3. Party Percentages of the National Vote

| Year | 1968 | 1971 | 1973 | 1975 | 1977 | Base Period (1918 – 75) | |
						Mean	St. Deviation
Social Democrats	34.2	37.3	25.6	29.9	37.0	39.5	5.8
Radical Liberals	15.0	14.4	11.2	7.1	3.6	10.6	3.4
Conservatives	20.4	16.7	9.2	5.5	8.4	17.2	3.6
Agrarian Liberals	18.6	15.6	12.3	23.3	11.9	24.0	5.9
Others	11.8	6.0	41.7	34.2	38.6	11.1	9.6
Turnout	89.3	87.2	88.7	82.2	88.7	82.7	4.5

A summary of the county indices of stability and competition illustrates the parameters of electoral stability. Furthermore, within the framework of stability there is evidence that partisan voting has become more diffuse and less stable. As evidence, however, the county measures are inconclusive by themselves. Measurement of commune level voting returns is much more revealing. Although all 26 counties were indexed, only 12 counties are reported. Six counties began to experience gradual electoral instability beginning as early as the election of 1957. Between the elections of 1957 and 1966, the mean winning party in each of the reported counties experienced a rather uniform decline in support. In all counties but Thisted, the dominant party was the Social Democratic Party. However, even the dominant Agrarian Liberal Party in Thisted gradually suffered a loss of support during this period. Therefore, the evidence suggests that instability and electoral erosion did not affect the Social Democrats alone. Rather, all traditional parties lost electoral support in ever increasing numbers from 1957 through the elections of 1966.

By the election of 1966, the remaining six counties all show signs of internal electoral movement. In all counties but Abenra and Haderslev, the Competition Index signifies an increase in partisan competition and a parallel decline in electoral support for the mean winning party. Abenra and Haderslev also exhibit signs of instability. Unlike the other counties, however, the mean winning party consistently increased its support, so

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movement occurred in these two counties, but to the benefit of the dominant party. In fact, this electoral phenomenon is characteristic of the entire South Jutland Region. Although space prohibits a discussion of the causes of this apparent defensive support, one conclusion is evident: beginning with the election of 1957, electoral change of a uniform nature began to occur in these two counties.

After the election of 1966, electorates in all counties showed continued patterns of instability. The patterns are consistent; the old traditional parties of dominance began to lose electoral support. Even though the noted patterns of instability are slight in comparison to France, Canada and the United States, in a context where the norm is extreme stability, any form of patterned instability takes on added significance.

The evidence from the indices is sufficiently compelling to warrant a more intensive investigation of commune-level electoral movement.

The notion of secular realignment implies a dichotomized pattern of electoral behavior. That is, realignment assumes a stable correlative pattern of voting prior to a threshold election, after which a gradual increase in instability is expected as new electoral groupings are formed. All elections prior to the reorientation ought to be intercorrelated, while all elections afterward would be highly correlated with each other, but any election after realignment should show a lesser correlation with any election prior to realignment.

Several studies have successfully employed the factor analytic technique to locate clusters of intercorrelated elections (Macrae & Meldrum 1960; Wildgen 1974; McHale & Shaber 1976). Each of these investigations found that the use of orthogonal rotation would produce factors reflecting intercorrelated sets of elections. However, only McHale and Shaber have applied factor analysis in a non-American multiparty environment (1976). A more systematic investigation of the alignments of all major party voters in a multiparty system is a unique adventure in the use of factor analysis.

Like previous studies, the emergent factors are orthogonally rotated to maximize the independence of anticipated clusters of intercorrelated elections. Similarly, a varimax rotation is employed to maximize the variance of the squared factor loadings for each election cluster. The additional advantage of this method of rotation is that it maximizes interpretation. Elections which load on a factor can be clearly identified, making it easier to judge which elections are loaded or not loaded on a given factor (Garson 1976; Rummel 1970).

The most difficult task involved in the use of factor analysis is interpretation of the output. The crucial question is what do the factors

represent? In the case of the present study, it is hypothesized that two factor structures will emerge. Those elections loaded on Factor 1 represent the old voting configurations, while Factor 2 encompasses all elections in a progressive order which share new affiliative patterns. Since the critical realignment would require a short break among factors, we should expect that each factor would account for a significant amount of variance. Statistically, each factor ought to have an eigenvalue in excess of 1.0. Fig. 4 illustrates factor loadings where a realignment is present.

Fig. 4. Example of Critical Election Factor Loading

Assens
Conservative Party

Year	Factor 1	Factor 2
1947	.86827	.45687
1950	.90463	.40712
1953a	.98649	.13415
1953s	.99415	.07501
1957	.29090	.92973
1960	.31424	.94522
1964	.76890	.61207
1966	.10208	.97495
Eigenvalue	6.05	1.75

Because our previous analysis of electoral stability suggests that change in Danish voting occurs in moderation, the anticipated result of a factor exploration is not an abrupt change in factor loadings, but a gradual change. Consequently, our criterion standards must be adjusted to accommodate the Danish context.

The existence of a secular realignment will produce two factor clusters, but unlike a critical realignment, we can expect that the factor loadings will not appear significant at first. Rather, with each succeeding election the factor scores loading on Factor 2 should become progressively larger. Therefore, verification of a secular realignment is complicated by the inability to depend upon eigenvalues to test significance. But how can we be certain that what appears to be evidence of a secular change is not simply 'noise' or merely normal fluctuations in voting behavior due to elector mobility, issues, personalities, etc.?

The test of secular change under these subtle conditions requires

verification, as Cattell and Baggeley suggest, through evidence of pattern repetition in well-defined circumstances (1970). To test reliability, the vote for each of the traditional parties across communes in each county provides 48 opportunities for repetition. If the hypothesis of secular realignment is to be verified, a common pattern should be obvious.

Several corollary research questions arise from this study but neither time nor space permit elaboration. Might realignment be confined in a multiparty system to only two or several of the parties? Is there a domino effect? Perhaps realignments assume characteristics in a multiparty environment which are uniquely different than the zero-sum nature of realignment in a two-party system. Can realignments be confined to only one location or one party? Similarly, is there a 'lag effect' where reorientation occurs at different times in different regions?

Using the same representative group of counties we employed in the measurement of electoral stability, each of 12 counties was subjected to an orthogonal varimax factor rotation. The results indicate that voter support realigned itself away from all four traditional parties during the base period. Realignment began as early as 1957 in the Copenhagen suburbs as Social Democratic voter support began to wane. Between the elections of 1960 and 1964, all of the old line parties realized a reconstruction of electoral support. However, minor exceptions to uniform movement do exist. In Assens and Abenra, reorientation in 1957 produced a slight increase in Social Democratic support. In Vejle and Copenhagen city, the Radical Liberals benefited from realignment. But still these electoral movements toward the traditional parties are the exceptions rather than the rule. The norm is a nationwide realignment which began in 1957 and by 1966 affected every major party in each of the counties.

The evidence concerning the secular quality of the realignment is equally compelling. In every county all change appears as a gradual shift from one factor to another. Additionally, there is evidence in each case of a continuously strengthened shift, so that after the election of 1966 it is apparent a rather strong uniform surge toward realignment is under way. The data presented in Fig. 5 clearly illustrate this point among Conservative and Social Democratic Party voters. Space prohibits a demonstration that a similar pattern exists among Agrarian and Radical Liberal voters.

Taken together, our indices and factor analyses clearly demonstrate that the Danish electorate began a slow, almost imperceptive shift in allegiance away from the four traditional parties: The Social Democrats, Radical Liberals, Conservatives and Agrarian Liberals. What differentiates this form of change from mere deviating behavior is the continuity

Fig. 5, Continued

Copenhagen City

	Conservative Party		Social Democrats	
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 1	Factor 2
1947	.6207	.7831	.7551	.6535
1950	.6785	.7337	.7602	.6485
1953a	.6837	.7283	.7598	.6499
1953s	.6782	.7338	.7590	.6499
1957	.7093	.7037	.7467	.6635
1960	.7501	.6603	.7146	.6979
1964	.7580	.6518	.6717	.7402
1966	.7755	.6305	.6390	.7686

Copenhagen suburbs

	Conservative Party		Social Democrats	
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 1	Factor 2
1947	.8508	.4455	.8848	.40497
1950	.8241	.5448	.8784	.4489
1953a	.8226	.5525	.8711	.4746
1953s	.8412	.5239	.8172	.5497
1957	.7842	.5966	.6840	.7003
1960	.7050	.6904	.5824	.7949
1964	.5289	.8477	.5051	.8492
1966	.4936	.8600	.3704	.9178

Frederiksborg

	Conservative Party		Social Democrats	
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 1	Factor 2
1947	.8970	.3887	.9151	.3795
1950	.8729	.4643	.9119	.3848
1953a	.8954	.4249	.8885	.4429
1953s	.8958	.4306	.8789	.4615
1957	.8446	.5073	.8342	.5347
1960	.7489	.6420	.7584	.6321
1964	.4965	.8593	.5207	.8470
1966	.3815	.9171	.3553	.9284

of the change across all parties and all counties tested. It is apparent, then, that the Danish electorate was in the process of realignment during the observed base period.

In support of these data, several Danish scholars have called attention to changing Danish electoral patterns during this period (Damgaard 1974; Stehouwer 1972; and Borre & Katz 1973). In a most insightful investigation of ecological predictors of election behavior, Jan Stehouwer notes significant ecological changes which in fact provide a partial explanation for realigning behavior.

First, new young voters were added to the electorate in 1953 and 1961, as the minimum voting age was reduced from 25 to 23 and from 23 to 21. Secondly, Stehouwer cites evidence of the precipitous decline in agriculture and the increase of industry. Third, during the 1950s, Denmark experienced a significant decline in manual and self-employed workers, while the ranks of the professional white collar workers increased rapidly. Fourth, there is obvious evidence toward continued urban-suburbanization in post-war Denmark. It is interesting that despite noting parallel changes among Social Democrats, Conservatives, and Agrarian Liberals in 1957, Stehouwer concludes that these changes were not significant but only reflected low turnouts due to a temporarily ambivalent electorate.

The advent of television has added another possible explanatory variable. Television was first introduced in 1960 as a nationwide campaign tool. The national impact of television can induce change but it also is an effective weapon to perpetuate the status quo. Television communicates party positions on a variety of issues. The influence of television depends primarily on the receptiveness of the audience. However, if some members of the audience possess preconceived attitudes and favor a particular party, they are likely to retain only that information which agrees with their partisan affiliations. In Denmark, as in other nations, research indicates that older audiences are less susceptible to change (Borre & Katz 1973). Under such circumstances, it might be expected that the use of televised campaign appeals would reinforce party loyalties among the middle aged and older voters. However, the impact of a nationalized television campaign upon the young and the ambiguous voters may be very different. As voters not yet possessing the perceptual screen of partisan commitment, this electorate is subject to media persuasion. Furthermore, widespread viewing of television permits greater access to messages appealing for change. Given the conditions of the late 1950s and early 1960s, it is obvious that television would fall upon fertile ground.

Summary

The Danish political environment during the 1950s is a study in the confluence of the forces of change and stability. The argument has been presented that, unlike the United States, protest and opposition to the status quo in Denmark are co-opted into the political system by proportional representation and the influence of parliamentary government. In this context, alienation, symptomatic of radical changes in partisan affiliation, is reduced considerably. Secondly, the perpetuation of traditional lines of cleavage and the continued identification and support for the traditional parties further reduce electoral volatility. Third, underlying social and economic homogeneity reduces polar tensions attributed to disadvantaged minorities. Fourth, the process of socialization is an instrument of stability. Each generation perpetuates its partisan affiliations, in large part, through the transfer of fixed attitudes to its children.

Juxtaposed to continuity are the forces of change. The alteration of the occupational and income structure as well as increased occupational and residential mobility since World War II have undermined the historic foundations of the four traditional parties. Ole Borre and Daniel Katz provide substantial evidence of a decline in party identification (1973). In a survey based upon voter recall, 36% of weak identifiers defected to other parties, while 62% of those leaning toward a traditional party defected. Although there are no corroborating historic data to compare to the results of this survey, the data strongly imply a significant increase in the number of weak identifiers and leaners. The full impact of the weaker partisan identifications and the tendency of these weak identifiers to defect did not manifest itself until the election of 1973 (Borre 1977).

Another influence for change in partisan affiliations has been the introduction of new voters in 1953 and 1961 who are more educated and more mobile than their fathers. Borre found that a disproportionate share of these new voters were supporting the new Socialist People's Party and the Progressive Party (1977). The tradition of cleavage class voting is gradually disappearing among the young with increased education, social mobility and sensitivity to cross-cutting economic pragmatism.

This dynamic interaction of the forces of stability and change is responsible for the secular realignment now in progress in Denmark. On one front, homogeneity, historic partisan loyalties, parliamentarism, proportional representation, socialization and television pull in the direction of status quo, while on the other front, affluence, education, social mobility, pragmatism, urbanization, professionalization, youth, cynicism and television push in the direction of a new order. The result is that

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change in the structure of partisan alignments occurs but in a slow protracted manner.

The elections of 1973 and 1975 demonstrate the direction of change. They are, in fact, the first substantial manifestation of a realignment which began in 1957. As the foundations of traditional partisan loyalty eroded throughout the last decade, an inexorable movement of uncommitted voters materialized. Sensitive to pragmatic concerns over taxation, the cost of living, and welfarism, these uncommitteds located outlets for their grievances in unconventional parties, e.g., Socialist People's Party, the Progressive Party, Independent Party, Christian People's Party and Center Democrats. Evidentally, as a vehicle for change, the old right-left axis became untenable. Consequently, new parties offered an alternative. The election of 1975 illustrates the crystallization of opposition to the old order. A new set of partisan affiliations have been born out of the politics of the 1950s.

NOTES

1. Data used in this study were made available in part by the Inter-University Consortium for Political Research. The data were supplied in partially proofed form and the Consortium bears no responsibility for either the analysis or interpretations presented here.

   Additional data were acquired through Denmark's *Statistisk Meddlser*, 1975 – 77.

2. The four dimensional classification schematic appears as a cross with each point representing a party dimension.
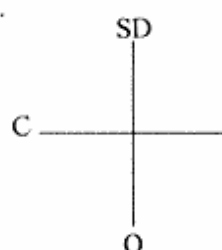
Similar categories representing percentage intervals are assigned to each dimension. For example:

One Dimension	$67\% \geqslant$	Vsd $\leqslant$	100%
Modified One Dimension	$62\% \geqslant$	Vsd $<$	67%
One Dimension Plus	$57\% \geqslant$	Vsd $<$	62%
Weak Two Dimension	$52\% \geqslant$	Vsd $<$	57%
Two Dimension	$47\% \geqslant$	Vsd $<$	52%
Modified Two Dimension	$42\% \geqslant$	Vsd $<$	47%
Two Dimension Plus	$37\% \geqslant$	Vsd $<$	42%
Three Dimension	$32\% \geqslant$	Vsd $<$	37%
Modified Three Dimension	$27\% \geqslant$	Vsd $<$	32%
Four Dimension	$22\% \geqslant$	Vsd $<$	27%

*VSD represents Social Democratic Party as the winning party.

Index values are assigned relative to the scale, and counting proceeds across the dimensions.

3. The formula for the Index of Stability is symbolically represented as:

$$S: \frac{<aw}{<pw}$$

where a is the number of actual moves on the stability scale, p is the potential moves from the ideal category and w is the communal percentage of the total county vote.

4. The formula for the Index of Competition is expressed:

$$C = \frac{<aw}{<pw}$$

where a is the annual category for the commune/county, p is the value of the ideal category and w is the unit's percentage of the total vote.

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