

Chapter 5

The Radical Left and Immigration

Resilient or Acquiescent in the Face of the Radical Right?

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Expectations that the Great Recession would result in greater support for RLPs have been fulfilled only partly (see chapters 2 and 18 of this volume). The general picture is one of moderate and uneven growth. While electoral gains for radical right populist parties have also been varied, they appear to have gained more in both national elections and in elections to the European Parliament (not least in the early stages of the Great Recession).¹ What can explain these apparently counter-intuitive developments? Luke March has highlighted that RLPs ‘lack a vision’ in contrast to the relative success of radical right parties (hereafter RRP) in crafting a narrative that resonates with many voters’ sense of grievance and insecurity.² Moreover, while Cas Mudde found reasons to caution against linking the crisis to a growth in the salience of anti-immigration sentiment, recent data highlights a need for further scrutiny.³

There has been considerable debate regarding whether or not mainstream parties have adopted less tolerant policy stances on migration control and integration in response to the growth of the radical Right, indicating a ‘contagion effect’. In this chapter, we ask whether the radical Right’s exploitation of migration-related issues has also obliged RLPs to change their policies. It could be argued that RLPs are caught between two key responses: on the one hand, defending a universalist position of (international) solidarity with often marginalised and oppressed communities; on the other, being wary of immigration as a manifestation of globalisation at home, undercutting wages and job security. Odmalm and Bale identify a similar dilemma facing the Left as a whole, but it is arguably more acute for RLPs given their adherence to critiquing globalisation and to making common cause with the oppressed.⁴ This might also coincide with a strategic dilemma of building support from migrant communities versus the fear of losing votes of the working class (often seen as a traditional source of RLP support).

Below, we explore how RLPs have responded to these dilemmas where parties of the radical Right have grown significantly since the crisis (see Table 5.1). Taking the examples of Denmark (Socialist People's Party [SF] and Red-Green Alliance [EL]), Sweden (Left Party), the Netherlands (Socialist Party [SP]) and Greece (Syriza), we contrast parties that have maintained a broadly 'solidaristic' stance on immigration with those who have adopted (or sustained) more restrictive and integrationist policies. We analyse these parties because they come from the largest of the RLP sub-categories that March identifies – the democratic socialists.⁵ This provides a basis for future comparative research with other RLP subgroups.

Our analysis draws on interviews with party elites and is supplemented by aggregate data from the Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP) and the Chapel Hill Expert Survey. The interviewees included members of the parties' leading bodies and immigration spokespeople. These interviewees were selected because they were well positioned to provide information regarding debates on immigration within their parties and actions (e.g. protests) that the parties engaged in as they responded to the radical Right.⁶

We begin by reviewing divisions in the existing literature regarding the way that we should expect RLPs and RRP to interact. On one side, writers such as Arzheimer view RLPs and RRP as occupying totally different parts of the spectrum and as not being in competition. Yet there is another prevalent view, which has become stronger with Syriza's more populist turn, that left and right radicalism are part of the same protest phenomenon or are more similar than they might otherwise appear.⁷

The following section compares the stances of RLPs on the three particularly salient migration-related issues of immigration, asylum and integration. We find only limited evidence of contagion, although it would be wrong to say that RLPs are entirely immune. A degree of variation does, however, exist in RLP immigration policies and in their responses to the radical Right, with the main explanation being party origins and office-seeking strategies. What stands out, however, is that even the RLPs that are most restrictive (i.e. seek to restrict levels of net immigration) are still relatively inclusive and promote rights for migrants in their programmes.

The chapter then analyses the organisational and electoral strategies pursued by RLPs. We examine the extent to which RLPs compete with the radical Right for support and to which they have confronted the radical Right in campaigns and protests. We argue that the leaders of the RLPs studied here do not perceive electoral competition as coming from the radical Right. Instead, most seek to present their parties as a repository for disaffected supporters of social democratic parties when these parties adopt more restrictive immigration policies. While the RLPs had generally been active in protesting

Table 5.1 RLP and RRP Electoral Results in Parliamentary Elections as Share of the Vote (and Recent Opinion Poll Data)

Year	The Netherlands		Sweden		Greece		Denmark		
	RLP Socialist Party	RRP Party for Freedom	RLP Left Party	RRP Swedish Democrats	RLP Syriza	RRP Golden Dawn	RLP Red-Green Alliance	RLP Socialist People's Party	RRP Danish People's Party
2015	19 (Sept 2015 poll)	22 (Sept 2015 poll)			36.3 and 35.5	6.3 and 7	7.8	4.2	21.5
2014			5.7						
2013									
2012	9.7	10.1		12.9	16.8 and 26.9	7.0 and 6.9			
2011							6.7	9.2	12.3
2010	9.9	15.5	5.6	5.7					
2009					4.6	0.3			
2008									
2007					5		2.2	13	13.9
2006	16.6	5.9	5.9	2.9					

Sources: Parties and Elections in Europe, 'The Netherlands', available at <http://www.parties-and-elections.eu/>, 2015. (election results); Ipsos, Politieke Barometer, IPSOS. 'Political Barometer' available at: <http://www.ipsos-nederland.nl/content.asp?targetid=1155> (opinion polls), 2015. Poll average taken from: <http://pellingwijzer.tomlouwse.nl/>. 1 September 2015.

against the radical Right, we show that RLPs have made only limited achievements in forging links with migrant community groups.

THE RADICAL RIGHT AND CONTAGION

As Joost van Spanje notes, the conventional wisdom has been that the electoral success and increased prominence of the radical Right in political debate has had a significant impact on other political parties and promoted a toughening of policies on immigration.⁸ How far might we expect RLPs to have been susceptible to such ‘contagion effects’? This depends on the extent to which such a contagion effect exists and how far it extends across the political spectrum. Indeed, recent attempts to gauge the impact of RLPs on other party families have come to rather divergent conclusions.

First, Tjitske Akkerman’s analysis of Western European party positions on immigration since the early 1990s finds that while some centre-right parties adopted restrictive positions on immigration and migrant rights, this has not spread to social democratic parties.⁹ Aside from some more restrictive positions on labour migration, the mainstream Left has generally followed ‘a fairly consistent cosmopolitan course’.¹⁰

Similarly, Sonia Alonso and Sara Claro da Fonseca highlight the ideological and strategic dilemmas facing mainstream left parties.¹¹ To them, such parties’ memberships consist of two groups: a well-educated group with liberal values and ‘an inclination towards ... social egalitarianism and solidarity that is defined in universalist ... terms’; the other, the traditional working class who feel threatened by elements of globalisation such as immigration. Their research, based on analysis of the party stances using CMP data, suggests that mainstream left parties have shifted towards ‘tougher’ migration policies. Last, Tim Bale et al. use a qualitative analysis of responses by social democrats to the radical Right in Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands and Austria to highlight considerable variation.¹²

RLPs are generally overlooked in these studies. Nevertheless, van Spanje calls into question the idea that the impact of contagion is greater for parties of the Centre-Right than the Left or that that parties of what he calls the ‘niche’ Left are the least affected by contagion. His analysis indicates that some of these parties have shifted their position (he cites the French and Greek communists and Danish and Italian Greens as examples).¹³

In contrast, Alonso and da Fonseca suggest that left-libertarian radical parties may be beneficiaries of the dilemmas which immigration presents the Centre-Left. Any move towards a tougher immigration stance risks alienating the Centre-Left’s more universalist-inclined supporters who may prefer more radical parties maintaining such policies. Similarly, Kai Arzheimer

argues that RLPs are least likely to be affected since they have a very different demographic of support and ‘occupy diametrically opposed positions in West European policy space’.¹⁴ Overall, then, recent research is divided and unclear on the extent to which the radical Right has redefined RLP positions on migration. The positions of RLPs on immigration, should however, be of interest to political scientists when Bale et al. find that the positions of RLPs are significant in shaping the positions of the Centre-Left. More concretely, when RLPs politicise immigration it becomes harder for social democratic parties to avoid the issue.¹⁵

Furthermore, the dilemmas facing RLPs over immigration issues are not entirely new. During the 1970s the French Communist Party, adopted a ‘welfare chauvinist’ position towards migrant communities in its traditional power bases of working-class communities. This policy became most visible when a communist mayor of a Parisian suburb oversaw the destruction of accommodation for migrant workers.¹⁶ This has even been interpreted as effectively facilitating rather than pre-empting the emergence of the radical Right.

PROGRAMMATIC RESPONSES

This section analyses RLP positions on immigration, asylum and integration. It demonstrates that our case studies generally promote policies inconsistent with the idea that they have undergone significant contagion from the radical Right. While it points to a general overlap in the parties’ policies on immigration issues, it highlights several important differences.

Immigration

Starting with the parties that favour less restrictive immigration policies, the Left Party has maintained a relatively open immigration policy compared with other Swedish parties (excluding the Greens). It opposes restrictive EU-level policies and visa regulations and calls for an easing of ‘Fortress Europe’ policies.¹⁷ It has generally viewed labour migration as a good thing and while it is concerned that migrants are used as a source of cheap labour to undercut wages and conditions for Swedish workers, it campaigns for all workers to be included in trade union collective bargaining arrangements rather than for migration restrictions.¹⁸ In addition, the Left Party calls for social policies to combat inequalities that migrants face.

Syriza also has relatively flexible programmatic positions on immigration. It has sought an easing of rules on Greek citizenship and to grant citizenship to large numbers of ‘illegal’ migrants. It argues that Greece is suffering a humanitarian crisis because of large migration flows but rather than tighter restrictions,

it wants migrants to be freer to travel into the European Union to their favoured destinations.¹⁹ Syriza also opposes laws that deny citizenship (and social and political rights) to the children of migrants born in Greece. It wants better regulation of labour contracts for migrant workers. It seeks to address their exploitation, in terms of lower wages and poor working conditions, to provide help for migrants receiving physical abuse from their employers.²⁰ The party also seeks to give migrants access to welfare services and education.

In contrast, the SP has taken a more ambiguous stance on immigration policy. It has held a rather restrictive position on levels of immigration for nearly 30 years. Its arguments are largely on economic grounds, claiming that open labour markets are a feature of neoliberalism that exploits the migrant and the national worker.²¹ The SP does not think that the Netherlands is full, but that immigration should take place at a more manageable rate that does not destabilise the Dutch labour market.²² Overall the party's stance combines some restrictions on immigration, including restoration of work permits to East European workers, with policies to combat discrimination against migrants. It wants to see Dutch labour standards applied to migrant working conditions and fines for companies that violate these rules.²³ It opposes policies of repatriation suggested by the radical Right or plans to restrict migrants' voting rights and access to social security.

In Denmark, the SF did not agree with Denmark's controversial '24 year' rule (a law restricting the right for family reunification to those over the age of 24 years old in order to prevent forced marriages). However, before the SF entered office in coalition with the social democrats in 2011 it accepted the need to compromise on the issue, since the social democrats are more restrictive on immigration.²⁴ SF seeks to remove application fees for residency; however, it argues that migrants seeking family reunification should demonstrate that they are engaged in work or education and talks more of attracting skilled workers.²⁵ In comparison, the EL has been more open to increased immigration. It has sought to make it easier for migrants to obtain citizenship and to facilitate family reunification by abolishing the '24 year rule'.²⁶

A clear distinction has been apparent between the approaches of the Left Party, EL and Syriza compared with the more restrictive immigration policies of SF and SP. Nevertheless, we also find areas of overlap between the parties. While none of them favoured an open borders policy, even the more restrictive policies of the SP and SF are designed to slow the pace and to focus on integration first, but do not oppose increased immigration rates in the future. Where the parties have called for restrictions on immigration, this has largely been based on opposition to neoliberalism and the distortion of labour markets. All the parties have opposed employers seeking to lower wages through cheap migrant labour and all claim to seek to prevent the exploitation of migrants by ensuring that they receive equal pay and employment rights. There is little sign of welfare chauvinism, with most parties seeking equal or

additional benefits for migrants. However, while Syriza and the Left Party most clearly emphasise cosmopolitanism/internationalism, the other parties tend to emphasise national solutions to immigration problems.

Asylum

The Left Party criticises Swedish government asylum policies, calling for a more generous approach, including full respect for international conventions, and arguing that too many asylum-seekers have been forced to return to their country of origin despite risks of persecution.²⁷ It calls for more funding to be provided for local authorities dealing with asylum cases and to ensure that welfare payments to asylum-seekers are raised to allow a decent standard of living.²⁸ In Greece, Syriza was also generally sympathetic to the rights of asylum-seekers, arguing that their predicament was a humanitarian crisis that must be addressed. However, it saw the problem as one for the European Union as a whole and not just for Greece. In particular it criticised the Dublin II Convention that makes the first EU country that asylum-seekers enter responsible for providing asylum. Instead, Syriza called for reforms to spread the burden imposed upon Greece, a speeding up of asylum procedures and the granting of travel papers to migrants. Since coming to power, however, the party has been obliged to adopt policies which are at odds with its opposition rhetoric. While initially the new government appeared to be acting on its commitments, aiming to close the detention camps set up to cope with the large number of asylum seekers, the intensification of the asylum crisis and pressures from the EU to engage in a broader asylum agreement with Turkey have led to a very restrictive policy. As part of the EU-Turkey agreement, Greece has been deporting some asylum seekers and detaining others in conditions as bad as those in place under previous governments.²⁹

The SP is closer to the other RLPs on asylum issues than on other immigration-related policy areas. It has called for changes to make it harder to send asylum-seekers back to dangerous states including Iraq and Somalia and giving child asylum-seekers the right to stay after five years. It opposed detention centres, and wanted to provide aid to Greece on the EU border to improve the conditions facing asylum-seekers.³⁰

Similarly, the SF has called for more humane conditions for asylum-seekers and for reforms to ensure that asylum-seekers can work outside asylum centres after staying in Denmark for a period of six months.³¹ It seeks better protection for child refugees and to tackle human trafficking. However, while the SF wanted to maintain Denmark's annual quota of 500 refugees, the EL called for this to be expanded.³² The EL campaigned to make it harder to send asylum-seekers back to Iraq where they could face persecution.³³ It called for improvements in the conditions for asylum-seekers and to make it easier to apply for asylum.³⁴

In sum, all the parties examined have had more in common over asylum policy than in the other two policy areas (at least until Syriza entered government). They have generally wanted more open asylum policies (or at least to defend existing commitments) and sought to prevent the return of asylum-seekers to states where they were at risk from persecution. They have demanded better conditions for asylum-seekers (including access to welfare benefits and the right to live outside detention centres) as well as fairer and speedier procedures. Internationally, they have sought conflict prevention in asylum-seekers' states of origin, and some seek to abolish or reform the Dublin II Accord. To most RLPs, it is necessary to reform this process to relieve the burden on southern European states.

Integration

The Left Party has maintained a policy of multiculturalism and has called for interaction between communities. It supported language courses for migrants but opposed citizenship or cultural tests. Instead it has wanted greater emphasis on encouraging the recruitment of migrants into employment and opportunities for communities to study in their native language.³⁵ Syriza has also adopted a broadly multicultural approach, respecting the different values of communities (e.g. criticising the publication of cartoons portraying the Prophet Mohammed). It seeks to remove the requirement of speaking Greek as a criteria for residency, promotes intercultural schools and education schemes for migrants to notify them of their social rights.³⁶

In comparison, the SP has stressed the importance of integration in protecting migrant workers from segregation.³⁷ It argues that the over-representation of migrant communities in crime statistics, and their experiences of educational underachievement and poor housing would have been prevented had the party's integration policies been applied.³⁸ The SP has stressed the need for education and citizenship tests but has sought to prevent these from becoming a financial burden on migrant communities.³⁹ While critics of the SP's stance have argued that it effectively places the blame upon the migrant communities and that its original policies on integration were racist, SP politicians have argued that their policy is not rooted in religion or ideas of cultural superiority and that it sought to ensure that migrants are treated fairly.⁴⁰

The Danish RLPs have been split on the issue of integration. The SF sought to send a message that migrants must integrate and respect the ways of Danish society – including democracy, freedom of speech and equality – and to counter the radicalisation of migrants. It demanded housing and education policies to dismantle ghettos and to relocate migrants by ensuring all schools have 30 per cent socially vulnerable migrants to ensure wealthy municipalities take greater responsibility. While the SF opposed a citizenship test it

supported language tests and giving migrant families vouchers to help them experience cultural activities.⁴¹

These policies were fiercely criticised by the EL, which adopted a multicultural approach. Unlike the SF, it argued that counselling rather than Denmark's '24 year rule' should tackle forced marriage.⁴² The EL opposed language tests and argued that children from migrant backgrounds should learn their parents' native languages.⁴³ It also criticised the SF for stigmatising immigrants by talking of breaking up 'ghettos' and associating them with crime.⁴⁴ Instead, it called for community mentors to provide role models for young migrants and urban regeneration to combat the poverty faced by migrants.⁴⁵

All five parties have wanted to reduce the cost of obtaining citizenship and most took a liberal position towards the rights of migrant communities to freedom of speech. Generally they have supported rights to wearing religious dress including the Burqa and shared a willingness to tackle Islamophobia. The parties have also largely agreed on helping migrants to succeed through integrating into the labour market, through better language training, work placements with industry and expanding access to education.

However we can identify three differences between RLPs on integration. First, some parties called for greater levels of cultural integration such as citizenship or language tests while others favour a multicultural society. Second, the parties have differed in terms of their willingness to link migrant communities to crime and social problems. Third, some parties promoted integration through using housing and education policies to avoid segregation and to break up so-called 'ghettos'. Others sought to help migrants where they reside through urban regeneration policies and argued that it is immoral to encourage migrants to move location.

Summarising the results of our analysis we have found a high degree of overlap on a number of immigration policies in the five RLPs. In general terms it appears that they have maintained a principled position on immigration, indicating that RLPs have experienced limited contagion from the radical Right. Data from the CMP (see Table 5.2) and Chapel Hill Expert Survey (see Table 5.3) also show that all five RLPs maintained positions that oppose highly restrictive migration policies and tough positions on integrating migrants. Moreover, this data indicates that since 2008 V and the SP may have become less restrictive on immigration (see Table 5.3).

However, we have also found some important differences between the policies of RLPs. Some (V, EL, Syriza) were more engaged in taking and promoting multiculturalism and have less restrictive immigration policies than others (SP, SF). This is again reinforced by the Chapel Hill data and to some extent by manifesto data on multiculturalism (summarised in Tables 5.2 and 5.3).

Table 5.2 Comparative Manifesto Project Data: Multiculturalism Positive or Negative Expressed as a Percentage of the Manifesto

	RGA Positive	RGA Negative	SF Positive	SF Negative	SP Positive	SP Negative	Syriza* Positive	Syriza* Negative	V Positive	V Negative
2014										
2013										
2012					0.913	0.0	1.667	0.0		
2011	6.7	0.0	0.6	0.0					0.4	0.0
2010					0.4	0.4	0.0	0.0		
2009										
2008										
2007										
2006					1.2	0.7	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0
2005	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2			2.5	0.0		
2004										
2003										
2002					0.1	0.0			0.0	0.0
2001	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0						
2000							0.487	0.0		

*Formerly Synaspismós
 Source: Pola Lehmann, Theres Matthieß, Theres Merz, Nicolas Regel, Sven, Annika Werner. *Manifesto Corpus. Version: 2000–2014* (Berlin: WZB Berlin Social Science Center, 2015).

Table 5.3 Chapel Hill Expert Survey Data on Immigration and Multiculturalism

	<i>SP</i>	<i>SF</i>	<i>Red-Green Alliance</i>	<i>Syriza</i>	<i>Left Party</i>
Immigration Policy	2006: 5.3	2006: 1.8	2006: 1	2006: 0.71	2006: 1.88
	2010: 6	2010: 3.7	2010: 1.3	2010: 0.6	2010: 1.4
	2014: 4.11	2014: 2.8	2014: 1.6	2014: 2.22	2014: 0.55
Multiculturalism vs Integration	2006: 6	2006: 2.8	2006: 1.4	2006: 2.14	2006: 2.25
	2010: 6.2	2010: 3.1	2010: 1.5	2010: 0.64	2010: 1.3
	2014: 3.77	2014: 2.8	2014: 1.5	2014: 1.88	2014: 0.66

Key: Position on immigration policy: 0 strongly opposes tough policy, 10 strongly supports tough policy. Importance/salience of immigration policy: 0 not important at all, 10 very important.

Source: Ryan Bakker, Erica Edwards, Liesbet Hooghe, Seth Jolly, Jelle Koedam, Filip Kostelka, Gary Marks, Jonathan Polk, Jan Rovny, Gijss Schumacher, Marco Steenbergen, Milada Vachudova, and Marko Zilovic. *1999–2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey Trend File. Version 1.1* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 2015). Available at: chesdata.eu.

EXPLAINING RLP RESPONSES TO THE RADICAL RIGHT

This section will show that RLP responses to the radical Right (and their immigration policies more generally) have been shaped by both contextual factors and internal party developments. The wider environment and the nature of the radical Right clearly matter. For example, the humanitarian crisis in Greece and the actions taken by Golden Dawn made the nature of immigration debates more immediate. Golden Dawn is qualitatively different from the parties in the other countries studied here as it is on the extreme Right, rather than simply being a radical right populist party.⁴⁶ Consequently, Syriza encountered additional pressure to engage in seeking protection for migrants, through housing shelters and educating the police due to the physical attacks on migrants. Institutional factors also come into play with Syriza having called for the removal of immunity for MPs in response to violence by politicians from Golden Dawn.⁴⁷

However, the more restrictive immigration policies and tougher integration policies of the SP and SF are not simply a direct result of contagion from the Right but have been shaped by internal factors. The SP has had the most restrictive and integrationist policies. These were motivated by ideological conviction and its own attempts to prevent divisions between migrants and workers in the 1980s that pre-date the rise of the radical Right in the Netherlands. In Denmark, SF politicians claimed it was not a fear of losing votes that led it in this direction but the adoption of an office-seeking strategy and its attempt to forge cooperation with the social democrats (who did fear the loss of votes to the Right).⁴⁸ This is supported by reports that its attempts to develop relations with the social democrats involved major compromises.⁴⁹ In this respect a form of indirect contagion can be identified. Chapel Hill data

also indicates that Syriza adopted a more restrictive position on immigration in 2014, which may reflect its office-seeking strategies.

RLPs have had some impact in terms of enacting immigration policy reforms while participating in coalition governments during the crisis. Syriza was criticised for coalescing with the anti-immigration right-wing populist Independent Greeks (ANEL) in January 2015. However, as the junior partner, ANEL appeared to have had limited impact on immigration policy and a human rights activist, Tassia Christodouloupoulou, became minister for immigration. Syriza passed reforms to make it easier for migrants to gain Greek nationality (without support from ANEL but from the social democratic PASOK). While these reforms may have been narrower than those Syriza had promised, this represented a significant change.

In contrast to the position encountered by Syriza, it has been more common for RLPs to be junior partners in governing coalitions. In Denmark, the SF worked to relax internal EU border controls introduced by the previous government.⁵⁰ Having been constrained by its coalition agreement in 2011, it only sought minor reforms including the relaxation of family reunification for migrants. Since it was only a support party to the government and not a coalition member, the SF's rival EL appeared to have more success in negotiating concessions in 2012, including a deal to reduce the time that refugee children spent in asylum centres. This raises questions as to whether RLPs may have more influence over immigration policy by remaining outside the coalition, ironically perhaps mirroring the practice of radical right parties.

Elizabeth Gautier of the PCF argues that 'Left Parties don't yet have a successful strategy to contest the extreme right'.⁵¹ Indeed, none of elites from the RLPs studied here thought that their parties' organisational or programmatic responses to the radical Right had been particularly successful given the ongoing growth of the latter. Studies of Swedish municipalities show that a stronger stance against the Sweden Democrats from the Left Party correlates with stronger gains for the Right and simply brings more attention to the radical Right.⁵²

ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSES: CONFRONTING THE RADICAL RIGHT?

Interviews with officials responsible for immigration policy from our case studies suggest that they do perceive the Great Recession to have contributed to the growth of the radical Right. The RLPs studied here, have however differed in the extent and nature of their readiness to confront RLPs directly during the economic crisis. The Swedish Left Party has a strong anti-fascist tradition, and has been to the fore in opposing the right-wing populist Sweden

Democrats.⁵³ Left Party politicians initially refused to share the stage with Sweden Democrats while forcefully arguing against their policies. Prior to the 2010 election, the Left Party was active in organising counterdemonstrations and rapid response tactics to oppose Sweden Democrat meetings.⁵⁴ Since the Sweden Democrats gained parliamentary representation in 2010, the adversarial strategy of the Left Party continued; however it focused on parliamentary debates and social media to counter the radical Right's claims.

Syriza too has been active in organising protests against the radical Right and has regularly organised conferences to promote migrant rights. It has run a 'Solidarity for all' campaign to encourage Greeks to show solidarity with migrants throughout the economic crisis. The party sought to educate the police to break Golden Dawn's influence and visited schools to educate children about migrant issues and racism, in order to limit Golden Dawn's appeal and to promote a cultural change. At the European level, it has worked with groups including European Antifascist Manifesto and organised protests and seminars against the threat from the Right.⁵⁵ Activists in the party have wanted to go further, however, in holding counterdemonstrations and organising 'defence committees' to protect migrants.

By contrast the Dutch SP has been critical of Geert Wilders, the leader of the radical right Party for Freedom, but has also been reluctant to organise protests and to engage in such direct confrontation with the radical Right. Instead, the party's vote- and office-seeking strategies have seen its leaders seek to campaign on issues that they believed would deliver more votes, rather than to spend time organising to fight the radical Right. In Denmark, the SF has opposed the Danish People's Party. Its youth organisation was active in organising counterdemonstrations against them. Since the economic crisis, however, immigration became less of an issue for the SF and the more radical EL became more engaged in campaigns on immigration. The EL was highly active in protesting against the Danish People's Party (e.g. at demonstrations in May 2013 in Copenhagen). This has become one of the EL's top priorities.⁵⁶

The RLPs have all tolerated the right of RRP to contest elections but they have all opposed the radical Right in parliament, in publications and in the media. The policy documents of V and Syriza now identify the radical Right as their main 'enemy' due to the nature of their policy proposals.⁵⁷ It is clear that some RLPs have also taken an adversarial approach towards confronting RRP through organising counterdemonstrations.

LINKS WITH MIGRANT COMMUNITIES

Most of the RLPs studied here have developed some links with migrant communities. The Swedish Left Party has long maintained links with migrant

community organisations.⁵⁸ The Dutch SP has also been active in campaigning to promote increased rights for refugees in The Hague where politicians are active in helping to organise refugee shelters. Of our case studies, however, only Syriza has really made it a priority to develop such links during the crisis. This was when the problems faced by migrants had become a major humanitarian problem. Where Syriza has governed at the local level it has engaged in providing free food and shelter for homeless migrants, and protecting them from attacks by the Far Right. Syriza also engaged in direct action to provide meals for migrants. In Denmark, the EL worked with asylum-seekers, who have gone underground having left government centres and protested in Copenhagen alongside Iraqi refugees facing deportation in 2011.⁵⁹

To at least a limited extent, however, our case studies suggest that RLPs have encountered internal divisions over immigration and their responses to the radical Right. Both the SP and the EL experienced internal debates about the selection of migrant candidates for parliamentary elections. For example, when a female Muslim candidate, Asmaa Abdol-Hamid, gained a place on the EL's list for the parliamentary elections in 2007, a debate unfolded as to whether this broke the party's secular image. Similarly, feminists within V have regularly criticised the treatment of women in migrant communities and changes to SF's immigration policies resulted in internal criticisms. In 2010, the SP's then-leader Agnes Kant faced internal dissent when she labelled scapegoating of migrants by Geert Wilders' PVV as the number one threat to Dutch society.

Migrants remain poorly represented as parliamentarians in several of our case studies (EL 0 per cent; SF 0 per cent; Syriza 6.5 per cent; SP 6.6 per cent; conversely the Left Party has 24 per cent).⁶⁰ No party had implemented quotas to ensure the representation of migrants in their parliamentary groups or national leaderships (however the data for the Left Party warrants further investigation). The Left Party's congress has, however, made a vague commitment to increasing the proportion of its elected representatives from immigrant backgrounds.⁶¹ Whether or not this has contributed to its higher levels of representation of migrant candidates warrants further investigation.

Most of the parties studied (including the Left Party, SP and SF) have failed to launch new links with migrant communities since the onset of the crisis and only Syriza has explicitly invited migrants to join. It appears that RLPs may be lagging behind trade unions in terms of launching initiatives to recruit members from migrant communities.⁶² While researchers have found that data on the proportion of RLP party members from migrant backgrounds is not available, this is generally regarded as lower than their relative share of the general population.⁶³ Moreover, SP politicians argue that their party sees migrant groups as relatively disparate, rather than a united group, and prefers to deal with them on class terms.⁶⁴

While RLPs including Syriza organise conferences on migration and the radical Right alongside other organisations including the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, they appear to have struggled to conceptualise the position of migrants in society. These conferences have revealed tensions as RLP politicians have portrayed migrants as the ‘most working class’ or revolutionary group in society, while representatives from migrant organisations have argued that this takes a reductionist approach to their experiences.⁶⁵

ELECTORAL RESPONSES: COMPETING WITH THE RADICAL RIGHT?

Research on the radical Right shows that a major source of its increased support has come from the male urban working class, historically seen as more likely to vote left than right. This group tends to have lower educational qualifications and fears that competition from immigrants threatens its welfare, jobs and culture.⁶⁶ Several RLPs have also promoted interventionist welfare policies that may appeal to these groups. The extent to which RLPs find themselves in competition with RRP is likely to be shaped by the extent to which they depend on working-class support. RLPs often claim to be parties ‘for the working class’ and therefore appear susceptible to contagion.

However, party elites and spokespeople on immigration issues interviewed for all case studies claimed that there were several reasons why their parties only encountered limited electoral competition from the radical Right. First, they believed their parties to be insulated by significant levels of middle-class, public-sector or highly educated supporters who were unlikely to defect to the Right. Second, their working-class supporters may have values that are directly opposed to the radical Right, making an oppositional strategy towards the radical Right popular. In Denmark, for example, the EL gained support from the SF following a shift by the latter to more restrictive approaches to immigration.⁶⁷

Third, geographical differences can mean that the parties compete in different regions. In Sweden, for example Left Party politicians highlighted their party’s support from unionised voters in the North while the SD has tended to get support from non-unionised voters in the South. Last and most significantly, they believed that their parties mostly competed with social democratic and other left/green parties for voters, providing little reason for contagion to occur.

RLP elites might be expected to downplay processes of contagion to present their parties as having stuck to their ideals. However, their arguments are consistent with our analysis of party programmes and gain some support from the available literature on RLP voters. For instance, Luke March and

Charlotte Rommerskirchen find that the presence of a successful radical right party can reduce RLP electoral results by 3 per cent; however, they show that RLP's are *mostly* in competition with social democratic parties.⁶⁸

The idea of a large transfer of votes between RLPs and RRP is rejected by Ramiro's analysis of European Social Study data that finds only marginal overlap between their voters in most countries.⁶⁹ Ramiro argues that the vast majority of those who end up voting for a RLP are not the same individuals who consider voting for a RRP. Despite some degree of overlap in their voters' social groups, it appears that RLP voters have different values. The literature on the SP adds support to this finding. Both the SP and Geert Wilders' Party For Freedom (PVV) attract lower educated and income groups, working and lower-middle class; however, there is little evidence of voters switching between the parties.⁷⁰ This is reinforced by research from the Netherlands that finds little overlap between the votes of the SP and PVV in parliament (and particularly on migration).⁷¹ In Sweden, Left Party voters also tend to be 'immigrant friendly', freeing the party to take an adversarial approach.⁷² More broadly, Eurobarometer surveys indicate that 'left-wing' voters are the least likely to say that immigrants do not contribute to the economy.⁷³ This indicates that the core voters of RLPs and RRP are fundamentally different. However, we do not discount room for overlap between the peripheral protest voters that the parties try to attract.

The literature on our case studies supports the idea that their electorates might present barriers to contagion. The RLP electorate is essentially split between working class and highly educated groups.⁷⁴ More specifically, European Social Survey data suggests that all of our cases derive less than half of their support from those identifying as working class (Left Party 34 per cent; SP 29 per cent; Syriza (plus KKE) 28 per cent and EL and SF combined 18 per cent).⁷⁵ For example, the Left Party draws more heavily on support from the middle classes, students and public-sector workers than the working classes.⁷⁶ Studies also show that in 2012 the typical Syriza voter had a degree or was still in university and that the party gained little support from industrial workers.⁷⁷

Several RLPs including the EL, SP and Syriza increased their vote simultaneously with RRP, which some party leaders interpreted as a sign they were not at risk of losing their voters.⁷⁸ However, success may also give new reasons for competition. After 2012 Syriza's new-found success involved expansion beyond the middle-class intelligentsia, to include a wider spectrum of poor and working-class voters, it came into more direct competition with Golden Dawn. Similarly, the EL's politicians have targeted winning voters from the Danish People's Party and sections of the working class after their party expanded in 2010.⁷⁹ Even so, however, we find limited evidence of contagion.

Support from Migrant Voters

While migration may or may not be an issue that could lose RLPs working-class supporters, it may also be one that could generate new sources of support including support from migrant communities (as might related issues such as the easing of citizenship rules). The evidence available on the voting intentions of migrant communities is, however, patchy. Individual country studies and some collective research projects (analysed below) have tried to tease out voting intentions, but their findings are quite variable and inconsistent between cases. However, most of these studies find that the Left tends to benefit from migrant votes.

One of the few comparative studies of migrant voting behaviour draws upon the perspectives of national experts making use of available national data to parse the allegiances of migrant communities.⁸⁰ The analysis of the Netherlands indicates lower levels for support for RLPs among migrant communities than for the country as a whole: instead migrant communities overwhelmingly supported the Labour Party (*Partij van de Arbeid* – PvdA). While this may have been due to the SP's ambivalent stance on immigration, more recent studies suggest higher levels of migrant community support for the SP – of up to 22 per cent of migrant community support.⁸¹ In Sweden, non-European migrants were nearly three times as likely to support the Left Party as other voters and high levels of support from migrants for RLPs were also apparent in Denmark.⁸² Syriza's policies have also been reciprocated by support from those migrants who are able to vote.⁸³

In explaining these trends, some analyses point to the relative youth of many migrant communities, while others highlight rationalist explanations in that RLP welfare policies may be appealing due to migrants' lower socio-economic status.⁸⁴ There may be significant 'group effects' in shaping migrant voting behaviour but the factor which seems less significant is ideology – indeed most analyses highlight the paradox that migrants may hold values that are more conservative than the parties for whom they vote.⁸⁵ Since most studies of migrant voting are based on research carried out before the crisis, research is needed to investigate how migrants' voting may have been affected by austerity measures or increases in anti-migrant rhetoric. Research is also needed to explore the way in which legal restrictions on migrant voting may impact on RLPs.

CONCLUSION

Several of the RLPs studied here appear to be developing a distinctive narrative on immigration issues, which emphasises internationalism and open migration and which often sets them apart from social democratic rivals.

However, they have generally struggled to express this in a way that has been convincing to voters or has been able to prevent the growth of the radical Right. It remains to be seen whether RLPs can successfully emulate Syriza's attempts to promote solidarity between migrants and workers.

Our analysis of RLPs in countries where the radical Right has grown during the crisis finds little evidence of contagion in terms of a tightening of immigration policy. This is reflected in the positions on immigration we have identified in RLP programmes as well as data from interviews regarding the attempts RLPs have made to protest against the growth of the radical Right. It is also supported by data from the CMP and Chapel Hill datasets. Questions remain, however, as to the extent to which the growth of the radical Right has contributed to the increased tendency of RLPs to promote left-populist appeals (a theme highlighted by several chapters in this volume).⁸⁶

The long-term implications of this remain unclear. On the one hand, engaging in left populism might encourage RLPs to emulate Syriza's inclusive approach to migrants and to appeal to a range of social groups on a local level. On the other, it could foreseeably lead to the promotion of restrictive and integrationist positions similar to those developed by the SP in the 1980s. It also remains to be seen whether the anti-establishment appeals made by left-populist RLPs make them any better positioned to win votes from the radical Right.

The findings of this chapter are significant in several respects. First, they point to the norm that RLPs adopted more policy-oriented than office-seeking positions on immigration issues. This may pose significant barriers to their inclusion in office as junior coalition partners alongside social democratic parties. Indeed, the case where contagion was most evident, was that of the SF in Denmark where the social democrats had undergone a process of contagion. The SF's office-seeking strategy required it to make significant compromises on immigration policy before it could gain acceptance as a coalition partner. There are some signs that in office, Syriza has also taken a more restrictive approach to immigration. While the SP has also adopted office-seeking strategies, there is little sign that this has coincided with more restrictive immigration policies. This may be because, for an RLP, the SP already had relatively restrictive immigration policies and therefore faced less pressure to make such compromises.

Second, it is significant that the RLPs studied here have maintained a policy-seeking approach on a number of immigration-related issues. The finding that RLPs have generally been committed to internationalism and more open migration systems may not surprise those familiar with these parties. However, that such positions have been largely maintained despite the growth of the radical Right, is significant in that it suggests that contagion across the party system from the radical Right is not as significant as some writers suggest. Moreover, it presents a way in which RLPs and RRP are not

as similar as is often claimed. Our findings suggest that the ‘theory of two extremes’ struggles to account for the immigration policies of RLPs as these significantly differ from those of RRP.

Third, our findings suggest that any electoral overlap between the parties may come from peripheral protest voters rather than their core supporters. Overall, however, taking principled positions on immigration issues does not appear to have gained RLPs much electoral traction, in all likelihood due to the popularity of anti-immigration positions. Questions also remain regarding the extent to which migrants can constitute a source of support for RLPs. We also find that RLPs’ programmatic commitments to defending migrant rights have not been accompanied by new or sustained attempts to build links with migrant organisations or to field migrant candidates in parliamentary elections.

NOTES

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3. Cas Mudde, *The Relationship between Immigration and Nativism in Europe and North America* (Washington, Migration Policy Institute: 2012), 30. Mudde found that the proportion of EU citizens viewing immigration as one of the two main challenges facing their country actually fell in the early years of the crisis. However, this increased from 8 per cent in 2011 to 18 per cent in 2014. Moreover it increased from 9 per cent in 2008 to 15 per cent in 2015 and may thereafter have contributed to RRP success. Given the growing debate surrounding the immigration crisis, this tendency seems likely to increase further. See Eurobarometer 2015, accessed 20 September 2015, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/cf/showtable.cfm?keyID=2212&nationID=16,&startdate=2003.11&enddate=2014.11.

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5. Luke March, *Radical Left Parties in Europe* (Routledge: London, 2012, 17). Notwithstanding that the SP was, until recently widely seen to be a left-populist party and that the Socialist People’s Party has can be understood as having ceased to be an RLP by 2014 when it became a Green Party.

6. References to the interviews are curtailed in the text to preserve readability.

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9. Tjitske Akkerman, 'Immigration Policy and Electoral Competition in Western Europe. A Fine-Grained Analysis of Party Positions over the Past Two Decades,' *Party Politics* 21 (2015): 60.

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13. Joost van Spanje, 'Contagious Parties', 576.

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