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Abstract

Discussions of the politics of immigration in Europe have focused on the apparent success of Radical Right Parties (RRP) in exploiting migration-related issues. The potential impact of RRPs upon mainstream political parties as the latter toughen their policies in response has been a major topic of debate. However, radical left parties (RLPs) have received relatively little attention. As significant niche players in many countries, such parties face a dilemma in positioning themselves on migration related issues. On the one hand they promote an inclusive politics of solidarity, universalism and diversity against the trend towards more - restrictive policies. On the other, they may share at least some sources of support with RRPs (notably the traditional working class) and a concern about the effects of immigration on their support. This paper analyses the way in which they have responded to this dilemma, particularly in those countries where RRPs have been successful.

Radical left parties and immigration issues

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Over the last three decades, radical right parties (RRPs) have emerged (or re-emerged) on the back of a restrictionist discourse which calls for controls on further migration, access to citizenship, and cultural rights (Norris 2005; Williams 2006; Mudde 2007; Art 2010). In some cases this has been particularly resonant in the period since the economic crisis. As a result, the radical right has shaped the political debate and influenced policy more generally. Some have argued that a sort of "contagion" from the radical right has spread to other parts of the political spectrum (van Spanje 2010; Schain 2006). Mainstream political parties have been obliged to respond to the radical right and its agenda either *directly* by co-opting them into government or seeking their support (and in exchange adopting their policies) or *indirectly* by toughening their own policies on these issues with the objective of stemming or reversing any loss in support to the radical right. The extent of such "contagion" has been much debated but many argue that it has affected the centre right and even the centre left in various parts of Europe.

However, one group has received relatively little attention in discussions of the party politics of migration-related issues: radical left parties (RLPs). At first sight the lack of attention appears justified. In most countries they have remained a relatively modest player in electoral politics and while they were expected to enjoy a boost in support as a result of the crisis this has, with some exceptions, failed to transpire (March 2012). Yet they demand our attention for several reasons. In terms of their electoral performance there is little reason why RLPs should be analysed less than the much studied greens and radical right (March 2012: 4). RLPs, moreover, retain some influence as both potential coalition partners with, and as rivals to, the mainstream centre-left. These parties are increasingly being included in government,

being 'brought in from the cold' after they sacrifice ideological purity (Dunphy and Bale 2011).

Study of RLPs is also merited given the complexity of their relationship with RRPs. On the one hand they can be seen as occupying the other end of the political spectrum, invoking an inclusive politics of solidarity, universalism and diversity against the latter's exclusivist politics of cultural nationalism. On the other, they may share at least some sources of support with the radical right (notably the traditional working class) and a concern about the effects of immigration on those sources of support (albeit from a very different ideological perspective). Indeed, it could be argued that RLPs are caught between two key responses to the politics of migration related issues: they defend a universalist position of solidarity with often marginalized and oppressed communities yet they are wary of immigration as a manifestation of globalization at home, undercutting wages and job security. Odmalm and Bale (forthcoming) identify a similar dilemma facing the left as a whole but it is arguably more acute for RLPs given their principled adherence to critiquing globalisation and keeping common cause with the oppressed. Underlying this is a concern with maintaining traditional sources of support, such as the indigenous working class, who may be willing to vote for RRPs.

The article explores the extent to which RLPs have responded to these dilemmas, particularly in those countries where RRPs have been successful. The focus is on responses in the last five years though we also take into account trends over the longer run. We draw upon the existing literatures on the politics of immigration, particularly regarding the possible "contagion effects" of RRPs on the policies of other parties and consider whether similar drivers are at work for RLPs.

While widely regarded as a significant factor in shaping the party politics of migration related issues, there is considerable debate about the extent to which such contagion is the primary driver of other parties' stances. Although we will not ignore this debate we proceed by assuming that contagion has taken place. We examine whether or not RLPs have adjusted their policy stances on migration related issues and how these parties have addressed the radical right.

On the basis of interviews with party politicians and experts, we analyse five RLPs. Taking the examples of Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands and Greece, the paper contrasts those parties whose approach has been to maintain a broadly pro-immigration/integration "solidaristic" stance with those who have adopted (or sustained) an approach which prioritises the concerns of traditional sources of support. All of them can be seen as 'democratic socialist' parties – the larger of the sub-categories of RLPs that March (2012) identifies. The parties have been selected because they provide a degree of variation in their responses to RRPs (the dependent variable) and we seek to explain the factors that have shaped this diversity. We systematically compare RLPs to draw general propositions about their engagement with the radical right, the factors shaping their responses and the degree to which they compete with the radical right.

This article is structured as follows. First, after contextualising RLPs in relation to RRPs as political parties, we review the key findings from the literature on the politics of immigration (specifically the extent of "contagion" and the nature of migrant communities' political support) and consider the potential implications for the radical left. Second, we introduce the case studies and outline their responses to the radical right and policies on immigration, asylum, citizenship and social rights, and integration. Third, we compare their responses to the radical right by drawing upon Bale et al.'s (2010) "hold-defuse-adopt" typology of mainstream parties' responses to new political issues/movements. We conclude by considering the wider implications of the influence of the radical right and the responses of RLPs.

The politics of migration for the Radical Left and Radical Right

The terms radical left and radical right cover a variety of political movements with important ideological and programmatic differences (see March 2012 and Mudde 2007). Viewed across a simple left right ideological spectrum we would expect parties associated with these terms to be located towards either extreme, or at least "beyond" any placement of "mainstream" or centre left and right parties. That positioning would be consistent with their tendency to be critical of the political status quo occupied by traditional parties/party families and to offer radical reforms of political and economic systems. However, in most cases that criticism does not preclude a general willingness to work within the rules of the game (even if the objective

is to bring about radical changes). This qualifier is an important distinction with their precursors in the 1930s or arguably during the Cold War.

Viewing the radical left and right along this traditional "old politics" spectrum provides us with only a partial view of their positions and their relationship to each other. For a number of decades political scientists have identified a "post-material" turn, highlighting the extent to which public opinion and political debates were increasingly informed by more than distributional issues, showing greater concerns for value-related issues. This "silent revolution" of post-materialism initially manifested itself in the form of a "new left" or libertarian left which gave greater weight to issues of environmental protection, sexual politics and decentralisation. While often associated with the emergence of the green movement, its impact was felt more generally across the radical left.

In due course, this value shift engendered a reaction on the right, a "silent counter-revolution" (Ignazi 1992) which rejected the ideology of the new left while sharing its focus on values. For some, these developments constitute a new cleavage in European politics, variously referred to as the left-libertarian/right-authoritarian (Kitschelt 1995), Green-Alternative-Libertarian vs Traditional-Authoritarian-Nationalist (Hooghe-Marks-Wilson 2002), or libertarian-universalist vs authoritarian-communitarian (Bornschier 2010; Oesch 2012).

Migration related issues have been central to this new cultural divide. Indeed some have argued that while the roots of the radical right may have lain in a reaction against the values of the new left they found a more concrete expression in the articulation of anti-immigration stances. In contrast, the left-libertarian movements (which broadly embrace the radical left) have been seen as supportive of immigration and defensive of migrant communities' rights.

The relationship between these dynamics has been contested. Hampshire (2012) notes that immigration issues cut across the traditional left right divide and raise the possibility of splits in mainstream party support. The left risks being conflicted between its support for human rights and solidarity on the one hand and its concerns to protect workers on the other while the right is conflicted between its support for traditional sources of identity and its commitment to a free market (24-5). Indeed some have argued that there is a disconnect between voter sentiment and party programmes, and highlighted the absence of a political movement which appeals to "left-authoritarian" voters (Lefkofridi et al. 2013). To some

extent, the radical right has resolved this by reducing its commitments to free market policies and defending welfare which provides a complement of economic nationalism and welfare chauvinism to their culturally exclusionist policies (Mudde 2007: 186). For their part, as we will show, the radical left is rather conflicted on how it aligns its stances on some migration-related issues.

The Radical Right, Immigration and Contagion

The relative success of the radical right has generally been attributed to their anti-immigrant stance. Some have argued that the rise of the radical right would have been inconceivable without large scale immigration (Art 2011: 9). Many have seen anti-immigration as a defining characteristic of most RRPs (Carter 2005). The fit between the radical right and immigration is not uncontested. Some authors explain their success in terms of a more general anti-system/populist politics (Taggart 1995) while others highlight other policies which are integral to their ideology (Mudde 1999). Some studies also question how far immigration is related to increased support for the radical right (Norris 2005; Hampshire 2013). Nonetheless, it is clear that questions of migration are central to their discourse and seem to resonate with parts of the European electorate.

The centrality of immigration issues to the identity of RRPs and its contribution to their success raise the question of how far they have been able to "own" the immigration issue and set the agenda for political debates. "Issue ownership" refers to the extent to which parties are associated with particular issues by the voters (Petrocik 2006): "if they think about the issue, they think about the party" and if they are concerned about that issue they are likely to vote for the party which is perceived as most credible on tackling the issue (Walgrave and de Swert 2007: 37). Immigration issues have traditionally been seen as being closer to the agenda of the right than the left, prompting some to argue that the right has a greater claim to "own" (Bale et al. 2009). However, others go further and, for at least some countries and parties, attribute "issue ownership" of immigration to the radical right (Boomgarden and Vliegenthart 2007). Whether or not they are perceived as owning the issue, there is a widespread view that RRPs have set the agenda on immigration and migration related issues (Schain 2006; Williams 2006).

The success of these parties and the toughening of public debate and policy on migration related issues raise the question whether and to what extent there has been a contagion from RRP to the rest of the political spectrum. Schain offers perhaps the clearest statement of the contagion argument, indicating a direct and an indirect effect upon policy. The direct influence comes from entering office and securing influence over the government programme. The indirect effect comes from the reaction of other parties to an electoral breakthrough. Highlighting the latter on the basis of the French experience he argues that "even a modest electoral breakthrough triggers a political dynamic that influences immigration policy" (Schain 2006: 286). This points to an important agenda setting role for the extreme right and indicates that indirect influence is more significant than direct influence through participation in government. He notes that "in virtually every case where there has been an electoral breakthrough of the extreme right, established parties have reacted by co-opting some aspects of their programme in an attempt to undermine their support" (286). Moreover, sometimes RRPs do not enter office but instead, provide support to minority governments which in return adopt restrictive immigration policies (Mudde 2012).

However, as van Spanje (2010) notes, if there appears to be a "consensus on contagion" (565) in the literature, it is one which has been challenged. Bale is particularly sceptical, arguing that tougher immigration policies predate the rise of RRPs and in some cases occur in the absence of those parties as significant forces. While keen to emphasise that parties matter in shaping immigration policy, he argues that too much attention has been spent on looking at RRPs rather than the mainstream, notably the centre right in promoting tougher stances on migration related issues (Bale 2008a: 317). He argues that there is a need to take into account centre right responses to public opinion. Summarising a series of country studies he argues that there are grounds to "at least question and qualify the common wisdom" of contagion (2008b: 457).

Looking at cases where direct influence might appear most obvious – where RRPs have shared power, the evidence on contagion is also unclear. Mudde (2007) finds that those parties probably ensured a toughening of policies on migration issues but questions whether the result would have been different had they been in opposition. Instead, he argues that a variety of other factors, including, for example, EU attempts to harmonise policy have contributed to the toughening of policy. Moreover, Akkerman (2012a) argues that party matters insofar as centre left coalitions have maintained relatively liberal policies while

centre right coalitions have become more restrictive. The latter's restrictiveness occurs whether or not a RRP is involved in the coalition. In a recent survey Hampshire (2013: 130) also notes that, while the emergence of RRPs as a significant force gives an impetus to more restrictionist policies, they are not a pre-requisite for such changes. Mudde (2013: 12) agrees that such parties may act as catalysts for change but argues they are neither necessary or sufficient as explanatory factors.

Contagion effects on the Left

Debates surrounding contagion, have focused on mainstream parties, principally the centre right but also the centre left. How far might we expect RLPs to be susceptible to such "contagion effects"? If a contagion effect exists, how far does it extend across the political spectrum?

As van Spanje (2010) notes the conventional wisdom on RRP and immigration is that there has been a significant impact on other political parties. However, recent attempts to gauge that impact, on the left, come to rather different conclusions. Van Spanje's own work calls into question two assumptions from elsewhere in the literature – that the impact is greater on parties of the right than the left and that parties of what he refers to as the "niche" left are the least affected. Regarding the latter his analysis indicates that some of these parties have shifted their positions.

Alonso and da Fonseca (2012) highlight the strategic dilemmas facing mainstream left parties. Such parties comprise two groups: a well-educated group with liberal values and "an inclination towards…social egalitarianism and solidarity that is defined in universalist...terms" (868); the other the traditional working class who feel threatened by globalization and immigration. Their analysis of Comparative Manifesto Project data, suggests that mainstream left parties have shifted towards "tougher" migration policies. 'Left-libertarian' parties were the only party family they studied that adopted an overall positive stance on immigration and integration in their manifestos. They suggest that left-libertarian parties may be beneficiaries of the dilemmas which immigration presents the mainstream left. Any move by the latter towards tougher immigration stances risk alienating their more universalist-inclined supporters. This raises questions of whether RLPs that retain

a core of working class voters face similar dilemmas and the extent to which RLPs, more generally, have benefited from divisions in centre-left parties over migration issues.

Different conclusions are reached by Akkerman (2012b) who tests how far mainstream parties have changed their party positions on immigration. Amongst the hypotheses tested is that Social Democratic Parties would adopt increasingly restrictive positions on immigration and migrant rights. Akkerman argues that such an anti-immigrant turn, while apparent in some mainstream parties of the right, has not spread to the mainstream left. Aside from some more restrictive positions on labour migration, the social democrats have generally followed "a fairly consistent cosmopolitan course" (14). However, Akkerman does not extend the analysis to the radical left.

Bale et al. (2010) also focus on the mainstream left in assessing the effect of RRPs on immigration policy stances. However, they bring in the radical left as one of the factors influencing whether and how the centre-left responded. Using a qualitative and in--depth analysis of the Danish, Norwegian, Dutch, and Austrian cases, the authors identify three options open to mainstream left parties in crafting their immigration and integration policies – hold (maintain and actively defend existing policies in the face of RRPs' advance), defuse (downplay the issue by stressing other policies), adopt (shift policies in the direction of those advocated by RRPs). These options are in turn shaped not only by the strength of the RRP challenge but also by the strategies which mainstream right parties adopt, the internal debates within social democratic parties and the responses of green-left parties. Their findings provide mixed support for the contagion hypothesis.

Overall, then, recent research on contagion is unclear on the extent to which the radical right has redefined mainstream parties' positions on migration related policies. The possible effects on RLPs have generally been overlooked. What would be the basis for expecting that RLPs would be susceptible to contagion or at least vulnerable to its support drifting away to the radical right? Arzheimer expects that the radical left would be the least likely to be affected since they have a very different demographic of support and "occupy diametrically opposed positions in West European policy space" (Arzheimer 2012, 77). There is some support for that different position from Eurobarometer surveys which indicate that "left wing" voters are the least likely to say that immigrants do not contribute to the economy

(44% compared with 53% for centre voters and 58% for "right wing" voters) (Bale 2008b, 454).

Whether or not the radical left is likely to lose support to RRPs depends on how far they are dependent on working class support. Much of the research on the radical right shows that a major source of its increased support came from the male urban working class, traditionally seen as more likely to vote left than right. This group tend to have lower educational qualifications, less job security and fear that competition from immigrants threatens their jobs, welfare and culture (Bale 2003: 71; Bornschier and Kriesi 2012: 12). However, while the radical left often claims the working class as a significant source of its support – therefore rendering it vulnerable – it is not clear how much of their support comes from the working class nor if that support would be susceptible to RRPs.

The Radical Left and Migration Related Issues

In this section we consider the position of the radical left on a range of issues related to migration (immigration, asylum, integration and social rights/citizenship). We do so in the context of their "interaction" with RRPs. Interaction refers to two types of relationship: the nature of the engagement with the radical right in political debate (does the radical left confront the arguments of the right directly, does it ignore them, or does it adopt them?) and the extent to which the radical left is in competition with RRPs for support. In considering such interactions, migration issues may be particularly salient.

Case studies

We study five democratic socialist parties. First, the Swedish Left-Party Communists which changed its name to Left Party (V) in 1990 and moderated its policies in an effort to exert influence over the social democrats and gain inclusion in a governing coalition. This strategy helped the party to expand its share of the vote at parliamentary elections from 5.8 per cent in 1988 to 12 per cent in 1998. We also examine Syriza in Greece which formed as a coalition of over ten small left parties and social movements as an umbrella electoral alliance in 2004 and became a party in 2012. These ideologically disparate groups were united by their resistance to neo-liberalism and sought left unity. Syriza expanded spectacularly to win 26.9 per cent of the vote in the June 2012 election, overtaking the social democrats as the largest party on the left and becoming the major opposition party.

We analyse both left parties in Denmark, the Socialist People's Party (SF) and the Red Green Alliance (Ø). The SF, which broke away from the Communist Party of Denmark in the 1960s to embrace environmentalism and feminism, has regularly offered support to social democratic governments and became a junior coalition partner in 2011. It has been argued that the party increasingly sacrifices radical left commitments and moves further towards social democracy (Johansen 2011). Ø, formed in 1989 out of an electoral alliance between several RLPs, promotes a grassroots approach and opposes neo-liberal globalisation. The party, whose support increased from 2.2 to 6.7 per cent of the vote in the 2011 election, seeks to influence the government from outside by offering parliamentary support. The Dutch Socialist Party (SP) is the last party analysed. It broke with Marxism-Leninism and has embraced traditional social democratic policies and office-seeking since the collapse of Communism in East Central Europe. This strategy helped it to enter parliament for the first time in 1994 and to become a force in Dutch politics gaining 16.6 per cent of the vote in 2006.

Swedish Left Party

With a strong anti-fascist tradition, the Swedish Left Party has been to the fore in opposing the Sweden Democrats (SD) as it had been in the early 1990s when it faced an earlier right wing populist party. The Left Party took an adversarial strategy between 1990 and 2006 (Dahlström and Esaiasson 2011). Left Party politicians initially refused to share the stage with SD while forcefully arguing against their policies. Prior to the election, the Left Party was active in counter-demonstrations and rapid response tactics to protest at SD meetings. Since the SD gained parliamentary representation, the Left Party has been more focused on parliamentary debates and social media to counter the radical right's claims (Esbati interview).

The party's leaders do not fear losing supporters to the SD. While both parties attract support from the working classes, the Left Party considers that they are fighting for different parts of the proletariat: it is stronger in the North of the country and amongst union members while the SD tends to get support from the South and from nonunionised workers (Einarsson interview). Moreover, electoral studies report that Left Party voters tend to be 'immigrant friendly' (Dahlström and Esaiasson 2011), and the Party itself has traditionally enjoyed good

links with migrant communities and the organisations that represent them (arguably helped by the Party's critical stance on US foreign policy).

Accordingly the party has maintained a relatively open immigration policy compared with other Swedish parties (other than the Greens). It has generally viewed labour migration positively. While it is concerned about the risks of migrants being used as a source of cheap labour to undercut wages and conditions for Swedish workers it campaigns to include all workers in trade union collective bargaining arrangements rather than to restrict migration (Larsson interview). On asylum it has been consistently critical of government 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. It wants to ensure that asylum cases on gender and LGBT grounds are given more support. The Left Party wants more funding for welfare payments to be allocated to local authorities dealing with asylum cases to provide asylum seekers provide with a decent standard of living (V 2012b). It also opposes more restrictive EU level policies, and calls for an easing of 'Fortress Europe' policies.

The Party maintains a policy of multiculturalism rather than integration (which it argues risks appearing racist) and has calls for increased interaction between communities (V 2013a). It supports language courses for new migrants but opposes citizenship or cultural tests. Instead it wants greater emphasis on encouraging employers to recruit migrants. It argues that issues like the Burqa should not be politicised though it offers to help those who feel pressured to wear it. In promoting migrants' rights, the Party has championed social policies to combat the inequalities that those communities face (V 2013b).

Syriza

Syriza too has confronted the radical right in terms of its rhetoric and policies (Tsiparas 2013a). It has opposed Golden Dawn in parliamentary debates but also in the wider arena. It is currently running a 'Solidarity for all' campaign to encourage Greeks to show solidarity with migrants through the economic crisis. The party seeks to promote a cultural change by educating the police and visiting schools to inform children about migrant issues and racism with the aim of limiting Golden Dawn's influence. Party activists have wanted to go further,

holding counter demonstrations and organising 'defence committees' to protect migrants from violence perpetrated by radical right supporters. The party also engages in direct action to provide meals for migrants and on a local level its politicians seek to extend state support to migrants (Hsyxos interview).

The growth of support for Syriza and, to a lesser extent, for Golden Dawn, indicates that they are not in competition for supporters. Syriza initially gained its core support amongst students and parts of the middle class intelligentsia and has broadened this to include a wider spectrum of poor and working class voters only recently, placing the two parties in more direct competition.

Syriza has a relatively flexible stance on immigration and asylum issues. It seeks to grant citizenship to large numbers of 'illegal' migrants (Syriza 2012). It thinks 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 EU to their favoured destinations, arguing that the problem is one for the EU as a whole and not just for Greece (Tsipras 2013b). In particular, it has called for an overhaul of the Dublin II Convention to spread the burden imposed upon Greece and it wants a speeding up of asylum procedures and granting of travel papers to migrants (though it has been criticised for not calling for the closure of detention camps which have been established to cope with large numbers of asylum seekers).

On integration issues, Syriza has adopted a broadly multicultural approach, respecting the different values of communities (Syriza 2012). The party supports education schemes for migrants to encourage them to participate in society and to notify them of their social and political rights, and has campaigned to give them better access to welfare services. It calls for an easing of rules on Greek citizenship and opposed laws that deny citizenship and social rights to the children of migrants born in Greece (Kalimeri interview). It also wants better regulation of labour contracts for migrant workers to combat the low wages and poor working conditions which they often endure. Where it is in power at the local level it has been involved in providing free food for migrants and shelter for homeless migrants, protecting them from attacks by Golden Dawn members (Mason 2012).

Dutch SP

The Dutch SP has been relatively unwilling to engage in direct confrontation with the radical right, preferring to campaign on issues that deliver more votes, rather than spend time fighting the radical right (Futsellar interview). While forcefully critical of Wilders and the growth of right wing populism, it found that taking him head on was not very successful (Meijer interview). In particular the party seems reluctant to engage with the immigration issue where an official argued "everyone loses voters". To some extent the SP has confronted the PVV on the issue of Islam where it has sought to challenge the veracity of the party's claims (SP 2007). The SP also complains that Wilders has copied its social policies but has failed to honour them in practice (Vleigenhart interview). To discourage voters from supporting the PVV the SP has produced reports to show how it breaks manifesto commitments on social policy in parliament. However, the overall failure to engage has opened the SP to criticism from other parts of the left.

How far does the SP compete with the radical right for supporters? Certainly there seem to be some similarities in the socioeconomic background of support for the SP and the PVV (less educated and lower income groups, working and lower middle classes). There is also some overlap in the programmes of the parties (opposition to globalisation, European integration and support for welfare). However, it appears that in value terms there is little overlap between their voters and that overall their supporters constitute two different groups of voters (van Heijningen interview). Surveys indicate that there has been very little switching between the two ends of the political spectrum (van Kessel and Krouwel 2012; Meer et al. 2012).

Immigration is not a priority issue for the SP as it does not see it as a vote winner and it played little role in the SP's 2012 election campaigns. Even so, the SP has taken a more ambiguous stance on immigration policy than other RLPs and has maintained a rather restrictive position on immigration for nearly thirty years. Its stance is economically-based: open labour markets are a feature of neoliberalism which exploits migrants and national workers. Accordingly, immigration should be managed at a rate which does not destabilise the Dutch labour market (Kox interview). Overall, the SP's stance combines some restrictions on immigration, including restoration of work permits to East European workers, with policies to combat discrimination against migrants (2012a). It wants to see Dutch labour

standards applied to migrant working conditions and fines for companies that violate these rules. It opposes policies of repatriation suggested by the radical right. The SP is closer to the positions of other RLPs on asylum. It seeks to make it harder to send asylum seekers back to dangerous states such as Somalia and giving child asylum seekers the right to stay after five years. It opposes detention centres, arguing that these should be run at European level, and wants to provide aid to Greece on the EU border to improve the conditions facing asylum seekers.

The SP's ambivalence is also apparent in its stance on integration where it argues that 'Migrants should open themselves to the values and culture of the society in which they now belong' (SP 2013). This position is in line with the SP's argument that integration rather than multiculturalism is the best way to protect migrant workers and to correct some of the consequences of past government policies (criminality, low skills, poor housing). They argue that these problems would not have emerged if their integration policies had been applied. However, while the party stresses the need for policies designed to encourage integration and supports measures such as citizenship tests, the SP does not want these to place financial burdens on migrants. Moreover, it has been clear in arguing that the challenge of integration is not rooted in religion. While critics of the SP's position argue that it effectively places the blame upon the migrant communities for failing to integrate, it has been clear in opposing plans to restrict migrants' voting rights or access to social security. It proposes tougher laws on discrimination and seeks equal social rights to education, housing and employment for migrants. For the most part the SP prefers to deal with migrants on class terms (Gesthuizen Interview).

SF/ Ø

Both the RLPs in Denmark have opposed the Danish People's Party, the principal RRP in the country. The SF votes against the DPP in parliament and its youth organisation has been active in organising counter demonstrations against them. Ø campaigns against the DPP more actively than the SF.   Neither party's stance, however, is defined by a concern over loss of support to the DPP. For several years there was only limited evidence in Denmark that the radical right had sucked votes from the left, instead, they had simply added votes to the right (Bale 2003:74). While more recently it appears that the Social Democrats have lost some of their working class support to the DPP (Rydgren 2010: 60). Officials from the RLPs, however, do not think their support has been vulnerable because there is only limited overlap

between their supporters and those of the DPP. SF officials argue that the party is quite protected because they have a high proportion of public sector/highly educated voters (Graveson interview). Officials from Ø argue that ideological differences mean that their supporters reject the radical right (Rohleder interview).

While both parties have adopted a principled opposition to the DPP, their stances on migration related policies are rather different. The SF does not see immigration as a priority issue and prefers to focus on economic issues. The SF was criticised for not doing more to object to the immigration policies of the previous centre right government (supported by the DPP) (Buley 2011). Indeed the SF was obliged to go along with the relatively tough immigration policies adopted by the 2011 Social Democrat-led coalition. The coalition retained much of the previous government's policy (such as its points system to restrict immigration, the '24 year rule' and a minimum age for the immigration of family members to prevent forced marriages) though it did make some symbolic changes (for example renaming the ministry of immigration). The SF's stance was determined by the need to compromise with the Social Democrats who were more fearful of losing voters to the DPP (Enevoldsen interview). The party's office seeking strategies have also involved several compromises in an attempt to forge closer relations with the social democrats. This was part of a broader strategy of moderation that involved an acceptance of NATO membership and limited tax rises on the rich (Johansen 2013). Critics argue that the tougher line on immigration has resulted in a loss in support for the SF (Johansen 2013:18).

By contrast Ø has maintained a pro-migrant stance and has campaigned, with some success, for changes in the government's policies (Lundegaard interview). Its conditional support in parliament for the coalition enabled it to secure reforms of the country's asylum legislation (a priority for the social liberals within the coalition) (Rheder interview). The party has also promoted social policies to provide immigrants with more opportunities that promote urban regeneration, combat poverty and social exclusion (Ø 2013; Lundegaard interview). While the parties share a commitment to expanding political and social rights for migrants Ø strongly criticises SF's use of an integrationist discourse in recent years (Rohleder interview) and is careful to avoid language that may problematise immigration.

Comparing the responses

We identify a high degree of consistency overall across the parties examined but with some important differences on particular aspects of policy and strategy. These differences are less to do with any contagion from RRPs than with differences in ideological perspective and party strategy.

Party elites from all five case studies believe that their parties are primarily in competition with social democratic and other left/green parties for voters. While social democratic parties may have lost voters to RRPs, the RLPs studied here have been insulated by significant levels of middle class, public sector or highly educated supporters that they believe are unlikely to defect to RRPs. Moreover, their working class supporters may be directly opposed to the radical right on value issues. This suggests that RLPs may remain relatively free to take adversarial positions toward RRPs. Indeed, all five of the cases have sought to directly oppose the radical right in parliament, publications, the media and public debates. We see, however that some parties (V, Ø, Syriza) have been far more engaged in taking an adversarial approach than others (SP, SF). For the latter parties immigration is less of a priority than job creation and welfare provision. The parties that place a stronger emphasis on immigration are more engaged in helping asylum seekers and organising counter demonstrations to RRP.

This contrast is also apparent in the parties' stances on immigration and integration policies. On immigration policy, there is a clear distinction apparent between the Left Party, Ø and Syriza in comparison with the more restrictive SF and SP. While the policies of the SP and SF are designed to slow the pace and to focus on integration, they do not oppose increased immigration rates in the future. Where the parties call for restrictions on immigration this is largely based on opposition to neo-liberalism and the distortion of labour markets. These parties also seem primarily motivated by ideological conviction or office seeking strategies rather than a fear of losing votes.

On integration, a similar pattern is apparent. While the parties generally support requirements for citizenship such as language (and in some cases cultural) tests, they also want to reduce the cost of obtaining citizenship. They share a willingness to tackle Islamophobia and cultural racism though they differ on issues such as how to achieve integration and how to tackle crime and fundamentalism in migrant communities. Some parties take an active form

of integration where they seek to use housing policies and education policies to avoid segregation and to break up so called 'ghettos'. Others seek to help migrants where they are through urban regeneration policies and think it is immoral to encourage migrants to move location. Most adopt a liberal position of freedom of speech issues.

The parties' policies on asylum and social rights/citizenship seem to have more in common than in the other two policy areas. The parties generally want more open asylum policies (or at least defend existing commitments) and seek to prevent the return of asylum seekers to states where they risk persecution. They demand better conditions for asylum seekers, fairer and speedier procedures for asylum seekers and better rights for their children. Internationally, they seek conflict prevention in states asylum seekers come from, harsher rules on human trafficking and some parties seek to abolish or reform the Dublin II Accord on asylum to relieve the burden on southern European states.

Overall, the RLPs studied here show little sign of welfare chauvinism and seek equal or additional provision for migrants. Moreover, they have sought to prevent the exploitation of migrants and to ensure that they receive equal pay and employment rights and for them to have better access to childcare. The parties call for additional laws to fight discrimination and racism suffered by migrants. The cases suggest that RLPs generally seek to make it easier for migrants to obtain citizenship, offer a more flexible approach to family reunion and promote policies that tackle poverty, unemployment, and low incomes in migrant communities.

Where RLPs have been tougher on immigration or integration this has not been a direct result of contagion from the right. Where these parties have been pro-integration, this is motivated out of a desire to protect migrants. For example the SP's policies stem from its own attempts to prevent divisions between migrants and workers in the 1980s. It has always sought to ensure that migrant workers are included on an equal basis in the labour market. The SP's reluctance to campaign on immigration is based on its vote seeking policies and attempt to focus on issues that will deliver more support rather than a fear of losing votes per se (Meijer interview). The party seeks to play to its own strengths and to try to beat the RRP on social policy more than migration. The SF shows that office seeking may result in compromises with social democrats that are experiencing contagion from the radical right. In this respect policy change was driven by office seeking.

On the basis of our interviews and analysis of party programmes it is possible to make some general propositions about the overall positions of RLPs on migration related policies. Taking the Bale et al. (2010) taxonomy we consider that Left Party, Ø and Syriza are best seen as parties "holding" to their existing policies on migration. They have all been taking RRPs head on, defending the rights of migrants and maintaining their principles in the face of the rhetoric of the radical right and more restrictive policies introduced by governments in their countries. We consider that the SP has adopted a strategy of seeking to "defuse" the issue of migration. It broadly maintained its policies (albeit a set of policies which are relatively restrictive by comparison with the "hold" parties) but has sought to emphasise other policies in a bid to secure votes and office. The SF, we argue, has "adopted" more restrictive policies as a consequence of joining a coalition including parties which had already adopted more restrictive policies given the influence of the radical right over the orientation of Danish policies.

There are also questions about which strategy is most successful. Studies of Swedish municipalities show that a stronger stance against the Sweden Democrats from the social democrats, greens and Left Party correlates with stronger gains for RRPs (Dahlström and Sundell 2012). Critics have argued that the SF's dual strategy of adopting tougher stances on immigration and integration but trying to deliver reforms to help migrants when in government has yielded few results. Moreover, attempts to defuse by the SP have not prevented the growth of the RRP. Elsewhere, it remains to be seen whether Syriza's attempts to educate people will be effective and whether it can sustain direct action to help migrants when, as experts argue, it 'remains a mass party without a mass' after its rapid expansion. None of the RLPs felt that their strategies had been that successful in combating RRP and in several countries they continue to grow. As one official argued 'We have done what we can but the fight from our side is not enough' (Larsson Interview).

Conclusion

Our review of RLPs shows that, for the most part, they have largely maintained their more pro-immigrant policy stances. Where changes have taken place they are on a smaller scale than those taken by centre left or the centre right parties. Whether or not contagion from the right on migration related issues has been significant in Western Europe, the radical left seems to have been relatively immune. There are good reasons why this might be the case. As

we noted the RLPs are ideologically the furthest away from the RRPs whether we think in old politics or new politics divides.

Revisiting the direct and indirect drivers of contagion, it is clear that there would be very little risk of direct contagion. Given their ideological basis, a coalition in which both RLPs and RRPs would be accommodated is unlikely. On the contrary RLPs have been amongst the most willing to confront the RRPs. If anything it may be that some countervailing pressures from the left may have operated. Rather, as RRPs have secured policy concessions in exchange for support of minority governments there have been instances (Denmark, for example) of RLPs securing policy changes where their support is needed.

The question of indirect contagion is less clear cut, though overall there appears to have been relatively little. The case studies suggest that RLPs have not feared a loss of traditional working class supporters to RRPs and that their support rests as much on other social groups. In those cases where parties have shifted their position it seems to have been more for reasons of office seeking and ideology than fear of losing (or of not increasing) support. This raises the issue of whether RLPs have enjoyed the luxury of maintaining their principled policy stance because of their rather limited experience of office seeking. It remains to be seen whether the SF's attempts to compromise on immigration issues and to then seek concessions when in government will be more successful than the Red-Green Alliance's attempt to win concessions through providing the government with parliamentary support.

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Appendix: Interviews

Ø

Niels Rohleder, immigration spokesperson 2.5.13.

Anne Rheder, international secretary 6.3.13.

Christine Lundegaard, Party education officer 19.11.13.

SF

Kare Enevoldsen, spokesperson immigration 3.5.13.

Bent Nørgaard Gravesen, parliamentary adviser 4.12.13

SP

Tiny Kox, member senate 12.04.13.

Frank Futsellar, councillor 14.04.13.

Eric Meijer, former MEP 26.4.13.

Sharon Gesthuizen, spokesperson immigration 26.4.13.

Hans van Heijningen, Party Secretary 28.06.13.

Syriza

Kostas Hsyxos – member Secretariat 25.04.13.

Elena Kalimeri, spokesperson immigration 27.05.13.

V

Kalle Larsson – Party Board member.

Ali Esbati - Chairman Programme Commission.

Mats Einarsson –Party Board member.

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