Radical Left Parties and left movements in Northern Europe and Scandinavia
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Researchers have made significant advances to our understanding of new radical left-wing movements (della Porta and Diani 2009, Flesher-Forminya). A major field of literature has emerged with studies analysing the Global Justice Movement, May Day protests and new anarchist movements (Graeber, Wannerhag Petterson et.al. 2012a). This complements studies of established CSOs including trade unions (Petterson et al. 2012b). There are few comparative studies of political parties’ relations with civil society and these tend to focus on mainstream parties (Bale and Allern, 2010).

Hudson (2012) and March (2011) make important observations about relations between RLPs and ‘the wider movement’. Most, studies however, focus on identifying variation in the ability of RLPs to connect with social movements in southern Europe since the 2008- global economic crisis (Verge 2012, Tsakatika and Lisi 2012). Consequently, we know little about the state of links between RLPs and social movements in Northern Europe and Scandinavia.

Our lack of knowledge on RLP relations with civil society outside of southern Europe is problematic for several reasons. First, linkage was seen as a key function these parties (Allern 2010). Second, such links have been found to strengthen the survival chances of new left parties (Bolleyer 2013). Third, RLPs are undergoing a limited electoral recovery after the collapse of the communist movement. They are de-radicalising and being included in governing coalitions giving reasons to question whether they can maintain relations with radical left movements (March 2011, Bale and Dunphy 2011, Olsen, Koß and Hough 2010). Last, relations with parties can impact upon the development of left movements (Della Porta and Diani 2009).

This chapter contributes to filling the significant gaps in our knowledge by asking whether RLPs have forged links with protest groups that have gained significance in recent years including anarchist groups? Have they connected with new groups opposed to financial bailouts and austerity measures during the sovereign debt crisis? To do this, it analyses whether RLPs in northern Europe (Britain and the Netherlands) and Scandinavia (Denmark, Sweden and Norway) have maintained or forged new links with CSOs (trade unions), NSMs (feminist, peace and environmental) and newly emergent radical left movements (Global
Justice movement, anarchist groups, anti-austerity protests and Occupy) during the 2008-economic crisis. It shows that fruitful connections can be made between theoretical literature on political parties, RLPs and social movement studies.

The chapter makes four main claims. First it argues that elites in most of the RLPs studied here have been active in launching new links with radical left social movements in response to the economic crisis. Second, it demonstrates how these links were shaped by similar factors to those Tsakatika and Lisi (2012) found in Southern Europe. Third, it is argued that participation in government may weaken RLP relations to protest movements, without necessarily leading to a break in relations with social movements. Last, ideas of resource exchange from social movement studies are shown to be useful in understanding the limited national links between RLPs and new anarchist or squatter radical left movements.

**Explaining links between RLPs and social movements**

*Political parties and civil society*

How should we expect RLPs to relate to social movements? Since Katz and Mair (1995) presented their ‘Cartel Party thesis’ researchers (Kitschelt 2000, Koole 1996) have debated the extent to which political parties have shed their links with civil society. According to Katz and Mair, parties struggled with declining memberships, a citizenry less willing to participate in politics while the growth of the mass media presented pressure on party leaders to assert strategic control over policy making (Katz and Mair 1995). This eroded possibilities for internal democratic decision-making. Links to interest groups became a liability for professional politicians seeking to appeal to a broad range of voters with similar and bland policies in aim of the spoils of office (Mair 2007). Consequently, parties weakened the chain of representation and used state funding to replenish their resources and to curtail the emergence of new rivals (Katz and Mair 2009, Mair 2007). Radical parties play a ‘peripheral’ role, but have little hope of entering office to enact alternative policies (Mair 2011).

Some scholars found evidence to support such developments (Lawson and Poguntke 2004, Blyth and Katz 2005). However, cross-national studies have found more evidence of increased dependency on state resources and a weakening of ties to interest groups, and less in terms of declining intra-organisational democracy (Bolleyer 2009, Detterbeck 2005: 173).
Others point to on-going close relationships between political parties and interest groups (Bale and Allern 2012).

**Radical left parties and civil society**

March (2011) identifies several trends in RLPs’ relations with civil society. He argues that they have made a partial recovery in terms of replacing the lost ‘Social Cosmos’ developed by European Communist parties. The youth organisations of RLPs are active in reaching out to social movements. The tendency for RLPs to de-radicalise and a distancing between unions and social democratic parties may have provided opportunities for a limited rapprochement between RLPs and the labour movement (March 2011: 178).

Most RLPs recognise that the GJM offers potential for mobilisation against neo-liberalism. However, the emergence of the GJM has not benefited RLPs in the same way as the NSM of the 1970s (March 2011: 177). March argues that links are undermined by the elements of the GJM engaging in anti-party politics, violent protests, rejecting statist politics and pursuing alternatives to representation. Indeed activists from RLPs including Die Linke involve participate on an individual basis in Social Forums, anti-war protests, the World Social Forum because these groups do not let parties work under official banners (Hudson 2011).

Research from the ‘crisis zone’ of Southern Europe indicates that RLPs had not broken their links with civil society as mainstream parties have supposedly done (Taskatika and Lisi 2012). Leaders of RLPs saw linkage as part of their raison d’être and the crisis provided opportunities to re-invigorate their links to society. Consequently, they established a wide range of links to CSOs and social movements and engaged in new forms of mobilisation including flash mobs (Taskatika and Lisi 2012: 13). RLPs developed loose links to CSOs through social forum and ‘movement parties including Podemos’ emerged (Fleshier Fominaya 2014).

Studies from Spain suggest that democratic socialist RLPs pursued open relationships with social movements based on collaboration rather than strategies aimed at co-opting or controlling them (Verge 2012). In one of the few studies of RLPs and civil society relations outside of Southern Europe, Allern (2010) finds that the leaders of the SV in Norway pursued similar links. Allern also found that the SV’s leaders viewed interest groups in terms of ‘exchange based relations’ – as sources of members and resources, as is typical of
mainstream parties (Allern 2010: 92). This raises questions as to whether such trends exist elsewhere.

**Social movement studies**

Studies of radical left social movements have made only tentative steps to examining the relations between movements and political parties. Della Porta and Diani (2009: 222) assert the GJM tend to ally with parties on the left. The authors draw on the work of Sidney Tarrow (1990) to suggest that left parties often play shape the success of new movements through playing an ‘offstage’ role in their development. However, while they study relations between the former Italian Communist Party and movements their study is out of date and generally focuses on relations between movements and social democratic parties. There is a need for further research on RLPs when initial links between social democrats and the GJM become strained by the rightward shift of social democratic parties (Della Porta and Diani 2009: 222 and Kreisi 1991).

Della Porta and Diani also explain links between parties and movements through potential for resource exchange. This is developed by Schwartz’s (2006) analysis of movements in the United States. Accordingly, links develop as movements seek access to the state and parties gain a means by which to win members, voters and to mobilise public opinion. Electoral competition means that parties compete to build alliances with movements to win votes (Della Porta and Diani 2009). Schwartz concludes that resource exchange goes a long way to explaining the links between movements and parties and that, ideological and institutional factors are also significant (although he rules out the importance of economic changes or deprivation).

Piotrowski and Wennerhag (2015) find that libertarian/anarchist activists in Sweden are opening up to more institutionalised forms of politics and voting pragmatically ‘to stop the wrong parties doing well’. This makes it necessary to question whether the leaders of RLPs have exploited opportunities to launch new links with such groups during the economic crisis.

**Expectations**

Several expectations regarding the links between RLPs, radical social movements, CSOs and NSMs can be derived from these fields of literature. First, the party literature tells us that RLPs in office, parliamentary, less radical and older parties will be likely to shed their links
to these movements. The literature on RLPs in Southern Europe suggests that they have launched new links during the economic crisis but found radical left movements reject their advances. Last, social movement studies point to new opportunities for RLPs as radical left movements have emerged that seek to influence established institutions. Studies from all three bodies of literature identify the importance of processes of resource exchange (Katz and Mair 1994; March 2011, Allern 2010, Schwartz 2006).

Case selection
This chapter explores potential for regional differences between RLPs and radical left social movements by analysing RLPs from three countries in Scandinavia (Sweden, Denmark, and Norway) and two in Northern Europe (the Netherlands and Britain). These cases have been selected because they exclude countries most severely hit by the economic crisis. They are more typical of most RLPs – encountering only the ‘ripple effects’ of the economic crisis. Each country had radical left movements emerged in recent years. Moreover, they are similar or comparable parties coming from the same democratic socialist ‘subgroup of the radical left’ identified by March (2011). RLPs in these countries also allow us to investigate the impact of variation in potential independent variables (origins, age, presence in office, size, and radicalism, recent electoral fortunes).

First, the former Communist, Left Party (V) in Sweden embraced new left politics in the late 1960s. After the collapse of the Soviet Union it moderated its policies in an effort exert influence over the social democrats in parliamentary negotiations. (Bale and Bergman 2006). It expanded to 12\% of the vote in 1998 and recently the social democrats accepted the idea of binging V into a centre-left coalition, however, it has declined to 5.7\% in 2014 and 12,000 members. Both the RLPs in Denmark are analysed. The Socialist People’s Party (SF) broke from the Communist Party of Denmark in the 1960s and embraced environmentalism and feminism and grew on the back of the anti-nuclear missile movement in the 1980s (Johnson 2011: 14). SF support to social democratic governments and became a junior coalition partner in 2011 even though it declined from 13 to 9.2 percent of the vote in 2011. It has 11,500 members (down from 17,500 in 2011). The party increasingly sacrifices radical commitments and moves towards social democracy and recently joined the European Green Party. In contrast, the Red-Green Alliance (Ø) formed in 1989 as an electoral alliance between small RLPs. It grew from 2.2 to 6.7 percent of the vote in the 2011 election on a grassroots approach that opposes neo-liberal globalisation. It seeks to influence the government from
outside by offering parliamentary support. It grew from just 4000 members in 2008 to 10,000 members in 2014.

The Norwegian Socialist Left Party (SV) formed from a coalition of socialists and communists opposed to the social democrats’ foreign policy in the 1970s. It moved from revolutionary, class based politics, to embrace reformism and ecological goals (Knutsen 1997; Ersson 2008). The party expanded dramatically in 2001 from 6 to 12.5 percent of the vote. After pursuing an oppositional strategy, it worked in a red-green coalition government from 2005-2013. In the 2013 elections it fell from 6.2 to 4.1 percent of the vote and has 9,500 members (Seiderstadt 2010: 65).

RLPs in Britain have regularly lacked representation in parliament (despite the Respect Party and Sinn Fein gaining representation with the latter abstaining from parliament). Analysis here focuses on Left Unity (LU), Britain’s largest democratic socialist party with 2000 fee-paying members. LU is an extra-parliamentary party that formed in 2013 as an attempt to break with the Left’s history of sectarianism in response to austerity measures. The Socialist Party of the Netherlands (SP) has origins as a tiny Maoist sect that formed in 1971. During the 1990s it broke with Communism and its populism, euroscepticism and direct activism helped it to gain representation in parliament. The SP’s pragmatic appeals and office-seeking delivered 9.7 percent of the vote in the 2012 parliamentary election.

**Method**

Researchers used survey data and semi-structured interviews to enhance our understanding of the attitudes of activists from radical left movements (Sorbom and Wennerhad 2011). Allern (2010) used similar methods to analyse the attitudes and social movement participation of party leaders and social movements in Norway. There is also, however, a need for research on the ‘subjective perceptions of reality in the process’ of making alliances between parties and radical left movements (Della Porta and Diani 2009: 222).

Therefore, this study builds on Allern’s use of semi-structured interviews to identify moments when the leaders of RLPs launch links with CSOs, NSMs and radical left movements. Second, the interview material is analysed to assess motives, priorities, and perceptions of party leaders in these processes. Non-random sampling and snowball sampling (recommended by Tansey…) were used to select respondents that are responsible for their
parties’ organisational work. These respondents are in suitable positions to provide information regarding moments when the parties’ launch links with social movements and the strategic calculations of those involved. Claims about their attempts to launch links have been cross-referenced with secondary sources or material from other interviews.

Findings
Tsakatika and Lisi (2013) analysis of RLP’s in Southern Europe rebutted arguments that RLPs have distanced themselves from civil society (Lazar 1988). All the RLPs studied here have also launched links with trade unions, NSMs or radical left organisations since 2008. Like in Southern Europe, the elites see this as part of their parties’ raison d’être.

CSOs
The elites interviewed here argued that their parties had prioritised developing links with the labour movement. All the parties had launched links with trade unions in recent years. Trade unions in Scandinavia, are stronger than in Southern Europe, however, RLPs there historically struggled to gain influence within Labour movements dominated by the social democrats. In Sweden, however, the social democrats’ hegemony over the unions has weakened (Aylott, 2003). The collapse of the Soviet Union and the Left Party’s attempts to work closely with social democrat governments in the 1990s, made it harder to exclude from the unions. It leaders report closer personal ties with the labour movement in recent years (Einarsson interview). The party participated in relatively small (under 10,000 people) anti-austerity protests with the unions in 2007 and 2011. It now has some leading officials in the board of the Swedish Trade Union Confederation which was previously unthinkable (Einarsson interview). More recently, the Left Party worked hard to build links, with party leaders speaking at events with Union leaders (LO 2008). The unions pressured the social democrats to include V in the proposed governing collation in 2010 (Steiner 2010: 68).

However, union membership steadily decreased in Sweden from 85 percent in 1993 to 70 percent in 2008 (Kjellberg 2009: 267). Trade unions have less capacity to organise social protests than before. While V’s leaders regularly meet with unions, pensioners organisations, and tenants associations to organise campaigns, they seek to facilitate their development and claim that ‘we don’t want to look like a faction and so when we work inside the trade unions we work as trade unionists not representatives of our party’ (Einarsson Interview).
In Denmark, SF’s politicians see trade unions as key allies (Westermann interview). From 2001 and in particular the unions found that their links to the social democrats were being eroded and built connections with SF. The unions lobbied the social democrats to include SF in the 2011- coalition government (Gravesen interview). Before the election the unions SF launched a major national level campaign with the unions including the largest union 3F to campaign for wage rises. In some areas, the party ran its election campaign from 3F offices. Governing, however, made it hard for SF to pursue an oppositional strategy. SF helped to organise large protests against austerity measures taken by the previous centre right government in 2006 and 2010 in Copenhagen alongside the unions, protest groups. It did not engage with protests by teachers against school closures and working conditions in 2013. Governing, presented new opportunities for SF to develop linkage strategies and it launched campaigns with groups protesting against tax havens it became responsible for the ministry of taxation. Governing presented new reasons for social movements and the unions to seek cooperation with SF as it had information about government policy (Westermann interview).

Ø’s closest ties are also now with the unions. It launched new links with them to take advantage of their strained relations with the social democrats. Around half of Ø’s members are trade unionists (Johnson 2010: 18). Ø’s leaders recently launched a training programme for activists on working with unions and social movements. It also made efforts to support strikes by teachers who were unable to influence the SF and increasingly ally with Ø. It campaigns with eurosceptic organisations including the People’s Movement against the EU. The party’s policy committees are required to forge links with CSOs (Ø 2012). In 2013, Ø protested in European wide demonstrations against welfare cuts and restrictions on budget deficits (Ø 2013).

In Norway, the SV’s leaders also tried to exploit strained relations between the unions and social democrats from 2003. It became common for leading trade unionists to address SV congresses (Allern 2013). The unions pressured the Labour Party to accept the SV as a coalition partner (Seiderstad 2010: 55). Researchers found that SV has more inter-organizational links with interest groups than most Norwegian parties, however this is generally based on informal dialogue rather than affiliation (Allern 2010: 227–30). SV asks activists from movements to write sections of election manifestos. While there have not been austerity cuts in Norway, the party has protested with groups opposed to cuts across Europe. Surveys show that over 80 percent of SV’s leaders had contact with one or more organisation
each month in 2003, most significantly with the unions, international organisations and anti-
EU groups (Allern 2013).

In Northern Europe, the SP’s leaders have forged links with the unions since the economic
crisis (Kox Interview). While the party historically lacked a significant presence in the main
Dutch trade union federation FNV, SP politicians met with them to discuss the crisis (De
Jong 2010). The SP is beginning to erode the dominance of social democrats in the larger
unions, with indications that trade unionists are increasingly voting SP (De Jong 2012). The
party organised protests with the unions to protect postal workers rights from EU legislation
and healthcare services from cuts in 2010 (Gestuizen, Kox interviews). It protested against
austerity cuts with FNV in November 2013 and in April 2014 with ETUC (SP 2013).

Despite the Labour Party’s historic dominance of the British labour movement, Left Unity
also gives priority to launching connections with unions. It supported the RMT union’s
‘Hands off London Transport’ initiative (LU 2014a) and the TUC’s ‘March against austerity’
in October 2014. The leaders of LU including maintain extensive engagement with the
People’s Assembly Against Austerity’s campaigns which are run by the unions (National
Executive Members A and B). Left Unity has produced publications supporting the People’s
Assembly’s national conference in March 2014.

NSMs
Elites from the Scandinavian parties studied here report that forging links with NSMs has
been a priority for their parties (Etzler interview). This is supported by evidence of events run
or sponsored by the parties. Since 2008 the Left Party in Sweden has arranged protests,
workshops and campaigns with Euroseptic movements, migrant organisations, anti-racist
organisations (Anti-Fascist Action), feminist (Feminist Forum) and environmental
movements (climate change protests in Copenhagen in 2009). The Left Party has worked
with anti-racist organisations in response to the growth of right-wing populism. It innovated
in campaigning by running teams of activists to contest criticisms of migrants on online
media (Larsson interview). Interviewees report that Left Party’s leaders are often members of
other organisations and representatives from a wide range of social movements address party
congresses (Esbati, Etzler interviews).
In Denmark, SF and Ø participated at climate change protests in Copenhagen in 2009 (Johnson 2010: 15). Ø’s leaders maintain links with social movements, student groups, and NGOs. These groups are invited to conferences and work with the party in campaigns and protests. Officials report that party headquarters and MPs regularly meet with leading figures of social movements. It was active in anti-war protests and protests against European integration.

In Denmark, SF claims to continue to provide NSMs with a direct influence in party policy making. The SF’s national party headquarters works with left-wing think tanks and a range of movements (peace and environmental) to learn about their policy goals (Westermann interview). The party has close, informal ties with development organisations including Action 8 and some SF elites work for development organisations (Graveson interview). Its parliamentarians are obliged to maintain regular contact with social movements in their role as policy spokespersons for the party.

SV maintains links with NSMs and NGOs. These include professionalised campaign organisations and loosely organised protest movements that are seen to provide important recruiting grounds for party members (Tveitdal interview). Alongside the trade unions, the SV’s closest ties are with environmental, feminist movements and it frequently runs campaigns with them. For example, it has recently worked with ‘People’s action against oil drilling’, a movement in northern Norway and Friends of the Earth. Such campaigns are promoted at both central and local levels of the party.

During the 1970s, ‘it was a demonstration every weekend’ (Einarsson interview). However, elites from Scandinavian RLPs perceive a decline in mass protest by social movements making it harder to build connections with NSMs (Esbati interview). Therefore, they find it more difficult to engage with social movements. While the emergence of Green parties provides more competition (March 2011: 173) a professionalisation of social movements makes them harder to connect with.

The Dutch Socialist Party protested in the Hague against the Dutch mission to Afghanistan with ‘Stop the War’ groups in January 2011 and international protests against nuclear weapons in 2010. It also supported LBGT protests in 2009. However, unlike the other parties studied here, the SP does not have links with the feminist movement or feminist groups on a
national level (Feenstra interview). SP has weaker links than the other parties to the feminist movement. Feminism is generally considered as being unnecessary within the party’. Feminism is not something that is discussed (Gestuizen interview).

Left Unity’s leaders have launched links with a range of NSMs. The party produces a broadsheet newspaper in support of International Women’s Day and made donations ‘Focus E15’ a campaign against the so called ‘Bedroom Tax’ in support of low income families evicted from their homes in London. LU also participated in ‘No to NATO’ and anti-war demonstrations by the Stop the War Coalition. It gave donations to the European Ecology Conference, protested in the People’s Climate March in September 2013 and protested in Frackfree demonstrations (LU 2014b).

**Radical left movements**

Most of the Scandinavian cases have recently forged links with radical left movements including ATTAC and the GJM. In Sweden leading party figures helped to organise ATTAC and in Norway the SV’s elites became involved in their campaigns. The SV invites GJM activists to party conferences. However, party elites report that ATTAC and the GJM are relatively weak movements.

Ø (Denmark) has been active in campaigning alongside new anti-capitalist groups in response to the economic crisis and in demonstrations against the G8 in 2013. It developed relations with Transform! and small anti-capitalist movements. While austerity measures have been relatively small in Denmark, the party maintains that the government broke promises on avoiding cuts. It engages with anti-capitalist groups in protests against bank bailouts and Socialistisk Arbejderparti, part of the Fourth International, works inside the party, it organised protests in 2013 against cuts to unemployment benefits.

Similarly, the Left Party recently developed links with Megafonen, a protest movement that began in 2012, in which young activists campaign for better urban social conditions. Representatives from V ran local campaigns against spending cuts with Megafonen. However, the movement eschews party politics and ‘suntanned politicians’ limiting opportunities for cooperation (Behdjou 2012). Left Party politicians report a lack of connection with neo-anarchist organisations. These are seen as being relatively unimportant and as not providing a basis through which the party can expand (Einarsson Interview).
In 2006, the SF’s youth organisation helped to organise a Social Forum. After changing its electoral strategy in search of a centre-left coalition, however, SF has not prioritised developing links with the GJM (Johnson 2010). Those involved in its organisational work reject links, seeing ATTAC as weak and overly radical (Westermann interview).

In Northern Europe, the SP forged relations with ATTAC and the global justice movement despite the relative weakness of the movement in the Netherlands (Flesher Fominaya 2013). Party elites helped organise workshops at a Social Forum in May 2006 and it enjoyed ‘the captive audience’ (SP 2006) and participated at the European Social Forum in Malmo in 2008. Here its youth organisation t-shirts and books and made contacts and defended their positions on Europe and globalisation (SP 2006). The SP’s party chair was a co-founder of ATTAC in the Netherlands (Gerritje and de Vries). The Party campaigned at G20 protest marches in London 2009. It also helped to organise workshops with the European Social Forum in Brussels in May 2011 to campaign against austerity (SP 2011). However, elites in the SP did not perceive a need for a shift of their vote-seeking strategies through launching new links with anti-capitalist in response to the economic crisis (Kox, Feenstra, Gesthuizen interviews). As one put it, ‘we are the anti-capitalist movement in the Netherlands’ (Kox interview) for another ‘there has been no real movement’ since the crisis (Gestuizen interview).

Several of the Scandinavian parties launched links to the Occupy movement. In Sweden, the Left Party’s parliamentarians including Ulla Andersson spoke at Occupy events. However, Party Secretary Aron Etzler argues that in Sweden Occupy was a rather small movement and V’s leaders saw only limited opportunities to work with it (Etzler interview). The SF met with Occupy, but found that it was disorganised, lacked a sustainable organisational model or a leadership for the party to contact. In Northern Europe the SP helped to organise Occupy Amsterdam in October 2011. The SP also donated sleeping bags and money to Occupy Amsterdam and party leader Emile Roemer spoke there as the SP activists distributed leaflets (SP 2011). However, the SP’s leaders see Occupy as being weak in the Netherlands (Kox interview). In Britain, Left Unity also invited speakers from occupy Democracy to address its national conference in November 2014 and the party’s principal speaker Salman Shaheen supported the occupation of parliament square in 2014 (Shaheen 2014). LU worked with other radical left groups including the Anti-Atos Alliance (against privatised healthcare) and Disabled People Against Cuts.
The leaders of the Scandinavian RLPs studied here have not sought to launch links with alternative lifestyle movements like squatters or neo-anarchist groups in recent years, these groups are seen as being too weak to be useful allies (Rehder and Etzler interviews) and offer little potential for mobilising joint protests (Westermann interview). Similarly, while the SV found that anarchist or squatters rights activists and groups including *Ungdomshuset* (Youth House) in Copenhagen, reject ties with parties. Relations between the SF and anarchist groups have become antagonistic, as officials report being attacked by anarchists in protest at compromises SF made in government.

In Northern Europe, the SP has worked with anarchist activists on the local level in The Hague to campaign for increased rights for refugees. However, the party’s national leaders have done little to forge new links with anarchists in recent years (Meijer interview). As MP and former students/trade union activist Sharon Gesthuitzen argues ‘we don’t go out of our way to make links with anarchists’ these groups are seen as too small to be influential beyond local level campaigns.

LU’s leaders attempted to forge links with the anarchist group ‘Class War’ in a failed request for cooperation at elections in 2014. Its leaders also appealed to anarchists to emphasise the need for a broad movement and anarchists formed a Left Libertarian Platform within LU. However, for the most part, the leaders of LU see limited room for working with anarchists (Interviews Member national executive A and B). Anarchism as an organised movement is seen as being too weak to provide useful and they argue that LU will not seek out anarchist groups to work on common campaigns at the national level: ‘If our orientation is towards the population at large we’re not going to intentionally seek out some tiny minority thing are we?’ (Member national executive A).

**Discussion**

There has been less opportunity for RLPs in Northern Europe and Scandinavia to protest against austerity measures in Southern Europe. The parties studied here, however, found new opportunities to launch links with social movements in anti-austerity protests. These parties continue to actively seek out opportunities to launch links with social movements and their leaders usually remain keen to engage with them when they emerge. The leaders of the Scandinavian RLPs studied here present links with social movements as ‘an important part of the party’s history and identity’ (Rehder interview). In this respect they are similar to Bloco
or Syriza. All the cases were active in recent protests with trade unions and social movements or against austerity measures in Europe.

It may not be surprising that elites from RLPs claim to connect with social movements. However, their claims are corroborated by evidence of common protests, working groups and initiatives. It appears that both parliamentarians and members of party executives in these RLPs are active in launching links with social movements and differ from those found in Katz and Mair’s ‘Cartel Party thesis. The RLPs studied here found opportunities to work with the GJM as in Southern Europe. Moreover, the parties were not just reacting to the emergence of such organisations. Sometimes, their activists were instrumental in forming them. This analysis suggests however, that so far RLP elites see links with CSOs and NSMs above links to radical left movements. Radical left movements since the 2008- economic crisis. These were seen as an electoral liability by elites in more moderate parties.

This study suggests that the economic crisis has contributed to the limited rapprochement March (2011) identified between RLPs and trade unions. RLPs have found opportunities to launch new links with trade unions through increased levels of contact with union leaders, common campaigns and at times, negotiations over government policy. The leaders of the RLPs were keen to develop relations with unions and their members found it easier to gain leading positions in unions. Unions are increasing involved in party meetings and policy-making committees. This highlights a need for research into the impact that RLPs have on union policy and their ability to deliver concessions for unions when in government.

The democratic socialist RLPs studied here pursued open strategies of collaboration with social movements as Verge found in in Southern Europe. These RLPs forged routine, informal links to movements and CSOs, contrary to the conventional view that these worked on a relatively ad hoc basis. This suggests that Allern’s (2012) findings in Norway have wider relevance. The cases also had regular links to a wide range of organisations (as in Norway) including not just feminist, environmental and labour movements but international organisations and anti-EU organisations (Christensen 2010).

The parties were more active in launching linkage strategies with social movements on a local level, this is particularly surprising given that the parties were all from unitary states. In Sweden, Left Party local organisations are more important than party headquarters in
launching campaigns with movements (Etzler interview). ¹ This has methodological implications when party researchers generally focus on analysing linkage at the national level.

The leaders of RLPs encountered several problems in working with radical left movements. First they struggled to work with GJMs like Occupy because they perceive a lack of organisational structure. This is intriguing when RLPs’ supposedly enjoy ad-hoc links to loosely organised NSMs. Second the parties’ elites pay relatively little or no attention to developing links to neo-anarchist groups and pay little attention to mobilising Graeber’s ‘new anarchists’ in national level campaigns. This study supports Allern’s findings in Norway that elites in RLPs make strategic calculations on links to movements on the basis of resource exchange, as in mainstream parties. It appears that elites in RLPs in Scandinavia and Northern Europe believe that anarchist groups and squatters offer little potential for mobilisation or exchange based relations.

In southern Europe, Tsatatika and Lisi found a range of factors including ideology, electoral incentives, party competition and external events explain the radical left’s continued commitment and attempts to launch new linkage strategies (Tsatatika and Lisi 2012). The countries studied here only enacted limited austerity measures since the 2008- global economic crisis. Norway and Sweden emerged relatively unscathed by austerity cuts (Financial Times 19 May 2010). The UK, the Netherlands and Denmark were more affected by austerity cuts. Unsurprisingly, it is noticeable that the parties in the UK, Netherlands, Denmark are more active in launching protests with unions against austerity. External events and what Schwartz calls ‘social breakdown or deprivation’ theories help to explanation of the links between RLPs and social movements. Furthermore, the nature of competition with social democrats provided new opportunities for all the RLPs studied here to forge new links with trade unions.

Party ideology (and origins) was also highly significant in explaining why the Dutch SP has been less involved in launching links with feminist groups. In contrast, Left Unity has presented women as a group particularly affected by the economic crisis (LU 2013). While

¹ For example, the local party in the municipality of Alby in Stockholm worked with the small ‘Alby is not for sale’ campaign against the privatisation of council homes in 2012. Left Party activists helped the group collect signatures in an effort to trigger a citizens’ initiative and provided local offices for it to hold meetings. While party activists attended meetings and some of the group joined the party, it aimed to work with the group rather than to control it (Einarsson interview).
LU was formed to be an overtly feminist party, the SP has historically focused on class politics and ‘improving the situation for the working class’ (Gesthuizen interview). Similarly we find the SF’s leaders paid less attention to connecting with the GJM declined when they perused a vote/office seeking strategy.

Participation in office weakened links between the RLPs and NSMs. The SF’s leaders felt a need to be seen to behave responsibly upon entering government for the first time as a junior coalition partner (Westermann interview Graveson interview). When the party was given responsibility for the ministry of the environment, its leaders decided to make meetings with the environmental movement less regular (Westermann interview). Similarly, the SV found after two years in office, environmental organisations criticised the compromises it made (Tveitdal interview).

Both parties re-launched links with NSMs while in office to boost membership and reenergise activists. In Denmark, in response to a loss of membership the SF sought to launch new links with environmental movements. SF politicians relaxed their approach and it increasingly environmental movements inside government ministries. However, after electoral losses in 2013 and a return to opposition that led the SV’s leaders to more serious attempts to launch new contacts with unions and protest movements (Tveitdal interview).

Tsakatika and Lisi also found, however, that some RLPs neglected linkage in government (2012: 8). Indeed, party leaders in SV and SF placed less emphasis on protest after entering government, and engaged less in protests. SV found that it was hard to maintain links with movements due to the functional constraints of office and in particular because most party staff were working to support the ministerial team. It found that playing a ‘double game’ of protesting and governing triggered internal divisions and instability within the government (Dunphy and Bale 2011: 499). A decline in linkage between SF and SV and radical left social movements, however, did not prevent the parties maintaining a wide range of links and activism at the local level.

To some extent the parties tried to have their cake and eat it. They were able to provide NSMs and trade unions with access to the formulation of party programmes continued and local level links were maintained. As, Allern and Bale (2012) argue, relations between
parties and interest groups are multi-dimensional. Governing allowed RLPs to provide access to state policy-making processes, gave the contact with a wider range of organisations and higher level contact with the leaders of movements and CSOs. While linkage may have declined in terms of quantity, some argue ‘it was of a higher quality’ (Westermann interview). SF tried to innovate through promoting a ‘cultural revolution’ upon entering government (Gravesen interview). It worked in a way that was unfamiliar to civil servants, by inviting movement activists to workshops and tasking civil servants with researching their proposals and translating them into policy.

In contrast, Ø provided a support role of centre left governments. It found it easier than SF to maintain and launch links with NSMs seeking a ‘second shot’ at influencing the government (Rehder interview). The cases suggest that RLPs that did not seek office Ø and LU and V (excluding 2010) found it easier to launch and maintain links with radical left movements. The younger parties RGA and LU were also particularly active in launching new links with radical left movements. LU’s extra-parliamentary existence helped its leaders to be marginally more successful at connecting with Occupy and anarchist groups than the other parties on the national level. With few members, links to such movements were vital for recruitment purposes. There is also evidence that RLPs launch linkage attempts on a return to opposition, electoral defeat or sudden loss of membership (SF 2011, SV in 2013). For Ø electoral growth also gave it more attractive to social movements.

**Conclusion**

This chapter begins to fill gaps in our knowledge about the links between RLPs in Northern Europe and Scandinavia and social movements. It shows that democratic socialist parties here maintain links with social movements, like RLPs in Southern Europe. Further research is needed to develop comparisons with other subgroups of the radical left in these regions. This chapter has focused on analysing the strategies pursued by the elites of RLPs in launching links with social movements. However, survey research is needed to provide data on their membership and contact with social movements. This study also points to a need to analyse the extent to which state funding has eroded internal democracy in RLPs and whether this shapes their linkage strategies. Last, it raises questions about whether RLPs that governed in Iceland, Finland and now Greece, could preserve links to radical left movements.


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