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26. Populism, Citizenship, and Migration

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Introduction

The questions of what populism is and what it is not have largely been settled by now (see. e.g. Gagnon *et al*, 2018; Arnold, 2018; Müller, 2016). However, most studies begin and end with parties and their leaders, which means less attention is paid to other aspects of the populist puzzle. This chapter therefore examines the relationship between populism, citizenship and immigration, and pays special attention to whether or not the populist radical right (PRR) has a populist understanding of ‘citizenship’ and ‘the citizen’. Conventional wisdom suggests populist parties are distinguished by their views of society, namely, that it is divided into two homogenous groups - the pure people and the corrupt elite (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2017; Canovan, 1999; see also Betz, 1994). When the issue of immigration is factored in it typically means a clear contrast vis-a-vi the political mainstream, particularly in terms of policy direction and the solutions proposed (Zaslove, 2004). However, the borders between mainstream and PRR parties have become blurred. The former is steadily catching up with the latter in terms of its stances on immigration and integration. At the same time, numerous PRR parties are broadening out their electoral appeal with the aim of moving into the mainstream. This process involves, amongst other things, the adoption of a more centrist party profile, which includes positions on socio-economic issues *as well* and toning down any anti-establishment messages (Akkerman *et al*, 2016). These developments present conceptual challenges for how to define

and classify different party families (see e.g. Odmalm and Rydgren 2018). But they also raise questions of where the populist understanding of society ends. That is, is it limited to the relationship between the people and the elite? Or can it be found in other types of relationships as well? The twinned issues of immigration and integration are in many respects central to this party family and there is a sizable body of work discussing the links the PRR has with the two (see e.g. Backlund and Jungar, 2019; Bohman and Hjerm, 2018; Rydgren, 2008). However, scholars have prioritised to explain the restrictive and assimilationist position favoured by the PRR. They consequently overlook if the populist worldview also is echoed in the PRR's appreciation of citizenship and the citizen. In other words, is the population *also* divided into a pure group (those with national citizenship) and a corrupt one (those holding a different one)? And if this dichotomy is present, then has it remained static over time? One reasonably expects to answer these questions in the affirmative but there could also be variation in comparative perspective. For example, PRR parties with a neo-Nazi background are perhaps more prone to emphasize this difference than those with a libertarian past.

To address these questions, the chapter homes in on three key elections during the early-to-late 2000s. The time-frame is especially illuminating since the process of mainstreaming took off during this period (Minkenberg, 2013). Of interest is whether these make-overs also filtered through to their respective party manifestos. As a proxy for how parties communicate with the electorate, manifestos can shed light on how the contemporary PRR conceptualizes and transmits its ideas of citizenship and the citizen. By comparing the PRR in six West European states (Britain; Denmark; Finland; France; The Netherlands, and Sweden), the case selection includes parties with different ideological backgrounds and with different *raison d'être*s. These differences allow any emerging patterns to be identified and examined. As a final reflection,

the chapter discusses the implication of these findings for the future relationship between mainstream parties and the PRR.

The results suggest that a populist understanding of citizenship has not quite yet materialised. Formal membership and the criteria of naturalisation are still interpreted along the traditional assimilation - multicultural axis. As expected, then, emphasis is on the former, and the ability to conform (to societal norms and values) plays a key role for the PRR when it determines who belongs and who does not. However, the way the citizen is conceptualized better corresponds to established definitions of populism. The citizen is said to have a unique set of traits, which the non-citizen does not. This peculiar outcome highlights the inherent contradictions of the politics of immigration that the PRR pursues. Migrants are encouraged to naturalize but likely to struggle with the criteria of the citizen since they are also said to lack certain essential qualities.

The Strained Relationship between Populism, Citizenship and Immigration

Immigration and integration lie to the core of why most PRR parties exist in the first place (see various contributions in Rydgren, 2018). For some of these, say, the Austrian *Freedom Party* (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ) or the Swedish *Sweden Democrats* (Sverigedemokraterna – SD), the anti-immigration and assimilationist positions topped their electoral and policy agendas since the beginning. Yet for others, for example the British *UK Independence Party* (UKIP) or the Norwegian *Progress Party* (Framskrittspartiet, FrP), they developed into salient issues at a later stage. The so-called populist stance has thus become synonymous with draconian approaches to border control and how to incorporate migrants into

the host society. Indeed, previous research shows that “the positions of the radical parties have become more radical over time, and the gap with mainstream parties has increased” (Akkerman *et al*, 2016: 41, see also various contributions in Odmalm and Hepburn, 2017). That said, the label could be a misnomer since populism also is described as a ‘thin ideology’, which attaches itself either to parties on the left or to the right. In other words, populism does not automatically mean such parties hold anti-immigration positions as well. Mudde (2017) instead points to the unholy trinity of nativism, authoritarianism, and populism, to characterise non-mainstream parties who push the hard-line position on immigration and integration. What sets apart the PRR is the role nativism plays, that is, ‘a combination of nationalism and xenophobia//...//[and] states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group (the nation) and that non-native (or ‘alien’) elements//...//are fundamentally threatening to the homogenous nation-state.’ (ibid: 4). The migrant ‘other’ is especially daunting since s/he brings different faiths, languages, and social practices to the nation (Halikiopolou *et al*, 2012). And if further immigration is not strictly regulated, then, in the long-run, it will dilute the essence of ‘the people’. But migrants are not only perceived as a threat to national identity, they are also said to undermine notions of shared responsibility and who has legitimate access to common resources and national labour markets (Schumacher and van Kersbergen, 2016). Various forms of chauvinism are thus important when the PRR pits the deserving indigenous population against undeserving migrant one. Betz (1993) refers to the ‘politics of resentment’ to describe those sentiments the PRR picks up on. The politics of immigration that the mainstream parties pursued is then held up as the causal factor for the precarious situation the indigenous population is in. Elsewhere, Rydgren (2005) highlights ethnopluralism as a distinguishing feature of the PRR. The racialized language of the past was replaced with the idea that different ethnicities are equal, but should be kept separate to preserve the uniqueness of each group. A number of PRR parties are consequently keen to support two-state solutions to ethnic conflict

(Hafez, 2014). But domestically they remain sceptical that the nation is anything other than a homogenous unit with a common history and a common purpose. However, further immigration can be tolerated as long as it stems from co-ethnic states who share a cultural heritage. Asylum-type migration is accordingly best handled in the area of conflict and by adjacent states. It is not unusual therefore that the PRR advocates increased contributions to those UN agencies who deal with asylum-seekers (Hatton and Langhammer, 2006).

These discursive shifts are important to understand mainstreaming processes the PRR went through over the past three decades. Contesting immigration and integration as a matter of culture (rather than race) allowed the PRR to distance itself from other - more extreme – right-wing parties. The logic of ethnopluralism still underscores differences between different ethnic groups, but also packaged in way to not obviously invite accusations of racism (Golder, 2016). The emphasis is rather on the incompatibility of different ethnic groups sharing the same geographical space. While the PRR position on immigration - and the reasoning behind this stance – is well documented in the literature (see e.g. Mudde, 1999; Guigni *et al*, 2005; Schain, 2016), the way the PRR conceptualises citizenship and the citizen received less attention. One reason for this gap, as Williams (2006) suggests, is that citizenship has been second-order to the PRR. This is partly down to the precedence immigration, assimilation and biological racism have had to the party family. Any questions relating to the link between citizenship and the PRR (be they practical or theoretical) were thus taken for granted, or at least downplayed, given the narrow definition of belonging the PRR applied. Therefore, previous research tends to focus on degrees of restrictiveness regarding the PRR's view on naturalization. Lucardie *et al*. (2016), for example, discuss the Flemish *Vlams Blok* and how the party demanded full assimilation and continuous testing of potential citizens. The French *Front National*, on the other hand, was more concerned with tightening up the rules of naturalization, particularly with

regards to children born in France to foreign born parents, as well as ending the option to hold dual citizenship (Carter, 2017). In Denmark, the *Danish People's Party* emphasised the unifying function of citizenship and how a shared language; set of values and certain basic views all formed part of the overarching Danish culture (Andersen, 2007). Although the acquisition of citizenship should involve a number of hurdles and requirements, most PRR parties do not rule out the possibility that migrants (eventually) can naturalize. The Swedish *Sweden Democrats* is an illuminating example of this line of thought. The party has a particular take on what it means to be Swedish (the so-called 'open Swedishness'). It thus invites migrants and their descendants to become citizens as long as they are prepared for significant cultural assimilation. However, not everyone is considered suitable to 'join the club'. The further away migrants originate – culturally, geographically, and in religious terms – the less likely they are to assimilate since they are said to hold a particularly strong attachment to their home cultures (Hellström *et al*, 2012). However, the ongoing process of mainstreaming also meant citizenship has become more important to the PRR. And the gradual move towards ethnopluralism brought the distinction between 'citizenship' and 'nationality' to the fore. This shift enabled the PRR to construct a racialized idea of belonging without the need to bring in, or mention, race. In other words, the 'real' citizen is someone who holds formal - as well as informal - citizenship (see further Haste, 2004). The former refers to the legal category, which specifies economic, social, and political rights (and obligations) granted through the act of naturalization. The latter is arguably more nebulous but denotes a variety of traits associated with being a national and thereby part of the 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983). These range from learnt behaviour (e.g. customs and traditions) to feeling part of the nation (e.g. by incorporating myths, collective memories and historical experiences) (Smith, 1991).

As far as the PRR is concerned, then, it does not have a populist understanding of citizenship or the citizen. Its signature feature of ‘the people’ is not based therefore on a distinction between a pure and a corrupt group (that is, citizens versus non-citizens). The overview instead suggests a mix of *jus sanguinis*, (culturally) assimilationist and covertly racist interpretations of belonging, especially for those recognised to form part of the ‘we’. Accordingly, citizenship is almost something sacred to hold and the PRR attaches substantial value to it. In policy terms it typically means lengthy residence requirements; no automatic *jus soli* rights, and a variety of tests to filter out those non-nationals who are deemed unable to assimilate. That said, these stances predominantly concern the *procedure* of acquiring citizenship. As such, they have more in common with nativist conceptions of belonging (see e.g. Biard. 2019), or, at the very least, with a very strict definition of *jus sanguinis*. But what is arguably less clear is how the PRR conceptualizes ‘the citizen’ and whether or not it embodies a particular set of traits, which are distinct from those of the non-citizen. The next section lays out the practicalities of the manifesto analysis and how relevant statements concerning citizenship and the citizen were identified. After that the findings are discussed and linked back to the overarching question of this chapter, namely, is there a populist understanding of ‘citizenship’ and ‘the citizen’?

Identifying the PRR’s understanding of citizenship and the citizen

The chapter uses a mixed methods approach. On the one hand, a descriptive set of statistics to establish the amount of coverage the PRR’s ‘philosophy of integration’ receives. The aim not only is to determine if citizenship and the citizen become more important but also to identify any inter-party differences with this regard. That is, do some *types* of PRR parties emphasise

citizenship and the citizen more than others? The case selection includes parties with an extreme right-wing profile (Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV - Party for Freedom) and Front National (FN - National Front)) and parties who started out as ‘populist’ but since then drifted rightwards (Perussuomalaiset/Sannfinländarna (PS - Finns Party); United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP - UK) and Dansk Folkeparti (DF - Danish People's Party)). The selection also includes a party with a different trajectory namely, Sverigedemokraterna (SD - The Sweden Democrats). The party originates in the white nationalist and neo-Nazi movement of the 1980s but reinvented itself as a socially conservative and nationalist party (Rydgren, 2006). The above parties are typically categorised under the (broad) PRR umbrella. However, the reader should note there is disagreement regarding how they are best classified (see further Zulianello, 2019). But at the same time, these parties are not necessarily anti-state or anti-system. Their main grievance is instead with the (perceived) democratic *deficit* in their respective polities (which furthermore is an essential populist take on political life) (see Clarke *et al*, 2016; Fuchs and Klingemann, 2018; Hernandez, 2018)).

On the other, the chapter critically examines how the PRR understands citizenship and the citizen, as well as what type of qualities it associates with each category. The intention is to ascertain whether the PRR also constructs citizenship and the citizen in a similar vein to how it constructs the ‘pure people’ and the ‘corrupt elite’ ((Kukla, 2013; Leavy, 2017). For reasons of comparability and parsimony, the respective party manifestos were used from six PRR parties across three elections (from 2002 – 2015). As per Klingemann (1987), manifestos are helpful to assess issue salience, parties’ positions, and what solutions they offer to a variety of societal challenges. Manifestos also allow like-with-like comparisons and to systemically categorise what parties want to achieve over the next parliamentary cycle. Of importance to this chapter, then, are statements and qualifiers which address citizenship and the citizen. To

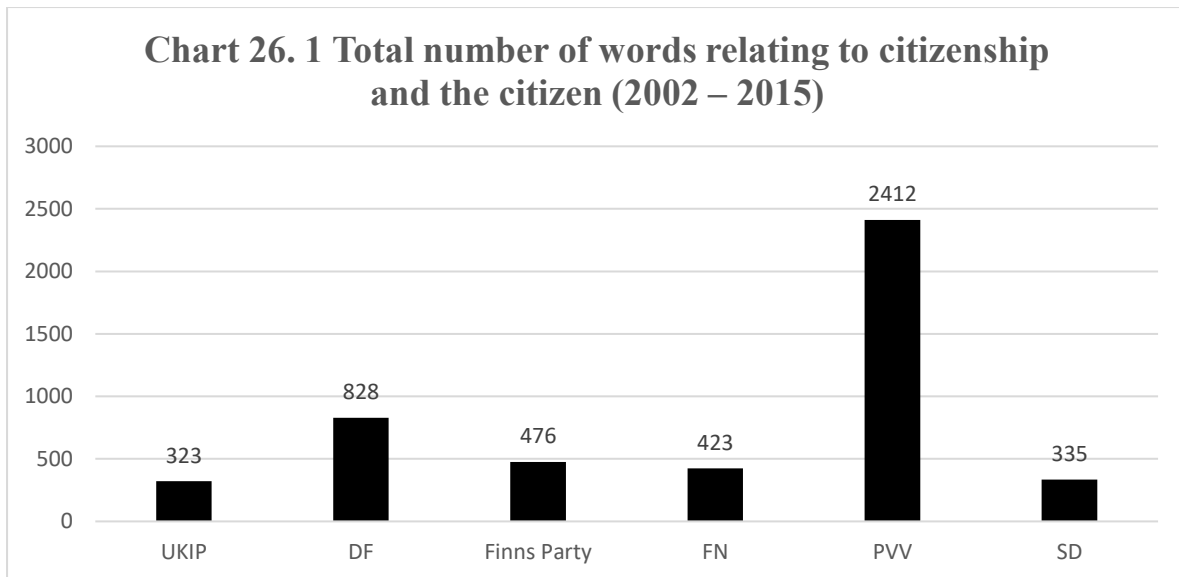
capture as much relevant information as possible, a variety of key words were employed to pick up on statements which cover citizenship and the citizen. In addition to these terms, the following key words were also applied – integration; assimilation; nation; people; foreigner; immigrant; asylum; refugee, and cohesion. Each manifesto was systematically searched and identified statements were grouped together (per party and per year) in a spread sheet. The number of statement words have been added together to get the total body of words where citizenship and the citizen were discussed. To identify variation in the amount of coverage the two terms received, the number of statement words (per election) was simply divided by the total number of statement words for all three elections, and then tracked over time.

As noted elsewhere (Wortham and Reyes, 2015), it is important to acknowledge the context of these statements. The chapter is sensitive therefore to how discourses might change and develop over time. In other words, citizenship and the citizen might not explicitly be referred to but rather part of a broader discussion of the type of society the party has in mind. For example, UKIP (2010) discusses certain qualities that the citizen has vis-à-vis the non-citizen but does not mention either category. The following excerpt – “Require those living in the UK under ‘Permanent Leave to Remain’ to abide by a legally binding ‘Undertaking of Residence’ ensuring they respect our laws or face deportation” – suggests non-citizens need an additional prompt to be able to follow the law. The citizen, on the other hand, does not need any similar nudges or at least is assumed to be more trustworthy. However, the following sentence more obviously lays out how the party understands citizenship, particularly regarding access to the state and the acquisition of citizenship – “[s]uch citizens will not be eligible for benefits. People applying for British citizenship will have to have completed a period of not less than [sic]! five years as a resident on ‘Permanent Leave to Remain’”. While the first quote does not mention neither citizenship nor the citizen, it nevertheless provides important clues for how UKIP

conceptualises the citizen relative the non-citizen. By the same token, the way citizenship and the citizen is understood might change over time. Therefore, the chapter also appreciates any discursive changes and compares manifesto statements between, as well as within, the six PRR parties.

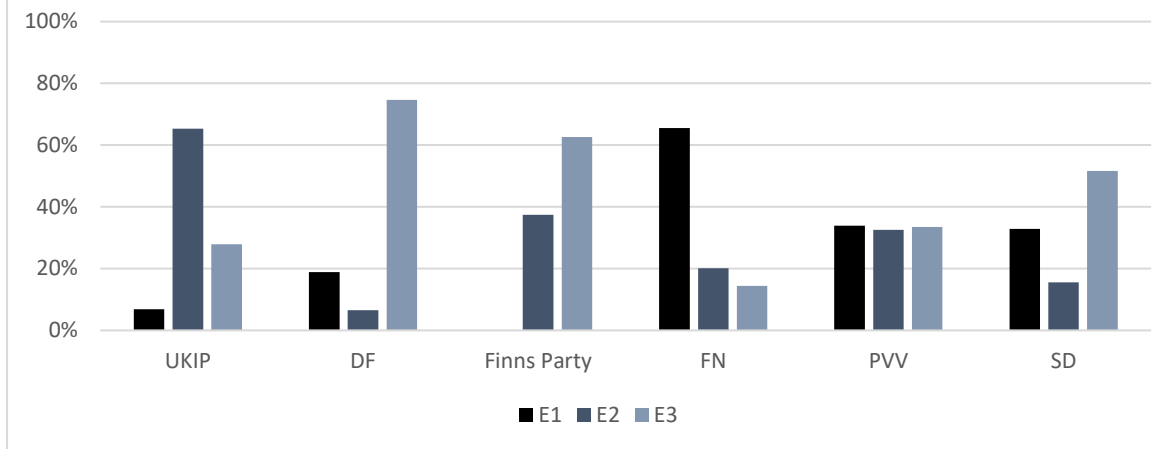
How important are citizenship and the citizen to the PRR? And how are they conceptualised and understood?

The descriptive statistics show variation in comparative perspective (see Chart 26.1). PVV pays the most attention to citizenship and the citizen (2412 words over the time period studied), whereas UKIP, somewhat surprisingly, pays the least (323 words). The Finns Party; FN and the SD fall somewhere in-between, whereas DF has the second highest score. Moreover, there is no obvious connection between the *type* of PRR party and the salience given to citizenship and the citizen. The two “extreme right-wing parties”, namely, PVV and FN, diverge in terms of their coverage. The score for the former tallies with results found elsewhere (see e.g. Stevens *et al*, 2019; Jugé and Perez, 2006). Jones (2016), in particular, notes how PVV spent time and effort on pursuing a ‘real Dutch-ness’. Accordingly, citizenship was reserved for the ‘unconditional citizens’ from the mythical core of the Dutch nation. But FN, who was just as keen to emphasize similar distinctions, by and large downplayed citizenship in its manifestos. Equally surprising was the scant amount produced by the SD, especially in light of how the party has been trying to raise the upgrading of citizenship during its election campaigns. The figures for the three remaining parties are also on the lower side of the scale but could reflect the transitional state these parties are in. A delay in salience levels might therefore be involved as they seek to re-invent themselves as PRR-type parties.



However, once the figures were broken down and tracked over time (see Chart 26.2) they suggest citizenship and the citizen have become increasingly more important to the PRR. Four out of six parties either incrementally (PVV) or substantially (DF; Finns Party and the SD) increased the amount of coverage of these terms in their respective manifestos. The changes were most noticeable between Election 2 and Election 3 and the scores for DF and the SD, in particular, stand out. Although the Finns Party has a similar trajectory it was not as dramatic compared to its two sister parties. PVV, on the other hand, was remarkably stable and roughly one third of its manifestos addressed citizenship and the citizen during each election. The figures for UKIP fluctuated from one election to the next but settled on the second lowest score in Election 3. And, finally, FN returned the most intriguing result. It is the only party to consistently *decrease* the amount of coverage which concerns citizenship and the citizen between 2002 and 2015.

**Chart 26. 2 Importance given to citizenship and the citizen
(2002 - 2015)**



Turning to the qualitative analysis, one sees a gradual shift in emphasis. Assimilation is the dominating theme in Election 1 and thus a key aim for the PRR’s ‘philosophy of integration’. A majority of parties refer to assimilation as a desirable process (“//...//demand that immigrants follow Danish laws, rules and fundamental values//...//this is the only way to achieve the good Danish society” (DF, 2007) or underscore its importance as an end goal (“1) repatriation or 2) assimilation, that is, those who immigrated have to accept the majority culture and eventually become part of the nation//...//” (SD, 2006). However, there are some differences with regards to the specifics of this process (“Britishness’ tests//...//” (UKIP; 2005); “We do not accept demands for halal meat [or] special bath facilities//...//” (DF, 2007); why it is a desirable outcome (“The goal of creating a pluralistic society is a serious threat to the Swedish nation//...//” (SD, 2006); “Personal safety, welfare, education, and work – these are not only kind offers but rather clear demands on migrants” (DF, 2007) and how assimilation will be achieved (“It shall be compulsory to partake in integration programs, which benefit the individual refugee as well as Denmark as a whole” (DF, 2007); “//...//immigration has to be on a level so it does not fundamentally change the composition of the people//...//” (SD, 2006).

Moreover, the ‘threat’ posed by the non-citizen and/or the naturalised migrant is not solely confined to the erosion of national identity and social cohesion. Just as frequent are references to the material costs incurred by (further) immigration and the calls to place stronger *demands* on migrants to become net contributors to the welfare state. But there was little evidence to suggest that the PRR perceived citizenship or the citizen in a populist fashion. The exceptions, however, are FN and PVV. A key sentence in the manifesto of the former (2002) signals a clear distinction between the ‘pure’ citizen and the ‘corrupt’ migrant/non-citizen – “The ethnic and ghetto-like suburbs have withdrawn into themselves//...//they *cannot 'be French'* any more. Much like the political and media elites, *they show overt hostility to our national values* [emphasis added]//...//.” PVV (2006) is not as explicit but nevertheless highlights qualitative differences between different *types* of Dutch citizens – ‘[g]iven the influx of drugs, criminality and *corruption* [emphasis added], the Dutch government needs to enforce the independence of the Antilles//...//’.

In Election 2 there were signs of a gear shift, most obviously in the UKIP manifesto (2010). The amount of coverage not only increased but also became more direct regarding how the ‘good’ citizen was conceptualised and understood. Although the 2005 manifesto briefly discussed the need for more stringent naturalisation procedures, the 2010 one homed in on those specific characteristics deemed essential for the British citizen. On the one hand, the ability to obey the law (“//...// Require those living in the UK under ‘Permanent Leave to Remain’ to abide by a legally binding ‘Undertaking of Residence’ ensuring they respect our laws or face deportation//...//”). And on the other, the ability to respect democracy (“UKIP will deport radical preachers calling for violence or the overthrow of democracy”) and show loyalty to the state (“//...//and reintroduce a proper Treason Act to prosecute British Citizens found guilty of attacks on the British people or armed forces.”). The latter statement is perhaps

indicative of the direction UKIP was heading in. The distinction between ‘citizens’ and ‘people’ highlights a familiar trope within the PRR party family, namely, that one can be a citizen but not necessarily part of the people. Yet the statement also goes beyond a mere populist understanding of the citizen when it pits ‘the British citizens’ against ‘the British people’”. Implied in the latter is perhaps a purity that the former lacks.

Meanwhile, the Finns Party (2011) considered self-reliance a key trait of ‘the citizen’ – “[t]he number of migrants who *depend on welfare* needs to be reduced so they become *part of the Finnish society*...// [emphasis added].” The excerpt suggests welfare dependency is not compatible with holding either formal or informal membership of the nation. In a similar vein to UKIP, then, the Finns Party redefined the meaning of the citizen so it denoted someone who contributed vis-a-vis someone who did not. In France, FN (2007) continued to emphasise the law-abiding nature of the citizen, in terms of both the acquisition and loss of citizenship (“[t]he acquisition [of French citizenship] will be contingent on good behaviour and degree of integration...//The loss of [French] nationality...//where serious crimes or offences were committed (more than 6 months in prison).” And like PVV, FN also stressed that current and past governments had bypassed the will of the people (“The suicidal politics of immigration, which, without brakes, have opened up our borders to social, fiscal and environmental dumping, means the demographic decline of our people...//”). PVV (2010), on the other hand, put forward several authoritarian solutions to the challenges it identified with the existing ethnic minorities. However, the populist understanding of the citizen, which featured in the previous election, has been replaced by a distinction between Dutch and non-Dutch citizens (“Nobody can become Dutch if they still possess another nationality”) and a further emphasis on pre-existing gaps between ‘the people’ and ‘the elite’ (“We cannot accept the multicultural nightmare forced upon us. The Dutch population did not ask for mass immigration and should

not pay the price for it either. Henk and Ingrid have done nothing wrong. The ones to be blamed are the leftist elites//...//”). In Scandinavia, both DF (2007) and the SD (2010) continued on the path set by their earlier manifestos. Assimilation (DF; SD), to solidify a common identity (SD) and tighten up the requirements of naturalization (SD) were thus held up as important goals.

In Election 3, finally, there was evidence that the populist understanding of citizenship and the citizen has intensified. But also that it diversified. For example, UKIP shifted its focus away from the qualities which distinguished the citizen from the non-citizen. In 2015 the party instead targeted the multicultural consensus held by ‘the elite’ (‘We reject multiculturalism//...//’) and thereby set up a new dichotomy between ‘pure’ and ‘corrupt’ types of values. The latter was considered responsible for the “alarming fragmentation of British society” where “//...//ethnic and religious groups are encouraged to maintain all aspects of their cultures//...//even if some of their values and customs conflict with British ones.” DF (2015) followed a similar logic when pointing out the negative effects immigration has had on social cohesion and solidarity. But the party also juxtaposed the will of the citizen with the will of the non-citizen. If the Danish state championed the latter over the former it eventually would lead to the demise of the Danish way of life – “[t]he life style we chose is unique, and in a small country like ours, it cannot survive if we allow mass immigration from alien cultures and religions to continue.” Echoing the traits UKIP identified in 2005, DF suggested the ‘pure’ citizen is someone who participated and followed the norms laid down by the majority population. And once again, the Finns Party (2015) raised particular economic qualities the citizen is supposed to have, but also highlighted language skills and a ‘will to live according to the rules of society’ as important markers to distinguish the citizen from the non-citizen. By 2012, FN has removed much of its populist discourse in favour of a narrow definition of

nationhood (“[n]aturalisation must be deserved and subject to strict conditions of lengthy and peaceful legal residence//...//”). In the Netherlands, PVV (2012) suggested ever more draconian policies to achieve the desired goal of assimilation (or possibly even voluntary repatriation). However, an important difference is the novel type of ‘corrupt elite’ the party added to its long list of antagonists. Previously, the main thrust was against the domestic elites and the role they played in undermining the progressive Dutch life-style. But in 2015 the target was the EU and especially the lack of border control which followed from membership in the European project – “Yet every day we see that numbers increase. Thanks to Madam Malmström, an unelected multiculti-Eurocrat, the Dutch politicians have become numbed and lost control over our immigration policies.” Although the SD had previously showed few signs of understanding citizenship and the citizen in populist terms, its 2014 manifesto adopted the distinction set up by the Finns Party. Consequently, the citizen is someone who is reliable and does not constitute a burden to the welfare state (“[r]educer the societal costs and strengthen the incentives *to integrate and take responsibility* by limiting access to benefits//...//”). The party also sought to upgrade citizenship by introducing language tests and assessing the level of knowledge migrants have about the Swedish society.

A populist understanding of the citizen but not of citizenship?

What, then, do the findings tell us about the relationship between populism, citizenship, and migration? First, citizenship has become more important to the PRR over time. Although Chart 26.1 suggests most of the PRR parties paid little attention to the term, the proportions in Chart 26.2 reveal an increase in the amount of space they devoted to citizenship and the citizen. The Nordic contingent showed a dramatic rise between Election 2 and Election 3. PVV, on the other hand, has consistently flagged up reform to the Dutch citizenship legislation as its key aim. But these changes in salience could also reflect ongoing attempts to broaden out their issue agendas

and electoral appeal. Moving the political conversation towards issues of citizenship and the citizen could thus be an important part of the mainstreaming process the PRR is going through, especially since harsher entry and integration policies are by now well known to the electorate. That said, the study also returned interesting contextual findings. PRR parties in different states emphasised different facets of citizenship and the citizen depending on what they considered relevant to their respective national circumstances. Citizenship and economic worries were discussed in some cases (e.g. by SD in Election 3) as were calls to make naturalisation conditional upon the amount non-citizens put into the welfare state (e.g. by the Finns Party in Election 2 and 3). Elsewhere, norms, values and national identity were given a higher priority, and, particularly, how the state was supposed to get non-citizens to conform to these ideals (e.g. by DF (Elections 1 and 3); FN (Elections 1 -3); PVV (Elections 1 -3); SD (Elections 2 and 3); by UKIP (Elections 1 -3).

Second, the emphasis placed on assimilation has not changed. This overarching goal continues to dominate the PRR's narrative on migrant incorporation, but the rhetoric also has sharpened and moved further in the authoritarian direction. Migrants were no longer 'encouraged' to acquire the cultural skills they need to fit in. Instead, these were now 'required' and applicants have to 'conform' and demonstrate 'full assimilation' before naturalisation could take place. There is consequently little to suggest the populist part of the PRR also has filtered through to how it conceptualises and understands citizenship. Most of the parties herein framed 'their' type of citizenship in normative terms. And they rarely made any qualitative claims about those that hold national citizenship versus those that hold a different one. To acquire the citizenship of the host society was in fact something migrants should aspire to do since it was considered an honour to have. The 'ethnopluralist' understanding of the nation-state was conversely limited to the act of immigration. As such, it can help explain the reductionist position the PRR

adopts. But in terms of resident non-nationals, the findings tell a different story. A narrow interpretation of belonging, and the numerous qualifiers the PRR wants added to the naturalization process, indeed suggests biological racism is (still) an integral part of how it conceptualises and understands citizenship and the citizen. Yet several parties do not exclude the possibility that migrants (eventually) can become citizens. However, the significant cultural (and identity) costs attached to the acquisition of citizenship presumably mean that not every non-national is suitable to undergo this transformation.

Third, the citizen was understood to have a unique set of qualities, which the non-citizen did not. This was a surprising finding, which further highlighted the contradictory relationship the PRR has with migration, ethnic minorities and issues of belonging. The finding suggests that elements of populist thinking were also present in the way the PRR conceptualized and understood the citizen. But any similar elements were largely absent when it came to citizenship. There were thus several examples where the ‘pure’ citizen was pitted against the ‘corrupt’ non-citizen. This frame sometimes involved welfare chauvinism, especially when the citizen was considered a net *contributor* to society. At other times, the distinguishing features were the beliefs and values the citizen subscribed to. It is worth noting that regardless of the *type* of PRR party in question (that is, with a neo-Nazi or libertarian background), the distinction was typically made between the ‘pure’ citizen and the ‘corrupt’ non-citizen. Granted, this division was more explicit in some cases than in others. And there also seemed to be some form of connection between those citizenry qualities the PRR considered important and the type of welfare state in place. But the intriguing outcome is perhaps not the contextual variation (which perhaps was expected) but that the idea of the ‘pure’ and the ‘corrupt’ citizen was present across the six cases.

Conclusion

The in-depth analysis of six PRR parties in six West European states suggests a populist understanding of the citizen has become increasingly salient to this party family. Especially in terms of how it conceptualises and understands differences between the citizen and the non-citizen. However, citizenship - as a legal status - was still interpreted along authoritarian and nativist lines, and assimilation continues to be an important pre-requisite for formal inclusion into the polity.

Moreover, these outcomes point to further complexity of already complex party systems. On the one hand, the boundaries between 'mainstream' and 'PRR' parties are increasingly difficult to maintain. And they are likely to be even more challenging when/if the traditionally defined mainstream starts to display similar understandings of what constitutes the (good) citizen as the PRR. In terms of electoral competition, then, mainstream parties will likely struggle to come with narratives that are distinct enough to set them apart from the PRR. But at the same time, they must frame and discuss the citizen in ways that does not lead them down a populist cul-de-sac. As the 'return of assimilation' and electoral success of the PRR have become cemented across Western Europe, the political mainstream is likely to find itself in an increasingly difficult situation. The PRR not only pushed assimilation for longer but has also been more consistent than most mainstream parties. The latter will therefore face issues of trust and competence should the electorate perceive them to change position out of necessity rather than conviction. The continuous growth of the PRR also makes it difficult to ignore or downplay citizenship and the citizen as electorally salient issues. Many states revisited their naturalization policies over the three past decades, and in some cases they also tightened them up, which could result in that conversations about citizenship or the citizen either are

overlooked or considered to be settled. If this is the case, it potentially means ample opportunities for the PRR to exploit aspects of the immigration coin, which, so far, played minor roles on its electoral agenda.

On the other hand, the twin-track developments of mainstreaming the PRR's anti-immigration position *and* its party profile can result in confusing strategies by the political mainstream. A number of mainstream parties, be they on the left or on the right, steadily moved towards the reductionist sphere, which previously was monopolised by the PRR. Consequently, the latter will be in a stronger position to set the agenda, and thereby force the mainstream to react rather than to lead. And as identified elsewhere (see e.g. van Klingeren *et al*, 2017) the probable outcome is a continuous game of catch-up where the PRR always is one step ahead. The issue of immigration is thereby made (even) more salient, and the authoritarian and nativist solutions that the PRR proposes will become normalised in political discourses. Taken together, these developments suggest that politicising 'the citizen' is the next logical step for the PRR.

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