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A Radical Left Party? The Ideology of SYRIZA

Bachelor's thesis

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Introduction

The subject of this thesis is the ideology of the Coalition of the Radical Left – known shortly as SYRIZA –, the party that gained power in a snap election in Greece at the beginning of 2015. Already before the party's victory at the polls, concern was expressed both in the Estonian as well as in the international media that a radical party might form a government in Greece. Calling it "extreme-left" or "far-left" automatically changes the ideological perception of SYRIZA, because leftism and opposition to austerity, which played a dominant role in SYRIZA's path to power, are appropriate markers also for parties that are not seen outside of mainstream politics. The fact that SYRIZA is the largest party in the Greek parliament and the leading government party to this day, having won another snap election in late September, and that support for radical parties in Europe is on the rise give reason to take a closer look at the ideological positions of SYRIZA.

The purpose of this paper is to find out SYRIZA's ideological stance in comparison to socialism and social democracy. Furthermore, this comparison will be used to analyse whether the possible radicalness of SYRIZA lies in its opposition to austerity, or are there features in the party's ideology which make it truly and substantially extreme left. I find that fulfilling the purpose as it is formulated will add significant value to the debate about the features of radical parties, and will better help to understand the political situation in today's Europe.

The hypothesis I wish to examine is the following:

Compared to socialism and social democracy, the ideological stance of SYRIZA is not radical – if anything, the radicalness of the party is expressed in its opposition to austerity politics.

The validity of the hypothesis should prove SYRIZA's ideological closeness to classical leftist ideologies. If proved correct, the hypothesis should also verify that the definition of being a radical party can only be based on SYRIZA's rejection of austerity measures. It is important to note that this paper will only focus on SYRIZA's positions and proposals presented in the party's programmatic documents, not on its actual policies.

Theoretical framework

The central challenge in this paper is to recognise the programmatic positions of SYRIZA and to associate them with different ideologies, in order to draw a conclusion on SYRIZA's ideology. In identifying the ideological markers of the Greek ruling party and linking them to classical ideologies, I will use diverse descriptions of classical ideologies by Vincent Geoghegan (2014), Andrew Heywood (2007), Andrew Vincent (2005), and others. Based on the authors mentioned, I will introduce the main characteristics of socialism, one of the three classical and most influential ideologies next to liberalism and conservatism, and social democracy, socialism's "moderate or reformist brand" (Heywood 2007: 101) whose ideas and theories created in a number of western states a "social-democratic consensus" (Heywood 2007: 130) in the mid-20th century.

It is quite safe to assume that the ideology of SYRIZA will not be so "pure" to correspond only to socialism or social democracy, because political parties are rarely adherent to just one or two ideological traditions. In other words, features from other ideologies, whether classical ones or "new" ideologies, will be identified. This means that some, maybe even major markers of other ideologies will have to be introduced and explained. When the need for this arises, it will certainly be addressed accordingly.

Methodology

In order to bring forth SYRIZA's ideological positions and to compare them to different ideologies, I will rely on various programmatic documents of the party, from which I

will present excerpts and then link them to characteristics of different ideologies. This means that the research method of this thesis is qualitative content analysis. The ideological positions of SYRIZA will be identified and defined with key terms, which refer to one or another distinct ideology. For instance, if the party program mentions distributing wealth through a measure of some kind, then based on the description of the specific measure, it will be linked to social democracy, because redistributing wealth is one of its key features (Heywood 2007: 134). This approach should bring forth even such ideological positions that are present also or exclusively in other ideologies than just socialism or social democracy.

The selection process of the sources has been based on a simple principle: the recentness of the document is balanced with its thoroughness and significance for the party. In practice, this means that a document that might date back to three years is still viewed as the most substantial source of the party's ideological stance, because it covers the widest range of topics than any other document produced after its publication.

The empirical sources of this paper, meaning the programmatic documents of SYRIZA, are the following:

- 1) The political resolution adopted at the founding congress of SYRIZA in July 2013 (SYRIZA 2013);
- 2) The Thessaloniki Programme adopted in September 2014 (SYRIZA 2014);
- 3) Party leader Alexis Tsipras's speech at the SYRIZA conference in September 2015 (SYRIZA 2015a);
- 4) SYRIZA's governmental program adopted before the snap election in September 2015 (transform! 2015).

All of the documents used in this paper have been available in English.

1. The ideology of SYRIZA

The following chapter will compare SYRIZA's ideological stance to different ideologies. The chapter is composed of 13 subchapters, one of them providing an overview of the party's development. 12 subchapters are directly concerned with ideology. They are titled as ideological markers. A brief, but solid overview of the chapter is found in Table 1.

1.1. The party's development

At first glance, calling SYRIZA radical is no mistake or at least not questionable. SYRIZA is actually a syllabic abbreviation: the full name of the party is Synaspismós Rizospastikís Aristerás, which is translated as the Coalition of the Radical Left. As an electoral alliance comprising of various political groups, SYRIZA was established as a single party during its founding congress in July 2013. Next to a large Central Committee, the delegates of the congress elected Alexis Tsipras to lead the party as President (SYRIZA 2015b). In its government programme for elections in September 2015, the party also described itself as a radical left party (transform! 2015).

At the congress, the newly formed party declared itself to be “a party of the democratic and radical Left, which has its roots in great independence, anti-fascist, democratic and labour movement struggles in Greece, comprises many different ideological currents and left cultures” (SYRIZA 2015b). The values of the labour movement were meant to be synthesised with values of ecologists, feminists and members of other “new social movements” (SYRIZA 2015b). For this reason, the logo of SYRIZA is said to comprise of three flags in different colours: red, green and purple (SYRIZA 2015b).

Since June 2013, after the party DIMAR (Democratic Left) decided to leave the governing coalition in protest of the government's decision to close down the public television and radio broadcaster (ERT), SYRIZA claimed its main goal to be to bring down the government and call for a general election. This demand was grounded in SYRIZA's argument to end the "Greek tragedy" (SYRIZA 2015b), which meant an overall unemployment rate of 30% and 60% among young people, widespread poverty, over-indebtedness of households, closure of many small shops and businesses, and a general economic recession. SYRIZA insisted strongly on its position to abolish the memoranda and called for renegotiating the country's debt. Simultaneously, the party wanted to promote "a program to rebuild the country economically and socially, aiming at growth focused on people and respect for nature" (SYRIZA 2015b).

The snap election called after the failure of the Greek parliament to elect the country's new president was held on 25 January 2015. The election resulted in a landslide victory for SYRIZA. The party earned 36% of the popular vote, which converted into 149 parliamentary seats, just two seats short of an absolute majority. After SYRIZA's triumph at the polls, its president Alexis Tsipras was given the mandate to form a new government. Since the party did not have a majority on their own, a coalition government with the Party of Independent Greeks was established (SYRIZA 2015b).

A number of events, most importantly the tough negotiations on a new deal with Greece's creditors, the government's acceptance of tax hikes and spending cuts included in the new bailout programme, and the subsequent rebellion among some SYRIZA members against the measures, led to the resignation of Tsipras as prime minister in August 2015. Following that, a new general election was held on 20 September (Kathimerini 2015). In spite of troubles within their own ranks, SYRIZA once again became the first party, winning over 35% of the vote and 145 seats in parliament. The governing coalition with the Independent Greeks was continued (The Economist 2016).

1.2. SYRIZA's ideological positions and their links to different ideologies

The following subchapters, titled as ideological markers, will provide a substantial examination of SYRIZA's ideology. A brief overview of the subchapters is presented in Table 1.

Critique towards neoliberalism

As Heywood (2007: 100) writes, opposition to capitalism and the attempt to provide a more humane and socially rewarding alternative to it have been the traditionally defining features of socialism as an ideology. The roots of this date back to the times of early industrialisation when socialist ideas were linked to the development of a growing class of industrial workers, who often suffered under poverty and degradation. Socialism emerged as a critique to liberal market society and was characterised by its pursuit to offer an alternative to industrial capitalism. At the beginning of the industrialisation era, radical and even revolutionary alternatives to capitalism were sought by socialists (Heywood 2007: 100). Initially, capitalism was regarded by most socialists as the source of all injustice and inequality (Vincent 2005: 89).

Over time, views towards capitalism within the socialist tradition have evolved, if not changed completely among some self-described socialists. Even in Marxism, where the abolition of the capitalist system has long been the key demand, new tendencies and views have surfaced. Modern Marxists have tried to revise or modify the classical ideas of Karl Marx while still remaining devoted to certain Marxist principles. This is especially clear among the New Left: in a mixture of Marxist political economy, Hegelian philosophy, and Freudian psychology, the Frankfurt School realised that Marx's prediction about the looming collapse of capitalism had failed to materialise, which led Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer and Herbert Marcuse to revitalise socialist thought. The New Left movement is still very and even radically critical towards advanced industrial society, but the main focus is not on capitalism, but much more on decentralisation, participation and personal liberation (Heywood 2007: 127).

In social democracy, the ideological stance within socialism that developed around the mid-twentieth century, the acceptance of capitalism is even clearer. During that time, western socialist parties gave up the goal of abolishing capitalism and instead started to pursue a strategy of reforming or “humanising” capitalism. For social democrats, capitalism is the only solid means of generating wealth, although it is still viewed as morally deficient by some, especially as a system for distributing wealth. Nevertheless, social democrats believe that the many flaws of the capitalist system can be fixed through improving, not abolishing it (Heywood 2007: 129-130).

Still, having accepted capitalism, at least to some extent, or not seeing a feasible alternative to it, socialists and social democrats have not abandoned criticising the underlying structures of modern societies. For decades, the new object of criticism for socialists, some social democrats, and especially for the New Left has been neoliberalism. The critique towards neoliberalism has notably gained ground after the global economic crisis that started in 2008 and the debt crisis in Europe which followed some time later (see Fotopoulos 2015; Geoghegan 2014: 92; Stavrakakis, Katsambekis 2014: 131).

Critique towards neoliberalism is a central theme in the programmatic documents of SYRIZA. Already from the first lines of SYRIZA’s political resolution adopted at the founding congress of the party in 2013, SYRIZA opposes itself to neoliberalism. The party sees upon itself a historic responsibility to save the Greek people from neoliberal memoranda policies which are said to have turned Greece into a debt colony (SYRIZA 2013). Clearly SYRIZA blames the economic and social troubles in the country on neoliberal policies and measures. But the party widens the horizon. They claim that:

Aged Europe, which produces less and less wealth and moves between powers like the USA, Russia, Turkey, China, and Latin American countries, has no prospects unless it reverses its self-destructive neoliberal strategy. (SYRIZA 2013)

SYRIZA perceives the European Union (EU) to be an executor of neoliberalism. This is said to endanger the whole process of European integration by denying it through the implementation of neoliberalism. For example, SYRIZA declares that:

The unprecedented by postwar standards capitalist crisis and the harsh neoliberal policies are already destabilizing and undermining the very core and existence of the European edifice, as the dominant powers cynically and brutally violate even today's institutional framework of the European Union and the Eurozone. (SYRIZA 2013)

Thus the threats imposed by neoliberalism are seen by SYRIZA not only dangerous for Greece, but also for the rest of Europe and for other regions. According to SYRIZA, the Greek people and other peoples of Europe are not the sole sufferers of neoliberal policies (SYRIZA 2013). The following quote sums up adequately the radical critique by SYRIZA towards neoliberalism:

This overaccumulation crisis is mainly characterized by inflation of the financial sector, based on the unimpeded circulation of money, which leads to the submission of the political personnel to financial power, the instrumentalization and commercialization of knowledge and information, and the biopolitical operation of the system. [...] Extreme austerity policies, shrinking and precarious employment, privatization of public goods and companies, destruction of large part of the productive forces, dramatic reduction in the welfare state, weakening of democratic institutions, strengthening of repression and emergency powers were all employed to maintain capital dominance and global profitability. [...] Globalized capital continues to exhaust its profitability margins in "Third World" countries, where local wars are raging and huge migration flows are created. (SYRIZA 2013)

SYRIZA blames neoliberal policies for the rise of euroscepticism, anti-Europeanism, nationalist tensions and the resurgence of fascism. Not such a burning issue three years ago, when this resolution was adopted, but definitely hotly contested now, is migration. For SYRIZA, neoliberalism is to blame for the huge flows of migrants:

We treat the immigration issue in all its complexity and in all its dimensions (humanitarian, class, international). The large migration flows are a result of the neoliberal, capitalist

globalization that uproots people from their hearths, either because it makes them victims of war or because it deprives them of the basic means of survival. (SYRIZA 2013)

In programmatic documents drafted after the government's acceptance of the new bailout programme, the critique towards neoliberalism is, not surprisingly, even sharper. Neoliberalism is said to have "conquered the world through continuous restructurings and breakthroughs that lasted four decades" (transform! 2015). SYRIZA makes the case for the overthrow of the "global neoliberal hegemony" (transform! 2015). The current state of Europe is described through neoliberalism and austerity:

It was exactly the negotiation of the Greek government these last months that pointed to the current limits of the real existing Europe, the cruelty of the mechanisms enforcing neoliberalism and the utterly disadvantaged political power ratio at the level of the institutions and the various governments. (transform! 2015)

SYRIZA attempts vehemently to distance itself from political rivals and previous governments of Greece, who – as the party alleges – are and were respectively implementing neoliberal policies. Referring to the acceptance of the harsh measures under the new bailout programme, it is argued that:

It is one thing to accept neoliberalism as a strategic horizon, as the sole road to social welfare and another to accept that in a certain moment in time, with a given balance of political forces, one has to make a tactical and temporary compromise so as to be in a position to keep fighting preserving the possibility and the opportunity of prevailing. (transform! 2015)

Despite its clear and frequent critique of neoliberalism, SYRIZA does not straight out oppose itself to capitalism. Sure, using different terms, the party is very critical towards capitalism, as is the case with neoliberalism. "Neoliberal capitalist globalisation" (SYRIZA 2013) is definitely not the description of today's world that would satisfy the party. But nowhere does SYRIZA demand the abolishment of capitalism. In this sense, SYRIZA's critical view of neoliberalism can be seen resembling the positions of the New Left and social democrats. In these traditions, capitalism is primarily seen as

inefficient and wasteful rather than immoral, although the moral deficiency of capitalism is not completely neglected (Vincent 2005: 93).

However, SYRIZA does advocate subversion. This certainly cannot be overlooked, because the call for subversion is very much present in the party's political resolution (SYRIZA 2013). The first part of the document is titled "SYRIZA and the great social and political movement of subversion" (SYRIZA 2013). Right at the beginning of the resolution, SYRIZA clearly defines the goal of the subversive movement:

SYRIZA has been established as a unified, democratic, multi-tendency, mass party of the contemporary Left for the strengthening of an already powerful popular movement of subversion with the aim of cancelling the memoranda, erasing most of the debt and implementing a program of social and productive reconstruction. (SYRIZA 2013)

SYRIZA does not have a plan to crush the capitalist system nor does it want to overthrow the government using every means necessary, including violent ones. SYRIZA does call for cooperation and subversive action between the Southern European countries, but the key term here that cannot be overlooked is the party's adherence to democracy, even when using the word "militant":

In order to be implemented, this platform needs the active intervention of an already existing mass and militant socio-political movement of democratic subversion. (SYRIZA 2013)

"Subversion" tied to "democracy" appears further in the document (SYRIZA 2013). What becomes clear, however, is that SYRIZA has no intention to attempt gaining power in an undemocratic manner. It clearly wants power but what political party doesn't? Furthermore, as we know now, SYRIZA has decisively won two democratic elections, receiving the mandate to govern (SYRIZA 2015b; The Economist 2015). So having looked into the matter what "subversion" stands for SYRIZA, it is safe to say that it cannot be equated in any way to the demand of abolishing capitalism, inherent to Marxism or radical socialism.

Still, SYRIZA's critique towards the situation in Greece and in the EU is undeniably radical. When a strategy is deemed to be self-destructive, as SYRIZA describes neoliberalism (SYRIZA 2013; see above), then the rejection of it is evident. However, SYRIZA is ready to accept capitalism, but as the New Left and social democrats, it is critical towards it. The desire of SYRIZA to reform and "humanise" capitalism becomes clearer further in the paper, but it is already safe to say that in criticising neoliberalism, SYRIZA's positions are more similar to the demands of social democrats or the New Left than Marxists or even communists, who have preached the end of capitalism.

Ideological marker	SYRIZA's positions(s)	Corresponding ideology
Critique towards neoliberalism	Radically critical of neoliberalism, but ready to accept reformed capitalism	Social democracy, New Left
Global solidarity	Supportive of similar movements and parties elsewhere in the world	Socialism, social democracy
Community	In favour of collective action at every level	Socialism, social democracy
Cooperation	An alternative to competition inherent to capitalism	Socialism, social democracy
Human nature	Society shapes the development of human beings	Socialism
Equality	Promotion of economic, social and political equality	Socialism, social democracy, New Left
Class politics	Attempts to narrow divisions between classes; advocacy of workers' rights	Social democracy
Common ownership	In favour of public ownership of certain institutions	Social democracy
Social justice and the welfare state	Advocacy of distributing wealth, providing free healthcare and education	Social democracy
Direct democracy and decentralisation	Argues for direct democracy and the reorganisation of the political system	New Left, conservatism
Meritocracy	Promotion of meritocracy in the public sector	Third Way, liberalism
Environment	In favour of sustainable development and environmentally sustainable production	Ecologism

Table 1. SYRIZA's positions and corresponding ideologies.

Global solidarity

The core of socialism has been a vision of human beings as social creatures united by their common humanity. This has been expressed, for instance, by calling fellow human beings “comrades”, “brothers” or “sisters”, which does not emphasise nationality, race, gender, or any other feature other than being human (Heywood 2007: 99, 103). Mass movements cooperating with one another and attracting the working class that were widely popular in several European countries in the 1820s and 1830s, and later from 1870s up to 1914, are another example of international unity and solidarity inherent in the socialist tradition (Vincent 2005: 89-90). The underlying principle in socialist cooperation has been the one of fraternity, which literally means brotherhood. The bonds of sympathy and comradeship between and among human beings and across national borders are key features both in socialism and in social democracy (Heywood 2007: 103).

Global solidarity is also present in the ideology of SYRIZA. For example, SYRIZA applauds the progress achieved in Latin American countries and calls for following their role model between people and countries in Southern Europe to further economic and political cooperation. SYRIZA also applauds the movements and popular uprisings in Spain and Portugal against the “attack of capital” (SYRIZA 2013).

The party sympathises with movements of resistance that are said to be developing on a global level. Corresponding to the principle of fraternity, SYRIZA sees these events not as sporadic, but as proof of resistance against class inequalities and in defence of human dignity. One example of this would be:

Struggles in Greece also meet up with the movement “Occupy Wall Street”, the uprisings in the Arab world with the characteristic example of the Egyptian people and the Left that continue to struggle for democracy and social justice, as well as the movement of the Turkish people, who massively and militantly questioned social injustices and the antidemocratic administration of Erdogan. (SYRIZA 2013)

As demonstrated by this example, SYRIZA sees its efforts connected to similar struggles in other European countries and the rest of the world. The prospects for Greece are said to be interwoven with the prospects of Europe and dependent on international developments. The dimension of thinking globally is plainly visible.

In this sense, SYRIZA clearly sees itself and Greece as part of a global community, where issues such as austerity, unemployment, contraction of the welfare state or weakening democratic institutions go well beyond national borders. As stated at the beginning of this subchapter, global solidarity is present both in socialist and social democratic traditions. Thus, a clear distinction between the two is not possible. However, SYRIZA names the strategic objective of the party's activities in the chapter discussing international situation to be "socialism of the 21st century in Greece and in Europe" (SYRIZA 2013). What does this exactly mean when converted into specific policy measures, will become clearer in the following parts of this paper.

Community

As already mentioned, socialism at its heart offers a unifying vision of human beings as social creatures, able of overcoming social and economic difficulties by drawing on the power of the community rather than relying on individual efforts. Just as Heywood (2007: 102) writes, this is a collectivist vision because it stresses the ability of people for collective action, their readiness and capability to pursue goals by working together, as opposed to seeking only personal self-interest. The belief in accomplishing something as a community is the reason why socialists call each other "comrades" or "brothers" and "sisters" (Heywood 2007: 103). In this regard, socialists agree with the poet John Donne who wrote:

No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main;
... any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never
send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee (In: Geoghegan 2014: 74)

Applauding the virtues of the community, socialists are also critical of capitalism because of the isolation and selfishness it breeds. For socialists, humanity can only flow from a genuine community (Geoghegan 2014: 74).

Belief in collective action and the community is also found in SYRIZA's programmatic documents. The party praises the solidarity networks and multiform structures that have been established in Greece during the economic crisis. These networks, attending mostly to food and health issues, are seen as examples of the community spirit. SYRIZA also favours giving power over several institutions into the hands of communities. The party calls for setting up public banks, reorganising the tourism sector in a way that would respond to the needs of local societies, and the restructuring of the political system in a way that would give more power to local authorities (SYRIZA 2013). Trust in the community is also reflected in the speech held by party chairman Alexis Tsipras in September 2015, where he addressed his listeners as "comrades" nearly ten times:

Comrades, Allow me to begin... [...] I know, comrades, that in our hearts we have mixed feelings. [...] It is with this NO that we will move forward, comrades. [...] I am addressing this to my friends and comrades, as well as to old and new opponents. (SYRIZA 2015a)

It is beyond doubt that SYRIZA firmly believes in the capability of the Greek people or the global community to overcome social and economic problems, by working together. SYRIZA favours collective action and the pursuit of goals by including every member of a community. With its recognition of the power of the community, whether on the local, national or even global level, SYRIZA's positions are rooted in socialism.

Cooperation

Socialists see the natural relationship among human beings to be cooperation rather than competition, since humans are perceived as social animals. According to socialist thought, cooperation is sensible both morally and economically because when individuals work together they develop bonds of sympathy, caring and affection, in addition to the mutual benefit they set out to achieve in the first place (Heywood 2007:

104-105). There exists a strong core belief among socialists that humans are cooperative creatures by nature (Vincent 2005: 100).

Moreover, the energies of the community rather than those of the individual can be employed. Socialists' commitment to cooperation has stimulated the growth of cooperative enterprises with the intent to replace competitive and hierarchic businesses which are common in capitalism. Producers' and consumers' cooperatives have always been favoured by socialists (Heywood 2007: 105).

Cooperating individuals and communities in the pursuit of a common goal is also a principle that SYRIZA follows. I have already described the party's favourable position towards the cooperation of Latin American countries and solidarity networks in Greece. In addition to that, SYRIZA supports the forming of a new type of public sector characterised by productivity, efficiency and openness to cooperation. SYRIZA is also for cooperation between different business sectors:

We aim at the functional synergy between tourism and other industries with the objective of a holistic national strategy for tourism. (SYRIZA 2013)

For SYRIZA, cooperation is not just a tactic or strategy for achieving a specific goal. It is an alternative to competition that is inherent to the capitalist system. The party also believes that the public education system should cultivate collective action and solidarity (SYRIZA 2013). SYRIZA supports endeavours and demands measures which would be based on the belief in collective action to accomplish mutual goals. Solidarity networks or the reshaping of the public sector are just few examples of this.

Human nature

According to Vincent (2005: 95), socialists usually have an optimistic developmental view of human beings. This approach could also be called the perfectibility thesis. Socialists believe that human beings are able to grow and improve in moral stature over time. As socialists see it, the roots of human nature are in social life. Remember here the poem by John Donne: no man is an island. Socialists are on the opinion that people are

not simply asocial impassable individuals. On the contrary: people are part of one another through a common social life (Vincent 2005: 95).

Furthermore, as socialists argue, the conditions under which humans evolve explain a great deal about their character and nature. This means that both the material and moral state in which a person finds him- or herself must be comprehended in the specific societal context. Nevertheless, the core belief regarding human nature for socialists is that all humans are capable of self-development and reason, whatever their country, class, sex or race is (Vincent 2005: 95). In this regard, one can argue that for socialists, the human nature is “plastic” (Heywood 2007: 103), shaped by the experiences and circumstances of social life. Thus single individuals are conjoined with the society which they live in (Heywood 2007: 103). Socialists recognise the continuing presence of human capacity for equality, community and liberty (Geoghegan 2014: 75).

There is one aspect in particular where SYRIZA’s view on human nature stands out and gives a clear understanding to what the party believes. This aspect is crime and the broader idea on the origin of violence. For SYRIZA, it is clear that crime is grounded in social context. When a society does well economically, the crime rate is low, and vice versa. SYRIZA firmly believes that under their rule, the crime situation in Greece would change dramatically. As is stated in the party's political resolution:

Social peace and security require justice and reduction of disparities. Mass poverty and misery lead to the violence of survival. Our plan for social reconstruction will result immediately in a drop in crime rate. (SYRIZA 2013)

In this regard, SYRIZA’s stance corresponds to socialism. For SYRIZA, society affects the development of humans, even when it comes to crime. But crime is not unstoppable: when the societal circumstances are changed, the crime rate will decrease.

Equality

In many respects, equality is the key feature and value in socialism. The drive for equality is also something that clearly differentiates socialist ideology from its main

rivals, particularly the other two classical ideologies: liberalism and conservatism (Heywood 2007: 105-106; Vincent 2005: 101).

Despite being widely regarded as the defining feature of socialism, there is not a consensus among socialists about what equality actually means or how it should be promoted. Attempts have still been made to argue on behalf of equality or egalitarianism, a theory or practice on the desire to promote equality. Heywood (2007: 106) has identified at least three arguments in favour of egalitarianism.

Firstly, socialists argue that social equality upholds justice or fairness. In their view, human inequality largely mirrors the unequal structure of society. But socialists do not believe all people are born with identical capacities and skills. A school where all pupils received the same marks would not be a socialist version of egalitarianism (Heywood 2007: 106). Socialists hold that the results of human endeavours should not give rise to inequality. Everyone should have at least a basic minimum of educational, health and welfare conditions from which to build further skills (Vincent 2005: 103). Secondly, socialists see social equality strengthening the community and cooperation. Socialists argue that if people have equal social conditions, then they will be more likely to identify with one another and work towards a mutual benefit. Thirdly, social equality gives the opportunity to pursue human fulfilment and self-realisation. If the basic needs of a human being are met, other needs for a fulfilling life can be sought (Heywood 2007: 106).

It is easy to notice equality as a central theme in the programmatic documents of SYRIZA. In its political resolution, the party vows to prevent a humanitarian disaster, meet social needs and raise a protective shield against the humanitarian crisis in Greece. SYRIZA very firmly believes in enabling every member of the society basic conditions to live on:

We will implement a program of social and economic recovery, [...] and gradually restore the conditions of secure employment and decent living, with the appropriate wages and pensions, creating new jobs. [...] There will be no citizen without the necessary for his

survival minimum income, without healthcare or social protection, without access to the basic goods of food and decent housing. We commit ourselves that we will allow no confiscation of any main residence due to debt. (SYRIZA 2013)

SYRIZA advocates wealth distribution in a socially just way to increase social expenditure to provide better living conditions. Furthermore, the party argues for a public and free healthcare system for all residents, no matter if Greek or foreign. SYRIZA wishes to promote equality also in the education system, which should be public, free for all residents and at every level, and based on an equal participation of both teachers and students. In addition, SYRIZA wishes to make the step towards a fulfilling life and self-actualisation more available for everyone, by securing access to culture which it describes as “a public good and a key factor in development and creation” (SYRIZA 2013):

SYRIZA will ensure access to cultural goods for everybody, with special emphasis on combating “cultural poverty” and the exclusion of poor and marginalized social groups from creating and enjoying cultural products. (SYRIZA 2013)

As socialists in the past have not limited themselves to just economic equality, demanding also political equality, legal equality of civil rights and social equality (Vincent 2005: 103), this is also found in SYRIZA’s positions. Favouring free and public education and healthcare for all are examples of social equality. But individual rights and democratic freedoms are also important to the party:

To protect and deepen the individual rights and democratic freedoms of our citizens, while putting an end to the old political system that was based on violence and repression. To promote – in practice – an ambitious program of advancing equality with the motto: “All different – all equal”. (SYRIZA 2015a)

SYRIZA is a firm believer in gender equality and is committed to the demands of women who, as the party claims, are more severely affected by the memoranda policies. SYRIZA vows to raise awareness about violence against women and to support shelters for women who are suffering from domestic violence. In this regard, SYRIZA clearly

shows feminist implications in its ideology which is inherent to the New Left and social democracy (Heywood 2007: 129, 131). The party admits that its ideas and positions are inspired by feminism along with radical ecology (SYRIZA 2013).

It is also important to note that SYRIZA recognises the rights of sexual minorities and promises to fight against discrimination – a view which is also common among the New Left and social democratic parties:

We combat racist and homophobic violence, all discriminations based on racial or national origin, religion, color of the skin, disability, age, sexual orientation or gender identity [...] In this context, we fully support the right to self-determination in terms of sexual orientation and gender choice, homosexual civil marriage with full and equal rights, and recognition of gender identity. (SYRIZA 2013)

In terms of promoting economic, social and political equality, it is safe to say that SYRIZA's stance is rooted in the socialist tradition. Public and free healthcare and education or providing the basic minimum income to each resident is inherent both to socialism and social democracy.

Class politics

Historically, socialists have defined social class as the deepest and politically most significant of social divisions. Class politics have been expressed in two ways. Firstly, social class has served as an analytical tool to explain developments in history and social change. In this regard, class politics has been clearest in the Marxist belief that historical change is produced by class conflict (Heywood 2007: 109). The second form of socialist class politics has focused on the working class and political struggle along with emancipation. The working class has often been seen as the base of socialist politics and also as a vehicle for achieving socialist goals. This does not mean that social class has been taken as a necessary feature of society: societies, where classes do not exist or where class inequalities have been reduced, belong to the socialist tradition as well (Heywood 2007: 109).

In any case, the importance of class politics within socialism has declined since the mid-twentieth century. The cause of this has mainly been the contraction of the traditional working class. Thus the focus of socialist and social democratic parties has focused from class emancipation to feminism, environmentalism and international development (Heywood 2007: 109).

SYRIZA definitely sees society as divided into classes. The party ascribes class importance both at the national and the international level of politics:

The euro is being treated mostly as a vehicle of the German policy, deepening inequalities between countries and between classes, [...] Movements of resistance against class inequalities and in defense of human dignity are developing all over the world, [...] We treat the immigration issue in all its complexity and in all its dimensions (humanitarian, class, international). (SYRIZA 2013)

SYRIZA clearly sees itself as a representative of the interests of the working class and “oppressed social groups” (SYRIZA 2013).

The devotion to the working class is also visible in the party’s advocacy of workers’ rights. SYRIZA promises that its first step, when in power, will be to restore employment relations, collective bargaining and minimum wages. The party also argues for democracy in the workplace. Standing up for the rights of the working class and the labour unions are the pillars of the party’s policy:

Free collective bargaining, protection against dismissals, the upgrade of control mechanisms, the elimination of undeclared and precarious work, the strengthening of the labor unions’ role, and the free and unhindered exercise of union activity are the pillars of our policy and of the production process itself. (SYRIZA 2013)

According to the party, several classes exist in modern society. Firstly, the working class as SYRIZA’s most important base; then the unemployed and others who have suffered most severely because of the crisis. They make up the oppressed social groups

and together with the working class also the “popular classes” (SYRIZA 2013). The middle class is also present. In SYRIZA’s view, the working class and the popular classes along with the middle class of the town and countryside will form an alliance that will become the basis of a leftist government. On the other side are the parties that have ruled in previous governments. SYRIZA refers to the parties and politicians that were in power since the 1990s and implemented neoliberal policies as the “bourgeois power bloc” (SYRIZA 2013). Furthermore, SYRIZA clearly sets itself in contrast to past ruling parties and what it calls the “bourgeois political system” (SYRIZA 2015a; transform 2015!).

“Bourgeoisie” is clearly a Marxist term denoting the ruling class of a capitalist society, the owners of productive wealth (Heywood 2007: 109). This might give the impression that SYRIZA adheres to the Marxist two-class model, in which there is an irreconcilable conflict between the bourgeoisie and the working class that will inevitably lead to the overthrow of capitalism through a revolution. However, this is not the case. Yes, SYRIZA uses a Marxist term, but as already mentioned, the party does not call for a revolution to crush capitalism nor does it paint a picture of a classless society. In class terms, the goal of SYRIZA is to reduce class inequalities through economic and social measures. SYRIZA promises to “heal the wounds inflicted on the working class” (SYRIZA 2013), but it does not pledge a workers’ government in a non-capitalist system.

Therefore SYRIZA’s views on class politics mostly relate to social democracy. The party sees social class in terms of income and status differences, and attempts to narrow the divisions between classes through economic and social measures. SYRIZA recognises class struggle (transform 2015!) and does not deny the existence of classes, but the party’s view on class politics is a fairly moderate one, despite the sporadic Marxist rhetoric.

Common ownership

As Heywood (2007: 109-111) notes, socialists have frequently traced the origins of competition and inequality to the institution of private property, by which they mean

productive wealth or capital, not personal belongings like clothes or houses. According to socialist ideology, property is unjust, because wealth is produced through a collective effort of human labour and should therefore be owned by the community, not by private individuals. In addition to that, socialists see private property as morally corrupting and the cause of materialistic tendencies. Property also breeds conflict in society, between employers and employees or the rich and the poor. Thus, socialists have argued that the institution of private property should be abolished and replaced by common ownership of productive wealth, or that the right to property be balanced against the interests of the community (Heywood 2007: 109-111).

In the twentieth century and even today, public ownership of certain industries and institutions has not been an exception in Europe. Nationalisation is an instrument that has been deployed by various governments, most recently during the global economic crisis that started in 2008 (Geoghegan 2014: 93). Industrial development has certainly been met with acceptance by socialists, but usually with a mix of private and public ownership (Vincent 2005: 111).

SYRIZA does not criticise the institution of private property as such and does not argue for its abolition. It even acknowledges that excessive taxes on the middle class have endangered their private property (SYRIZA 2014). However, the party is critical towards the privatisation of public goods and companies. One of its promises is to cancel planned privatisations and the “looting of the public wealth” (SYRIZA 2013). The party wants to restore public control over strategically important enterprises that have already been privatised or are under privatisation. SYRIZA is also in favour of setting the banking system under public control:

We will set the banking system under public ownership and control, through the radical conversion of its functioning and the aims it is serving today, through the upgrade of the workers and the customers’ role. (SYRIZA 2013)

In SYRIZA’s vision, production will be based on the public sector, cooperative and self-management units, social economy ventures and small and medium-sized

businesses. This does not mean that SYRIZA plans to shut down the private sector (SYRIZA 2013). SYRIZA's view on private property relates to social democracy where there is a priority to keep certain industries and institutions under public control and use nationalisation as an instrument when it's necessary, but at the same time there is no plan to abolish private property or to persecute private entrepreneurs. SYRIZA does not intend to move towards a planned economy that has been desired by some socialists over time.

Social justice and the welfare state

The principle of social justice has been central in social democracy. Social democrats see social justice as a morally justifiable distribution of wealth which usually implies a commitment to greater equality. The tool for achieving higher levels of social justice is the welfare state, which is also viewed by many socialists as the principal means of reforming or humanising the capitalist system. This has made possible for socialists and social democrats not to demand the abolition of capitalism, but rather to argue in favour of the welfare state which has the capacity to promote social justice, eradicate poverty, and thus modify capitalism (Heywood 2007: 133).

Moreover, the notion of the positive sides of the welfare state has led socialists and social democrats to give up on the idea that wealth should be owned in common. Socialism has thus transformed into politics of social justice, rather than the politics of ownership. The redistribution of incomes and the rise in working-class purchasing power are regarded more important than the public ownership of industries (Crosland [1967] 2005: 246-250).

Both social justice and the welfare state are significant for SYRIZA. The party calls for the re-establishment of the European project based on, among other principles, social justice:

We highlight the need for and demand the reversal of the current form of the European integration process, the reversal of the Euro zone architecture and the neoliberal concept which the common currency has been based on, so as to refound the European project in the

direction of democratic construction and functioning, social justice, and socialism. (SYRIZA 2013)

SYRIZA is very critical towards the reduction of the welfare state. This is seen by the party as one of the biggest problems in Greece next to collapsing production, company closures, and the dismantling of public services. SYRIZA vows to restore and strengthen the welfare state and to promote the democratization of all its activities and functions, such as protection of employment, healthcare, education, and social insurance (SYRIZA 2013).

There are several public measures that SYRIZA stands for. One of them is public healthcare. SYRIZA wants to ensure the functioning of public hospitals, primary healthcare structures, mental health structures, and prevention and rehabilitation centres. In SYRIZA's view, the public healthcare system has to be accessible to all residents of Greece – especially to patients with chronic diseases and patients under the poverty line –, regardless of their employment or insurance status. Another feature of the welfare state is public education which SYRIZA refers to as a “non-negotiable universal social good” (SYRIZA 2013). The party thinks that private education is a disorder that should be eliminated (SYRIZA 2013).

In its programme for the elections in January 2015, SYRIZA drafted a number of additional and concrete welfare measures. These included free electricity for 300,000 families under the poverty line, meal subsidies for 300,000 families without income, rent subsidies, restoration of the so-called 13th additional pension for more than a million pensioners, special public transport cards for long-term unemployed people and those under the poverty line, personal debt relief for private individuals and enterprises, and the restoration of the minimum wage to €751 (SYRIZA 2014). According to the party, these measures were designed to confront the humanitarian crisis, restart the economy and regain employment.

As revenues to “cope with deficits in an effective and socially just way, giving priority to redistribution and environmentally safe growth” (SYRIZA 2013), the party sees higher taxes for the wealthy and other measures:

We will create a national land registry and an analytical registry of assets in order to restore economic democracy. State revenue will come from the taxation on wealth, net profits, high incomes, large property, and the property of the Church; from cancelling the privileges of the oligarchy and multinational corporations; from halting recession. (SYRIZA 2013)

As demonstrated, SYRIZA is very committed to the welfare state and the principle of social justice. The party promotes the distribution of wealth, free healthcare and education for everyone and safety net measures for those in need. With its demands and views on social welfare, SYRIZA clearly falls in line with social democracy.

Direct democracy and decentralisation

In general, direct democracy is not associated with socialism or social democracy. However, a tradition of direct democracy became established, at least in Europe, already centuries ago. With the arrival of the European Union, the usage of direct democracy has become more common throughout Europe (Beramendi et al. 2008: 188).

On the other hand, decentralisation is a central principle for the New Left movement. The New Left has tried to revitalise socialist thought by developing a radical critique of advanced industrial society, stressing the need for participation, decentralisation and personal liberation (Heywood 2007: 127).

SYRIZA’s aims correspond to the demands of the New Left. The party wants to change Greece’s political system. SYRIZA promises to fundamentally reorganise the country’s political system by eliminating corruption, observing the principles of the separation of powers and the separation of the church and the state, and restoring transparency in institutions. These changes should be supplemented with direct democracy:

We will upgrade the democratic structure and operation of the representational institutions, both at the level of the central government and at that of local authorities, enacting simple proportional representation and introducing forms of direct democracy. (SYRIZA 2013)

Furthermore, SYRIZA is committed to conduct a democratic revision of Greece's constitution based on the principle of subsidiarity. The appeal for subsidiarity is in accordance with the principle of decentralisation advocated by the New Left, but originally, subsidiarity is rooted in conservatism, more precisely in Christian democracy. Subsidiarity is the idea that decisions should be made by the lowest appropriate institution (Heywood 2007: 85). This seems to be favoured also by SYRIZA, when it lays out the plan of the "regional organisation of the state" (SYRIZA 2014). However, this does not cast a shadow on the ideological coherence of SYRIZA, since subsidiarity is also present in the socialist tradition through decentralisation. It can be argued that in regards of direct democracy and decentralisation, SYRIZA is affected by the growing tendency in Europe to use instruments of direct democracy and also by the positions of the New Left.

Meritocracy

Meritocracy means rule by those with merit, merit being in this case intelligence plus effort (Heywood 2007: 34). In a meritocratic society, the social position of an individual is determined exclusively by ability and hard work. Moreover, inequalities of wealth and social position merely reflect the unequal distribution of merit or skills among human beings, or are based on factors beyond the reach of human control – for instance, luck or chance. A meritocratic society is deemed to be just because individuals are judged not by their gender, race or religion, but according to their talents and willingness to work. This corresponds to the liberal idea of equality of opportunity: individuals should have an even playing field to develop their unequal skills and abilities (Heywood 2007: 34).

Traditionally, meritocracy is equated with liberalism, but it also has its place in socialism. The idea of "equality of opportunity" rather than "equality of outcome" is inherent to the ideological stance adopted by some socialist and social democratic

parties since the 1980s, namely the Third Way. The Third Way presents itself as an alternative to old-fashioned social democracy and neoliberalism by being pragmatic rather than ideological. As opposed to social democrats, Third Way followers do not favour equal outcomes, but rather equal opportunities and meritocracy. In this regard, Third Way has some similarities with liberalism (Heywood 2007: 136-139).

Therefore it is surprising to find a call for meritocracy in the programmatic documents of SYRIZA. Besides democracy, decentralisation and transparency that SYRIZA wants to accomplish by reforming public services, the party also favours meritocracy (SYRIZA 2013). In another programmatic document, the party promises to rebuild the welfare state, restore the rule of law and create a meritocratic state (SYRIZA 2014). This causes confusion on whether SYRIZA wants to promote meritocracy within the public sector and among public officials or the party is interested in meritocracy on a general level for the whole society. However, the latter option seems implausible considering the other promises and ideological positions stated in SYRIZA's programmatic documents. That the focus for meritocracy will concentrate on the public sector and the government becomes clear from a statement issued by Alexis Tsipras in 2015:

The various, small and big cartels of established interests, which attempt, even today, to control public administration and the economy, will collapse. Meritocracy, transparency, equal opportunities everywhere, with the appropriate social sensitivity and the rule of law will be the trademark for the new Greece of tomorrow. (Koutsokosta 2015)

The appeal for a meritocratic public sector is as such in accordance with the Third Way stance. Although this might be perceived as a surprising element in SYRIZA's ideology, it further sets the party in line with a moderate, not a radical version of socialism.

Environment

For socialists, the environment has not been a central topic in their ideology or policies. This is, however, not the case for SYRIZA. Environmentally friendly and sustainable

economic management has an essential and also distinctive role in SYRIZA's ideology. Along with social and economic reconstruction that SYRIZA promotes for the Greek society, environmental reconstruction is also present in their positions. For example:

We will cancel the environmentally destructive regulations of the memoranda governments concerning: concession of natural resources (mining rights, beaches, forests, and nature reserves) [...] fast track procedures that bypass legislation about the environment, land use, or archaeology; legalization of any environmental abuse; the scandalous contracts for waste management. (SYRIZA 2013)

The party prioritises the environmentally safe use of resources and also environmentally-friendly tourism. SYRIZA promotes food sufficiency/food sovereignty and a new type of agricultural policy which is partly based on the redistribution of farmland (SYRIZA 2013).

Clear influences from ecologism and the principle of sustainability can be recognised in SYRIZA's positions. Sustainability, the capacity of a system to maintain its health and continue in existence over a period of time (Heywood 2007: 267), is a recurring theme in SYRIZA's programmatic documents. The party argues for sustainable development and environmentally sustainable forms of production. In this regard, SYRIZA's critique towards capitalism becomes evident:

In contrast to capitalist competition, continuous enlargement and accumulation, we support another organizational model which is based on the balance between human activities and natural resources and which ensures sustainable growth. The ecological transformation of the economy can become a key element in a more just socio-political vision of productive reconstruction that can mobilize large masses of citizens for its specification and implementation. (SYRIZA 2013)

This is a critique of the capitalist system based on the unsustainable features of the system. SYRIZA is definitely influenced by green politics, but this should not come as a surprise, as SYRIZA describes itself as a party which has "its class roots in the labour

and popular movement and is motivated and inspired by the ideas and positions of radical ecology and feminism” (SYRIZA 2013).

2. Discussion: Is SYRIZA radical?¹

As has been demonstrated throughout this paper, the ideological positions and proposals of SYRIZA mainly correspond to socialism and social democracy. In addition, there are strong tendencies towards the New Left movement and ecologism, and some influences from conservatism and liberalism. However, markers from other ideologies do not place in doubt the ideological coherence of SYRIZA: they are a leftist party whose positions are rooted in socialism and social democracy, as becomes clear by looking at Table 1.

This point is shared by many authors who have written about the Greek ruling party. Smith (2015) argues that despite excitement among the European left about SYRIZA gaining power in Greece, the party didn't offer an insurrectionary fantasy, but proposed only modest Keynesian measures, meant to restart economic growth and alleviate austerity. Stavrakakis and Katsambekis (2014: 126) show that these measures have been recurrent in SYRIZA's programme. Cognord (2015) is also on the opinion that SYRIZA's solution for dealing with the crisis was based on a Keynesian model. He describes SYRIZA as a "social-democratic party with progressive sensitivities" (Cognord 2015).

Based on research presented in this paper and articles that were just referred to, I claim that ideologically, SYRIZA is not a radical party. Despite its sporadic Marxist rhetoric and anti-establishment tendencies, it is not valid to deem radical a party whose proposals include protecting workers' rights, providing social benefits and welfare, enabling free healthcare and public education for everyone, supporting public ownership of certain institutions, promoting equal rights for minorities, commitment to direct democracy, advocating reforms in the public sector, and arguing for environmental sustainability. To be sure, SYRIZA is very critical towards the current state of Greece, the European Union and neoliberal policies, but nowhere in its

¹ Parts of this chapter have been recently published in an article in *Müürileht*. See Gert Siniloo. 2016. „Sotsiaaldemokraatia kui uus radikaalsus.“ *Müürileht*, May, No. 54.

programmatic documents does the party pursue a revolution to completely change the system. Incidentally, this notion of trying to reform capitalism instead of challenging its existence is why some authors are critical of SYRIZA (see Cognord 2015; Fotopoulos 2015). In the context of this paper, however, this critique furthermore proves the moderateness of SYRIZA.

If anything, the radicalness of SYRIZA lies in the party's opposition to the politics of austerity. This position is definitely long-standing (see Stavrakakis and Katsambekis 2014: 126) and clearly essential for the party – the promise to renegotiate the terms of Greece's loan contracts with the Troika (the European Union, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund) and fight for better conditions for the Greek people was the main campaign slogan that brought SYRIZA to power. In the Thessaloniki programme for the upcoming elections in January 2015, the party explicitly demanded a write-off of "the greater part of public debt's nominal value so that it becomes sustainable" (SYRIZA 2014). The voters were given a clear choice: negotiation or non-negotiation, growth or austerity (SYRIZA 2014).

In a post-crisis Europe, dominated by the fiscal principles of Germany, all of this might indeed appear to be radical. This is also perceptible in Estonia, where a strict fiscal policy and a government refraining from borrowing money have for a long time been key fundamentals of those in power. Austerity has become such a prevalent principle that even the slightest deviance from its course will be accused of being radical. As Žižek (2015) argues, SYRIZA's proposals might seem radical, but this says a lot about the present situation:

It is a sad sign of our times that today you have to belong to a "radical" left to advocate these same measures – a sign of dark times, but also a chance for the left to occupy the space which, decades ago, was that of the moderate centre left. (Žižek 2015)

It is no wonder that the most vocal critics of SYRIZA have, among others, been Spain and Portugal – if the SYRIZA government would have succeeded in negotiating a new deal with its creditors, then the Spanish and Portuguese politicians would have had to

explain to their people why they had to suffer, when there was another possibility to exit the crisis.

Today we know that SYRIZA did not get its way. The negotiations during the six months after the party gained power culminated on 5 July 2015, when the Greek people voted in a referendum on the new conditions of a deal that was reached 10 days before. The result was a rejection of the new contract with a majority of more than 60% of the vote. Nevertheless, new negotiations began already on the very next day. Finally, the Greek government requested for a third bailout, which they received, but under much harsher conditions than presented in the previous deal. Instead of implementing anti-austerity measures, SYRIZA's chairman and the Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras agreed to pension cuts, tax hikes and other austerity measures (Steinhauser, Fairless 2015).

The SYRIZA-led government has clearly made mistakes. The acceptance of a bailout including much more severe austerity measures was a direct consequence of a venturesome negotiation strategy gone awry. At the same time, SYRIZA has not abandoned its ideological positions and proposals. The goals of the Thessaloniki Programme (SYRIZA 2014) are impossible to implement for the party, because they lack the necessary financial means, but SYRIZA is still trying.

In February 2016, the Greek parliament approved a bill with the aim of mitigating the impact of austerity measures on the poor (Kathimerini 2016a). The plan, referred to as the government's parallel programme, includes measures such as full healthcare coverage for 2.5 million uninsured people, free electricity and water for many households, free transportation for the unemployed, free hot meals for 200,000 students, increased funding for research activities, and public administration reform (Panagiotidis 2016). Still, there exists a gap between the party's pre-election proposals and the measures it has to implement to fulfil its commitments to the country's creditors. This is also expressed in opinion polls which show SYRIZA lagging behind the conservative New Democracy, the party which lost its power to SYRIZA (Kathimerini 2016b).

Despite the fact that SYRIZA has not been a complete success story in achieving its demands, the emergence of left parties and politicians in Western countries has been considerable. For almost a year now, the leader of the UK Labour Party has been Jeremy Corbyn, a self-described socialist who has urged his party to look to SYRIZA and learn from them (Wilkinson 2015). Yanis Varoufakis, Greece's former finance minister has launched a new pan-European movement DiEM25 that aims to democratise the European Union. According to their website, the movement has in 56 countries more than 17,000 members, among others Noam Chomsky and Slavoj Žižek (DiEM25 2016). Podemos, an anti-austerity party in Spain who became the third largest party in the country's parliament in December 2015, is building a left-wing election alliance (Reuters 2016). And who could forget the rise of Bernie Sanders, a self-described socialist, in the U.S. presidential election (BBC 2016). Meanwhile, SYRIZA itself has formed a joint front against austerity with Portugal (Choros 2016).

Of course, these trends do not mean that anti-austerity leftists will start regularly winning elections and forming governments. The case of SYRIZA has demonstrated how even several election victories might not be enough to implement leftist policies. On the other hand, the increasing popularity of socialism cannot be overlooked. What will be the implications of these developments, remain yet to be seen.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to find out the ideological stance of the Greek ruling party SYRIZA in comparison to socialism and social democracy. This comparison was used to determine whether the possible radicalness of SYRIZA lies in the party's rejection of the politics of austerity or are there features in SYRIZA's ideology which make the party substantially extreme left.

The hypothesis formulated at the beginning of this thesis suggested that compared to socialism and social democracy, SYRIZA's ideological stance is not radical – if anything, the radicalness of the party is expressed in its opposition to austerity politics. In my view, this hypothesis proved to be correct and thus the ideological closeness of SYRIZA to classical leftist ideologies was confirmed. The essence of SYRIZA's positions and proposals are found in Table 1 which plainly demonstrates the party's socialist and social democratic roots.

Thus, the central conclusion of this paper is that ideologically, SYRIZA is not a radical party. True, it uses Marxist rhetoric, is anti-elite and severely criticises neoliberalism, but it is not seeking to stage a revolution to abolish the capitalist system. The party's proposed measures regarding social welfare, equality, reforms in the public sector or sustainable development are not essentially radical. If anything, the radicalness of SYRIZA lies in the party's opposition to the politics of austerity.

One dimension missing from this paper is SYRIZA's use of populism. The way the party deploys populist rhetoric and to what extent is definitely a possible topic for future research. Another fascinating option would be to compare SYRIZA to the anti-austerity movements and parties in other countries, some of which were mentioned in the discussion part of this paper.

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Kokkuvõte

Käesoleva töö eesmärk oli välja selgitada Kreeka võimupartei ideoloogiline hoiak võrdluses sotsialismi ja sotsiaaldemokraatiaga. Selle võrdluse abil tehti kindlaks, kas SYRIZA võimalik radikaalsus seisneb partei vastuseisus kasinuspoliitikale või leidub SYRIZA ideoloogias tunnusjooni, mis teevad partei olemuslikult vasakäärmuslikuks.

Töö alguses sõnastatud hüpoteesi järgi pole SYRIZA ideoloogiline hoiak sotsialismi ja sotsiaaldemokraatiaga võrreldes radikaalne – kui üldse, väljendub partei radikaalsus tema vastuseisus kasinuspoliitikale. Autori hinnangul osutus hüpotees tõseks ja seega leidis kinnitust SYRIZA lähedus klassikaliste vasakpoolsete ideoloogiatega. SYRIZA seisukohtade ja ettepanekute olemus on esitatud Tabelis 1, kus tulevad selgesti esile partei sotsialistlikud ja sotsiaaldemokraatlikud juured.

Seega on käesoleva töö keskne järeldus, et ideoloogiliselt pole SYRIZA radikaalne erakond. Tõsi, partei kasutab marksistlikku retoorikat, on eliidivastane ja kritiseerib teravalt neoliberalismi, kuid ta ei püüa lavastada revolutsiooni kapitalistliku süsteemi kukutamiseks. Erakonna väljakäidud ettepanekud sotsiaalse heaolu, võrdsuse, avaliku sektori reformide või kestliku arengu kohta pole olemuslikult radikaalsed. Kui üldse, seisneb SYRIZA radikaalsus tema vastuseisus kasinusmeetmetele.

Mõõde, mida sellest töös ei leia, puudutab SYRIZA populistlikke omadusi. Viis, kuidas ja mil määral erakond kasutab populistlikku retoorikat, on igal juhul võimalik tulevane uurimisteema. Teine huvipakkuv võimalus oleks võrrelda SYRIZAt teiste riikide kasinusvastaste liikumiste ja parteidega, millest mõnda mainiti käesoleva töö aruteluosas.

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