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Abstract

The occurrence of the financial crisis has affected politics in Europe and led to remarkable political shifts. The electoral rise of far-right populism has been one significant outcome of the crisis and the way it has been addressed by the European government and the EU institutions. The far-right parties has gained significant electoral power in several European countries and actually got out of the margins on national political systems, becoming a crucial political player. Such examples are the neonazist party of "Golden Dawn" in Greece as well as the Lega Nord in Italy and AfD in Germany. Particularly, the intensification of the international economic crisis has led to the transformation of the ideological and political differentiations in the sense that it has brought to light an impressive rise of populist parties in Europe. In any case, populist reliance and its multipliers have grown dramatically amidst the pressure of mass unemployment, new poverty, immigration flows, anger about politics and fear of the future. The aim of this paper is to analyze and categorize the roots of the far-right populist rise in Europe and the role of democracy as a mechanism of stabilization and prevention.

Keywords: populism, crisis, far-right political parties

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1. Introduction

The international financial crisis of 2007 has not only eroded the credibility of states but also contributed to the contestation of the democratically structured public sphere through the impressive rise of far-right populist parties in Europe which theoretically retained a democratic mantle and through the diffusion of authoritarian mentalities in the public domain.

Radicalism of the far right is fueled by all the deprivations and fears of an electorate looking for salvation in the violent proposals of populist leaders (Meny, 1995: 155). Pre-electoral speech and policies of the far-right fundamentally question the democratic constitution, the democratically tested procedures, the fundamental rights and values that protect the individuals, the opposition and minorities, the recognition and trust of the citizens towards the institutional order. Far-right political structures do not accept the definition of Democracy "as a class which represents a state-owned system of sovereignty which, in the exclusion of any violent and arbitrary form of power, is based on the principle of self-determination of the people, based on the will of the majority and on equality" (von Alemann, 1995: 2).

Inspired by an article by Jürgen Habermas (2016) about the notion of democratic polarization as a tool for the elimination of the far-right, we will attempt to question in this study with which polar strategy and methodology the democratic space could delineate and entrench the field of expansion of far-right populism. Furthermore another interesting question is to further investigate which are the deepest structural causes that lead to the strengthening of authoritarian tendencies.

2. Structural Causes of the Rise of Far-Right Populism
2.1 The popular features

Populism characterizes parties that are outcomes of a rhetoric against the establishment (established parties), drawing their legitimacy from a supposedly moral superiority and having as a mouthpiece a charismatic leader. They also approach people as a homogeneous group and are mobilized around specialized issues of protest.

Populism has at least 4 dimensions (Hartlep, 2005: 15):

• The technical dimension refers to an over-simplified political style combined with a demagogic, simplified rhetoric, rich in images, that builds an immediacy with the people.

• The dimension of content refers to the orientation on anti-movement protests (anti-immigration, class and security, anti-EU and globalization, anti-Americanism, social demagogy).

• The dimension of staffing and personnel refers mainly to the expression of the demands of populism through a charismatic central figure (leader).

• Finally, the media dimension is related to the exploitation of media for promotion purposes through the production of positive or negative news.

Populism challenges all social differences, apart from the leader and the people. The relationship between the two must be immediate and uninterrupted (Hartleb, 2005: 1; Hoschuetzky, 2003: 33-34; Van der Brug & Mugham, 2004: 5-7; Hildebrand: 2017,120). The leader is presented as an exponent and true advocate of the interests of the people by gradually establishing an close relationship between him and his admirers. (Van der Brug & Mugham, 2004: 5-7; Hartleb, 2005: 1; Hildebrand, 2017, 120-122).

The charisma of the leader consolidates his position as a protector, legislator and even "hero" of the people. This gift comes not only from the virtue of mobilizing the masses but from a process of semantic emptiness in the sense that only if the leader does not mark something specific then he represents everything being able to construct an interactive representative relationship in which his name and image consolidate various marginalized groups into a collectivity. Thus, populist leaders function as symbolically constructed and universal reference symbols on which disappointed desires and expectations are presented by expecting

a reversion of the problems that they suffer (Hildebrand, 2017: 121). Charismatic leaders skillfully manipulate the underlying moods and the non-expressing interests of the people in favor of "political correctness", triggering transitions whereby as "the main speakers of the popular language" they are elevated as "regulators of the game" (Van der Brug & Mugham, 2004: 5-7). The charismatic personality of the leader acts as a "figure" for the identification of members and voters.

At the same time the inexpensive, but dramatic and unrealistic reference to the people (von Beyme, 2018: 14; Taggart, 2000: 46) serves the legitimization process that takes place amid the simplification and technical aggravation of problems, along with the presentation of their radical proposing solution (von Beyme, 2018;Betz, 2005: 11-12; Decker, 2000: 27-30; Dorna, 2003: 1-5; Taggart, 2000: 92). Populism as a starting point needs a crisis that is technically expanded through its acute negative presentation. (von Beyme: 2018, 10-11) These crises are identified by Milzer as moments of accelerating history in which the diffuse sense of loss of identity and living data is generated, with the result that racial motivation is created around the right-wing populism, which is then translated into votes mainly from those who are characterized by feelings of fear and threat. The upcoming changes to the lives of several people are not perceived as opportunities and possibilities, but as threats combined with a fear of the upcoming social degradation and an aggressive defense of the traditional roles of both genders and self-images of each nation. The majority of citizens are rather pessimistic about the future. This is the ground which feeds the ideological and political trends of identities "identitäre" (Füks, 2017; Geogiadou, 2005: 265).

Mazzoleni (2004: 3) refers to the dependence of right-wing populists on a kind of conspiratorial cooperation with the Media. The populists create and promote the scandals and the Media make them known to the public, offering him the appropriate projection screen (Mazoleoni, 2004: 4). Particularly, right-wing populist leaders are still characterized by the fact that they are using media for an extreme hostility to foreign, nationalist politics in admixture with neoliberal elements. The ideological aims of the populist far-right parties are presented as simplified and radical solutions to a crisis for which the dominant elite, which is presented as incompetent and corrupt, is responsible (Stanyer, Salgado, Strömbäck, 2017: 360; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017: 11- 15; Mudde, 2004: 543; Müller, 2016; Taggart, 2000: 43; Hartleb, 2005b: 1).

The opposition to the institutions of representative democracy, the moralization of the popular will, the anger, namely the discomfort, alienation, antipathy, to the elite power, the use of the "people" as a fundamental concept, the charismatic leadership, top political integration of the popular strata, laxity and ambiguity of political discourse, resentment and xenophobia, constitute the basic factors of the populist platform (Demertzis, 2004). In addition, "the populist political discourse coincides with other ideologies and adapts to a variety of political and religious contexts" (Demertzis, 2004; Stanyer, Salgado, Strombäck, 2017: 353-364).

The populist component contributes significantly to the extent of acceptance and offers to the far right the possibility of appearing as anti-state, anti-political, anti-liberal, anti-capitalist, anti-semitic, nationalist and anti-communist to penetrate into those social strata excluded from "comforts" and from the urban constriction, so they confront with fear the transformation of productive structures and the internationalization of capital (Georgiadou, 2005; Stanyer, Salgado, Strombäck, 2017: 353-364).

In a specific form, far-right populism constitutes an ideology that promises security through the withdrawal and fortification in a closed world and in a closed community. Populist nationalism is distinguished by aversion to the open society. Populism as a potentially successful dimension of far-right parties is both a symptom of profound socio-economic changes and, on the other hand, of the expression of a particular aspect of inefficiency of the modern political systems (Binder, 2005: 3;von Beyme, 2018: 10). Extremist parties achieve legitimacy by protesters, increased personal effectiveness, and when confidence in the

political system is declining (Eatwell, 2004: 329-30). A general decline in confidence for incumbent political institutions is necessary alongside the diffusion of the belief that rebellious parties are not totally incompatible with the democratic order of things.

Ultimately, potential voters of extremist parties believe that the actions of the parties they support are effective. According to Eatwell, this means that there is a rational choice, rather than a blind protest on the vote in the far-right (Eatwell, 2004: 330). In any case, the penetration of the far-right populism into party systems coincides with a generalized tendency for structural violence (von Beyme, 2018: 16). The attitudes of the extremist populist and right-wing supporters are compounded by a readiness to violence within an ideological triad consisting of the themes of corruption, immigration and security (von Beyme, 2018: 20).

2. 2. The effect of globalization

Habermas describes the dilemma that permeates the current Western democracies as follows:

> "Economic globalization is a rapid structural change that redistributes social costs more unequally and opens up the gap in social status between the winners and losers, generally imposing more burdens in the short run, while greater benefits only appear in the long run"

(Habermas, 2001: 9)

Globalization and modernization as parallel, but asynchronous processes produce a sort of social dissatisfaction which politically can be translated as a departure from, or deviation from, established political patterns. The impact of globalization on the development and evolution of far-right political parties is based on different arguments by different scholars and approaches (Falkenberg, 1997, Betz, 1994, Kriesi, 1999 and 2001, Kitschelt / McGann, 1997, Decker, 2000, Zürn, 2001)

Three main arguments may systematically be differentiated:

The population is divided into "winners" and "losers" of globalization based on economic impacts (Falkenberg, 1997: 12-44). The "losers" are approaching the lower socio-economic groups that can no longer compete with international competition (Kitschelt, 1997: 19). Moreover, the dynamic flow of migrants in developed countries creates additional competition and insecurity in permanently installed, vulnerable social groups (Winkler, 2002: 46). Possible reactions from the perspective of "losers" of globalization are xenophobia, hostility towards immigrants, along with a nostalgia for "national borders" (Hartleb, 2005: 2; Winkler, 2002: 22).

The internationalization of political decision-making centers has been highlighted, resulting in the accumulated political alienation of the "losers" of globalization. Nationally important issues are transposed to the transnational decision-making area (Kriesi, 1999: 17; Scharpf:1997) which means that a much wider range of political actors, parties, institutions and interest groups is involved, while the national interests of many other states has to be taken into account. While the elites are internationally oriented, the lower strata or the losers of globalization remain as social groups trapped in the national level. To the extent that political decisions of the elites neglect the national frame of reference, the inferior layers of politics are alienated.

Finally, there is an emergence of certain parties which aim to close the above-mentioned gap and politically represent the interests of the politically "alienated" and socially "lost" globalization (Hartleb, 2005: 2).

Kupchan (2012: 62) considers that "globalization is creating a widening gap between what electors are asking from their governments and what those governments are able to deliver. The mismatch between growing demand for good governance and its shrinking supply is one of the most serious challenges that the western world faces today. Voters in industrialized democracies are expecting from their governments to

respond to the decline in living standards and to the growing inequality resulting from the unprecedented global flows of goods, services and capital. Globalization is making less effective the political levers at their disposal while also diminishing Western sovereignty over the world's affairs by fueling the "rise of the rest." The inability of democratic governments to address the needs of their broader public has, on the other hand, only increased popular disaffection, further undermining the legitimacy and efficiency of representative institutions". It is obvious that the interpretations about the overall political effect of globalization in the field of political beliefs, values and attitudes are right. However, there is a need for a sociological interpretation of the value shifts that have occurred amid globalization.

2. 3.The impact of personalization

It is precisely at this point that an approach in the sense of "personalization" is necessary, as Beck (1986: 67-75, 205-220) analyses. Especially, according to Beck, the take-off of the level of prosperity and the widening of the welfare state in the economically flowering period after the Second World War, as well as the increasing pluralism of lifestyles in the 1970s, created the conditions for an individualization in the sense of disconnection from classes, castes and guilds (Beck, 1986: 121-161). The individual, through social mobility and communicative development was able to take his fate into his own hands and take responsibility for himself. To write his own biography.

Meanwhile, however, we are witnessing the end of "personalization". Personal responsibility and autonomy either get a negative tone in the era of neoliberalism and the selective and fragmented welfare state, or become totally impossible due to individual socioeconomic landslide. In this regard, for many, an autonomous life plan in the era of uncertainty and demotion is in any case impossible. Therefore, there are plenty of scholars who talk about returning to class society. As Walzer (2015: 1) notes:

"it is time to think about class. The insurgencies we most need today are the insurgencies of large numbers of people without money, or without enough money; People without jobs or with jobs that barely support them; People who are frighteningly vulnerable to the smallest economic downturn, who live on the edge of destitution; People whose children are taught in overcrowded and understaffed schools, who are served or, more likely, not served by defunct welfare agencies, who live in decaying cities or in rural isolation, who die before their time. And these people are not distinguished by their gender, or their nationality, or their religion, not even by their race. They are, so to speak, naturally diverse..."

It is precisely an outcome of the weakening of the social dividing lines and the obvious reduction of the hierarchical social mechanisms that we have experienced over the last century, in the midst of the crisis. The corresponding political civilization is also gradually dismantled which is inherent in values such as pluralism, tolerance, respect for the opposite opinion etc.

That modernity, characterized by personalization as an extension of the person's choice, as a weakening of class constraint and as a free choice of lifestyle (Beck: 1986), seems to have been seriously questioned. But this means that the renowned market economy that guaranteed the unlimited development of the person is now linked to the reversal of the promise of freedom and the limitation of autonomy (Grau, 2016). The end of personalization is not only related to the entrenchment of the "social" but also to the entrenchment of liberalism itself.

2.4. The importance of the refugee crisis

The refugee crisis that arose as a result of political and economic instability, especially in the Middle East countries, was not only a matter of confrontation between developed Western states but also a cause for

serious political shifts that strengthened the far-right parties. Germany's unprecedented solidarity at the start of the refugee crisis and the opening of the German border for the reception of almost one million refugees in 2015 triggered serious internal conflicts and disputes (Hutton, 2015; Huggler, 2015; Leisegang, 2016). It is characteristic, that against the internal and external warnings and threats to finally limit the flow of refugees to Germany, Angela Merkel strongly resisted with the argument that

“I cannot define unilaterally limits. We in Germany cannot unilaterally determine simply who can come and who cannot come”

(Huggler, 2015; Leisegang, 2016).

At the same time, however, “open door” policy has created major problems for Europe. The most significant problem is that the far-right parties that have increased their negative rhetoric against immigrants have discovered a source of fear-spreading through which they strengthen their electoral influence (Martin, 2015).

In addition to the security issue, these parties raised fear for refugees in conjunction with mischievous images as tangible evidence that the ruling parties have lost control of the borders. If democratic leaders do not increase their intervention soon on this issue they may be replaced by “harsh” nationalists who will implement reactive policies along the lines of Hungary. Due to the dramatic situation at Europe's peripheral borders, the search for destitute victims of right-wing populists is an intensifying practice in everyday political life. As Heisbourg (2015) pointed out, the refugee crisis separates governments from voters, divides EU Member States and separates the EU from its founding principles. The defense and intimidation policy carried out, for instance, by the Orban government in Hungary, is severely condemned by almost everybody internationally, but it has a wide-ranging impact on the two-thirds of the Hungarians (Lendvai, 2015).

Certainly, Angela Merkel has received international recognition for the humanitarian spirit of her new refugee policy. In the public, however, the Chancellor's refugee policy is the main reason for the drastic fall of both her own popularity and her governmental coalition. The latest elections confirmed this trend with the rapid rise of the right-wing AfD, which signals the voters' negative attitude, not generally to the government, but specifically to immigration policy.

The refugee crisis has increased the influence of far-right parties that have focused their rhetoric against immigrants, believing that they have discovered a source of fear-spreading at this point, by which they strengthen their electoral influence. It is characteristic that Angela Merkel has received great international recognition for the humanitarian spirit of her new refugee policy, but has been punished, in a way, in recent elections in Germany. For the public opinion, the Chancellor's refugee policy is the main reason for the drastic fall of both his own popularity and his governmental coalition. The latest elections confirmed this trend with the rapid rise of the far-right AfD, which marks in general the voters' negative attitude not for the governmental policies but implicitly for immigration policy. EU's postponement strategy and the transfer of responsibility for the creation of conditions, competences and institutions that would allow the pursuit of a universal immigration policy not only leads to national isolation but also to the rapid rise of far-right populism. Far-right parties are constantly gaining ground by their anti-refugee rhetoric. The far right in France Front National (FN) with Marine Le Pen and the anti-European and anti-immigrant party in Germany AfD have recently reported alarming electoral successes by knocking the door to power (Schirmer, 2015).The far-right has now been established as a permanent element of the European political scene (Frey, 2015). However, as Nida-Rümelin (2017) notes, the public debate about the refugee crisis since September 2015, has been derailed along with the rise of chauvinistic, xenophobic attitudes, which means inter alia that far-right

populism has been fed to a large extent, by a policy of non-orientation, without delimitation and clarification.

2.5 The economic crisis

The international financial crisis of 2008 and the associated welfare crisis together with the growing inequality and the accumulation of excessive wealth in the hands of a international elite, have not been translated into a direct political assault on neoliberalism but on a hostile populism against foreigners (Crouch, 2016). For the far-right populists the defense of nation and ethnicity is now a rational response to the great dangers posed by the global economy which is ruled by a cosmopolitan elite, by migratory and refugee flows, and by Islamic terrorism (Crouch, 2016).

In a sense, therefore, some politicians manage the concept of national identity to produce nationalist, anti-political and anti-immigration feelings. Hence, almost all right-wing populists from Donald Trump in the United States to Geert Wilders in the Netherlands, Norbert Hofer in Austria, or AfD in Germany, link their attacks on immigrants with a war against national elites. Even the movements that initially criticized the elites without being hostile to foreigners have gradually realized that their charm and influence is growing rapidly when they expand their attacks on immigrants and refugees (Crouch, 2016). In this sense, as Crouch (2016) points out, the issue of national identity has encouraged criticism on the elite by creating a combination that is electorally and politically at times very cost-effective.

The economic crisis obviously boosted the extreme right across Europe. As recorded in all recent surveys, the great winner of the economic crisis is the far-right. An empirical research by Funke, Schularick, and Trebesch (2015) shows that over the last 140 years, the far-right parties on average have been strengthened by at least 30%. The researchers evaluated over 800 election procedures in 20 countries. The survey highlights the fact that in the economic collapse of the 1920s-1930s right and far-right parties have gained significant political ground in Germany, Italy, Belgium, Spain and Finland, and it is noted that similar effects seem to have been increased by the economic crisis of 2008, with a significant increase of the far-right in most countries since the start of the crisis and beyond. Funke, Schularick, and Trebesch (2015) also highlight the strengthening of the far-right after the onset of the economic crisis, noting that immediately after its outbreak, Front National and Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) in Germany has immediately increased their supporters. According to this research, economic crises seem to have significant effects on democracy since governments lose more than 4% of their power after crisis, incompatible political figures are gaining power in the next elections, while social outbursts and violent reactions are rising.

Almost all the empirical studies justify that, in general, the economic crisis has increased the insecurity of the middle socio-economic groups under the pressure of social upheaval. This can be translated politically as the growth of unsatisfied and politically unrelated people who tend to either abstain from voting or become protest voters. Those who have won this process are right-wing populists (Malone, 2014). Therefore, economic shocks are often accompanied by an extreme right shock that can last for a whole decade, especially if there is a continuous economic stagnation.

In an interesting study (Algan, Guriev, Papaioannou, Passar, 2017), the relationship of economic stagnation that produces unemployment with the rise of electoral preferences to the far-right appears to be evident. The study analyzes the relationship between voting for non-mainstream parties and the change in unemployment before and after the financial crisis of 2007-2009. The non-mainstream parties are classified into four categories:
- Far right (e.g. Golden Dawn in Greece)
- Extreme left (e.g. Syriza in Greece, Podemos in Spain)
- Populist (e.g. UKIP in the UK, the Five Star Movement in Italy)

- Euro-sceptic (e.g. UKIP in the UK, Jobbik in Hungary).

The outcomes show a strong link between increases in unemployment and voting populist parties. Algan, Guriev, Papaioannou and Passar (2017), demonstrates that one percentage point increase in unemployment is associated with a one percentage point increase in the populist vote. As the researchers indicate:

> "The effects are strongest in the South, but the relationship is also present in the East and the Centre; it is not significant in the North. Interestingly, in the South we observe a tight association between unemployment and voting for radical-left parties, while in the North unemployment correlates with voting for far-right and populist parties – a pattern that is also present in Eastern Europe, where people are turning their backs on communist and far-left parties and moving to xenophobic and anti-European parties"
>
> (Algan, Guriev,Papaioannou, Passarı, 2017)

The effects of unemployment and economic insecurity are also connected with political beliefs. The Authors illustrates that the increase in regional unemployment has resulted in a drastic reduction in confidence towards national and European political institutions (Algan, Guriev, Papaioannou, Passarı, 2017).

The study by Algan, Guriev, Papaioannou and Passari (2017) also shows that political mistrust resulting from unemployment is less directed towards institutions such as courts, police or the UN, and more in national and European leaderships. It is therefore expected that in the regions with the highest increase in unemployment, voters support populist formations in national and European elections. This trend explains to a certain extent, also the increase in the supply of populist rhetoric and policies expressed by new or old parties. As regards the impact of unemployment on citizens' beliefs about European integration Algan, Guriev, Papaioannou and Passari (2017) find that in southern Europe increases in unemployment are associated with stronger ambitions for deeper European integration, while in regions of northern and central Europe that were most affected by the crisis, they find a citizens' tendency to further pursue the European integration project.

Overall, the empirical researches show that the economic crisis has exacerbated insecurity of the middle socio-economic groups that feel the pressure of social dumping. This is translated politically into the growth of unsatisfied and politically unrelated subjects, which tend to either abstain from voting or choose protest votes. Those who have won this process are right-wing populists. More generally, the neoliberal restructuring of Europe has clearly led to an obvious turn towards the populist right. Moreover, populist parties as derivatives of social crises of adaptation and modernization, especially in times of rapid social change, exploit the emerging social divisions of societies into winners and losers in the sequence of these crises (Decker, 2004: 231). Because populist parties usually take their place in favor of the majority of the losers of the crisis, expressing their fears and concerns, the far-right populist parties have increased their power since 2000 and are increasingly emerging as a dominant political feature of the era (Painter, 2013: 7). The fact that also contributed was the stabilization policy promoted by Germany which was not linked to economic recovery, and this is reflected with increasing unemployment, which at the EU-25 average at the end of 2015 in countries such as Greece and Spain reached 24,6% and 21,4% respectively (Mammone, 2016). It is now clear that the vision of a competitive Europe through the fiscal constraint embraced by Germany is short-sighted because there is also a political and social dimension of the crisis which has now become bleak. (Müller, 2015).

Since 2008 the EU has encountered a crisis and the Heads of State and Prime Ministers of the countries are facing from one emergency situation to another. Though, the compromises that have been found so far to deal with the crisis are not yet convincing (Fischer, 2015). Indeed, it seems that a new

generation of politically irreproachable leaders leads Europe into a phase of dangerous and prolonged social and political instability with various effects that produce conflicts and tensions (Lavdas & Mavrozacharakis, 2015: 130). The crisis is particularly intensified in the social sphere and the division between member countries is intensified on the one hand due to the fatigue caused by the constant confrontations and conflicts and on the other hand, due to a lack of real visionary leadership. The insistence on cuts and competitiveness has aggravated the social problems that citizens face.

The fragmented consensus that legitimized the European venture, which was fueled by political outflows of the unification process, such as freedoms of movement and consumption, is now totally questioned. The Euro-crisis has divided the EU into creditor countries and borrowers with correspondingly independent interests. This division is clearly expressed in conflicts at the level of the European Council and is permeating all the institutions of the Community, such as the ECB. Since the beginning of the crisis, Germany has taken the position of principal creditor from a purely national point of view, since the main objective was the rescue of German banks (Rulf, 2015). Based on the above, it should be reasonably assumed that if there is indeed a revival of the regression to the national state, this would be the result of a wrong European policy to deal with the crisis. The tendency to re-nationalize European policy is also apparent from the publicly-staged conflict between state leaders. Instead of making a step towards a European federation of states, a complex system of mutual controls, rules and sanctions has been put in place, on the basis of which the States continue to make mutual criticisms and convictions (Müller, 2015). The dysfunctional European political structure creates constant divisions and no longer facilitates consensus in the absence of the necessary safeguards.

In order to emerge democratically from the crisis of legitimacy and confidence, the EU should block the risk of autonomy of the individual executive powers. Only when the European Parliament is able to control national governments as effectively as national parliaments do to national governments, is it possible to transfer at European level the sovereign right in the area of budget ratification (Winkler, 2014: 10).In conclusion, the policy which copes with the crisis has led the EU to a political radicalization that ultimately has as a consequence the strengthening of retrograde processes and self-dissolution trends, such as the strengthening of the national state.

3. The Extraordinary Greek Case and the Adaptability of Populism

In the Greek case, the paradox of relative homogeneity between left-wing politicians and extreme right-wing populism is presented in the sense that globalization, European integration, the EU and its institutions, the troika, Germany and so on, are identified as a common enemy, and as a common friend, the wealthy Greek people, Russia, the BRICS and anyone else supporting the country's disengagement from its debt commitments and contractual obligations. As Roubini notes, the far-right and far-left parties that are constantly rise their electoral power have common denominators in economic politics by expressing a model of illiberal state capitalism. Common denominators of the left and right populism for Roubini (2015) are an agenda against the EU, against free trade, against foreign direct investment and in favor of domestic workers and companies.

The hostility towards the market and the fear that globalization and liberal capitalism will erode ethnic identity and integrity characterize both SYRIZA and a whole series of far-right parties. As Katsoulis notes in an earlier analysis, "the return to the community values that is attempted, the invocation of tradition and the principles of Greek-Christian civilization, which 'neo-ordering' intellectuals interpret as a denial of modern conquests, call into question the parliamentary democracy and political mediation institutions, by rejecting

collectively and all professional politicians. The strengthening of 'anti-party sentiments' and the rejection of political parties as the main mediating institution between society and the state, dominate political speech and penetrate into the collective unconscious, helping to make the electorate vulnerable to populist rhetoric" (Katsoulis, 1999: 61-62).

Xenophobia, in combination with nationalism, is a constituent element of the political process in Greece and in one way or another prevents the possibility of mutual benefit through interaction and cooperation with other partner states (Pappas, 2015: 38). Xenophobia is distinguished by the preference for conspiratorial interpretations and a defensive recruitment of internationalization, while nationalism is distinguished by the emphasis on supremacy towards other nations due to ancient Greek heritage, Orthodox Christian tradition and the Greek language. In this context, the world is divided into philhellenes and mistresses, and the identification with other "unjust peoples" such as the Kurds, the Arabs, and the Cork Serbs, spreads (Papas: 2015, 38).

This overwhelming situation of the crisis as a synthesis of tough fiscal measures, existential phobia in the face of possible loss of social status, xenophobia, Europhobia, nationalism, has deliberately cultivated myths in the context of collective illusion and has created a political field that favored cooperation between the left and extreme right in Greece. The Greek case reflects to a very extreme extent, the tendency of adaptability which is inherently susceptible to extreme right-wing. The Greek case of cooperation between the left and the far-right both in oppositional phases and in the governmental period, is a clear model of adaptability of populism. In this case, this model combines the most opposing expectations, claims and assumptions, the rule of popular sovereignty and national independence, nationalism, xenophobia, Euro-skepticism and the feeling of national pride, together with the demand for social justice within the political framework of the Eurozone, which requires exactly the opposite, namely the relevance of national sovereignty for the sake of the supranational entity, as well as the priority of the financial stability in relation to social policy and redistribution policies.

Indeed, the Greek ideology of populism, even though it seems paradoxical, has made the impossible. In a "magical" way, the unrealistic populist devotees were transformed into a vector of political realism. The memorandum is considered now as an inevitable factor for the majority of citizens. Therefore, the SYRIZA party, along with the political propaganda it expressed, functioned as a political melting pot that created wider social consensus on the basis of the gradual acceptance of the austerity measures (Mavrozacharakis, Kotroyannos, Tzagkarakis, 2017).Instead of the social normalization and social liberation that promised the Greek ideology of populism in power, it has implemented a policy which has aggravated social problems and has created even more profound failures in social cohesion (Kotroyannos, Tzagkarakis, Mavrozacharakis, Kamekis, 2017: 61).

4. The Question of Democratic Response and the Necessity of Democratic Polarization

The rise of far-right populism would have not caused much concern if the pre-electoral speech, and often the political practices and the political discourse it expressed, did not fundamentally question the established constitutional regulatory framework and the overall law-order of Western societies. The phenomenon of "established legitimacy" and the "democratic legitimacy" (democratic constitution, democratically tested procedures, fundamental rights and values that protect the individual, the opposition and minorities, the recognition and citizens' trust in the institutional order) that characterizes the political systems of modern western societies are being questioned.

All the above, however, mean that the fight against extremism may last for decades and it is very likely that the inherent explosion of extremist groups and trends of any type, as they are present in Western

democracies, do not merely constitute a characteristic of the 2010-2017 period, but rather, they will be of great concern in the next generations as well. Therefore, a struggle for social justice and the reduction of inequalities may be the cornerstone of reconnecting people with democracy. In particular, democratic political regimes should engage in a race to re-convince young generations that their existence is strong and that they play an important role in society. If the democratic and progressive political forms fail in this respect, then the populist wave that is witnessed today all over the world constitutes the harbinger of worse situations.

It is precisely at this point that the political response of the dominant democratic political forces is required. It is undisputed that in a democratic society the overriding task of political parties is to address the legitimate interests of citizens. Therefore, the concept of Responsivity and its implementation will play a key role in the future legitimacy of policy. The challenge for established political parties towards populism does not only lie in the recognition of voices of the electorate and social aspirations but much more in a balanced political leadership open to listening to the society as a whole, while remaining prudent and placid with skills of political guidance.

As Habermas (2016) rightly points out, domestic politics towards populism by established political forces have been erroneous from their point of view and they have moved between flattery and confrontation. However, these ways of response according to Habermas are false because they empower the opponent, namely populism, by turning the attention on it. "The mistake of established political parties is that they recognize the front set by right-wing populism: we against the system" (Habermas, 2016: 38). The ground under the feet of right-wing populism can only be lost through the rejection of its subject. The political contradictions, as well as the difference between left-wing cosmopolitanism and the nationalist odor of right-wing criticism of globalization, should again be made clear (Habermas, 2016: 38-39). Habermas (2016: 37) proposes as a strategy to tackle populism what it defines as "dethematization", which is achieved through a shift to another subject, namely the dominant issue currently occupying Western societies. The crucial question for Habermas (2016: 37) is "how can we get the possibility of political intervention against the devastating forces of rampant capitalist globalization?". This question leads inevitably to a democratic polarization which lies in the redefinition of crisis on the part of the democratic forces instead of providing ground for the definition of the existing situation to the authoritarian and populist forces. In this context, it will require an acute controversy among established political parties about whether they will make a political effort to shape the globalized world or whether they will follow the neoliberal imperatives of state retention.

Concluding, for Habermas (2016: 35) "democracy and market economy shape the dynamics of social modernization, but they refer to functional axioms that tend to be in constant contradiction. Achieving a balanced participation of the people in high-growth economies was only possible thanks to the existence of a democratic state. (Nationalist reactions are now being strengthened by social strata that do not benefit from social prosperity or benefit very little". At this point, Habermas (2016) strongly criticizes the democratic and leftist powers for delivering the issues that determined their status in the populist right wing and refused to lead the decisive struggle against social inequality.

The necessity of democratic polarization, as viewed by Habermas, opens up a major channel of dialogue regarding the strategy of tackling the expansion of authoritarian populist tendencies. The conditions for a productive process of democratic polarization are not so bad indeed. The young generation, despite its mistrust towards politics and institutions, shows readiness to participate in political institutions. The survey by von Schwartz, Calmbach, Möller-Slawinski (2016: 22-25) shows that 9% of young Europeans have a positive experience of political engagement and 31% consider institutional political activity a new but interesting aspect. However, there are significant differences between countries. The readiness of active political

participation in organizations is stronger in Germany, with 44%, and weaker in Greece, with 13%.

5. Conclusion: For a New Aspiration of Democracy

A new aspiration to the idea of democracy should be given in this direction, and this can be derived from the very essence of the democratic idea. Democracy means equality. Equal participation in political decisions. The idea of equality again derives from the concept of freedom in the sense that anyone who participates equally in political decisions ensures equal freedom (Notter, 2012: 2). This is precisely why we accept political decisions even if our view belongs to the minority. We know that next time we will have the opportunity to be in the majority. But this presupposes various things: The circle of decision-makers cannot be arbitrarily narrow. If a relevant group is permanently excluded from participation, democracy loses its legitimacy. It is therefore necessary to safeguard the rights of individual freedom and to pose limits as far as private space is concerned. It is also imperative that there exists a space of political debate and confrontation and therefore the protection of open communication. It needs also free areas of research and knowledge generation - one ca not vote on the validity of scientific knowledge. (Notter, 2012:1). These presuppositions of democracy arise from the main democratic idea. They are not brought from the outside, but are inherent in democracy. But how can these conditions be ensured?

Democratic confrontation or polarization can give democratic freedoms a new impetus with a much more social identity since they will move around vital issues that willingness of a transformed society. Only then, according to Habermas (1998), can we "diagnose from the existing constitutions a reforming undertaking of the realization of a more just and properly structured society. This dynamic reading of the democratic process was followed by politicians of every shade in post-war Europe in order to form the social state. From the success of this so-called social-democratic venture, the plan of a society is inspired by similar forces, a society that has a political effect on itself in the midst of the will and conscience of its democratically united citizens"(Habermas: 1998: 7-8) .

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