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eDossier

July 2019



The Laughter of Medusa: The Left in Europe.

Seminar of transform! europe in July 2018

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ROSA LUXEMBURG STIFTUNG

IMPRINT

2019 

transform! european network for alternative thinking and political dialogue

Square de Meeûs 25
1000 Brussels, Belgium

transform! europe is partially financed through a subsidy from the European Parliament.

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Layout: sanja.at e.U.

Cover illustration: "The head of the Medusa" painting by Caravaggio, (1595–1598)

Introduction

Angelina Giannopoulou, Facilitator of the "European Integration and the Strategic Perspectives of the Radical Left" Programme

The annual strategic seminar of transform! and the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation aims to give space for left-wing analyses and policy proposals which can challenge the neoliberal doctrine. We always wish for debates on the most crucial issues of the European politics and the stance of the Left. The main goal of transform, as the political foundation related with the Party of the European Left and as network of more than 30 political foundation throughout Europe, is to bring the forces of the Left (political parties, political initiatives/campaigns, progressive trade unions and activists from the social movements) together in order to build a common space of dialogue and political resistance in Europe. We consider this step as fundamental for developing a radical strategy based on the interests of the European people.

Though it was not a common ground ten years ago, we all now share a common position: The European integration project was built on a very soft ground that resulted to a multi-level, multi-speed, financial and economical -not a political one- union where the peripheral economies are not an accident, but an essential part of such kind of development. In parallel, the Eurozone is everything but an optimum currency area because of the multiple speeds of productivity among the countries, but also because of the lack -the intentional lack- of a mechanism that can transfer capitals from the strongest economies to the less developed ones.

Ten years after the crisis' outbreak we are still not "back to normal". But what is this normality? Keynesian capitalism? Welfare state? collective bargaining? This used to be the normal for capitalist accumulation. Now it is over. The "normality" now is precariousness, flexibility, flexicurity, minimum wages that cannot cover even basic needs, commodification of common goods etc. Meanwhile this new normality has transformed the planet into a heating ball, politicians have no idea how to react to the refugees, we cannot even imagine what will happen some years from now with the climate refugees. The reflexive response would be, as it is now, authoritarianization, death deals with third countries, xenophobia and Machiavellian Realpolitik.

The left forces have so far failed. We failed to organize, mobilize and politicize the European people to fight back neoliberalism and its political representatives. We failed because we could not prevent the far right of becoming a hegemonic force and discourse that actually sets the agenda of the political debate and pushes the whole political spectrum towards its direction. We failed because we could not transform all those various and promising movements (anti-austerity movement, solidarity to the refugees, the ongoing feminist uprising etc) that rose during the crisis to a political subject that shares a common consciousness and a common strategic plan. Many political developments of the recent years left us puzzled. The "NO" vote in the Greek referendum in July 2015, the refugees' marches towards Europe, the terror attacks in various European capitals, the "Brexit" vote, the successes of the far right (the electoral and the parliamentary ones), the Catalunyan question, the formation of the German and, more recently, the Italian government and more. Meanwhile, the left in Europe is being restructured and new actors are emerging.

The "Ahora el pueblo!"/ "Maintenant le peuple" initiative of La France Insoumise, Podemos, Bloco de Esquerda, the Red-Green Alliance in Denmark, the Left Party in Sweden and the Left Forum of Finland, aims to form a paneuropean left front that will question the EU and its inner capacities of reform. On the other hand, Diem25 of Y.Varoufakis also presents a European platform for left - wing and progressive forces. It is still quite unclear how the Left is going to run for the forthcoming European Elections in May and how this mosaic of actors will look like the day after.

Though what has been described so far sounds pessimistic, being a leftist and a marxist means that history never ends. The left parties have a specific role and this is also a common ground among us. They aim to take power. To change the balance of class powers, hegemonise the political sphere and afterward to claim the power. We should therefore develop struggles and be engaged in struggles in every field where power is organized. This means the local level, the national, the regional and the European level as well. Consequently, there is no such field that is "unreformable", because power is a priori "reformable", a priori under

continuous transformations. As we move from one level to another, political struggles are getting harder and harder and more complex. Nevertheless, this conclusion does not result to the argument of the “unreformability”. If the Left claims to be an internationalist force, then it also assumes the asymmetrical level of struggles and resistance and the fact that indeed, some appear to be more privileged than others.

However we need to work more focused and step by step both in the political and the ideological level. We have to present a holistic alternative to the neoliberal order. Provide with a new definition of humanity, of social relations and we must present a new vision that can be understood, in which people can find themselves in it and embrace it so to fight for it. We cannot ensure that this seminar will give the “right answers”. What we want is pose at least the right questions. Where do we want to go? How? With whom? Why? Lets hope that we can at least seek for a small piece of the puzzle that answers to those questions, having in mind that the left wishes to be the political representation of the popular classes to their way towards the social emancipation.

This publication presents selected contributions from speakers that participated at the strategic seminar of transform!¹ and the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation “The laughter of the Medusa²: The Left in Europe” that took place in Vienna on the 9th to 11th of July 2018 alongside with the Summer University of the Party of the European Left. We consider the debates of this Seminar and its conclusions as a valuable material for the dialogue of the European Left, its parties and its activists throughout Europe and we do hope this dossier to be used as a theoretical tool towards a radical left European strategy.

February 2019

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- 1 The report of the Seminar can be found in our website, <https://www.transform-network.net/focus/overview/article/strategic-perspectives-of-the-european-left/the-laugh-of-the-medusa-the-left-in-europe-1>, as well as the full programme, <https://www.transform-network.net/calendar/event/the-laugh-of-the-medusa-the-left-in-europe/>.
 - 2 The title is inspired by the theoretical concept of Hélène Cixous and the titular book. We imagined drawing a parallel between Medusa – the woman (in Cixous thought) and the Left. Medusa in Cixous is a call to arms, a struggle to reclaim the subjectivity, the identity and the will of the woman. If we see Medusa as the Left in Europe, we could say that as Medusa has been used to symbolise the danger, as a deviation, the same way the left towards the EU could be seen as such. Then, the “laugh of the Medusa”, therefore this restoration, applies to what we are trying to do now. The left should reclaim its identity, vision and position inside the EU and write its own narrative.

The left and the question of power

Renato Soeiro, Bloco de Esquerda, former collaborator with GUE/NGL

In this particular time, I choose to focus on a *fundamental weakness*, not of the left narrative, but certainly of the content of our debates and our publications, a specific point that I think is too often missing or, at least, underestimated in our theoretical and critical work. Allow me to start by trackling the role of the Left, the great issue mentioned in the title of the Seminar organised by transform! and the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation.

Basically, the role of the Left is to change society. What do we precisely need to change society? To make it simple, we only need two things: ideas and power. Ideas on what do we wish to change, how, in which direction, with whom etc. And power in order to implement the ideas. A question arises after this conclusion. From these two things we need, which one is part of our weakness and which part of our strength? I do believe that everyone would easily argue that we lack in power and not ideas. We do have a lot of ideas for the social transformation. Books and volumes filled with excellent proposals, seminars, public debates and workshops on various topics.

It is profound that our ideas have to be further developed, fine tuned and constantly adapted to the new challeng-

es of a world that moves fast and creates always different needs for the people of each country. Therefore we have to admit that our ideas should improve, deepen and listen to the will of the people as well. However we should not abandon the impressive construction of ideas we have built through years. It is this construction that serves as our moving force towards the question of power. Nonetheless, how peculiar is the fact that this question is the one often ignored, absent of the agenda of most of our meetings, seminars and publications.

A series of questions that pop up:

- Why we don't have power ?
- How can we gain power?
- What's the next step after gaining power?
How do we exercise power?
- What leads us to lose power?
- How to act after losing power?

It's hard to say why the left never debates on the key issue of power. Nonetheless, we should try approach the reasons behind this reluctance and a glimpse upon the history of the left in power would be definitely fruitful.

MAPPING THE EXPERIENCES OF THE LEFT IN POWER

To make things easier, we shall limit the scope of our attention. I would suggest introducing three different types:

- **Geographically:** let's reduce the scope to Europe (we skip the obstacles of analysing power in Asia, Latin America, Africa, cases that nevertheless have strongly affected people's perception of the Left in Europe).
- **Chronologically:** let's reduce the scope to our century and particularly, these last 18 years (we skip the difficulties of dealing with all the crucial power experiences of real existing socialism, popular antifascist fronts, etc).
- **And politically:** let's reduce the scope to the Left, to our Left, the political space around the Party of the European Left, GUE/NGL, transform! and friends.

So, what happened in Europe, in the last 18 years with the left parties, regarding the exercise of power?

It may be methodologically useful to introduce here yet another partition: A distinction between the experiences of the Left as a leading force and the experiences of the Left as junior partner in governments or governmental coalitions.

Indubitably, apart from these two conditions, we shall not exclude from our reflections the state of powers where the left exists as an opposition. Namely, the collective power of the social resistance, the trade unions, the influential power of social movements and citizens' initiatives, but also the power of the vote in parliaments (national, local or European). The last Socialist Portuguese government, the one that later called the Troika and signed the Memorandum, fell down in 2011 by a vote in Parliament rejecting its Stability and Growth Program, a vote where the Bloco de Esquerda participated with a decisive influence.

However we are now focusing on all these cases where the left was close to the power. As junior partners in government, we have had a variety of situations, in many different countries and regions, from the North of Ireland to Catalonia, from Finland to Italy or Berlin. The cases are abundant in quantity and diverse in quality.

All of them have been objective of analysis and debate in the countries concerned. Many times the debates were intense like the one I witnessed during the congress of Rifondazione Comunista right after the defeat that followed the participation in Prodi's government. This Italian case had

such an impact that it surely grabbed attention in many meetings and debates of the Left in Europe.

Still, the majority of our governmental experiences as junior partners have not really had the necessary scrutiny at European level, we didn't share thoroughly our experiences in this crucial issue, learning the precious lessons that only real situations of acting while in power can bring.

Moving now to cases where our Left has been leading force in governments, which are quite few:

MOLDOVA

The century started with a stunning victory of the Communist Party of the Republic of Moldova, winning 71 of the 101 seats of Moldovan Parliament, with 50,1% of the votes, forming a government and electing also the President of Republic. After some years of right wing domination, this was a surprise for most European observers and analysts. In 2005 the CPRM won again the elections with absolute majority (46% and 56 seats out of 101).

In April 2009, the Communist party wins another absolute majority with 49,5% of the votes and 60 seats. Months later, in July 2009, a new election brings another victory for the Communists, with 44,7% and 48 seats, loosing the absolute majority which allowed the opposition to unite and form a government. In 2010, PCRM wins again, with 39% and 42

seats, but far from the absolute majority. This is the longest period of consecutive victories and the highest electoral scores of all Left parties in Europe in the particular period we are examining. The CPRM is a full and active member of EL and of our Left parliamentary group in PACE³. For the first time in XXI century our Left won elections and ruled a country in Europe. This experience has been, for sure, very rich in lessons on how to conquer power, how to use power and also how and why we may lose it. During and after this experience, many debates developed and many books and articles were circulated trying to analyse and explain the Moldovan Left experiment, the very first European Left government in the XXI century Why and how they won election after election? What their government has achieved for the benefit of the people? Why did they later lose support?

CYPRUS

In 2008, while we were still keeping our good electoral results in Moldova, we saw another victory with the election of Dimitris Christofias, general secretary of AKEL, as President of the Republic and head of government in Cyprus. Now it was happening inside the European Union. Enormous expectations were raised by the presence of an experienced communist leader inside the meetings of the European Council, where the future of EU is supposedly designed and

decided. Namely -taking into consideration that some decisions are to be taken by unanimous vote- giving AKEL⁴ a *de facto* right of veto to all key political decisions of the Union that they would consider as negative for people's interest, makes an important exercise of left power. Christofias's presidency lasted five years. Adding to this, during this period, Christofias government had the rotating presidency of the Council of the EU for six months, with a reinforced role in

³ Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

⁴ AKEL – Progressive Party of The Working People, the communist party in Cyprus.

agenda setting and the conduction of the daily work of EU. Now European citizens would be finally able to appreciate the difference that makes to choose the Left, instead of the Right or the Centre. What has been the extent and profoundness of the debates and analyses promoted by the Party of

the European Left, the GUE/NGL or Transform! about this period Cyprus? Where have we concluded regarding the influence of this particular government both to Cypriots and EU citizens?

GREECE

In 2015, the victory of Syriza, brought the European left to the third historic governmental experience of the period we are analysing.

The Greek situation has been the object of huge and controversial debates in Europe, long before Syriza came to power. It was only natural that it would continue to be so even after their victory.

The international impact of the Greek case is enormous, much more than the Cypriot case and the Moldovan before it.

It has been presented to the people (both by the leftists and our enemies) as an example of what a Left party would do when reaches power in a member-state of the European Union and namely, in a member-state facing great economic difficulties and all kind of pressures and blackmails.

The actions and decisions of the EU and the Troika against Greece have been contested everywhere, all mainstream media included. The counter-reactions of the Greek government and the Greek people were also part of the controversies.

But what about our own debate? Did it match the importance of what was at stake for us? The importance most certainly couldn't be higher. The entire world was watching Syriza and Alexis.

For the first time, our Left was at the eye of the hurricane and great expectations were hidden behind every single move in Athens. What was happening there would affect enormously the future of us all in Europe.

One real risk was that Greece could be swallowed by a catastrophic turmoil of misery and violence (with Gold-

en Dawn⁵ and infiltrated police involved, this could have looked pretty ugly). If it had happened, I think it would have jeopardised any chance of success of all other Left parties in Europe for decades, because we would have all be facing the argument that voting for the left equals with the very same Greek-style chaos, misery and violence to our own countries. It's good that it didn't happen.

But what happened instead has also been quite problematic for us. Since we were so closely linked to Syriza, the right wing parties downgraded our critique against them saying "Why do you criticize us for obeying the Troika and applying the Memorandum, if this is exactly what your good friends of Syriza are doing?"

The immediate consequence was the strengthening of the "there is no alternative" doctrine. This apparent absence of a political alternative had a huge negative impact on people's state of mind and the willingness to fight back austerity measures. The importance of this situation required a deeper and more open, detailed and outspoken political debate among us all.

Once again, when the question is about power, and power of our own people, we have a rather diplomatic if not timorous approach. In other cases, we also split. Either we mix up fraternity and solidarity with hypocritical diplomacy and submissive silence, or we handle political differences with sectarian warfare.

⁵ The far-right, neofascist party in Greece, with parliamentary representation and 7% of the votes.

CONCLUSION

I am quite confident we can detect, in all cases where we have the left related to power, a certain pattern of hardship in dealing with it openly, analysing the phenomenon in a lucid and critical way. On the grounds that, although power is, or must be, a key question for any left militant or organisation, we strangely avoid debating. Especially when it actually happens, which is the moment when it has to be debated more intensely and with more accuracy. We are internationalists. However, we do not intend at all to interfere in the sovereign decisions of our parties when they are ruling their countries. But any left power, any left government anywhere, has a strong influence in the popular perception of the left parties everywhere.

We are all affected (in a positive or in a negative way) by the concrete measures taken by any left party when it conquers power.

We know that being in the government is not exactly the same as having the ultimate power to govern. Mostly in the cases when we are junior partners in ruling coalitions, it can even weaken us, if we don't have power enough to implement our policies or block others' decisions we disagree with, because, at the end of the day, we will be seen as responsible or co-responsible for all measures taken, even if we are not at all identified with them. Every particular governmental experience by any of our parties, must be seen as a case-study by all of our parties in Europe. Why have we been avoiding the debate about power in general, but especially, about the concrete experiences of power of our own parties of the Left?

Perhaps we still carry upon our shoulders an old poisoned mix of fear and uncritical reverence towards power, mostly when that power is held by our own comrades. Wasn't this the case with the governments of the former socialist countries, even when things started going terribly wrong? Or today, with China but also towards our friends of the left governments in Latin America and the Caribbean, when they express attitudes we would never accept in our own countries? The same applies in various African governments as well, resulting from anticolonial liberation wars that we all supported with militant determination, but that later slowly became a bunch of corrupt kleptocrats.

Perhaps we still have the feeling that any critique, made during these always difficult moments when we govern a country, could sound like a betrayal in times of war. So, we forgive or on the other hand, we forget everything.

If it is so, is very problematic. It means that is time to make a revolution in our minds. Always dare to ask for the concrete results while the left in government, those moments when we are effectively trying to change society.

Sometimes, the exercise of power, instead of changing society, could have the effect of changing us instead. Changing us towards a worst direction, rather than changing society for better. It would not be the first time in history.

I'm concluding by insisting on the proposal that we should start dedicating "half" of our time on our debates and "half" of the space in our publications to the question of power. If you have the ideas -good ideas- then "all you need is power; power; power is all you need".

The governmental experience in Greece: lessons we could learn

Danae Koltsida, General Counsel of the General Secretary of the Ministry of Interior and member of the Central Committee of SYRIZA

This particular article does not aim to a comprehensive presentation of the SYRIZA's governmental period – it would be impossible anyway – but I will refer to some points deriving from our experience, that I think can be of wider interest for everyone in the Left.

My first point, as one can imagine, is about Europe. There is no doubt that the case of Greece and the management of the Greek crisis has been a very clear example of how the EU and the Eurozone operates economically and political-ly – something that has been many times criticised by the European Left.

It is now clear that as long as the political unification of Europe remains incomplete, in crucial decisions we keep coming back to the traditional balance of power between individual states.

What is the solution then?

I could argue that the solution is not, of course, to leave the EU. However, what we have learnt is the following: As long as the efforts of a gradual political change remain in the European periphery and do not reach the heart of Europe and, above all, its French and German pillar, the Left will always be confronted with the same difficulties encountered by SYRIZA.

Despite the hopes and the collective optimism that the path of SYRIZA towards power created, despite the touching – symbolic *and* substantial – support of the entire European Left, the fact remains that at the crucial EU Summit exactly three years ago, where the so-called “coup” against the will of the Greek people took place, Alexis Tsipras found himself alone, confronted with one, more or less solid, neoliberal front. And this remained largely the situation all those years – despite some positive developments in some European countries.

So, instead of adhering to the anti-EU debate, what we need is to propose a different architecture and functioning, to safeguard the unity of the forces of the Left and change the balance of forces within the European Parliament and, most of all, to strengthen the Left in each country.

Moving to the second point that is absolutely relevant to the first: The European Social Democracy is at a crossroads, having to choose between two main strategies: Either to identify itself with the neoliberal – sometimes even the conservative – right or to shift towards its social roots and its political tradition and form an alliance with the Left.

This is a dilemma that the Left cannot just watch passively, since it also has direct consequences for us.

Tracing the Greek experience as an example would be fruitful. You all know that the Greek Social Democratic Party, PASOK, is the first and main example of allying with the Right. Irrespective of the consequences this choice had for the electoral impact and the political identity of PASOK, the well known “pasokification”, it also had important consequences for the Left.

Not having allies in “neighboring” political spaces, either the communist party – KKE, or PASOK, SYRIZA has been governing for the last three and a half years with ANELL, a small party of the Right, on the basis of an anti-memorandum and anti-corruption political agreement.

It is clear, however, that this alliance has a limited perspective. I must though admit that so far it has worked effectively, but not without consequences and not without constantly being questioned. We have seen this clearly in a series of progressive laws in the field of rights. And we are still experiencing it, with particular tension, with regard to the agreement with Northern Macedonia – an agreement that solves a long-standing diplomatic problem in the region, restoring good neighbourly relations in the Balkans, and that has been globally recognised as a model in resolving national identity disputes.

Under normal circumstances, however, it is the parties of Social Democracy and, of course, those belonging to the tradition of Political Ecology, that are in fact the natural ally of the Left. So it is only logical that the formation of progressive alliances with them should be at the epicentre of our efforts in Europe and in our countries. What is critical is what political program will be to the basis of these alli-

ances. What we want is for the Social Democrats to come towards the Left. Not the Left to transform into a renewed Social Democracy.

The third point I wish to tackle is with regards to the political content of such an alliance. We all know that these alliances are not built in abstract, but on the basis of concrete initiatives that will have a clear progressive mark, gaining support from the social basis of the socialists and, thus, putting pressure on the respective parties to support them as well.

In Greece, we have a number of positive experiences about this: Important laws in the field of rights (such as the ones on the civil union for homosexual couples, the recognition of gender identity, the adoption of children from gay couples etc.), big reforms of political institutions (such as the proportional electoral system at national, regional and local level or the introduction of participatory processes in the municipalities and the regions), but also initiatives in the social field (such as measures to halt the humanitarian crisis, minimum guaranteed income, measures for the protection of labour rights etc.), that put pressure on Social Democracy.

Even in cases as the agreement with Northern Macedonia, where the leadership of PASOK insisted on the nationalistic line, the clear progressive mark of this initiative resulted in a heated internal debate that questioned the choice of the leadership.

Therefore, it is only by taking up initiatives – both in the movement and in the institutions – across the spectrum of the so-called “progressive” agenda, that we can effectively intervene in the strategic dilemmas of Social Democracy and prepare the basis for a social and political alliance.

Coming more to the internal issues, by the time it rose to power in January 2015, SYRIZA had grown electorally, but basically, it remained the same party that had been in previous years – a small party with limited organisational means.

And this is not just about the small number or the lack of administrative and governmental experience of most of its members and executives. Above all, this is related to the lack of a strong presence and of deep roots in social organisations and institutions of collective representation

outside the parliament, such as in particular trade unions and local and regional authorities.

Just to give an example. While in the European Elections of May 2014, SYRIZA got 27% of the vote – exactly the same percentage it got in the 2012 national elections – in the regional elections that took place on the same day as the European elections, SYRIZA got only 18% of the vote – that is nearly half of its share of the vote eight months later in the national elections in January 2015. And of course, it won only 2 of the 13 regions and about 20 of the 325 municipalities.

The support SYRIZA and the government found in crucial moments was weak. A very characteristic example of this was during the outbreak of refugee flows to Greece, when some Mayors – not the majority, luckily – not only didn't help to address the basic needs of these people but, on the contrary, they found an opportunity to oppose the government by stimulating the most xenophobic instincts of their local societies.

What we learned from the Greek experience confirmed that gaining the government is not and will never be enough. We cannot keep going without grassroots movements and social institutions on our side.

An other critical issue is the state and the public administration and certainly not as a theoretical debate about the role and the relative autonomy of the state in relation to class struggle. We must be more concrete, based on the experience in Greece, in order to highlight some aspects of what could be an alternative model of governance of the modern European Left.

Apart from its long-standing pathologies – mainly petty corruption and lack of meritocracy, especially in the upper ranks – the Greek public administration has been the target of the neoliberal assault since 2010, with severe results to its ability to work effectively and to its personnel.

Most certainly, because of the political choices of previous governments, the public administration had become accustomed to a clientelistic logic and to a function dominated by the ruling party, as the career path of a civil servant was significantly dependent on his or her affiliation with one or the other governing party.

As one can imagine, the Greek public administration – despite the fact that SYRIZA recorded high electoral rates among civil servants – was an unknown territory and, usually, not particularly friendly to the new government, at least in the beginning.

Within this framework, the SYRIZA government has made great efforts at many levels:

- Firstly, in order to support the functioning of public services and their employees, it took measures such as the gradual restoration of the pace of renewal of human resources, the democratisation of disciplinary law, which was used as a mechanism for redundancies etc.
- Secondly, it supported and upgraded the inspecting bodies, so that they can function effectively and independently, combating real cases of corruption, instead of collectively targeting and defaming civil servants, as was usually the case before.
- Thirdly, it promoted substantial reforms, which are planned and implemented together with the employees, instead of overpaid assignments to private actors.
- Fourthly, and above all, we tried and, to a certain extent, we managed to change in general the perception and the way of functioning of the administration.

We have adopted a very different way of working. Collective, with no exclusions or preferential treatment of employees according to party preferences, with open doors to everyone's problems and proposals.

In a nutshell, it took effort – and of course, there is still a long way to go – but at least according to the concrete experiences, a different, open, collective, democratic functioning of public services, that only a left government can adopt, is the only effective way to overcome bureaucracy and set in motion the existent creative forces of people, even in difficult times.

Since the beginning of its government, SYRIZA has tried – and to a certain extent succeeded – in stopping the economic and especially the social catastrophe. From the first law we voted to address the humanitarian crisis, to the access of all those not covered by social insurance – about 2 million people – to free health care, school meals, de-escalation of unemployment from the huge rate of 28%, social guaranteed income, reforms in education and health, very few would doubt this effort.

However, now fiscal indexes seem to go better and – with all the questions and the objections that have been raised and are, to a certain extent, understandable – in less than two months, the last memorandum program will be over and Greece will return to being a relatively “normal” country again.

Clearly, this doesn't mean that austerity and all the negative measures that were taken will magically disappear. However, starting this autumn, we will have, as it is usually said by the Greek government, “more degrees of freedom”. This means that our obligations now only concern the achievement of concrete results and not the ways in which they will be delivered.

So, Greece leaving an eight-year exception regime and recovering much of its sovereignty, in the most fundamentally political sense of the term, I would argue that – in a way – a new era is now opening for the Left as well. For many years, we have all described with great success the causes and effects of the crisis. We have identified and highlighted the social injustices and the devastating results of the austerity policies. We have also tried – to a greater or lesser extent – to mobilise the working class of our countries and to prevent even worse developments, to stop the destruction, to limit the losses.

But to date, not only in the countries where we are in the opposition but to a large extent in Greece too, we mainly do damage control. I think it is time – and this is perhaps the biggest “lesson” we can draw from our own experience – to move on to the implementation of our own positive alternative proposal at local, national and European level.

In the immediate future in Greece, after the end of the program, major initiatives will be launched:

- At the institutional level, we are starting with the reform of the Local Government and wider and deeper institutional reforms will follow, as part of the Constitution Amendment process that will start in autumn.
- At the social level, the expansiveness of collective bargaining and the restoration of other basic principles of collective labour law that had been abolished by previous governments, have already been passed by the Parliament and will enter into force by the end of August. In the same critical field, the fight against undeclared work, as well as the protection of basic labour rights, which are being more easily violated due to high un-

employment, continues and intensifies. And, of course, within 2018 we start the necessary initiatives to raise the minimum wage, which – in combination with all the above – will result in an overall improvement in the standard of living of the citizens.

- Finally, at an economic level, both this year and the next few years, we are going to use the fiscal space created by the achievement of the agreed objectives, either to abolish unfavourable measures, for example by reducing tax burdens, or to implement positive income policies. At the same time, we have worked on an overall development plan, the details of which were for the first time decided in cooperation with local communities. This project focuses on small and medium entrepreneurship, supports workers' rights and forms a long-term sustainable strategy for the Greek economy.

The restoration of regularity and, above all, the formation of a collective positive vision, in a society that was filled with guilt, insecurity, anger, frustration and despair for more than eight years, is more important than one could imagine.

There is a whole generation of Greeks that found itself growing up in the core of the 10 years crisis and austerity, and thus faced only defeat, without personal dreams and without collective visions.

Our biggest duty is to build with our societies a positive collective vision, which will be worthwhile to fight for and which they will be able to win. This is the answer not only to the neo-liberal Europe, but also against the extremely conservative, closed, phobic Europe that is currently emerging.

For Greece the attempt of a left-wing government in the middle of an unprecedented crisis and within the architecture of the European Union and the Eurozone will definitely mark the historical period we live in. Whether it will prove to be positive or negative at the macro historical level is something we do not know yet, and it will take time before we can judge it. After all, the whole history of the Left and of mankind itself proceeds through the pattern of continuous attempts that proved wrong, until the moment of the right choice is attained.

In any case, we cannot overlook where we started and where we stand today. We can now plan our political strategy from a much better position.

Labour at the heart of our struggles: The Greek experience

Giorgos Chondros, Department of European Affairs of SYRIZA

This is an extremely timely debate considering the transitions and changes taking place in the global level combined with the challenges faced by the workplaces and the trade unions.

We should start with an observation. By choosing to talk about Greece we need to bear in mind that we talk about a country trying to find “the way to a normality”. At the same time, we would also like to emphasize that by saying “normality”, we do not mean a return to the same status and model that we had before 2008 and 2009. We believe that this model is responsible for the big crisis we have been experiencing accompanied with enormous social sacrifices we still try to overcome.

The very concept of transitions accepts as a prerequisite a structured situation which needs to be re-adjusted in order to respond to the new challenges. And more specifically, by discussing the future of the labour, the question formed is, how should the institutional protection systems of labour and the syndicates be adapted in order to respond to the new challenges, so that they could be effective in their role.

However, we do believe that if we take a step back we will find that core labour protection institutions, fixed labour protection data have been shaken vigorously, if not completely dismantled. We are referring on the rapid deregulation experienced mostly by national labour protection systems over the last two decades, for two main reasons:

Firstly, because of the growing economic integration in Europe, which has not been accompanied by parallel mechanisms for the harmonisation of social systems, the latter have been failing in their attempts not to hamper economic integration. Secondly, because of the great economic and financial crisis that broke out in Europe in 2008 and the recipe that has been applied mainly to the countries most infected by this crisis, the southern countries. The recipe of internal devaluation, which is neither new nor foregone, is the core of the neoliberal model: a recipe requiring that competitiveness’s deficit that characterizes the economies infected the most should be addressed through internal depreciation (monetary union in the case of the Eurozone

does not exist as an option). This results to the reduction of the labour cost, which should be achieved not only through the reduction of wages but also through the general restriction of workers’ rights since they are perceived as factors that increase a company’s operation cost. That was briefly the recipe also applied in Greece, where -during 2010-2014- fundamental elements of the national system of labour protection were dismantled through a series of measures.

Therefore, when we are discussing about the changes and challenges faced by the labour forces, we must also focus on the past, the things that have been deregulated and the need for their restoration.

Another question comes up after the necessity of restoration. Is such institutional restoration enough to deal effectively with the challenges that have a negative impact on the labour? The answer is clearly no.

Restoration, although necessary, is certainly not sufficient for the progressive political forces to face the growing challenges. And that for two reasons mainly. The first one has already been implied and is no other than European economic integration. Even by restoring crucial institutions, we will again not be able to respond to the growing challenge posed by the free movement of capital in the European level. The restoration of collective bargaining in Greece – although necessary – cannot respond to the challenge raised with regards to the labour rights by the integrated market. I think that the case of workers’ exploitation in the framework of the free provision services in the EU has demonstrated in the most characteristic way the failure of national labour protection systems to respond to the challenges posed by economic integration. The second reason is that, while the concept of restoration of labour security institutions and bodies can be extremely important for some workers, for others it may mean absolutely nothing. That is because the latter have never experienced this protective framework that has now been broken down or suspended. We are referring to the self-employed, the undeclared workers, the migrant workers, the workers in precarious forms of labour.

Therefore we need to start debating in a more visionary way. Consequently, we need to proceed with even more courage to revolutionary interventions in favor of those who have no voice, young people, precarious workers, migrants, to promote radical reforms that -based on the right to work- will give voice to the invisible and all social rights will receive content. It is this kind of interventions, which will create and cause actual breaks, and free our thinking from the limitations of the present.

This need for radical interventions concerns both progressive political forces and, above all, trade unions.

A few thoughts upon the trade unions, the movements and the political forces, especially of the Left, concerning their response to the challenges posed by European economic integration. Downstream competition in working conditions has shaped a new reality on the field of industrial relations. In parallel, profound inter-dependencies of the labour and the capital are obviously not overturned.

What seems to be lacking today in the trade unions' plan is a reconstructive strategy that will turn them into a powerful opponent of the globalized capital. And such a plan cannot remain influenced by strategies and practices developed during the industrial age that have apparently been overcome. The main inertia is that syndicates' operating mechanisms remain trapped in the border of the nation state while they are forced to cope with an opponent who is beyond the scope of their actions.

Today, the rival of the capital pushes the labor forces to organise themselves beyond the national level. Labour's internationalism has to move from the level of symbolism, a motto to which it has been moving so far, into the phase of determination and activation. What's the purpose? What are the requests? The upwards harmonisation of levels of labour protection and upwards convergence of wages. That is why the debate on the upward convergence of wages in Europe is, in my opinion, of the utmost importance. In the same direction, it is of primary importance that syndicates integrate in their agenda issues of labour protection with a genuine transnational character, such as the workers' extortion. Such initiatives are important because they prevent the perpetu-

ation of a culture of national protectionism that is not only foreign to European traditions, but it also proves totally ineffective against the ever-increasing social dumping. In the same direction, we should seek to strengthen at EU level the role of social competitors in defining the rules governing industrial relations, and to this point we refer to nothing more than conducting collective bargaining and binding CLA's (Collective Labor Agreements) at EU level.

So, we must act in a way both thoughtful and bold, reflecting on what the workers have been fighting during the past decades, and the welfare state, which today is unjustifiably deregulated, but also think in a visionary way, one that will not mix up prescriptions, will not make repetitions in history, but will experience new responses, creative responses to challenges. If the crisis has given us any lesson, is that we have come to a new world, and our approach to labour protection cannot be static but constantly transforming itself into the social dynamics that are shaping up in Europe. If we accept this fact, it is therefore our responsibility not to defend the past unprejudiced but to think creatively about the future.

As we mentioned before, it was not a new recipe but a fierce and time-saving implementation of the neoliberal ideology that economic growth should be achieved based on labour crush. Of course, this position often embraces a social mantle. There were times when we heard -during the negotiations of the fiscal adjustment program in Greece- the representatives of the IMF demanding the elimination of basic protective institutions of labour in the name of the defense of the unemployed, on the basis of a truly unstable argument that the less protective and organised a system of labour protection is and the lower the wages, the easier it will be for the unemployed to find a job (or as the delegates of the IMF said, the "outsiders" of the labor market to become "insiders"). A perception that proved not only socially damaging but also economically ineffective. The case of Greece is the most characteristic one: The unemployment rose to the nightmarish 28%, creating a whole generation of working poor, and the risk of poverty and material deprivation of a large part of the population took the dimensions of a humanitarian crisis.

In August 2018, the third Memorandum program, the third loan, is ending.⁶ This does not mean that the country will

6 The contribution was presented in June 2018, two months before the completion of the third Memorandum programme of Greece with its creditors.

automatically come out of the crisis. But it will be able to apply its own policies in the economic field and will gradually recover.

In our opinion, the truly difficult period for SYRIZA and the government is actually starting now. We are not just talking about politics in the post-Memorandum times. We are talking about the need for a total reconstruction of the country. The implementation of a new productive model that will shield the country and society from crises like the one we have experienced but will also ensure a sustainable future.

The success of this plan will mainly depend on whether we can initially make real measurable steps towards the creation of new stable jobs with full labour rights.

In conclusion, a simple and at the same time common observation. The Greek government and SYRIZA are planning and envisioning, proposing and trying to implement their plan. Nevertheless, the necessary correlation and the political alliances in Europe are not only deficient, but they also become more and more unfavorable every day.

We must do everything we can to change it.

The EU trade and investment policy: A European political struggle of the people

Lucía Bárcena from Ecologistas en Acción which is a grassroots organization focused on social ecology. One of the working areas is specific about trade and investment.

Ecologistas en Acción is part of the Spanish and European campaigns on trade and investment agreements which are present in more than 2000 cities with organizations from civil society, political parties, trade unions, and professional sectors.

Until now we have been focusing on the transatlantic trade agreement (TTIP) and the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA). We made TTIP a political issue, a campaign agenda. After many protests, actions and advocacy work we have **managed many advances**. CETA still needs to be ratified by many national parliaments; the ISDS system is severely damaged, politically and legally.

In spite of all the efforts, this year the EU has announced nine new trade agreements that compromise a number of different countries: JAPAN, MERCOSUR, MEXICO, SINGAPORE, NEW ZEALAND, VIETNAM, AUSTRALIA.

When we talk about the EU trade and investment policy we talk about how **governments are legislating against their own interest** and their people. With a strong influence of transnational companies in this agenda.

Transnational companies are building their own rules in the trade regime and protecting their own interest while most governments are giving them special privileges by signing more and more trade agreements.

We can observe 3 tendencies with the new wave of FTAs:

We see how we are rapidly moving from a multilateral system (WTO) to a system of mega treaties among regions with many rules and provisions:

1. New generation of trade agreements: there is more emphasis not only on the rules of access to market or tariffs (between borders) but on what happens inside the borders (within the countries), those regulations that are a barrier for trade to flow for big corporations. This is managed by the so-called **regulatory coopera-**

tion and what it does is to change our rules, our way of policy making at national level and also European level. It allows corporations to have at a very incipient moment of law making special access to lobby. The objective is to make trade flow easier but in reality it is the **deregulatory agenda**, which is extremely dangerous for public policy or for environment protection, labour protection, etc. Corporate interests are clearly not our interests. Regulatory cooperation is a **straight jacket** for governments, it ties them to the laws of the corporations and it gives away their sovereignty. **We need to expose the real deregulatory nature of them.**

2. An increase of **trade in services**. Not only in TiSA (the trade in services agreement) but also in many of the other agreements, there are specific chapters on services. *Services* mean almost everything that is needed to deliver a product (telecommunication services, finance, computer, IT, postal mail). We are also talking about public services. In fact there is a strong link with liberalization of services and the investment agenda. As a private investor you would want to liberalize public services (and services in general) in order to invest/buy/privatize them. The liberalization of state monopolies has been going on since the 60s and continues in those places where there still are (transport, postal mail, telephone) and is now affecting sectors that are highly regulated: taxis (uber), hotels (airbnb).
3. **The Investment regime**: to facilitate investment is the main tendency of the treaties. Increase investment means (in a way) convincing governments to allow private investment in economic activities that are not subject of profit and thus allowing private investment can be detrimental (in environment, labour, public health). This is why the liberalization of trade in services and the investment agenda are extremely linked to each other. The investment regime includes giving special privileges for investors (for example through the Investment State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) or the Investment Court System (ICS) or any new proposal of the EC that is based on giving special privileges to investors). It is

an unfair (asymmetric) system; it gives lots of privileges for investors and little for the people. There are recent struggles to end this system with some successes. Ecuador has terminated the BITs containing ISDS clauses; Indonesia and India are also revising. The ISDS system in all its forms is badly damaged politically and legally. In the EU the German Court of Justice is still evaluating it by the European Court of Justice and. Also, a series of court cases (ECJ Opinion 2/15 on EU-Singapore and ECJ Achmea v. Slovak Republic case) were also serious blows. The first one ensures that any agreement containing ISDS will have to be ratified by all national parliaments, greatly increasing our chances of preventing an expansion of the system. The second is likely to bring

an end to already existing intra-EU bilateral investment treaties, and possibly to seriously lower the impact of the infamous Energy Charter Treaty.

Meanwhile, new shocking cases keep on raining on Member States, providing new stories to strengthen national and European opposition of policy makers and citizens to ISDS. Worldwide, civil society and some governments are challenging the system, including in major agreements like NAFTA. Spain has 36 cases of ISDS, which are billions of euros for taxpayers. This is all enough to set an alarm among people and policy makers, and it is urgent that we take the lead on it.

We need to bury ISDS in all its forms for good.

A FEW PROPOSALS ON HOW TO WORK TOGETHER (BUILDING BLOCKS)

The European movement coordinates on a regular basis with calls and face-to-face meetings. Resources are shared among campaigns; including reports, info graphics, articles, social media work. Training of trainers on specific topics and also to lobby our MPs and MEPs. Coordinated actions are also organized.

The campaign also includes political parties (Left and greens, in some cases social democrats). As allies we need to walk hand in hand. This is about defending very basic sovereignty principles, of the people, of the national parliaments, of the regional parliaments, of local authorities. At this moment all the EU member states are giving their OK to continue with the **EU-Japan agreement**, one of the biggest agreements in terms of trade flow, once approved, the European Parliament will be only asked for a Yes/No vote with no debates in the countries because it is considered a not mixed EU only agreement, and so the national parliaments will not be asked to ratify.

The GUE organized a debate in the European Parliament, highly appreciated. But it needs to be more work done together with social movements, building bridges. There is a need to work better and coordinate communication and social actions between movements and elective representatives in both level European and national ones. It has to be the Left who leads the trade battle. We cannot hand in our debate to the right wing. We cannot let Trump lead the trade battle.

The European left has been very positive on our same trade agenda but when they are near power their position becomes less strong. We are still waiting for the Greek government to take the lead in the fight against trade agreements.

The European left should also work more closely **with unions** (and particularly public sector trade unions- that have been very active in most countries) to build a progressive bloc. In those countries where this has happened unions/ the left/ other civil society [Spain, France...] not only the left is reinforced but also the social democratic parties take a more leftwing turn. When divisions do not allow this joint fronts the result is poorest. In countries where the radical left is electorally small this is even more evident.

There are some strong social movements starting in countries that need specific support, resources, capacity building and the European left should help those movements that are starting.

The GUE has 51 MEPs of 751 and we almost won CETA. The GUE has been the only group we could count with on a certain consistency on their votes. So yes, we need GUE MEPs to lead this trade battle even more now.

Finally, there is a need of an **alternative trade policy**. Situations like the EU-Ecuador or the Mercosur agreement call for a real discussion within the left for what alternatives.

We can oppose TTIP, CETA and TISA but we eventually need something like a positive agenda for the left.

It is important that you (GUE/transform!) open a debate based on your historic experience on what is the way forward.

In what ways is the discussion on commons' transition useful for the left and the question of social emancipation?

Theodora Kotsaka, Dr. Political Sociology, Independent Researcher

1. INTRODUCTION

The article elaborates on two main arguments. Applied commons policies have been fragmented and operate almost exclusively in small scale. In order to escalate, the appropriate institutional and law framework is presupposed and that need can not be answered without taking seriously the role of the state as a regulator. Left is the crucial political actor in that effort. Up to now the discourse about commons have mainly be defensive, like supporting public services and right to land or water amongst several others. It is time to enrich that narrative by the confidence that commons analysis 'is the one that goes with the flow', as it takes seriously the change of the production model into the framework of intense knowledge economy and digitalization.

Structural changes have as a result that today economic value is mainly produced through immaterial goods such as research, knowledge, information etc. An evolution with serious implications for capitalism. Commons theory claims that for those types of goods features such as openness and P2P modes of production, are essential in order for them to flourish. It is that parameter that makes it possible for commons analysis to contribute to answers -from a social emancipator perspective- that deal with technology, IT, big data, biotechnology etc. Those issues are at the core of our time and we need do admit that Left is facing them with a particular puzzlement.

Some definitions are necessary since people often define commons by whatever each one considers as a 'good thing or idea' according to personal perceptions. Also a misunderstanding arise very often between operational tools of commons economy like social economy or P2P modes of production, considering them as identical. Especially in the

Left a certain confusion between commons and public is also very often.

Definitions⁷:

- **Commons** are a shared resource which is co-governed by its user community, according to the rules and norms of that community (the protocol of resource stewardship). The category includes gifts of nature (water, land etc), but also shared assets or creative work (language, information, culture artifacts etc).
- **P2P** – peer to peer, people to people, person to person- a relational dynamic through which peers freely collaborate to create value in the form of shared resources, circulated in the form of commons. P2P expresses an observable pattern of relations between humans.

Inclusive by nature, commons as applied policies can enable grassroots political participation and contribute to society empowerment and emancipation, which is the most important political deliverable in the process of commons transition.

Where are we in terms of commons transition?

Commons transition is not a promised paradise. Is a process based on some values that under the given situation and balance of power, is possible to deliver emancipator results as societies make steps towards it⁸. It is also possible to renew Lefts narrative in a way that is desperately needed. At the current moment in western wold main examples of such a process are to be found in municipal level. Cities and peripheries like Ghent, Bologna, Amsterdam, Barcelona, Naples, Montreal, Lille, Madrid and Bristol are creating spaces/institutions/structures for citizens to manage mat-

7 The P2P Foundation, *Commons Transition and P2P: A primer*, Transnational Institute, 2017.

8 For fearther reading: <http://commonstransition.org/>.

ters that most directly concern them⁹. They are increasing transparency, enabling participatory budgeting, facilitating the creation of social care co-ops, turning empty lots into community gardens, co-creating skill and tool sharing programs etc. All the above has been known under the term of 'New Municipalism'¹⁰. A movement of citizen-led municipal coalitions that has delivered very good results in electoral and political terms.

As already mentioned, commons have a problem in escalating. They are more comfortably operating in small scale. That is the reason that we can easily find examples in local level but when moving to national one, things become harder¹¹. There is an interesting experience from Greece concerning applied commons policies in governmental level. In 2015 a board was created at the Ministry of Coordination with the task to research, define and enforce the most appropriate applied commons policies in different

sectors. Soon, it became evident that even when all the administrative obstacles were faced and there was the political will to enforce a policy of that kind, the problems were to be found at the institutional framework that was unable to adjust. For example there were cases that a free license for hardware was needed, and even though GPL was covering the software, for hardware there were nothing. Seeking for the appropriate lawyers to work on the issue a second realization arose. Lawyers get educated in preserving and creating new enclosures and not in protecting commons. They are educated to 'close' for the interest of private profit, not to 'open' for society profit.

The importance of the state as a regulator regarding productive transformation towards commons is at the core of the whole process. The commons transition plan is mainly referring to the Partner State model and the construction of the respective Legal and Institutional Framework¹².

2. THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A PREVAILING ROLE FOR COMMONS ECONOMY DUE TO THE CHANGE OF THE PRODUCTION MODEL

It is important to keep in mind that there are two kind of commons: material like land and water and immaterial like knowledge or digital common goods. Analytically we cannot treat them with the same tools. There are fundamental differences that have to do with their nature. One, very indicative example: for material common goods is clear that when one person uses them, the other cannot. If I drink one glass of water the use is exclusive and another person cannot drink it. On the contrary, for immaterial commons it works on a reverse process. The biggest the number of people that use a language, the more reach and important it becomes. The use of one doesn't exclude another. On the contrary it is presupposed. The more people use digital commons as Wikipedia or Linux, the most important they become. And the value they produce is responding to the

number of people that are using them at one time.

That difference is of extreme importance, not only in order to define a convincing strategy for promoting commons transition, but also in order to understand the changes that are occurring in the production model and consequently to the value production process.

There are two ways, two different strategies in order to construct a commons narrative which is necessary for communicating our argument not only to the public in general, but also with opinion leaders, policy makers, politicians, bureaucrats, regulators etc. That networking is presupposed in order to manage to have applied policies and an institutional framework that will enable commons economy.

9 L. Calafati & N. Mcinroy, Local government and the commons: The time has come, Progressive Economic for People and Place (PELS), November 2017. <https://cles.org.uk/blog/local-government-the-commons-the-time-has-come/>.

10 V. Rubio-Pueyo, *Municipalism in Spain: From Barcelona to Madrid, and Beyond*, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung: New York Office, December 2017.

11 The FLOK project at Equador as an example at national level: <http://flokociety.org/2014/06/18/2601/>.
<http://flokociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Press-Release-Final.pdf>.

12 On Partner State: http://wiki.p2pfoundation.net/Partner_State.

One line of thought in commons literature is emphasizing the fact that humanity was practicing commoning since its birth. In the matter fact its very existence has to do with the managing of resources as a common good. Fishery, water, forests, land were managed for ages by rules that were taking under consideration environmental protection and preservation for future generations. Those rules were inseparable from traditions, myths and culture of each community. Protection of welfare state, managing of taxation for the public interest and not for the multinationals' profit, research on the ways that public services and resources can be managed as a common good, all that are part of a discussion of extreme importance in commons theory.

However, the argument here is that this part of the discussion -taken its fundamental importance for granted- has mainly a defensive character that can be crucially enriched if we add or stress (it depends on which is our goal in each case) a more dynamic parameter, that shows that it is commons analysis that 'goes with the flow'.

Capitalism got born into feudalism¹³. It was a long term process of production model change that took more than hundred years. Technological and social evolution changed also the process of value accumulation. The commons narrative comes today to stress that something similar is happening the last decades into the framework of capitalist economy. Technological and economic evolutions occurring, have as a result a new system of value production mainly related to knowledge and information¹⁴. During last years we arrived for first time in human history at the point that sectors of economy that has to do with immaterial goods -mainly technology, big data, information, science, culture even emotions etc- became more productive for the economy, compared to sectors that are dealing with material goods.

This new system under construction is possible to acquire two different forms. That of cognitive capitalism that will renew itself on the base of new enclosures, making profit from collective intelligence and giving nothing back to society, or the one of intense knowledge economy that under

the appropriate institutional arrangements will contribute to a society emancipation process.

An important advantage is that whereas commons transition goes with the flow, capitalism is restricted by its structural contradictions. The point is that in order for knowledge and information -under their features as immaterial goods- to maximize value production, there are some important presuppositions. Knowledge and information needs to be open and to circulate freely in order to produce maximum results, having the most brains possible involved. On the contrary capitalism by its nature, needs constantly new enclosures in order to maintain itself. Knowledge and information enclosures reduce the amount of value that can be produced and are bad for the economy, even if you are a capitalist. At the same time, commons and P2P economy are a synonym of openness as one of their fundamental presuppositions. P2P modes of production are best adjusted to this type of economy evolving, they maximize the benefits of networks amongst peers and enable openness and circulation at their maximum. Commons economy is going with the flow and that is an argument that a bureaucrat or a policy maker gets obliged to accept when presented effectively.

Ethics and values are a strong point in commons discussion, but in political terms this cannot be the leading operating tool. People cannot be persuaded to accept commoners values based only on their moral advantage. That reminds early Christians or religious practices in general. Continuing to stress the moral argument is not enough. At the same time we need to stress that at this historical moment capitalism is bad for value production, which means bad for markets. If that argument gets communicated effectively there is the opportunity for starting having applied policies that will respect parts of the market from capitalism. The reason that it is important to convince a broader group, is that commons and P2P economy need a broad consensus and political alliances in order to start escalating, after one decade of discussing 'What is the commons?' and practicing in small scales and communities.

13 E.J. Hobsbawm, Introduction to Karl Marx, Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations (New York: International Publishers, 1964), 20-27.
G.A. Cohen, History, Labour, and Freedom (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 3.

14 Y. Benkler, The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom, (Yale University Press, 2007).

Having escalation as a strategic target we need commons oriented applied policies, we need licenses protecting commons like GPL¹⁵, we need cooperative banks¹⁶, we need Public Commons Partnerships (PCP)¹⁷, we need a partner state approach. In order to be able to enforce that type of applied policies political alliances and the necessary political hegemony are presupposed. Is that type of argument which takes under consideration the change of production model that proved to be precious in that effort.

It is certainly encouraging that the above mentioned are present to the per-electoral campaign of Mr Corbyn's New Labour¹⁸ and it is even more encouraging that commons, P2P and cooperative economy applied policies are heard loudly in the public sphere of a country that religiously followed Ms Thatcher's TINA dogma for decades.

Furthermore, the argument on the efficiency of commons oriented policies¹⁹ into the framework of intense knowledge economy becomes even more obvious when we arrive to labor. Capitalism is facing another serious contradiction on that sector. For example, 'be creative' has been one of the slogans in use from big corporations that are involved with knowledge, information, design, research, software and other immaterial goods. However, creativity is not something that a worker or employee can force his

or herself to do. It is not a matter of discipline. You cannot force yourself to be creative in order to pay your bills because it simply doesn't work that way. Commons economy and P2P modes of production on the other hand, answer effectively to that type of contradiction.

Obviously, fordist model with its clear divisions between labor and non labor time doesn't adjust into the framework of intense knowledge and information economy²⁰. An employer simply cannot measure effective and not effective labor time because creativity doesn't fit to that type of measurement. Personal and professional spheres are interrelated, as identities do, at their most during human history. Effective labor time is not possible to get measured and the most productive idea may cross cognitive workers mind during brushing his/hers teeth. Or the most important networking that will escalate an investment, may happen during a music festival.

Technology of information blurred the need for the type of labor as we know it, in order to produce value²¹. It blurred the dynamics between labor and wages. And the state of things is so blur that the coming wave of robotisation is delayed because current social infrastructures can not stand the consequences.

15 <https://www.gnu.org/licenses/licenses.html>.

16 For example: <https://bankofthecommons.coop/coopshares/>.

17 An applied example of Public Commons Partnership (PCP) is the port of Capri: <http://labgov.city/thecommonspost/the-port-of-capri-public-private-commons-partnership/>. More on Public Commons Partnerships: http://wiki.p2pfoundation.net/Public-Commons_Partnership.

18 For example: https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/corbynstays/pages/329/attachments/original/1472552058/Digital_Democracy.pdf?1472552058.

19 P2P modes of production, cooperative economy, openness etc are also subjects of that category.

20 Francesca Bria, Theoretical Framework on future knowledge based economy, D-CENT. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281600183_Theoretical_Framework_on_future_knowledge-based_economy
Carlo Vercellone, Francesca Bria, Andrea Fumagalli, Eleonora Gentilucci, Alfonso Giuliani, Giorgio Griziotti, Pierluigi Vattimo, Managing the commons in the knowledge economy, D-CENT.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281600183_Theoretical_Framework_on_future_knowledge-based_economy.

21 Inticative for the new dynamics in labour: Trebor Scholz, Platform Cooperatives: Challenging the corporate sharing economy, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, New York Office, January 2016.

3. OPENESS AND ENCLOSURES IN INTENSE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

Trying to describe some of the key features of intense knowledge economy and its relation to the new historical model of value production we arrive to open source, open data, open design, open culture movements. There is to be found this new vision that was decisive for the rebirth of commons discussion during last years, related to digital commons of design, of knowledge, of software, of culture. There are Wikipedia, Linux and myriads free/open source projects, like 3D printing, highlighting the emergence of technological capabilities that reshape economic and consequently social environment, as the principle 'design global – manufacture local'²².

However 'openness'/P2P/commons cannot protect themselves alone from corporate greed. For example IBM turned to Linux, private giant companies use Android but they don't give nothing in return to the community. Bottom up innovation is vitally linked to new institutions and new rights. In human history, communities had to defend again and again their rights on land, natural resources, crafts, language, culture etc. Today, we need an equivalent for science and information, a new principle against new enclosures. In the lack of the appropriate legal framework and institutional stewardship the more open data are, the more it works in favor of the big players in the market.

Through the technological changes of last decades we have arrived to a production model that is delivering maximum of profit through research and innovation, mainly in industries such as software, biotechnology or artificial intelligence. What is new is that in the case that production and management of knowledge, research, information etc are controlled by private actors we arrive to a typical market failure due to the enclosures effect. Private sector makes decisions on investments having a short term ho-

rizon, driven from short term profit expectations. Knowledge production and research planning are too crucial for our societies and cannot be left to private speculation. State must intervene mainly by financing and organizing fundamental research. It is a presupposition that research results -in order to escalate and to produce profit- should be free, open and treated as a common good. Following that argument we arrive to a certain division of labor between private and public. Private sector should be linked to applied research in large laboratories of large managerial enterprises, whereas public sector should take care about fundamental research and secure that the basic knowledge of humanity is treated as a common good.

An example of commons oriented applied policy is the Open Educational Resources (OER)²³. Researchers, teachers, professors, institutions share their knowledge and educational material by putting them under Creative Commons license and being available in an open and functional Public Reserve free for people to reuse, revise, remix, and redistribute.

That kind of policies is possible to reduce the harm of the monopoly derived from intellectual property and patent systems. Information economy erodes markets ability to balance prices since markets are based on insufficiencies whereas information are abundant. The defense mechanism of capitalism is to create monopolies -the giant high tech multinationals- at a scale that has never happened the last 200 years. Which is more, there is the idea of the positive externalities of globalization that brings system balance as a counterpart of negatives, an idea similar to the 'invisible hand' that balances market. Open knowledge circulation is considered one of the most important amongst those. However, if knowledge get captured as it happens

22 Vasilis Kostakis, Vasilis Niaros, George Dafermos, Michel Bauwens, Design global, manufacture local: Exploring the contours of an emerging productive model, Futures vol. 73, October 2015, p. 126-135. Several examples can be found at: Sustainable models for shared culture: Case studies and policy issues by CONSERVAS/Xnet, Barchelona Stichting Kennisland, Amsderdam World-Information Institute, Vienna National Hellenic Research Foundation/ National Documentation Centre (NHRF/EKT) Athens.

23 In the following map it is possible to find the OER's in different countries <https://oerworldmap.org/resource/>. What is an OER? https://wiki.creativecommons.org/wiki/What_is_OER%3F. In 2018 a legislation from the Greek Ministry Education passed in order not only to facilitate OER's but also to give motivations to researchers and teachers to contribute to it. According to the legislation projects in the fields of education, research, culture and technology should have as a deliverable also OER's.

through patents and intellectual rights in cognitive capitalism for short-term private profit, then we arrive to a value production reduce and the system is forced to unbalance.

During the 80's -also an effect of new liberal era- the distinction between basic research (discovery) and applied research (invention) stopped being applied. That meant that algorithms, human genome, plants seeds, GMO's etc became subjects of patentability. The road was open for the market to privatise not only knowledge but also something living (biopiracy). In order to defend our societies from private sector, commons movement should be reinforced by certain institutional arrangements. The social outcome of research and innovation, depends on the intellectual property rights system and the legal framework of research. Developments -especially in areas as biotechnology, big data or IT – can lead to an emancipatory path for society or to a collective nightmare. Both paths are there, waiting in the future. As data shows there is a strong argument on the ex-

treme importance of EU's policies on that area since Europe generates more scientific output than any other region in the world. **Europe is the leading economy in terms of public investment in science, research and innovation and even though its population is only 7%** of the world population, 20% of global R&D and 1/3 of all high-quality scientific publications comes from Europe²⁴.

If we want to avoid the future that cognitive capitalism is leading as to, we need to focus at the respective institutional framework. At this point policies towards commoning can be proved very useful²⁵. Like general public licenses²⁶ as GPL or Creative Commons. Public – Commons Partnerships instead of the overused Public – Private Partnerships that has been applied even for public goods like water or health, causing indefensible damage to societies. A general Partner State approach and strategy and appropriate legal forms of common ownership and stewardship are new emancipatory tools that Left can have in its tool-kit.

4. WHAT POLITICAL STRATEGY FOR COMMONS TRANSITION?

At the same time there is a spontaneous augmentation of cooperative economy and P2P production. A dynamic grass rooted activity is taking place that comes as a reaction from society to austerity, especially in southern Europe. It is not a product of policy enforcement by some political power or party and it certainly seems as an opportunity for the Left that already is supporting some of those efforts at grass root level.

Almost unnoticed from capitalist economy's logistics, several fragments of economic life starting moving under a different structure creating a net: parallel currencies, time banks, carpools, local exchange systems, food cooperatives, cooperatives and self-organised spaces with a variety of uses as selforganised kindergartens, are multiplied every day without being noticed by the economists and ac-

countants. In most cases -as happened in Greece- they are the result of the collapse of the previous structure that crisis cause. In most cases people, are practicing commoning, solidarity economy or P2P without even knowing it. For official economics all the above mentioned hardly fit in the category of 'economic activity'. And that is a crucial point. Those practices exist because they manage to answer specific social problems in times of need. They are functional because they operate according to contemporary structures and values that in commons and P2P economy are fundamental such as, openness, free time, sustainability, networked activity or sharing of resources (stuff and services) etc. Which is more, the idea of shifting the focus of the struggle from ownership -the corner stone of capitalism and the legislature environment on which it is based- to management. Commons movements put the emphasis on

24 https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/support-policy-making/support-national-research-and-innovation-policy-making/srip-report_en#sripreport2018overviewandfindings.

25 It is indicative that in Greece is the Industrial Property Organisation that prepared and proposed to the Ministry of Finance a legislation that is going to come soon in the parliament concerning: i. compulsory licence, for reasons of public interest (f.e. health), ii. registry of open patents, iii. technology pools.

26 <https://www.gnu.org/licenses/gpl.html>.

the right to use and the right to access to a resource, not to its ownership.

New forms of ownership, new forms of lending, new types of legal contracts: a new entrepreneurial subculture has been created during the last 10 years, but we are still at the point of trying to describe it by terms such as 'commons' or 'P2P production'. The important question is 'in what ways is capitalism going to be affected by these evolutions'. In a system that needs constant expansion in order to maintain itself the removal of economy sectors signifies an ominous perspective. Wikipedia for example, deprived 3 billions out of advertising industry. It can be an alternative, but only if those small scale structures are going to be nourished, fostered and protected as a part of a political plan and official applied policies. And that presuppose a radical change in our mind set about technology, ownership and labour.

Early examples of the partner state approach can be found in some urban practices such as the 'Bologna Regulation'²⁷ for care and regeneration of the Urban Commons' or the Barcelona en Comu citizen platform²⁸. The Bologna Regulation is based on a change in the Italian Constitution allowing engaged citizens to claim urban resources as commons and to declare an interest in their care and management. After an evaluation procedure, an 'accord' is signed with the municipality specifying how the city will support the initiative with an appropriate mix of resources and specifying a joint 'public-commons' management. In Bologna itself dozens of projects have been carried out and more than 140 other Italian cities have followed. The key is the reversal of logic: the citizenry initiates and proposes, the city enables and supports.

As new liberalism through last decades had constructed a formalised institutional structure (IMF, World Bank, WTO etc) and a legal framework that supports it, we need to construct our own institutions that will support the commons

paradigm in order to escalate and be protected from capitalist enclosures. The creation of local institutions that will protect commons oriented enterprises and make possible for the people working on them to have a decent living can be crucial²⁹. Institutions like a Chamber of Commons that will manage open licenses -like PPL or copy sol- and support P2P and cooperative economy. It will protect and reinforce openness in the same way that capitalist institutions support private. It will provide the institutional chance for those that are involved in social economy, for public administrators, policy implementors and entrepreneurs to exchange ideas and propose reinforcing policies. Assemblies of Commons bringing together, in local and national level, citizens and commoners that maintain common goods can also be very useful. A Commons oriented Entrepreneurial Association, an international association that will connect the existing commons-oriented enterprises, in order to share expertise and raise a common voice³⁰.

Global and local coalitions between political parties (Left, Greens, Social democrats, Pirate Parties on the paradigm of Progressive Caucus in European Parliament) that have included commons in their agenda can formulate a Commons Discussion Agenda that is necessary for coordination. In any case it seems that in the agenda of issues that are more fertile in terms of political alliances, commons could be classified at the top of the list. Besides political parties are the eligible agent to fight at the parliaments -the assigned legislative authority- for the necessary legislation adjustments in constitutional level and in private law, like legal forms of commons ownership. All the above mentioned are interrelated to administrative participatory mechanisms that also can -and should be- institutionally enforced, like participatory legislation or participatory budgeting..

27 <http://www.labgov.it/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/Bologna-Regulation-on-collaboration-between-citizens-and-the-city-for-the-cure-and-regeneration-of-urban-commons1.pdf>.

28 <https://barcelonaencomu.cat/sites/default/files/win-the-city-guide.pdf>.

29 Labour as a common is a tricky point. The lack of the respective institutional framework can function as a trap for the working people.

30 The institutions mentioned are described at the: Transnational Institute (TNI) & P2P Foundation, Commons transition and P2P: A primer, March 2017, p. 42-43.

The rise of the Polish illiberal democracy – actors, impacts and resistance

Liliana Religa, Communications and Promotions Coordinator in the Federation for Women and Family Planning in Poland

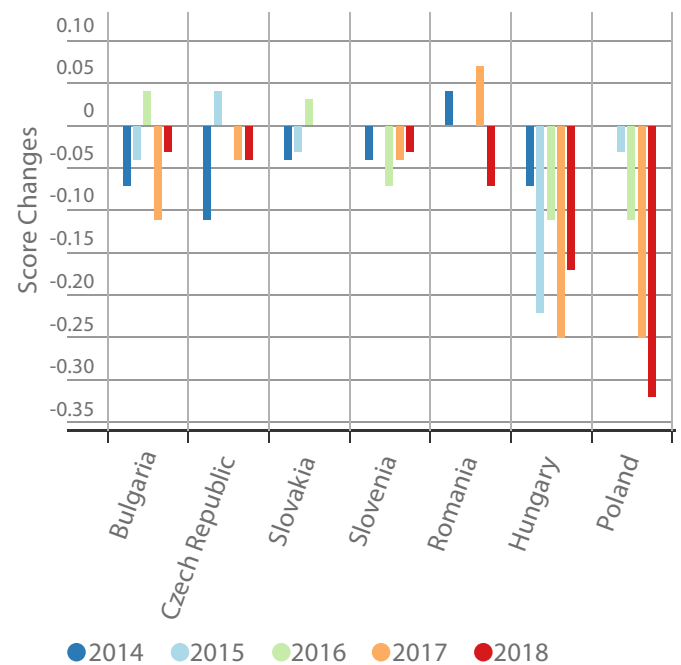
“Three years since November 2015 have brought the greatest number of challenges and threats to human rights and freedoms of the entire post-1989 period”³¹, The Helsinki Committee in Poland stated. Due to the constitutional crisis and general erosion of the rule of law, basic freedoms have been undermined and the civic space is narrowed³².

In such environment the far right groups and their allies were able to thrive and become more successful and visible in the public sphere than ever.

How did it happen? The Law and Justice enjoyed great electoral success³³ thanks to the **narrative** which was reiterated by conservative, affiliated media, the Church, and the religious groups. The party with its supporters declared itself on a **mission to fight the erosion of patriotic and Christian values in Poland**. Their narrative prioritized values such as national sovereignty, social justice (in populist, anti-elitist terms), and traditional, patriarchal family. It fueled **social polarization** (creating opposition: the small elite who benefit from the democratic transition vs. the deprived majority), **antisemitism and xenophobia** (no refugees, no migrants, Polishness equated with being Catholic, heterosexual, conservative), and **historic resentment** (requests for post-war reparations from Germany; demanding more autonomy in the EU). The fusion of religious conservatism and Polish nationalism has been exploited by far-right movements, who **entered the Parliament**. I mean here a few MPs from the National Movement, MPs in the more conservative wing of the Law and Justice, and the anti-establishment, Eurosceptic, anti-refugee party Kukiz'15. Although, the ruling party's official line is far gentler than that of extremist groups, they have much in

common. Many antidemocratic steps the party have taken fulfil the agenda of the far right.

Democracy Score Changes in Central and Eastern Europe 2014-2018



Graphic from the report “Nations in Transit 2018”
nationsintransit.org

How did the Law and Justice move towards illiberal democracy?

1. The first victim were the **civil service and media**, where the electoral winners purged the staff. The public media have been formally renamed “national media” and transformed into government propaganda mouth-

31 The introduced legal changes were “a systemic systematic construction of an “assembly line,” designed to legislatively limit the sphere of individual freedoms and simultaneous preparation of the ground for increased arbitrary and non-transparent executive authority unchecked by effective judicial control”. www.hfhr.pl/wp-content/.../stanowisko_komitet-helsinki-w-polsce_15022018.pdf.

32 According to the CIVICUS Report on State of Civil Society 2017; <https://www.civicus.org/index.php/state-of-civil-society-report-2017>.

33 The good result is attributable to the following factors: anger and frustration caused by the rule of the Civic Platform; big absence among eligible voter (49%); support of the Episcopate and priests during holy masses.

pieces strengthening the ultraconservatives. Poland dropped in the World Press Freedom Index from place 18 in 2015 down to 58 to 2018³⁴, out of 180 countries.

2. Next they adopted laws affecting the entire **justice system**, so that the executive and legislative branches could politically interfere in its composition, powers, and functioning^{35,36}. The decision makers attempted to justify the reform by a state-sponsored smear campaign against the judiciary with false accusations of corruption, nepotism, incompetence.
3. **Abolishing the separation of powers came hand in hand with reducing the power of local administrators** (inland waterways economy, construction inspection, control over regional operational programmes involving European funds). The Law and Justice tends to bypass the executive branch and parliamentary control by fast-tracking legislation via Private Members Bills, which do not require consultations.
4. Liberal **NGOs and watchdogs** have been experiencing barriers in functioning and smear campaigns. State media present NGO activities sponsored by George Soros as trying to “create societies without nationality and religion”. In public calls for proposals ministries favor nationalist or Catholic organizations despite lacking experience or capabilities. Public money for NGOs will be distributed by the government-controlled National Institute of Freedom.
5. All of these moves caused shrinking spaces for **civil society**, rising incidence of criminalization of peaceful protests, arbitrary deprivations of liberty, violations of fair treatment, occasional intimidation and surveillance³⁷. Every second intervention involved unjustified use of violence. Politicians in this term are notorious for homophobic, misogynistic, and Islamophobic hate speech. Hate crimes against Muslims, Jews and Roma have grown by 200% 2013- 2017³⁸.
6. Ultraconservatives aim at **controlling women** by depriving them of their autonomy, rights, and forcing to play the traditional roles as mothers and caretakers. Abortion is permitted in three instances only³⁹, still it is hardly accessible and the far right has been lobbying for

34 <https://rsf.org/en/poland>.

35 Recommendations:

- Amend the Supreme Court law, not apply a lowered retirement age to current judges, remove the discretionary power of the President to prolong the mandate of Supreme Court judges, and remove the extraordinary appeal procedure, which includes a power to reopen final judgments taken years earlier;
- Amend the law on the National Council for the Judiciary, to not terminate the mandate of judges-members, and ensure that the new appointment regime continues to guarantee the election of judges-members by their peers;
- Amend or withdraw the law on Ordinary Courts Organisation, in particular to remove the new retirement regime for judges including the discretionary powers of the Minister of Justice to prolong the mandate of judges and to appoint and dismiss presidents of courts;
- Restore the independence and legitimacy of the Constitutional Tribunal, by ensuring that its judges, President and Vice-President are lawfully elected and by ensuring that all its judgements are published and fully implemented;
- Refrain from actions and public statements which could further undermine the legitimacy of the judiciary.

36 The new Polish law on the Supreme Court lowers the retirement age of Supreme Court judges from 70 to 65, which undermines the principle of judicial independence, including the irremovability of judges. Thereby Poland fails to fulfil its obligations under Article 19(1) of the Treaty on European Union read in connection with Article 47 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. “MEPs already stated in a resolution adopted in November 2017 that the situation in Poland represents a clear risk of a serious breach of the European values, including the rule of law. In December 2017, the Commission decided to start the procedure under Article 7. On 1 March, MEPs urged the EU Council to undertake swift action in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty.” <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/eu-affairs/20180222STO98434/rule-of-law-concerns-in-poland-how-the-article-7-procedure-would-work>.

37 https://oko.press/images/2017/10/Polska_Demonstracje-w-obronie-praw-cz%C5%82owieka.pdf <https://amnesty.org.pl/moculicy-w-obronie-wolnosci-pokojowych-zgromadzen-w-polsce-%e2%80%afnajnowszy-raport-amnesty-international/>.

38 <http://wyborcza.pl/7,75398,22861475,coraz-wiecej-przestepstw-z-nienawisci-prokuratura-krajowa-opublikowala.html>.

39 1) The pregnancy poses a threat to the life or health of the pregnant woman,
 2) Prenatal examinations or other medical conditions indicate that there is a high probability of a severe and irreversible fetal defect or incurable illness that threatens the fetus's life,
 3) There are reasons to suspect that the pregnancy is a result of an unlawful act.

banning abortion in case of foetal impairment. Abuses of conscience clause, more and more common, even in drug stores, remain unpunished and disregarded. As part of **family mainstreaming** politicians introduced a condition that laws must be evaluated in terms of their **impact on the family**. Their goal is to fossilize traditional gender roles and discriminate against other forms of relations. Since the ultraconservative actors reject the **gender perspective and the notion of gender-based domestic violence**, they downgrade the scope of sexual violence and harassment denying funds for combating violence against women. In a sharply regressive move, the Polish government announced its intention to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention.



Police officers carrying a peaceful protester. Photo: John-Bob & Sophieart

ACTORS

Church

Far-right groups are seeking to exploit the historical connection between religion and nationalism, espousing common causes with the Church such as opposition to women's reproductive rights and emancipation, gender, LGBT rights, other cultures. Both powers support the Law and Justice and benefit from their rule.

- The case of abortion represents the power of the Church as a key political actor. It was the Church which pushed for limiting access to abortion just after the democratic transition as a reward for its achievements in the struggle with the Communism. Then prior to the Poland's accession to the EU the social-democratic government promised not to liberalize the anti-abortion law in return for the bishops' support for the accession referendum. The Church has always been involved in gathering signatures under civic bills that would restrict abortion and it keeps appealing to MPs to vote for the ban.
- the Church and church-affiliated institutions **lobby intensively to keep laws compliant with their agenda** – no euthanasia; no evidence-based sexuality education; no IVF; no same-sex marriages or partnerships. The current government is unprecedentedly responsive to their requests in return for massive support of the Bishops, especially before elections.
- The far-right welcomed and propagated the Church-led **war on gender**, which was waged to demonize gender



Poster by Iza Dudzik for the Black Protest in March 2018, 23.

as a threat to Polish religious and cultural values. This nationwide campaign targeted at the Istanbul Con-

vention has **hindered gender-equality education and laws on combating gender-based violence.**

- Some Catholic elites in Poland are openly critical of the Pope's reformist agenda and reluctant to accept Muslim migrants. Bishops' call for humanitarian corridors and helping refugees came very late and in a moderate form. The hard-line nationalist wing of the church has got out of control, e.g. influential media empire owned by ultra-conservative priest Rydzyk airs anti-Semitic, homophobic and Islamophobic content, in line with far right ideals.
- Having even more impact under Kaczyński's rule, the **Church keeps silent**, when diverse social groups protest their reforms or pose demands. The Bishops kept the side of the government when young doctors went on a hunger strike or when parents of adults with disabilities occupied the Parliament.

Anti-rights groups

Far right goes hand in hand with anti-rights movement, who intend to undermine human rights with arguments based on culture, tradition, national sovereignty.

- The most powerful representative of this group is the conservative legal think tank **Ordo Iuris**, which commonly manipulates law for the sake of their ultraconservative crusade against **antidiscrimination laws, liberal values, human rights, SRHR**. It authored highly repressive anti-abortion bill that sparked off the Black protest in 2016. Ordo Iuris is also notorious for influencing legislative process – amending school curricula, lobbying for conscience clause for many medical professions, secretly safeguarding that gender perspective is not applied in laws related to education and domestic violence, mobilizing prosecutor's offices to investigate cases of abetting women in terminating pregnancies.

National Movement

Poland's history, repeatedly interrupted by wars and occupation, provides the far right and populists with a va-

riety of **martyrdom imaginary** to reinforce the image of Poland as plagued by internal and external enemies. Main contemporary radical movements – The National-Radical Camp (ONR), the National Movement (RN) and the All Polish Youth (MW) – have adopted names and traditions from the interwar period.

Far-right insiders reveal that its public image has changed substantially in recent years – “more girls, fewer skin-heads”⁴⁰ with a marked increase in middle-aged and highly educated recruits, as presented in an interview with nationalist women in a liberal weekly⁴¹.

One factor in this change, was the influence on Polish society of young people returning from working in countries such as Britain. Apparently, their experience of the West seems to have bolstered up their conservatism and traditionalism⁴².

It is wrong to assume that the far right constitutes a considerable societal segment. According to the 2016 survey⁴³ 95 percent of Poles said they did not know anyone from this group. However, one in six said they supported their activities.

Far right organizations have **inculcated** new forms of nationalism, especially in younger generations. To create a new generation of “**patriots**”, The All-Polish Youth conducted seemingly innocent programs for schools and students like sports competitions, lectures on historical and socio-political issues, and pilgrimages.

The **National Radical Camp** is notorious for fascist-style marches against Muslim immigration and the EU. The group, which calls for “ethnic homogeneity” in Poland, says openly that the PiS won the elections by copying their rhetoric. Therefore, migrants/refugees with a Muslim background are opposed by the Law and Justice not because of economic or security challenges. They are portrayed and a moral threat to the base of Christian civilization⁴⁴.

40 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/nov/18/more-girls-fewer-skinheads-polands-far-right-wrestles-with-changing-image>.

41 <http://wyborcza.pl/duzyformat/7,127290,23090679,my-nacjonalistki-mezczyzni-stosujacy-przemoc-wobec-kobiet-w.html>.

42 <https://underwesterneyes.org/2016/09/11/their-experience-of-the-west-has-reinforced-their-social-conservatism-in-conversation-with-aleks-szczerbiak/>.

43 https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K_151_16.PDF.

44 <http://politicalcritique.org/cee/poland/2016/tilles-pis-far-right/>.



Cover of the liberal weekly “Duży Format”. Title “Women in the nation’s service. How did they become nationalists? Coverage by Magda Ruta”.

The far-right groups especially the National Movement have appropriated the celebration of the **Independence Day**. The rally often ends in clashes between far-right participants and counterprotesters. Next to families, the extremists marched with banners “Death to the enemies of the homeland”, “Poland for Poles”, “Clean blood” and “White Europe”, while their chants had anti-Semitic, anti-Ukraini-

EUROPEAN DIMENSION

Gathering far-right leaders from countries such as Italy, Britain, Hungary and Slovakia, the march cast a disturbing light on the **militant and radical currents coursing through Europe’s ever-more successful nationalist parties** in Europe. “Their polished images and relatively temperate language have enabled them to jar Europe’s liberal order by pushing



Cover of the right-wing weekly “wSieci”. Title “Islamic rape of Europe”

an, anti-Muslim, anti-refugee and anticommunist contents. Participants insist that their movements are meant to protect the Polish-Catholic culture and to make it the foundation of the law and of a new constitution. They claim that their ultimate goal is not white supremacy. The March on the Independence Day is a good example of how the far-right narratives have made it to the mainstream.

their policies on three areas in which their interests overlap with neo-Nazi extremists: immigration, Islam, and the EU”, Paul Hockenos stated⁴⁵.

By switching to the illiberalism, the Poland’s government has created following conditions for the rise of the far right:

45 <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/11/europe-far-right-populist-nazi-poland/524559/>.

- violation of the separation of powers
- weakened democratic institutions
- control over public media, police
- rising populism, nationalist propaganda
- smearing campaign against NGOs, independent media and civil society
- stigmatization of 'The Others' – xenophobia, anti-Semitism, homophobia, Islamophobia etc.
- demonization of centrist and left-wing political opposition
- feeding anti-establishment sentiment
- conspiratorial sense of victimization
- intensified discourse on family and traditional values
- historical policy that promotes a one-sided version of country's past

This "recipe" can be or is used by other countries with rising ultraconservative base. Let's take a look at Europe.

Populist messages have entered the mainstream. The main "enemies" of their authors included: political elites, the European Union, refugees, liberal media, globalization, gender equality. This led to the weakening of the **rule of law and an erosion in the protection of human rights**, particularly for refugees and terrorism suspects⁴⁶. One of the most alarming practices of states like Hungary, France, Bulgaria, Slovakia, UK, Poland, Netherland was to invoke emergency state or introduce anti-terrorist measures to

the detriment of civils⁴⁷. In a few European countries there was a marked increase in hate crimes targeting refugees, Muslims and foreigners as well as and **abuses against peaceful protesters**⁴⁸.

Attacks on opposition parties, the press, and civil society organizations have become the norm, according to *Nations in Transit 2018*⁴⁹, the annual report on democracy in Central and Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and Eurasia. "A discourse hostile to **human rights** frequently leads to the repression of human rights defenders, political opposition, protest movements, anti-corruption campaigners and sexual minorities", stated its authors.

As illustrated by the Amnesty International⁵⁰, "women and girls in Europe and Central Asia continued to experience **systemic human rights violations and abuses**, including torture and other ill-treatment, denial of the right to health and bodily autonomy, inequality of opportunity, and widespread gender-based violence." Another vulnerable group experiencing discrimination and stigmatization are diverse **minorities**.

Another dangerous development in Eastern Europe and Central Asia is the popularity of a discriminatory interpretation of so-called "**traditional values**". As a result, decision-makers and opinion-leaders tend to promote and/or justify their politics with this **xenophobic, misogynistic and homophobic inter-**

46 <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/POL1067002018ENGLISH.PDF> <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/POL1048002017ENGLISH.PDF>.

47 "Hungary led the way with the adoption of legislation providing for sweeping executive powers in the event of a declared emergency, including the banning of public assemblies, severe restrictions on the freedom of movement and the freezing of assets with no judicial controls. The Bulgarian Parliament passed a similar set of measures at first vote in July. following the November 2015 attacks, France extended for the fifth time the state of emergency imposed. The emergency powers were significantly expanded in the July extension, which reintroduced house searches without prior judicial approval (a power dropped from an earlier extension) and new powers to prohibit public events on public security grounds, which were variously used to ban protests. Measures once viewed as exceptional were embedded in ordinary criminal law in several European states. These included extensions in the period of pre-charge detention for terrorism-related suspects in Slovakia and Poland and a proposal to do the same for all charges in Belgium. In the Netherlands and Bulgaria, proposals were put before Parliament to introduce administrative control measures to restrict people's freedom of movement without prior judicial authorization." <http://www.refworld.org/docid/58b0342a13.html>.

48 In Germany, France, Poland and Spain, governments' response to public assemblies against restrictive policies or human rights abuses included sealing off public spaces, excessive use of force by police, containment of peaceful protesters or "kettling", surveillance, and threats of administrative and criminal sanctions.

49 <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/nations-transit-2018>.

50 <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/POL1067002018ENGLISH.PDF> <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/POL1048002017ENGLISH.PDF>.

pretation of cultural values. We have to be aware of Agenda Europe⁵¹ – Vatican-inspired, transnational, professional advocacy network. Its members like Ordo Iuris have been implementing a detailed strategy to overturn existing laws on basic human rights related to sexuality and reproduction.

“The acceptance of homosexual, lesbian, and (ultimately) paedophile relationships seems thus a logical consequence of accepting artificial contraception.”

Restoring the Natural Order

Quote from the must-read “Restoring the Natural Order: The religious extremists’ vision to mobilize European societies against human rights on sexuality and reproduction” by the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development.

RESISTANCE

One of truly surprising, positive aspects of the Law and Justice rule is the fact that it has provoked unprecedented mobilization and consolidation of the grassroots opposition. Almost every month, or even every week, people take to the streets to halt government’s reforms, voice concerns and demands. They conduct **prodemocratic advocacy and online campaigning** and use social media to inform people about the impacts of pending laws, activate critical thinking and willingness to protest etc. The main goals of the left-wing parties & progressive NGOs and movements are to bring closer seemingly abstract topics of democracy, human rights, rule of law (many read the Constitution for the first time during the constitutional crisis), to convince voters not to support ultraconservatives, and to make people more aware and active citizens.

What is remarkable, is that the **Polish Women’s Strike**, which organized the Black Protest and other prochoice rallies, engages holistically in all sorts of protests concerning the rule of law, rights of people with disabilities, democracy, justice, independent academia. Countering the far right has always been on agenda of Polish feminists. Marches of extremists meet with blockages created by feminists and the left despite unimaginable offences and violence.



Grandmother reading the Constitution to her grandson.
Photo: JohnBob & Sophieart

A few mayors have submitted motions for **delegalization** of the Nationa-Radical Camp. However, the Minister of justice and the Prosecutor General in one, hardliner Zbigniew Ziobro, has already announced that courts are not likely to rule on it in a foreseeable future. NGOs took the initiative to start websites for reporting hate speech and hate crimes. They also monitor violence committed by the far right in the so-called “Brown Book”⁵².

51 <https://www.epfweb.org/node/689>.

52 <http://www.nigdywiecej.org/en/>.



Blockage of the nationalists. banner "Hitler kaput". Photo: JonBob & Sophieart

Bishops' abortion-related appeals to the decision-makers sparked off fierce opposition and **strong anticlerical moods**. For the first time, there were manifestations in front of the curiae under the slogan "A coathanger for a bishop", while more radical groups left messages at the walls of the church buildings. Activists announced that any further interference of the Church will bring up new signs of the "Stop the Bishop" action.

The holistic strategy is also used by many movements which attempt to act **intersectionally**, e.g. secular groups fight for legal abortion, while diverse NGOs, informal groups and extraparlimentary opposition work on a **strategy undermining the power of the Church**, which would also automatically weaken the far right. They also work on bills that would safeguard a true separation between the Church and the State. Bills will not be passed in this term, but they will deepen the debate about the Church's power and build a critical mass necessary for a systemic secular change. They also spread information about Church's spending and abuses of power (pedophilia, exorcisms), apostasy procedures.

Given the necessity to fight **church-affiliated anti-rights group**, many NGOs and groups start petitions against their initiatives and spread information about their informal and nontransparent power in the state. New billboards appear in the public sphere to counter manipulative anti-choice posters with dismembered fetuses.

Our Federation empowers people to counteract anti-rights campaign by providing legal measures, e.g. draft claims and open letters, easy procedures for exercising one's



Graffiti at the walls of archcathedral in Warsaw. Slogans: "Murders", "Enough of women's hell", "This is my blood and my body – stay away". Source: Facebook group of the Polish Women's Strike



Billboard "Polish women demand legal abortion". Photo: Liliana Religa



Billboard "Statistically 1 in 3 of your acquaintances had an abortion. You are not alone". Source: fanpage "Aborcyjny Dream Team on Tour"

rights violated by the ultraconservatives. Diverse measures are supposed to weaken the position of anti-choice groups and to disclose their dangerous agenda.

Polish politicians learnt a lesson from Hungary and they form **alliances before upcoming election**. The two main

opposition parties built a coalition with joint lists, while extraparliamentary opposition is uniting to run in bigger blocks. Many women are determined to candidate so as to create laws that would represent their perspective, needs and visions. The promising left-wing RAZEM party (ens. "Together") propagates its own constructive, progressive programme for upcoming local and European⁵³ elections and promotes inclusive and modern concept of patriotism.



White Eagle emblem on the rainbow background. "Poland for all. Without hate" Graphic by the RAZEM Party.

Investigate journalism in Poland proved to be very useful in rectifying fake news, in exposing links between politicians and private companies or foreign intelligence or the far right, and in informing the public about their spending. Historic drop in support for the Law and Justice is attributable to revelations brought by an MP about unprecedentedly high bonuses for ministers.

Mainstreaming of the far-right language and ideas, requires also two international reactions as regards:

- **online platforms** – We need more transparency from the social media platforms. Twitter, Facebook and others must counteract attempts of Russia and other actors to influence internal politics and they must protect

users from fake news, dangerous ideologies and non-transparent meddling. The good example was the decision of Google to block all ads relating to the upcoming abortion referendum in Ireland on its search engine and on YouTube. Facebook did not permit ads coming from advertisers out of Ireland. These moves were devastating for powerful anti-choice lobby that intended to invest heavily in e-campaigns. The Polish Facebook blocked the account of the National-Radical Camp for racist, anti-Semitic contents (based on users' reports). This practice should become a standard,

- **public figures** – It is essential that the EU and its member states, the Council of Europe and the UN, put pressure on the governments so that they reverse antidemocratic legislative changes. This is instrumental in protecting fundamental freedoms, human rights, and the future of Europe. Each of us needs to speak up whenever acceptable boundaries of any debate are crossed. For NGOs and civil society in my country, it is priceless when politicians, representatives of international bodies take a stance in our sake. It gives us hope and strength to fight for a better Poland and a better world.



Quote by MEP Tania González Peñas during the debate on the Future of Europe with Polish PM Morawiecki, 4.07.2018. Picture: Liliana Religa

⁵³ The programme involves big investments in R&D, green technologies, Energy transition, new jobs in Central-Eastern-South Europe, European system for refugees to protect them from deportation to their homelands. <http://partiarazem.pl/2018/06/europejska-wiosna-warszawie/>.

Understanding the Rise of the Radical Right: Dimensions of a Generalized Culture of Insecurity

Mario Candeias, Director of the Institute for Social Analysis of the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung

It is the time of monsters. The organic crisis of the old neoliberal project has also brought forth the rise of a new radical right. Yet these monsters are quite different from one another: we have strong men like Trump, Kurz and Macron—political entrepreneurs shaping a new authoritarianism from positions of governance. Theresa May and Boris Johnson are acting quite similar, with less fortune, but unlike the others, they are established representatives of authoritarian elite right-wing conservatism. They all have an anti-establishment discourse in common, although they have strong capital faction backing them.

The authoritarian-nationalistic regimes in Poland and Hungary (or Turkey) are distinct, and are in turn different from the radical right like the Front National, Geert Wilders's PVV or the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), the Austrian FPÖ and Italy's Lega—both operating from a position of government. and very different form that the Five-Star-Movement. So, how can we understand these formations' differences and commonalities? This question must be addressed to identify specific tactics and counter-strategies in the concrete countries (see Wiegel 2018).

Here, I will try to tease out a more fundamental question: how can we understand the reasons behind the rise of the radical right? Many different explanations exist, most of which are valuable in explaining certain aspects. But they exist in parallel at best, sometimes even in conflict with one another. So is there a specific relation which we could flesh out theoretically?

Beyond empirical detail, only a few attempts at systematic and subject-orientated research have been undertaken. Rarely are these conducted with recourse to or for the further refinement of critical theory. Of course the phenomenon is extremely heterogeneous and highly dynamic, and thus eludes simple explanation. It must be seen in the framework of a crisis and concrete transformation of the mode of production and living. Why has this phenomenon gained so much importance now, and not ten years ago? In fact, it was already there. I will thus seek to elaborate the

concept of a generalized culture of insecurity, including highly distinct but intertwined dimensions in the context of an organic crisis of the old neoliberal project—insecurity in the field of work, family, territory and homeland, one's own perspectives and history, gender identity or mode of living.

The following will draw on a research project conducted with the University of Stendal, a small town in eastern Germany and former stronghold of Die Linke that has now become a stronghold of the AfD. We also draw on our experience from the hundreds of door-to-door conversations and our pilot project in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Although the Alternative für Deutschland is certainly not a workers' party, when we look at its constituency and electorate, it appears they receive a significant degree of support from workers and poor people. The French sociologist Didier Eribon calls this electoral decision an "act of self-defence"—to have a voice, to be heard in political discourse even when it is only a "negative self-affirmation". This is true of our experience, as well. Betrayed by Social Democracy and disappointed by the powerlessness of the left, they turn to a new powerful narrative: the defence of hard-working men, of our nation, our culture, against the Other—Islam, refugees, globalization, gays and lesbians, the moralizing '68 elite in government, etc.

This phenomenon is nothing new and well-documented. But why has it gained such momentum? Explanations often pose the dilemma of: is it the social question, or racism? In the words of Stuart Hall, we can say that "the problem is not if economic structures are relevant for racial divisions, but how they are connected" (Hall 1980, 92). He continues: "It is not the question if people make racist ascriptions, but what are the specific conditions under which racism become socially decisive and historically effective" (129).

A CULTURE OF INSECURITY

1989 marked an historical rupture that began with the crisis of Fordism in East and West 20 years before. This was a moment of generalized neoliberalism, with shock therapies in Eastern Europe and deindustrialization with social subsidies in eastern Germany. The east was a field of experimentation for neoliberal flexibilization and precarization, but it was also the moment of phasing out the remains of West German and Western European Fordism.

The result was a widespread culture of insecurity—emblematic were the workfare programs all over Europe and the US and the Agenda 2010 in Germany which dismantled the old unemployment security system. The goal was to establish the largest precarious low-wage sector in Western Europe. The fear of falling was not limited to those at the bottom of the social hierarchy, but spread to the established so-called middle classes, who knew the safety net was fraying while experiencing a rapid intensification of work, flexibilization, and fluid structures of protection. The fear was used to produce “compliant workers”, as Klaus Dörre (2005) puts it.⁵⁴

The implicit social contract—promising recognition and social security in exchange for hard work—was unilaterally broken. While unions were unable to oppose this development, frustration and anger often was directed towards groups assumed to be under less pressure, performing less and taking money from the state—the unemployed, people receiving social assistance, refugees.

As I said, this reaction was not particularly true for the lowest class segments, but rather emanated from the middle—those who had something to lose, who see themselves as the productive core of society. Even when they were able to maintain or even improve their social position and status, this came at the price of increased workloads, unrestricted working hours, and exhaustive flexibility requirements.⁵⁵

Oliver Nachtwey (2016) found a brilliant metaphor for the situation: the image of a moving escalator going down. One is not intended to stand still—one must struggle to avoid going downward, while moving upward proves even more y exhausting. Only a few manage to take the escalator to the top. But the upper segments of society are closed off; the rich live in a world of their own.

Beyond the dramatic increase in inequality, hard divisions of respectability (not only small distinctions) were drawn: the bourgeois class produced popular images legitimizing the authoritarian education of the unemployed, migrants and other subaltern groups, pushing for a conscious class distinction from the under-performers. The parts of the working class which have something to lose draw a line against those further below, denying them respectability as well. The fear of not being respectable—the fear of falling and failing—produced a feeling of guilt leading to self-loathing directed against weaker groups and individuals: a revaluation of the self through the devaluation of others. The most effective forms of this are classism, racism, and sexism.

Beyond precarization, however, more dimensions are at the root of a culture of insecurity, and all are interconnected. A brief overview:

a) *The Crisis of Male Subjectivity:*

New forms of male individuality could not be generalized in neoliberalism—“emotional intelligence”, self-reflexivity, cooperative and communicative capabilities, gender equality, anti-sexist discourse and so on. In contrast, many feel a kind of feminization of requirements in their work and in family relations and child care, up to feeling forced to eat less meat. On the labour market, they experience women as fierce competition, while losing their role as family breadwinners and feeling the gender hierarchy at home has been turned upside down. Entire male-dominated sectors of the economy,

54 In their analysis of different quantitative studies on the reasons for the rise of right-wing populism Falkner u. Kahrs summarize, that „the majority of ‚worried people‘ consider themselves as ‚middle class‘ between the top and the bottom“ (2018, 18).

55 Hilmer/Kohlrausch et.al. summarize in their rather socio-economic quantitative study: „Not so much real deprivation, but a combination of perceived descent in the past and fear of descent for the future lead to the phenomenon, that people vote for the Alternative for Germany or take it into consideration. ...predominantly they are not in a financially precarious situation, but have a feeling of being unprotected from crisis in the future.“ (2017, 33).

often bound to a certain exploitation of nature, are threatened—from mining to automobile manufacturing. This challenges certain habits of male skilled labour, already under pressure from permanent technological requirements of re-qualification and further education. This leads to experiences of being incapable of meeting requirements—incurring a certain nostalgia for the good old images of family, clear gender roles and male work habits. This might be a reason why men of a certain age are particularly likely to vote for the radical right and why anti-genderism is so central for them.

b) *The Crisis of Female Subjectivity:*

Promises of emancipation through integration into the labour market encountered several “glass ceilings”: the pay gap, omnipresent requirements of being flexible incompatible with family life – even with a more or less equal distribution of care work or delegation to others, often illegalized migrants – the new family models (Gabriele Winker) are not working, not only because of increased requirements on the job, but also because of new aspirations concerning (quality) time with children and life partners (but also to meet the competitive pressures on children within educational institutions, concerning one’s own fitness, etc.). Out of this stress between increased requirements and own aspirations, some develop a nostalgia for old family models—exaggerating the value of motherhood, especially where these new experiences meet with conservative values. This may be a reason why women vote for a radical right which is so anti-feminist—after all, liberal feminism rarely addresses these needs and problems, particularly for woman of the popular classes.

There are other dimensions as well, but, we lack the space to delve into them. I will simply name them:

c) Insecurity due to *certain kind of lifestyles growing outdated*, losing their claim to what is culturally “normal”. Old milieus dissolve and new modern, diverse, cosmopolitan, multi-cultural and multi-lingual lifestyles seem to dominate media and advertising. The world and experience of skilled workers is no longer the standard—it becomes unsettled, proletarianized. Being gender-sensible, ecologically responsible, accepting gay and queer people as equal, using a non-discriminatory language etc.—all of these are perceived as “political correctness”’s directed against persistent but outdated

habits. This often meets with pre-existing prejudice and may revert into aggressive denial and intolerance.

- d) Insecurity due to “*external threats*”: experiencing the demise of social infrastructures (especially schools, public transport, public administration and police, public security in general), particularly in certain regions, causes real social problems but is not traced back to the roots of neoliberal reform but is falsely associated with assumed external causes like “migration into our social systems”, “kanakization’ of our schools”, “parallel societies”, migrant delinquency or Islamism, even terrorism, but also job insecurity because of multinational corporations, European reforms, or competition through labour migration. This often links up with pre-existing racial prejudice, which is gaining more weight and importance for individuals against this backdrop.
- e) Insecurity through *discharged democratic institutions and organized irresponsibility*: who decides on new requirements, what kinds of life experiences and identities are still represented, where do I have a voice in family decisions, in living my own identity, in transnational production chains or in despotic low-wage relations? Economic imperialism is eating away at individual responsibility. One cannot direct demands toward a super-powerful globalized market. Politics seems to have deprived itself of power vis-à-vis the market and detached itself from the people, even corrupt. Democracy is becoming a play without any real participation. This might often be articulated mistakenly, but the experience is real: feeling helpless and powerless, without control of one’s conditions of life. This reverts into “anger without a target” (Detje et.al. 2013), and to an “extreme fatalism” (Haug 1993, 229): “You can do nothing about it.”

The point is: when the various dimensions come together, this can condense into a state of panic (Balibar/Wallerstein 1990, 271). The radical right is mobilizing and fuelling a “moral panic” (Demirović 2018, 29). This way, they encourage the subaltern to disconnect their feelings from efforts to understand the reasons behind their predicament and translate them directly into resentment, racism, coldness, and denial of solidarity instead. The reward is attention and false grief from above: “We have understood, and we take your worries and concerns seriously”, etc. (32).

BIZARRE EVERYDAY CONSCIOUSNESS AND RIGHT-WING POPULISM

Most of the time, however, we encounter a bizarre form of everyday consciousness (Gramsci), not a coherent and closed view of the world, but what W.F.Haug calls “proto-ideological material” (Haug 1993, 52), meaning impulses and elements of feeling and thinking which are not yet ideologically determined. The impulse of discontent and anger is not in itself ideological. This depends on how it articulates itself or is articulated along with other elements. Thus, discontent can be translated into solidarity and horizontal practices of association from below, or revert into hierarchical forms, depreciating and excluding the Other.

If we seek to understand the rise of the radical right, it is less about right-wing attitudes in the population, as can be found in polls for the last 20 years or so, than it is about how these loose, proto-ideological impulses, feelings, forms of thinking, desires and aspirations—often in contradiction to one another—are integrated into a political project, giving them a coherent articulation. This explains why right-wing attitudes may decline in the polls, while the right-wing agenda continues to rise in the public eye.

This is not a monocausal process: this proto-ideological material is formed and processed in constant discourses in various ideological apparatuses such as the media and political parties, but also in schools, on the shop floor, in associations or in the family. At the same time, social individuals appropriate political discourses in the sense of active subjectivation, adapting them to their respective conditions in order to gain at least a „restrictive capacity to act” (Holzkamp 1987). The question is “how the social individuals integrate themselves in to the existing structures (and discourses), thereby shaping their own subjectivity” (F.Haug 1983, 16). But we also may have to ask why leftist or solidary discourses are less effective than elsewhere, for instance in Spain or Greece (see Candeias/Völpel 2013).

Especially when the experience of solidarity is lacking or disappointed, this opens a window of opportunity for the radical right. When the experience of solidary practice or the prospect for their possible success is absent, this may lead to stubborn dissidence, as represented also by the radical right: their dissidence at the same time defends the status quo of existing social relations, the good old past, while questioning them partially. There is a dominant feel-

ing of “extreme fatalism”, very aware of its powerlessness against “those at the top”, re-enacting a rebellious gesture, combined with an “extreme voluntarism” (Haug 1993, 229) against the weaker social groups at “the bottom and outside”, very aware of the little danger of being sanctioned for that. This attitude is in “opposition towards the ruling bloc in power”, but is “dangerous” only where the foundation of capitalist rule is not concerned (222). The radical right enables social individuals a “nonconformist conformism” (Thomas Barfuss): an attitude of resistance towards the ruling power bloc, at the same time requesting (in a form of interpellation) for their action to depreciate and actively exclude “the Other” —migrants, those “unwilling to work”, the “grubby 68-heads”, feminists, etc. This can be experienced as stabilizing a restrictive capacity to act under heightened conditions of insecurity.

The new authoritarianism could be read as an “attempt to build a coalition with parts of the petit bourgeoisie and the working class from the side of the bourgeois class, without the need to make concessions. It works like a short circuit between the forces of the bourgeoisie and the subaltern” (Demirović 2018, 34). In doing so, this does not lead to a simple rejection of democracy, but to its reactionary re-making—an illiberal democracy—a plebiscitary strategy, dividing and mobilizing along the lines of racism, nationalism, religion, sex and gender, or form of exploitation of nature, “reproducing and disarranging the bizarre everyday consciousness, converting into neurotic subjectivities” (ibid).

Their form of mobilizing is connected to an imagined self-empowerment of the subaltern, based on the promise of taking back control. Once the different proto-ideological elements are articulated in a coherent way, it is much more difficult to re-articulate them in a different manner.

NEW RELATIONS OF REPRESENTATION

Against the backdrop of this culture of insecurity, modernized radical right parties could be established in many European countries over the last 20 years—the ugly siblings of neoliberalism. In Germany, they vanished time and again, but authoritarian or racist attitudes spread nevertheless. With the rise of the *Alternative für Deutschland*, one could say the country reverted to the European norm (Opratko 2016). Its appearance led to a complete shift of the whole political and ideological spectrum towards the right. They created a new relation of representation (Demirović 2018, 28). The “anger without a target” that was found before found a representative to articulate this anger—not in the sense of simple expression of that anger, but in a specific coherent and more and more radical way.

The AfD started with the dream of a return to the *Deutschmark* and to a strong national, we can say “imagined economy”. The rise could not have been consolidated with the critique on the Euro alone. The clear class character of the project, created by angry neoliberal professors looking with arrogance and disdain at the subaltern, would have been too obvious.

Only taking up and intensifying the anti-migration, anti-Muslim, anti-feminist, homophobic and anti-liberal discourse strategically directed against all minorities enabled the party to invert popular discord into popular compliance—against its own class composition concerning its constituency and leadership (cf. Hall 1982, 114). Polemics against “migration into our social security systems” and turning the social question into an ethnic question proved particularly effective (Wiegel 2014, 83).

Insofar as the ethno-nationalist and social wings of the party are becoming more influential, also in the workplace, their notion of “exclusive solidarity” (Dörre 2005) could broaden their appeal in sections of the working class. It does not seem to matter that the party advocates for the most radical neoliberal reforms at the same time. In fact, they play with ambiguity, relativizing truth. This is one of their most effective strategies. They have succeeded in re-articulating the populist agenda and asserting right-wing hegemony in public discourse.

Most of the other parties are taking up this agenda, always with a shift to the right—even the media, talk shows in

particular. Now, it would seem, people can say whatever they want in public. An astonishing symbol was the last German government crisis between Horst Seehofer, Minister of the Interior and head of the right-wing Bavarian CSU (the sister party of the ruling CDU), and Chancellor Angela Merkel. It revolved around closed detention centres and how to send back refugees, completely ignoring the mass carnage in the Mediterranean. The radical right has set the agenda, and they are “on the hunt”, as Alexander Gauland, head of the AfD, said. Only a few weeks later, we witnessed huge crowds of Neo-Nazis parade through the small city of Chemnitz (formerly Karl-Marx-Stadt), giving open Hitler salutes and chasing people of colour through the streets. With a small number of police units unable and unwilling to stop the mob (while any leftist or antifascist activity is confronted with huge numbers of militarized anti-terror units). The head of the secret service (the so-called “Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution”), Hans-Georg Maaßen, denied the incidents and implied that media coverage and film footage had been “fake news”. Following extensive public unrest, this prompted another government crisis with Seehofer backing Maaßen, while Merkel and her coalition partner SPD demanded his demotion. In the end, Maaßen was removed from his position but only to become state secretary for internal security and cyber security. The crisis is still smouldering and the established parties are losing popularity, pushing more people toward frustration and towards the anti-elite course of the AfD.

The radical right’s strategy is combined with an open hostility towards parliamentarism and its democratic procedures, while using the parliament as a stage. Of course, post-democracy already began under neoliberalism, but now it approaches a rupture with democratic procedures, starting with Berlusconi, then Orbán, Trump, etc. The radical right, one could say, is doing the legwork for a new authoritarian project.

Attempts to assert political control over jurisdiction (in Poland, Hungary, the US, Turkey), constraining freedom of the press or at least disparaging them as “lying press” while deploying fake news and “alternative facts”, often combined with a rough historical revisionism. The rights of minorities, women, unions, and science are at least questioned. A violent language becomes normal, affirmative towards and

relativizing physical violence, enforcing security discourses and repressive apparatuses. Enhancing the space for what is allowed to say (“one might be allowed to lay it on the line”) is expanding the space for malpractice from open

hatred to real individual violence. I think these are clear tendencies of what we in Germany call *Faschisierung*: not fascist regimes, but clear tendencies against a democratic and solidary mode of living.

RACISM FROM BELOW AS REACTIONARY SELF-EMPOWERMENT AND EXPANSION OF ONE’S CAPACITY TO ACT

The production and combating of “the Other” plays a central role here.

The tremendous heterogeneity of the subaltern classes could serve as a fruitful foundation for solidarity in plurality, but of course could also be the foundation for strategically dividing the class. This is especially done by integrating factions of the class into a hegemonic project. Forms of chauvinism, racism, sexism, and classism in the everyday consciousness—as well as the distinction of certain professions from others, different modes of consumption and lifestyle—are useful elements to expand minor differences into real divisions.

A common pattern is to compensate one’s own (real or feared) social decline by depreciating others, because the feeling of dignity and individual social position is a relative one, always in comparison to others. To allocate someone else a lower position makes me feel that I am not at the bottom of the social hierarchy, maybe I am still part of the middle class, I am part of a nation—in the German case an successful export and football world champion (the latter may be weakened after the last World Cup, where Germany was knocked out in the first round).

Racism and nationalism were always present, but remained in a subaltern position in most people’s minds, emerging to the fore from time to time but not systematically. That they gained so much importance is also a symptom of the lack of effective class struggle (Balibar/Wallerstein 1990, 259). In the moment of this generalization of a culture of insecurity and crisis of the old neoliberal project, the articulation of the proto-ideological elements changes: what was marginal or less important takes on a central position in the ideological structure, becomes a point of condensation.

The ruling class seeks to divide the subaltern classes via integration into an hegemonic project. This is not a mere ideological phenomenon, but includes the realization of material

interests: because of power relations and a strong workers’ movement, class compromise in Fordism was broad and inclusive of many, although it also produced an exterior and exhibited a patriarchal and paternalistic structure. In neo-liberalism, the basis of class compromise was much smaller, more and more reduced to high-tech specialists and the core workforce in production. Export-nationalism, purchased at the high cost of austerity and wage restraint, still guarantees a highly contested degree of participation for a certain part of the working class. This kind of class compromise has high costs entailing subordination, increased flexibilization, tightened performance requirements, etc. This kind of class compromise with less and less concessions mobilizes tremendous fears of tailing to keep up in this universal “war of every one against everyone” (Hobbes, as cited by Haug 1993, 228).

This becomes evident with the constant burden of increasing contributions to social insurance and higher taxes, constricted with declining benefits and crumbling social infrastructure—first due to German reunification, rising unemployment, the costs of the EU, and then the arrival of hundreds of thousands of refugees. The so-called middle classes and high performers are burdened more and more (so the story goes), while the real reasons—the dramatic re-distribution of wealth in favour of capital and the rich—is not an issue. One cannot do anything about it – otherwise they would have turn their anger against the ruling power bloc offering at least a small portion of the economic success to be part of the class comprise, although in a very subaltern position.

The feeling of bearing the burden grows even more when faced with heightened competition on the labour market, in housing, for access to high-quality social services, especially child care and schools, and for public space. Although the actual cause might be permanent neoliberal restructuring, some fear that with the arrival of so many refugees there will be even less left for them.

These unreasonable demands should also apply to the Other even more so, up to denying them individual and social rights. The higher the perceived pressure is, the harsher the break with solidarity vis-à-vis social groups outside the class compromise. Even a portion of those excluded, the poor, want to be part of that compromise vehemently, struggling for recognition, adopting the images and forms of social exclusion against their own group to mark a distinction from them.

If it is true that racist ideology is primarily an ideology of those segments of those in-between class—not only in the sense of ascending or descending class segments, but concerning “active negation of class solidarity”, as Balibar/Wallerstein put it (1990, 263)—then we could understand the radical right as a class alliance between descending segments of skilled labour, endangered segments of the working class that developed into petit bourgeoisie defending their small residential property and consumptive status, between ascending individualistic high performers, family businesses under pressure from globalization, bourgeois intellectuals lacking recognition or experiencing marginalization in institutions. Concerning the descending class factions, one can speak of manifest or threatened social declassification (see Kahrs 2018), while the ascending segments and class factions are engaged in the struggle over the recomposition of the power bloc.

The mix of heightened requirements and unreasonable demands, experiences of declassification, insecurity, attempts to stabilize the self via imaginary communities (Benedict Anderson), racism and other forms of depreciating Others add up to a radical right articulation of initially independent phenomena. “The racial stigma and class ha-

ted” against those below in the social hierarchy coincide with the category of migration (Balibar/Wallerstein 1990, 249). “Insofar as they project their fears and resentments, their desperation and defiance onto the strangers, they not only fight competition, as it is said, but they try to distance themselves from their own exploitation. They hate themselves as proletarians or as humans, in danger of falling into the mill of proletarianization.” (258) A constant interplay and entanglement of “class-racism” and “ethnic racism” (ibid) against the ones below and outside. The interpellation of racism (or anti-Semitism) “instantly operates like directing a magnet onto loose iron filings”, rearranging the whole political field—after which it becomes possible to „rganize a populism from the right, that is to say an authoritarian constitution of Volk” (an ethnic unity of the people) (Haug 1993, 222).

Against this backdrop we can understand the growing significance of racism, chauvinism, nationalism, etc. as creating a more coherent everyday consciousness as active inscription of individuals into an ideological project from the right. This is connected with a transition from a latent to openly racist mode of living.

This is not a seduction by pied pipers of the far right, but an active subjectivation enabling a reactionary self-empowerment and expansion of one’s capacity to act. This may help to understand why the question of migration advanced as a central social line of conflict, inverting the hierarchical conflict between capital and class into a horizontal conflict between class factions in and outside of the class compromise.

The problem? The left cannot win on this terrains. We need to shift nit.

CONNECTIVE CLASS POLITICS FROM DOOR TO DOOR

Thus, back to the manifold dimensions of a generalized culture of insecurity in times of an organic crisis of the neo-liberal project, with uncertainty at work, in family relations, neighbourhoods and whole regions, future prospects, one’s own history, identity, gender or mode of living. This pervasive insecurity is the basis for subjective strategies to confront the situation, which in absence of experiences with solidarity receive an ideological supply from the right to win back control.

But one can tie in from the left on the same basis. Most people do not have a closed view of the world, but a bizarre everyday consciousness in which conflicting impulses coexist. We have to be aware that it is much more difficult to win people back once they become part of a radical right project, seeking to lend coherence to their everyday consciousness with a radical right view of the world and a racist mode of living. But many are aware that the radical right will not solve their everyday problems of manifold

insecurity, and feel discomfort and a guilty consciousness with the right. Die Linke lost 400,000 voters to the AfD in the last elections. We want them back. So, how to connect with them from the left?

This has been a focus of the debate around new connective class politics (cf. *Luxemburg* Special Issue, 2017) in recent years, i.e. a class politics reaching beyond the usual suspects (Candeias 2017), developing and experimenting with new concrete projects. This sometimes means simple things that seem so difficult: knocking on doors in disadvantaged neighbourhoods all over Germany (and especially in the left's former strongholds), taking lessons from Greece and Spain, the Netherlands, Austria, Great Britain and the US (cf. Steckner 2017a, Pieschke 2016). We need patience and endurance to build active relations. We have to listen, debate, organize local meetings centred around everyday problems such as neighbourhood rent policies or struggles in and for health and child care services. We have to come back and try again. It was often a surprising experience for both sides: first to be approached at all, and then to have a political conversation focused on everyday problems.

We sent hundreds of militants to knock on doors all over Germany. Our activists of course encountered resentment and racism, even among people leaning to the left. Nevertheless: most of the time, a conversation was possible. Frequently, people responded the question of what has to happen for their situation to progress with "Asys"—a derogatory term for asylum seekers—"must go!"

"Okay, but was your situation better before the refugees came—or do you expect it will be better when they are gone?"

"No! I know that this will not change, even with the AfD..."

People then started to talk about their own problems, that they have three kids, receive social assistance but are not able to pay the rent or buy enough food or a birthday present for their kids, and so on. Less political correctness and more listening and taking experiences seriously—without denying one's political point of view.

Other studies confirm our findings: In a study by Hillje 2018, knocking on more than 500 doors in Germany and France, the first things people would like to change if they

were in power were: higher minimum wages, universal basic income, and more assistance to single mothers" (15f).

"When people talk about politics in their own words, fear of Islam, Euroscepticism, the 'lying media' or an emphasis on national identity doesn't play a major role", still the same study. They do not even have anything against migrants, at least it is not a major point, but the feeling that politics follows the wrong priorities, is not serving their needs, especially in disadvantaged regions or neighbourhoods.

As discussed above, they do not necessarily believe that the AfD or Front National could really solve their problems (Hillje 2018, 10). This was also true for our conversations: voting for the radical right is more an expression of the desperate wish to be heard and have politics focused on everyday needs. We interviewed a middle-aged man who always voted for the left. After years of disappointment, he voted for the AfD. When we talked he was already skeptical that this would change anything for the better. We invited him to a longer interview. After a while we called again, he joined the local organizing initiative and will vote for the left again. This is not an isolated case. This is an opportunity for the left: to proceed from solidary forms of working together on social problems in the neighbourhood, building structures of mutual solidarity (see Candeias/Völpel 2013). This is what we are trying to develop and spread across the party, and to support movements doing similar things.

From this common ground on social issues, we can work on questions like racism and sexism as they get modified and reduced in their significance to an initially reactionary capacity to act. However we cannot stop there, as this leads to a silent tolerance of these ideologies. Rather we have to work on this, with continuous training and political education, but moreover by organizing space for experiences of solidarity irrespective of one's migrant background. Experience with refugees as part of organizing projects in the neighbourhoods is crucial. Moreover, it is at least as important to support the self-organization of migrants and refugees. How to do all this can be learned, requiring systematic training so people lose the fear of approaching the Other.

At the moment, we think it is the only and most promising way to win back those segments of the popular classes we have lost over the years—not only those who voted for

AfD, but the even larger number of people who do not vote at all (cf. Candeias 2015, Schäfer et al. 2013a, 2015).

Decisive is whether everyday experience is shaped by practical solidarity or by competition and isolation. It is not impossible that a successive practice of solidarity could be more attractive than the imagined self-empowerment of the radical right, without any solution for people's everyday problems. It is about a "generalized capacity to act" (Klaus Holzkamp) on the path toward a common and solidary disposition about our own conditions of life—"taking back control", but "for the many, not the few".

This is an edited version of: "Den Aufstieg der radikalen Rechten begreifen. Wie hängen unterschiedliche Erklärungsmuster zusammen? Dimensionen einer verallgemeinerten Kultur der Unsicherheit", in: Rechtspopulismus, radikale Rechte, Faschisierung, ed. by M.Candeias, Berlin 2018, 33-60, www.rosalux.de/publikation/id/39174/.

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The stakes of popular classes' political subjectivity in today's Europe

Espace Marx (presented by Yann Le Lann, Director of Espaces Marx and Pablo Livigni, Researcher at Espaces Marx)

The aim of this study is to understand the new forms of political subjectivity of popular classes according to the consequences of the reorganization of capitalism at the European and global scale. The relocation of production towards the eastern part of Europe and the failure of the collective bargaining had particularly drastic effects on the political subjectivity of blue collar workers. On the other hand, the global offensive of neoliberalism against the protected form of employment combined with heavy aus-

terity measures in public services and welfare systems led to the apparition of new relationship with labour, occupational identity and precariousness of life and social integration (housing, sustainability of the revenue, access to private property,...). The study aims to analyse popular political subjectivity through its polarisation in order to counter the mainstream discourse that focuses on one side (the reactionary one) and accuse popular classes to be responsible of the populist far right's growth.

ESCAPING THE PRO/ANTI EUROPE TRAP

The liberals are trying to propose a unique narrative about Europe. Simplistic and false it consists in assigning all popular class to a unique reactionary bloc that refuses Europe. Therefore they allow themselves to appropriate the legitimacy of the European project and try to own the political monopole of its construction. They proceed to a moral blackmail: supporting their neoliberal project or being a reactionary nationalist. In order to refuse this pro/anti Europe trap, we need to propose a new analysis that is not one sided. Refusing the different simplistic analyses that opposes winner/loser of globalisation, urban/rural areas is demonstrating that there is an existing social

base that can convey our project of democratic and social Europe.

A second party of the study aims also at analysing the hegemonical domains and thematics of the European Union in the "European public opinion" through the Eurobarometers. Such an attempt aims at understanding and proposing hypotheses to determine why certain domains are considered supranational while others are seen as nation-state prerogatives. It will allow us to get a better understanding of positive and negative judgments of the European achievements by popular classes.

THE CASE OF POPULIST FAR RIGHT

The aim was to try to identify the three main segments of popular classes that are constituting a social base for the far right electorate and proposing hypotheses to why those groups are more likely to support the populist far right.

The little independants

In the West: mainly artisans, little business owners, shopkeepers and merchants. Those populations are independent in the sense that they do no benefit from protected forms of employment. They usually stand for less state intervention and less regulation of labour. They are partly an historical electorate of the far populist right in the west,

especially since those parties were historically more neoliberal (Front National in 1981, FPÖ, AfD at its foundation, Lega,...).

In the south: numerous workers are working as employees but are attached to independent pensions system or lack of social protections relating to their labour status. Some can be supporting of populist discourse such as in Italy with the M5S.

In the East: mainly little farmers and agricultural workers. An electorate that supports populist right through its tra-

ditional values. They represent a high percentage of the populations in central and eastern Europe.

The blue collar workers

The blue collar workers were a symbolic group that conveyed the interest of all popular classes in the past through the publicization of their situation by communist and socialist parties as well as trade unions. If they represented the working class in the past, in today's Europe, the west has known a relocation of its industry toward eastern Europe, northern Africa or Asia. The number of blue collar workers is decreasing in western Europe while most of them are concentrated in Germany and neighboring countries of the east as well as Austria and northern Italy.

In the West: the failure of collective bargaining in allowing workers to have control over their fate has transformed the political subjectivity of the group, notably towards abstention. The relocation of production in other European regions as well as outside of Europe led part of this group towards the populist right discourse that opposes globalisation and designates Europe as the trojan horse of the neoliberal globalisation in their lives. Powerless in changing their concrete conditions of work and living, betrayed by social-democrat and conservative governments, important groups of workers felt into pessimism and were seduced by the nationalist inward-looking far right populist. This group is often a supporter of the AfD, Front National, FPÖ, Lega/M5S and the PVV.

In the East: Blue collar workers in the east are actually benefiting from the relocation of production in their employment area. However, the expected benefits from the European integration are late to arrive. The labour conditions are socially hard in order to maintain a high of competitiveness and the level of revenues are rising too slow to have great consequences on standard of living. To that extend Czech Republic is a good example. One of the hypothesis of the difficulty to convey a progressive discourse including social high demands is the ongoing negative affect that represents the soviet period. The blue collar workers have therefore a tendency to vote according to their traditional values as for example in Poland.

The nebula of precarious workers

In the West: The west witnessed these last thirty years the meticulous deconstruction of labour society. Since the crisis, the dismantling process of social protection of labour has drastically increase. Precariousness is not anymore only a characterisation of the different forms of new contracts and labour. It has become a socio-economical position inside the global economic infrastructure. From unemployed workers to short-term contracts, forced part-time job, more and more people are caught in a trap of precariousness. Those precarious workers have very different profiles in terms of capital (economical, cultural, social) to mobilise and personal situation. The most pessimistic individuals of this group are likely to support populist far right that scores high in unemployed workers and working poor.

Summary

In these different groups, the common characteristic is pessimism in the West as well as "identity stress" for both the eastern and western part of Europe. The populist far right is achieving perfectly the strategy of populism: it succeeds in gathering different groups with heterogeneous social demands by creating an equivalence chain that connects them. This equivalence is made through the nationalist and xenophobic discourse. The identity based proposals are covering the contradiction between the social demands while proposing a reactionary version of Polanyi's concept of "social protectionnisme".

This electorate is mainly a captive electorate. However we believe the main problem it encounters are socio-economic related, this electorate list as high priorities mainly problems of security, migration, terrorism and islam or national pride. If the different voting system have different effects on the possibilities of electorate transfer, the potential this electorate represents for the radical left is low on the short term. The case of France is very interesting to this regard, from 2012 to 2018, 150 000 votes (1,2%) have shifted from the National Front to La France Insoumise, a very low amount in comparison to the 3 millions (32%) that went from the Social Party (social-democrat) to La France Insoumise. We could also see in Germany 2017 elections⁵⁶, that the biggest gain in Die Linke electorates comes from the SPD (430 000 votes) the non voters (270 000) and the

56 <https://www.shz.de/deutschland-welt/bundestagswahl/waehlerwanderung-wie-sich-die-parteien-gegenseitig-die-stimmen-abluchsten-id17921181.html>.

Greens (130 000). Nothing indicates that the tendency to win back the electorate lost to the AfD is a strategic short term potential⁵⁷ on the contrary there is a high potential in the left (SPD, Grünen) and non voters (either new voters or past non voters).

This should help us see that that “populist left” strategies to conquer the far right’s electorate are not going to successfully steal it. It reinforces our believe that we shall never lower down our publics expressions on questions relative to our values, especially on subjects such as migration.

THE CASE OF RADICAL LEFT

The leftist electorate is one of the most heterogeneous of all. It spreads through the whole social hierarchy. This study is an attempt to outline some significant characteristics and detail specific groups from popular classes that are likely to be a social base for the radical left.

Neo-voters and the youth

The battle on neo-voters is essential as they are central in the overall renewal of the electoral body. The generation that was between 18 and 30 years old in 2008 was particularly affected by the consequences of the crisis. The youth, starting from this generation is a interesting variable to observe. Not as a generational variable but as a socio-economical one. Indeed, particularly subjected to precariousness, new forms of labour, and difficulties to socially integrate (ability to find a professional identity and project, access to housings and property, more subjected to unemployment,...). Therefore, the youth is more likely to have high social demands and support the radical left program. The powerpoint gives examples in France, Spain, Greece.

“The left hand of the State” in the West and the South

The left hand of the state related to a concept of Pierre Bourdieu: *“all those who are called ‘social workers’: family counsellors, youth leaders, rank-and-file magistrates, and also, increasingly, secondary and primary teachers. They constitute what I call the left hand of the state, the set of agents of the so-called spending ministries which are the trace, within the state, of the social struggles of the past.*⁵⁸ They are civil servants, social workers (notably in the “care” sector), employees and workers from State-owned firms or previous publics firms privatized in the recent years. They are the one conveying

what is left of the social functions of the State. This group is likely to vote for the radical left for at least two reasons. First, their personal relation to labour is shaped by the adherence to high social propositions. Secondly, their personal status is usually characterized by high level of social and labour protection allowing them to be one of the most optimistic electorate. However through austerity their working conditions dramatically deteriorated. They are also usually well unionised. They are likely to support a project that aims at investing heavily in public services, social work and their optimism and status protect them partially against identity stress and nationalist inward-looking preoccupations.

In France, it is particularly true for those that are the less paid in comparison to their level of education. It would be interesting to try to identify such a tendency in other countries.

Ethnic minorities

The ethnic minorities are discriminated both socially and racially, especially the ones coming from ex-colonies background, assigned rightfully or wrongfully to islam. These minorities are massively part of the precariat. Indeed, their race and their late integration to the countries usually led them to occupy low-paid positions, short-term contracts and unemployment. They are more inclined to support the call for equality, tolerance and multinational values that the radical left supports.

It is however necessary to use datas in order to precise how the different countries of origin can also play a role in the political subjectivity. For example, in France, people with an eastern background are a counter example and are inclined to vote for the far right. In Germany, the turkish di-

57 <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/wahlergebnisse-volksparteien-laufen-waehler-weg-afd-und-fdp-profitieren-a-1169611.html>.

58 <https://liamchingliu.wordpress.com/2011/04/27/pierre-bourdieu-on-the-left-hand-and-the-right-hand-of-the-government/>.

aspora has a tendency to vote for SPD or the Greens but associate Die Linke to the Kurdish leftist associations that support the party, which could limitate its ability. In France, arab minorities are more inclined to support radical left.

Summary

The radical left electorate is characterized both by its heterogeneity and its optimism. Its electorate is based on a social alliance between parts of popular classes and parts

of precarized “middle classes” (especially the ones with low revenues but high cultural capital). Its optimism protects it against nationalism and intolerant xenophobic discourse.

The main electorate transfer that has vivified the radical left are coming from the failure of social-democrats organisation such as in Greece, France and in another extend Spain, Portugal, Germany. The late gain in terms of electorate also comports neo-voters or non voters who started voting again.

EUROPEAN DOMAINS OF HEGEMONY

It is important to determine what are the domains and thematics that have fully reached a supranational level in the eyes of the “European public opinion” and the reasons behind such a reality. Indeed, it will allow us to understand how to carry out a transnational political discourse, how to achieve hegemony in different domains that are nowadays strictly reserved to national-state prerogative and allow us to avoid the trap of thinking and restricting our left agenda in the national scale.

A few observations with the beginning of our analysis on European domains of hegemony:

1) There is a correlation between the thematics Europeans seen as successes of the EU and their ability to be seen as a necessary supranational scale.

- 2) The social and cultural(from education to healthcare, pensions,..) thematics are the first priorities evoked at the national level but most Europeans do not judge positively the way the EU is acting in this domain and do not want to see the EU in charge of their welfare and care systems. It is a positive sign that they do no trust the neoliberals with such responsibilities, it is a potential for the left.
- 3) The European domains of hegemony are concentrated for the moment on intrinsic supranational political subject (environment, economy,transport, peace...).
- 4) The european priorities according to European’s perspective are dramatically concentrated on identitarian issues (terrorism, migration, islam, security,...).

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

There are a few axis of research that the discussion allowed us to debate. Consequently we believe that there should be integrated in our overall reflection. The main three questions that we believed should be integrated as a common base of exchanges and debate in order to propose more precise answers are the following:

1. The question of overall electoral transferts. In order to propose a genuine political proposition to where potential lies for the radical left, we should have a more profound look at electoral transfers between the populist right and the far left, inside the left, inside the right. If no electorate is to be abandoned, it might precise strategic targets and priorities.
2. The question of neo-voters. There are two categories of new voters that are to be monitored with our best at-

tention. The first one is the new voters that are entering for the first time the electoral body. They are more likely to be youth and newly naturalized. There constitute the core of the new battle for hegemony over the political landscape. The second are abstentionist and people who stopped their participation to the electoral system. They represent a high potential, it is especially common in popular classes. We need to integrate the dynamics of ex non-voters in the potentiel for our electoral social base.

3. The question of origins and multiple identity. We believe that we will shall precise the role identity and ethnicity play in political subjectivity and particularly with its relation to transnational and cosmopolitan values.



The participants of the Seminar in July 2018. Vienna



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