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Master thesis

Populism Versus the Populist Parties

*- An Analysis of the Relationship Between
Ideology and Populism on the Cases of
Fidesz and Syriza*



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Abstract

This is a case study aiming to clarify the potentially outdated focus on the populist features in modern populist parties. By analyzing the right-wing populist party of Fidesz and the left-wing populist party of Syriza the aim is to clarify whether populism as a feature is descriptive enough to illustrate these parties, regardless their ideological stance, or whether ideology should be taken more into account than it tends to do today. To do this, the policies of each party are mapped to distinguish populist similarities, despite their ideological disparity and their differences. The analysis is delimited by the three pillars of civil society: Freedom of Associations, Freedom of Peaceful Assemblies and Freedom of Expression, referred to as the three pillars of civil society. The study shows that the descriptiveness of Fidesz as a right-wing populist party is conformed. However, the policies of Syriza demonstrate a variation of partially right-wing and left-wing populism, but also tendencies of no populism at all in their foreign policies. The descriptiveness of contemporary left-wing populist parties in the case of Syriza is thereby questionable.

Key words

Populism, Ideology, Right-wing populism, Left-wing populism, Civic Space, Fidesz, Syriza, Freedom of association, Freedom of peaceful assembly, Freedom of expression.



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1 The out-dated populist picture

In 1995 Richard Katz and Peter Mair claimed that mass parties on both right and left side of the ideological spectra colluded, thereby gaining power on the cost of the civil society. By this collaboration emerged between the parties, and political power became isolated. Katz and Mair referred to this as *cartelization*, which increased the distance between the state and political parties on one side, and the civil society on the other. From this the ideological differences between the parties dissolved in the eyes of civil society hampering the ability for citizens to distinguish political opinions and thereby excluding the civil society from the democratic arena (Katz & Mair 1995).

Katz and Mair called this the Cartel Party-thesis, which raises questions when applying it on contemporary politics. When Western democratic governments fail to satisfy their, often multifaceted, population's demands democratic values are at risk of de-legitimization. Democracy experiences a hailstorm of criticism from authoritarian states, thereby asking the question whether the traditional Western democracy is the only game in town (Bilodeau 2014; Wallis 1997; Wells 2005).

The condition of politics in democratic states fluctuates naturally. Authoritarian values seem to be more and more validated in modern-day democracies (Norris 2016), risking to expand the latitude for political leaders to act and reduce the people's influence, thereby shrinking the Civic Space. Civic Space connotes to the Cartel party-thesis and refers to the distance between state and civil society. An open Civic Space enhances the opportunities for civil society to engage in political questions, allowing the conditions of politics in democratic states to fluctuate naturally. Populist parties have been deemed as one of the main factors of enhancing authoritarian values and causing a shrinking of the Civic Space (Sida 2018;



Civicus 2018; Transparency International 2019). However, politicians of populist parties claim to be the defenders of the will of the people (Stavrakakis & Katsambekis 2017:394).

Where do these opposing opinions between populist and non-populist parties originate? Should *all* populist parties be considered a cause of this development? Or is the concept of populism in fact misused, risking to neglect their ideological stance, and thereby misleading the political debate regarding the effects of the populist development in Western democracies? As Stavrakakis and Katsambekis (2014:133) put it, “Today, however, evidence mounts that this [populist] picture may be seriously out-dated and that mainstream research orientations in the study of European populism may have to be reviewed”.

1.1 Purpose of the study

Political trends fluctuate as a natural function in a flourishing democratic society, where reactions create counter-actions (Lipset & Rokkan 1990) and changes are possibly more frequent in democratic states compared to authoritarian states due to the pluralistic voices expressing disparities, satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Political scientists and politicians have tried to clarify the concept of populism and in many cases seem to fail in making it more graspable than before. Descriptions of Erdogan’s Justice and Development Party in Turkey, Le Pen’s National Front in France, Geert Wilder’s Party of Freedom in the Netherlands and Putin’s People’s Front Party in Russia, often seem to be considered alike due to their populist feature.

In Lipset and Rokkan’s spirit a potential counter-reaction, perhaps against the strong hold of right-wing populist parties, emerged in southern Europe in the beginning of the 21st century. Left-wing populist parties in Spain and Greece gained ground to such an extent that in Greece the party Syriza won the national election in 2015. These right-wing and left-wing



populist parties seems to a large extent be considered as populists, despite their ideological differences which is risking to confuse the political debate. Or, as Huber and Schimpf (2017:147) claimed “[...] there is little debate whether the postulated relationship between populist parties and democracy is a function of their host ideology, their populist element, or both”. This is illustrating the potentially neglected relationship between the populist party and their host ideology that the Cartel Party-thesis stresses.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is: *To clarify whether populism as a feature is descriptive enough to describe a populist party per se regardless of ideological stance, or whether the ideological definition of the populist party should be taken into greater consideration than it tends to do today.*

From this purpose following hypothesis have been formulated: *The contemporary definition of populist parties exaggerate the descriptiveness of the populist feature and neglect their ideological stance.*

1.2 Research questions

Two relationships have been emphasized so far, *populism and ideology*, as well as *the nature of state and civil society*. So far, this second relationship is largely accentuated through the Cartel Party-thesis, which is formulating that democracy in general stress the connection of the will of the people. The will of the people was the one of the founding ideas of the city-state in Aristotle’s Athens, and will be in this study as well. Within political science, there are some controversies regarding the definitions of “the people”, however, since both Greece and Hungary accept the EU definition of the civil society due to the criteria of their memberships, a problematization of this is not necessary.

Moreover, the foundation of the theoretical framework is based on the democratic values of the EU, where the above-mentioned Civic Space includes most of these values. The three pillars of civil society (1) *Freedom of Association* (2) *Freedom of Peaceful Assembly* and (3) *Freedom of Expression*, are generally considered as fundamental for a functioning civil



society in Western democracies (Former UN Special Rapporteur 2019; Sida 2018; Civicus 2018; Transparency International 2019). Based on this, the following research questions have been formulated:

- 1) In what way has the three pillars of civil society been affected by the politics of Fidesz?
- 2) In what way has the three pillars of civil society been affected by the politics of Syriza?
- 3) Based on the three pillars of civil society, what differences and similarities prevail in the case of Syriza compared to the case of Fidesz?
- 4) Is the contemporary definition of populist parties justified, or is ideology neglected, based on the cases of Fidesz and Syriza?

The theoretical framework of the three pillars of civil society, as will be shown, constitutes major factors for a flourishing civil society, however, they do not make up the object of study in themselves. Policies of political parties are often multifaceted, extensive and exceeding local, regional, national and international policies, which making them very comprehensive, and thus hard to grasp. By this, some sort of limitation needs to be set and, as will be shown later, a limitation of the analysis of populist parties within the framework of civil society therefore falls naturally. Therefore it will be the cases of Fidesz and Syriza that is analysed, through the three pillars of civil society.

Other factors than civil society could of course be used to clarify the descriptive capability of populism on populist parties, nonetheless, civil society's central role in democracies and populist politics motivate this choice.

These research questions will result in either of the following results. First, if the politics of Syriza and Fidesz proves to be more similar to each



other, this indicate that the common denominator of populism has a greater part in each party's politics since they are ideologically separated. This implies a validation of the contemporary definition of populism. However, if the politics of each case to a large extent differentiates, this indicate that each party's ideology influence more than the feature of populism, thereby suggesting that the definition of the parties as populists might be too generalizing. The results will either delegitimize the descriptiveness of populism on populist parties, thereby suggesting that ideology should be taken into greater consideration, or vice versa.

However, since a right-wing and a left-wing populist party are analysed, this will enable the usage of the certain characteristics of right-wing and left-wing populism to separate the cases from each other in the analysis and thereby further specify and validate the result of the study. If, e.g. the analysis of the politics exerted by Fidesz proves to match the description of left-wing populism on certain points, this indicates a deviation in the description of right-wing populism and indicating that the definition of parties as right-wing populists on specific points might be misleading. In the other way around, if the analysis indicates a correspondence to the right-wing description of populism in the case of Fidesz, this indicates that the definition of parties as right-wing populists might be more valid. Naturally, the same goes for the analysis of the Syriza. For specifications see chapter 4.3 *Operationalization*.

Furthermore, the study does not claim populist governments, right-wing or left-wing, to consciously shrink the Civic Space, aggravating the living standards for civil society. Populist parties might have the ambitions to control civil society in an authoritarian manner, in comparison to other democratic parties. However, this does not have to originate in pure malice.

Hence, this study is not mapping general violations by populist parties towards civil society, if that were the case, it would not lead to a better clarification of the concept of populism than current definitions. Rather Civic



Space is solely used as a theoretical framework to map inherent characteristics and highlight the populist features and ideological stance of the populist parties.

2 Previous research

Although the study uses the Cartel party-thesis as a fundament, other scientists influenced this thesis initially. Hence, the next part consists of a review on the research field of party politics.

2.1 Fundamental views of party politics

Three theories recognizes that the Western party politics occasionally stand accused of poor ability representing the people and thus de-legitimizing the way of governing. Robert Michels *Iron law of Oligarchy*, Otto Kirschheimer's *Catch-all party thesis* and Richard Katz and Peter Mairs *Cartel-party thesis*.

2.1.1 The Iron Law of Oligarchy

The idea of interchangeable parties, i.e. that parties adopt politics from other motives than ideology, was noticed during the 19th, and in the beginning of the 20th century, when Tocqueville, Ostrogorski, Weber, and Michels began questioning Western party systems (Lipset & Rokkan 1990:114). Downs defined it as *convergence* (1957), Katz and Mair as *cartelization* (1995), Michels, however, defined this as the Iron law of Oligarchy (1958 [1915]).

By originating in party-organization, Michels defines the relationship between voters and officials as asymmetrical, where voters request channels to be represented through, while officials desires votes to gain power. The outcome is a widening space between party and ideology, where representation erodes as a crucial political reference point and ideology



vanishes. As the officials' power increases, it concentrates within the political elite, and the Iron Law of Oligarchy is fulfilled (Kitchelt 2018:1-5).

2.1.2 The Catch-all Party thesis

The Catch-all party thesis derives from the evolution of party politics post-WWII, emphasizing the development of mass-parties that represented the uprising working class. The integration of an uprising working-class, partly caused by intensified international co-operations, failed in the West. As workers settled in Western Europe the bourgeoisie kept focusing on the social elite, thus neglecting the new class. The interests of the masses conflicted with the interests of the bourgeoisie, and when the working-class grew strong, the bourgeoisie became the exception.

When social standards improved in general, the working-class participated more consistent in political matters, starting to slide alongside the ideological scale. Once faithful masses changed values in conjunction with better living standards and parties adapted to this movement by committing to questions that had fewer ideological differences. As a result, both parties on the left and the right tried to attract new voters, and Catch-all parties emerged (Kirschheimer 1990:50-60).

These Catch-all parties mainly moved towards the center of the political scale, attracting voters weighing between left and right, confident in keeping the voters on the ends of the ideological spectra. Thereby, the ability of the parties to represent “the people” was impaired (Kitchelt 2018:1-2).

2.1.3 The Cartel-party thesis

According to the Cartel party-thesis, traditional mass parties are considered created through Rokkan's and Lipset's above-mentioned idea of reactions and counter-reactions. Injustices towards a certain social group are met by counteractions from political parties, claiming to represent that certain question (Katz & Mair 1995:5-7). By enabling cross-ideological collusion between the western parties, modern party politics has resulted in coercion



rather than a conviction of voters. This has eroded the ideological features of the political parties. By this, civil society stands unrepresented from the cartelized group of state and parties (Katz & Mair 1995:8-16).

Katz and Mair revised the thesis by taking the factor of globalization into account in 2009 by claiming that strengthened international co-operations provided institutions such as the EU, the UN and WTO great influence in decision-making processes. These supranational politics displaced civil society even further away from the state and the political parties, hampering citizen's ability to influence, and further eroded ideology in modern Western political parties (2009:762).

Nonetheless, the Cartel Party-thesis has been questioned. A case study by Hagevi and Enroth, revealed that rather than colluding, Swedish parties are more unveil opposite tendencies (2018:23). The cartelization on the ideological scale proves to be the opposite, the study indicates that disagreements amongst parties have been increasing in Swedish politics (Hagevi & Loxbo 2018:54-57).

This applies to international politics as well, where convergence proves to be rare or non-existent. Nevertheless, social cleavages on economic factors on the right-left scale slightly eroded in the international politics, however, cultural factors polarized even more (Kriesi et. al. 2008:318).

These studies emphasize the relationship between all parties within the Swedish party system. However, this critique is valid in the sense of de-alignment and re-alignment between *different* political parties. Although, this study originates in the debate on solely populist parties, focusing on the difference within various those parties.



2.2 On populism

“I came to see how a noble quest to stop the spread of communism had become blinded to the forces of nationalism and anticolonialism and obsessed with preserving an image of American steadfastness, a tragic cost” (Diamond 2009:3).

A common view of populism permeates this quote where populist politics have endured massive criticism due to the promotion of authoritarian values, which is claimed to threaten democracy.

The next section discusses the concept of populism, first in general, then by distinguishing the ideological characteristics of left-wing contra right-wing populism. The difference will appear rather small on some points. However, the description demonstrates some crucial distinctions to keep in mind in the rest of the study. Within the section some general critiques towards populism are presented, contrasting the views clashing between populism and democracy. Lastly, the relationship between populism and ideology will be discussed. This study holds that populism and ideology should not be considered as equals, however there are those who argue the opposite.

2.2.1 Populism - A general definition

Despite its fashionable using in news media and politics, populism is a well-established feature in politics. The most extreme populist parties vanished post-WWII, meanwhile modern populist parties established 40 years later.

In 1973, at the very beginning of Huntington’s *Third Democratic Wave*, the populist *Danish Progress Party* enters the political arena in Denmark by gaining 15,9 percent of the votes in the national election. In the same year in Norway, the populist *Norwegian Progress Party* obtains 5,0 percent of the votes in the national elections.

These two parties were among the first tendencies of a populist trend pouring throughout Europe. Other populist parties grew strong during the 1980s and 1990s, such as *National Front* in France, the *Freedom Party* in



Austria, *Lega Nord* in Italy, *Republikaner Party* in Germany, *Vlaams Blok* in Belgium and the *Schweizerische Volkspartei* in Switzerland (Zaslove 2004:61-62). All of these are right-wing populist parties, which might partly explain the considerable amount of right-wing populism that has been dominating European politics in the last four decades.

The general approach of populism is as the voice of the people. In a paternalistic, authoritarian manner the people are seen as the underdog, the non-privileged, protected by a strong, charismatic and affable leader. The people are considered as the backbone of the state where the leader is the ideal interpreter of the will of the people. Because of this populist parties prefer people-centered politics where the will of the people is specific and can only be fulfilled through a like-minded identity (Stavrakakis & Katsambekis 2017:394). Populist parties therefore consider themselves to directly reflect the will of the people. Accordingly checks and balances are unnecessary (Huber & Schimpf 2017:149).

Individuals with higher socio-economic stance stands on the opposite side of the people stand the political elite. These are considered unresponsive to the will of the people, not able in taking measures against threats that endangers the unity, integrity and well being of the state. These two are the two poles of civil politics, the good (the people) and evil (the elite), which comprise the moralistic categorization of populism (Stavrakakis & Katsambekis 2017:394; Akkerman et. al. 2014:1327-1328). This moralistic discourse tends to create segregation, polarization and de-legitimization of democracies according to critics of populism (Esen & Yardimci-Geyikçi 2019:446; O'Brien 2015:338-339). However, populist parties claim to represent the direct dissatisfaction by civil society towards democracy per se. Amongst populist critics though dissatisfaction is considered a breeding ground for more populist parties (Akkerman et. al. 2014: 1325).

Populism often uses connotations to a mythical, better past where changes often are seen as the reason for problems that the elite has caused.



According to its critics it is creating even more polarization and populism is accused for hindering pluralism (Esen & Yardimci-Geyikçi 2019:447).

While claiming to represent the people and simultaneously often being centralized in their governance, populist parties are ambiguous in its relationship to democracy (Akkerman et. al. 2014:1328; Stavrakakis & Katsambekis 2014:123). In general populist parties are skeptical towards Western democratic institutions and mediation between institutional bodies, which inheres fundamental aspects of pluralism (Akkerman et. al. 2014:1327).

Lastly, populism developed its in two directions, one emphasizing cultural values, the other emphasizing socio-economic values (O'Brien 2015:343). This is also the core distinction between right-wing and left-wing populist politics.

2.2.2 Right-wing populism

Right-wing populism refers to cultural and ethnic characteristics in its definition of the people. By alluding on nationalism and xenophobia to preserve the state identity the concept of pluralism is challenged. Social prosperity is met by well-defined identities often based on mythical and non-factual images of the own state's origin, (Salmela & von Scheve 2018:436).

The paternalistic approach creates an underdog mentality, where slogans such as "Make America great again" is a means to build an identity around a group, which often is claimed to be stigmatized. The elite are the politically, socially and/or culturally privileged, that benefits on the cost of the people, however, citizens or politicians are not the only ones considered as the elite, but also various out-groups and supranational institutions. These out-groups are enable to enjoy a fruitful life without hard work and not fitting into the given identity (Salmela & von Scheve 2018:440). An example of this is the extreme right-wing populists *Golden Dawn* in Greece, alluding



to threats caused by refugees and religion and claiming that the Greek state has forgotten its original people (O'Brien 2015:344).

2.2.3 Left-wing populism

The resentment, insecurity, and fear that permeated right-wing populism also apply for left-wing populism, although, the references to the identity of the people and the elite differs. In contrast to right-wing populism, left-wing populism does not suggest that culture and ethnicity defines the people. Instead, left-wing populists emphasize socioeconomic factors. In this group the people are those who experienced injustices, foremost considering neoliberal economic politics. Definitions of the elite are politicians and the economic establishment that by severity disadvantage the people, more specifically, neoliberal governments and supranational institutions as the EU, the UN, the World Bank and large-scale companies (Salmela & von Scheve 2018:440). These examples should not be confused with the negative approach of populism in general.

Left-wing populist parties are usually more horizontal and informal than right-wing parties in their party organizational structure (Salmela & von Scheve 2018:445; Huber & Schimpf 2017:146). Even though left-wing populist parties seem to be founded on more democratic values, Huber and Schimpf highlight that the general nature of "Populist parties [...] do not accept political competitions for that they, and only they, are the true representatives of *the people*" (2017:148). In fact, in a comparison between right-wing populists in Europe and the leftist populist governments in Latin America, both sides show "Little respect for the rules of political [as they] foster a moralization of politics (O'Brien 2015:344). Thereof, the authoritarian approach is infused in left-wing populism as well.

2.2.4 Populism as an ideology or a feature

The relationship between populism and ideology is an ever-ongoing circle of definitions. One of the most widely used definitions of populism that claims



that it could be seen as an ideology. However, this is not this study's approach.

Under the paragraph "Defining the Undefinable", Cas Mudde refers to populism as a phenomena of demagogy and opportunism and "[...] an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and by which he argues populist politics could be an expression of the *volonté general* (2004:543). By this, Mudde denotes to populism "As a 'thin-centered ideology', exhibiting a restricted core attached to a narrower range of political concepts" (2004:544).

By this, one of the most used definitions of populism argues for populism as an ideology, yet not. This makes the conviction of populism as either an ideology, or and feature questionable, an uncertainty which this study's purpose partly is based upon. In the same manner that populism could be seen as an ideology, parties with differing ideologies could be seen as populists since those more centralized on the ideological scale prevail populist characteristics.

For example, the Social Democrats in Sweden more or less dominated Swedish politics during the second half of the 20th century, enjoying strong affable leaders such as former Prime Minister Olof Palme. The Social Democrats governed with the majority during long periods, centralized in their organization, especially during the 1950s (Loxbo 2013), which created a national identity of neutrality. The same contradictions are described on populism where populist parties claim to have affable leaders, while simultaneously being centralized in its politics, personalized in their organizations and alluding to a common identity.

The point is not to depict the Social Democrats as populists, but populist tendencies seem to exist within parties over the whole ideological spectra, making the definition of populism as an ideology problematic. Or as



Ralf Dahrendorf puts it “the one’s populism, is the other one’s democracy, and vice versa” (2003:156).

The connection between populism and ideology proves to be, if not non-existing, at least vague, hence, this study defines ideology as a “[...] total, closed and cohesive view of human beings in a society” (Akkerman 2003:150), considering populism as a feature that uses contradictions of right and wrong, people versus elite, us versus them, referring to common sense and moral and simplified solutions in complex questions. Thereby not as an ideology, which according to this study, is seen as a set of beliefs, upon which political parties are founded.

2.3 On democracy

“In the relationship between state and civil society, the nature of the regime is the key in determining what civil society actors will deem to be acceptable.”

(O’Brien 2015: 342).

So far the first of the two relationships in this study have been discussed, ideology and populism. The next step is a discussion regarding the second relationship, the nature of state and civil society. The introduction gave a hint of the significance of a strong civil society in a strengthening democracy. However, this only applies when considering a democracy as the most preferable type of governance.

As stressed in the introduction, both Greece and Hungary are members of the EU, a membership founded on inherent democratic rules. Larry Diamond in *The Spirit of Democracy: the Struggle to Build Free Societies Throughout the World* (2009) encompasses one of the most noticed democratic theories in political science. Consequently, this is used when defining civil society.

This, of course, does not instinctively suggest the theory for being flawless, however, with the support of the three pillars of civil society, it will comprise a solid ground to build a theory upon. Democratic values by this



involves the foundation of the study's definition of civil society, hence both need to be discussed, beginning with democracy.

2.2.5 On enhancing democracy

According to Diamond, in order for a democracy to flourish, political culture is necessary in accomplishing favorable conditions for participation of civil society are required.

Firstly, a foundation of knowledge and information is essential, where access to information will provoke conflicts of interest, thus invoking importance of equal rights for the multifaceted population to express opinions (Diamond 2009:22, 153-157). Civil society needs to be independent of the state, meaning that civil society should no be dependent of state resources to organize and act collectively and thereby defending and promoting opinions. Civil society actors, individual citizens, NGOs, think tanks, etc., are audits of the state enhancing social and economic injustices (Diamond 2009:157-160). Diamond highlights diversity within the political management, emphasizing the nature and quality of the institutions to sustain a high-quality democracy. This refers to a great variety of representation in democratic institutions, for example opportunities for all citizens to study at university (2009:160-165). Finally, Diamonds stress accountability and the rule of law, referring to equality before the law, a neutral judiciary that is free from political or elitist influence (2009:165-166).

These factors not only refer to the right for organizations and interest groups to gather members and demonstrate but also a tolerance towards political, ethnic, racial and similar social differences. The next section will connect the relationship between the nature of state and civil society.

2.2.6 On enhancing civil society

The latitude for civil society to act has continuously been restricted in democracies since the 1990s (Poppe et. al. 2017:470). This inheres a



restricted funding of civil society organizations, stricter qualifications for state approval of civil society actions, state prosecutions against NGO's and coercion to channel organizational funding through the state (Pope et. al. 2017:742).

Civil society is a fundamental contributor to the stimulation of social participation, activation of resources and sharing of information. Through these intermediate associations problems, identities and opinions emerges (Rondinella et. al. 2017:959, 965; Parvin 2018:42). These problems, identities, and opinions develop civic awareness, stimulate cooperation, acknowledge conflicting interests and provoke mutual understanding between citizens (Rondinella et. al. 2017:965). Notice the parallel junction between a pluralistic climate of opinions in the civil society and the above-mentioned factors such as the access to information creating conflicts of interests. This in turn enhances democracy. Institutions of civil society is constituted by e.g. associations, book-circles, sports clubs or acting groups, as well as political actors connected politics. By this civil society is an autonomous body, pressuring political elites into change on an everyday basis (Foley & Edwards 1996:45-46).

States with weak civil societies leave no room for information or to express problems, prohibiting citizens to create various interests, opinions and identities. This jeopardizes the acceptance of other opinions, which in turn creates polarization of civil society, decreasing its possibilities to become audits of the state (Foley & Edwards 1996:46; Putnam 2003:324; Parvin 2018:32; Esen & Yardimci-Geyikçi 2019:447). Therefore, "The strength and responsiveness of a democracy may depend upon the character of its civil society [...] reinforcing both the democratic functioning and the strength of the state. But such effects depend upon prior achievements of both democracy and a strong state" (Foley & Edwards 1996:47).

Strong democracies endure due to a flourishing political culture, which consists when civil society access various sources of information. Civil



society is in this case independent of the state, with prolific organizations, and supported by the state where all citizens, regardless ethnicity, social status or alike are included. An independent judiciary provides possibilities of making all instances of the state equal before the law. The thriving political culture will cease to exist. If civil society is restricted, state funding's indented and organizations require state approval to be established. The people will unite under the impression of only one truth, stagnating fluctuant political trends and shrinking Civic Space.

3 Theory

So far, fundamental views of party politics in Western Democratic Party systems have been discussed. Furthermore, the general idea of populism and the differences between right-wing and left-wing populism as well as the study's standpoint regarding the relationship between ideology and populism have been identified. Furthermore, the relationship between the nature of the state and civil society have been stressed, therefore it is suitable to proceed to the theory.

Authoritarian governments obstruct the flourishing of civil society compared to democracies. Populist governments appear to be considered as a part of this problem, no matter ideological stance. To exam this, Civic Space will be used as an outline, while policies of Fidesz and Syriza will be analysed within the framework the three pillars of civil society. However, first Civic Space needs to be presented, hence the following section.

3.1 On Civic Space

Populist leaders win support by picturing threats of different sorts and citizens experience a threat from the democratic system, impersonated by the political elite (Transparency International 2019). Meanwhile, Jan-Werner Müller (2016) distinguishes a characteristic of populism as generally



suppressing civil society. Transparency International describes this relationship between populism, Civic Space and democracy as “The Populism Paradox”,

Civic Space is essential for any open democratic society, enabling citizens and organizations to act without unfair or disproportional restrictions. Furthermore it ensures a flourishing political culture and, in a civil society one can express opinions and gaining influence over political and social structures. In turn, when opinions are restricted, this implicitly evokes intolerance towards groups stressing those opinions.

According to *Civicus*, a global umbrella organization for civil society organizations, Civic Space is the foundation for any open and democratic society, creating opportunities to organize, participate and communicate without interference. It safeguards the capability to affect political and social structures within the state. Neither organizations, nor citizens are able to act when information is controlled, private matters become state matters and cronyism and elitism obstruct the expression of will among the people. In preventing this, the state must uphold the three pillars of civil society: *Freedom of Association, Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Freedom of Expression* (Civicus 2019).

The connection between populism and civil society risks reducing checks and balances centralizing the governance of the state and thereby constituting the risk of shrinking the Civic Space. However, is this generalizable to all populist parties? The three pillars of civil society encompass the essence for a strong civil society and thus a strong democracy.

In 2006 Civic Space was for the first time acknowledged to shrink and was distinguished through the repression of civil society organizations. It was described as a backlash of democracy in regimes in democratic transition. Back then the phenomena was not regarded as a threat towards



democracy, however, in 2016 six out of seven lived in societies where Civic Space was repressed (Buyse 2018:970; Aho & Grinde 2017:6).

In upcoming sections, each pillar of Civic Space is described in detail, starting with the Freedom of Association.

3.1.1 Freedom of Association

This refers to the right for any citizen to join formal or informal groups to realize collective actions, more precisely the right to form a new or join an existing group without limitations. In Diamond's point of view, this is described as a prolific organizational life, regardless of social or ethnic heritage. In a democratic manner, such associations can be e.g. clubs, cooperatives, NGOs, religious associations, political parties, trade unions, foundations, online associations or social movements. Furthermore, for Civic Space to thrive there should be no requirements for associations to be registered for this freedom to apply, independence of civil society must be respected by the state.

Additionally, civil society needs to have the right accessing funding and resources without monitoring by the state and citizens should not be compelled to join any association. Furthermore states should be obliged taking positive measures establishing and maintaining associations in a flourishing organizational environment. State funding is an important resource in the democratic view of civil society, however, the independence from the state remains. This stresses the demand of independence from the state stressed by Diamond.

Moreover, states should refrain from unduly obstructing associations exercising this freedom and hence respect the privacy of associations. States may place legal restrictions on associations, however, these restrictions must meet necessity in democratic societies regarding national security or public safety and/or order, protection of public health and/or morals, or the



protection of the rights and freedoms of others (Former UN Special Rapporteur 2019; Civicus 2019).¹

Therefore, the independence of the civil society towards the state must not be obstructed on ambiguous grounds by the state as Diamond puts it. If, as Foley and Edwards, Putnam and Parvin highlighted in *On enhancing civil society*, authoritarian states de-legitimize civil society polarization is at risk. Where those opposing the general acceptance within the state are excluded. When populist states exclusively acknowledge associations and assemblies fitting the nation's identity it might jeopardize the responsiveness from civil society as the audit of the state.

In preventing this from happening, opportunities to question those obstructing must exist, which requires the rule of law. This description leads up to the following six criteria for fulfilling the Freedom of Association:

Appendix 1

Freedom of Association
<i>Possibilities to:</i>
Join or form a new formal or informal association
No obligations of registration of an association
Positive state measures towards associations
Respect of privacy of associations
Fair restrictions prescribed by law
No compulsion to join associations

¹ All information above in this paragraph is gathered from (Former UN Special Rapporteur 2019) and (Civicus 2019). Two sources with same information are used to validate the relevance of the theory.



3.1.2 Freedom of Peaceful Assembly

This refers to the right for citizens to gather, publicly or privately, and collectively express, promote, pursue and/or defend common interests. When referring to an assembly its including meetings, protests, strikes, sit-ins, demonstrations and other similar temporary peaceful gatherings in a specific peaceful purpose. As Diamond stressed, this requires a mutual acceptance of pluralism, approving various opinions and evoking conflicts of interests.

Democratic states must protect and take positive measures to facilitate peaceful assemblies, and states may not limit assemblies based on race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinions, national or social origin, property, place of birth or any other socioeconomic status.

However, the Freedom of Peaceful Assembly is not absolute, but state prohibitions must meet necessity in the interests of national security or public safety, public order, protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others, however, Freedom of Peaceful Assembly must be the rule, not the exception. This, as Diamond emphasize, requires accountability towards rule of law. International law should protect *peaceful* assemblies and the peaceful intentions of those should be prioritized (Former UN Special Rapporteur 2019; Civicus 2019).²

Once again, this freedom advocates that a strong rule of law is essential to legitimize the assemblies. From this, the following four criteria for fulfilling the pillar of Freedom of Peaceful Assembly have been designed:

² All information above in this paragraph is gathered from (Former UN Special Rapporteur 2019) and (Civicus 2019). Two sources with same information are used to validate the relevance of the theory.



Appendix 2

Freedom of Peaceful Assembly
<i>Possibilities of:</i>
Participation in public or private gatherings for common interests
States measures to protect and facilitate peaceful assemblies
Assemblies no matter social or ethnic status
Restrictions by law that meet necessity and proportionality

3.1.3 Freedom of Expression

As Diamond also stress, this includes the right to access information. This enables civil society to critically evaluate and express discomfort regarding policies and actions of state and non-state actors. Here, free access to the Internet comprises a major source of information as well as a medium to express opinions. Also, it includes the right to publicly draw attention to, and carry out actions without fear of any kind of retribution. This facilitates civil society to promote and defend opinions as Diamond puts it. Thereby, civil society must be assured to carry out investigations and document findings (Former UN Special Rapporteur 2019; Civicus 2019).³ Furthermore, the independence of the civil society is once again emphasized, contradicting the features of populism in the case of disapproval towards pluralism. From this, following four criteria for fulfilling the Freedom of Expression have been formulated:

³ All information above in this paragraph is gathered from (Former UN Special Rapporteur 2019) and (Civicus 2019). Two sources with same information are used to validate the relevance of the theory.



Appendix 3

Freedom of Expression
<i>Possibilities of:</i>
Access to information
Evaluation and statements of state and/or non-state actors
Advocate and carry out public actions without fear of retribution
Carrying out investigations, collect official documents and document findings

4 Research method

The next part will clarify the methodology of the study, followed by a discussion on the cases. After this the operationalization of the study is presented, as well as the demarcations and lastly a discussion on the material.

4.1 Methodology

To fulfill its purpose the study attempt to rerun political actions of each case, but changes their conditions in the analysis. This is done by using cases as similar to each other on as many factors as possible, while changing a commonly accepted explanatory variable with a postulated explanatory variable. Since the hypothesis claim that ideology is neglected and the contemporary definitions overestimate the commonly accepted populist features, the new explanatory variable becomes ideology. Thereof, ideology is the independent variable of the study and populism the dependent. From this, the result can either confirm or deny the relevance of ideology in contrast to populism. If the independent variable proves to not have the effect that the hypothesis suggests, the commonly accepted explanatory variable of populism stands fast (Esaiasson et. al. 2012:91-93).



Since the appearance of left-wing populism in democratic states still appear to be rare the amount of cases are rather restricted. Under such conditions a most-similar systems design is appropriate. This design is also appropriate due to the massive amount of research material in contrast to the time and space of this study, as well as the rather unexplored field of especially left-wing populism. Overall, the ambition is to add additional contributions to the discussion on populist parties, which makes most-similar systems design preferable (Esaiasson et. al 2012:101).

Intrinsically, this suggests that the more similar the cases are, the more reliable is the result (Esaiasson et. al. 2012:91-93). A starting point when conducting a study of most-similar systems design, the choice of cases is crucial, hence the next part.

4.2 The cases

To conduct such a study, the choice of cases must be homogenous, i.e. similar on other possibly relevant independent variables except on the independent explanatory variable of ideology. This suggests that the cases should be strategically chosen, where other variables that could be explanatory are ruled out, such as differing judicial factors, economic dissimilarities etc. except the concerning independent variable, ideology. This rules out the corresponding independent variables, while ideology remains relevant (Esaiasson et. al. 2012:102).

The fact that the cases of the study need to be homogenous naturally brings complications, how do you to ensure that the cases are homogenous enough? Since two entirely homogenous cases are more or less impossible to find (Esaiasson et. al. 2012:103), a justification regarding the choice of cases is preferable.



4.2.1 A justification on the choice of cases

Some major similarities between the cases justify the selection. First, both countries are EU members, implying that both cases comply with the same regional judiciary. This is prohibiting the cases to differ to a larger extent on a judicial basis. Second, populism is critical to western democratic institutions, motivating the choice of cases since both are members of the EU.

Moreover, in his democratization studies, Diamond stresses that steady economic development is fundamental in preserving democracy and in preventing the postulated effect of populist politics of cronyism and centralization of power. In turn, possibilities of embracing self-expression values will enhance amongst civil society (Diamond 2009:98-101). This validates the importance of economic equality even further between the cases since Civic Space comprises the theoretical framework.

Hence, the cases are similar in their economic status. Greece performs slightly better, having a GDP/capita of \$18,071 (Freedomhouse 2018a), and Hungary GDP/capita \$12,484 (Freedomhouse 2018b). Third, Syriza and Fidesz accompanied by the Five Star Movement are the top three strongest populist parties in Europe (Timbro 2019).

4.3 Operationalization

The purpose of this study is to clarify whether populism as a feature is descriptive enough to describe a populist party *per se*, regardless of ideological stance, or whether the ideological definition of the populist parties should be taken into greater consideration than it tends to do today.

If the result of each of the first two questions, 1) *In what way has the three pillars of civil society been affected by the politics of Fidesz?* And 2) *In what way has the three pillars of civil society been affected by the politics of Syriza?*”, which leads to the third question 3) *Based on the three pillars of civil society, what differences and similarities prevail in the case of Syriza*



compared to the case of Fidesz?, tend to have more similarities than differences, this suggests that the contemporary populist definition of Fidesz and Syriza as populists is justified. Meanwhile, if the result indicates that there are more differences than similarities, this points towards a neglecting of the ideological stance in the contemporary definition of populism.

In the analysis, these political ambitions of each case will be coupled to the features of the general view of populism, both right-wing populism and left-wing populism. As established in the introduction, the distinction of left and right within the populist feature is an appropriate indicator of an ideological affection amongst the populist parties, and, therefore the more ideological characteristics of populism can be used as a reference when comparing the cases.

Hence, if e.g. the politics of Syriza prove to differ from the politics of Fidesz, and show tendencies of embracing the features of left-wing populism, this will provide an additional indicator, increasing the relevance in the ideological factor of that specific case. However, if the politics of Syriza show tendencies of embracing the features of right-wing populism, or the general description of populism, this points at lesser ideological affection in its politics. This in turn enhances the descriptiveness of populism.

However, if the politics of Syriza differ from the politics of Fidesz, and indicates right-wing populist tendencies, this will imply a flaw in the definition of populist parties, motivating further studies on the topic. Either way, this will answer the question three and four, thereby fulfilling the purpose of this study (Esaiasson et. al. 2012:107).

The result of the analysis will be summarized in tables in the end of each part, listing the number of positive respectively negative affected criteria, as well as number of positive and negative actions each case have conducted based on the three pillars. These will be used to ease the analysis, providing an overview when answering the third and fourth research question.



4.4 Demarcations

The choice of using solely two cases is foremost due to the scope of time and space in the study. A study with several cases would require a various amount of analyses, this since a comparison of western democracies with parties like Fidesz and Syriza compared with cases of e.g. the left-wing populists in Venezuela, would be unreliable and lack validity due to differing national and the regional conditions (Esaiasson et. al. 2012:101; George & Bennett 2005:80). By this, a result proving differences between the cases is not generalizable to other cases, but proves to be so in this study. However, since the nexus between populism and ideology seems to be relatively untested, it will provide a hint of whether more intensified testing is necessary, invigorating the relevance of the study. George and Bennett refer to this as a *plausibility probe* (2005:75).

Also, the time frame differs between the cases. Concerning Fidesz, the analysis is between 2010 to present time, while the analysis of Syriza is mainly conducted between 2015 to present time. The choices of these periods are based on the time in the government of each party. The point of this study is not to identify politics to be left-wing contra right-wing populist parties, but to indicate tendencies of the descriptiveness of populism in populist parties. This suggests two things. First, the problem of estimating to what exact level each party found their politics on populism contra ideology becomes even less relevant. Since it is tendencies that are of interest, the distinction between “ideology-based politics”, “populist-based politics” or simply “both” are good enough to prove tendencies (Esaiasson et. al. 2012:143-144). This means that if the populist feature does not fit the politics of one or both cases, one could assume that ideology should be taking into greater consideration. Thereby implying that populism is not descriptive enough, or vice versa, and fulfilling the purpose of this study.

Second, both Syriza and Fidesz where acting in periods of greatest political power, in their in-time government. This is presumably when both



cases pleading most of their political ambitions. However, compared to Syriza, Fidesz has gained greater political influence and governed for twice as long time, increasing the risk of making a comparison of actions during the same period of time less reliable.

4.5 Material

This study is mainly using secondary sources through scientific articles, which is in some cases considered as a problem of bias. However, once again, there are tendencies and not specific political implementations that are of interest. The potential problem of contemporaneity in the analysed material when using secondary sources should not become an actual problem, since it is not, once again the change over time that is of interest in this analysis, but the tendencies each case show of being affected by ideology contra populism in their politics. Thereof, scientific articles are considered, especially due to the rich amount of material existing in the case of Fidesz, as valid to conduct this study. To increase the validity of the study, the differing time span of governance will be complemented by the latest ambitions of Syriza through their manifesto, press releases, speeches, and articles, backed up by scientific articles, providing an as fair analysis of Syriza as possible. The main empirical part of the analysis of Fidesz consists of scientific articles. The primary reason for this is due to the access of unpublished material on Fidesz's affection on the democratic values of the EU (see Andersson & Petersson 2018), consisting mainly of scientific articles.

5 Analysis

Next, each analysis will begin with a short background on the history of each case. Then the cases will be analyzed separately, answering the first two research questions "In what way has the three pillars of civil society been



affected by the politics of Fidesz?” and “In what way has the three pillars of civil society been affected by the politics of Syriza?”.

5.1 The history of Fidesz

Fidesz was established as a left-liberal party, attracting followers from young, urban educated voters, with the motto “Don’t trust anyone over 35”, the maximum age for its members until 1993. In the beginning of the 1990s, the Fidesz recognized problems of being a left-liberal party since most voters were voting for the Alliance of Free Democrats. The right side, on the other hand, gave opportunities in gaining power in the politics of Hungary, where the rightist Hungarian Democratic Forum started to loose its role as the leading party.

In the late 1990s, the position was virtually open and Fidesz filled out the space. Fidesz had transformed from a liberal leftist party to a right-center party during just a few years. In the 2010 free and (more or less) fair democratic election (Transparency International 2014) Fidesz convincingly won, which provided Fidesz influence over the Constitutional Court. After this, the Hungarian policy field has been adjusted on several fields (Rupnik, 2012:132).

5.2 In what way has the three pillars of civil society been affected by the politics of Fidesz?

In the 2018 national elections, Fidesz won 49 percent of the votes, providing Fidesz a two-thirds majority in the national parliament (Transparency International 2018). Since the fall of the Soviet Union, there has been a concern that the two-third majority requested being able to adjust the constitution is a too low set limit in Hungarian politics. By Fidesz electoral victory in 2010, the election-law transformed the result of 53 percent into a 68 percent majority in the parliament (Bánkuti, Halmai, Scheppele, 2012:138-139). This limit was lowered even further during 2011 by



implementing a new electoral law, with no consulting or support from the parliament. It was solely founded on the ambitions from Fidesz members that lead to that 45 percent of the votes would provide a two-third majority in the parliament (Bogaards, 2018:1485).

By increasing the power of, and centralizing, the power to Fidesz, the centralizing approach of power in the general definition of populism prevails. Several implementations by Fidesz affecting the Civic Space reveals at first when changing the electoral law, giving Fidesz increased power. It demonstrates ignorance towards checks and balances which is a superfluous function of western institutions according to the general populist approach. Moreover, this decreases the legitimacy of the judicial system and concentrating power to Fidesz.

Fidesz showed no ambitions enhancing the checks and balances but rather took advantage of the judicial flaws that gave opportunities to seize influence in parliament. Hence, in terms of Freedom of Association, the criteria *Fair restrictions by law* and the Freedom of Peaceful Assembly's criteria of *Restrictions by law that meet necessity and proportionality* are restricted, invoking of the independence of courts.

Between 2010 and 2012 the premises of nominating judges in the Constitutional Court have been changed by Fidesz (Bugarcic & Ginsburg, 2016:73). This was followed by a new constitution designed by Fidesz officials with no possibilities of reviewing the decision (Kornai, 2015:35). After abruptly being implemented the constitution has been modified seven times in five years (Bogaards, 2018:1488), and the passage of close to 350 new bills have been implemented (Rupnik, 2012:132).

Several criteria in the Freedom of Expression are infringed by these actions as *Evaluations and statements of state and/or non-state actors*, where an examination of bills and constitutional change enacted unhampered. By this, Fidesz offends *Access to information*, leading to a restriction for organizations *Carrying out investigations, collect official documents and*



document findings due to lack of information. Also, this violated the criteria of *Advocate and carry out public actions without fear of retribution*, prohibiting civil society to utter opinions by not being aware of the governmental actions. Hence, the party's governance infringed all four criteria. Also, Freedom of Peaceful Assembly was violated by withholding information aggravating the possibilities for citizens to *Participate in public or private gatherings for common interests*. By discriminating against the rule of law and Checks and Balances the general feature of populism in centralization and paternalism prevail once again in the politics of Fidesz.

The local self-control has been decreased due to the above-mentioned monopolizing of power (Bogaards, 2018:1488). This could be seen as an attempt to unite the identity of the people by restricting self-control. However, the critics of populism claims that this increases the risk of polarization, thereby questioning pluralism by controlling the ability for citizens on a local level to utter differing opinions.

In influential institution's key officials have been superseded, weakening Checks and Balances, and officials in semi-autonomous Prosecutor-General's Office, the Electoral Commission, the State Audit Office, the Fiscal Council, the State Media, and the Constitutional Court were exchanged by mostly officials loyal to Fidesz, infringing the monitoring privileges of for example, the Constitutional Court against the government (Bugarcic & Ginsburg, 2016:70; Krekó & Enyedi, 2018:42; Kornai 2015:39; Jenne & Mudde, 2012:148; Bánkuti, Halmai, Scheppele, 2012:140). These infractions of institutions have affected the legitimacy of e.g. the Ombudsman-system, otherwise expertise on human rights. Instead, a new office has been launched, consisting of a certain degree of Fidesz officials (Bánkuti, Halmai, Scheppele, 2012:144). The Hungarian state now consists of policies combining statism, economic nationalism, crony protectionism, and neoliberalism (Bozóki 2015:14).



New laws have to some extent prohibited the Constitutional Court in commenting on the new budget and tax laws. By this, Fidesz is left unmonitored, executing new economic policies. For example, the nationalizing of private pensions, once again a centralizing of power, indicating an authoritarian ambition of governance. Instead, a Budget Council was established where one out of three members were chosen directly by Fidesz. The Budget Council has a veto right, and, if an annual budget proposal is not presented before May 31, the Prime Minister holds the right to dissolve parliament (Bánkuti, Halmai & Scheppele, 2012:139-140, 144).

The direct link to the Prime Minister points at a glorification of the leader in the general populist ambition of depicting the party's leader as affable. Also, by excavate out these institutions, the populist coupling to the people serves no function and civil society's role as an audit of the state is de-legitimized and thereby threatening the Civic Space. Major parts of the state apparatus are exposed by these changes, most distinctly distinguished in the Freedom of Expression in the criteria to *Advocate and carry out public actions without fear of retribution* and *Carrying out investigations, collect official documents and document findings*. This is risking being biased benefitting Fidesz. This ignorance towards the judicial system also points at disrespect towards both the Freedom of Association and the Freedom of Peaceful Assembly in the criteria of *Fair restrictions prescribed by law* and *Restrictions by law that meet necessity and proportionality*.

The above-mentioned new constitution resulted in a lower age of retirement for the judges in the countries courts, including most of the presidents of the country's courts. The European Commission accused Hungary of age discrimination and won the case, although, the former judges were not reinstated, but substituted by Fidesz loyalists (Bugarcic & Ginsburg, 2016:77).



Fidesz has violated Freedom of Expression, creating like-minded truths in the politics of Hungary and a new national identity. By this pluralism is denied and the criteria to *Advocate and carry out public actions without fear of retribution* is violated, risking to affect less influential groups as minorities. Moreover, this also decreases opportunities for groups opposing state opinions to promote ideas through *Assemblies no matter social or ethnic status* in Freedom of Peaceful Assemblies.

Officially it is not illegal for other assemblies to utter controversial opinions about the state. However, the legitimacy is restricted by the disparaged view of pluralism, confining the will of the multifaceted people to a higher degree. And with a populist touch by Fidesz, they claim to act in the common good for the people. This inheres to an idea, as established in the chapter on populism, that only like-minded people can make it possible for the state to act in the people's interest.

In turn, this violates two of the pillars, first by redefining the idea of common interest, since the common interest is only channeled through the state. The criteria of *Participation in public or private gatherings for common interests* is infringed, as well as *Assemblies no matter social or ethnic status*. Also, possibilities to gather alternative information becomes restricted in the sense that state matters only provides one channel of information regarding state matters which is shrinking the possibilities of *Access to information*. Also, the possibilities of *Evaluation and statements of state/non-state actors* is restricted, obtaining means for the common interest. This is also a hint of a restriction of public means towards associations, i.e. *Positive state measures towards associations* for associations.

Fidesz also affects the media economically by restricting independent news bureaus and making it costly to run and difficult to broadcast due to bad frequencies (Kornai, 2015:40). This has made Hungary's freedom of



press worst in the EU (Bogaards, 2018:1486), where Fidesz controls approximately 90 percent of the media (Transparency International, 2018).

All four criteria in Freedom of Expression are infringed *Access to information*, as well as the possibility of *Carrying out investigations, collect official documents and document findings, Advocate and carry out public actions without fear of retribution* and *Evaluations and statements of state and/or non-state actors*. Also Freedom of Peaceful Assembly, *Participation in public or private gatherings for common interests* is infringed.

The control over media once again points at an ambition to unite the people under a singular truth, excluding the opportunities for citizens to gather oppositional information and thereby acting in the general populist manner.

There are opportunities for religious freedom in the new constitution, however, it refers to Christianity and advocates its role in preserving the nationhood (Freedom House 2018c). Fidesz's has ambitions to build an "old-school Christian democracy, rooted in European traditions", referring to the 1870s, sought to infix moral guidance to the people by religion, which also should serve as a shield against socialism (Lloyd, 2018:32-33).

This preference of Christianity indicates infringements on the Freedom of Peaceful Assembly, where *Assemblies no matter social or ethnic status and States measure to protect*. Also, the Freedom of Association, more precisely the criteria to *Join or form a new formal or informal association, No compulsion to join associations*, as well as *Respect of privacy of associations*, is challenged.

However, Hungary "is one of the least religious countries in Europe", meaning it could also be seen as a tactic against the liberal, pro-EU intelligentsia in Hungary (Lloyd, 2018:32-33). Nonetheless, once again Fidesz demonstrates an ambition of instituting ethnic and cultural values of right-wing populism in their politics.



Furthermore, by alluding crises within the EU and Western politics, Fidesz tends to express its politics through general populist, paternalistic and protectionist values promoting identity politics. By amplifying hierarchical values the Social Capital is decreasing and thereby hampering the ability to build a pluralistic society (Krekó & Enyedi 2018:41). The examples mention above are all core characteristics of right-wing populism.

This is expressed in Fidesz's attitude regarding the refugee-crisis, where Christianity and the nationhood are considered threatened by the Muslim refugees (Bogaards, 2018:1487). This is pointing at the populist identity politics, depicting a threat towards the identity, which in turn might invoke polarization.

Furthermore, general populist paternalistic acts unveil in e.g. threats towards civilians and organizations accusing the government to break laws in the constitution. Therefore, Freedom of Expression is controlled by a "keep a low profile and obey mentality" (Kornai, 2015:37), nonetheless, prosecutions by courts are unusual (Freedom House 2018c; Kornai, 2015:48).

These are acts restricting Freedom of Expression in the criteria *Advocate and carry out public actions without fear of retribution*. Also, the Freedom of Peaceful Assemblies is violated in the criteria of *Participation in public or private gatherings for common interests*, *States measures to protect and facilitate peaceful assemblies*, *Assemblies no matter social or ethnic status* and *Restriction by law that meets necessity and proportionality*. Furthermore, the Freedom of Association is restricted as well, where possibilities to *Join or form a new formal or informal association*, *Positive state measures towards associations*, *Respect of the privacy of associations* and *fair restrictions prescribed by law* are violated.

Some organized protests have been conducted during Fidesz governance, although these protests are considered antagonistic markers not affecting Fidesz's political ambitions (Jenne & Mudde, 2012:152-153), pointing at regulated possibilities in the Freedom of Peaceful Assemblies in



the criteria of *Participation in public or private gatherings for common interests*. However, this does not seem to affect Fidesz, perhaps because of the strictly united ambitions in government, parliament, and courts, also tending to infringe Freedom of Peaceful Assembly in the criteria of *State measures to protect and facilitate peaceful assemblies*.

Some independent NGOs, civil society organizations and associations have had a function of scrutiny in Hungary and uttering criticism towards the abuses of power by Fidesz. This has resulted in, for example, the exclusion of civil society in drafting new parliamentary bills, where trade unions, organizations and some other political parties have been ostracized (Kornai 2015:37). Also, foreign-funded NGOs met intensified thwarting by the government, including EU sanctioned NGOs (Transparency International 2018).

By this, some tendencies of positive measures towards NGOs prevail in Freedom of Association in the criteria *Positive state measures towards associations*. However, the migration of NGOs in Hungary is more and more common (Bogaards, 2018:1486). Here the criteria *Positive state measures towards associations*, *Respect of privacy of associations* and *Fair restrictions prescribed by the law* of the Freedom of Associations are violated.

Fidesz has been trying to attempt to implement an Internet tax, but was met by massive protests (Kornai 2015:40). In 2017 Hungary stands slightly below the average in Internet consumption, but is according to the European Commission improving its broadband access (European Commission 2017).

This indicates some improvement of the criteria of *Access to information* and proves to be fulfilling the criteria of *Participation on public or private gatherings for common interests* in the Freedom of Peaceful Assembly.

Also, Fidesz has unveiled ambitions to centralize the political arena based on ethnicity, politically homogenizing a national culture (Bozóki, 2015:13). The constitutional law illegalizes domestic violence;



however, rape only comprises violence or coercion, not the absence of consent. Thereby, women rights are discriminated. The constitution does not forbid gay marriage, however, it does urge the marriage between a man and a woman is advocated (Freedom House 2018c).

This points at an offense towards the Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and the criteria of *Assemblies no matter social or ethnic status*. Also, this indicates some typical right-wing populist ambitions, alluding more intensively on an ethnical and cultural basis, rather than a left-wing, socioeconomic, basis.⁴

Appendix 4

Freedom of Association	Number of positive measures	Number of negative measures
Join or form a new formal or informal association	0	2
No obligations of registration of an association	0	0
Positive state measures towards associations	1	3
Respect of privacy of associations	0	3
Fair restrictions prescribed by law	0	4
No compulsion to join	0	1

⁴ The main part of the analysis is based on unpublished material (Andersson & Petersson 2018). See references.



associations		
Number of affected criteria:	1	6
Number of actions identified affecting the criteria	1	13

Appendix 5

Freedom of Peaceful Assembly	Number of positive measures	Number of negative measures
Participation in public or private gatherings for common interests	1	5
States measures to protect and facilitate peaceful assemblies	0	3
Assemblies no matter social or ethnic status	0	5
Restrictions by law that meet necessity and proportionality	0	3
Number of affected criteria:	1	4
Number of actions identified affecting the criteria:	1	16

Appendix 6



Freedom of Expression	Number of positive measures	Number of negative measures
Access to information	1	3
Evaluation and statements of state and/or non-state actors	0	3
Advocate and carry out public actions without fear of retribution	0	5
Carrying out investigations, collect official documents and document findings	0	3
Number of affected criteria:	1	4
Number of actions identified affecting the criteria:	1	14

5.3 The history of Syriza

Greece has had populist governments before the rise of Syriza. After seven years of military dictatorship Greece became a democracy in 1974 and shortly after that, during the 1980's, the left-wing populist party PASOK dominated Greek politics on and off until present day. However, PASOK's political agenda gradually drifted away from the left-wing approach, turning to neo-liberalism after 2010 (Stavrakakis & Katsambekis 2014:124; Aslanidis & Kaltwasser 2016:1078).

In the empty space on the left flank the *Coalition of Radical Left*, Syriza, rose comprising a mix of over ten parties. The Coalition of the Left



and the Green and Social Movement (SYN) comprised the major parts, although eleven other extra-parliamentary parties and groups, such as Trotskyists and Maoists joined the coalition (Agnantopoulos & Lambiri 2015:6).

On January 25th in 2015 Syriza won the Greek national elections by 36,3 percent, two seats from a majority in parliament. This electoral success has been explained by two reasons, firstly due to a resentment of poor management of bailout programs after the 2008 financial crisis by the liberal-conservative New Democracy (ND) and PASOK. Secondly, it was due to extravagant demands from the EU, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund regarding the bailout agreements (Stavarakakis 2015:276). Apart from this, Greece has a history of poor economy, further diluting Syriza's success (Agnantopoulos & Lambiri 2015:5).

PASOK relinquished the fiscal sovereignty of Greece to the EU, which initiated massive demonstrations and strikes throughout Greece, paving the way for a de-alignment in the Greek politics. New parties established and making Syriza the strongest political party in Greece in 2015 (Aslanidis & Kaltwasser 2016:1078).

5.4 In what way has the three pillars of civil society been affected by the politics of Syriza?

Greece has had a steady liberal democracy since 1974 with free and fair elections, enhanced freedom of speech, press freedom, freedom of associations and the right to assemblies. Muslim and other ethnic minorities hold the right to vote, the acceptance of rule of law is existing and a three-fifths majority that must extend over two consecutive parliaments is required to accomplish constitutional change. The state apparatus have an established Ombudsman-office, the General Inspectorate of Public Administration, as well as NGOs proliferating characteristics of liberal democratic governance. This is providing Greece a score of two of Freedom House's yearly rating of



the quality of democracy (1 is the highest quality and 7 lowest quality) (Danopoulos 2015:111; Danopoulos 2017:230).

Advocacy for this liberal-democratic development has been pronounced by Syriza, placing effort on the re-establishment of democratic institutions, empowering representative democracy, however with the general populist characteristic of direct democracy (Syriza 2014a). The people hold the very epicenter of the politics of Syriza, emphasizing the self-governance of the people by promoting the peoples legislative initiative, the people's veto and the peoples right for a referendum (Syriza 2014a). The last might be an effect of the ambition to enact direct democracy even further.

In the pre-election speeches, Syriza's Prime Minister Tsipras promised more regional and local self-governance in Greece (2014c), pointing at an ambition of decreased centralization. This could be seen as an act in the opposite direction of general populist characteristics regarding the ambition of creating a united national identity. However, Syriza has also been accused to act in a traditional populist manner by centralizing its organization and thereby decreasing the internal democracy due to a concentration of power to its leader Alexis Tsipras (Danopoulos 2015:119) and opposing the traditional left-wing populist features of horizontal party organization. Syriza also advocates empowering the parliament by an increased parliamentary immunity, decreasing opportunities for Ministers of Parliament to act without risk of prosecution (Syriza 2014a).

These political adjustments point at a restriction of the people of Greece to affect the political leaders in policies, limiting to some extent the Freedom of Peaceful Assembly in the criteria of *Participation in public or private gatherings for common interests* as well as Freedom of Expression regarding *Evaluations and statements of state and/or non-state actors*. Nonetheless, the local self-governance points at less strict ambitions of concentrating power to Syriza on a national level, which in turn might open for criteria as *Evaluations and statements of state and/or non-state actors*.



Syriza has promoted accountability factors regarding the political elite as well, which can be seen as a contradiction of the general authoritarian populist features. In March 2017 Syriza supported the role of political accountability in European politics by preventing the “[...] movements that vie for the return of nationalism and political elites, support the notion of ‘fortress of Europe’ [...]”, and instead the desirability to “[...] communicate with the citizens and make them understand that political mobilization is the most effective way to achieve more” was preferred (Syriza 2017b).

The ambition of uniting the people correlates with the general populist ambition. However, the active stance against nationalism points at criticism towards the typical ethnic-based right-wing populist politics and thereby indicating a more left-populist ambition of Syriza.

Moreover, this statement points at ambitions to increase Freedom of Association in criteria’s such as *Join, or form a new, formal or informal association* and *Positive state measures towards associations*, Freedom of Peaceful Assembly in the criteria of *Participation in public or private gatherings for common interests* and *State measures to protect and facilitate peaceful assemblies* as well as Freedom of Expression in criteria of *Evaluations and statements of state and/or non-state actors* and *Advocate and carry out public actions without fear of retribution*.

On October 12th in 2015, Syriza called for participation in a rally in Athens against a bombing in Ankara (Syriza 2015b). In one of many press releases by Syriza during 2015 in could be read that *On the murderous bomb attack in Ankara, SYRIZA express the solidarity to the people of Turkey and SYRIZA calls for participation in the rally in Syntagma Square on the occasion of the bomb attack in Ankara* (Syriza 2015b).

Thereof, Syriza promotes strengthening Freedom of Peaceful Assembly in criteria such as *Participation in public or private gatherings for common interests*, *State measures to protect and facilitate peaceful assemblies* and in this case also *Assemblies no matter social or ethnic*



status. However, Syriza's strong focus on the rightist government of Turkey based on moralist opinions, depicting the Turkish military, police and Erdogan's regime as liable for attacks on democracy (Syriza 2015c) risks increasing polarization between right and left.

In the case of equality Syriza has increased the number of women in the party, nonetheless, in the party's cabinet, only 6 out of 40 executives are women, again refrain from the feature of social pluralism common in left-wing populism. Nonetheless, in a left-wing populist manner, Syriza has outspokenly advocated the right of gay marriage and internationally been one of the main promoters of equal rights for immigrants (Danopoulos 2017:234).

This points at policies enhancing the criteria of *Assemblies no matter social or ethnic status*. However, the motives of this follow the polarizing trend, where Syriza has claimed that the leftist values are threatened by neoliberal values of the political elite (Markou 2017:62).

According to Freedom House (2019), Greece struggles with asylum applications, nevertheless, NGOs can utter opinions regarding the treatment of refugees without risking reprisals by the state.

This acceptance of a political discussion from the NGOs points at a deviation from the general populist feature of implementing a common identity. These actions point at an acceptance regarding Freedom of Association in criteria of *Respect of privacy of associations* as well as *Positive state measures towards associations* and the Freedom of Expression in criteria such as *Evaluations and statements of state and/or non-state actors* and *Advocate and carry out public acts without fear of retribution*.

Syriza claims to act in the interests of the people on an economical level in a left-wing populist manner. The banks are considered as part of the neoliberal elite, plaguing the people, dividing the population and risking to create a sense of resentment among the people. Additionally, Syriza



promotes public banks and abolishing of private banks to handle civilian's debts emphasizing the poorest part of the population (Syriza 2014a). The polarizing discourse prevails in speeches by Syriza representatives as well, highlighting divisions within European politic between north and south, the people versus the bankers, Juncker versus Greece, where voting for the solidarity and not austerity is proclaimed (Syriza 2014d).

The problem solving of the conflict in the Middle East is considered as a failure, where pan-national organizations such as the UN and the EU are seen as a part of the solution, nonetheless, to accomplish peace Russia is claimed to be a part of the solution (Syriza 2016b). This hints that Syriza withholds the pluralistic approach and promotes e.g. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly on the criteria of *Assemblies no matter social or ethnical status*.

According to Freedom House (2018a), the Greek constitution guarantees freedom of religion, however, the Greek Orthodox Church collect revenues from the state and is considered as de "faith of Greece". According to Danopoulos (2017:234) the church gains, both on a national and municipal level, major support from the state. However, Muslim clergies are financed by the Greek state as well, where the Greek state-financed construction of a mosque in Athens even though this was met by substantial opposition (Freedom House 2019). Elementary school is permeated by Orthodox Christian values, producing a school that risks ignoring cultural diversity and pluralism. Protestants and Evangelical Christians in Greece experience segregation and exclusion, not only by religion but also ethnically, marked as un-patriotic and agents of the west (Danopoulos 2017:234) and the constitution prohibits proselytizing, although the restriction is rarely enforced (Freedom House 2019).

The exact extent of inclusiveness from the state between the Greek Orthodox Church and Muslims are inexplicit, making it difficult to draw any conclusions from this. However, it does point at a statement against the ethnical and cultural-based politics of right-wing populism. Syriza seems to



fulfill the criteria of Freedom of Association such as *Positive state measures towards associations* and *Respect of privacy of associations*. Meanwhile, the acting of Syriza is ambivalent, on the one hand, financing the construction of a mosque, while showing tendencies to exclude Protestant and Evangelic Christians, pointing at risk of restriction in the criteria of *No compulsion to join associations* in Freedom of Association.

The infringements of certain Christian groups indicate some tendencies of right-wing based politics, alluding to culture, rather than socioeconomic status. Furthermore, the massive opposition regarding the construction of a mosque in Athens could be an effect of the polarizing discourse of populism in general. Therefore this might make the pluralistic approach of Syriza vainly, instead risking to create an identity crisis and resentment, rather than a united identity.

Also, most minority organizations are allowed to act in specific interests through associations, some have, in a right-wing populist manner, been neglected based on ethnical background due to names referring to their ethnical identity, however, most have not (Freedom House 2019).

This points at both the support of Freedom of Association on criteria as *Respect of privacy of association* and towards Freedom of Expression to *Advocate and carry out public actions without fear of retribution* and *Evaluations and statements of state and/or non-state actors*. Conversely, the very same criteria are at risk of being infringed by the denial of associations due to ethnical identity. This also risks infringing the criteria of *Fair restrictions by law* in the Freedom of Associations as well as Freedom of Peaceful Assemblies on the criteria of *Assemblies no matter social or ethnical status*.

Nonetheless, in a press release, Syriza argues that the increasing numbers of refugees to Europe resulted in an identity crisis, criticizing the development of the right-wing populist features of xenophobia and nationalism. Furthermore, Syriza claims that austerity of migration to Europe



has affected the lives of migrants and thereby promoting international cooperation, not just between states, but also between associations to solve the problem (Syriza 2018a).

In a press message on November 9th in 2017 Syriza promoted the European forum of Progressive Forces, inviting to cooperation between the left-wing- greens- and progressive parties, as well as trade unions, movements and political organizations across Europe (Syriza 2017a). This points at a generally positive stance towards more or less all three pillars of civil society, however, it also suggests that the strong left-wing focus in their promotion, questioning criteria such as *Assemblies no matter social or ethnical status* in Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and *Join, or form a new, formal or informal association* and *positive state measures towards associations* in Freedom of Associations.

Regarding the media, Syriza re-launched the state-controlled media Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation (ERT), being criticized by political parties as well as the press for governmental partiality (Iosifidis & Papathanassopoulos 2019:346) However, since 2018 private TV-channels have dominated viewer ratings, thereby outcompete state media (Iosifidis & Papathanassopoulos 2019:349). The revenues of ERT have increased and the journalistic quality somewhat along with it, however, the committee of ERT is proportionally seated based on the parliament and Syriza obtains a majority of the seats. This influence is reflected in the selection of key appointees in the national TV and radio, where most of them sympathize with Syriza (Iosifidis & Papathanassopoulos 2019:353-354) and non-state media is declared as the enemy of Syriza's definition of the people (Markou 2017:61). In 2018, three journalists stood accused of defamation due to criticism regarding the actions of the Greek Minister of Defense (Freedomhouse 2019).

The media climate has become a victim of polarization as well. In 2018 Syriza decided to boycott a privately owned news bureau based on



accusations of systematic anti-governmental reporting. In response oppositional parties announced to not participate in public news, claiming that public news is controlled by Syriza (Freedom House 2019).

All these actions point at infringements of the criteria in the Freedom of Expression: *Access to information, Evaluations and statements of state and/or non-state actors, Advocate and carry out public actions without fear of retribution* and *Carrying out investigations, collect official documents and document findings*. Nonetheless, despite the latitude for private news channels, which indicate a positive stance towards *Access to information*, Syriza's exclusion of the channel opposing the government, the prosecution of journalists, as well as the centralization of state media, indicates a more authoritarian approach by Syriza regarding the media climate, and an ambition of centralization of power towards the state, which is a right-wing populist approach.

However, in 2017 Syriza hosted an event, discussing the emergence of fake news in media by inviting students, media experts, sociologists and active readers across Europe to discuss the problem (Syriza 2017c). Also, in March 2016 Syriza made a statement submitting one of the largest oppositional newspaper in Turkey under state control, meaning that this development is most disturbing, threatening the "[...] third parliamentary force in the country", claiming that this would threaten the progressive democratic forces in the country (Syriza 2016a). All these actions point at an equivocal attitude towards the media by Syriza, while proving to some degree infringe the Freedom of Expression, which also endorse the legitimacy of media in Turkey.

Syriza gained a lot of influence before the rise to power by supporting amongst others the *Square Movement*, a chain reaction originated in Spain influencing the Greeks to demonstrate against the injustices caused by the EU since the financial crisis in 2008. Even though Syriza already was established as a party, they identified themselves to the masses and



outspokenly promoted the social movement. The movement involved voters of both left and right and Syriza claimed to have a pluralistic vision in their politics (Katsambekis 2016:392-393).

Nonetheless, the political climate made the conditions for association and assemblies harsh in Greece. Due to the polarizing politics, extremist groups of both left and right have vandalized e.g. NGOs, universities, and churches (Freedom House 2019). Syriza themselves claimed they included NGOs to speak out their opinions regarding new policies and alike (Syriza 2018b). Once again, the politics of Greece seems to invoke an identity crisis by encouraging pluralism, while creating polarization. This is expressed in the dissatisfaction of the general view of populism and the resentment of extreme leftist groups, resulting e.g. in a bombing of a news bureau in Athens (Freedom House 2019).

Fear, discontent, and anger amongst the Greeks are claimed to be channeled through Syriza, where failed negotiators of a bailout package were blamed on the EU, the former governing parties and Germany and those opposing these were considered as allies such as Russia, China, and Venezuela (Mavrozacharakis et. al. 2017:43). This socioeconomic focus follows the left-wing populist description, where Syriza themselves invites Russia to cooperation regarding economic politics, while rejecting cooperation with Germany by stating that the German governance is a part of the “[...] neo-liberal barbarity, the one-way of austerity and the violation of democracy” (Syriza 2016b; Syriza 2015a).

According to Syriza, both neoliberalism and nationalism are referred to as poisons of European politics, where neoliberal economics enhances the social inequalities and worsens the ecological politics in Europe, inhering a clear example of a left-wing populist stance. Nationalism, on the other hand, has diminished the definition of a foreigner, making it a “scapegoat” for EUs problems (Syriza 2018b), pointing at a criticism toward the right-wing



populist approach and a support of the criteria of *Assemblies no matter social or ethnical status*.

When in power, Syriza act on an economic basis, attempting to negotiate with the EU regarding package deals and loans. In conjunction with a deal that the EU promoted for Syriza, Prime Minister Tsipras called for a snap referendum, inviting civil society to the debate (Nikolakakis 2017:134-135). Even though the party disagrees regarding many of the supra-national premises of the EU, Syriza seems not to be opposed to the development of globalization.

The more traditional left-wing populist view of globalization is thereby not entirely adopted. Nonetheless, the traditional populist approach of creating a sense indignity and exclusion permeates the politics of Syriza. By stating that “The reason for the existence of an EU in the benefit of the peoples is slowly disappearing [...]” (Synaspismos 2013:1). The Euro is mainly seen as the vehicle of German policy, widening the inequalities between countries as well as the inequalities amongst social classes where “[...] The future of the EU as well as the Eurozone itself is rendered more and more uncertain. The politics of austerity and recession disintegrate the bonds amongst the European states, strengthen Euro skepticism, anti-Europeanism [...]” (Synaspismos 2013:1).

In the long run, Syriza promotes a socialist democracy within in EU, not criticizing the EU in itself, but the liberal economic aspects of it (Nikolakakis 2017:142). This becomes clear in their manifesto when promoting a solution to the economic dilemmas in cooperation with the European Investment Bank and the European Central Bank, and not mentioning a potential Grexit as an alternative (Syriza 2014a). In 2014, Syriza criticized the European Commission, regarding the handling of the bailout programs by stating “The Greek people should be left to determine their own political future” (Syriza 2014b). For a summary of the analysis of Syriza, see appendix 7-9.



Appendix 7

Freedom of Association	Number of positive measures	Number of negative measures
Join or form a new formal or informal association	1	1
No obligations of registration of an association	0	0
Positive state measures towards associations	3	1
Respect of privacy of associations	3	0
Fair restrictions prescribed by law	0	1
No compulsion to join associations	0	1
Number of affected criteria:	3	4
Number of identified actions affecting the criteria:	7	4

Appendix 8

Freedom of Peaceful Assembly	Number of positive measures	Number of negative measures
Participation in public or private gatherings for common interests	2	1
State measures to protect and facilitate peaceful assemblies	2	0



Assemblies no matter social or ethnic status	4	2
Restrictions by law that meet necessity and proportionality	0	0
Number of affected criteria:	3	2
Number of identified actions affecting the criteria:	8	3

Appendix 9

Freedom of Expression	Number of positive measures	Number of negative measures
Access to information	1	1
Evaluation and statements of state and/or non-state actors	4	3
Advocate and carry out public actions without fear of retribution	3	2
Carrying out investigations, collect official documents and document findings	0	1
Number of affected criteria:	3	4
Number of identified actions affecting the criteria:	8	7



6 Results

Since the former section highlighted how the three pillars of civil society have been affected, the next section will stress the differences and similarities between the cases. The result of this will lead to a conclusion, aiming to answer the fourth question and fulfil the purpose of this study, which is to clarify whether populism as a feature is generalizable to other populist parties regardless ideological stance, or whether ideology is a more prominent descriptive factor than populism itself.⁵

6.1 Based on the three pillars of civil society, what differences and similarities prevail in the case of Syriza compared to the case of Fidesz?

In general, a convincing higher frequency of positive actions enhancing the three pillars of civil society appears in the politics of Syriza in comparison to the politics of Fidesz.

Overall, the analysis Fidesz demonstrates beneficial actions in merely three out of the fourteen criteria, one identified positive action in each pillar. One in the case of Freedom of Association, under the criteria of *Positive state measures towards associations*, where some NGOs have been able to scrutinize some state actions. However, the number of cases where NGOs are restricted under the same criteria is considerable. Another action is under Freedom of Peaceful Assemblies, regarding the criteria of *Participation in public or private gatherings for common interests*, where some organized protests have been conducted. However, extensive state control over institutions makes it problematic for these assemblies to have any effect on

⁵ See appendix 4-6 for summaries on the analysis of Fidesz, and appendix 7-9 for summaries on the analysis of Syriza.



the politics. The third action is in the case of Freedom of Expression, where the improvement of broadband access within Hungary enhances *access to information*. Nonetheless, Fidesz attempts to adopt Internet taxes, prohibiting these otherwise positive developments.

The numbers of negative measures are recurrent in the case of Fidesz's. Thirteen out of fourteen criteria infringed were identified in the analysis, leaving *No obligations of registration of an association* in Freedom of Associations unaffected of both positive and negative measures. The total of negative actions identified were forty-three, making the number of negative actions considerably more than positive actions. Most negative actions were found in the Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Freedom of Expression, however, the Freedom of Associations only show slightly fewer negative actions.

In the case of Syriza nine out of fourteen criteria were positively affected and the total number of positive measures is twenty-three. Meanwhile, ten out of fourteen criteria were affected by negative actions, and a total number of fourteen negative actions identified. Thereof, the number of criteria negatively affected exceeds the positively affected by one in the case of Syriza.

Furthermore, the total number of actions enhancing the three pillars of civil society by Syriza is more recurrent than actions impairing them in all three pillars. However, the number of identified negative actions is remarkably higher in the Freedom of Expression in comparison to the negative actions in the other two pillars. Meanwhile, the number of positive actions is rather similar in each pillar.

Some specific similarities and differences distinguish in the analysis. In the Freedom of Association both cases prevail no tendencies of either positive or negative measures towards the criteria *No obligations of registration of an association*. Otherwise, Syriza show relatively many identified positive actions regarding the criteria *Positive state measures*



towards associations and *Respect of privacy of associations*. Meanwhile, Fidesz shows the opposite by having a high concentration of negative actions on these criteria, as well as on the criteria of *Fair restrictions prescribed by law*.

Fidesz also show relatively many negative actions on the criteria *Participation in public or private gatherings for common interests* and *Assemblies no matter social or ethnic status*. Syriza however, has more positive than negative actions in both of these criteria. Nonetheless, Syriza also has relatively many negative actions towards *Assemblies no matter social or ethnic status* in comparison to the other criteria.

Syriza indicate most negative actions compared to the number of criteria in the Freedom of Expression. This is especially expressed in *Evaluation and statements of state and/or non-state actors*. Furthermore, Fidesz show most negative actions in the criteria of *Advocate and carry out public actions without fear of retribution*.

From this, the result shows an extensive variation between the cases in their affection towards the three pillars of civil society. Therefore, the overall tendency points to more positive policies by Syriza compared to Fidesz in the analyzed material.

6.1.1 Identified populist elements

Fidesz differentiates regarding the actively gained influence over institutions compared to Syriza. On merely one occasion Syriza proves trying to affect possibilities of discretion for Ministers of Parliament decreasing the likelihoods for prosecutions, thereby limiting the criteria of *Evaluations and statements of state and/or non-state actors* in the Freedom of Expression. This points at an attempt of centralizing power according to the general definition of populism. Fidesz centralization of power reveals more frequently, where ambition of extensive authoritarian, centralized governance seems to be stressed. Fidesz also infiltrates auditing institutions



as well as the courts, which centralize power to the party and enhancing possibilities of uniting the Hungarian people.

However, otherwise Syriza expresses more ambitions of decentralization of power, enhancing local self-governance. In comparison to Fidesz, it would be inaccurate to claim that the cases general populist ambitions should be considered as equal.

On an international level, Syriza proves to advocate cooperation with the EU and the UN regarding internationally complex problems such as peace in the Middle East, pointing at unconventionality of all populist descriptions. The general populist approach is critical to international cooperation, especially with Western democratic institutions. The same goes for the right-wing populist approach, which maintains a nationalistic character. Even though left-wing populism does not focus on ethnicity and culture, compared with right-wing populists, they still are critical to the neoliberal approach of Western democratic institutions.

Nonetheless, despite the positive international stance regarding the specific question of peace in the Middle East politics and the inclusiveness of its immigrant politics, Syriza also shows tendencies of critique towards the neoliberal approach of European politics, favoring cooperation with Russia and at the same time claiming Germany and the European banking system to be a source of social infliction in Europe. A left-wing party might consider this a rational act, where the promotion of cooperation with authoritarian regimes points at a confirmation of the general populist preference of authoritarian governance. Nonetheless, Syriza's parallel promotion of the EU and the UN leaves an unclear stance.

Fidesz does not utter ambitions of international cooperation, following both the general, as well as the right-wing populist approach of paternalism and restraint towards supranational organizations. However, the case of Internet taxes statutes one of few examples where the purpose of protests in



Hungary was realized in the examined material. Once again, this points at the authoritarian approach of right-wing, and general populism.

Syriza tends to enable more positive measures in promoting associations as well as assemblies by organizing an event on fake news, inviting journalists, students, active readers and other experts to the discussion. NGOs have greater possibilities to scrutinize state activities and utter opinions on e.g. treatment of refugees. This points at distance from the general approach of populism, where the more authoritarian approach falters. However, the topics of the event do not reveal in the material, hence, it cannot be concluded whether the discussion was biased or objective in its topics. However, Syriza's exclusion of assemblies based on ethnicity reveals some tendencies of lack of acceptance of pluralism, infringing Freedom of Peaceful Assemblies and indicates a right-wing populist feature of exclusion of certain ethnic groups and cultures.

The fact that Fidesz owns approximately 90 percent of the media in Hungary and the economical restrictions applied on news bureaus strongly suggests a general populist approach of paternalism, creating opportunities for univocal information flow which is creating a united national identity.

However, the analysis of Syriza unveils similar tendencies, although not in the same grasp. Syriza proves to boycott opposing news channels and declaring non-state channels as enemies of the national identity, which points at a left-wing populist, socioeconomic, absence. This points at a less authoritarian approach in Syriza's politics compared to Fidesz, however, it also indicates a general populist, as well as a right-wing populist approach of authoritarianism by refusing some state critical media and preserving a national identity.

The religious rights characterize both cases, providing similar tendencies. The analyzed material proves a systematic promotion of Christianity by Fidesz to preserve the Hungarian identity. Muslims are depicted as a threat of the national identity despite the constitutional



protection of religious freedom. This points at the right-wing populist approach of ethnic and cultural focus regarding the national identity.

Syriza shows similar trends by excluding Protestant and Evangelic in comparison to Orthodox Christians, nonetheless, Muslim clergies enjoy state subsidies and the construction of a mosque in Athens proves a higher acceptance of religions by Syriza than by Fidesz. Nonetheless, these actions by Syriza point at a deviation from the socioeconomic focus of left-wing populist, and rather indicate right-wing populist cultural focus.

Meanwhile, Syriza also supports the right of gay marriage, pointing at both pluralism and a less strict view of the Orthodox Christian religion. While Syriza shows some restrictive tendencies in their politics regarding ethnical and social pluralism, it seems not they reach the same standard as Fidesz's, which seems to allude more on the connection to a Christian identity compared to Syriza.

7 Conclusions

So far, the first three research questions have been discussed:

- 1) *In what way has the three pillars of civil society been affected by the politics of Fidesz?*
- 2) *In what way has the three pillars of civil society been affected by the politics of Syriza?*
- 3) *Based on the three pillars of civil society, what differences and similarities prevail in the case of Syriza compared to the case of Fidesz?*

Thereby leading to the fourth and final question:

- 4) *Is the contemporary definition of populist parties justified, or is ideology neglected in the politics of Syriza and Fidesz?*



The results on the populist elements show that the politics of Fidesz provides clear tendencies of general, and right-wing populism. The restrictions of groups not fitting the Christian profile indicate the cultural and ethnic focus. Democratic institutions are to a great extent negatively affected by Fidesz politics, simplifying the possibilities of uniting the national identity. NGOs and similar associations act under what seems to be massive limited conditions, where threats of retributions are conducted, however, prosecutions are unusual. Media is heavily controlled by the state and centralizing ambitions permeates Fidesz politics.

All of these political actions imply that the politics of Fidesz tries to unite the Hungarian people under one common identity. It is important to notice that the restrictions in themselves do not need to be considered as typical populist. However, the ambitions of unification of the people, and the authoritarian governance indicate qualities that match the description of populism in this study.

Meanwhile, the politics of Syriza appears to be more difficult to define in solely the general and left-wing populist definition. The neoliberal governance of the EU and Germany are considered as one of the main causes of the social injustices in Europe, implying a left-wing populist socioeconomic emphasis. Furthermore, gay marriage is legal and Syriza encourages shared responsibility regarding the refugee crisis, pointing at a depreciation of the cultural and ethnic focus of right-wing populism.

In a general populist manner, Syriza shows tendencies of preserving the national identity by excluding a media bureau. Furthermore, the above-mentioned criticism towards Germany and neoliberal economy points at dissatisfaction towards some western European democratic institutions.

However, the ethnic focus on some minorities' points at more right-wing politics, also the emphasis on orthodox Christian values reveals a right-



wing populist approach in the case of Syriza. Furthermore, the positive stance towards western international institutions such as the EU and the UN are contradicting the general populist approach as negative to Western institutions also points at no populist ambitions at all.

Furthermore, even though left-wing populists are considered more horizontal in their party organization, the promoting of local self-government disproves the general populist manner of centralized governance. The positive stance towards NGOs and civic gatherings could also be seen as a step away from the authoritarian approach of the general populism. Left-wing populism might be considered more pluralistic, but this openness could invite to a questioning the general populist approach of the national identity.

7.1 The steadfastness of Fidesz & the ambivalence of Syriza

The populist politics of Syriza and Fidesz, when applying it on Civic Space, tend to differ on most aspects, despite their populist feature. The view of parties as simply populist seem, in these cases, to be rather deceptive. As can be seen in the result, the analysis show great difference between the cases in most of the criteria. The numbers of positive measures towards Civic Space are more or less absent in the case of Fidesz, while Syriza show more positive than negative measures in all three pillars. However, Syriza had significantly greater amount of negative actions towards the Freedom of Expression. This could be an indication of more similar ambitions regarding this freedom, however, this is just speculations. Nonetheless, the negative actions by Fidesz are twice as much than Syriza.

Furthermore, the cases show differentiating ambitions in their politics, where the view of the people are distinctively based on the right-wing populist characteristic of ethnicity and culture in the case of Fidesz, while Syriza's focus seems rather unclear.



Fidesz's ethnic and cultural focus indicate that their right-wing populist definition of the elite is rather clear. Western European democratic institutions as well as out-groups, such as immigrants and departing religious groups, enjoy the privileges that rightfully belong to the true Hungarian people.

Meanwhile, the corresponding definition of the elite in the case of Syriza appears unclear. Established western economically neoliberal states as Germany, and the western banking system, are illustrated as the elite, and a reason of the social injustices in Europe. However, Syriza also urges for help by the EU and the UN in solving the crisis in the Middle East.

By this, the emphasis on the populist feature of the cases of Fidesz and Syriza seem to be unjustified, where both cases differ in most of the analysed aspects. Rather, Fidesz follow both the general definition of populism, as well as the right-wing definition. This suggests that the definition of Fidesz as populists is justified, and by showing no tendency of embracing left-wing populist features, their ideological stance appears rather clear. This in turn rejects the hypothesis that *the contemporary definition of populist parties exaggerates the descriptiveness of the populist feature and neglects their ideological stance* in the individual case of Fidesz.

Syriza on the other hand, show tendencies of both the general description of populism and left-wing populism. Tendencies are also showed of right-wing populism, but on the other hand on a major policy field as international relations with the EU and the UN, no populist features unveil at all. Based on this, the hypothesis seems to be confirmed in the individual case of Syriza, at least its politics on Civic Space. The labelling of Syriza as a left-wing populist party seems misleading based on this result. The clear ideological stance seems to be correspondingly vague as the populist feature.



The misused function of ideology expressed by Katz and Mair might be a result of a flaw in the definitions of the parties, at least in the case of left-wing populism. If this is a question of discourse regarding the definition of left-wing populism, or a question of inconsequent ambitions in the policies of Syriza is not for this study to answer.

However, both Syriza and Fidesz came to power during a few years time span, hence this type of parties could be considered as rather young. The Sweden Democrats, the Five Star Movement and Party for Freedom in the Netherlands, have had similar development. Is the label of these parties as populists unjustified as well? Is it so that the term confuses the political debate rather than clarifies these parties' functions? The intensified discussion regarding populist parties during the last ten years might have been limited due to a misuse of the definition of the concept. Perhaps this mainly applies to left-wing populism, which might be used as a tool of affection, rather than facilitation, of the politic debate.

To answer these reasoning more similar studies needs to be conducted. The result of this study provides a hint of a confusion regarding the concept of left-wing populism. Left-wing populist parties seem to gain more and more ground in European politics, and to reach a nuanced debate regarding the emergence of left-wing populism a clarification of the concept appears necessary.

7.2 The ambivalence of ideology and populism – Further research

This study also holds the opinion that populism should not be considered an ideology, but as a feature. However, this idea is mostly based on the fact that the contemporary definition of populism is rather vague, thereby making it difficult to validate its ideological functions. This study has also emphasized the role of populism in contrast of the parties' host ideology, evoking the discussion that all parties in certain ways can be



considered as populists. To evolve future studies similar to this one, the concept of populism needs to be elaborated, is it in fact an ideology? Or is it a mean for political parties to reach out their ideological stance? Or something entirely else? Questions like these might thwart the result of this study, nonetheless, they could also most certain enlighten the discussion even further. These questions are left for future research.



8 Appendices

8.1 Three pillars of civil society

Appendix 1

Freedom of Association
<i>Possibilities to:</i>
Join or form a new formal or informal association
No obligations of registration of an association
Positive state measures towards associations
Respect of privacy of associations
Fair restrictions prescribed by law
No compulsion to join associations

Appendix 2

Freedom of Peaceful Assembly
<i>Possibilities of:</i>
Participation in public or private gatherings for common interests
States measures to protect and facilitate peaceful assemblies
Assemblies no matter social or ethnic status
Restrictions by law that meet necessity and proportionality

Appendix 3

Freedom of Expression
<i>Possibilities of:</i>
Access to information
Evaluation and statements of state and/or non-state actors
Advocate and carry out public actions without fear of retribution
Carrying out investigations, collect official documents and document



findings

8.2 Results – Analysis of Fidesz

Appendix 4

Freedom of Association	Number of positive measures	Number of negative measures
Join or form a new formal or informal association	0	2
No obligations of registration of an association	0	0
Positive state measures towards associations	1	3
Respect of privacy of associations	0	3
Fair restrictions prescribed by law	0	4
No compulsion to join associations	0	1
Number of affected criteria:	1	5
Number of identified actions affecting the criteria:	1	13



Appendix 5

Freedom of Peaceful Assembly	Number of positive measures	Number of negative measures
Participation in public or private gatherings for common interests	1	5
States measures to protect and facilitate peaceful assemblies	0	3
Assemblies no matter social or ethnic status	0	5
Restrictions by law that meet necessity and proportionality	0	3
Number of affected criteria:	1	4
Number of identified actions affecting the criteria:	1	16

Appendix 6

Freedom of Expression	Number of positive measures	Number of negative measures
Access to information	1	3
Evaluation and statements of state and/or non-state actors	0	3
Advocate and carry out public actions without	0	5



fear of retribution		
Carrying out investigations, collect official documents and document findings	0	3
Number of affected criteria:	1	4
Number of identified actions affecting the criteria:	1	14

8.3 Results – Analysis of Syriza

Appendix 7

Freedom of Association	Number of positive measures	Number of negative measures
Join or form a new formal or informal association	1	1
No obligations of registration of an association	0	0
Positive state measures towards associations	3	1
Respect of privacy of associations	3	0
Fair restrictions prescribed by law	0	1
No compulsion to join associations	0	1
Number of affected criteria:	3	4
Number of identified	7	4



actions affecting the criteria:		
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Appendix 8

Freedom of Peaceful Assembly	Number of positive measures	Number of negative measures
Participation in public or private gatherings for common interests	2	1
State measures to protect and facilitate peaceful assemblies	2	0
Assemblies no matter social or ethnic status	4	2
Restrictions by law that meet necessity and proportionality	0	0
Number of affected criteria:	3	2
Number of identified actions affecting the criteria:	8	3

Appendix 9

Freedom of Expression	Number of positive measures	Number of negative measures
Access to information	1	1
Evaluation and statements of state and/or non-state actors	4	3



Advocate and carry out public actions without fear of retribution	3	2
Carrying out investigations, collect official documents and document findings	0	1
Number of affected criteria:	3	4
Number of identified actions affecting the criteria:	8	7



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