Populism(s) in Power:

A framework of analysis - insights from the case of Syriza (2013 – 2019)

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1. Introduction:

The crash of 2008 can be characterised as a moment of *dislocation* in western-liberal-democratic politics. The consequences of the crisis were not restrained within the sphere of the economy but as expected, the implications on the political sphere were critical. The economic distress, *interwoven* with a profound distrust towards the political and business elites, lead to a crisis of *democratic representation*. Traditional political parties were perceived as incapable of responding to the popular frustration and representing the electorate. The emergence of the square and occupy movements in 2011 manifested an increasing de-legitimisation of the political and economic status quo as well as a desire for an alternative social, political and economic imaginary (Prentoulis and Thomassen 2013). At this very intersection the hitherto hegemonic *neo*liberal order was put into question. Populist movements, both on the Left and the Right emerged in the void of political *under*-representation and articulated political demands challenging popular frustration against what they coined as 'the Establishment ' (Gerbaudo 2017).

The 'indignant movements' of the squares were rapidly transformed into populist (movement) parties that gained massive electoral success to the extent of replacing traditionally dominant forces (della Porta et al. 2017). Even more the populist discourses were largely diffused into the mainstream of public life. In other words, and in an attempt to provide an initial working definition, these actors dichotomise the social and political in two antagonistic camps. On the one hand lies 'the people' as a (potential) social majority and on the other 'the elite', or 'the establishment' as an illegitimate minority that suppresses the rights and enjoyment of the former (Katsambekis and Stavrakakis 2017).

The increasing normalisation of populist discourses and the consolidation of populist actors in political institutions raises a critical question: *what happens when populists achieve power?* The transition to power carries the possibility of changes in populist discourse as actors move from the position of the *antagonist* to that of *protagonist*. Despite the proliferation of literature that advances the understanding of the matter from different angles and in its different dimensions, research on populism in *power* remains either scant or problematic. Lack in the literature simply reflects on the fact that not many populists are currently in power. Most critically, research becomes problematic when attempts to investigate populists in power are founded on *analytical inconsistencies*. These inconsistencies are arguably related with two issues: first, the 'mainstream' camp in populist studies is solely focused on the European experience of the respective phenomenon thus it is governed by a regional bias. Second, the 'mainstream' studies populism always in relation to liberal democracy thus it is governed by an epistemological bias.

This research aims to cure the aforementioned analytical inconsistency as it generates the risk of breaching the operational consensus that lies at the core of 'populist studies'. The objective behind this task is to better classify populist phenomena and understand their similarities, with respect to their 'formal' characteristics, but also their differences, with regards to their ideological core. Most critically, this research attempts to provide the conceptual tools that differentiate populist from non-populist phenomena such as extremism, fascism, and the far right. Especially in a period of populist proliferation, both on the Left and the Right, the predominantly pejorative understanding of populism forecloses the possibilities for observing progressive, equalitarian and emancipatory projects (Stavrakakis 2013). The paper focuses on the case of Syriza in Greece. First it looks at the years when the party served as the main opposition party (2013 – 2015) and then it looks at its current service in government (2015-2019) in order to examine what kind of transformations the leftwing populism of Syriza undergo. To proceed the analysis of populism's transformations in power, the present paper is structured as follows. In the first section I review the dominant approaches with regards to populism's relationship with the institutions of power; I indicate the inconsistency which creates methodological inconsistencies and I propose a method on how to systematize research on populism in power. Next, I review the literature on the 'definition' of populism in order to search for a suitable approach on operationalising this task. Next, I outline my research design and justify the case selection and the methodology that is to be followed.

2. Literature Review: mainstream perspectives on populism in power

In this section I review mainstream literature on populism in power. I contrast perspectives advocating that populism necessarily consolidates with power with perspectives suggesting that populism can survive and govern in a populist style in power. As this section argues, both perspectives are problematic in that they do not depart from the formal criteria for classifying a phenomenon as populist. I argue instead that the analytical locus for populism in power must be the same one that allows research to identify populist phenomena in general: that is the form of populism – the operational criteria that pit the people against the elite.

The dominant perception in 'populist studies' literature is that populism inevitably fails once in power. Two main approaches can be identified in support of this statement. The first has to do with the 'apparent' nature of populism as a (solely?) antagonistic/oppositional force which stresses the incompatible relationship between *populism* and *power*. (Mény and Surel 2002) for instance, argued that 'populist parties are by nature neither durable nor sustainable parties of government. Their fate is to be integrated into the mainstream, to disappear, *or to remain permanently in opposition*' (2002, p.18; *emphasis added*). Such conclusion implies that the survival of populists rests upon its oppositional character. The antagonistic dimension in populism is understood to be cancelled out once the latter consolidate with power as populists are understood to lose their anti-systemic and anti-establishment character. In Mudde's (Mudde 2017) understanding, populism is expected to consolidate with the institutions of power and populist politicians will turn conventional. The second approach advocates the

association of populism with illusory promises and demagogy. As (Canovan 1999) suggests when a populist actor 'actually gets into power, its own inability to live up to its promises will be revealed'. Both approaches seem teleological in that they provide a speculation with regards to populism's fade once it moves from opposition to power. This generates a risk of reducing populism to demagogy but most critically forestalls the possibilities of examining populist phenomena in power.

Against the suggested unavoidable failure of populists to survive the experience of government, (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2015) suggest otherwise. Their book *Populists in Power* (2015) shows that, although flash cases of populist parties in government are not absent, populist governments are neither inevitably episodic nor are necessarily destined to fail. It is empirically illustrated that populists are capable of drafting policy and implementing legislation that is not distant to their core ideological values. The experience of government does not strictly translate to electoral losses for the populists but also to electoral gains. Dismissing those who advocate that populism fails necessarily once in government, Albertazzi and McDonnell show that populists are also often able to be *re-elected*. The basis of their argument lies on the extent to which power (government) corrupts (or not) the ideological core of the populists: can populists survive discounts on their programmatic promises? Against this unavoidable failure in power sides also (Müller 2016) who argues that populists can govern as populists: they corrupt the institutions and disregard constitutional procedures.

It is evident that despite the fact that Müller, Albertazzi and McDonnell arrive to common conclusion their approaches are different. Albertazzi and McDonnel follow a *content*-driven approach that highlights the ability of populists to implement policy (to do politics) in an appropriate standard that is convincing enough enough to give populists the credibility to get re-elected. Müller on the other hand, follows an *end*-driven approach. His conclusion that populists can 'govern as populists' is grounded on the outcomes of actors on democracy and its institutions.

What is at stake here is to understand whether the content and the outcomes that Müller, Albertazzi and McDonnell analyse is populist by definition: are the policies implemented and outcomes occurred by and from actors under study populist by a formal definition? Or do they end up being classified as populist because the actor has been labelled, even wrongly, as populist? Do the aforementioned practices classify as populist?

The content of populist politics, and most critically their outcomes, vary across contexts: region, referent actor, historical, political and economic circumstances as well as the capabilities of political actors. On the one hand, content-driven approach runs the danger of reducing populism merely to an electoral strategy, rendering the analysis of the 'in-power' phase impossible. While a 'populist strategy' may be common to all forms of politics to an extent, shifting the focus from what classifies a phenomenon as populist leads to the following critical question: does actor x who *was* elected via a populist strategy *continue* to be a populist in power? On the other hand, the end-driven approach runs the danger of becoming even more teleological than the accounts of Mudde, Cannovan, Mény and Surel that were initially dismissed. The question that an outcome oriented approach needs to answer is whether

assaulting institutions and intimidating opponents is an exclusive to populism.[1] In (Lyrintzis 1990) view, these may be *consequences* but are by no means constitutive characteristics of populism.

Far from constructing a method for analysis on populism in power, the abovementioned approaches have critical implications in populist studies. Following the dominant logic dislocates the question on how populism responds to the transition to power and the extent to which it is transformed into something else. In order to systematise research on *populism in power*, this project directs the focus on the very definition of populism. Arguably, the investigation of the transformations in any populist movement or party in government are dependent on *how one perceives populism at the first place*. In other words, the conceptualisation of populism has significant implications on the observation of its transformations. The next subsection will shed light on the different approaches in defining populism illuminating why the dominant ones carry the risk for inconsistencies and how the discursive one provides certain merits.

3. What is populism?
3.1. The ideational approach

For more than four decades, scholarship on populism has failed to secure an agreed definition on what populism is. Yet, despite this inability 'it is feasible to capture the core of all major past and present manifestations of populism' (Mudde and Kaltwasser Rovira 2017, 5) by extracting two of its consistently omnipresent characteristics. From the Russian Narodniki of the 1860s, to Peronism in Argentina, and from Donald Trump in the USA to Spanish Podemos, relevant research indicates that populists consistently pose *an appeal to the people* and denunciation of *the elites*. This last sentence indicates the operational consensus, or the minimal criteria, for the enactment of any research on populism.

The most widely cited definition, as formulated by Mudde (2004), describes populism as:

'an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people'.

While the ideational approach has unlocked research pathways for the field, and especially when applied in comparative manner, it does not cease to entail critical conceptual problems that lead to methodological inconsistencies and essentialist pitfalls (Aslanidis 2016; Ostiguy 2017). Due to space restrictions, in this version of the paper I outline only the most important drawbacks which better correspond with the current stage of the present research.

First, 'ideology' suggests a dichotomous option: it can classify a phenomenon either as populist or not. There are no grey-zones, there are only populist and non-populist moments. It is a take it or leave it option that classifies a phenomenon for once and for all. In this manner such approach does not serve the present research as it is possible to observe degrees of populism, high and low, in specific moments such as crises and elections. In other words, when attempts

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[1] Putin and Erdogan apply such methods but they cannot be classified as populist by formal definition.

to see how and to what extent the framing of the people and the elite changes, it does not expect it to change only once and one and for all (ibid.).

The second problem with the above definition is that it classifies populism as a moralistic discourse which cannot be understood as a constitutive phenomenon of populism but rather a phenomenon that is observed in many other forms of politics as well.

Third, the ideational definition understands populism as producing a homogenous identity (the people) (Stavrakakis 2017; Stavrakakis and Jäger 2017) which better corresponds to nationalism rather than populism and ultimately does not allow one to observe egalitarian populist projects.

3.2.   Populism as a discursive logic

This research favours an understanding of populism as a *discursive logic*. While arguably the ideological perspective offers a static conceptualisation of populism – i.e. *a movement is populist once and for all, or is not populist and will remain not populis*t – the discursive approach captures both its repertoires and fluctuations; it is able to observe populist discourse occurring at times while at other times not. This allows us to understand the mobilising and disruptive dynamics of populism, as an antagonistic and polarising moment under a gradational approach.

In its vast majority, existing literature is actor-centred. It analyses actors that have already been classified as populists and produces conclusions on their actions and practices, classifying the latter also as populist; simply because the actor is baptised as populist a priori (Stanyer, Salgado, and Strömbäck 2016).

On the contrary, and in Laclau's (2005, p.33) terms, 'political practices do not *express* the nature of social agents but instead, *constitute* the later'. Following this move, the present research also gives an ontological priority to the practices of the agents under study and not the agent itself. It is the nature of the very (discursive) actions, strategies and tactics of the actors that classify the latter as populist and not vice-versa (that is, it is not the actor that classifies a practice as populist).

Populism has an institutive power: in a highly heterogeneous society with plethora of interests and ideals populism *constructs* a social majority; it builds an equivalence among different sectors (identities) of society in order to build a hegemonic bloc that publically contests the hitherto hegemonic political norm and attempts to build a new one. It does so by linking together differential demands into a chain of equivalence. Heterogenous identities and demands come to a *partial fixity*: while keeping their difference they also construct a frontier among them and against the political enemy (Laclau 2005a).

3.3.   How to study the transitions of populism?

In order to systematise research on populism in power this research draws on the minimal criteria for the identification of populism. Perceiving populism as a *people-centric* and *anti-elitist* discourse the project aims to observe to *what extent* and *how* references to the collective subject and its enemy change in the 'in-power' position.

The minimal criteria are understood as the *analytical locus* through which transformations of populism in power can be observed. This strategic choice seeks to cure a major error that current research maintains: that is, the analytical *shift* from the *form of populism* (people versus the elite) to the *outcomes* of the practices of 'populists'. To put it simply, practices or outcomes of actors who have been classified as populist are not necessarily populist themselves just because the actor is classified as populist. The nature of outcomes occurring out of 'populist' practices may not be features that are exclusive to populism.

In order to capture what constitutes a populist phenomenon, and most importantly how populism in power can be conceptualised, one has to depart from the core criteria of populism. Critically to examine the transformations of populism in power, one has to look at the very set of criteria that constitute a phenomenon as populist at the first place. Thus, what is at stake, is the examination of the very discursive practices of the populists and the extent and the ways that those juxtapose the people as a social majority against an establishment that is portrayed as a threatening minority. A variety of material that is available in the socio-political realm - ranging from rhetoric, written, visual, and audio material, to symbols and gestures – are understood as tools in arriving to these conclusions.

Having arrived at a point of clarification on how populism in power is to be researched, the next section defines populism in accordance to its operational criteria in order to exemplify the analytical locus where research departs from. Indeed, an actor may continue to 'talk' populism in its in-power but this does not necessarily reflect back to the original moment of institution of the collective identity. In this sense I propose to look, beyond the interpellation of the subject by the discourse itself, at the identification side of the collective subject with the populist project in power.

[Empirical Part: The case of Greek Syriza 2013 – 2019]

4. Syriza in opposition 2013 – 2019

Let us initiate this analysis from the May 2012 elections. The poster that is located on the left in Figure 1 reads: "either us or them … together we can overthrow them", and below "Syriza. Coalition of the Radical Left: Resistance, Disobedience, Solidarity". The second poster, located on the right-hand side, reads: "They decided without us. We move on without them. Upheaval in Greece. Message to Europe" (Syriza 2012). Evidently, the populist polarisation is present, accompanied by the revolutionary aspect in populism: the collision with the establishment and the desire for change prevail in these two posters.

Figure 1. Syriza's 2012 election campaign posters.

Two years later, in the European elections of May 2014, Syriza launched the posters one can see in Figure 2. They are evidently vibrant, colourful and hopeful. Within the emotive sphere, this aesthetic is not irrelevant to the conditions that prevailed in Greece, or to Syriza's proclamation that would reverse the general mood of depression and distress. This is best evident in the changing audio-visual scenes exposed in Syriza's one-minute campaigning spots. The screenshot in the left spot portrays numerous signs reading 'For Sale' or 'For Rent'. It narrates a widespread situation where people lived in fear of losing their homes during the crisis (Syriza 2015a). The screenshot on the right portrays a female pensioner receiving "300 euros per month which are not enough even for basic medication" (Syriza 2015a). In the end, the scenario is completely overturned. The melancholy music and colours change to an optimistic mood and a phrase which communicates that "this coming victory allows me to hope. Greece moves forward. Europe is changing. Hope is coming" (ibid.).

Figure 2. Syriza's 2014 election campaign posters.

At the level of collective identity formation, the posters in Figure 3 portray the different social groups that composed Syriza's 'chain of equivalence': manual workers, youth, pensioners, people with disabilities and children. Respectively, the messages that the posters communicate: "we vote for jobs and wages", "…for our dreams and rights", "…for pensions and dignity", "…for healthcare and social security", "…for the future of our children", while the last two posters read "our patience is over". Evidently, the 'identities' that are portrayed in the posters are in line with the subjects that Syriza addressed at rallies in Omonoia Square or the parliament as the main opposition party, which have been analysed above.

Figure 3. Syriza's posters from the 2014 election campaign.

The central demands that are visually illustrated in the posters for the same European elections reflected the general social and economic conditions in Greece which the United Nations characterised as being in a state of 'humanitarian crisis'. Applying only a loose comparison, this also highlights a continuity between these demands and the political vision articulated by Tsipras. In order, the posters read: "our fridge is empty…", "our power supply is cut off…", "our medication has run out…"; while the last poster portrays a black and white hand joined, reading "we vote for justice and equality", providing a visual representation of an inclusive populism.

Figure 4. 2014 posters showing Syriza's central demands.

Drawing on the theory of populism, and the minimal criteria that classify it, one could clearly see the metonymy that the political enemy takes on for Syriza. On the left of Figure 5, we see a poster prepared for the visit of the German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Athens in April 2014, portraying her with the then Greek Prime Minister and New Democracy leader, Antonis Samaras. They are shown together as an ensemble presented as the enemy, reading "No more

– Thank you". What that slogan refers to can be found in the poster on the right: "Memoranda – Never Again".

Figure 5. Syriza's posters for Angela Merkel's visit to Athens, 2014.

The analysis of the above visual material is evidently coherent with the left-populist discourse of Syriza. Beyond the discourse analysis presented above, the formal characteristics of populism are evident in aesthetic and visual representations which are indeed discursively mediated and comprehended. Syriza continues to divide the Greek socio-political space in two, between the many and the few; additionally, there is a systematic co-articulation of seemingly asymmetric identities that are brought into discursive equivalence.

5. Syriza in power 2015 - 2019   (preliminary findings)

The political developments in Greece 2013 – 2019, and especially the party of Syriza which consists of the prime unit of analysis for this study, offer to researchers a very rich and complex set of data to be analysed. The principle focus for this dissertation is jointly:

The period 2015 – 2019 continues to offer very interesting observations at many different levels of analysis. First, by analysing the supply side of political discourse as articulated mainly by Alexis Tsipras, and at a supplementary level by other politicians and party members sourced through public interventions or primary interviews, it becomes evident that the populist discourse is still present. This is the very first finding that goes against the conventional perception that populism fails once in power.

Secondly, and very interestingly the analysis of the supply side of political discourse points to very rich and complex observations. In brief, these observations could be analysed within the framework of degreeism/gradational property. In the discourse of Syriza (in general), populism appears in different degrees depending on who speaks and where. For example, Alexis Tsipras is more populist than other politicians of his party. Many of them are not populist at all. Additionally, when Tsipras speaks in a UN summit he is barely populist; rather you can see a humanitarian/liberal discourse (e.g. pro-immigration and equality), although sometimes he speaks about the peoples of Europe, for a different Europe against its neoliberal elites. So in this sense populism can be understood as a matter of degree in terms of intensity.

Additionally, the variations in the populist discourse articulated by Syriza and Tsipras can be observed in terms of the inclusions/exclusions of groups from the chain of equivalence. Sometimes there are more groups co-articulated together sometimes less. Again, depending on where, to who, and why political actors speak there are variations in the discourse. In this sense populism can be understood as a matter of degree in terms of the variation that occurs from inclusion and exclusion in the collective we and the collective other as well.

Overall argument on degrees: degrees must not only be conceptualised in terms of intensity (low/high) but also in horizontal fashion (additions /exclusions)

5.1. Co-articulations and frame-bridging

While populism seems to continue being a feature in the discourse of Syriza it just not comes out of context: syriza does not simply speak out 'the people' against 'the elites'. There are certain frames which emanate from the political developments either those are produced by Syriza, by the international system, by the opposition, or as a matter of contingency. In other words, the populism is articulated along other master frames which occur from the empirical political reality. Deductively we can observe the following master frames which populism is co-articulated with:

5.1.1. The populist/anti-establishment frame:

In the first period that Syriza is in power the populist frame that was used while in opposition is predominantly in present. Of course it is affected by the economic developments in the country and the negotiations with Troika but neither the 'people' nor the 'elite' cease to exist in its discourse. Rather than retreating back to a 'mainstream' party discourse Syriza attempts to justify its choices within the populist framework. Certain changes are observed such as the fact that the 'enemy' is no longer Germany, the EU or Ms. Merkel but the domestic establishment embodied in the name of PASOK and New Democracy.

This frame becomes evident by the following politics that Syriza attempted to do.

Novartis scandal

TV channels licences competition

5.1.2. The patriotic frame

Upon the 'opportunity' of opening up and addressing the (international) issue that Greece had with its neighbour country, now Republic of North-Macedonia (then FYROM), an avalanche of reactions from the public became evident. The nationalist sentiment was boosted, especially because the resolution of the issue with the neighbouring country involved including 'Macedonia' to its name. The majority of political forces opposed the solution to the issue accusing Syriza for a sell-off of the country. In this sense, the majority of political parties (including PASOK etc.) got caught up in the master frame of the Right which sought to 'preserve Macedonia' as something (land, idea, history) that is Greek. The mobilisations from below had a predominantly nationalist consistency (if we are to consider the more militant components of it). Interestingly, and against these mobilisations, Syriza used anti-populist elitism and treated the protestors as ignorant masses. The diplomatic processes that Greece – under the

government of Syriza – followed happened completely from above, in a very technocratic (hence, as it will be argued, anti-populist way).

Beyond this stance which occurred in the two distinct days when the demonstrations were organised outside the Greek parliament, Syriza campaigned *for* the issue under the master frame of 'the home land' which was bridged with the older populist frame. While the nation was at the core of the oppositions' discourse, the homeland was the nodal point in the discourse of Syriza. Here one can expand the typologies which distinguish nationalism from patriotism.

Examples of Tsipras' patriotic discourse:

Patriotism: 'is loving your own country, not hating the neighbor, patriotism means not to stand in silence in front of the monster of fascism. [Patriotism is] to stand up against those who humiliate the (Greek) flag dipping it into the blood of the innocent and the weak, those who have (tattooed) the sun of Vergina on the one hand and the Nazi symbol on the other'

The meaning of the Greek flag: 'the blue and white (flag) that was waved in the villages of resistance by EAM which kicked out the occupier (the fascists/Nazis), the blue and white (flag) that was raised by the students of the Polytechnic University before it turned red from their blood'.
(Alexis Tsipras, Dec.2018 speech on the Macedonian Question)

The patriotic master frame was structured in a populist way. That is to say, while the patriotic discourse observed above is the master frame, the people are defined as all the progressive, democratic, citizens of the country, while the elite is the very same elite that was always described by Syriza in all these years:

e.g. 'the elite which threw Greece in the rocks, destroyed its economy and brought malaise to the people now attempts to isolate us internationally with their fake nationalism'

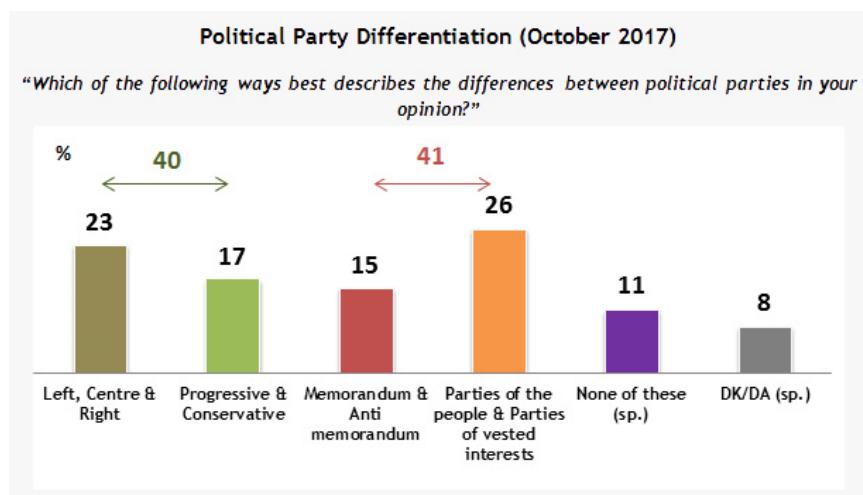### 5.1.3. The 'progress or far-right' dilemmatic frame:

Emanating from the patriotic frame which also suggests an anti-nationalist character the master frame that exists currently in Greece, according to the Syriza narrative, is one that divides the political spectrum between progress and conservatism. National elections are due October and European elections due May 2019. This period is characterised with high polarisation which does not necessarily occur from the camp of Syriza but rather from that of New Democracy. New democracy and the other parties of opposition are set in an anti-Syriza camp while Syriza maintains a master frame that puts forward a cleavage that divides politics, the political spectrum, but also society itself between progress and conservatism; two signifiers that come with different metonymies: on the one hand progress, the progressive alliance or front, and on the other conservatism, the far right, the extreme right, neoliberalism and the New Democracy. Syriza culminates in saying its either us or them, it's either Syriza or the far right, it's either Syriza or the return to the old establishment. This is another opportunity to observe frame bridging.

The polarisation across this dichotomy does not occur in a vacuum. In the 1980s, and up until 1990s, Greek politics – and especially those put forward by the historic leader of the old PASOK Andreas Papandreou – organised against an anti-Right front. Central message back then was ''the people does not forget what the Right wing ideology means''. This referent to the junta regime of the colonels, and it has a high impact on today's 1960s-generation of Leftists. The master frame analysed here refers to this anti-right wing memory in order to polarise society too. Syriza's leader and Prime Minister, but also other members of the government, MEP candidates and MPs, invoke similar messages today that indirectly back to the old cleavage. On the 02/05/2019 Syriza MP Costas Douzinas stated that the people today must know what will happen if the right returns while the MEP candidate G. Mouzalas stated directly that ''the people must not forget what the Right wing ideology means''.

5.1.4. Transformations in the political system

The political discourse in Greece, either communicated by Syriza or other parties of the opposition, cannot not be reduced to the level of rhetoric. There is a real imprint on the political system in itself. In brief, while the centrist parties PASOK, and Potami have sided with the New Democracy, they have arguably moved to their right. New Democracy which is led by its right/nationalist fraction has moved further to the right. Syriza claims that New Democracy is on the extreme right now. This has given space to Syriza to capture space in the centre. It seems that syriza occupies the space from the centre until the Left, where the communist party of Greece is placed.

Additionally, the Left/Right axis has revived and the memorandum/anti-memorandum cleavage that was relevant until 2015 is now less relevant.

Political Party Differentiation (October 2017)

"Which of the following ways best describes the differences between political parties in your opinion?"

5.1.5. Populism without 'the people'?

After having analysed the supply side of political discourse I inquire into the resonance of the respective discourse to the people that Syriza addressed to before 2015 but also the new categories that emerged in its discourse after.

Where is 'the people' or who is 'the people'?

Certain observations:

1. There is a decline of social movement activity. Political conflict is only articulated in the parliament and not in the street. Indeed, this comes with the exception of the right wing mobilisations that occurred in two to five moments between the months of November until February. Also while movement politics may not take place in the street in the form of protest against something they do take place (yet, to a smaller extent) in community level.
2. The radical Left is the number 1 group in the chain of equivalence that is disappointed with Syriza. On the one hand, this part of Syriza's electoral base was only 3% in the 2012 elections, the rest 25% of the people were not party members. On the other hand, it seems that there is a frame bridging between the anti-far right discourse of Syriza and these left activists.
3. Syriza addresses a lot to the popular classes, the super-marginalised sectors outside the urban centre. Syriza has implemented policies which benefit these sectors like 'solidarity benefit', '…… ', '……….', it increased the lower wage, provided benefits…. These sectors identify passively with Syriza but do not participate actively in politics.
4. Middle class and liberal sectors also seem to share the 'progressive' 'liberal' values that syriza is putting forward against the far right.

6. Conclusions in brief:
6.1. Theoretical and scientific:
- Populism in Europe is conceptualised a priori as something negative
- It is highly linked to authoritarianism and the far right
- It is conceptualised in close relation to liberal democracy
- These epistemological pitfalls lead to analytical inconsistencies
- Analytical inconsistencies do not allow us to understand the concept of populism, and in the case of this paper populism in power
- To resolve this one should return to the very definition of populism (people vs. elite)
- Conceptualising populism as a type of discourse one can understand that populism is a matter of degree (intensive or moderate, with a growing chain of equivalence or a shortening one)
- Additionally, through the discursive perspective one can observe the other discourses and master frames that populism is co-articulated with

6.2. Empirical: the case of Syriza:
- Syriza continues to be populist. Its populism appears as a matter of degree mostly in the sense that it is co-articulated and bridged with other political master frames that occur through time
- On the identification side one observes not a complete dis-identification but rather a shift in the consistency of 'the people'.