

**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF POLITICAL STUDIES AND PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION**

**SOCIAL DEMOCRACY IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE
AND MEDITERRANEAN EUROPE DURING TRANSITION**

**-A COMPARATIVE STUDY-
ROMANIA, HUNGARY, SPAIN AND GREECE**

- SUMMARY -

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**BUCHAREST
2020**

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The doctoral thesis named *Social Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe and Mediterranean Europe During Transition* was written because of the desire to understand the main causes of the decline experienced by the European social democratic parties in the last decade. Given that a thorough knowledge of history is indispensable to a study that belongs to the field of political science, we decided to highlight the dynamics of recent evolutions through an incursion in history, incursion meant to analyze the ideological, organizational, and electoral evolution of social democratic movements. The analyzed period begins in the last decades of the 19th century and ends in 2020.

The thesis focuses mainly on the transition period. One of the most important goals of the research is to determine if the nature of the authoritarian regime imposed in a country (fascist or communist) had a significant impact on the organizational and ideological development of social democratic parties during the transition. Therefore, it was necessary to analyze countries that went through left-wing dictatorships, and also countries that went through right-wing dictatorships. On one hand, we selected Romania and Hungary, countries in which communist regimes were built after the end of WWII with the decisive involvement of the USSR. These regimes were in place for more than 40 years. Important for these choices was the fact that both cases are familiar to the author, who fluently speaks Hungarian. On the other hand, we selected Spain and Greece, countries from the Mediterranean area (although, as we point out in the thesis, from a historical point of view there are bigger similarities between Greece and Romania than between Greece and Spain) that went for a shorter (Greece between 1967 and 1974) or longer (Spain between 1939 and 1975) period through right-wing authoritarian regimes.

In the **introduction**, we present, among others, the questions of the research and the hypotheses. The main question of the research is the following: *Which are the most important causes of the ideological transformations suffered by the social democratic parties from Romania, Hungary, Spain, and Greece during the transition from authoritarianism to democracy and from a centralized economy to a market economy?*

Trying to answer this question, we formulated four hypotheses. The first hypothesis is the following: *The ideological transition of Western social democracy from Keynesianism to neoliberalism, completed in the 1990s, expanded from center to periphery and decisively*

influenced the doctrinal evolution of the analyzed parties. The second hypothesis is the following: *The analyzed parties pivoted towards the center also because of the constraints imposed by institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the European Commission.* The third hypothesis is the following: *The nature of the removed authoritarian regime (communist or right-wing) contributed to the survival/dissappearance of the left-wing character of the doctrine embraced by the social democratic parties we analyze.* The last hypothesis linked to the main question of the research is formulated as follows: *The doctrinal evolution of the four parties during the transition was influenced by the fact that their history was characterized by ideological heterogeneity.*

The secondary question of the research, which has two components, is formulated as follows: *Which was the impact of the four social democratic parties on the democratization process? Is this impact a consequence of the doctrinal paths that they engaged in after the regime change?* Trying to answer this question, we formulated two hypotheses.

The first hypothesis is the following: *The social democratic parties had a positive impact on the processes of democratisation in Romania, Hungary, Spain, and Greece.* The second hypothesis is the following: *Because the analyzed parties embraced the Third Way doctrine, they implemented policies that contributed to the survival of the socio-economical gaps between the four countries and the core of the European Union.*

The **theoretical framework** of the thesis is built around four concepts: Socialism, capitalism, transition, and political party. An important observation is the following: the concept of *Socialism* can be understood not only as of the Leninist phase that precedes the instauration of the Communist society but also as Social democracy. An important author that studied the varieties of Socialism is the Italian economist Domenico Mario Nuti. Nuti considers that the main elements of Socialism are the following: a) dominant public sector, or at least an important participation of the state in the main sectors of the economy; b) equality; c) economical participation of the population and democracy; d) effective social control on the economical variables (income, growth, unemployment, etc.). Starting from these variables, we can formulate 16 models. In the thesis, we observed which models describe properly the analyzed countries.

The German philosopher Karl Marx is an author whose work is essential for a study centered on social democracy. Marx rejected both utopian Socialism and the theories of Ferdinand Lassalle, theories that influenced the German social democracy. According to Lassalle, the state will have an important role in the construction of a socialist society. Marx believed that history is a dialectic succession of the modes of production; in his view, the laws of history prove that eventually the capitalist system will be destroyed by a violent revolution led by the proletariat, and a communist society will be built, in which there will be no state and no social classes.

Eduard Bernstein is the author which, by partly rejecting Marx's theory, will become the father of the Marxist heresy known as social democracy. Bernstein claims that a global revolution is not inevitable; the living standards of the proletariat can be improved through parliamentary reforms. Moreover, a violent revolution is not even desirable, and not only from a moral point of view; the social peace would be almost impossible to maintain on the long term in a post-revolutionary society. Notable is that Bernstein, although criticised several components of Marxism, never rejected the theoretical system entirely. His remark, „The movement is everything, the goal is nothing”, is very important for understanding social democracy.

The British economist John Maynard Keynes will elaborate a theory that will eliminate completely Marxism from the doctrinal body of social democracy. Keynes rejects the idea that capitalism must be destroyed and replaced with a system that has visible utopian elements. He also rejects the idea that markets deserve absolute freedom. Authors like Friedrich Hayek and Ludwig von Mises claim that free markets are generating freedom and prosperity for the entire society. Keynes highlights the absurdity of this theory, and advocates a regulated capitalist system.

The British sociologist Anthony Giddens is the main ideologue of the *Third Way* movement. He considers that social democracy must be modernised, and this modernisation means abandoning the Marxist remainings and Keynesian interventionism. According to Giddens, the new social, economical and geopolitical realities require innovative ideas, the old ones being incompatible with a world in which the rhythm of the changes is constantly growing. The ideological evolution of the international Socialist movement begins with Marx,

continues with Bernstein and Keynes, and reaches a new turning point because of Giddens' theory. Our study observes if the same evolution is characteristic for analysed parties or not.

Regarding the varieties of capitalism, Peter Hall and David Soskice (political economists) consider that there are three types of capitalist economies: liberal (the competition is more important than the cooperation), coordinated (the cooperation is more important than the competition) and mixed. Michael A. Witt and Gregory Jackson expose a similar taxonomy, but they mention that this taxonomy is not entirely proper for understanding economies that are in the middle of a process of transition.

The taxonomy elaborated by the French economist Bruno Amable contains 5 categories: market based Anglo-Saxon model, social democratic (Scandinavian) model, Continental European model, Mediterranean model and Asian model. The market based model is similar with the liberal market economy described by Hall and Soskice; the level of regulations is low. The other four models are built around a geographical criteria; from this point of view, Amable's theory is innovative.

Basing their theory on the framework set by the Austro-Hungarian philosopher and economist Karl Polanyi, Dorothee Bohle and Bela Greskovitz conclude that there are three varieties of capitalist economy in Central and Eastern Europe. First of all, we have a type of neoliberal capitalism in the Baltic states. This model is close to what the investor and philosopher George Soros names *market fundamentalism*. Secondly, a type of embedded neoliberalism is present in Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Thirdly, in Slovenia we notice a particular model, neocorporatist, that lacks the market radicalism which is present in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Last, but not least, the authors identify three peculiar cases: Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia. They consider that Romania and Bulgaria are close to the Baltic neoliberal model, while Croatia is closer to the embedded neoliberal economy. Our study verifies the exactity of these conclusions.

Regarding transitology, an important author is Martin Seymour Lipset. Lipset considers that industrialization, urbanization, education and wealth are components of a single factor, and the absence of this factor represents a great obstacle for any process of democratisation.

Lipset also claims that economic growth *per se* is not enough for fueling a successful democratisation. The efficiency and legitimacy of the political system are also needed.

The political scientist Dankwart Rustow identifies several elements that according to him are vital for the success of a process of democratisation. Firstly, the national unity is more important than the social and economical development. Secondly, the existence of significant social cleavages is needed, and this cleavages must be formed around modernising initiatives. Thirdly, a political decision that favours the democratisation must be taken; this decision can be made by the government or by opposition groups. Last, but not least, there is necessary a period of accommodation, when the consensus that strengthens the reforms is built.

Thomas Carothers criticises the transition paradigm. According to him, this paradigm concludes way too easily that a country has become a democracy, ignoring the vulnerability and reversability of the democratisation processes. Simultaneously, the paradigm ignores the grey zone between the democratic areas and the authoritarian ones. The political scientist Seva Gunitsky considers that the transition paradigm focuses too much on internal conditions, neglecting the external influences. Therefore, he concludes that democratic/authoritarian waves are driven by hegemonic shocks (the ascension or the decline of a great power).

Regarding the political parties, Maurice Duverger proposes the following taxonomy: the mass-based parties are characteristic for the political left and the elite-based parties are characteristic for the political right. This taxonomy is useful especially for understanding the party systems that were in place before the ideological hegemony of market fundamentalism started. The Italian political scientist Mauro Calise claims that countries like Italy or Belgium can be considered *particracies*. In certain conditions, a democracy of parties can transform itself in a mutant described in political science with the concept *particracy*. In such a system, political parties monopolise the state, being able to control completely the shape and substance of the public policies and the distribution of the functions in the public administration. In the fifth chapter we prove that some of the analysed countries, like Romania and Greece, can be considered *particracies*.

The German jurist Otto Kirchheimer created in the 1950s a concept that remains highly relevant today: catch-all party. He claims that the era of the mass-based parties is approaching

its end; many political parties are not trying anymore to represent a social class, or the entire society. Their main goal is to obtain as much votes as possible, so their main political tool is a discourse built as a product with an attractive marketing strategy. In the fifth chapter we prove that some of the analysed parties, like PSD or MSZP, are at least partly embracing the catch-all model.

Regarding the **methodology** of the thesis, we use mainly a qualitative tool, the historical analysis. Although we often use numbers, it is not our goal to quantify; we expose informations, and we try to extract from them proves and causalities that confirm or invalidate our hypotheses. Therefore, it is possible that in some points the research resembles more a political history thesis than a political science one. Nevertheless, the starting point and the destination of our journey are strongly rooted in the field of political science.

One of the reasons of choosing a historical analysis was an article written by a political scientist named Michael C. Desch. Desch claims that the ascension of methodological rigor affected the relevance of the field. In other words, the attempt to own entirely the methodological tools of natural sciences affected the capacity of the political scientists to influence the process of creating and implementing public policies. By agreeing with Desch's arguments we don't question the utility of using quantitative tools in political science; these tools are not harmful *per se*. We simply want to highlight that opting for a historical analysis doesn't undermine the scientific character of our research.

The **third chapter** has four sections, one for each studied country. Romania's section focuses on a period that begins in 1879 and ends in 1948. Here we present the important role played by Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea in the formation of the first Romanian social democratic party in 1893 (PSDMR), and in the process of shaping a Marxist doctrinal identity for this party. Although Dobrogeanu-Gherea is a remarkable ideologue, who tries to adapt Marxism to the Romanian social and economic reality, Romanian socialism is unable to evolve from an organisational, doctrinal and electoral point of view, PSDMR is dissolved in 1899, after some of its leaders became members of a liberal party (PNL).

The Bulgarian born Socialist Cristian Racovski will try to resuscitate the Romanian Marxist movement, but the success of his actions will be limited. During WWI and in the

beginning of the interwar period the movement is slightly radicalised. This is the context of the rupture between the Communists and the Social democrats. The social democrats will try to reorganise themselves. An important role in these attempts will be played by moderate socialists from Transylvania and Bukovina. Overall, during the entire interwar period the Romanian democratic left remains vulnerable ideologically, organisationally and electorally.

Between 1938 and 1940 some social democrats will collaborate with a right-wing authoritarian regime, an action which questions their loyalty to the principles and values of social democracy. In 1944 the social democrats became allies of the communists and contributed to the downfall of the fascist regime led by Ion Antonescu. In the following years, some social democrats will be involved in the construction of a Communist regime. Others will become political prisoners, or will choose the path of exile.

The following section analyses the Hungarian case, and focuses on a period which starts in 1890 and ends in 1948. Just like in the Romanian case, in its first decades of existence the Hungarian Socialism is vulnerable from a ideological, electoral and organisational point of view. The party doesn't have an ideologue like Dobrogeanu-Gherea, and is affected by numerous scissions. The collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire fueled by the outcome of WWI leads to the subordination of the Socialists by the Communists and to the installation of an ephemeral Soviet Republic. The main consequence of this failed revolution is the creation of a right-wing authoritarian regime. Moreover, the left is completely decedibilized in the eyes of the peasantry.

Just like in the Romanian case, during the interwar period the social democrats will collaborate with the right-wing dictatorship. Because of this collaboration, they will have parliamentary representation, but they are unable to use it in order to achieve their main social and economical goals. After 1945 some social democrats will support the installation of the Communist regime, while other will become political prisoners, or will choose the path of exile.

The third section of the third chapter is dedicated to Spain. The section focuses on a period which starts in 1879 and ends in 1939. The Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE) is founded in 1879. Although in Spain the social and economic conditions are more friendly for the

development of such a party than in Romania or Hungary, PSOE's development will be difficult in its first decades of existence. The Spanish left is also affected by the absence of an ideologue capable of adapting Marxism to the local realities, and the carelessness towards the issues of the peasantry is another factor that creates vulnerability. Other factors are the rejection of decentralisation and of the idea of creating partnerships with the progressive Republican forces.

The Socialists will decide to collaborate with the Republicans only after 1909. Just like in the previous cases, WWI fuels a process of radicalization, process which is not able to generate an organisational and electoral development. In 1923 a right-wing dictatorship is imposed, and the socialists will choose to collaborate with this regime. The regime collapses in 1931, and a democratic republic is created. Between 1931 and 1936 the socialists will collaborate with the republicans, but there will be also episodes filled with tension. The Socialists will be able to impose several reforms with a positive social and economic impact, but in the end multiple wrong tactical choices will facilitate the collapse of the republic and the debut of a civil war in which the fascists will triumph. Many members of PSOE will become victims of the terrible reactionary repression, while others will be fortunate enough to leave the country in time.

The following section analyses the Greek case and focuses on a period which starts in 1918 and ends in 1967. The conditions for the development of Socialism are worse in Greece than in Spain, or Hungary, or even Romania. The proletariat is underdeveloped, nationalism is thriving, and the peasantry wasn't affected for a long period by the dominance of landlords. The first notable Greek Socialist party appears only in 1918, and quickly becomes a satellite of the Kremlin. Unlike in the previous cases, in the interwar period the Communists will have parliamentary representation, while the Socialists will be completely irrelevant.

The Communists will be loyal to the Stalinist project, while the authorities will impose obstacles that will weaken their position. In 1936 a right-wing authoritarian regime will be imposed, and the Communists will be outlawed. During WWII Greece is occupied by Nazi and fascist forces; this occupation represents a great opportunity for the Communist party (KKE). They will be able to develop organisationally; the Communists will be a pillar of the Resistance. After the end of WWII a civil war will break out between the radical left and the

conservative nationalists. The right-wing will win the war with the support of the USA and the UK. After 1949 KKE will continue its activity in clandestinity and exile.

In the 1950s an illiberal democracy will be built with the support of the USA. A Socialist party, created as an interface for the Communists, but which will become autonomous with time, will grow steadily as importance on the political stage. However, in the end it will become a satellite of a liberal party led by Georgios Papandreou, which was the only structure capable of undermining the conservative hegemony. Papandreou's success will lead to a military *coup d'état*, which will install a right-wing dictatorship in 1967. The socialists and the liberals will continue their activity in clandestinity and exile.

The **fourth chapter** is dedicated to the authoritarian/totalitarian period. In Romania the Communist regime is in place between 1948 and 1989. The regime has several phases of ideological transformations. Several social democratic political prisoners are freed in 1955-1956, and social democrats from exile are politically active until the 1960s, but overall the clandestine/external actions of the democratic left have no impact on the stability of the regime. Decisive for the collapse of communism will be the Kremlin's new philosophy and the social and economical consequences produced by Nicolae Ceaușescu's decision to replicate the Eastern Asian Communist model.

In Hungary the Communist regime survives as well until 1989. However, the regime was seriously shaken by the Revolution of 1956, which had an important socialist foundation (proletarians and left-wing intellectuals were involved in its development). After 1956 the Hungarian communism is liberalised. This process of liberalisation leads to the formation in the 1980s of reformist informal groups inside the Communist Party. These groups will play an important role during the negotiated transition which takes place mainly in 1989.

In Spain the fascist regime collapses in 1975, because of the death of Francisco Franco. Until then the Socialists are active clandestinely in Spain and officially in exile, being supported by the Western social democratic parties. In the 1960s a conflict will erupt between the internal and the external socialists. The cleavage was mainly a generational one. At the beginning of the 1970s the younger group, which was led in Spain by Felipe Gonzalez, obtains a decisive victory.

In Greece the military dictatorship lasts for only 7 years. The opposition in exile is led by the socialist Andreas Papandreou, the son of the late liberal Georgios Papandreou. However, when the authoritarian regime collapses, the conservatives take over the political power. Nevertheless, they will have a strong adversary in PASOK, the first socialist party in the history of Greece capable of controlling the government. PASOK was founded and led by Andreas Papandreou.

The **fifth chapter** is the main chapter of the thesis, focusing on the transition. In Romania the regime change is violent. Nicolae Ceaușescu and his wife are executed. Ion Iliescu, a former communist dignitary, takes over the political power, and creates a party that claims to be social democratic (FSN). FSN will win the first democratic elections in Romania's history in May 1990, but its actions while being in government will be only partly compatible with the social democratic doctrine. Under FSN/FDSN/PDSR's coordination, the Romanian transition will be more than difficult, the country being a hybrid regime between 1990 and 1995.

From an economical point of view, Romania has between 1990 and 1992 a liberal neodevelopmentalist government. After Ion Iliescu and FDSN are victorious in the elections held in 1992, the cabinet adopts a populist neodevelopmentalist philosophy, which is closer to the Keynesian interventionism of the postwar Western social democracy. In 1996 Iliescu and his party lose the political power, regaining it in 2000.

In 2000 Adrian Năstase becomes the leader of the government. He will coordinate an ideological transformation: PSD will distance itself from Keynesian interventionism, moving towards the *Third Way* current which was led by Tony Blair and Anthony Giddens. In the same time, the social democrats will be involved in several corruption scandals, which will be a cause of the right-wing's victory at the presidential and parliamentary elections held in 2004.

In 2005 Ion Iliescu is defeated in the elections for PSD's leadership by the centrist Mircea Geoană. After Iliescu's defeat PSD abandons the Keynesian vision almost entirely, moving even closer to the *Third Way* model. In this context, on January 1st of 2007, the Romanian transition ends when the country becomes member of the European Union (EU). We must mention that the social democrats, although they had an important role in

maintaining Romania in the grey area between the democratic zone and the authoritarian zone between 1990 and 1995, overall had a positive influence on the process of democratisation. The country joined NATO and EU with the active involvement of the social democrats.

In Hungary the regime change is negotiated, peaceful. The Communist Party is not dissolved, like in the Romanian case, being transformed in a Socialist one (MSZP). MSZP loses the elections held in 1990, but wins four years later, taking over the government alongside a liberal party. The ideological ambiguity that characterised Hungarian Socialism in the interwar period is visible also in the 1990s. Gyula Horn's government will impose draconian austerity measures, until these measures are blocked by the populist wing of MSZP. However, the elections held in 1998 are lost and Viktor Orbán becomes for the first time head of the Hungarian government.

In 2002 MSZP takes over the government once again. The technocrat Peter Medgyessy becomes Prime Minister. MSZP was starting to move towards the *Third Way* model. In 2004 Medgyessy is replaced by the centrist Ferenc Gyurcsány. Between 2002 and 2006 both Prime Ministers imposed social and economic measures that had a positive impact. However, after 2006 Gyurcsány will implement draconian austerity measures, measures that are partly fueled by the global economic crisis. His successor, Gordon Bajnai, will have the same philosophy. In 2010 MSZP was completely subordinated in front of neoliberalism.

The Hungarian transition ends in 2004, when the country becomes member of the EU. The socialists are not moving the country towards the group of hybrid regimes, like the Romanian ones, and are involved in the process of Euro-Atlantic integration. However, their governmental failures open the way for Viktor Orbán's project of building an illiberal democracy.

In Spain the regime change is negotiated, peaceful. Until 1982 the political power is held by the conservatives. In 1981 the conservatives are able, with the King's involvement, to defeat a military *coup d'état* attempt. Meanwhile, the Socialists abandon the Marxist component of their ideological identity, replacing it, at least at a discursive level, with Keynesian interventionism. Under the leadership of Felipe Gonzalez they will monopolise the

left-wing of the political scene, marginalizing the Communist Party (PCE). In 1982 PSOE wins the parliamentary elections, and Felipe Gonzalez becomes Prime Minister.

In the first 8 years of governing, the Socialists will neglect the Keynesian component of their discourse, getting close to the neoliberal philosophy. In their case the following label can be used: *Third Way avant la lettre*. This transformation will strain the relationship between PSOE and the trade unions. However, PSOE will win the elections held in 1986 and 1989. The population appreciated the progressive social and cultural reforms, and some progressive reforms that regarded education and healthcare.

After 1989 PSOE moves a bit closer to the Keynesian interventionism that characterised the postwar Western social democracy. Nevertheless, the party's problems regarding corruption grew bigger and bigger. In 1996, when the conservatives regained the power, and the Spanish transition can be considered ended, PSOE left behind an ambiguous social and economic legacy.

PSOE had a positive impact in the Spanish process of democratization. Initially the socialists opposed the Euro-Atlantic integration, but they changed their position after the Marxist component of their doctrine was abandoned.

In Greece the first 7 years of transition are controlled by the conservatives. Meanwhile, PASOK grows stronger and stronger, being able to monopolise the left-wing of the political scene by marginalising the communists. From an ideological point of view, PASOK combined Marxist and Keynesian elements. Andreas Papandreou led the party in an authoritarian way.

The parliamentary elections held in 1981 are won by PASOK, and Andreas Papandreou becomes Prime Minister. Among all the analysed cases, the PASOK government between 1981 and 1985 is the one that has the highest level of loyalty to Keynesian interventionism. However, the things change after 1985, when the cabinet tries to impose austerity measures. Some of these measures will be abandoned in the end, but they signaled that the transition of PASOK towards a *Third Way avant la lettre* model had started. In 1990 the conservatives regained the political power.

PASOK had a positive impact on the Greek process of democratisation, and, just like PSOE, gradually abandoned its hostility towards the project of Euro-Atlantic integration. On the other hand, the socialists finally pivoted towards the centr, just like PSD, MSZP and PSOE, and were affected by Papandreou's authoritarian leadership style and by corruption scandals.

The **sixth chapter** focuses on a period which is described using the following concept: post-transition. In Romania after 2007 PSD continues to embrace the *Third Way* model. Victor Ponta, the successor of Mircea Geoană, is a close friend of Tony Blair. After Ponta resigns as leader of PSD in 2015, the party arrives once again in a more ambiguous ideological zone. PSD's new president, Liviu Dragnea, a politician involved in corruption scandals, moves the Romanian social democracy quite close to the illiberal path promoted by Viktor Orban. After Dragnea is jailed in 2019, the uncertainty that surrounds PSD's ideological identity grows. Under Marcel Ciolacu's leadership, the party seems to be moving towards the *Third Way* model imposed by Mircea Geoană. However, illiberalism and populist neodevelopmentalism still remain valid options.

In Hungary, as Viktor Orban consolidates the illiberal democracy, MSZP becomes weaker, both organisationally and electorally. From an ideological point of view, the party seems to be blocked in the centrist zone promoted by Ferenc Gyurcsany. This blockage undermines the chances of starting a process of revival.

In Spain, socialism seems to have regained the energy that characterised it while the leader of the party was Felipe Gonzalez. From an ideological point of view, PSOE is closer to the left today than in the 1980s. The socialists took over the government once again in 2004, under the leadership of Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero. Zapatero rejected both Keynesian interventionism and Giddens' centrism. He promoted a civic republicanism inspired by Philip Pettit and John Rawls. However, after 2008 he implemented austerity measures in the context of the global economic crisis, which facilitated a conservative victory at the parliamentary elections held in 2011. Under the leadership of Pedro Sanchez PSOE took over the government once again in 2018, having a doctrinal identity that is closer to Keynesian interventionism than in the previous decades.

In Greece the socialists took over the government once again in 1993, under the leadership of Andreas Papandreou. Papandreou passed away in 1996, being replaced as Prime Minister and leader of PASOK by Costas Simitis. Under Simitis' leadership, the transition of PASOK towards neoliberalism continues. The transition is completed after 2009, when Prime Minister and leader of the party is George Papandreou, the son of Andreas. The draconian austerity measures imposed by PASOK between 2009 and 2011 destroyed the party both organisationally and electorally. Between 2012 and 2015 PASOK was a junior partner in a government led by the conservatives, and in 2018 it became part of a centrist party named *Movement for Change (KA or KINAL)*.

In the section dedicated to the **conclusions**, we verify the validity of the hypotheses by bringing into discussion informations and arguments presented throughout the study. The first hypothesis (*The ideological transition of Western social democracy from Keynesianism to neoliberalism, completed in the 1990s, expanded from center to periphery and decisively influenced the doctrinal evolution of the analyzed parties*) is confirmed. German social democracy, which after 1959 was moving towards the centre, influenced the ideological development of PSD (at the beginning of the 2000s), MSZP (at the beginning of the 1990s) and PSOE (at the end of the 1970s). In the Greek case, the French influence was the most important: Mitterand's deradicalization fueled Papandreou's deradicalization.

The second hypothesis (*The analyzed parties pivoted towards the center also because of the constraints imposed by institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the European Commission*) is also confirmed. The IMF was constantly advocating for neoliberal austerity. Joining the European Union was incompatible with Keynesian reforms. Overall, the European integration was a positive development for the analysed countries, but nevertheless it weakened the left-wing component of the social democratic doctrinal identity.

The third hypothesis (*The nature of the removed authoritarian regime (communist or right-wing) contributed to the survival/dissappearance of the left-wing character of the doctrine embraced by the social democratic parties we analyze*) is invalidated. PSD (1989-2007) and MSZP (1989-2010) are moving closer to the political centre than PSOE (1975-1996) and PASOK (1974-1990), but not because of the authoritarian past, but because the

analysed periods are different. The dimensions of the compromise between European social democracy and neoliberalism were much bigger in the 2000s than in the 1980s.

The fourth hypothesis (*The doctrinal evolution of the four parties during the transition was influenced by the fact that their history was characterized by ideological heterogeneity*) is confirmed. The four socialist movements embraced before 1945 a kind of „decaffeinated Marxism”. They all lacked an ideologue capable of adapting the Marxist theory to the local realities (maybe Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea is the only exception). They had progressive programs, and often progressive actions, but the Romanian, Hungarian and Spanish socialists also collaborated with right-wing dictators. These movements developed in the interwar period a propensity towards compromise which enabled during the transition the abandonment of Keynesianism.

The first hypothesis linked to the secondary question of the research (*The social democratic parties had a positive impact on the processes of democratisation in Romania, Hungary, Spain, and Greece*) is valid, but some observations regarding each case have to be made. In Romania the social democrats maintained the country for 6 years in the area of the hybrid regimes, and harmed the rule of law in several occasions after 1995. In Hungary MSZP created the conditions for Viktor Orban’s illiberal project. In Spain Gonzalez and Zapatero never embraced fully neoliberalism, and today Pedro Sanchez is leading a government that often acts in a Keynesian way. In Greece after 2009 PASOK constantly undermined the stability of the democratic regime.

The second hypothesis linked to the secondary question of the research (*Because the analyzed parties embraced the Third Way doctrine, they implemented policies that contributed to the survival of the socio-economical gaps between the four countries and the core of the European Union*) is also confirmed. The austerity measures, the dismantling of the public sector, the flexibilization of the labor market, the weakening of the trade unions are factors that maintained the mentioned gaps. Important progresses were made regarding many indicators, but the gaps remain.

Regarding the **research limitations**, using qualitative methodological tools could have improved the accuracy of the results. We don’t claim that we have offered complete and

final answers to the questions that we formulated. Future studies could improve or elaborate our conclusions.

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