

NEO-GRAMSCIAN APPROACH ON EUROPEANIZATION

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Abstract

This paper belongs to the area of critical studies in European Integration and I will try to demonstrate that the concept of Europeanization is not able to capture the nature of social change which occurs in member states. Nowadays, this concept is largely used by scholars to describe all of the economic, political and social changes that are taking place in national domestic policy under the influence of the European Union, understood as a distinct polity. In other words, this approach of Europeanization is limited only to the European geographical space and, as a consequence, it cannot capture the wider context in which the European Union exists – globalization and the nature of world order.

My aim is to analyse the concept of Europeanization through the neo-gramscian theoretical framework and to see if it can be overlapped with the process of European integration. I will do this by assuming a historical materialist view on the European integration process and international relations which will help me understand these changes through the Marxist perspective of structure and superstructure. Those concepts are mutually constructed in the neo-gramscian approach and they are represented by the agency of social forces and its superstructural dimension – the neoliberal ideology according to Baastian Van Apeldoorn, Andeas Bieler, Adam David Morton or Stephen Gill.

Keywords: *Neo-gramscianism; European integration; Europeanization; critical theory; social forces.*

1. Introduction – Overview on Europeanization

In this section I will try to figure out what are the theoretical approaches regarding Europeanization and to see how this concept is overlapping with the process of European Integration. Thus, is Europeanization a process unique in the world? Does it have any elements that make it different from other similar processes¹? I will start my research with a historical view on Europeanization by considering Wolfgang Schmale's definition: "Processes resulting in the development of a single European culture can be bundled under the term Europeanization. The majority of these processes played out over the long-term, but accelerated since the second half of the 18th century²" (Schmale 2010). They create in this way a significant degree of cultural coherency on the continent. As an example, he identifies the spread of Greco-Roman culture to be the first source of Europeanization. Furthermore, which is more interesting for my research, is that Schmale tries to find a pattern of Europeanization identifiable over the course of time. Thus, "one particular interpretation

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¹ There are also other attempts to achieve a kind of regional integration outside the European Continent: Mercosur in Latin America, African Union (AU), Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

² "This differentiation may well be simple, but is of inestimable importance to the purposes of orientation. The major processes of Europeanization often correspond to the core characteristics used to refer to epochs such as the Renaissance, the Baroque age, or the Enlightenment. Minor processes of Europeanization emerge in conjunction with a large number of cultural transfers, which hone a number of cultural assets through transfer, enabling them to fit into a number of different contexts" (Schmale 2010).

advanced by the literature is the common division onto an East-West schema. Such a model is certainly applicable to the process of industrialization and the Enlightenment, which first developed in England, Scotland and France” (Schmale 2010).

Consequently, those two components of Europeanization could be framed in Marxist terms of structure and superstructure as it follows. Regarding the economic structure, industrialization is about technological development and mass production and it represents the moment when the Western world (especially Europe) made a huge step forward. On the other side, the superstructural dimension could be discussed in terms of Enlightenment and emergence of the capitalist mode of production. I will put forward the ideas of Milan Zafirovski, who argues that the Enlightenment was a source of critical ideas, such as freedom or democracy, that strongly opposed to the legitimacy of the ruling kings. “Specifically, the Enlightenment intellectually destroys or discredits feudalism as the economic structure of the ancient regime as a total social system. In turn, it creates or envisions modern capitalism as a coherent theoretical concept³” (Zafirovski 2010, 12). Those ideas came out and were spread through society by some thinkers like Hume, Ferguson, Condorcet, Montesquieu, Saint Simon or even Adam Smith, who was the actual member of Enlightenment. All of those things mean that Europeanization was a concept confounded with the technological, economic, social and political supremacy of Europe comparing to the rest of the World, and with the action of the European states to implement their own way of life abroad, through the colonization process.

After this introduction, I need to come closely to the nowadays Europe, and to bring the discussion into the field of the European Union – the main tool of Europeanization. One of the most relevant scholars is Johan Olsen who believes that this term is useful for understanding the dynamics of the evolving European polity. He also includes here the relation between the European system of governance and similar national systems. But to clarify this perspective, Olsen defines the process of Europeanization through five different phenomena, which are also five possible uses of the term:

1. ***Changes in external boundaries***: “This involves the territorial reach of a system of governance and the degree to which Europe as a continent becomes a single political space” (Olsen 2002, 923). A good example of Europeanization here is the European Union enlargement and the changes that are taking place in those states that applied for membership.
2. ***Developing institutions at the European level***: “This signifies centre-building with a collective action capacity, providing some degree of co-ordination and coherence” (Olsen 2002, 923). It means that the institutions of governance and normative order can facilitate or constrain the ability to legislate and to enforce decisions, or even to sanction non-compliance.
3. ***Central penetration of national systems of governance***: “Europeanization here involves the division of responsibilities and powers between different levels of governance. All multilevel systems of governance need to work out a balance between unity and diversity, central co-ordination and local autonomy” (Olsen 2002, 923-924). Here Europeanization signifies the adapting national and sub-national systems of governance to the European polity.
4. ***Exporting forms of political organization***: “Europeanization as exporting forms of political organization and governance that are typical and distinct for Europe beyond the European territory, focuses on relations with non-European actors and

³ “Generally, the Enlightenment directly as through Hume, Condorcet, Montesquieu, and Saint Simon, or indirectly via Smith’s classical political economy is admittedly the primary intellectual source and theoretical formulation of the conception of economic freedom, including free markets, thus modern capitalism replacing feudal servitude, just as of political liberty and democracy superseding despotism and theocracy” (Zafirovski 2010, 13).

institutions and how Europe finds a place in a larger world order” (Olsen 2002, 924). Olsen is assuming here that non-European countries import more from Europe, than European countries import from outside.

5. ***A political unification project***: “The degree to which Europe is becoming a more unified and stronger political entity is related both to territorial space, centre-building, domestic adaptation, and how European developments impact and are impacted by systems of governance and events outside the European continent” (Olsen 2002, 924). The Europeanization process is measured by the impact of the European Union as an entity in the field of international relations and as a model of development.

Using those insights of Europeanization, I will discuss this concept under the neo-Marxist point of view (neo-gramscianism). The first point that needs a separate discussion is number four, *exporting forms of political organization*. I consider this to be the most important aspect of my research concept because it involves a level where Europeanization cannot overlap with European integration. But also, I will emphasise the main question that rises automatically: what are the elements of this Europeanization insight? To find a proper answer, I will bring out the example of the economic based relationship between the European Union and Mercosur⁴.

The most important aspects of this relation are the *Interregional Framework Cooperation Agreement* signed in 1995, and the *2007-2013 Regional Programme* adopted in 2007. The former programme, and the most important one, provide 50 million euro for the next three priority areas: “Mercosur institutional strengthening; Supporting Mercosur in preparing for the implementation of the Association Agreement; Fostering the participation of civil society to Mercosur integration process⁵”. Until now, the EU seems to export a model of regional integration. But why does Latin America need something like that? Was it just social and political willingness or are there other pressures coming from the economy? And also, what is the framework in which those interactions are taking place? Europeanization does not tell us anything about globalization and world order. Furthermore, for Patrick Messerlin, which made a deeper research into the economic relations between EU and Mercosur, non-trade topics often included in comprehensive economic and trade agreements are: Anti-corruption, civil protection, consumer protection, cultural cooperation, economic policy dialogue, education and training, human rights, innovation policies, labour market regulations, money laundering, public administration, regional cooperation, small and medium enterprises or social matters taxation (Messerlin 2013). All of those elements show that the European Union is exporting, or at least it is trying to, a model of capitalism, not an entire mode of production as it did before⁶, during the age of industrialization and Enlightenment. It means that no big changes could happen with the Mercosur in this way – because the European Union is implementing some regional projects. The European type of capitalism has two main roots: historical processes of European States and national specificities on one hand, and the influence of the neoliberal ideology under the pressure of globalization, on the other hand. As it is obvious, the historical processes and national specificities are rather different in Mercosur compared to the European Union. And regarding globalization, it is a process that involved almost the entire planet, and it should not be overlapped with Europeanization. I will discuss more about the relation between globalization and European integration in the next chapter.

⁴ Mercosur was founded in 1991 by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. In July 2012, Bolivia also joined this group of states. Moreover, Columbia, Ecuador, Peru and Chile are only associated states.

⁵ http://eeas.europa.eu/mercosur/index_en.htm

⁶ Not as a political entity, but through the most advanced European states, like Great Britain or France.

Turning back to the Europeanization insights, the other four are connected geographically with the European continent which means that they could be overlapped with European integration. The second and the fifth insight are referring to the building of supranational institutions and to a unified European political project. But are those elements not part of the integration process? Also, why is this Europeanization occurring? Which are its catalysts? Furthermore, if we look to the first and third insight, Europeanization through enlargement and through penetration of national systems of governance, we can say even more that those are the core elements of European integration. A relevant view on those issues belongs to Claudio Radaelli who defines Europeanization in terms of a process of “(a) construction, (b) diffusion, and (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things', and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU public policy and politics and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures, and public policies⁷” (Radaelli 2003, 30). This perspective supports my point of view that Europeanization is, in its specific areas, overlapped with the process of integration. The main question here is why use Europeanization in those cases and not European integration? I will show in the next section that, by using neo-gramscianism, one could add to the integration process other variables like globalization or even world order, which through Europeanization they cannot be incorporated.

2. Content

2.1. Neo-gramscianism and European Integration

In this chapter I will present an alternative theory of European integration, the neo-gramscian approach. I have chosen this theory because it can provide a better understanding of social change by considering the economic structure (social forces agency) and superstructural dimension (impact of neoliberal ideology). Consequently, a neo-gramscian approach⁸ is able to offer a critical perspective, focusing on hegemonic projects which have both succeeded and failed, and those which will constitute the framework of future hegemonic contestation.

The most important aspect of neo-gramscianism is represented by its focusing on social forces engendered by the production process and understood as the most important collective actor. „Consequently, various fractions of labour and capital may be identified in relation to their place in the production system. This makes structural changes such as globalisation accessible, since the emergence of new social forces engendered by the transnationalisation of production and finance can be incorporated” (Bieler, Andreas and Adam David Morton. *Introduction: Neo-Gramscian Perspectives in International Political Economy and the Relevance to European Integration* in Bieler and Morton 2001, 17). Those social forces, being engendered by the production process, are related with social classes in classical Marxist theory. Social classes are therefore regarded as social forces whose cohesion derives from its role in the production process. „Consequently, class is defined as a relation

⁷ In each member state, the Europeanization process occurs on follow levels: “(1) Political structures (institutions, public administration, intergovernmental relations, legal structure); Structures of representation and cleavages (political parties, pressure groups, societal-cleavage structures); (2) Public policy (actors, policy problems, style, instruments, resources); (3) Cognitive and normative structures (discourse, norms and values, political legitimacy, identities, state traditions — understanding of governance, policy paradigms, frames, and narratives)” (Radaelli 2003, p. 35).

⁸ This approach, as van Apeldoorn also affirms, has its roots in the “historical materialism that emphasizes the role of transnational social forces in the construction of the European socio-economic order” (van Apeldoorn 2002, 11).

and the various fractions of labour and capital can be identified by relating them to their place in the production system” (Bieler 2000, 10).

To further explore the nature of social forces, Bieler and Morton make the following distinctions: (1) national social forces - are derived from national production sectors; (2) transnational social forces – transnational forces of capital and labour engendered by the process of transnational production. Moreover, „the first group can be further sub-divided into nationally-oriented capital and labour, which stem from domestic production sectors which produce for the national market, and internationally-oriented capital and labour, engendered by domestic production sectors, which produce for the international market” (Bieler, Andreas and Adam David Morton. *Introduction: Neo-Gramscian Perspectives in International Political Economy and the Relevance to European Integration* in Bieler and Morton 2001, 17). I would like to state that, however, considering the economical characteristics of the XXI century, it becomes difficult to imagine an exclusively national type of capitalism which has absolutely no connection with global production. Thus, we cannot talk about an exclusively national capital, but we can talk instead about forms of capital interested by national protectionism, which are not able to compete on global market because they would not survive.

Furthermore, because this research belongs to a neo-gramscian approach, it will consequently emphasise the independent role of ideas. Firstly, those ideas are part of a social structure as intersubjective meanings and, as Robert Cox suggest, the individuals or groups of individuals become aware of their social condition and about possibilities of change. Secondly, „ideas may be used by actors as ‘weapons’ in order to legitimise particular policies and are important in that they form part of a hegemonic project by organic intellectuals” (Bieler 2000, 13). Thus, I will discuss further to what extent the concepts of historical bloc and hegemony will help me to explain the process of European integration.

One of the most important elements of the neo-gramscian theory is represented by the concept of historical bloc. „At a basic level of understanding, a historical bloc is an alliance of classes or fractions of classes, which attempts to establish a particular form of state and/or world order preferable to them. Nevertheless, a historical bloc is more than a simple alliance of social forces” (Bieler 2000, 14). This concept involves a unity between structure and superstructure forming a complex dynamic of social forces which include economic, political and cultural aspects. „Various social forces may attempt to do this by forming an historical bloc to establish preferable forms of governance at the national, European and/or international level” (Bieler, Andreas and Adam David Morton. *Introduction: Neo-Gramscian Perspectives in International Political Economy and the Relevance to European Integration* in Bieler and Morton 2001, 20).

Another important aspect of neo-gramscianism is the concept of hegemony⁹. This is a form of leadership which is more likely characterized by consent than coercion. „Additionally, a hegemonic order is based on a historical bloc that does not necessarily coincide with the boundaries of a state, but may be established at a transnational level” (Bieler 2000, 14). From another perspective, hegemony could be seen as a form of social leadership: „Ideas are essential for constituting political coalitions. They constitute or define interests of social groups. At the same time, they may also seek to legitimate these interests vis-à-vis other social groups. Thus ideational practice is an important element of constituting social leadership” (Drahokoupil, Jan, Bastiaan van Apeldoorn and Laura Horn. *Introduction: Towards a Critical Political Economy of European Governance* in van Apeldoorn, Drahokoupil and Horn 2009, 9). To achieve those things, the hegemony should not contain

⁹ This concept should not be confounded with the neorealist version developed by Gilpin or Keohane, “in which a hegemonic state controls and dominates other states and the international order thanks to its superior amount of economic and military capabilities” (Bieler 2000, 14).

only the interests of the dominant social group, but it should also incorporate “other (opposing) interests into the hegemonic world view and thus transcending the narrow selfinterests of the leading group” (Drahokoupil, Jan, Bastiaan van Apeldoorn and Laura Horn. *Introduction: Towards a Critical Political Economy of European Governance* in van Apeldoorn, Drahokoupil and Horn 2009, 9).

Considering the situation of nowadays European Union, some scholars like Bastiaan van Apeldoorn, Stephen Gill¹⁰ or Dorothee Bhole¹¹ are discussing the superstructural dimension of European Integration in terms of neoliberal hegemony. The most important here is van Apeldoorn who states that the European project is neoliberal because it “aimed at the restoration and expansion of capitalist class power through an ideological commitment to the freedom of market exchange and to the absolute exercise of capitalist property rights, it was particularly within the European context that the new neoliberal policy paradigm had to adjust to the persisting traditions of corporatist industrial relations (‘social partnership’)” (van Apeldoorn, Bastiaan. “The Contradictions of ‘Embedded Neoliberalism’ and Europe’s Multi-level Legitimacy Crisis: The European Project and its Limits” in van Apeldoorn, Drahokoupil and Horn 2009, 9). Also, regarding the social and industrial protection offered by the state intervention, Apeldoorn uses the term ‘embeddedness’. In consequence, embedded neoliberalism encompasses former neo-mercantilists, the European labour movement, and social-democratic political forces.

To conclude, European integration is seen and analysed from two perspectives: the first one is the social forces agency which can explain also the process of globalization by considering the lobby activity of transnational social forces; and the second one is analysing the ideological dimension of European integration – which is known today as the neoliberal project. Assuming those characteristics of integration process, I could say that Europeanization would be an empty process when we try to describe the external strategy of the European Union. The first element that it cannot conceive, as the neo-gramscian approach to European integration shows, is globalization. The second element will be discussed in the next chapter.

2.2. Robert Cox. Gramsci in International Relations

In this section I will try to show how the integration process is seen when I will analyse the European Union in the context of international relations. By doing this, I will try to show the limits of neo-gramscian approach of European Integration and to see also what other aspects are neglected by the concept of Europeanization.

In his works, Karl Marx has dealt with the problem of modern capitalist development, but he was focusing on social forces that were going to lead to the collapse of capitalism and the release of humanity from domination and exploitation. „Neo-Gramscian approaches work in the same spirit by focusing on the role of counter-hegemonic political forces in the global order – that is, on the various groups which are opposed to a world system which produces among other things massive global inequalities and damage to the natural environment” (Linklater, Andrew. *Marxism* in Burchill et al 2005, 128). The analysis of Robert Cox started also from the social forces, but it later expanded to the state and world order, containing the all three in a mutual relation of determination. „Cox claimed that production shapes other realms such as the nature of state power and strategic interaction to a far greater extent than

¹⁰ Stephen Gill states that it is not the moment to talk about a neoliberal hegemony, but one can identify a supremacy of neoliberalism. For more details see Gill, S. (2003) “A Neo-Gramscian Approach to European Integration” in Cafruny, A.W. and Ryner M. “A Ruined Fortress? Neoliberal Hegemony and Transformation in Europe”, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, New York, p 47-71.

¹¹ For more details see Bhole, Dorothee, “Neoliberal Hegemony, Transnational Capital and the Terms of EU’s Eastwards Expansion”, *Capital and Class*, Issue 85, 2006, 57-86.

traditional international relations theory has realized but it is also shaped by them” (Linklater, Andrew. *Marxism* in Burchill et al 2005, 126). In this way, he was highlighting the internationalization of production relations which started to be clear since the second half of the XX century, and the forms of global governance which strive to perpetuate power and welfare inequalities. Developing the ideas of Antonio Gramsci, „Cox focused on the hegemonic nature of world order – that is, on how the political architecture of global capitalism helps to maintain material inequalities through a combination of coercion and efforts to win consent” (Linklater, Andrew. *Marxism* in Burchill et al 2005, 127).

For a better understanding of international relations, Robert Cox proposes the concept of *Framework of action*, known as historical structure¹². This is no more than a picture of a particular configuration of forces which „does not determine actions in any direct, mechanical way but imposes pressure and constrains. Individual and groups may move with the pressure or resist and oppose them, but they cannot ignore them” (Cox, Robert. *Social Forces, States, and World Orders* in Keohane 1986, 217-218).

In the context of a historical structure, hegemony is achieved through three spheres of activity: „(1) organization of production, more particularly with regard to the *social forces* engendered by the production process; (2) *forms of state*¹³ as derived from a study of state/society complexes; and (3) *world orders*¹⁴, that is, the particular configuration of forces which successively define the problematic of war and peace for the ensemble of states” (Cox, Robert. *Social Forces, States, and World Orders* in Keohane 1986, 220)

Following Cox, those three levels are interconnected. „Changes in the organization of production generates new social forces which, in turn, bring about changes in the structure of states; and the generalization of changes in the structure of states alters the problematic of world order” (Cox, Robert. *Social Forces, States, and World Orders* in Keohane 1986, 220). For example, transnational social forces, which emerged as an answer to the globalization process, influence the structure of the state; or the understanding of Stalinism as an answer to the fact that the world order was threatening the soviet state (in this case world order determines the form of state); of the very existence of military industry which determines a conflicted world order.

“Within each of the three main spheres, it is argued that three further elements reciprocally combine to constitute a historical structure: ideas, understood as intersubjective meanings as well as collective images of world order; material capabilities, referring to accumulated resources; and institutions, which are amalgams of the previous two elements and are means of stabilising a particular order” (Morton 2007, 115). It means that every level (social forces, state and world order) could be understood separately by analysing material capabilities, ideas and institutions. Also, the relations between those three levels should be

¹² “The historical structure does not represent the whole world but rather a particular sphere of human activity in its historically located totality” (Cox, Robert. *Social Forces, States, and World Orders* in Keohane 1986, 220).

¹³ The changes of social relations of productions engender a new configuration of social forces. “State power rests on these configurations. Therefore, rather than taking the state as a given or pre-constituted institutional category, consideration is given to the historical construction of various forms of state and the social context of political struggle” (Bieler, Andreas and Adam David Morton. *A Critical Theory Route to Hegemony, World Order and Historical Change* in Bieler, Bonefeld, Burnham and Morton 2006, 14). In this way, opposing to many stato-centric approaches of international relations, one could elaborate a new theory of state starting from this theoretical framework. “Considering different forms of state as the expression of particular historical blocs and thus relations across state–civil society fulfils this objective. Overall, this relationship is referred to as the state–civil society complex that, clearly, owes an intellectual debt to Gramsci” (Bieler, Andreas and Adam David Morton. *A Critical Theory Route to Hegemony, World Order and Historical Change* in Bieler, Bonefeld, Burnham and Morton 2006, 15).

¹⁴ Once the hegemony was achieved on national level, it could be expanded to the global level being introduced by the world order. “By doing so it can connect social forces across different countries” (Bieler, Andreas and Adam David Morton. *A Critical Theory Route to Hegemony, World Order and Historical Change* in Bieler, Bonefeld, Burnham and Morton 2006, 16).

understood as a mutual determinism (Cox, Robert. *Social Forces, States, and World Orders* in Keohane 1986, 218).

Material capabilities have a destructive and productive potential. „In their dynamic from these exist as technological and organizational capabilities, and in their accumulated forms as natural resources which technology can transform, stocks of equipment (for example, industries and armaments), and the wealth which can command these” (Cox, Robert. *Social Forces, States, and World Orders* in Keohane 1986, 218).

Ideas are of two kinds. “One kind consists of intersubjective meanings, or those shared notions of the nature of social relation which tend to perpetuate habits and expectations of behaviour” (Cox, Robert. *Social Forces, States, and World Orders* in Keohane 1986, 218). An example for the intersubjective meanings is the way people are organised and commanded by the state which has authority over a specific territory. The same thing applies for the relations between states which needs diplomats in order to ensure communication even in the war time. „The other kind of ideas relevant to a historical structure are collective images of social order held by different groups of people” (Cox, Robert. *Social Forces, States, and World Orders* in Keohane 1986, 218). Those represent different views on the nature and legitimacy of power, meaning of justice or public goods, etc. To clarify the distinction between those two types of ideas, Cox states that the intersubjective meanings are wider concepts and are shared by a larger part of the social structure, generating the framework of social discourse, while the collective images could be various and in contradiction. „The clash of rival collective images provides evidence of the potential for alternative paths of development and raises questions as to the possible material and institutional basis for the emergence of an alternative structure” (Cox, Robert. *Social Forces, States, and World Orders* in Keohane 1986, 219).

Institutionalization is a way of stabilizing and perpetuating a particular order. „Institutions reflect the power relations prevailing at their point of origin and tend, at least initially, to encourage collective images consistent with the power relations. Eventually, institutions take on their own life; they can become a battleground of opposing tendencies, or rival institutions may reflect different tendencies” (Cox, Robert. *Social Forces, States, and World Orders* in Keohane 1986, 219). Institutions can be understood also as an amalgam of material capabilities and ideas that, once they come alive, are able to influence themselves material capabilities and ideas¹⁵.

The theoretical framework of Robert Cox will help me to analyse the historical structure in which the European Union has emerged and developed. Although those issues need a separate and deeper discussion, I am trying in this article only to make an initial frame of European Union’s nature. Thus, considering the world order definition provided by Robert Cox, the European Union could be understood as a subsystem of the world system. Furthermore, any theory that tries to explain the European integration process should embed also the nature of world order.

3. Conclusions

In the first part of this article, I presented the main insights of the Europeanization concept and I tried to see to what extent it could overlap with the concept of European

¹⁵ There is a close connection between institutionalization and the Gramsci concept of hegemony. Institution are dealing with conflict management and minimization of armed force. “Institutions may become the anchor for such a hegemonic strategy since they lend themselves both to the representation of diverse interests and to the universalization of policy” (Cox, Robert. *Social Forces, States, and World Orders* in Keohane 1986, 219). However, Cox argues, we must be able to distinguish between hegemonic and non-hegemonic structures, “that is to say between those in which the power basis of the structure tends to recede into the background of consciousness, and those in which the management of power relations is always in the forefront” (Cox, Robert. *Social Forces, States, and World Orders* in Keohane 1986, 219-220). Thus, the hegemony cannot be reduced to its institutional dimension.

integration. After this, I developed the concept of integration through the neo-gramscian approach to show that it can encompass variables like globalization or world order, which could influence transformations that are understood as Europeanization.

Consequently, Europeanization does look like an empty concept due the economic, social and political transformation of the XXI century. As I showed, when we speak about the Europeanization outside the potential borders of the European Union expansion, we do not know how much of this Europeanization is already influenced by the globalization process or by the nature of world order. Regarding the Europeanization inside the European Union borders and potential expansion borders, it is more adequate to talk about a European integration rather than Europeanization – as I demonstrated using the neo-gramscian approach. Thus the concept of integration could be understand and used in more ways than Europeanization and this makes it more useful for academic research.

This critic of Europeanization could be further used to analyse the European economic model – known as the Social Market Economy. The elements of the European Integration from a neo-gramscian perspective show that this process could not be understand out of a broader discussion on globalisation and world order. Thus, one could rise relevant questions on social dimension of the European economic model due the transnational social forces that hardly promote a neoliberal agenda at all levels of the decision making process. But this topic needs a separate and further research.

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