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# Examining Facets of the Hegemonic: The Globalisation Discourse in Greece and Ireland

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## Abstract

This paper attempts to make a contribution to the study and understanding of the phenomenon of globalisation and its interplay with national politico-economic systems. How did globalisation resonate and/or dominate in different national contexts? What was the role of national political economies and domestic institutions in this process? What role did specific institutional actors played in it? Focusing on the materialisation of globalisation discourse in Greece and Ireland, the paper presents three main findings: (i) the reproduction of the Greek and Irish politico-economic systems during the 1990s was dominated, to a significant extent, by the same set of meanings and practices (ii) the way in which this set of meanings and practices emerged in the two countries was fundamentally different: in Greece it defined a new zone of contestation, whereas in Ireland it defined a new zone of fundamental consensus (iii) after the end of the 1990s, these two different facets of hegemonic globalisation seemed to converge. The paper draws on these findings to examine the role of political economy and domestic institutions in the communication of the hegemonic discourse of globalisation.

## **Examining Facets of the Hegemonic: The Globalisation Discourse in Greece and Ireland**

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Globalisation has been experienced differently in different countries and by different social actors. In some cases it was heavily politicised and produced new social cleavages and conflicts, whereas in others it remained beyond politics and ideology, and was treated either as a fact of life or a unique opportunity for development and prosperity. To understand the phenomenon of globalisation in its entirety we need to examine the conditions and forces that produce, govern and relate these different facets of globalisation. For, this will allow us to understand what defines the *unity* of the phenomenon of globalisation, and therefore its conditions of existence and change.

This paper attempts a modest contribution to the above endeavour. Its first aim is to focus on the stage-of-formation of globalisation. Instead of taking globalisation as a given, the paper aims to explore how political actors *produced* the phenomenon of globalisation. The second aim is to account for the role of domestic institutions and political economy in the communication/generation of globalisation. The overall aim then is to bring globalisation under the microscope of comparative institutional analysis in a way that will enrich both the study of globalisation and domestic institutions.

Globalisation is construed in this paper as a hegemonic discourse. The latter is defined in a Foucaultian manner as a set of practices and meaning that produce the object and processes of which they speak (Foucault, 1972: 49). I find this conceptualisation of globalisation useful for three reasons. (a) It does not treat globalisation as an end-product, as something given and stable. In contrast globalisation is conceptualised as a dynamic set of practices and meanings that are *productive* of their subjects and objects. (b) It abolishes a superficial analytical and ontological distance, that is found in many positivistic projects, between the production of social agents and the production of their social environment. Thus, for the approach proposed here, significant changes in the environment of social agents (for instance the liberalisation

of financial markets or the introduction of flexibility practices in the labour market) signify changes in the (re)production of social agents themselves. In this manner, globalisation is produced by political actors but at the same time it produces these actors. That is, agents write their history and change their societies, but within not without them. (c) It allows us to transcend the dichotomy between material and ideational globalisation. To study globalisation as a hegemonic discourse, it is to study both practices and meanings; both material and ideational factors. Thus, there is nothing exclusively ideational in the definition of globalisation as a hegemonic discourse (see also Ernesto Laclau and Roy Bhaskar, 1998: 9).

The focus of the paper is on how the hegemonic discourse of globalisation (henceforth used interchangeably with the concept 'globalisation discourse') was materialised in two different institutional settings, Greece and Ireland. By materialisation here I mean the process through which the set of practices and meanings that define globalisation came to be actualised as new policy debates, new policy initiatives, and more broadly as a new politics at the domestic level. Most important examples here include the privatisation of public companies, the liberalisation of capital accounts, the deregulation of different economic sectors, the introduction of flexibility in labour market, the reform of the corporate tax regime, or more general struggles over the role of state in the economy, or the usage of the concept of globalisation itself. Furthermore, the paper focuses on the second half of the 1990s, when, according to most analysts, the 'globalisation of the globalisation discourse' took place.

The research findings presented here suggest that in Greece globalisation discourse emerged as a multilevel societal struggle over the definition of what was at stake in political, economic, social and cultural terms. Thus the emergent meanings and practises of globalisation discourse acquired a heavily politicised and forcefully contested character. On the other hand, in Ireland the same meanings and practises did not generate contestation but consensus. They constituted the underlying givens of the Irish polity and the key institutional actors treated them as if they stood outside the sphere of politics and ideology. Thus, in Greece globalisation emerged as a new *political*, whereas in Ireland it emerged as a new *apolitical*.

These findings are then used to examine the following research questions.

1. Is the nature of political economy sufficient to account for the materialisation process of hegemonic discourses? Here I examine the ‘goodness-of-fit’ hypothesis (among others see Knill and Lehmkuhl, 1999; Borzel and Risse, 2000; Caporaso et al 2001) in the case of globalisation discourse. This hypothesis, for the purposes of this paper, reads as follows: the degree and intensity of the adaptational pressures at the national level depend on the degree of the ‘fit’ or ‘misfit’ (i.e. the compatibility) of the national institutions and practices with those promoted by the hegemonic discourse of globalisation.
2. Is the nature of domestic structures sufficient to account for the materialisation process of hegemonic discourses? Here, the focus shifts from the analysis of the nature of political economy to the broader structures of societal interest organisation and state-society relations (Schmitter, 1979; Cawson, 1978; Lehmbrunch, 1979). These structures are important because they define the ways in which societies negotiate domestically social change and continuity (see also Schmidt, 2002).
3. Can the combination of the above two factors (i.e. the nature of political economy and the nature of interest representation) account for the materialisation process of hegemonic discourses?

It should be stressed here that the above questions are not treated in this paper as formal hypotheses, the validity of which will be tested against specific empirical evidence. Our purpose is not to gather empirical information in order to test hypotheses, but to elucidate what had really happened in these two countries, and on this basis to reflect on the explanatory capacity of the factors involved in the above questions. In this manner our case studies aspire to play not a hypothesis-testing, but a hypothesis-generating role (see Lijphart, 1971: 691-693).

It must be clear by now that although the subject of the paper is the globalisation discourse, the issue in question is not the causal force of ideational factors in world politics and economics. Rather our main concern is with the role and function of

domestic factors in the materialisation of hegemonic discourses, as well as with the nature of this materialisation process itself. Consequently our study is not a study of ideas. The purpose is to examine, changing politico-economic arenas, in two domestic national settings, in order to understand the generation and communication of globalisation as a new dominant ‘reality’ in world politics and economics. On this basis, in the evolving interdisciplinary debate among the various strands of institutional analysis (see Campbell and Pedersen, 2001), this paper joins with those approaches that underline the fundamental role of ‘translation’ that takes place at the national level. Yet, for this paper, this translation is, and must be construed and studied as a constitutive part of the writing of the ‘original text’.

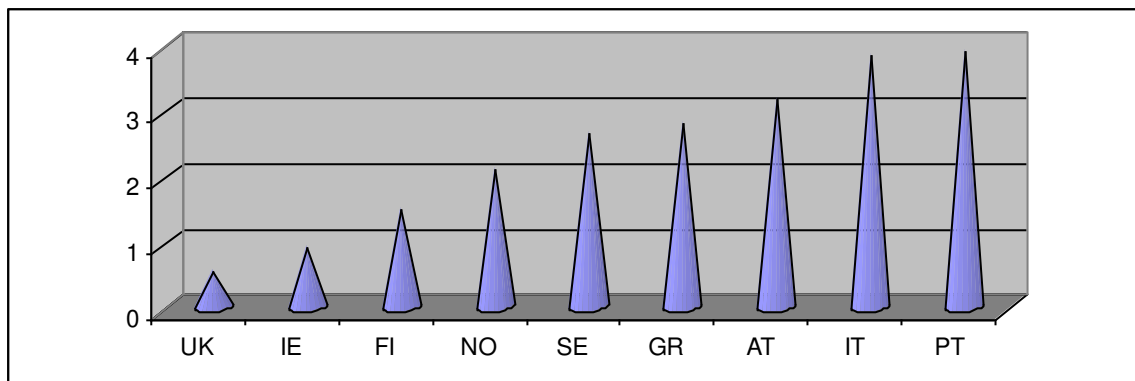
The last issue to be addressed here is what are the reasons for and benefits from comparing Greece and Ireland. First, both countries are members of the European Union, so the ‘regional dimension’ is kept constant. Moreover, the two countries have similar, prime-ministerial political systems, similar political cultures (traditionally involving an underdog behaviour and strong clientelistic relations), but significantly different political economies. Greece is usually classified in the Continental/Mediterranean model of political economy, whereas Ireland is classified in the Anglo-Saxon model (see, Rhodes and Mény, 1998; Hall and Soskice, 2001). Yet, in real terms, these general models of political economy are inefficient/unhelpful in describing our case studies. For instance, Irish political economy is characterised by a strong social partnership, which is a defining characteristic of the Continental model of political economy (Hardiman, 2002). Furthermore, the state has played a different role in Irish economy in comparison to the ideal type of the Anglo-Saxon model (see O’ Riain and O’ Connell, 2000). To account for the inefficiency of these general models to describe our case studies, we break them down into two components: nature of political economy and nature of domestic structures. The nature of political economy is defined in terms of two interrelated factors: the degree of the ‘state control domain’ (see Table 1) and the degree of regulation in a country’s economy (see Table 2). On the other hand, the nature of domestic structures is narrowly defined in terms of the existence, or not, of a consociational, well institutionalised and well-functioning structure of interest representation (for a classical study see Schmitter, 1979). The following section presents the main findings

from our case-study analysis, and the next one assesses the role of these two factors in the materialisation of globalisation discourse.

**Table 1. Ranking of Selected EU Countries According to their ‘State Control Domain’**

*0-6 indicator from least to more state control*

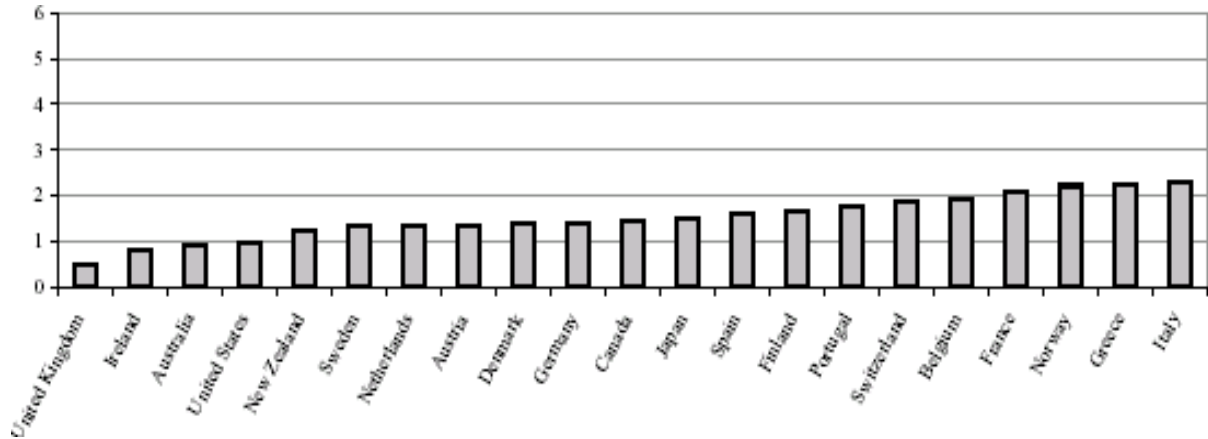
Domain		Sub-Domain	
Country	State Control	Public Ownership	Involvement in Business Operation
United Kingdom (UK)	0.55	0.03	1.22
Ireland (IE)	0.94	1.32	0.46
Finland (FI)	1.51	3.28	1.90
Norway (NO)	2.11	3.72	2.51
Sweden (SE)	2.68	2.25	0.55
Greece (GR)	2.83	3.39	4.50
Austria (AT)	3.19	2.36	1.77
Italy (IT)	3.87	4.44	3.26
Portugal (PT)	3.92	2.69	3.02



Source: Nicoletti et al., 1999 : 23

**Table 2. Overall Regulatory Approaches in Selected OECD Countries**

*0-6 indicator from least to most restrictive<sup>1</sup>*



Source: Nicoletti et al., 1999: 34

## **The Communication of Globalisation Discourse in Greece and Ireland in the 1990s**

### **The literature**

The literature on the emergence of globalisation discourse in specific countries is not as developed as one would expect. Significant contributions in this regard include the works of Hay (2001) and Kjaer and Pedersen (2001) on the diffusion/translation of neoliberal norms in the UK and Denmark respectively. The analysis of the deployment of the discourse of globalisation by New Labour in Britain, by Hay and Watson (1999), has also been an important contribution. Hay and Watson argued that the impact of globalisation on the British political economy ‘may be more rhetorical than substantive, *but no less real for this*’ (ibid.: emphasis in the original; see also Rosamond, 1999). Pushing this line of inquiry further, Hay and Rosamond (2000) attempted one of the first mappings of the different ways in which the phenomenon of globalisation has been conceptualised and treated in different European countries, using as case studies Britain, France, Germany and Italy. They concluded that in all



cases globalisation was strategically deployed to legitimate specific social and economic reforms. They also found that the mode and characteristics of that deployment remained ‘strikingly different’ in different national settings (ibid.: 22). More recently, Smith (2005) attempted one of the first in-depth, country-specific studies, on the impact of globalisation discourse, focusing on the Irish case. Confirming the analysis of Hay and Watson (1999) she claimed that ‘[i]n acting as if globalisation were a material reality, Irish policy makers may actually be creating the very outcomes they attribute to globalisation itself’. This research was then pushed forward by Hay and Smith (2005), through a comparison of the UK and Irish cases<sup>1</sup>.

There are however differences in the way that globalisation discourse is conceptualised in this paper and in the above literature. In the latter much of the emphasis is on narratives and strategic deployment, whereas here it is on the (re)production of actors and domestic realms. The two approaches, however, are not mutually exclusive, and to a great extent this paper builds on and extends this earlier research.

### **The methodology**

To capture the materialisation of globalisation discourse, I analysed national institutional actors that dominate in the production and reproduction of domestic public discourses and policies. In particular, I examined political parties, worker unions, employer associations, the Church and the Press. The analysis of these actors was based on the systematic analysis of key, official, periodical publications (see below) over a period of six years (1995-2001). Thus, rather than capturing all domestic voices on globalisation, the aim of the research was to capture voices with a significant effect in politics and the policy process. If other actors, such as the anti-globalisation movement or academics, had such a voice we expect to capture, at least part of it, through the channels/actors that are examined. The inclusion of a press sample is an important safety belt in this regard. The chosen pool of social actors does not exhaust the national institutional settings under examination. Yet, the ‘signals’ one gets from the selected actors, spread as they are through the body politic, are able

to capture trends and changes beyond any sectoral or narrow defined institutional boundaries.

The purpose of our investigation was to trace whether and how globalisation discourse was implicated in the vocabularies, ideological proposals, visions, policies or strategies of the social actors in question. To do so, a ‘double reading’ of the analysed official documents was adopted. A first reading aimed to examine where, how frequent, in what context and for what purpose the term globalisation was used. The second reading aimed to examine what were the dominant objects (including themes, practices, policies, rationalities) of these documents irrespective of the term/concept globalisation. The dominant objects that came to the surface through this second reading were then contrasted with the various dominant objects of the globalisation discourse itself (e.g. flexibility, liberalisation, deregulation, speculative capital) to find out whether there was a relationship between them or not. The findings from the various national actors were then brought together to assess what was the impact of globalisation discourse on the national level overall.

The research strategy followed here allowed us to study globalisation in its complexity and multiplicity, without demanding its reduction to a single process or object. It let the social actors speak for themselves, and set on their own the limits and the rules of globalisation’s definition. In this way, the paper attempted to capture the conditions of *unity* of globalisation discourse. That is, the *social space* in which the various objects, meanings and processes of globalisation discourse ‘emerge and are continuously transformed’ (Foucault, 1972: 32). Foucault argues that in order to analyse a hegemonic discourse one must focus on the conditions of co-existence of these dispersed and heterogeneous objects, meanings and processes, and study ‘the system that governs their division, the degree to which they depend upon one another, the way in which they interlock or exclude one another, the transformation that they undergo, and the play of their location, arrangement and replacement’ (ibid.: 34); that is, one must analyse the *rules of formation* of the discourse (ibid.: 38).

## The findings

### The Main Political Parties

The study of the political parties was based on the analysis of their national election manifestos. In particular, the 1996 and 2000 electoral manifestos were studied in the case of Greece, and in the case of Ireland those of 1997 and 2002. The political parties examined are the following.

<b>Greek Political Parties</b>	<b>Irish Political Parties</b>
Panhellenic Socialist Movement - PASOK (left-to-the-centre)	Fianna Fail - FF (conservative party)
New Democracy - ND (right-to-the-centre)	Fine Gael - FG (conservative party)
The Communist Party of Greece – KKE (traditional communist party)	Labour Party - LP (left-to-the-centre)
Coalition of the Left and the Progress - Synaspismos (left/progressive party)	Progressive Democrats -PD (right-to-the-centre/liberal)

The above study revealed two very different modes of communication/materialisation of globalisation discourse. In Greece the discourse of globalisation emerged as a new zone of contestation, as a new point of reference through which political parties came to re-conceptualise what was at stake in economic, political and social terms. Thus, globalisation, conceptualised either as a dangerous dynamic that could lead to ‘a new barbarism’ (PASOK, 1996), or as a new form of imperialism (KKE, 1996), ‘the domination of market over society’ (PASOK, 1996; Synaspismos, 2000), a ‘policy justification instrument’ (KKE, 2000; Synaspismos, 2000), or, on the other hand, as a ‘new reality’ (ND, 1996, 2000) or even as a significant opportunity for the development of Greece (PASOK, 2000: 10), came to dominate and redefine the terms of antagonism between the Greek political parties.

Interestingly, there were changes in the positions of the political parties during the period under examination. For instance, the party in government, PASOK, shifted between the two national elections from a negative conceptualisation of globalisation to a proactively positive approach in which ‘market liberalisation, globalisation, the restructuring of the production...constitute[d] the driving forces for development’ (PASOK, 2000: 10). Moreover, even when the term globalisation was avoided in the party realm, this seemed to be a statement on globalisation itself. For instance, New Democracy, after 2000 began to use the more *neutral* concept of globality (παγκοσμιότητα) (see for instance ND, 2000: 32), thus implicitly taking a (rather negative) position towards the concept of globalisation.

In Ireland, on the other hand, the discourse of globalisation emerged as a new zone of consensus, the constituent meanings and practices of which remained beyond public deliberation, ideological contestation or party antagonism (see also Phelan, 2007). It is indicative that the concept of globalisation itself was rather absent from the party political scene. Three out of the four main Irish parties (FF, FG, PD) made no reference to the term globalisation in their 1997 and 2002 manifestos. On the other hand, the main ‘objects’ of economic globalisation (e.g. deregulation, privatisation, tax cuts) were ever-present in Irish politics. Yet, these objects did not define a new zone of contestation, but rather a set of taken-for-granted policies and practices. Thus, the Irish political parties redefined their identities, visions, strategies, critiques and policy suggestions, not through a new zone of contestation, but rather through a new zone of a somewhat subliminal consensus that defined what was *not* to be discussed or disputed. In this process, the role and influence of the institution of social partnership was all-powerful.

Along the above lines, Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and the Progressive Democrats set as their main governmental objective to do whatever was required in order Ireland to remain attractive to ‘mobile capital investments’ (see FG, 1997: 4; FF, 2002: 26, 29-30; PD, 1997, 2002). The most telling statement, however, with regard to the above consensual ‘non-ideological’ space of Irish politics, was one coming from the left. The Labour Party declared that it was ‘committed to a strong market economy based on competition’ (LP, 1997: 11), and that its objective was ‘[t]he prioritisation of enterprise and innovation as key elements in the creation of wealth’ (ibid., 6). Yet, as

in Greece, some parties gradually changed their stance towards globalisation. For instance, the Labour Party adopted by 2002 a more traditional European Left stance that treated globalisation as a 'gross injustice' and as a threat for 'the social and economic rights of the individual' (LP, 2002: 1). In addition, after 1997, FG developed a critique of the phenomenon of the 'Celtic Tiger' that had many things in common with cultural critiques of globalisation (see for instance FG, 2002: 22). This critique, however, was focused on the *redistribution* of wealth rather than the *redefinition* or *reconsideration* of the core policies undertaken.

### The Social Partners

The second key group of institutional actors that was examined in the two countries was the social partners. While studying this group, it is important to keep the developments at the EU level as a significant backdrop. After the mid-1990s the need for adjustment to the 'new international environment' and the need for deregulation and flexibility had been at the top of the agenda of both the EU in general and UNICE in particular<sup>2</sup>. In addition, since the mid-1990s the social dialogue between the European employers' associations (UNICE, CEEP) and workers' unions (ETUC) had been enhanced, while with the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997 this dialogue was institutionalised (see Hoffmann et al, 2000; Berndt and Platzer, 2003). Finally, relevant events and developments at the international level, such as the ILO annual conferences or reports published by OECD and IMF, had also an impact on the social partners' discourses and strategies.

To examine the engagement of employers with globalisation discourse, I focused on the Federation of Greek Industries (SEV) and the Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC) and analysed their Annual Reviews (1995-2002) and the main public pronouncements of their leaders<sup>3</sup>. Both organisations are the main 'voice' of private business in their countries (for the Greek case see Mavrogordatos, 1988; Lavdas, 1997; for the Irish case see Murphy, 1999; Murphy and Roche, 1997). On the other hand, the study of the workers was based on the study of the Greek General Confederation of Labour (GSEE) and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU). GSEE is the main, national-wide association that represents workers and employees in

the private sector, whereas ICTU is the single umbrella organisation for trade unions in both the Republic and Northern Ireland (for the Greek case see Mavrogordatos, 1988; Lavdas, 1997; Ioannou, 1999; and for the Irish see Murphy and Roche, 1997; Murphy, 1999; Gunnigle et al, 2002). In the case of GSEE I analysed its monthly newsletter *Enimerosi* (published by the GSEE's 'Institute of Labour-INE'), whilst in the case of ICTU I examined the biennial Reports of the Executive Council and the Reports of Proceedings (RP) of its biennial Delegate Conferences. The main findings from the above investigation are as follows.

### *Employers*

The pattern of engagement of employers with globalisation discourse in the two countries was similar. On the one hand, they did not use the term or develop a discourse on globalisation as such. On the other hand, as one would expect, both organisations promoted passionately an 'economic globalisation' agenda. Thus the dominant objects of economic globalisation (e.g. flexibility, tax cuts, liberalisation, deregulation, privatisation) were at the core of their public pronouncements and policy suggestions. Moreover, the views of the leaders of the two organisations on the nature of the changes underway were very close. In Greece, Iason Stratos argued that 'globalisation and the need for adjustment to market forces is not something new for SEV; it is what SEV has been fighting for since the late 1980s'<sup>4</sup>. In a similar manner, Anthony Barry in Ireland congratulated the government in 1997 for following policies 'which largely reflected the policy objectives for which...IBEC...had campaigned over the years' (IBEC, 1997: 3; see also p. 7).

There are, however, two interesting differences in the broader social context in which IBEC's and SEV's strategies and policies were developed. In Greece, and mainly after 1997, the concept of globalisation became more and more ideologically charged. Thus, the avoidance of the use of this concept by SEV can be attributed to its effort to avoid associating its policy proposals with an increasingly negatively charged concept. This was not the case in Ireland. On the contrary, considering the language factor (i.e. English) and Ireland's proximity to the UK and USA (through the Irish diaspora and business) one would expect a wide dissemination of the concept of

globalisation. Contrary to these expectations, the concept of globalisation was more visible in the discourse of the SEV rather than of the IBEC.

The second difference concerns the place of the discourses of the two organisations within their broader public discourses. In Greece, SEV was leading the domestic pro-economic globalisation agenda. In Ireland, IBEC faced strong criticism and pressure for not being active enough in the promotion of economic globalisation policies. In particular, the best-selling Irish broadsheet, the *Irish Independent*, was criticising IBEC throughout the 1990s as being part of the ‘old economy’, a ‘dinosaur’, the voice of Irish big banks and semi-state companies<sup>5</sup>.

### *Workers*

On the other hand, the concept of globalisation came, if in slightly different time-frames, to re-order and dominate the discourses of workers. In the case of GSEE this happened in 1997, whereas in the case of ICTU it took place a year later<sup>6</sup>. The first question to be raised then is what was there before these discursive shifts. What was it that globalisation changed or continued in the discourses of the two unions?

In the case of GSEE, the central point of reference and object of critique during the period 1995-1997 was ‘neoliberalism’. Globalisation acquired a considerable position in GSEE’s vocabulary in 1996, but it was only in 1997 that it became the new defining conceptual framework through which GSEE read its environment and produced its strategies, policies and vision. In this process globalisation came to be conceptualised as a ‘justification instrument’ used by the government and the employers to promote policies against the vested interests and living conditions of the workers (see *Enimerosi*, no 44 and 45, 1999; no 61-62, 2000).

In the case of ICTU globalisation did not seem to have replaced any other dominant concept or point of reference. What did seem to happen is that ICTU itself changed the way it engaged with the discourse of globalisation. Thus, globalisation was present in ICTU’s discourse since 1995. Yet, this early understanding and mobilisation of the concept of globalisation was associated with developing countries and broader issues of international development (see for instance ICTU, 1997: 5, 61).

It is in this regard that 1998 seems to signify a shift. From being an ‘out there’ developmental issue, globalisation began to be treated as an ‘in here’, first order, domestic issue. This new type of engagement contested openly, if not the results, the direction of the Celtic Tiger’s development.

### The Church

The study of the Church in the two countries was based on the analysis of the discourses of the Heads of the Churches; Archbishop Christodoulos in Greece<sup>7</sup> and Cardinal Connell in Ireland<sup>8</sup> (for the role of church in Greece see Ware, 1983; Stavrakakis, 2002; and in Ireland see Inglis, 1998; Kissane, 2003).

In Greece, Archbishop Christodoulos launched a ferocious attack against globalisation. He portrayed it as a major and immediate threat for European societies in general and Greece in particular, and as a development that was associated with economic exploitation, identity and cultural annihilation, the ‘forces of evil’ and ‘the destruction of Christianity’ (Christodoulos, 2000; see also Christodoulos, 1998, 1999). Cardinal Connell, on the other hand, made no references to globalisation. Instead he launched a ferocious attack on the concept and nature of the ‘Celtic Tiger’, relating it to a ‘sad spectacle of poverty and exclusion’<sup>9</sup>. He also described the contemporary economic system as ‘unchecked capitalism’, arguing that ‘we are so full of the Celtic tiger that anything else seems unthinkable’<sup>10</sup>.

Although the referent objects of the two religious leaders were different, the content of their discourses was almost the same. They both had as their focal points the issues of national identity, tradition, cultural homogenisation, secularism, social estrangement, depersonalisation, individualism, consumerism, poverty and exclusion<sup>11</sup>. Thus, although their targets were different (i.e. globalisation vs. the Celtic Tiger), they addressed the same issues, pointed to the same problems, and sensed similarly the nature and consequences of the changes underway.

There is, however, one important difference in the nature of the two discourses. The discourse of the Greek Church was based on an *outside-in* logic. External forces and



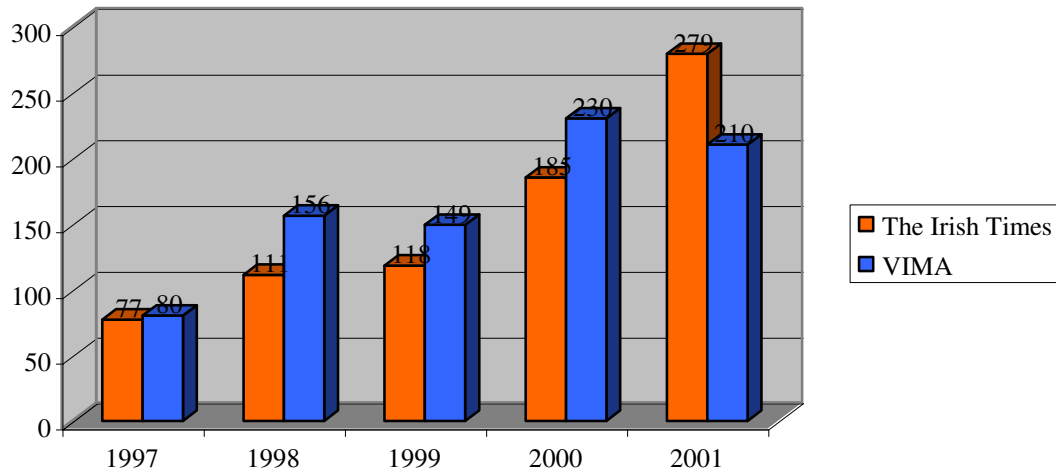
interests had penetrated and attempted culturally to annihilate European societies and Greece. Thus, no matter how it was promoted or expressed at the national level, the source of the threat, according to the Greek Church, was both external and externally driven. In contrast the Church discourse in Ireland, albeit stressing the same ‘symptoms’ as its Greek counterpart, was an *inside-out* discourse. Its principal object of critique was the Celtic Tiger, the most impressive manifestation of the Irish economic miracle, and not external forces driven by globalisation or otherwise. It is interesting that this remained the case despite the concern of Pope John Paul II with globalisation. Thus, to address the same problems the Church in Ireland focused on the Celtic Tiger, whereas the Church in Greece turned to globalisation.

#### A press sample

The aim of this section is to capture the role of press both as an autonomous agent and as a mirror of society, i.e. both as a major agent in terms of reality-construction, and as a mirror that reflects and represents the prevailing social concerns and relations of power. The sources that were selected for this purpose was the Sunday edition of VIMA in Greece (the best selling Sunday newspaper for most of the period under examination), and the daily edition of *The Irish Times* in Ireland (the second best-selling broadsheet)<sup>12</sup>.

The comparison of the aforementioned press sources enhances the picture that has already been formed through the analysis of the other institutional actors. Compared to the references to globalisation found in VIMA, the references found in *The Irish Times* are minimal. Specifically, as shown in Figure 1, the absolute number of references found in the *daily* Irish paper (6 papers per week) was lower than those found in the Sunday edition of the Greek paper (i.e. 1 paper per week) each and every year, throughout the period 1997-2000.

**Figure 1: A Comparison of References to Globalisation between the daily *The Irish Times* and the Sunday Edition of the VIMA**



Considering that *The Irish Times* is in English (so, a new term did not have to be created, and/or the term globalisation did not have to be translated, or otherwise appropriated for domestic use) then, indeed, the extremely low number of references to globalisation found in *The Irish Times* (in comparison to VIMA) is contrary to all expectations. This situation seems to change in 2001, when the references to globalisation in *The Irish Times* exceeded those found in VIMA.

The high number of references to globalisation in VIMA must manifest the centrality of globalisation both as an object and as a prism of analysis; both as news and as a way of reading the news. Furthermore, the gradual increase of the references must reflect the gradual domination of globalisation in the discourses of key institutional actors. The opposite conclusions can be drawn in the case of Ireland. Globalisation was not present in the public discourse, as this was reflected in *The Irish Times*, either as a news item, or as a way of reading the news. Moreover, the concept of globalisation was not implicated in the discourses of institutional actors, as these were reflected and reconstructed in the press.

## Synopsis & Conclusions

The first observation to make is that there is a significant difference in the use of the concept of globalisation in the two countries. In Greece it emerged as a new referent point that dominated in the vocabulary, policies and strategies of the key-institutional actors. On the contrary the concept of globalisation was relatively absent from the Irish public discourse, especially up to the year 2000. Yet, globalisation discourse is conceptualised in this paper as a productive set of practices and meanings that is not reducible to any single word or exclusive ideational aspect. On this basis, there are three important conclusions to draw from the above findings.

First, the reproduction of the Greek and Irish politico-economic systems during the period under investigation was dominated to a significant extent by the same meanings, practices and points of reference. This does not mean that one finds the same practices (e.g. flexibility in labour market) to have been implemented to the same extent in the two countries. It means that – either as taken-for-granted assumptions or as highly politicised and contested policy concepts and strategies – these meanings and practices functioned as focal points that defined the terms of public discourse reproduction, and the stakes, identities, strategies and power relationships of the actors involved. In this regard globalisation discourse, as a delineation either of the socially given, or of the socially contested, seems to have supplied the common ordering principle/force (based on a specific stock of objects, meanings, practices and policies) on the basis of which both the Greek and the Irish politico-economic systems were being restructured.

The second conclusion to be drawn is that, although the stock of meanings and practices that was present in the two countries was, with few exceptions (e.g. the term globalisation) the same, the way in which this stock was present in the two cases was fundamentally different. In Greece the hegemonic/globalisation was communicated, and thus materialised, as a multi-level struggle over a new *political*. Most social, political, economic and cultural stakes had to be thought through, redefined and fought for anew within Greek society. In Ireland the hegemonic/globalisation was communicated, and thus materialised, as a set of practices and meanings that stood

outside the *political*; beyond politics and ideology. It delineated not a zone of contestation, but a zone of fundamental consensus; the underlying *givens* of Irish politics and economics. The critique of Celtic Tiger by Cardinal Connell remains a seeming exception in this regard. Yet, even if this criticism helped to the generation of a cultural critique of Celtic Tiger, it did not lead to a broader politicisation of the main economic policies that produced and sustained the Celtic Tiger. Thus the findings of our research point to two different facets of hegemonic globalisation. In Greece it emerged/materialised as a new *political*, whereas in Ireland it emerged/materialised as a new *apolitical*.

The last conclusion is a more tentative one and refers to the dynamics of the materialisation of globalisation discourse in the two countries. Thus, while during the first part of the period under investigation (i.e. 1995-1999) the different facets of the hegemonic seemed to grow stronger and stronger, during the last part of the period under investigation (i.e. 2000-2002), these opposing dynamics seem to change, and divergence seems to have given its place to convergence. Thus, in Ireland since 2000 there was gradually developed a trend towards the politicisation of the 'apolitical'. This new dynamic was manifested in the change of ICTU's understanding and treating of globalisation, in the new discourse on globalisation developed by the Labour party, and in the adoption of the cultural critique of the Celtic Tiger by Fine Gael. This new dynamic had at least two sources: (a) There was a domestic dynamic towards politicisation that was led by the failure – real or perceived – of the 'apolitical' and its underlying institutional apparatus (mainly the social partnership) to fulfil certain promises (e.g. reduction of social disparities, recognition of unionism). (b) There was also a dynamic that was produced by the communication within Ireland of Ireland's (neoliberal) image abroad, and in particular within the European Union. On the other hand, a similar but reverse trend can be traced in Greece. Thus, some highly politicised issues, such as part-time employment, through their *quotidianisation* seemed to be treated as less political within the Greek public discourse. For instance, the labour movement's struggle against flexibility was gradually transformed into a new bargain on what the (inevitable) promotion of flexibility should be exchanged with. Finally, as has already been argued, the EU had a significant role in this convergence process, acting as a powerful generator of economic globalisation objects, policies and practices.

It is now time to use the above findings and conclusions in order to examine the three research questions presented in the introduction of this paper. The issue at stake here is how the differences in the materialisation of globalisation discourse in Greece and Ireland are to be explained.

### **Political Economy, Domestic Institutional Arrangements and Hegemonic Discourses**

*Is the nature of political economy enough to account for the materialisation process of hegemonic discourses?*

The nature of political economy is one of the first factors to be considered in the explanation of the observed different facets of the hegemonic. The main hypothesis here would be that there must be a certain degree of ‘genealogical compatibility’ between the conditions in which a hegemonic discourse originates, and the conditions that a hegemonic discourse in turn generates. Thus in our case, one could assume that the practices and meanings that were generated by the hegemonic discourse of globalisation (e.g. liberalisation, flexibility, deregulation, privatisation, corporate tax-cuts) would be more or less taken for granted, or smoothly absorbed in political economies that were based on institutional arrangements that were conducive with the globalisation discourse (i.e. political economies that have a small state control domain and low degree of regulation in the economy), whereas they would generate controversy, tension and clashes in political economies that were based on different, non-compatible arrangements (for instance the continental/Mediterranean political economies).

Yet, the above analysis is characterised by significant conceptual and practical limitations. It is based on a conceptualisation of globalisation as a predetermined phenomenon, independent from state policies and actions, and it portrays states as static structures, stripped of any agency and strategic capacity. Two specific examples would help to clarify this point. The percentage of part-time employment in a country is usually treated as an indicator for the degree of labour market flexibility (the higher

the percentage of part-time workers, the higher the degree of flexibility). In 1992 the percentage of part time employment in Greece was 4.5% of the total employment, in Portugal 7.2%, in Ireland 9.1%, in Germany 14.5% and the UK 22.9%. By 2002 part-time employment had remained unchanged in Greece at 4.5%, whereas it had increased by 57% in Portugal (usually classified in the same model of political economy with Greece), by 81% in Ireland, by 43.4% in Germany (the main representative of the Continental model) and by 9.2% in the UK (source: Eurostat, European Commission). There are two points to make here. First, the above example advances the argument that it is wrong to conceptualise globalisation as something that was taken for granted by genealogically compatible political economies. In the above example Ireland, i.e. a 'genealogically' compatible political economy, was not the EU15 member state that made the least changes (less adaptation) but, in contrast, the one that adopted the most proactive stance and experienced the most significant change in its labour market. Second, we see that to cope with the same policy issue, similar economies, such as Greece and Portugal, adopted different strategies. These points signify the significance of state agency, rather than the importance of the nature of political economy. The same picture emerges if one focuses on corporate tax cuts. Ireland adopted in the second half of the 1990s the most pro-active stance among EU15 member states, reducing its corporate tax between 1995-2003 by 69% (from 40% in 1995, to 12.5% in 2003). In the same period the UK reduced its corporate tax only by 9% (from 33% to 30%), whereas in Spain the corporate tax remained unchanged at 35%, in Greece it was reduced by 12.5% (from 40% to 35%), and in Germany it was reduced by 30.3% (from 56.8% to 39.6%) (source: European Commission) <sup>13</sup>. Again, here the most significant 'adaptation' takes place in a genealogically compatible economy (Ireland), while the second most significant change takes place in a non-compatible economy (Germany). On the other hand, the UK (a compatible economy) and Greece (a non-compatible economy) adopted modest changes, and there was no change in Spain (a non-compatible economies). As above, the nature of political economy does not seem able to offer a persuasive answer for the above variations; nor the conceptualisation of globalisation as a pre-determined phenomenon seems to help us understand the nature of, and the dynamics at play in, the above changes.

The above analysis strengthens the significance of conceptualising globalisation as a hegemonic discourse, for, such a conceptualisation suggests an independent and significant reordering effect even on political economies that are ‘genealogically compatible’ with the hegemonic discourse. Thus the outcome of the hegemonic rearrangement at the domestic level is far from being pre-determined, because the hegemonic discourse itself is not pre-determined and because the materialisation of the hegemonic discourse depends on the actions and perceptions of domestic social actors. Hence, a hegemonic discourse redefines the conditions in which agency takes place, it does not replace this agency or neutralise its capacity for change. It is this agency-centred and undetermined effect of the hegemonic discourse that breaks down the circular, self-proved explanation of the goodness-of-fit approach.

Another significant problem of the goodness-of-fit hypothesis is that it is based on a fixed conceptualisation of models of political economy. An uncritical endorsement of these models, however, runs the risk of reducing the factor of political economy to an ahistorical construct, incapable of strategic adaptation, evolution or learning, i.e. beyond change and social agency (see also Crouch, 2005). Yet, for instance, in Britain in the 1980s, Thatcher was functioning within a traditional Anglo-Saxon political economy but, at the same time, was changing the nature of this political economy by, among other, reversing the long-established tradition of Keynesianism, putting an end to the powers of the trade unions, and minimising welfare state provisions. Along the same lines, the rise of the social partnership in Ireland after 1987, although it took place within specific politico-economic arrangements, in fact transformed Irish political economy. Thus, a new hybrid politico-economic model emerged that combined a deregulated Anglo-Saxon political economy with a centralised, *consociational* mechanism of interest representation – what in the Irish public discourse started to be referred to as the ‘Irish model of political economy’. Therefore, the factor political economy should always be examined in dynamic terms and not as an end-product.

It is also important to note here that the specific nature of Irish political economy makes it even more difficult to assess the role of political economy in the communication of hegemonic discourses (Ireland should be treated here as a representative case of a wider group of states). For, Irish political economy is based

on a rather dualistic structure. A liberal, highly flexible and foreign owned sector (product of the magnificent increase in inwards foreign direct investments in the 1990s), coexists with an indigenous, more traditional and regulated, manufacturing sector (Hardiman, 2002; Enterprise Strategy Group, 2004). Therefore, the assumptions about the ‘compatibility’ between the Irish political economy and globalisation, and the role that this compatibility has played in the materialisation of globalisation are further problematised, for, even if they were true, they would not really capture the whole of Irish economy.

Finally, even when the direction of changes generated by a hegemonic discourse is more conducive to the tradition of a certain political economy, one would expect that social groups that are on the losing-side of the changes underway would protest and try to block the relevant governmental policies. To put this differently, the fact that the contemporary Irish political economy has Anglo-Saxon characteristics (in terms of the degree of regulation and state control domain), does not mean that the changes in the domestic environment and the domestic distribution of power, produced by the hegemonic discourse of globalisation would escape, if not public protest, at least public deliberation. In this regard one must not conflate the (non-) power of an actor with its willingness to dispute or deliberate on existing and changing practices. For instance, the fact that the ICTU and its leaders and members have been socialised within a rather unregulated economic environment, does not mean that when ICTU’s suggestions and preferences are marginalised in the policy process, ICTU will not protest, or will not, however unsuccessfully, try to block governmental policies that are disadvantageous for its members (e.g. an 81% increase in part-time employment). The same goes for the ICTU’s preferences. The fact that the Irish labour market is flexible in comparison to most of its European counterparts, does not mean that Irish labour force has a fixed preference in favour of flexibility practices.

Based on the above analysis it can be argued that the nature of political economy cannot fully account for the materialisation of globalisation discourse. Thus, although the importance of the nature of the political economy in the hegemonic discourse communication process is undisputable, a clear correlation between the nature of the political economy and the nature of the communication/materialisation of a hegemonic discourse cannot be established.



*Is the nature of domestic structures enough to account for the materialisation process of hegemonic discourses?*

To get a picture that can better account for the different facets of the hegemonic, one could qualify the role of the nature of political economy with a study of the case and time specific (domestic) conditions that affect the capacity and willingness of the various actors to dispute or deliberate on the practices and policies generated by the hegemonic.

In this regard, the existence of a highly-institutionalised, well-functioning and ever-inclusive social partnership, cannot but be considered instrumental in the explanation of the communication of globalisation discourse in Ireland. Thus, although Irish political economy is usually classified as an Anglo-Saxon, it was characterised throughout the period under investigation, as mentioned above, by a strong and expanding consociational institutional base, a defining characteristic of Continental political economies (see Murphy, 1999; O'Donnell and O'Reardon, 2000; Hardiman, 2002). It seems that this distinctive characteristic of Irish political economy played a crucial role in the way in which the hegemonic discourse of globalisation was materialised. Such that it could be argued that the effects that were generated by the production of new winners and losers, inherent in any hegemonic discourse materialisation process, were mediated, negotiated and resolved, at the level of this consociational mechanism, ever-dominant in the Irish politico-economic life. Along these lines it could also be argued that the fact that many heads or representatives of public institutions in Ireland, have grown up together or have personal/family relationships, due to the small size of the Irish society, must have facilitated the above dynamics.

Does this mean that the structure of interest representation can account for the hegemonic discourse communication process? Based on our evidence, the answer is no. While the structure of interest representation tells us important things about how a public discourse is reproduced, it tells us little about actors' preferences and understandings. To put this more clearly, although the study of the structures of interest representation tells us much about where and with whom the actors speak, it

tells us little about what they say. Thus, it seems that the problem mentioned with regard to the nature of political economy, also applies to the structures of interest representation. The fact that a political economy is based on consociational institutional arrangements does not mean that the social actors that are negatively affected by the hegemonic discourse will not react; it just means that their reactions will be brought into and negotiated within the framework of these institutional arrangements. Yet, in the case of Ireland no such negotiation was found. It was not that the social partners were negotiating economic globalisation policies among themselves, but rather that the promotion of these policies was taken as a given; that is, it was beyond discussion and public or intra policy group deliberation. I do not mean here to ignore or downgrade the important role of social partnership in fostering consensus around economic globalisation policies. But, the important issue here is not how this consensus was fostered but what allowed this consensus to emerge in the first place. Greece for instance did not only lack a social partnership to foster consensus around economic globalisation policies, but most importantly it lacked such a consensus in the first place. Thus the key piece of the puzzle still seems to be missing.

*Nature of political economy plus structures of interest representation. Is a combined explanation enough?*

It could be argued that it was on the one hand the genealogical compatibility between the globalisation discourse and the Irish political economy, and on the other hand the strong consociational base of the Irish political economy that led to the apolitical facet of the hegemonic, observed in the Irish case. Respectively, it could be argued that the effects from the incompatibility between the hegemonic discourse of globalisation and the Greek political economy, were exacerbated by the overly fragmented and particularistic structure of interest representation that characterise the Greek politico-economic life. Thus it may be the case that the solution to our puzzle is based on the combination of the two factors examined above, i.e. the nature of political economy and the nature of the structures of interest representation.

The combination of a nature-of-political-economy perspective with a case-specific, domestic institutional arrangements analysis appears to improve significantly the understanding of the nature of hegemonic discourse materialisation. It takes into consideration, not only factors concerning the degree of genealogical compatibility between hegemonic discourses and national political economies, but also factors concerning the way in which different societies negotiate social change domestically, i.e. whether there are strong or weak intermediation structures of interest-representation, and whether these structures promote consensus building, or rather enhance the reproduction of social divisions and antagonisms. Yet, still this combined explanation does not seem sufficient to account for why there was no public or intra group deliberation/negotiation in the case of Ireland.

Accordingly, the Irish case seems to suggest that the nature of political economy and the structures of interest representation cannot on their own account for all facets of the hegemonic; they cannot offer a conclusive explanation of the hegemonic discourse materialisation process. To address this problem, some scholars have suggested that we need to take into consideration the different political culture that exist in different countries. In Ireland this would include the ‘non-ideological’ and ‘consensus-driven’ public life, whereas in Greece it would point towards the ‘high degree of abstraction and polarisation’ that traditionally characterises public debates. Yet, the factor political culture seems to obscure rather than elucidate the communication of globalisation discourse. In the case of Ireland, for instance, it seems to ignore the turbulent industrial relations that have defined most contemporary Irish economic history. It also fails to provide us with a convincing answer as to why this consensus did not take place earlier (or later), especially since the infrastructure of the social partnership was in place since the early 1970s.

It seems that in order to grasp the apolitical facet observed in the Irish case, one needs to dig deeper into the reasons that affected social actors’ understandings, and their capacity and willingness to dispute or deliberate on the meanings and practices of the globalisation discourse. Following such a deep, case-specific, analytically bottom-up route it becomes apparent that the social technology (i.e. the hegemonic) that in the Greek case came at a certain historical period to be communicated and materialised as a new zone of contestation concerning the redistribution of wealth and power, in the

Irish case it was communicated and materialised as a historically unique economic miracle, a social technology of prosperity and wealth-generation (for the Irish ‘economic miracle’ see Walsh 2000; for a critique see Allen 2000).

Indeed, as it has been well documented, during the 1990s and up to the first half of the 2000s Ireland was the fastest growing economy in the OECD (see various *Economic Surveys* of Ireland published by the OECD). It evolved from a ‘cohesion fund’ poor country, to a most prosperous economy. Its GDP per capita as a percentage of the EU average increased from 69.7% in 1990 to 135.1% in 2002 – a 93.8% increase within almost a decade! In addition to growth rates, the development of a number of macro-economic indicators was also impressive. Unemployment fell from 13.4% in 1990 to 4.3% in 2002. Industrial production (excluding construction) grew with an average of 13.5% during 1992-2000, whereas the EU15 average was 1.7%. The general government gross debt reduced from 94.2% of GDP in 1990 to 32.7% in 2002 (all data are from the *European Economy*, no 6/2004, published by the European Commission). Thus, from the ‘poorest of the rich’ in 1988 (*Economist’s Survey*, 1988), Ireland became ‘Europe’s shining light’ (*Economist’s Survey*, 1997) in the 1990s.

For sure, the above numbers tell us nothing about social and income inequalities, and indeed few analysts would dispute the fact that the economic miracle maintained, if not exacerbated, such inequalities (see Kirby, 2002; Allen, 2003). Yet, one can hardly downgrade the positive impact the rapid economic growth had on Irish population, in absolute terms. Along these lines, Whelan and Layte (2004: 103) note with regard to social mobility: ‘Ireland has remained a highly unequal society in terms of the distribution of income. However...economic change and, in particular, the economic boom of recent years has been associated with substantial absolute [positive] social mobility’ (see also Smith, 2005: chapter 2). The positive impact the economic miracle had on the living conditions of the great majority of the Irish population is also reflected in the shift in the mood of public opinion captured in Eurobarometer surveys at the end of the 1980s. In particular, during 1980-1987, to the question whether the next year will be better or worse in comparison to the current one, the Irish were among the most pessimistic Europeans (the percentage of negative replies varied between 45% and 55%). Yet, after this period a radical change of attitude, from

pessimism to optimism, is observed. Thus, after 1987 Irish were constantly among the most optimistic Europeans (and had the highest percentage of positive replies in 1988, 1990 and 1994, and the second lowest percentage of negative replies in 1994 and 1996). This significant shift of attitude cannot but be related to positive personal experiences and absolute gains in living conditions.

Following this reasoning, it can be argued that it was this economic miracle experience, that defined what was conceivable and what was non-conceivable, what was part of politics and what was beyond politics, what in general could be spoken of and how, within the Irish public discourse of the time. Additionally it can be argued that this prosperity was so deeply and widely felt in Ireland, that it marginalised or made (temporarily) irrelevant any social clash as to who gets what. That is, the great majority of the population was experiencing such an absolute gain in the conditions of their everyday life, that until the end of the 1990s, relative-gains considerations remained beyond public deliberation.

The explanation proposed here goes beyond the nature of political economy, and differs from explanations focused on structures of interest representation. It is an explanation grounded on changes in the material environment, but the emphasis is on how and why real people experience specific changes in specific ways. In this regard, in the case of Ireland some further historical contextualisation adds important information to the nature of the materialisation of globalisation discourse. It can thus be argued that the economic miracle was translated in Ireland into a *positive social shock* that *disrupted* the continuity of a generations-long collective memory and social self-portrayal that was driven by the potato-famine of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Hence, it was this positive social shock that ‘placed’ the practices, mechanisms and policies of the economic miracle beyond the sphere of the socially contested and negotiable, beyond the sphere of the political. Gradually, however, and despite the fact that wealth was still generated at an unprecedented historical pace, the effect of this positive shock started to fade away and give its place to relative gains and wealth-disparity considerations. The counterfactual bottom line here is that if the specific historical experiences were not there, the positive shock would not have had the impact it did. On this basis, it can also be argued that one cannot easily generalise the findings of

the Irish case, as the factor ‘economic miracle’ should not be expected to have exactly the same effects on just any national context.

## **Conclusion**

This paper aspired to make a contribution to the existing literature on globalisation through a detailed examination of two case studies. In the case of Ireland, it offered an independent validation of the important research already made by Nicola Smith (2005). In this regard, Smith’s main position on the all-powerful discourse of competitiveness in the Irish politico-economic life is reaffirmed. Yet, according to our findings, Smith has overemphasised the role and importance of the concept of globalisation in the Irish public discourse. The analysis of the Greek case was rather the first attempt to map how globalisation discourse emerged in this country in the 1990s. The analysis of these two case studies led us to two different facets, two different routes of materialisation of globalisation discourse. Yet, we also saw how a highly politicised materialisation route led to specific policy-agenda reifications, and how a highly apolitical route, was gradually politicised.

The second aspiration of the paper was to examine the role of political economy and domestic institutions in the above materialisation processes. The conclusion here is that although these two factors play an important role in hegemonic discourse materialisation, they cannot account on their own, combined or separately, for the materialisation of globalisation discourse. Along these lines it was argued that a complete reading and understanding of the different facets of the hegemonic and its materialisation cannot but finally rest upon historical and case-specific factors and characteristics. State agency, changes in the material environment (e.g. the economic boom in Ireland), and specific historical experiences that influence the way in which these changes impact on specific societies (e.g. the traditional socio-economic deprivation, and negative self-images in Ireland), are also crucial elements here.

Finally, the countries examined and the findings presented here point to the significant limitations of the models-of-political-economy approach to international political economy. These models not only fail to capture the nature of the states under

examination but also obscure significantly the social dynamics that govern social change in world politics and economics. In this regard the conclusion of this paper seems to raise a broader issue. Singular factors such as types of political economy or types of domestic structures may be of minor analytical value or even meaningless if examined as separate variables, independent from the socio-historical systems in which they are embedded. Thus the failure of political economy and domestic structures to account for the materialisation of globalisation discourse, observed in this paper, may not just be a call to include more factors in our analysis but a call for new ways of thinking. It may be a call for new theoretical and analytical perspectives that shift the emphasis from singular factors to the social systems that define the existence and govern the co-existence of these factors. The purpose here would not be to examine which factor matters most in the communication of hegemonic discourses but rather to scrutinise the system that governs the co-existence of the different factors and thus to elucidate the rules that define the social formation/transformation of different societies.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> See also the papers presented at the ECPR joint session workshop: 'Elites discourses in Globalisation and Europeanisation', Nicosia, April 2006, available at: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/ecpr>. Furthermore, the volumes *National Perspectives on Globalization* and *Regional Perspectives on Globalization*, edited by Paul Bowles and Henry Veltmeyer, forthcoming by Palgrave Macmillan, will also be an important contribution to the existing literature.

<sup>2</sup> Relevant developments include the 'Essen strategy', agreed in the European Council in Essen (December 1994), the 'Concluding Report' of the 'Molitor group' (June 1995), and a relevant UNICE report (October 1995). Furthermore, with the treaty of Amsterdam in 1997, competition became a basic target of the European Union.

<sup>3</sup> In the case of SEV, I examined the speeches of its Chairman, during the annual General Assemblies of the Federation, for the period 1998-2001. In the case of IBEC, I examined statements of its executives (i.e. the Chairpersons or the Directors General) that made a reference to globalisation and were published in *The Irish Times* or the *Irish Independent* (i.e. the two best selling Irish broadsheets), for the period 1996-2002.

<sup>4</sup> Author's interview, 20/04/02. Jason Stratos was the Chairman of SEV for the period 1992-2000.

<sup>5</sup> See indicatively: 'Tigers eat up the Dinosaurs', 'Troops in: Bust AIB's top Brass', 'Tigers Vs Dinosaurs' and 'Did the Unions dictate the budget?' in *The Sunday Independent*, December 12, 1999, and April 2, April 16 and December 10, 2000, respectively.

<sup>6</sup> A significant point of convergence in workers' discourses was also the references to the importance of the 'social dimension' of the European model of capitalism (see for instance, *Enimerosi*, no 24, April 1997: 5; ICTU, 2001: 9-10; ICTU, 2001a: 61).

<sup>7</sup> The study of Archbishop's discourse was based on 62 speeches, letters and interviews, available on-line in the archive of the Church of Greece. See <http://www.ecclesia.gr>.

<sup>8</sup> The study of Cardinal's discourse was based on material published in Irish press. The database *Lexis-Nexis Executive* was used to collect all the articles published in Irish newspapers that made a reference to Cardinal Connell, along with one of the following key-words: 'global' or 'globalisation' or 'identity' or 'flexibility' or 'Celtic Tiger' or Europe, for the period 1996-2001. 40 articles were found and analysed. Approximately one fourth of these were articles or speeches by Cardinal Connell.

<sup>9</sup> See Desmond Connell 'Human Face of Poverty Reflected in Homeless Statistics', available at: <http://www.dublindiocese.ie/Releases/releases.htm>.

<sup>10</sup> See *The Irish Times*, February 14, 1998, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> The main difference between the two discourses was Archbishop Christodoulos critique of 'Americanisation' and 'American cultural imperialism'. See for instance Christodoulos, 1999.

<sup>12</sup> Most Irish analysts consider *The Irish Times* as the most credible source for tracing and analysing the issues prevailing in Irish politico-economic scene.

<sup>13</sup> All percentages refer to the "basic" top statutory tax rates on corporate income.



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