Abstract

The aim of this paper is to examine how meanings, policies and practices related with economic globalisation came to dominate in different institutional settings after the end of the Cold War. Rather than taking globalisation for granted, the paper attempts to explore how key institutional actors in different countries ‘translated’ and ‘materialised’ economic globalisation, and what was the role of political economy and domestic institutional arrangements in this process. To do so the paper focuses on the impact of globalisation on Greece, a Mediterranean political economy, and Ireland, an Anglo-Saxon political economy. The findings demonstrate that although, in the 1990s, globalisation was ever-present in both countries, the way in which it was present was significantly different. The paper goes on to compare and contrast these different communication/materialisation processes, evaluating the impact of the different factors involved.
The paper has a dual purpose. First, to make a contribution to the globalisation literature. There has been a great amount of work that has tried to clarify the issue of globalisation at a conceptual level. My aim here is to shift the focus of this literature from the general, the international, the outside and the top-down to the concrete, the national/comparative, the inside and the bottom-up. The target 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 of the paper is to use the above evidence and analysis in order to make a contribution to the literature on comparative institutionalism. The target here is to account for the role of domestic institutions and political economy in the communication/generation of globalisation. The overall aim 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 the 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 most productive for two 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 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 paper aspires to present evidence on how the hegemonic discourse of globalisation (henceforth used interchangeably with the concept ‘globalisation discourse’) was materialised in different institutional setting. 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. I then use this evidence 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 want to test the ‘goodness-of-fit’ hypothesis, developed in Europeanisation Studies, (among others see Knill and Lehmkuhl, 1999; Borzel and Risse, 2000; Caporaso et al 2001) in the case of globalisation discourse.

2. Is the nature of the structures of interest representation sufficient to account for the materialisation process of hegemonic discourses? Here I shift my focus from the nature of the political economy to the broader structures of societal interest organisation and state-society relations (Schmitter, 1979; Cawson, 1978 Lehmbrunch, 1979).

3. Can the combination of the above two factors (i.e. the nature of political economy and the structure of interest representation) account for the materialisation process of hegemonic discourses?

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. The purpose is to examine (changing) social identities, and changing public policies and politico-economic arenas, in order to understand the nature and conditions of the
domination of globalisation as a ‘new reality’ in world politics and economics, as well as the role of domestic factors in this process.

To do so, the paper focuses on the second half of the 1990s and examines two case studies, Greece and Ireland. The period chosen is the period in which, according to most analysts, the ‘globalisation of the globalisation discourse’ took place. Thus by the mid-1990s the political economy and political geography of the Cold War started to be replaced by the political economy and geography of globalisation. The paper attempts to illustrate the nature and evolution of this process in the case of Greece and Ireland. The puzzle presented by this pair of countries is in short as follows. Both countries are members of the European Union, so the ‘regional dimension’ is kept constant, and thus a potential intervening variable is eliminated. Then, the two countries have similar prime-ministerial political systems and 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 M?y, 1998; Hall and Soskice, 2001). Yet, 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. To account for the inefficiency of these models to describe our case studies, we need to 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 functioning structure of interest representation (for a classical study see Schmitter, 1979). The following section presents the main findings from our case-study investigation, 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’

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

Source: Nicoletti et al., 1999 : 23
Table 2. Overall Regulatory Approaches in Selected OECD Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>0-6 indicator from least to most restrictive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Nicoletti et al., 1999: 34

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

The literature

The globalisation literature is rather underdeveloped with regard to concrete case-study evidence. Banchoff’s (1999) research on narratives of Globalisation and Social Policy in Germany and the United States was one of the first applied attempts¹. The same goes for the research delivered by Hay and Watson (1999) on the political deployment of the discourse of globalisation by New Labour in Britain. Hay and Watson articulated the case 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 further this line of inquiry Hay and Rosamond (2000) attempted one of the first mappings of the different ways in which the phenomenon of globalisation was 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 found however that the mode and characteristics of that deployment remained ‘strikingly different’ in different national settings. 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. She concluded that the discourse of globalisation had a significant impact on Irish politics and policies. Confirming the analysis of Hay and Watson (1999) she argued 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.

¹ See also the studies of Hay (2001) and Kjaer and Pedersen (2001) on the diffusion/translation of neoliberal norms in the UK and Denmark respectively.
The methodology

To capture the materialisation of globalisation discourse in Greece and Ireland, I focused and examined the political parties, the workers’ unions, the employers’ associations, the Church and the Press. My aim was to study national institutional actors that dominate in the production and reproduction of domestic public discourses and policies. 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 analysis of these actors was based on the systematic analysis of key periodical publications by them (see below) over a period of six years (1995-2001).2

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 document 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 evidence from the various national actors was then brought together to assess what was the impact on the national level overall.

The findings

The Main Political Parties

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

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

2 This material was combined with a limited number of semi-structured interviews with the heads of these organisations.
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, through which the political parties redefined their identities, visions, strategies, critiques and policy suggestions. It can indeed be argued that the discourse of globalisation emerged in the Greek political party realm as a new political, i.e. as a new point of reference through which political agents came to conceptualise and define what was at stake in economic, political and social terms.

Thus, globalisation, either as a significant opportunity for the development of Greece (PASOK, 2000: 10), or as a ‘new reality’ (ND, 1996, 2000), a ‘policy justification instrument’ (KKE, 2000; Synaspismos, 2000), a new form of imperialism (KKE, 1996), ‘the domination of market over society’ (Synaspismos, 2000), or a danger for a ‘new barbarism’ (PASOK, 1996) came to dominate and redefine the terms of antagonism between the Greek political parties. Even when the political parties avoided the use of the term globalisation, this seemed to be a statement on globalisation itself. For instance, New Democracy, after 2000, tried to avoid the use of the concept of globalisation, preferring instead the use of the more neutral concept of globality (παγκοσμιότητα) (see for instance ND, 2000: 32). Yet by doing so it was implicitly taking a (rather negative) position towards the phenomenon 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. It is indicative that the concept of globalisation itself remained rather absent from the party political scene. Three out of the four 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 (for instance deregulation, privatisation and 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. It can thus be argued that the hegemonic discourse of globalisation emerged in the Irish political scene as a new apolitical, i.e. a new point of reference that defined what was to be excluded from the spheres of politics and ideology. 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.

For instance both Fianna Fail and Fine Gael (the two largest parties) set as a main governmental objective of theirs to do whatever was needed in order Ireland to remain attractive to ‘mobile capital investments’, and objective that was shared most enthusiastically by the Progressive Democrats, unequivocally the most passionate advocate of (economic) globalisation in Ireland (see FG, 1997: 4; FF, 2002: 26, 29-30; PD, 1997 and 2002). The most telling statement however, with regard to this non-ideological space of Irish politics, was one coming from the left, from the Labour Party, which declared that it was ‘committed to a strong market economy based on competition’ (LP, 1997: 11), and that its ‘object is...[t]he prioritisation of enterprise and innovation as key elements in the creation of wealth’ (ibid., 6). Yet, the Labour Party significantly changed its position by 2002, adopting a more traditional European Left stance that treated globalisation as a ‘gross injustice’ and 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. Based on the above analysis, it can be argued that the globalisation discourse came to dominate the Irish political system as a new ordering principle that defined what was to be taken as granted both in policy terms and in politics in general. This seems to change towards 2002 when globalisation seems gradually to enter into the sphere of the socially visible and contestable.

The following sections turn to the examination of the social partners. While studying the latter, it is important to keep the developments at the EU level as a backdrop. Indeed, 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).

Employers
The study of employers was based on the study of the Federation of Greek Industries (SEV) and the Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC). 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). The material used for the examination of these organisations is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federation of Greek Industries (SEV)</th>
<th>Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. The speeches of the Chairman of SEV, during the annual General Assemblies of the Federation, for the period 1998-2001.</td>
<td>2. Statements of senior IBEC 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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study of the above material revealed a similar pattern in the way IBEC and SEV engaged with the globalisation discourse. On the one hand, neither of these organisations mobilised the concept of globalisation or developed 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 interventions and policy suggestions.

It is worth emphasising the closeness of the reading of the situation by the chairpersons of SEV and IBEC. 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’3. 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). Undoubtedly, the developments at the EU level cannot be neglected when these commonalities are

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3 Author’s interview, 20/04/02. Iason Stratos was the Chairman of SEV for the period 1992-2000.
discussed. Thus after the mid-1990s the need for adjustment to the ‘new conditions’ 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.

There is, however, an interesting difference with regard to the place of IBEC’s and SEV’s discourses 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. Thus, in contrast to SEV in Greece, IBEC seemed to be far from leading the pro-economic globalisation agenda in Irish public discourse.

Workers
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, nationwide 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). The material used for the analysis of the workers’ discourses and policies is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greek General Confederation of Labour (GSEE)</th>
<th>Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. A personal interview with Peter Cassells, the General Secretary of ICTU for the period 1987-1999 (held on 27/06/2002).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Globalisation discourse came gradually, if in slightly different time-frames, to reorder and dominate the discourses of GSEE and ICTU. In the case of GSEE this happened in 1997, whereas in the case of ICTU it took place a year later. The European and international levels should again be kept as a significant backdrop.

If 1997 and 1998 signify shifts for the workers’ discourses in Greece and Ireland, the first important question to be raised is what was there before these shifts. What was it that globalisation changed or continued in the discourses of GSEE and ICTU? In the case of GSEE the central point of reference and object of critique during the period 1995-1997 was

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4 Relevant developments include the ‘Essen strategy’ (December 1994), the ‘Concluding Report’ of the ‘Molitor group’ (June 1995) and a relevant UNICE report (October 1995), and the treaty of Amsterdam (1997), with which competition became a basic target for the European Union.

5 See indicatively *The Sunday Independent* 1999, 2000a,b,c.
‘neoliberalism’. The latter offered to GSEE both a conceptual framework for decoding and understanding the politico-economic environment of the time (i.e. 1995-97), and a point of reference for defining its interests, policies and, broadly speaking, identity. 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 for instance the argumentation of the three main economic researchers of INE, N. Grammatikos, D. Katsoridas, G. Kollias in Enimerosi, no 61-62, July/August 2000; see also Enimerosi, no 44 and 45, 1999). Finally, it can be said that this new discourse of globalisation was built on – rather than against – the former central point of reference of workers’ discourse, i.e. neoliberalism.

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 was that ICTU itself changed in the late 1990s the way it engaged with the discourse of globalisation. Thus, globalisation was present in ICTU’s discourse since 1995, i.e. much earlier than in the case of GSEE. Yet this early understanding and mobilisation of the concept 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 associated more and more with Ireland and its model of development. By the end of the 1990s, globalisation had become a central point of reference of the ICTU’s strategy and discourse.

The Church

The Church has an undisputed influence in public life in Greece and Ireland (for the role of church in Greece see Ware, 1983; Stavrakakis, 2002; and in Ireland see Inglis, 1998; Kissane, 2003). The study of the discourses and policies of the Church in the two countries was based on the study of the discourses of their Heads; Archbishop Christodoulos in Greece and Cardinal Connell in Ireland. The material used for this analysis is as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Archbishop Christodoulos</th>
<th>Cardinal Connell</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The research was based on 62 speeches, letters and interviews by the Archbishop, available on-line in the archive of the Church of Greece.</td>
<td>The research was based on material published in Irish press. The data base 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 relevant articles were found and analysed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The discourses of the Heads of the two Churches had different referent objects but were very close in substance. In Greece, Archbishop Christodoulos launched a ferocious attack against globalisation. He portrayed it as a major and immediate threat for European societies in

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6 Another significant point of convergence in workers’ strategies and discourses was 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).


8 Approximately one fourth of these were articles or speeches by Cardinal Connell, or interviews with him.
general and Greece in particular, and as a development that was associated with economic exploitation, identity 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’. There is, however, a striking similarity in the focal points of the discourses of the two church leaders. In the case of Christodoulos, these were national identity, tradition, Americanisation, cultural homogenisation, secularism, social estrangement and individualism. In the case of Connell they were national identity, tradition, secularism, consumerism, depersonalisation, as well as unchecked capitalism, poverty and exclusion (see for instance The Irish Times, 14 February 1998: 3). Thus, in both cases we have two rather secular and highly politicised church discourses, which, although their targets were different (i.e. globalisation vs. the Celtic Tiger), addressed the same issues⁹, 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 thus Greece. Thus, the source of the threat for the Greek Church was both external and externally driven. In contrast, the Church discourse in Ireland, was an inside-out discourse. Its principal object 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 (see John Paul II, 1998, 2000, 2002). Thus to address the same problems the Church in Ireland focused on the concept of 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 in the communication of globalisation discourse both as an autonomous agent and as a mirror of society, i.e. both as a major agent in terms of reality-construction/ideology-production, and as a mirror that reflects and represents the prevailing social concerns and relations of power in a society. The sources that were selected for this purpose was the Sunday edition of VIMA in Greece (the best selling Sunday newspaper for the period in question), and the daily edition of The Irish Times in Ireland (the second best-selling broadsheet in Ireland)¹⁰.

The comparison of the aforementioned press sources, with regard to the mobilisation of the concept of globalisation, indeed 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 were 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.

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⁹ The basic difference between the two discourses was Archbishop Christodoulos references to ‘Americanisation’ and ‘American cultural imperialism’. See for instance Christodoulos, 1999.

¹⁰ Most Irish analysts consider The Irish Times as the most credible source for tracing and analysing the issues prevailing in Irish politico-economic scene.
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 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 the Sunday edition of VIMA.

The centrality of the concept of globalisation in VIMA signifies 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**

Based on the above findings and analysis we can draw the following conclusions. There is a significant difference regarding 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, the globalisation discourse, as is conceptualised and studied in this paper, is 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 observations to be made.

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
Models of 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 ‘goodness-of-fit’ hypothesis

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, 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 (the Anglo-Saxon model in the case of Ireland), whereas they would generate controversy, tension and clashes in political economies that were based on different, non-compatible arrangements (the continental/Mediterranean model, in the case of Greece). For example, the reduction of state control over the economy and the deregulation of national economic frameworks have been defining characteristics of the hegemonic discourse of globalisation. Nevertheless, whereas Irish political economy was characterised by low state control over the economy and a highly deregulated economic framework, the Greek political economy had the opposite characteristics, i.e. high state control of the economy and a strict regulatory framework (see Nicoletti, 1999: 23, 29-35). Table 1 is suggestive in this regard.

Yet, one must be cautious to avoid a circular logic that turns the goodness-of-fit approach into a self-proof explanation. First and most significantly a hegemonic discourse is not a closed, controlled and linear phenomenon but an open-ended, productive social process with an independent dynamic that transforms the very conditions and interests that gave birth to it in the first place. Thus any outcome of the hegemonic re-arrangement at the domestic level is far from being pre-determined. It is this independent and un-determined effect of the hegemonic discourse that breaks down the circular, self-proved explanation of the goodness-of-fit approach. Thus, the analysis of globalisation as a hegemonic discourse suggests an independent and significant reordering effect even on political economies that were ‘genealogically compatible’ with it. Consequently, although the nature of the political economy does affect the communication/materialisation process, the latter is hardly determined exclusively by it. Otherwise we end up with a closed, circular system that both analytically and conceptually is premised on the absence of social change.

Furthermore, even if the level of osmosis between a political economy and a hegemonic discourse is high, 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 belongs to the Anglo-Saxon model, 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 an Anglo-Saxon politico-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. The same goes for the ICTU’s preferences. The fact that
the Irish labour market is flexible compared to most of its European counterparts, does not mean that Irish labour force has a fixed preference in favour of flexibility practices.

Finally, an uncritical emphasis on the role of the models of political economy runs the risk of reducing these models to ahistorical constructs, beyond change and social agency (see also Crouch, 2005). 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 in 1987, although it took place within specific politico-economic arrangements, in fact transformed the Irish political economy, producing a new hybrid politico-economic model. Thus, the models of political economy should always be examined in dynamic terms and not as end-products.

Based on this analysis it can be argued that 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? Evaluating the role of the structures of interest representation and state-society relations

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, although Irish political economy is usually classified as an Anglo-Saxon, it was characterised throughout the period under investigation 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, 2000). This distinctive characteristic of Irish political economy must have 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. In contrast, Greek political economy was characterised by an overly fragmented and particularistic structure of interest representation (Mavrogordatos, 1993; Lavdas, 1997), and therefore lacked such an intermediate level, where ideas, interests and social change could consociationally be negotiated and agreed. In the case of Ireland it could furthermore 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.

Yet, 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

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11 Author’s interview with Peter Cassells, 27-06-2002.
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 above 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. 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 fragmented and particularistic structure of interest representation that characterise the Greek politico-economic life.

The combination of a general 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. 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 was communicated and materialised by all strata of Irish society 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). Following this reasoning, it can also 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 its 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 details on the nature of the materialisation of the hegemonic. Therefore, in the Irish case, this economic miracle disrupted the continuity of a generations-long collective memory and social self-portrayal that was driven by the potato-famine of the 19th century. Hence, it was the positive social shock produced by the above disruption 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 of economic progress and prosperity 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 the case studies led us to two different facets, two different routes of materialisation, of the hegemonic globalisation. Based on this finding, this paper joins with those institutional approaches that underline the fundamental role of ‘translation’ that takes place at the national level (for this discussion see Campbell and Pedersen, 2001). Yet, to this author, this translation is, and must be construed and studied as, a constitutive part of the writing of the ‘original text’.

The second aspiration of the paper was to examine the role of political economy and domestic institutions in the above materialisation processes/trajectories. The conclusion here is that these factors cannot account on their own, combined or separately, for the nature of these processes. Along these lines it has been 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; a picture from which
the impact of historical contingency cannot be excluded. A caution remains necessary here. It is not argued that institutions and political economy do not matter in the materialisation of hegemonic discourses. It is simply claimed that these two factors, central as they are in the puzzle of hegemonic discourse materialisation, are not all that matter.


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