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THE CONCEPT OF GREEN ECONOMY AND ITS ROLE IN HEGEMONIC NEOLIBERAL CAPITALISM

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Abstract

Since 2008 the term „Green Economy“ has been highly discussed on international and national political agendas, and it was the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) which promoted the idea of „green stimulus packages“ to avoid a global recession in the context of the financial crisis in 2008. This article examines the concept of a Green Economy and its role in neoliberal capitalism using neo-Gramscian theoretic terms, namely „hegemony“ and „passive revolution“. Thus, different ways of establishing and maintaining hegemonic power are central issues. Due to several crises in recent years, and especially since the financial crisis in 2008, the hegemonic predominance of neoliberal capitalism has come under pressure and now faces a functional crisis. Consequently, the necessity to address this issue arises and is required in order to ensure hegemonic power. I suggest that the concept of a Green Economy embodies a new hegemonic project of neoliberal capitalism and represents a „passive revolution“ to calm critics and prevent counter-hegemonic approaches.

It becomes obvious that the promoting of a Green Economy will not question the inherent contradictions of neoliberal capitalism that have led to the current multiple crises, but rather aims to transform the present economic progress towards a socio-ecological compatibility through carbon-independent economic growth. I conclude that a Green Economy, which operates within a capitalistic mode of production, will produce other forms of exclusion and exploitation and is not likely to overcome the inherent contradictions.

Keywords: *capitalism, Green Economy, neo-Gramscianism, neoliberalism, sustainable development*

1. INTRODUCTION

Neoliberal capitalism bears economic hegemonic power since the crisis of Fordism in the 1970s. According to Antonio Gramsci, hegemonic power builds up on a wide societal consensus, which is stabilised by concessions to subaltern groups and their expectations of real advantages. These groups accept a certain kind of repression and represent an active part of the reproduction of hegemonic power (Candeias, 2007). However, this neoliberal hegemony has come more and more under pressure due to the emergence of several crises and particularly since the financial crisis in 2008. Despite that, the hegemon-

onic structure of neoliberal capitalism still seems robust thanks to its wide anchorage in different societal institutions on a national and international basis and the production of certain knowledge in favour of hegemonic predominance.

The Green Economy concept was first raised in the year 2008, when the financial crisis broke out and the vulnerability of neoliberalism was at its peak. It promised the mutual compatibility of economic prosperity and environmental protection through the implementation of environmentally compatible growth stimuli (UNDESA, 2012). This was supposed to ensure inclusive and sustainable economic growth and further tackle other dimensions of current crises, such as the food and energy crisis (UNEP, 2009a). It embodied the approach to overcome the inherent contradictions of neoliberal capitalism by decoupling economic growth from the usage of fossil fuel and to prevent further environmental damage.

The aim of this article is a critical examination of the Green Economy concept and its role in neoliberal capitalism using the theoretic terms of neo-Gramscianism (see Waner, 2015). By using a neo-Gramscian approach, it is possible to analyse the different power relations which influenced the formation of a Green Economy on an international level. Furthermore, it provides crucial terms, such as „hegemony“ and „passive revolution“ by which an examination of implementation processes may be fruitful.

I claim that the concept of a Green Economy represents a new hegemonic project of neoliberal capitalism to ensure capitalistic hegemonic power and to prevent counter-hegemonic approaches. According to Gramsci, the implementation of a Green Economy takes place in the form of a „passive revolution“ governed by the leading class. Therefore, this concept does not tackle the inner contradictions of capitalists' production and consumption patterns, but tries to maintain these structures through the postulation of a carbon independent capitalism. It is most likely that a Green Economy would reduce the harmful consequences of the current multiple crisis only in a spatial and socially uneven way and would produce new forms of exploitation and inequalities.

In the first section of the paper I describe the Green Economy concept, including its objectives and components to overcome several crises. In the second part I outline the main theoretic terms of neo-Gramscianism, namely „hegemony“ and „passive revolution“. In the third part I build up on the previous explanations, and expose the Green Economy concept as a new hegemonic project of neoliberal capitalism and a „passive revolution“ within current hegemonic capitalistic accumulation patterns. Moreover, I outline the inherent contradictions of capitalism and substantiate the argument that a Green Economy will not be able to overcome the multiple crisis in the long run. Finally, I conclude with the most important findings and suggestions for further development of emancipatory approaches which challenge the current hegemony of neoliberal capitalism.

2. GREEN ECONOMY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The first appearance of the term „Green Economy“ in a political context can be traced back to a report with the title „Blueprint for a Green Economy“ published in 1989 for

the Government of the United Kingdom. The report deals with a general definition of the term „sustainable development“, its effects on the measurement of economic prosperity as well as on different projects and politics according to its implementation, and calls upon a contribution of economics to environmental politics. However, the term Green Economy received no further attention in the report except for its mention in the title. Additional reports in 1991 and 1994 from the same authors extended the possible contribution of economics to environmental issues on a global scale, such as climate change, ozone depletion or tropical deforestation amongst others (UNDESA, 2012). It was only with the outbreak of the financial crisis in 2008 that the term Green Economy appeared again on the political agenda, but this time on a global scale. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) promoted the idea of „green stimulus packages“ in order to avoid a global recession and to start an initiative for a Green Economy. This led to a wide range of analyses and political guidance for „green“ investments in certain economic key sectors such as agriculture, transport and energy supply, to name just a few (UNDESA, 2012). In April 2009, a compact report entitled „Global Green New Deal“ (GGND) was published and substantiated the concept of a Green Economy as an approach not just to combine economic recovery and environmental sustainability, but also to overcome what was known as the „multiple crisis“. This term describes the simultaneous appearance of several crises worldwide with different dimensions (UNEP, 2009a). Amongst others these comprise the financial crisis with its outbreak in 2008, the ecological crisis which was most obviously reflected in the climate change, the energy crisis caused by finite fossil resources, and the food crisis characterised by various problems of food security (Houtart, 2010).

2.1. Objectives and components of a Green Economy

UNEP describes the overall objective of a GGND and thus of a Green Economy to stimulate multilateral and national action „[...] to address the current financial crisis and its social, economic and environmental impacts, while simultaneously addressing the interconnected global climate, food, fuel and water challenges that threaten society over the medium term“ (UNEP, 2009a:5).

Three main objectives for further policy, investment and incentive measures based on the GGND are elaborated: First, the reviving of the world economy including the protection and creation of employment opportunities, as well as the protection of vulnerable groups. Second, the demand for carbon independence and ecosystem improvements to limit global warming and further ecological degradation. Third, further support of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially the eradication of extreme poverty through sustainable and inclusive economic growth (UNEP, 2009b). These objectives demonstrate the holistic and ambitious approach of the GGND and the claim to overcome the complexly interrelated issues of the „multiple crisis“.

The provided strategy to fulfil this ambitious goal focuses on two further objectives: the reduction of carbon dependency and ecological scarcity. Although these two objectives tackle only environmental issues, UNEP clarifies that „[...] each measure discussed is

assessed for its impact on not just environmental objectives but also the economic goals of instigating a speedy economic recovery, creating jobs, sustaining growth and reducing poverty“ (UNEP, 2009b:29). This demand substantiates the importance of economic growth in the implementation of a GGND and demonstrates that those measures which tackle the environmental crisis without considering aspects of economic growth are not expedient.

In 2011, UNEP enhanced its political suggestions with a synthesis for policy-makers called „Towards a Green Economy“. They urged for a „sound regulatory framework“, which should provide different incentives for a Green Economy (UNEP, 2011).

UNEP expressed its confidence in establishing an international consensus in terms of a GGND and addressing the outlined objectives due to several already implemented initiatives. To exemplify, it is worth mentioning the assembly of the United Nations (UN) High Level Task Force on Global Food and Nutrition Security, which operates globally and develops a comprehensive plan for international policy to overcome the current food crisis. In terms of the climate crisis, the current „green recovery“ efforts in the USA and the „Green New Deal“ initiative in the United Kingdom are seen as indicators of the commitment to an economic adoption towards a Green Economy (UNEP, 2009b). For further acceleration of the process, they indicated the leading role by the European Union (EU), the USA and China and concentrated certain suggestions on their specific requirements. This was justified by their 50% contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions and their high impact on international relations. Consequently, a transformation of these economies to a Green Economy would lead to a rapid reduction of emissions and have a major impact in moving the global economy towards a low-carbon economy. The suggestions and results should further support similar implementations in other countries with large economies. Lower income economies may also benefit due to the adoption of certain elements (UNEP, 2009b). However, this focus on larger economies neglects the support of smaller ones in terms of the implementation of a Green Economy, while this approach of a GGND could lead to a further divergence of economic progress in favour of the current leading economies to the detriment of already disadvantaged smaller economies.

2.2. A Green Economy in the context of sustainable development

The definition and further implementation of „sustainable development“ has been highly promoted by international and multilateral efforts and has gained attention in many international conferences since the 1970s (Johnston, 2012). The importance of the economic sphere in terms of sustainable development becomes obvious when considering one of the most pioneering reports for sustainable development titled „Our Common Future“ by the Brundtland Commission which was published in 1987. The report substantiates the connection between economic progress and environmental stability. It also offers one of the most quoted definitions of sustainable development (Emas, 2015) as „development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs“ (WCED, 1987:41). Based on this wide

definition, further actions towards sustainable development were pursued through the determination of the following three pillars that should be targeted: improved economic progress, enhancement of social equity, and environmental protection addressing the local, national, regional and global level (Johnston, 2012).

In 2015, the UN heralded a new era of sustainable development in the form of „Sustainable Development Goals“ (SDGs), which followed the former MDGs. They are also based on the three above-named pillars and concretise them using 17 different goals, which represent a holistic and ambitious approach to prospective world development and should be fulfilled by 2030. The underlying vision covers objectives in terms of poverty, health, education, security, justice, gender equality, and economic growth (UN, 2015). In order to fulfil this vision of sustainable development, the UN envisages a world which is characterised by „[...] democracy, good governance and the rule of law, as well as an enabling environment at the national and international level [...]“ (UN, 2015:5).

Although the term Green Economy is not mentioned in the SDGs' agenda paper, one may find similar references and objectives. Considering the concept of Green Economy, the great suitability for the objectives of the SDGs becomes quite evident. Therefore, a Green Economy would be crucial for further progress towards the fulfilment of the SDGs.

To sum up, the concept of a Green Economy is an ambitious approach tackling the different issues of the current multiple crisis, particularly the ecological and financial one. The main tool to overcome the crises is the speedy restoration of economic growth by transforming the current „brown“ economy to a „green“ one, which fosters inclusive and sustainable economic growth and in turn environmental stabilisation, decent employment, and the reduction of poverty. To foster coherent political action on all levels, a further strengthening of international governance and the enhancement of international agreements is demanded.

3. HEGEMONIC POWER AND „PASSIVE REVOLUTION“

The neo-Gramscian understanding of hegemony builds up on the considerations of Antonio Gramsci, who described hegemony as more than a constrained repression. Instead of the thought that coercion is crucial in shaping a stable hegemony, he stated consent within a society as the main condition. This consent can be established by considering the interests of subaltern groups by certain concessions. Thus hegemony is based on societal consensus, which is just related to coercive instruments. In such connection, the subordinates may agree to a certain kind of repression and work actively on a stable hegemony, because of the expectations of real advantages (Candeias, 2007).

In a similar way, neo-Gramscianism gives hegemony a broader meaning and states the necessity of broad consent within a society. Furthermore, it notes that this consent is shaped through social struggles dominated by leading social forces. This dominance, in turn, is part of an accepted consensual agreement within a society and includes conces-

sions to the dominated part of society and does not only build on repressive or brute force elements. Rather it builds on the acceptance of certain imaginations of ways of living and is stabilised by different institutions, which are operating along a complementary moral and ideological context. Thereby, institutions influence human acting and thinking to (re-)produce a particular hegemonic „reality“ (Bieler and Morton, 2004). The strength of hegemonic forces is their ability to penetrate society on a structural level and their presence in main societal areas such as economy, culture, gender, and class (Burnham, 1991).

From an international point of view, patterns of world hegemony are a constellation of universal norms, which are embodied in a certain international organisation. This international organisation produces specific necessary institutions, which ensure these universal norms and therefore a certain hegemonic ideology. It refers to a dominant mode of economic production, which penetrates the system of social institutions and cultural understanding (Cox, 1983). According to Robert W. Cox, the hegemonic characteristics of such an international organisation are that „[...] they embody the rules which facilitate the expansion of hegemonic world orders, they are themselves the product of the hegemonic world order, they ideologically legitimate the norms of the world order, they co-opt the elites from peripheral countries and they absorb counterhegemonic ideas“ (Cox, 1983:62).

Thus a well-organised, hegemonic international organisation seems stable and difficult to question. It is ensured by its ideological institutions, which (re)produce and enforce the universal norms. Periods of crisis appear when these universal norms and its complementary institutions lose their legitimation or their function to solve international issues. It then becomes obvious why periods of crisis are especially fruitful for critical counter-hegemonic approaches.

With the term „passive revolution“, Gramsci described a „revolution without a revolution“ that is initiated by the dominant class. Instead of a revolution of the subordinate class, the social class in power adopts and modifies the social structure in favour of the current necessities whereby it becomes a „restoration“ or a „revolution from above“ rather than a revolutionary change (Forgacs, 2000).

The enlargement of capitalistic hegemonic power on an international scale can be described as a „passive revolution“ in the countries encompassed. It comprises the absorption of universalised ideas, norms, rules and institutions that leads to a transformation of its former societal constitutions. This revolution is not led by the subordinates, but by higher hierarchical groups supported by international organisations. This process leads via different kinds of concessions and the conviction of the leading social class to the integration in the international hegemony (Bieling, 2011:13).

The neo-Gramscian theory represents a critical approach examining hegemonic structures, such as those of neoliberal capitalism. According to the neo-Gramscian understanding of hegemony, neoliberal capitalism is based on a certain international consent and on universal norms, which are both ensured by international institutions and enlarged through a „passive revolution“ on an international scale. It is now the time to

examine this international consent, its supportive institutions as well as the role of a Green Economy within hegemonic neoliberal capitalism.

4. A GREEN ECONOMY AND ITS ROLE IN NEOLIBERAL CAPITALISM

4.1. Critical remarks from a neo-Gramscian point of view

Before continuing with my main argument, I would like to point out three crucial features of a Green Economy from a neo-Gramscian point of view which may influence the implementation of a Green Economy and thus its objective to create a socio-ecologically compatible capitalism.

First, the market is still the main force of innovation for a Green Economy and should produce conducive technology to establish a low-carbon or even carbon independent society. It just needs a supportive regulatory framework to produce the desired outcome. The establishment of this framework is the responsibility of the state and international organisations. According to neo-Gramscian theory, it has to be considered that the market, the state as well as international organisations are the product of social power relations and not neutral institutions. Thus, markets are characterised by structures of inequality along class, ethnicity and gender, regional as well as international relations and thereby reproduce a certain hegemonic reality. Similarly, states and international organisations are contested institutions by different asymmetric social forces. Their first intrinsic function is to ensure the internationally established capitalistic hegemonic order (Brand, 2009). Consequently, a GGND in the form of a Green Economy, which aims to fulfil the promise of a socio-ecologically compatible capitalism does not only have to consider these social power relations but must combat the forces that maintain structures of inequality. Otherwise a real transformation towards a socially inclusive and ecological compatible economic progress seems unlikely to happen.

Second, with regards to international hegemonic power relations, it must be taken into consideration that a simple transformation towards a carbon independent economy without changing the hegemonic world order is likely to work along the same ruling structures. Thus, it would immediately externalise the possible new upcoming social and ecological side effects of a Green Economy. Such externalisation processes can already be observed in terms of the extraction of rare earth metals and minerals required for „green“ technology or agricultural products for biofuel. This raises doubts about the worldwide compatibility of such a development. It seems probable that a Green Economy would be established geographically and temporarily limited and may just be feasible for countries in the Global North as well as for emerging countries, but hardly for countries of the Global South. Consequently, it will again produce processes of exclusion for many countries of the Global South. In addition, many of these necessary resources for a Green Economy are located in the Global South and will raise further conflicts in order to ensure the possibilities for extraction (Wissen, 2012). The current

promotions of a Green Economy do not consider this possible development, but support it through their preferred implementation in countries of the Global North including China (cf. Chapter 2.2.).

Third, I argue that the promotion of strengthened international commitments and the establishment of international agreements to a transformation towards a Green Economy is likely to lead to a further integration of countries of the Global South into neoliberal capitalism. This is legitimated by the conviction that the multiple crisis requires global action to overcome it and it therefore bears the further opportunity to enlarge hegemonic power on an international scale. Consequently, these international commitments are likely to weaken counter-hegemonic approaches through the enlargement of consent to a Green Economy and as such critical discussions about adequate national implementations are urgently needed.

4.2. A Green Economy as a new hegemonic strategy within neoliberal capitalism

These remarks leave doubt about the possible success of a Green Economy in order to deal with the challenges of the current multiple crisis in a global way and raise considerations about its hegemonic character.

The promotion of the concept of a Green Economy took place during the financial crisis in 2008 when the pressure on the current mode of production became strongest and the opportunities to oppose the current hegemonic neoliberalism were at its peak. Thinking back to the components of a Green Economy, it should solve the current multiple crisis through green investments in areas such as green technology or skill enhancement as well as through a strengthened international cooperation including international governance and trade. The most important objective is to ensure economic recovery that is compatible with socio-ecological contradictions (cf. Chapter 2.2.). It represents the support of new global economic growth patterns to ensure new ways of capital accumulation within the rules of capitalism. Further, its promotion is driven by national and multilateral institutions, above all the institutions of the UN and governments of industrial countries in the Global North. They embody the current hegemonic power of international organisations and are encouraged to ensure their hegemonic ideology. Given these objectives and the promoted methods to achieve them, the support of a Green Economy constitutes a new hegemonic project which tries to overcome the deep crisis of neoliberal capitalism through new strategies of accumulation in the form of a „passive revolution“ (Wissen, 2012). As Thomas Wanner similarly observed, the concept of a Green Economy describes a „new economic paradigm“ that tries to maintain the global hegemonic capitalistic world order through doubtful promises of decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation (Wanner, 2015). It becomes obvious then that a Green Economy is not interested in the general transformation of the current mode of production and therefore in the cancellation of its discrepancy, but rather tries to modernise it in an ecologically compatible way (Wissen, 2013).

There are three crucial arguments as to why a Green Economy is likely to work as a new hegemonic strategy. First, it is deeply rooted in the daily imaginations and practices

and does not demand a radical change of people's behaviour (Wissen, 2013). Second, it is very attractive to many actors. Enterprises are likely to accept a Green Economy to adopt their strategies to become „greener“ and a more acceptable image or to prepare for the time after the depletion of fossil resources. Due to the potential of creating new „green“ jobs, labour unions are also likely to support further ecological modernisation instead of a more radical transformation beyond neoliberal capitalism. On an international level, the driven carbon independent economic growth would reduce the current conflict in terms of natural resource procurement between the Global North and the Global South. Consequently, the emerging countries are especially likely to accept a Green Economy due to the further possibility to proceed with their current economic progress (Wissen, 2012). In addition, a Green Economy is attractive for investors of financial capital ever since the financial crisis of 2008 as they have been seeking new investment opportunities such as agriculture, soil and infrastructure among others and for the vast amount of over-accumulated capital (Brand, 2012). Third, it is promoted by international organisations, which embody the current hegemonic world order, and is supported by the most influential countries such as the USA and the EU. They have the power to enforce additional steps to ensure a further integration of „green“ strategies on a national level and to drive back opposed strategies. Thus, it is likely to establish broad societal consent for the implementation of green economic strategies to maintain capitalistic hegemony.

4.3. Inherent contradictions of neoliberal capitalism as the main obstacles to the successful implementation of a Green Economy

Notwithstanding the above, it is still unclear whether a Green Economy can overcome the multiple crisis due to its inherent contradictions. Ulrich Brand and Markus Wissen connected with the current post-Fordist mode of production, a specifically adjusted hegemonic „mode of living“ in the Global North. This „mode of living“ is institutionally secured and rooted deeply in the daily practices of the majoritarian population. It is characterised by resource intensive mass consumption and complements the current mode of production.

Furthermore, this resource intensive „mode of living“ gains an imperial character as it requires exclusivity and the opportunity to outsource its ecological and social costs. Thus, it needs a balancing non-capitalist or at least a low-resource mode of living in the countries of the Global South. Additionally, it was precisely the secure and beneficial access to world resources in the Global South, such as raw materials or labour force, which ensured the economic prosperity of Fordism and post-Fordism (Brand and Wissen, 2011), making the asymmetric power relations between countries of the Global North and the Global South become obvious.

Now the trend of a global generalisation of this „imperial mode of living“ can be observed. However, this expansion takes place unevenly with substantial geographical and temporal differences. Corporate strategies, trade-, investment- and geopolitics as well as the respective imaginations of a desirable life in affected countries are inevitable for

a certain implementation. Consequently, a generalisation does not mean a worldwide convergence of the „mode of living“ but the development of a general imagination of desirable societal progress. The further expansion of this resource intensive „mode of living“ especially in emerging countries such as China or India shows its contradiction and unsustainable basis and led to the previously described multiple crisis, which implicates a crisis of societal relations to nature (Brand and Wissen, 2011).

However, the concept of a Green Economy does not tackle this unsustainable „imperial mode of living“. Thus, the vision of a carbon independent economy and a decoupling of economic growth from fossil fuel must become true to prevent further environmental and societal degradation.

Contrary to this vision of a carbon independent capitalism, Matthew T. Huber fosters the argument that fossil fuel energy is a necessary condition of capitalist production and circulation system. Huber (2008) affirms that the exploitation of fossil fuel only enabled capitalism to push its inherent drive of capital accumulation forward and led to the enormous productivity of fossilised production. This, however, in turn results in a similarly unbelievable production of industrial waste and pollution, which harms humans and leads to environmental degradation. Additionally, he implicates the uneven power relations, which control the access and exploitation of energy systems (Huber, 2008). Accordingly, capitalism, as we know it nowadays, is not possible without fossil fuel, due to the massive demand for energy and the promise of a possible green growth is questioned.

Wanner (2015) substantiates the contradictions of recently promoted green growth patterns through the exposure of two myths inherent to the concept of a Green Economy. First, the myth of decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation and resource depletion through a more efficient use of resources and adopted production and consumption patterns is just possible in relative but not in absolute terms. Relative decoupling is about the creation of more value with fewer resources; however, this relative reduction of resource depletion per unit of economic output is offset by the simultaneously increasing economic output. To reduce the absolute usage of carbon resources, the increase of resource efficiency must be higher than the growth of economic output and this is hardly the case on a worldwide scale.

Second, the conviction of limitless growth underlying a Green Economy is a myth because it builds on the separation of humans and nature and considers nature as „natural capital“ necessary for capitalistic accumulation patterns. Natural capital became the limiting factor of economic growth and many forms are not substitutable. Therefore, increasing resource efficiency as well as replacements of some natural resources will not be able to overcome the global ecological limits of economic growth (Wanner, 2015).

Due to the described intensified contradictions within capitalistic neoliberalism, its hegemonic character gets put under pressure and faces a crisis of functioning. This is reflected in the increasing problem to balance societal contradictions and the inability to establish a stable economic coherence and social cohesion (Wissen, 2012).

5. CONCLUSION AND PROSPECTS

The first serious promotion of the concept of a Green Economy started in parallel to the outbreak of the financial crisis in 2008. Its driving forces were international organisations and associations, foremost UNEP and countries of the Global North such as the USA, United Kingdom and the EU. The main objective was the transformation of the economy towards environmental and societal compatibility and the simultaneous usage of this process to recover economic growth in a period of low average growth rates. Thereby, a Green Economy is promoted as an instrument to overcome the current multiple crisis, which has already increased the pressure on neoliberal capitalism. Neoliberal capitalism became highly vulnerable to criticism and faced a functional crisis especially due to the enormous financial crisis. However, this reflects the many inherent contradictions of neoliberal capitalism.

This paper has argued that the concept of a Green Economy is a new hegemonic project within neoliberal capitalism to ensure its hegemonic predominance and to prevent possible opposed emancipatory approaches. A Green Economy does not question the inherent contradictions of neoliberal capitalism, such as the connection between economic growth and environmental degradation or the externalisation of social costs due to an „imperial mode of living“, but rather tries to adapt the current production system towards a socio-ecological compatibility. However, a Green Economy seems likely to be accepted as a new hegemonic project, mainly because of its roots in neoliberal capitalism, and is likely to integrate the interests of the different stakeholders in order to build consent necessary for a strengthened hegemony.

Nevertheless, there is doubt that a Green Economy will be able to offset the inherent contradictions of capitalism and thus achieve long-term acceptance. It seems rather likely that a Green Economy may work on the triggers and effects of the multiple crisis just in a temporarily and spatially limited way and will further produce processes of exclusion and exploitation.

A real transformation towards a socio-ecologically compatible production system must question the different ruling power relations, which constitute the current hegemonic neoliberal capitalism. The discussions around a GGND should continue but must also consider these relations of power and reflect their influence on its outcome such as the project of a Green Economy. There is a need to query the capitalist inherent obligation of economic growth and its „imperial mode of living“, which requires exclusivity and the externalisation of social and ecological costs.

Regarding these critics, it is substantial to consider current counter-hegemonic approaches and support their assertiveness. The common way forward must lead to a communalisation of production by the producers and communities and to a collective democratic form of production (Burkett, 2005).

Several of these approaches have already been developed in different parts of the world, each with specific strategies and basic considerations. A selection includes the Degrowth movement in Europe, the Buen Vivir concept in Latin America, the ecological Swaraj

approach in India, or the Ubuntu project in South Africa (Asara et al., 2015). These approaches affirm many critical remarks on neoliberal capitalism and must challenge its hegemonic predominance, primarily on a regional scale. Therefore, they must enter the stage of social struggles, where hegemonic power arises and strengthens their assertiveness and persuasion in terms of the different stakeholders.

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ZELENA EKONOMIJA I NJENA ULOGA U NEOLIBERALNOM KAPITALIZMU

David Neusteurer

Sažetak

Od 2008. godine nacionalne i međunarodne politike sve se više bave „zelenom ekonomijom“. Program Ujedinjenih naroda za okoliš (UNEP) među prvima je promovirao tzv. „zeleno pakete poticaja“ kako bi se izbjegla globalna recesija kao posljedica financijske krize 2008. godine. U ovom radu analiziramo projekt zelene ekonomije i njegovu ulogu u neoliberalnom kapitalizmu koristeći se neo-gramšijanskim pojmovima poput „hegemonije“ i „pasivne revolucije“. Temeljna pitanja kojima se u radu bavimo uspostava su i održanje hegemonijske moći. Zbog niza kriza posljednjih godina, a posebice nakon financijske krize 2008. godine, hegemonijska dominacija neoliberalnog kapitalizma nalazi se pod pritiskom i prisiljena je suočiti se s krizom vlastitog djelovanja. Stoga, da bi se osigurao opstanak hegemonijske premoći, postaje važno detaljnije istražiti ovaj problem i pronaći nove načine opstanka. Pri tome, pojavu zelene ekonomije smatramo sastavnim dijelom novog hegemonijskog projekta neoliberalnog kapitalizma – „pasivna revolucija“ koja za cilj ima umiriti kritičare i spriječiti kontra-hegemonijske tendencije.

Očito je da zelena ekonomija ne dovodi u pitanje sastavna proturječja neoliberalnog kapitalizma koja su uzrokovala višestruke krize u suvremeno doba. Umjesto toga, njen je cilj postojećem shvaćanju ekonomskog razvoja dodati socio-ekološku komponentu, kako bi se oblikovalo novo poimanje ekonomskog rasta neovisnog o ugljičnom dioksidu. Zaključujemo da će zelena ekonomija, koja djeluje u sklopu kapitalističkih oblika proizvodnje, proizvesti nove oblike isključenja i izrabljivanja, te da je malo vjerojatno da će uspjeti prevladati svoja sastavna proturječja.

Ključne riječi: kapitalizam, zelena ekonomija, neo-gramšijanizam, neoliberalizam, održivi razvoj

GREEN ECONOMY UND IHRE ROLLE IM NEOLIBERALEN KAPITALISMUS

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Zusammenfassung

Seit dem Jahr 2008 befassen sich nationale und internationale Politiken immer mehr mit der „Green Economy“. Das Umweltprogramm der Vereinten Nationen (UNEP) förderte die sogenannten „grünen Stimuluspakete“, damit die globale Rezession – eine Folge der Finanzkrise von 2008 – vermieden werden kann. In dieser Arbeit analysieren wir das Projekt Green Economy und seine Rolle im neoliberalen Kapitalismus, indem wir die Neogramscianer Termini „Hegemonie“ i „passive Revolution“ verwenden. Die Grundfragen dieser Arbeit sind Errichtung und Erhaltung der Hegemoniemacht. Wegen einer Reihe von Krisen, insbesondere nach der Finanzkrise im Jahr 2008, steht die Dominierung des neoliberalen Kapitalismus unter Druck und er ist gezwungen, sich mit der Krise des eigenen Wirkens zu konfrontieren. Daher ist es wichtig, dieses Problem zu studieren und neue Fortbestehensformen zu erfinden, um das Fortbestehen der hegemonialen Übermacht zu sichern. Die Erscheinung der Green Economy halten wir dabei für einen Bestandteil des neuen Projektes der Hegemonie des neoliberalen Kapitalismus – eine „passive Revolution“, die es zum Ziel hat, ihre Kritiker zu beruhigen und antihegemoniale Tendenzen zu verhindern.

Es ist offenbar, dass die Green Economy die systemimmanenten Widersprüche des neoliberalen Kapitalismus nicht in Frage stellt, die mehrfache Krisen der Gegenwart verursacht haben. Ihr Ziel ist stattdessen, der bestehenden Verständnis der ökonomischen Entwicklung eine sozioökologische Komponente hinzuzufügen, um eine neue Meinung über das von Kohlendioxid unabhängige Wirtschaftswachstum zu bilden. Wir ziehen den Schluß, dass die Green Economy, die ein Teil der kapitalistischen Produktionsform ist, neue Arten des Ausschlusses und der Ausbeutung erfindet, und dass es wenig wahrscheinlich ist, dass sie die eigenen systemimmanenten Widersprüche überwindet.

Schlüsselwörter: Kapitalismus, Green Economy, Neogramscianismus, Neoliberalismus, nachhaltige Entwicklung