

CRITICALLY THINKING THE GLOBAL POLITICAL ECONOMY: ASSESSMENTS FOR THE STUDY OF MIDDLE EMERGING POWERS

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Introduction

Series of transformations which occurred during the last decades have called for attention of investment banks, newspapers and the academy to the emergency of certain States in the global political economy. In that process, the emerging States have been developing distinct articulations, such as the BRICS, IBAS, Agriculture G20, articulations in financial G20 et, that increase the highlight given to them. There have been several attempts to classify and analyze these countries and their impacts on global political economy: emerging middle powers (Jordan 2003), intermediate States (Lima and Hirst 2006) e would-be great powers (Hurrell 2006) are a few examples. However, in a context of crisis and uncertainty, critical approaches are extremely relevant, particularly the ones that refer to the potentialities of a qualitative change of reality (Cox 1981 and 1996). Is in this debate that this article wishes to insert itself. The idea is to present and articulate the potentiality of two approaches and, specially, two concepts associated to them, with the aim to understand the emerging middle powers and their role in the contemporary world politics: world-system – and the idea of semi-periphery; and neo-gramscian – and the idea of transnationalization of the State. The hypothesis is that the idea of

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transnationalization of the State could complement the idea of semi-periphery, and the study of the two ideas together could enhance our understanding of the new configurations of the global political economy.

In this matter, first will be presented the concept of semi-periphery, in regards of how this idea is thought in the analysis of world-system (WSA). Done that, second it will be presented the concept of internationalization of the State and, next, the arise of a transnational fraction in the capitalist class. Both questions are fundamental to contextualize the emergence and the analytical potential of the idea of transnationalization of the State, specially related to the context of globalization. At last, there will be made some final considerations about the potentialities and limits as well as possible research lines that result from the presented questions.

World-System and the idea of Semi-Periphery

Since the second half of the 70s, the WSA has consolidated as an alternative to handle questions of the hierarchy of the global political economy. This approach emerges as a critic to the theory of modernization, stressing two fundamental questions: (i) the limits of state centralism – or the critic to the idea of States being the operational units of society; (ii) critic to the idea of “general theory of development”, i.e., of the idea that there would be stages by which late societies must pass until they become developed countries (Mariutti 2004).

In this sense, the world-system would be a social system “(...) which has limits, structures, associated groups, legitimate rules and coherence” (Wallerstein 1990, 337). This system is dynamic, once its own existence derives from the groups that compose it, whose interactions keep the system united by tension or dilacerate it, given the fact that such groups constantly pursue to reform it for their own benefit. Therefore, in last resort what makes the world-system a social system “(...) is the fact (*sic*) that life in its essence is in a great measure self-contained, and that the dynamic of its development be in a great sense internal” (*Idibem*). Thus, the system itself is the unity of analysis (Mariutti 2004; Brewer 1990).

Historically there were only two forms of world-systems: in first place, world-empires, where there is only one political system above most part of the area of the world-system; in second place, world-economies, which would be

world-systems that are not commanded by one political authority. Before the modern era, there were two possible ways to the establishment of the world-economies: first, to achieve the status of world-empires by the development of a political structure able to embrace the world-economies or being conquered by a world-empire in expansion; in second place, the disintegration. The big peculiarity of the modern world-system is the fact that “a world-economy have survived for 500 years however have not become a world-empire – a peculiarity that is the secret of its strength” (Wallerstein 1990, 338).

Such peculiarity – and strength – says much about the political aspect of capitalism, which developed by the fact that the world-economy contains in its limits not one but multiples political systems. Only the modern world-system developed a political structure composed of autonomous political units, “sovereign” States in a certain geographical area, a political structure that guarantee the continuity of a partially free trade logic – which is a *sinequa non* condition to the accumulation of capital in a systemic scale (Arrighi 1996) . Therefore, the capitalist world-economy and the modern system of States are not historical separate innovations that articulate with one another: both were developed simultaneously, being the existence of one being depended of the existence of the other (Wallerstein 1996b).

Consequently, the capitalists achieve a capacity of articulation and mobility that has a structural base, a fact that enabled a constant economic and geographical expansion in the modern world-system beyond its initial European borders. In this process, new areas and peoples were incorporated in the capitalist division of labor until its process of accumulation and reproduction covered the whole world, around the end of the nineteenth century, being that the first world-system of history to have achieved such condition – despite of the unequal distribution of its gains (Wallerstein 1990; 1996b; 2004a).

The unequal distribution derives from one of the defining definitions of a world-system, the division of labor. Thus, it is possible to realize the existence of “(...) *one space-time whole* (author’s griffin) whose special scope coincides with the axes of the social division of labor that integrates its composing parts” (Maiutti 2004, 97). The most profitable activities tend to concentrate geographically in certain reduced areas of the world-economy, called the *center*. The least profitable activities tend to be widely geographic scattered, in the

periphery. In this sense, the division of labor that occurs in the capitalist world-economy regards to a hierarchy of assignments that depends of the distinct levels of qualification and capitalization, a fact that has significant impact on the profitability e, therefore, implies in the transference of the surplus value from the periphery to the center. There is an element, though, that makes this process more complex, the semi-periphery, which is:

“(...) a necessary structural element in a world-economy. (...) They are collection points of vital skills that are often poetically unpopular. These middle areas partially deflect the political pressures which groups primarily located in peripheral areas might otherwise direct against core-States and the groups which operate within and through their state machineries. On the other hand, the interests primarily located in the semi-periphery are located outside the political arena of the core-States, and find it difficult to pursue the ends in political coalitions that might be open to them were they in the same political arena” (Wallerstein 1990, 339).

Therefore, the semi-periphery, acting in the same time as a peripheral area in relation to the core and as a core area in relation to the periphery, can contribute in the perpetuation of the modern world-system by reducing the tension between the extremes. Besides that, there is a dynamism role, given the fact that in periods of economic crisis the States of the semi-periphery can gain advantages and, because of their hybrid constitution, threaten the system core (Wallerstein 1996b; Mariutti 2004). In this sense, they are States with certain instabilities: in political terms, one might say of fragile state structures; in social terms, of unequal structures in urbanization processes, which have intense migratory fluxes for example (cf. inter alia Chase-Dunn 1989).

The idea of semi-periphery arises from empirical verification, i.e., from the identification of countries that, in regards to GDP per capita, are between the core advanced States and the underdevelopment periphery. On the other hand, with the passage of time the term acquired analytical significance in the study of the core-periphery dynamics (Radice 2009). Although core and periphery (and semi-periphery) are terms with a geographical origin and consequences, they are not used mainly in space terms, but in relational terms

(Wallerstein 2004a; Arrighi and Drangel 1986). The relation between core and periphery stands itself as being a relation between global capital and global work, between high and low profitable activities. Thus, as the integration of such activities happens there is the transfer of surplus of peripheral productive activities to the central activities, and the result is “an uneven distribution of the value of the world production” (Arienti and Filomeno 2007, 109) – not only of the workers to the owners, but also of the periphery owners to the core owners (Wallerstein 1996b; 2004a).

In the words of Wallerstein (2004a, x; 2004b, 53-76), “The proponents of world-systems analysis have been talking about globalization since long before the word was invented – not, however, as something new but as something that has been basic to the modern world-system ever since it began in the sixteenth century”. Even though at first sight such statement might be seen as meritorious, because it places globalization as something real, later some problems emerge. At first, the identification of globalization as a phenomenon that dates back to the sixteenth century impoverishes its meaning because it empties its heuristic potential. Besides, to the WSA, the capitalism dates back to the sixteenth century and has remained essentially the same, without any big changes, since then. In the last instance, this perspective analyses capitalism as, basically, “(...) a static system of exploration” (Brewer 1990, 18). In this respect, besides highlighting the centrality of the States and their endurance in the processes referring to the dynamics of expansion of world capitalism since the formation of the modern world-system – as well as the persistence of the core-peripheral structure In the global political economy – the WSA sees globalization as something that has always existed, without fundamental or relevant changes in this tendency in contemporary processes (Arrighi 2005). Likewise, as it concentrate itself mainly in the cycles of the system and of systemic crisis, the WSA ends up developing a analysis of the real which, in a certain way, alleviate the subjectivity of history, bringing a limited reading about the power relations in a context of globalization.

One may note, thus, that the conceptualization of the semi-periphery shares certain analytical distinction between economy and politics, fact that leads to the development of two analytically independent structural concepts (Radice 2009). Once such problems are aggregated to critics of Laclau (1997)

about the current reductionism in systemic approaches as the WSA, it can be enhanced some of the main problems of the conventional definitions of semi-periphery: reductionism, determinism and state-centralism. Therefore, it is necessary, mainly because of the context of increasing transnationalization of capital and relevance of middle emerging powers, to break the ontology of world-system, in the search of a better understanding of such countries and their behavior in the global scope.

State Internationalization, *Pax Americana* and Globalization

The intensification of the globalizing processes has caused some problems to the state-centric classifications of the core-periphery relation and, hence, to the interpretations of the semi-periphery (Worth 2009). Consequently, despite of the initial pertinence of this concept it is important to search for elements of critical inspiration in order to better understand the behavior of the middle emerging powers. It is at this point that the neo-gramscian approaches can be of great value.

Central in these approaches is the perception of the political impacts of the intensification of certain processes of production internationalization. Cox has named that state internationalization, a fundamental concept to better comprehend the mechanisms in which the American hegemony stood itself in the period of *Pax Americana* as well as to the understanding of the new context that arose with the intensification of the globalization processes.

State internationalization would be “a global process in which the national politics and practices have been adjusted by the demands of the world economy (...)” (Cox 1987, 253). Underlying this point is the fact that States have become part of a complex structural politic emergent in international scale². Hence two questions emerge: first, the state can’t disappear from this process: with the uprising of the “global”, a new scope of interactions appears without, however, the implication of the encompassment or the hierarchy of the other ambits. Second, this internationalization doesn’t occur in a homogeneous way around the world. Actually, the prominence given to the “national

² To Cox, such process must be seen as a *nébuleuse*, i.e., as “something that doesn’t have an imposing firm institutional structure (...)” (Cox 2002, 33). To further reading about this topic, see: Cox 1981 and 1996.

moment” contributes for the perception of the existent “interscale articulations” (Morton 2007, 138) between the national and the international scope; i.e., it is fundamental at this point to realize the special dynamics of the globalization dialectics.

One may note, thus, a process of change in the state political structures that happens because of new alignments in the power relations among the domestic groups and between these groups and groups of other States in a wider process of construction of a historical bloc beyond the limits of the national state. Hence, there is the formation of a interstate consensus intimately linked to the needs of the world economy, whose participation is hierarchically structured from the establish outlines in the historical dominant bloc. Given this external structure, the internal structures of the participant States are adjusted to translate this consensus in the national public policies.

In *Pax Americana* prevails an hegemonic world order in which dominates, in the advanced industrial States, a form of state that is accountable to the institutions of world economy – IMF and World Bank, for example – and to the domestic public opinion. It was the “embedded liberalism” (Ruggie 1982) or the possibility of combine free-trade in the international level with state interventionism in the national level in order to guarantee stability. In such change in the gravitational center of the national economy to the world economy the State remains as the responsible to the stability in both fields.

The political internalized process associated with the internationalization of the State required a political structure in which agencies and other United States government components had a prominent position. However, such structure did not operate just in the top-down approach nor was a exclusive structure of the State. As any process of hegemonic construction, it assumed that its subordinates would identify with this structure, which relates with the dimension of the consensus and to the processes of negotiations and haggling between dominants and subordinates within the establish limits of the historical bloc in question. The process of State internationalization should, thus, be understood in a dialectical way, not as something inexorable but as a tendency that, as any tendency, generates contradictions and opposition movements.

The hegemonic world order established by *Pax Americana*, during which the process of state internationalization occurred, “was founded by a country in which the social hegemony have been established and in which such hegemony was sufficiently expansive to project itself in a world scale” (Cox 1987, 266). In this same process, the fordist way of production and a determinate form of the State have become world models, being exported and modeled elsewhere. In other words, such hegemonic world order was closely related to

“ (...) a global scale [projection of] those institutions and practices that had already developed in the United States, such as Fordist mass production/consumption industrial organization, electoral democracy, limited state welfare policies, and government economic policies directed toward stimulating private economic activities” (Agnew 2005, 124)

Once the hegemonies do not appear by chance, being deliberately constructed, one can note behind the *Pax Americana* a vision of hegemony, the heir of the New Deal success and associated to the economic internationalism through which social American groups pursued incitation of the demand through mass consumption. It is fundamental of realize there questions, because they express the relevance to the space scope in the process of hegemonic construction “the place that comes to exercise hegemony matters therefore, in the content and form that hegemony takes.” (Agnew 2005, 9)

This hegemony had some particularities. Its geography of power is one that follows logically from the networked power that has long been “cultivated within American marketplace society” (Agnew 2005, 61) and, from and by these peculiarities, has led to a increasing internationalization of production and finances that brought negative consequences, mainly the erosion of the principles of the *Pax Americana* world order. In this process, the “economic-cultural model of the United States and its hegemonic global position” (ibdem) were fundamental, being possible to notice a growing integration of the production processes not just in international but in global scale through determinate processes of articulation of transnational corporations in different territorial places. This question is very important once is “this organization of

production and finances in the transnational level [that] primarily distinguishes *Pax Americana* globalization” (Morton 2007, 124).

Globalization and social forces: The formation of a transnational fraction of the capitalist class

An analysis of the class formation process must arise from the superiority of the social relations of production within the process of constitution of the antagonistic classes and from the fact that the classes fractions derive from the classes struggle that are a result of these social relations. In this sense, it is fundamental to start from the analysis of the prevailing social relations of production in order to the understanding of the class structure of a certain society in a certain period of time. In the contemporary era, the reinstruction of capitalism, in a global scale, causes the emergency of new social forces. In other words, the intensification of the processes of globalization in the 1970 would be leading to a modification of the central premises in the analysis of the social classes (van der Pijl 1995; 1998), in particular the notion that the classes are, by definition, entailed with the State. To some Marxists, the bourgeoisie, although a global agent, would be organically national since its development happens within the State national boundaries. Consequently, it would be a nationally based class.

The problem of such approach is intimately related to the lack of knowledge about the historical specificity of this social phenomenon, which leads to a trans-historical conclusion in regards to the dynamics of the class formation since some historical period of capitalism. The relation among national States, economic institutions and social structures has modified itself in the extent that the national economy reorganizes and integrates itself with a new system of global production. In this process, in spite of the permanence of States and his fundamental role to the global political economy, the globalization of the production provides bases to a transnationalization of classes and the following outbreak of a transnational capitalist class. Explaining in another way, in a world of national economies the classes develop in national circles of accumulation. These circles transnationalize themselves, and the same thing happen with the social classes that, if in one hand do not stop to

articulate themselves in the national level, in the other hand they start to articulate themselves in other interaction scopes.

Therefore, the following question emerges: how these social forces have been generated by the processes of globalization? During the “State phase” of capitalism– i.e. in the period in which the classes developed having as focal point only the national States – the local social structures of accumulation that have been developed frequently assumed the form of developmental and welfare projects, all of them based in a redistributive logic and in a labor and other popular classes incorporation in the national historical bloc (Cox 1987; Przeworski 1989; Rupert 1995). As these Keynesian/fordist modes of accumulation start to lose their strength because of the intensification of the globalizing processes of social relations since the 1970, new models of accumulation emerge and the social arrangement previously existent among dominant and subordinate groups start to disintegrate, making way to the emergence of new political agendas.

Closely looking to the processes of formation and transformation of such classes’ fractions and of the historical blocs articulated to them, it is possible to realize that, in the passage from the XIX to the XX century, the transatlantic finance in the prominent form of internationalization of capital. Great volumes of European investment – especially of British investment - went to the United States, financing its economic development in this period. However, there is a change in this process in the end to the First World War: the volume of loans from the United States bankers to the allies made Wall Street the new world finance center. The most intimately fraction of class linked to this Atlantic circuit of capital represented or defended a liberal-internationalist concept of financial flux control, being formed mainly by international bankers but including as well the interests of the industrial and agricultural classes engaged in the transatlantic trade and the interests of some allies among the intensive labor industries that were financed by those bankers (van der Pijl 1984; Polanyi 2000). Nevertheless, the industry of mass production – articulated with a new model of mass consumption - arose in the United States, causing the penetration of his biggest firms in the foreign markets, remodeling the world division of labor and establishing new patterns of productivity, competition and consumption all over the globe (Rupert 1995; Agnew 2005).

The relation between financial and productive capital is a nuclear social relation in the process of development of capitalism. Thus, there is a increasing tension between the predominance of financial capital and its vision of a liberal-internationalist world and the emergent fraction of class which represented the industrial capital in large scale – i.e., the fordist model of accumulation – and its concept of productive capital. This fraction of class had a critic in regards to the volatile “non productive” financial capital and its predominance trough the deregulated markets, a critic that gain strength with the financial collapse and global crisis in the inter-Wars period (Polanyi 2000). In this period a new dominant class emerged in the United States, a class that would be the ground for a hegemonic vision of the world capitalist order that was:

“The synthesis between the *laissez-faire* liberalism, the internationalist-liberal fraction (...) and the State intervention brought to the scene by the requirements of the large scale industry and the organized labor, which during the interwar period walked along many forms of class conciliation generally called corporativism.” (van der Pijl 1984, c. XV)

This vision of a “proto-hegemonic” world, related to the anti-communism after the Second World War, was central to the process of construction of the alliance between the Keynesians planners and the liberal internationalists. The historical bloc that emerges of the alliance promoted the increasing and expansion of international trade and investment in this period, especially inside and among the “triad” regions. Although successive rounds in the multilateral GATT regime have decrease the tariff barriers in a relative progressive way, the liberal globalization did not limit itself to trade. In the financial scope, excess liquidity originated in the constant deficits of the United States Balance of Payments, the collapse of the regime of Bretton Woods fixed exchange rates and of the its associated capital controls, the recycling of petrodollars and the emergence of offshore markets resulted in huge volumes of international trade and of speculative international investment. Concomitant with this process of financial globalization there is a revival of the *laissez-faire* fundamentalism since the 1970 – which is possible to the perceived in the

neoliberal austerity that has eclipsed the growth oriented ideology that was the fulcrum of world economy after the Second World War.

It is noted, thus, the implications of globalization to the construction of the social classes. In previous moments the dominant classes developed themselves mainly under the State protection and developed its interests in opposition to the interests of rival national capitals. In this sense, States expressed the classes and groups coalitions that were incorporated in the national historical blocs. However, the processes of integration, in a transnational scale, of the national productive structures given the processes of globalization of social relations impact significantly the social classes, which begin to experiment an supranational integration with “national “classes and fractions of classes of other States. Therefore, as certain systems of local production are integrated in globalized circuits of production trough the processes of transnationalization, the local and global accumulation logic tend to converge and the rivalries to stop being expressed in terms of national rivalries. It is not affirmed that there is, because of the intensification of the globalizing processes, one general interest in all capitalist class (Gill 2003). The competition among capitalists continues, but now it also occurs among oligopolistic *clusters* in a transnational environment.

This new transnational capitalist class is the owners of the transnational capital, i.e., the group who possesses the world production resources that are expressed, mainly, in the transnational corporations and in the private financial institutions. This fraction of class is transnational because it is connected o the world circuits of production, *marketing* and finance – unbind, thus, not only to the identities but also to the territories of each national State in particular – and because its interests are focused to the accumulation in global scale. It is possible to assume, therefore, that the difference between the transnational and local/national fractions evolves from the fact of the former is involved in the in the global production and in the managing of globalized circuits of accumulation that give it an objective class existence and an identity that is as special as politically distinct from the local territories and politics. As agents of world economy, this capitalist transnational class fraction has become the hegemonic fraction of capital in a

world scale³. The capitalist class would be, thus, an dynamic unit of heterogeneous in which there is a dispute about the projects and the interests that will be highlighted in the process of reproduction of social relations and, more specifically, in the process of capitalist accumulation. Summarizing, there is a struggle for the leadership of the historical bloc or, in other words, for the hegemony.

From internationalization to the transnationalization of the State

The incorporation of globalization as an analytical category leads not only to the emergence of Cox's concept of state internationalization but also to the development of such concept by other authors with the objective of better understand its application and real heuristic potential. Stephen Gill contributed to the understanding of this process as part of the exchangeable character of the world hegemony centered in the United States, mainly in regards to his analysis of the role of the Trilateral Commission (Gill 1990). Gill, as well as Cox, sees global restructuration of production in post-fordism lines happening in a context of structural change in the 1970. Is in this period that there is, according to Gill, a transition of the international historical bloc to the transnational liberal historical bloc.

Since the end of Second World War – especially since the end of the 1960 – there was a fast process of internationalization of production, being extreme that about 30% of OECD's workers hired by transnational companies and a high number of other workers being dependent of transnational production and international trade to their survival (Gill 1990). Concomitant with this process there is also a significant integration of capital markets and of the exchange rate in global scale. In this context, the national governments and the workers are increasingly constrained by the resources of power and by the transnational mobility of capital (Gill and Law 1989). Is this process there is

³ It is important to take into knowledge that the concept of fraction here is related to segments within classes that are determined by its relation with social production and with the class as a whole. The hegemonic fraction would be, thus, the fraction that was able to be the main direction and the character of production that conditions the cultural, political and social scope of the capitalist society. To further details, see: Robinson 2004 and 2005; Overbeek and van der Pijl 1993; van Apeldoorn 2001.

the mobilization of the emerging transnational fraction of the capitalist class, which begins to develop a conscience and a solidarity that are expressed, for example, in the international organizations, international financial institutions and private councils in the international relations. This fraction, therefore, become increasingly the center of an emerging transnational liberal historical bloc that has a wider leadership than the transatlantic hegemony of the previous period and a small incorporation of the labor sectors. With these questions about the transition of historical blocs, Gill has contributed to the coxian thesis of State internationalization and, beyond that, through the development of the concept of State transnationalization the author tried to, with a semantic change, raise attention to the relevance of transnational actors:

“(...) a process whereby state policies and institutional arrangements are conditioned and changed by the power and mobility of transnational fractions of capital. In the 1970s and 1980s this gave increased weight to certain parts of government, notably finance and economics ministries (...)” (Gill 1990, 94)

This supremacy is organized in a global scope based on two fundamental processes: the new constitutionalism and the disciplinary neo-liberalism, concomitant with the diffusion of the market civilization. Disciplinary neo-liberalism would be the expression of a counter-revolution of capital in a world scale happened in 1990, which reconstitutes the State and capitalism and intensifies the social hierarchies associated with class, race and gender relations in world scale. This revolution involves specifically the extension of the processes of “convenience” and alienation based on the intensification of capital discipline in the social relations. Thus, it is a concrete form of structural and behavior power binding the structural power of capital with the “capilar power” of “panopticism” (Gill 2003). This disciplinary neo-liberalism is institutionalized through State rebuilding and international institutions, involving the imposition of new legal structures and constitutional or semi-constitutional policies, what is referred by Gill as new constitutionalism “(...) the political process of making liberalism transnational and, if possible, making the democratic liberal capitalism the only model for future

development” (Gill 2003, 131-132). Related to this project is the attempt of a global dissemination of what would be a market civilization based in a capitalist progress ideology.

The concept of State transnationalization allows us to realize the existent dialectic between territoriality and globalization. The process of capitalism social relations creation, thus, must be understood in association with “the (exchangeable) role of the State in the social and spatial reproduction of capital” (Lacher 2006, 12). It is fundamental to have in mind the inherent contradiction, in the process of development of capitalist social relations, between spaces of accumulation and spaces of governance.

Consequently, such concept applies as an antidote to the idea of “homoefficiency of capitalism” – the assumption that the diffusion and impact of capitalism around the world would be cohesive, despite of “contradictions in the unequal development expressed trough the vary relations of capital in the different processes of State formation” (Morton 2007, 147). However, the contradictions of unequal development are expressions of class struggle which happen trough diverse spatial scales, from the local to the global scope passing necessarily by the state.

In other words, to say that “the global processes and the transformations can, and actually do, destabilize the hierarchy of scales centered in the nation State” (Sassen 2007, 24) doesn’t mean that new global scales outdo the old scales of the national level. Based on these considerations, it is realized that a more fruitful appreciation of the State transnationalization concept is important to an avoidance of not only the “territorial trap” (Agnew 2005) – and the negation of the global associated to it – but also the globalism: both perspectives suffer from a shallow ontology because they deny the global or state as a spatial scale still meaningful in the process of accumulation of capital. It helps to understand the processes of neo-liberalization, which if on the one hand present themselves through a systemic dimension, on the other have been historically expressed in the discontinue, unequal and contradictory reconstitution of the relations between global and national. In other words, the processes of neo-liberalization have, at the same time, caused the expansion of neo-liberalism around the world and intensified “the unequal development of the regulatory rules in many places, territories and scales”; to summarize, has

led to a “systemic production of geo-institutionalized differentiation” (Brenner et al. 2010, 3)

There is, therefore, the necessity of understanding how the process of capital accumulation happens through multi-scale social relations, in which the State has to be seen not as dominant figure, but as a nodal point. The geographical space is “an inseparable assemble of object and actions systems“, systems that change over time. Given that, then the “objects constituting the current geographical space are intentionally conceived to certain endings, intentionally manufactured and localized. The resultant spatial order is, thus, intentional.” (Santos 2004, 332)

Final Considerations

If, on the one hand, there is the existence of a process that has a significant impact in the form of organization of the social relation in space, on the other hand this phenomenon causes, through a process of internalization of certain processes, manners and ideologies, the reproduction of capital inside distinct States. Thus, what one may note in the emergency of globalization that it is not the end or the withdraw of the State, is the restructuring of different State forms basing on the internalization, within States, of “new configurations of social forces expressed by a class struggle among distinct fractions (national and transnational) of capital and of work” (Morton 2007, 133). One of the fundamental elements in this point is the fact that trough a neo-gramscian perspective – the concept of State transnationalization – it is possible to realize how “the global can (...) constitute itself inside the national (...)” and how “the State has actually gain power because it has to execute the job of implementing necessary politics to the global corporative economy” (Sassen 2008, 63). Therefore, such concept is of most importance in the understanding of the current global political economy once it contributes significantly to the comprehension of the process of denationalization.

It is noticeable that the neo-gramscian approaches and their articulated concepts have a significant heuristic potential to deal with the last decades transformations in the global political economy. Nevertheless, only a few has been said, from this approach, about the answers given by the middle emergence powers to those transformations. Few are the analyses of the emerging process and its relation to norms and rules of the current world order:

articulations/coalitions as BRICS and IBAS, for example; the role of some of these articulations in wider forums as the financial G20 or UN are questions that demand attention from this critical perspective.

There are certain aspects of the systemic change associated with the emergency of new powers that are frequently ignored; in special, the fact that such processes occur in a structural-historical context of the capitalist world order characterized by the deepening of the processes of capital transnationalization. Thus, even if it assumes the principle that the idea of semi-periphery was relevant when it was elaborated in the context of ASM, the processes of capital transnationalization altered significantly the role of the semi-peripheral countries in the global political economy: with changes in investment and information flows. The distinction between States based in the emphasis on resources or industry becomes harder and harder, which places the semi-periphery – as moment of equilibrium and mediation – in a increasingly fluid situation (Worth 2009).

The idea of semi-periphery is fruitful because it contributes to the understanding of the potential of change and influences that such middle-States can have in the international order without losing from sight the capital re-structural power dimension. Specially, there questions are relevant as critics to the hiperglobalist approaches that emerged since the 1990s. On its part, the concept of State transnationalization is relevant once it indicates the complexities of international insertion in a context of neoliberal globalization. Thus, it complements the idea of semi-periphery because it shows certain articulations existent between the semi-peripheral States and transnational capital, inserting classes issues in debates as well as clarifying how certain process of the global-national dialectic are structure – or, in other terms, how State remains central in the processes of denationalization.

At the same time that he presents a fruitful articulation between national and international, stating important clues to the reflection about the global, Gramsci makes an important critic to state-centrism, not visualizing the State as something on its own, as something absolute is its fetishized sense (Gramsci 2002b, 279-280, 332-333). The State is seen as a form of social relation in which methodological – and not organic – distinctions can be contrasted among the dimensions related to consensus and coercion phenomena. This

question is relevant because it open space to think the contemporary State changes, i.e., its process of denationalization articulated to the emergency of the global.

In this process a fundamental question that emerges is about the real potential of transformation presented by these middle emerging powers. The idea of State transnationalization has some explicatory effect, but not in a conclusive way. Thus, a fundamental concept that requires a further discussion is of passive revolution, which would help to understand in which way States not only inserts in the order but also how its actions and articulations relates themselves with the current order. Therefore, an agenda to future researches about the middle emerging powers refers to the model(s) of development presented by them and in what level this(these) is(are) really alternative to the current model. This issue would demand an analysis of the civil/State complexes of the middle emerging powers and their articulations within the process of State transnationalization highlighting the relevance of these countries in the capitalist structure of production – that would point, once again, to the relevance of the concepts presented here to the understanding of middle emergence powers in the contemporary world order.

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ABSTRACT

The current article intends to present and articulate the potentiality of two approaches and, specially, of two concepts, with the aim to understand the middle emerging powers and their role in the contemporary world politics: world-system – and the idea of Semi-periphery; and neo-gramscian – and the idea of transnationalization of the State.

KEYWORDS

Transnationalization; Globalization; Political Economy; Middle Emerging Powers.

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