

**UNITED NATIONS' SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
GOALS AS AN EXTENSION OF WESTERN HEGEMONY**

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Bachelor's thesis
Political science
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Sciences and Philosophy
University of Jyväskylä
Autumn 2022

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

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Title United Nations' sustainable development goals as an extension of western hegemony	
Discipline Politiikan tutkimus	Työn laji Bachelor's thesis
Time Autumn 2022	Number of pages 32
Abstract <p>Sustainable Development Goals can be interpreted as an extension of western hegemony through Coxian conceptual reading of the Agenda 2030 declaration document. This bachelor's thesis includes the following hypothesis: there are elements of western hegemony, such as promoting its values of democracy, emphasising economy, equality, and others present in Agenda 2030.</p> <p>The research questions of this thesis are the following: "Are there elements of western hegemony in the SDGs?" and "How is western hegemony present in the SDGs?". The answer to these is uncovered by firstly examining the concept of hegemony through prestigious Antonio Gramsci, selecting Robert W. Cox's application of Gramscian thought to the international sphere as the theoretical tool, and briefly explaining how the concept of hegemony is connected to the west and its values within the scope of this bachelor's thesis. Agenda 2030 is the examined and interpreted through Cox's application of Gramsci's theoretisation. Answers to the research questions are yes, there are elements of western hegemony in the SDGs and some ways of those elements being present are the manner of constructing shared identity, utilisation of technology in production of hegemony, and linking western interests within the sustainability discourse.</p>	
Keywords western hegemony, sustainable development goals, hegemony, sustainable development, Robert W. Cox, Antonio Gramsci, United Nations	
Depository University of Jyväskylä	
Other information	

Tiedekunta Humanistis-yhteiskuntatieteellinen	Laitos Yhteiskuntatieteiden ja filosofian laitos
Tekijä Emma Lepistö	
Työn nimi United Nations' sustainable development goals as an extension of western hegemony	
Oppiaine Politiikan tutkimus	Työn laji kandidaatin tutkielma
Aika Syksy 2022	Sivumäärä 32
<p>Tiivistelmä</p> <p>Kestävän kehityksen tavoitteet voidaan tulkita länsihegemonian jatkeeksi lukemalla Agenda 2030 julistusta Coxilaisen käsitteellisen analyysin kautta. Tämän kandidaatin tutkielman hypoteesi on se, että Agenda 2030 sisältää länsihegemonian elementtejä, kuten länsimaisten arvojen ajaminen. Näitä arvoja ja normeja ovat esimerkiksi demokratia, talousajattelun painotus sekä tasa-arvo.</p> <p>Tutkielman tutkimuskysymyksiä ovat "Onko kestävän kehityksen tavoitteissa länsihegemonian elementtejä?" sekä "Kuinka länsihegemonisuus on läsnä kestävän kehityksen tavoitteissa?". Vastaukset näihin saavutetaan ensin tarkastelemalla hegemonia-käsitettä tunnetun teoreetikon, Antonio Gramscin, kautta. Tämän jälkeen teoreettiseksi työkaluksi valitaan Robert W. Coxin sovellus Gramscin teoretisoinnista kansainväliselle areenalle. Sitten hegemonia-käsite punotaan yhteen lännen kanssa avaamalla lännen ja hegemonian suhdetta länsimaisten arvojen kautta. Lopuksi Agenda 2030 käydään läpi lukemalla se Coxin teoreettisen sovelluksen läpi, mikä mahdollistaa lopuksi tulkintojen tekemisen. Vastaukset tutkimuskysymyksiin ovat seuraavanlaiset: kyllä, kestävän kehityksen tavoitteissa on viitteitä länsihegemonisuudesta ja ne ovat näkyvissä muun muassa siinä, millä tavoin julistuksessa rakennetaan jaettua identiteettiä, hyödynnetään teknologiaa hegemonian tuottamisessa sekä tavassa, jolla länsimaiset intressit ja arvot punotaan kestävyysdiskurssiin olennaiseksi osaksi.</p>	
Asiasanat länsihegemonia, kestävän kehityksen tavoitteet, hegemonia, kestävä kehitys, Robert W. Cox, Antonio Gramsci, Yhdistyneet Kansakunnat	
Säilytyspaikka Jyväskylän yliopisto	
Muita tietoja	

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1 INTRODUCTION

My first introduction to sustainable development, or SD as a shorter abbreviation, took place in secondary school, just after the establishment of the United Nations' Agenda 2030 in 2015. Even then, with fifteen years ahead to fulfil the sustainable development goals, also known as SDGs, the goals established in Agenda 2030 were a mere utopia to me. There was not an ounce of realism for me to see there. In my teenager mind there was certainly no way, considering all the bad things happening to good and innocent people, that the goals would be fulfilled in just fifteen years. Naturally I, among the other teenagers in my class, loved the idea of ending famine and poverty, as wishing for world peace was almost ingrained into our minds since childhood.

Afterwards the suspicion and critical curiosity towards SD only sparked due to the public discussion around said theme. The criticism offered was anything but notable, which only reinforced the mild frustration and acted as an accelerator for the need to investigate more. Why is the discussion so one sided? How come the whole idea is taken as a given? Where are the opposing opinions? In which manner was the position of the sustainability discussion, as we now know it, legitimised? The whole issue of SD seems to be consistently displayed as a nonpolitical matter, even though it directly has an effect on domestic and foreign policies of the UN' member states, not to mention the involved resources used to fund the actions to further the goals. Later on during my studies I was introduced to the concept of SD on a deeper level, and was simultaneously made aware of the controversy around its oxymoron nature and overall discussion of the very existence of the concept. Does such a thing exist? Are advances on furthering a SDG, as a matter of fact, actually

sustainable if they go against another SDG? Can actions be named as sustainable with a clear conscience if they more or less directly harm another SDG or if they partake in keeping up harmful societal structures? The education system wires us to seek for logic in many places, such as mathematics, philosophy and even nature. Reflecting on this, it would seem that questioning the whole concept of SD should be an organic part of the entire conversation around the topic. Yet it is not - hence my enthusiasm to dive deeper into it.

The initial inquiry, that inspired the theme of this bachelor's thesis, into the relationship between SD and international politics considered first and foremost the potential of SD assuming the role of an extension of neocolonialism. Thus the perspective of this thesis could have been very dissimilar as to what it is formed into now. Consequently, the initial curiosity is too big of a question to summon in a mere bachelor's thesis, and as such, the perspective should be confined into a more manageable and reasonable form. By contrast, the research focus may have been to explore the relationship between SD and colonialism, or SD as a means of geopolitics. For the sake of simplicity the observation focus is shifted towards exploring the elements of SD, which could be interpreted as a manifestation of western hegemony. Following Kari Palonen's (1988, 19) aspect character of politics (*politiikan aspektiluonne*) principle, I feel inclined to ask how SD could be interpreted as political, as it is typically presented as nonpolitical. Additionally this thesis relies on Palonen's (1988, p. 19) assumption of nothing is out of reach of being interpreted as political, nothing is necessarily political and anything can be political.¹ Operating under this assumption, SD is not beyond being politicised.

Additionally, the aspect character of politics considers first and foremost the interpretations of a situation and one's comprehension of politics (Palonen, 1988, p.19). For instance, the conversation around SD, according to my comprehension, does not consider the political interests of states or other actors. International politics as a political space contains actors, who strive to fulfil their interests and gain, for

¹ "Millä tahansa ilmiöllä on/ voi olla poliittinen aspektinsa, millään ilmiöllä ei ole välttämättä poliittista aspektia, mikään ilmiö ei ole varmasti 'suojattu' poliittisuudelta" (Palonen, 1988, p.19)

example, resources or power from cooperating with other states. Naturally, this steers the actions towards those that are perceived as beneficial, which indicates actors having visible and ulterior motives, which further shapes the cooperation. From this assumption I conclude the need for states to seek benefits from complying with SD. The issue may be presented in a way, in which preserving the world is a mere way to sustaining humanity, but combined with Palonen's (1988,p.19) suggestion of political nature depending on interpretation I suggest that this may not be all as there is. I assume that especially the developed western countries aim to benefit in some other additional ways, which are not immediately visible, but require interpretation, which further suggests that SD is not objective even if presented as such. Additionally, the societal significance of this thesis' theme also generates from the same reasoning. If the SD is as infiltrated by western hegemony as I assume it to be, it as a result is most undeniably societally valuable research focus, and as such it should be examined further. Moreover, power between actors, such as states or other actors, is an orthodox research objective in political science, and hegemony is closely related to power relations between different actors. Additionally, the concept of hegemony is relatively comprehensible, though not at all uncomplicated. Due to western hegemony's versatility it is selected as the theoretical tool. Therefore, I offer this as an explanation for accepting the hypothesis of SD containing elements of western hegemony and for justifying my choice of topic for this bachelor's thesis.

In my bachelor's thesis, I firstly intend to scrutinise the historical and ideological background of hegemony in Gramscian thought. The reasoning for this is based on the status Gramsci possesses in the field of International Relations and Global Politics. Gramsci's prestige notwithstanding, Robert W. Cox's application of Gramscian hegemony will be the main theoretical tool utilised in this thesis due to its usability and clarity compared to Gramsci's original theory. To conclude, Cox applies Gramscian thought into the international sphere, whereas Gramsci operates on the national level. While executing this, Cox presents clear procedures of how hegemony can be detected in the activity of international institutions, thus

composing a more precise tool for analysis. The hegemony in this specific thesis is that of the western countries, which in itself is not a concept free of contradictions. I accept this as is without trying to come into a definite conclusion of the composition of the “western”, because the composition is not as essential as the norms and values that it is associated with.

Moreover, SD is hefty a theme, and as such it desperately calls for clear cut boundaries. For clarity reasons, the United Nations’ Agenda 2030 SDG declaration document is specific enough to be analysed. More importantly, the United Nations consists of 193 member states out of 195 recognized countries in the World. Notably, the whole membership of 193 member states signed Agenda 2030 (A/RES/70/1), which makes the declaration as global as it could be. For some this might be a complicating factor, but in this specific case I have deemed it the most straightforward. The aspects explained above contribute to the conclusion of examining the Agenda 2030 declaration document.

As such, the questions that are to be kept in mind as the base for precise research questions, relevant to this regard the nature of SD. Does it truly innocently only hold value as a means to live sustainably, so to speak, or is it actually an extension of western hegemony? Subsequently, is it a mere political tool to keep the developing countries in check in order to enable western countries’ consumerism? Such wonderings offer guidance in determining and structuring the definite forms of research questions. As a result, the task at hand in this particular thesis is to respond to the primary question “Are there elements of western hegemony in the SDGs?”. Secondly, the interest is shifted towards answering “How is western hegemony present in the SDGs?”.

2 METHOD

Due to the nature of political studies, there is not always a clear-cut method, such as discourse or rhetoric analysis, especially if the research theme and questions lean more towards a theoretical frame. For this very reason, it would be more complicated than necessary to attempt applying a specific method to above defined research questions regarding the characteristics of SDGs. Instead of a precise method, I firstly aim to analyse the nature of hegemony through conceptual examination, focusing first on the Gramscian thought of hegemony and later on Robert W. Cox's additions and interpretations of Gramsci's thoughts, as he applies and refines them to fit the international sphere. Secondly, I will analyse the Agenda 2030 declaration document through the point of view of so-called Coxian perception of hegemony. Whilst prosecuting aforementioned, I shall direct analysis and interpretations towards primarily on how certain understandings of hegemony are created in the document and secondarily on what is linguistically being produced. Consequently, a significant amount of attention will be placed on how language is used as a political tool.

Most importantly, even I am a product of western hegemony as I have been subjected to the values, customs, and ways of western comprehension for the entirety of my life. In a sense, even this thesis could be seen as an extension of the hegemonic stance of the English language as I very well could have chosen Finnish instead. In other words, it would be foolish of me to assume I would have the ability

to analyse questions of western hegemony perfectly objectively without any unconscious bias.

3 WESTERN HEGEMONY

3.1 Hegemony in Gramscian thought

The concept of hegemony may have been based on the Greek word signifying a leader or a ruler, yet the usage has been varying from political predominance, typically between states, to politics of a superpower that focuses on dominating other actors (Williams, 1985, p. 103). On the other hand, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary (n.d.), the concept of hegemony can be comprehended as “preponderant influence or authority over others : domination” and secondly “the social, cultural, ideological, or economic influence exerted by a dominant group”. Furthermore, Owen Worth (2015, p.1) introduces traditional understandings of hegemony in the field of international relations, which are comprehended as a design of ideology or a leading state, and as such, for instance neoliberalism and the USA may be established as hegemonies. In other words, there are almost as many definitions as there are people discussing the theme and concept, which is the exact reason for the requirement for choosing a single interpretation as without one the task at hand would be impossible.

Typically, the most credit for developing the concept of hegemony is appointed towards Italian Antonio Gramsci, who was the first to extend the deeper dive into hegemony and its complicated nature (see Williams, 1985; Worth, 2015). Gramsci

wrote his thoughts, which were later compiled into a compilation of books, as he was held prisoner by the Italian fascists. The General Introduction of Selections from Prison Notebooks (Nowell-Smith, & Hoare, 1978) dives deeper into Gramsci's life and the political situation in Italy and Europe at the time. Gramsci was heavily involved in the politics of Italy as he acted both as a member of parliament and the general secretary of the Communist Party at the time of his initial arrest. The inspiration for active participation in politics was nurtured by Gramsci's studies, which he later abandoned in order to focus on political commitments. In fact, significant influence came from professors, many of whom were one way or another involved with the socialist movement. Additionally, some of Italy's Marxist thinkers had a particularly major influence on Gramsci's thinking, which at a later time helped him shape his own interpretation of Marxism. Notably, not forgetting Gramsci's enthusiasm directed towards Machiavelli, the historical context included the political movement in Italy before and after World War I, Mussolini and the formation of fascism, and Lenin and the bolsheviks, which are to be kept in mind while reading Gramsci. (Nowell-Smith, & Hoare, 1978.) Realistically the base of Gramsci lies within socialist and communist, especially Marxist, fashion of reasoning, and as such it is not independent of ideologies, nor should there be attempts of separating them from each other. Hereby, my intention with the foregoing is to acknowledge the ideological and historical context, without delving too deep into them as that is not the concentration point of this specific thesis.

Hegemony excluded, some of the related noteworthy concepts in Gramscian thought are superstructures, war of position, war of movement, and counter hegemony. Next, I shall attempt to comprehend said concepts to my best ability. According to Gramsci (1978, pp.12, 263), there are two superstructural levels in a society; civil society, which he categorises as the private sector, and the state, which he recognises as the political society, which combined constitute the state. The dominant group's, such as the bourgeoisie, intellectuals exercise "the subaltern functions of social hegemony and political government" (Gramsci, 1978, p.12), which consist of spontaneous consent of the masses and coercive power enforced against

those that do not give their consent. The civil society resembles the hegemonic stance of a social group while the state resembles “the narrow sense of governmental-coercive apparatus” (Gramsci, 1978, pp.264-265). The importance and significance of hegemony comes from the ruling class’ interests, which, following the Marxist tradition, go hand in hand with the needs of production and development. This is executed through education, which promotes the usefulness of the rest of the population through ensuring a set cultural and moral standard. (Gramsci, 1978, p.258.) Afore-explained superstructures constitute a historical bloc when combined with structures. Gramsci separates war into three distinctive forms: war of movement, war of position, and underground warfare. Last one would take shape as secret preparation of military force, whereas war of movement would correspond as strikes and war of position as boycotts. (Gramsci, 1978, pp.12, 229, 258, 263, 264-265, 366.)

In view of this, my interpretations of Gramsci (1978) are as follows. There are historical blocs in time, one at a time, occupying the time slot in a sense, in the states where each bloc is located. They consist of structures and superstructures. Said historical bloc is formed through and maintained by hegemony and it may be replaced by another bloc, which, in turn, is maintained and produced with another form of hegemony, for instance, another class in a society. Hegemony is produced with the help of the ruling class’s intellectuals. The masses are prepared to accomplish their roles, as their significance in a society is to carry out their roles as actors supporting the interests of the hegemonic class through education. The education system ensures that the masses accept the fundamental pieces of a culture and the morales associated with it, which provides an uncomplicated and effortless route towards the needed spontaneous consent to hegemony from the masses. The first superstructural level, civil society, is constructed of the hegemonic stance of a class. If the consent to the hegemonic class’s hegemony is not provided by the masses, it will be taken through the second superstructural level of the historical bloc, the political sphere. (Gramsci, 1978, pp.12, 229, 258, 263, 264-265, 366.)

As previously briefly mentioned, Gramsci wrote the majority of his work while incarcerated, suffering from health issues, which warranted a transfer to a prison clinic with a tad better conditions (Nowell-Smith, & Hoare, 1978, p. lxxxix). The General Introduction of Selections from Prison Notebooks even goes as far as to disclose Gramsci's time imprisoned as "eleven-year death-agony" (Nowell-Smith, & Hoare, 1978, p.xcii), which does clarify why Gramsci's writings are at times arduous to interpret and read. Gramsci offers no precise or absolute definitions for concepts. More often than not, if one desires to understand a concept or an idea in the Gramscian sense, one must take the time to pursue bits and pieces scattered throughout his writings. By no means, at least for me personally, is Gramsci's comprehension achieved with ease, yet I previously offered my best attempt.

As for this specific thesis, a theoretisation regarding hegemony was required, yet the infamous Gramsci did not quite seem suitable to be utilised straightforwardly on an issue of international politics and development. Gramsci does not explicitly voice his opinion of international matters (Robert W. Cox, 1993, p.49) as his theoretisation depends on the national structures of a society (Germain & Kenny, 1998, p.20). Germain and Kenny (1998, p.20) note that Gramsci utilised concepts in such a specific context, that of a national level, which forms a requirement of clear justification process for how and why interpretation of Gramsci's concepts is to be done. Moreover, Gramsci, following the Marxist footsteps, delivers his thoughts through such concepts as bourgeoisie, class struggle, and dominant and subdominant classes. Noticeably these concepts, as Gramsci them used, coupled with the specific relationships between them, are not visible in the field of international or world politics. Discussions within the interstate relationships do not intuitively involve such concepts as class struggle or bourgeoisie as the common perception of international politics is heavily linked to states, organisations, and societies in the global political sphere.

3.2 Hegemony in Robert W. Cox's thinking

As previously explained, Gramsci alone would not suffice as I do not have the means to analyse my interpretations of his concepts in the global sphere when they originally were used in the national sphere. Therefore, for this particular thesis I have chosen Robert W. Cox and his interpretation of Gramsci's thoughts within the international framework as he has already legitimised his interpretations through argumentation in his own work. Importantly, Cox interprets Gramsci's hegemony as a refined form of Machiavelli's conception of power as a centaur, also known as a necessary combination of consent and coercion (Machiavelli, 1977, pp.49-50;; Gramsci, 1971, pp. 169-90, as cited in Cox, 1993, p.52). In a sense, the necessary amount of conformity in the form of consent is provided by hegemony, which allows power to be used without having to resort to coercive means of control.

Additionally, Cox argues in favour of world hegemony consisting of three distinctive levels, all of which must be present for the structure to be called hegemony. Aforementioned levels are, as the very basic understanding of hegemony likewise suggests, economic, political, and social. Here hegemony may be understood as the glue maintaining cohesion and identity through reproduction of culture in a historical bloc. In other words, without hegemony of a social class there would not be a historical bloc. Following this thought, a new bloc will take place when a class forms a new hegemony via utilising the intellectuals to take the place of the previous bloc, which had exhausted its full potential. The entirety of the historical bloc, hegemony, culture, and identity is composed by the intellectuals through shared imagination, technology, and organisations. For instance, they construct and share mental scenery of a shared and accepted similarity, also known as shared identity. (Cox, 1993, pp. 56-57, 62.) In Gramscian sense there are three levels of consciousness when advancing towards a hegemony "the economic-corporative, which is aware of the specific interests of a particular group; the solidarity or class consciousness, which extends to a whole social class but remains at a purely economical level; and the hegemonic, which brings the interests of the

leading class into harmony with those of subordinate classes and incorporates these other interests into an ideology expressed in universal terms" (Gramsci, 1971, pp. 180-95, as cited in Cox, 1993, p.57). Advancements towards hegemony include actions that further the involvement of the hegemonic group's interests into institutions and ideologies whilst keeping them universal enough to not raise suspicions among the subordinate groups, which ensures acceptance and thus hegemony. The way to exposing hegemony is uncovering its existence in universal norms, institutions, and mechanisms, which dictate the dominant production mode's supporting rules in the shape of rules for the state and civil society's behaviour. (Cox, 1993, pp.52, 57, 62)

Within the international or global sphere bigger actors have more autonomy to utilise their foreign politics in order to advance their internal politics, which, in other words, is associated with the strong powers' ability to have power over small ones, especially within the small powers' economic policies. (Gramsci, 1978, pp.182, 264 as cited in Cox, 1993, p.59). Furthermore, according to Cox (1993, p.62) the path to a deeper understanding of the mechanics of hegemony is paved towards international organisations, as they play a role in shaping hegemony and the crucial ideology around it. Such international organisations operate in five conspicuous fashions; "(1) they embody the rules which facilitate the expansion of hegemonic world orders; (2) they are themselves the product of the hegemonic world order; (3) they ideologically legitimate the norms of the world order; (4) they co-opt elites from peripheral countries; and (5) they absorb counter-hegemonic ideas" (Robert W. Cox, 1993, p.62). The visibility of aforementioned modes of operation will be demonstrated next. Firstly, international institutions incorporate rules of the international sphere, which further the extension of hegemony while simultaneously providing an opportunity for the smaller powers to have an effect in the form of adjustments in the rules. Secondly, such institutions must possess the support of the hegemony, either in the form of initiation or approval of rules and thus be a commodity of said hegemony. Afterwards consent of states not included in the hegemony will be briefly sought after by the hegemon. This process will be carried out according to the subaltern states' hierarchy. Moreover, international institutions act as a vessel for ideology,

which can be detected within legitimisation of institutions and common practices as well as in international policies, which the international institutions help construct. Absorbing elites into international institutions is executed through their eagerness of having an impact towards the right direction from inside. They seemingly have an opportunity to transform the system into an improved model, yet they are actually confined into passive revolution. Lastly, in a similar fashion any counter hegemonic ideas will be assimilated into hegemony by transforming it into a silhouette fitting to hegemony's standards. Thus modification of a hegemony from the outside is an illusion, which minimises the possibility of war of movement that could be used to attempt initiate change. (Cox, 1993, pp.62-64 .)

To conclude, hegemony in Coxian terms is visible on three levels: economic, political, and social through shared imagination, technology, and organisations. It may be understood as reproduction of hegemonic culture, which maintains a set standard of unity and coherence among people and institutions within the sphere of influence the hegemon has accumulated. Notably, in the international sphere the reproduction of essential elements is executed through institutions working within the sphere. Visibility of hegemony is not conspicuous, though it can be detected in the set principles regarding the mechanics of hegemony. Aforementioned mechanics include such principles as the institution in question having being born out of the hegemony, them legitimising the values and norms of the hegemony, embodying the rules of expanding most notably the economic cooperation, and incorporating counter-hegemonic ideas and individuals, who may be seen as willing or inclined to strive for change. As one seeks to uncover hegemony, they should inspect demeanors and language. For instance, questions such as what norms or values are present and how they are expressed linguistically, what ideologies may be detectable in the institution's activity, how has the institution changed, and what is the nature of the institution and countering ideas. (Cox, 1993, pp. 52, 56-57, 62-64.) Thus, Cox's theory provides concrete and straightforward focus points for inquiries, which makes it advantageous for analysis.

3.3 Western hegemony

For this thesis, I have chosen to utilise the concept of western hegemony even though it is highly debated among scholars. In fact, many political scientists choose to straightforwardly speak of the US hegemony instead of western hegemony due to the latter's ambiguity. For instance, while Worth introduces (2015, pp.21,23,25,27, 41) different hegemonies through examples, some of which include the hegemonies of the US, Greece, Rome, and the British. Notably, Worth (2015) separates them from each other, making a clear distinction between the US hegemony and others. In other words, he does not entertain the concept of western hegemony, but rather explains hegemonies clearly into different historical blocs.

On the other hand, some scholars, such as Marie-Josée Lavalée (2022, pp. xvi-xvii, xxxi- xxxii), employ the concept of western hegemonies, which is composed of not only of the US, but also of the former colonial and imperialist western powers. Even though EU and US can be viewed as comprising two separate wests (Kanin, 2019, pp.18-20), at times, the concept is handled in academics without specifications as to what it contains due to assumptions of sufficient enough perception of its contents (Lavalée, 2022, pp.xvi-xvii, xxxi- xxxii), which sometimes seems as to be a sort of default feature of social sciences, as it would not be practical to fully explain every single applied concept. Depending on the time period, western hegemony could be used to refer to a single hegemon, such as Great Britain or the US (Lavalée, 2022, p. xxxii), or to multiple countries with colonial or imperial backgrounds, such as France, Great Britain, Italy, Germany (Kanin, 2019, pp. 11-18). Notably, western hegemony might also consist of the US, Western European countries and some European countries that are not in the west of Europe. In short, depending on time and historical context, western hegemony could refer to one of three alternatives: The US, the EU, or a set of countries. (Lavalée, 2022, p. xvi-xvii, xxxi- xxxii).

For this thesis, the definition of western hegemony is not of most relevance. Conversely, if the topic would have vastly dissimilar shape, such as concentrating on the relations between few selected countries perhaps in a historical timeframe, it

might be more helpful to utilise a narrower sense of western hegemony. As the Agenda 2030 is ratified by 193 of the total 195 countries, it considers a larger historical context, which should be taken into account when contemplating the scope of the chosen concept. The entirety of the 193 countries bring their history and power relations between themselves and other countries to the table, meaning that their histories naturally still have an effect on today, decision making, and international relations and politics. Moreover, I am arguing in favour of similar enough values and norms in any of the suggested interpretations. The US was established by 13 British colonies, which unarguably does constitute a shared foundation between the US and Great Britain, even though they have since grown apart. Customarily, Greece is viewed as the foundation for Western civilisation and especially democracy, which in turn establishes a shared groundwork, norms, and values for the western countries. Thus, I recognise the applicability of any of the presented perceptions yet do not see a reason to necessarily embrace only a single option, as most of the values and norms associated with the interpretations are similar enough with each other.

Worth (2015, p.13, 50) raises democracy, individualism, pluralism, capitalism, and free trade as some of the core values of US hegemony. The EU (n.d.) lists human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law, and human rights as the values the union is based on. Additionally, European morality is heavily anthropocentric (Chatterjee, 2016, pp. 278). Thus, combining these the norms and values I hereby recognise as western are such as anthropocentricity, individualism, equality, democracy, rule of law, human rights, freedom, capitalism. The values and norms of western culture itself are highly debated among scholars, which is the reason for accepting the intricate nature of the definition.

4 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Global responsibility as a starting point for sustainable development

To achieve a better comprehension of where I am coming from with this bachelor's thesis, I will demonstrate a sample of the discussions considering global responsibility and climate change. Examination of possibilities of mitigation and adaptation to climate change has been diligent, as research uncovers the effects of specific actions while philosophers propose varying ways of distributing responsibility based on dissimilar moral and ethical perspectives.

David Miller's (2001, p. 454) remedial responsibility is a theoretisation in which responsibility to alleviate a wrong, such as poverty or famine, is distributed among actors according to four principles. Simply put, causal responsibility assumes only a causal relationship between the wrong that should be remedied and the actor that is causally responsible for said wrong, whereas moral responsibility aims the attention towards the faulty party's liability to moral blame: did they act intentionally or neglectfully (Miller, 2001, p. 455-465). These may be categorised as a backward-looking approach, which is a quite self-explanatory concept as it seeks for a solution from the past. Alternatively, capacity as a principle suggests the remedy should be provided by those of the best capacity of doing so, while community as a principle assigns the responsibility to those of communal ties, such as family and nation

(Miller, 2001, p. 460-462). These, in turn, may be viewed as forward-looking approaches, which follow the same self-explanatory principle as backward-looking approaches. Miller's (2011, p. 469-471) final suggestion of connection theory is a pluralistic approach that utilises above mentioned principles to determine the actor that possesses strongest linkage to the situation that needs remedying, assigning the responsibility to them.

In conclusion, there are many ways of applying and distributing responsibility among different involved parties. In my eyes, remedial responsibility is one of the key pieces in sustainable development. We have a globe that has encountered excessive usage of resources and rising temperature, in other words, a situation that needs remedying. Who has the responsibility to act? Should the responsibility be appointed to those countries that have polluted the most? Or should the burden be shared among all, even though not everyone has contributed to the climate crisis as much as other countries have? Is the climate crisis actually only an issue to those that are affected by it the most, should others even bother with it? Such questions are of most importance due to the circumstances at hand: how to convince countries and organisations to collaborate with one another while sustaining an understanding or even an illusion of fair distribution of the burden.

Furthermore, Peter Singer (2016, p. 41-54) proposes a model of equal per capita emissions as a means of fair distribution of so-called atmospheric sink. Hence the name atmospheric sink, the amount of bearable greenhouse gas emissions that the globe may withstand should be estimated. After the fact the amount of emissions per person should be calculated, thus determining the tolerable amount of emissions for a country based on its population. As a forward-looking approach, it is argued that it would ensure a suitable political compromise that might not be trumped as vastly by the developed countries as the backward-looking approaches might be. (Singer, 2016, p.54.)

Not only did Industrial Revolutions in Western Europe and North America before 1900's assist in establishing a head start compared to other countries but also it means that the developed countries, or the Global North, have had more time to

produce industrial pollution. Majority of the developing countries are located in the Global South and their industrialisation process is relatively young, which translates to significantly less time to pollute and cause harm to the environment. For this reason, many find backward-looking approaches to distributing responsibility of remedying the climate crisis as just. This expectation goes as Polluter Pays Principle, which might be arduous to incorporate into international politics considering that the actual polluters are long dead and as such it could be argued to be an unfair burden to the developed countries. On the other hand, the descendants of the polluters still enjoy the results of the vast industrialisation, such as technological advancements, accumulated wealth, and economic stability.

Nevertheless, political, and economic superpowers, which also happen to be some of the biggest polluters, have long been anything but eager to sufficiently limit their usage of resources, some of which have been accumulated via coercion during colonial times. Customarily, the heaviest cost of climate change weighs greatest on the underprivileged and poorest regions around the globe, the Global South. As such the majority of aforementioned propositions may sound intriguing yet might not be particularly realistic as the key to mitigating the effects of climate change.

4.2 Sustainable development

Firstly adapted into policy making discourse in 1987, sustainable development examined development of economic, social, and political spheres from the perspective of environment. The concept has been utilized in many differing ways by different actors on varying levels, which has led to the concept being used in ways, which, in some cases, are mutually exclusive. In other words, there have been multiple sustainable development discourses. The first time sustainable development was used, the definition applied to it simply called for present day development, which would not obstruct the future generations from accessing necessary resources, such as food and other needs for survival. Such a broad

definition posed issues with needs of future generations changing over time, the impact of culture in understanding said needs, and determining the sustainability of actions. (Redclift, 2005, pp. 212-213.) Sustainable development was recognized as an oxymoron in 1987 (Redclift, 2005, p.212), and is still extensively considered to be a concept of an oxymoron nature (Salleh, 2016, p.952), which coupled by the vague and disconnected definition generates a possibility to interpret it in accordance with one's interests. In fact, according to Redclift (2005, p.212) the concept has been used to justify and embellish decisions and actions on various levels of decision making. The significance of sustainable development as a concept for this thesis is in awareness of the broadest definition, recognising the conceptual incoherence and the underlying issues in differing discourses around the concept.

4.3 Agenda 2030, sustainable development goals

The major events leading up to the declaration of Agenda 2030 include such as the Earth Summit (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), Millennium Summit (New York, 2000), World Summit on Sustainable Development (South Africa, 2002), the UN's Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio de Janeiro, 2012), organising Open Working Group (2013). The precursor goals of the SDGs, the Millennium Development Goals, were adopted at the Millennium Summit by the UN members. The main aim was to decrease extreme poverty by 2015. (United Nations, n.d.-c) The MDGs constituted of 8 goals, which included goals to combat extreme hunger, poverty, child mortality, HIV, and other diseases while promoting gender equality, maternal health, global partnership, universal primary education, and environmental sustainability (United Nations, n.d.-b). In other words, the effort put into SD and Agenda 2030 has been going on since the 90's and there has been evolution of the UN' goals. During these twenty or so years, the groundwork was established, and it was utilised in constructing the contents of the Agenda 2030 declaration: 17 SDGs and 169 targets. Said goals are constructed around many of the same themes than MDGs.

Consequently, SDGs aim to nurture nature via battling climate change and preserving what we have left of nature, whilst simultaneously boosting economic growth, eradicating poverty, famine and the like, decreasing inequality, and advancing education and health care (United Nations, n.d.-c).

As previously explained, there are two approaches to dividing remedial responsibility: forward-looking and backward-looking. From these two approaches, I argue in favour of branding Agenda 2030 as a mostly forward-looking approach due to its nature. It does not take historical context into account but rather generally calls the members for action, even though it does emphasise the significance of supporting developing countries (A/RES/70/1, p. 8). Additionally, there is no mention of concrete power to penalise if a country does not follow the Agenda 2030 as it is presented as a shared responsibility (A/RES/70/1). Compared to how the so-called superpowers of the UN's Security Council abuse their veto powers according to their national interests, I would not be too surprised if the form that Agenda 2030 has been shaped into would be the only one said superpowers would even consider agreeing to. Some examples of blatant promotion of one's own interests are Russia's veto on maintaining peace in Ukraine (30.9.2022), the US using its veto multiple times on issues considering Middle East and especially Palestine (from 2001 to 2011 up to 10 times), and China and Russia on non-proliferation of North Korea (26.5.2022) (United Nations, n.d.-d). Such obvious promotion of a country's own interests over human lives and peace provides a rooting for feeling the need to uncover the hidden interests that may be promoted invisibly, especially if the institution, treaty, or any other form of cooperation appears too good to be true. For instance, SDGs require a considerable amount of resources as they call for development of more sustainable ways to produce energy, economic growth, and food (A/RES/70/1, p.14). Combating climate change undoubtedly is important, but for instance the US, which in this thesis is considered to be a part of the western hegemony, has not been basing all of its decisions on human rights or traditional western moral standards of right and wrong. The usage of veto power on issues in Middle East and Palestine is an example, which shows that doubting a politically

and economically prominent country's interests and actions is not baseless, and thus seeking to uncover the ulterior motives is justifiable.

SD has not been the sole target for criticism, as the SDGs have received their fair share. For instance, Salleh (2015, pp. 953, 954) argues that SDGs are unrealistic, but also raises the question of the relationship between SDGs, technology, and financialisation. Especially SDG target 7a, according to Salleh, is a target, which might either encourage financialization in order to further SDG 7, or encourage using SDG 7 as a reason to boost financialization. Additionally, Salleh suggests that the SDGs are undemocratic due to granting unnecessary amounts of power to the World Trade Organisation and appointing emphasis on market liberalization and free trade. (Salleh, 2015, pp.953, 954.) Both of Salleh's (2015) arguments are worrying at best and they further my uneasiness regarding the shape of SDGs and their significance and true effects on societies and international politics.

5 ANALYSIS

For this bachelor's thesis, I will utilise the declaration for Agenda 2030 (A/RES/70/1) as the subject for analysis. The declaration document is the logical option as the subject for analysis due its nature. Every country out of the 193 belonging to the UN has ratified Agenda2030 (A/RES/70/1), which did not exist before the said declaration. As such it is the base of SDGs and the current model for SD cooperation, which makes it the best target of analysis. The analysis will be a form of conceptual Coxian reading of the declaration as I aim to uncover the potentially existing elements of western hegemony. The hegemonic values of importance are capitalism, rule of law, free trade, freedom, democracy, equality, human rights, individualism, and anthropocentrism. Out of abovementioned, I will discuss capitalism, which coupled with free trade manifests itself as a manner of emphasizing economy, rule of law, anthropocentrism, equality, and democracy. I will have to employ some elements of Gramscian thinking as Cox's theoretisation is an application of Gramsci's theory.

The document itself consists of 35 pages, which is on the rather longer side for the research material of a bachelor's thesis. I will direct the attention towards the introduction of the document and the declaration itself on a deeper level, while elevating some of the essential SDGs, such as the 8th, 9th, and 16th goals due to their significance.

Briefly explained, Cox initiated a form of analysis, in which one should examine international institutions in a certain way. To uncover hegemony, one must aim to read and interpret actions or texts to see if there is evidence of the five mechanisms of hegemony in international institutions or other notable parts of Cox's application. Said mechanisms are the hegemony constituting the institution, the institution embodying the rules according to which the international cooperation may expand, absorption of counter-hegemonic ideas and elites of the nonhegemonic, and lastly legitimation of world's orders norms. (Cox, 1993, p.62.) My task here is to read the declaration document of Agenda2030 (A/RES/70/1), while elevating relevant points of writing, which I then interpret through Coxian application of Gramsci's theory and terminology.

5.1 Production of shared identity and hegemony

The declaration was adopted by the UN's General Assembly (A/RES/70/1, 1). One state has one vote, which translates into one UNGA member per state (United Nations, n.d.-a). According to Gramscian thought, one historical bloc contains one hegemony, which is produced and sustained by the hegemony's intellectuals. As the UNGA has one equal vote per state, it naturally has some of the western hegemony's intellectuals, who are a part of the hegemonic machinery. Substantially, in Gramscian comprehension, the intellectuals assemble and preserve hegemony through shared imagination, technology and organisations. An important part of aforementioned is the construction of shared identity, which is visible in the declaration of Agenda 2030 through painting a shared mental imagery and thus a shared identity that includes cosmopolitanism, technology, shared values such as human rights, unity, democracy, and building a humanity versus poverty mentality. The presented parts of the shared identity are not simple in nature as they more often than not overlap with one another. The focus shall next be aimed towards building the base via cosmopolitanism, unity, and similarity, anthropocentricity, and utilising technology as a path to access non-hegemonic state's people.

5.1.1 Unity, similarity, and cosmopolitanism

Firstly, I shall demonstrate how exactly the understanding of cosmopolitanism, similarity and unity is formed within the declaration as they are the. Firstly, peace is explicitly stated as one of the foundation pillars, without which SD cannot exist (A/RES/70/1, p.2). For instance, such phrases as “collaborative partnership” (A/RES/70/1, p.1), “collective journey” (A/RES/70/1, pp.1,3), “no one will be left behind” (A/RES/70/1, pp.1,3) , and “universal goals” (A/RES/70/1, pp.3,31) are often emphasised as a vital part of SD and SDGs. Accentuating on collaboration and peace is utilised as a way to create an understanding of harmonious people, who strive to live the best lives they possibly could while giving others the space and helping them achieve the means to do the same. Additionally, unity and similarity are built in 10th SDG “Reduce inequality within and among countries” (A/RES/70/1, p.2) as it expressly states the need to decrease inequality. In other words, the SDG implies the need for equality and thus insinuates equal value of countries and peoples, which maintains a sense of similarity. Furthermore, a notable way of establishing unity is positioning all of humanity against “the tyranny of poverty” (A/RES/70/1, p.1), creating a setting of people versus a societal issue such as poverty. This is visible in stating that numerous people suffer the effects of poverty (A/RES/70/1, p.5), declaring that focus will be directed towards the poorest and most vulnerable by every state, person, and stakeholder (A/RES/70/1, p.2), and announcing poverty as the most meaningful universal issue (A/RES/70/1, p.1). Cosmopolitanism is an understanding of all people being members of a universal community, which is likewise evident in forming the comprehension of unity, equality, similarity and people versus poverty mentality.

In Cox’s application hegemony is visible in the manner in which shared imagination is constructed and how the produced imagery then is utilised in

building universal identity. Therefore, it is justifiable to seek for ways in which the former are executed. As Agenda2030 is ratified by all of the UN's member states, the common imagination requires something that essentially all of humanity can accept as something they can relate to. Realistically, discovering a common ground for all the peoples of varying religious, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds is next to impossible. This suggests that the only prospect is to start assembling a base for shared imagination, thus identity is to emphasise humanity, the only thing in common between every human of differing situations. Accordingly, in Agenda2030 this is concluded through cosmopolitanism, unity and similarity. Therefore, according to my interpretation, the foundation for the hegemonic shared identity is cast in the manner depicted above.

5.1.2 Anthropocentricity

Furthermore, the document asserts a set of shared values, which proceed to pursue the construction of shared identity, which, according to Cox's interpretation of Gramsci, is crucial from the perspective of the hegemony's intellectuals constructing hegemony through shared identity. Therefore, from my understanding, if there is western hegemony to be detected in the Agenda2030, there should be an indication of infiltration of western values. For clarity I will direct my focus on anthropocentricity, which can be seen as a European, or as interpreted here, a western value, to see in which fashion it is present in the declaration.

Reading the document, it is very evident that the values embedded in the hegemonic shared identity are anthropocentricity, justice, inclusivity, peace, human rights, equality especially between genders, democracy, and sustainability. In this section the center of attention will be anthropocentricity. The statement describing SDGs as "a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Goals and targets." (A/RES/70/1, p.3), is a clear example of the fashion in which anthropocentricity is plainly stated as a feature of the SDGs. The document goes on to characterise droughts, desertification, loss of biodiversity and

other such depletions of natural resources and degradation of environment on “the list of challenges which humanity faces” (A/RES/70/1, p.5), which implies that such matters pose an issue worth worrying over only to humans. Overall, the whole issue of climate change is presented as an obstacle emphasising the human perspective throughout the whole document. For instance, wildlife, which includes flora and fauna, is only mentioned three times in the whole document. Said instances include description of a common future, in which “humanity lives in harmony with nature and in which wildlife and other living species are protected “(A/RES/70/1, p.4). Latter mentions of wildlife reduce wildlife to resources to be sustainably managed and sources of illegal products (A/RES/70/1, p.9, 25). Animals, in turn, are mentioned once on Goal 2 “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture “ (A/RES/70/1, p.15), in which they are depicted as a part of the food security chain, where the significance of animals is derived from maintaining their genetic diversity (A/RES/70/1, p.15). The direct quotation “The survival of many societies, and of the biological support systems of the planet, is at risk. “ (A/RES/70/1, p.5) from the document is a telling summary of the relationship between SD, humans and nature. People are put as the top priority and nature is stationed as the supporting actor, which does not exist for itself but for the sole reason of providing for humanity and for enabling their thriving. In short, humanity is perceived as intrinsic value whereas nature is perceived as extrinsic value. In other words, humanity is valuable on its own, while nature’s value comes from the ability to support humanity. This argument is further supported by Goals 14 “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development “ (A/RES/70/1, p.23) and 15 “Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss” (A/RES/70/1, p.24) as they exclusively depict nature as a resource through such remarks as “in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans” (A/RES/70/1, p.23), “in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield” (A/RES/70/1, p.24), and “in order to enhance

their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development” (A/RES/70/1, p.25).

The aforepresented observations illustrate a mindset, which should be internalized as a part of following the standards set in SDGs that are applicable to everyone within the shared imagination and identity. Moreover, such interpretations could be examined through more than one angle of the Coxian understanding, but due to my choices of confining the interpretations to certain components, I instead interpret them as a western value incorporated into the shared identity. In other words, combining my interpretations of how anthropocentricity is expressed in the Agenda2030 declaration, the set task of scrutinizing the document for indications of western values, and the Coxian understanding of Gramsci’s hegemony, I therefore suggest that the declaration document indeed has western values and thus western hegemony present. To back this up there should be a more thorough examination, but for now above executed will have to do.

5.1.3 Technology, sustainability, and economy

Secondly, the focus will be shifted towards the role cast for technology, sustainability, and economy in the constitution of shared identity. Starting from Industrialisation, some features typically linked to western countries may include such notions as development and modernity, which are often fathomed through concentration of wealth and thus favourable circumstances for developing technologies and expansion of newer technologies to ordinary people in different socioeconomic situations. The technology associated with western countries nowadays may vary from stable and fast internet connection, solar power, fancy computers to accessibility of water and sanitation, and access to energy. A key factor in the Gramscian hegemony through Cox’s comprehension is intellectuals binding the hegemonic and nonhegemonic not only by creation of mental imagery but also by expanding the reach of technology. Bringing all the people within the range of the hegemony’s technology and enabling distribution can be seen as a segment of shared

identity in a Gramscian sense. The same may be applied to the economy and notably in trade or other forms of collaboration between states and companies. The focus in this thesis will be positioned on technology.

The way, in which technology's reach is expanded in the document, is most visible in Goals 6 "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all" (A/RES/70/1, p.18), 7 "Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all" (A/RES/70/1, p.19), and 9 "Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation" (A/RES/70/1, p.20) alongside with target 14.a "Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology (...)" (A/RES/70/1, p.24). The former, SDG 6, calls for actions, which would ensure access to safe drinking water, proper sanitation, and hygiene. The SDG emphasises affordability, efficiency in water usage and management, and sharing technologies, programmes, and activities, which would ensure the former. (A/RES/70/1, p.18.) SDG 7 in turn simply promotes ideas of investing in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and energy accessibility through affordability, reliability, and modernity (A/RES/70/1, p.19). Lastly, SDG 9 advocates for advancements in infrastructure and industries, controlled industrialisation, and promoting inclusivity (A/RES/70/1, p.20). Many of the selected examples either straightforwardly name sustainability as an essential and inseparable element of technology or rely on the reader interpreting it as such due to the emphasis on sustainability on Agenda2030. Consequently, target 14.1 summarises the primary message, which follows the basic idea of ensuring that all the developing and developed countries have access to modern technologies in the SDGs focus area. Said target of expanding the reach of sustainable technology is a clear example of Gramscian sense and Cox's interpretation of tying people and communities together by the hegemony's intellectuals. The declaration, within the aforerepresented SDGs, mentions such objectives as expansion of international cooperation, supporting the developing states, connecting local communities through endorsed participation, facilitating domestic innovations, and reinforcing the spread of information through the internet

(A/RES/70/1, p.18-20). The international cooperation is inseparable from the economic sphere, which is a partial explanation as to why I will not scrutinize economy the same way as I did technology.

Consequently, the concrete manners presented above are included in the fashion, in which the shared mental imagery is constructed through technology, economy, sustainability, and combination of these. Such actions create paths for cooperation and thus create access to the nonhegemonic countries' elites and ordinary people for the hegemony's intellectuals. In addition to arguing technology, economy, and sustainability combined acting as a route for the hegemon's intellectuals to access the people of the nonhegemonic states, through Cox's theory this may be seen as an embodiment of one of the manners of operation of international institutions. Specifically sustainable technology typically warrants a certain level of understanding, which customarily is achieved through education, especially that of higher levels. Further education is generally high-priced, which limits the amount of people able to educate themselves to those who have access to enough financial stability, a stable support system, and other necessary resources such as health care. The highly educated may often be regarded as the elite due to the opened doors and resources that are customarily associated with advanced degrees. The cooperation programmes and other procedures that aim to further international business and the spread of technology seem to act as a way to co-opt the elite from peripheral countries, which is one of Cox's applications of Gramsci's theory onto the international sphere. Furthermore, from my interpretation, to be chosen as a business partner or the primary contact person for a program suggests an altered power relationship in the selection process. To be chosen one surely must fulfil certain criteria set by the hegemon's intellectuals offering the knowledge, resources, and aid. I suggest it can be seen as a way to favour those elites, who comply with the hegemon's standards, which enforces the internalisation of those standards, which often are translated into values and norms. To conclude, this may be a portion of the mechanics of gently applying shared identity to the

nonhegemonic elites. Thus, to summarise, this enables spreading and sustaining the identity in peripheral countries as well.

5.2 Expansion of hegemonic interests and values

In Gramscian sense, in order to pass the hegemon's interests through with those nonhegemonic, said interests should be combined into an ideology universal enough to keep notable objections from being risen. Cox interprets this as international institutions absorbing counterhegemonic ideas, which could be examined further, but in this instance, I have chosen to exclude from this thesis. As I have previously explained, some of the norms and values of western hegemony recognized in this thesis are capitalism, or a certain manner of emphasising economy, free trade, rule of law, anthropocentrism, equality, and democracy. As they are the norms, it is in the hegemony's best interest to incorporate these elements in the SDGs, as they simultaneously set a standard for future cooperation between countries and companies. Accordingly, this alone could be interpreted as Cox's application of Gramscian thought: the manner in which hegemony's international institutions operate as they aim to set the standards and rules for future collaboration. This is most notably distinguishable in SDG 17 "Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development" (A/RES/70/1, p.26). SDG 17, for instance, calls for assisting the developing countries with debt through coordinated policies, suggests developed countries fulfilling their commitments on development assistance directed towards the developing countries, and promotes the need to enhance North-South and South-South technological collaboration (A/RES/70/1, p.26). Notably, SDG 17.10 "Promote a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization, including through the conclusion of negotiations under its Doha Development Agenda" (A/RES/70/1, p.27), aims to adjust the international trading system. As a result, according to my interpretation, SDG 17.10

is the embodiment of Cox's outline for hegemony's mechanisms in international institutions as it embodies the rules according to which trading system should be expanded.

Furthermore, the declaration document openly promotes democracy, rule of law, and economic growth, which is essential for the dominant production mode. The dominant production mode's support is visible in the incorporation of the SDGs 8 "Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all" (A/RES/70/1, p.19) and 9 "Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation" (A/RES/70/1, p.20) and SDG 17, which was presented above. The inclusion of democracy, the hegemonic form of government, is present not only in the link of essentiality created between democracy and sustainability (A/RES/70/1, p.4), but also in SDG 16. As illustrated in SDG 16, where the emphasis is on the importance of promoting rule of law, transparency, participatory and representative decision making (A/RES/70/1, p.25), all of which are notably essential for democracy and thus western hegemony.

In Coxian application international institutions of hegemony intend to ideologically legitimate hegemony's norms, which functions as a way to legitimate certain policies, practices and institutions to the national level. In other words, the international institutions seek to apply a frame of expectations, which constitutes western hegemony's values and norms as the legitimized way of functioning, which are subtly expressed in the document. Thus, I suggest, that the aforepresented evidence illustrates a pattern of Cox's ideological legitimation of western hegemony's norms.

6 CONCLUSION

This thesis' Coxian reading of Agenda 2030 declaration document is now concluded, which has initiated space for interpretations of the document. According to my interpretation, the document does not only present itself as an extension of western hegemony, but also seems to demonstrate a model of linguistic production, which blocks any potential criticism. As a result, it seems as if the document is used to produce and sustain a utopia, which constitutes a space without possibility of criticising said utopia. The setting seems to position such things as human rights, ending poverty and famine, and sustainable world at the very substance of SDGs, positioning them as if they performed as a shield against criticising SDGs, because criticising the SDGs would translate into criticising human dignity. This seems to assemble a complex societal structure, which is repeatedly reproduced as objective and universal forbidding scrutiny that might expose the western hegemony within. As a result, the structure is continuously displayed as non-political and out of reach of politics. Fading the hegemonic features constructs an imagery of circumstances with no alternative political possibilities. As if the way international cooperation is composed today is the only possibility, which in this specific scenario might be interpreted as no need to address consumerism as it just happens to be how affairs are organised and it should not be questioned. In Cox's terms this may be interpreted as the international institution of SDGs incorporating the counter-hegemonic idea of sustainability, which enables the continuance of the historical bloc. Accordingly, the scenery of no alternatives poses an understanding, which

strongly suggests Agenda2030 as the only path to ensure human dignity. To actually combat climate change and bring human dignity closer to all people the examination of possibilities should not be confined, which is where the importance of politicising SDGs stems from.

This thesis has scrutinised the elements of western hegemony in the UN's declaration document for Agenda2030 and SDGs. The answers to research questions have been shaped into the following. Yes, SDGs seem to be an extension of the western hegemony through Coxian reading of SDGs. Elements of western hegemony are present in SDGs and they are apparent in the manner in which unity, similarity, cosmopolitanism, and anthropocentricity are utilised in production of shared imagination and thus shared identity and how technology is employed as a way to further the production of western hegemony. Moreover, elements of western hegemony are present in the fashion in which hegemonic norms are expressed as the sustainable and thus desirable way of governance on the national level. The aim was to analyse SD through SDGs without constructing a stance on the SDGs contents further. By no means is this thesis criticising the intent of extending human dignity to all or saving the world from definitive damage caused by the climate crisis. If anything, the criticism is directed towards expressing western values and governance as the only sustainable and thus desirable possibility. Indigenous knowledge and different culture may have been mentioned in the document, but they are heavily overridden by the expression of western values as the preferred option.

Some prospects to consider when outlining future research might consider the alternative routes I briefly mentioned: the relationship between sustainable development and neocolonialism or geopolitics. Alternatively, I suggest that the subject might be able to be approached from the perspective of political utopia, informal power, and soft power. The perspective is not as important as the act of politicisation. As presented in this thesis, SDGs might be constructed in such a fashion that they are viewed as non-political, objective, and as the only possible

solution, which ironically is undemocratic even though democracy is emphasised in the declaration of SDGs.

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