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Abstract

The ongoing global crisis not only poses challenges for critical empirical analyses, it also forces us to reconsider central analytical concepts. This paper takes the multiple crisis as a starting point to reconsider notions of (state) power, hegemony and subjectivation in contemporary crisis management. We discuss recent analyses by feminist and neo-Gramscian scholars, highlight their valuable contributions to a richer understanding of current crisis politics, and argue for their mutual complementarity. Neo-Gramscian perspectives, which productively highlight the current conjuncture’s increasing (lack of) hegemonic qualities, need to be confronted with feminist insights regarding the current transformations of gender orders. In combining these approaches, we develop the notion of ‘crisis management by subjectivation’. To illustrate this we refer to the example of Greece: increasingly coercive and authoritarian modes of governance parallel the re-privatization of reproductive work and increasing reliance on gendered division of labor, traditional concepts of privacy and gendered knowledge of care and the practices associated with it for the reproduction of social cohesion. With the notion of ‘crisis management by subjectivation’ we hence refer to the fact that austerity policies draw on a gendered (re-)allocation and subjective incorporation of social responsibilities as hidden resources of stability and hegemony. The crisis, through its management, is displaced into the gendered subjects themselves.

Keywords
Feminist IPE, Neogramscian IPE, Hegemony, Subjectivation, Crisis, Austerity, Greece
Crisis Management by Subjectivation. Towards a Feminist Neo-Gramscian Framework for the Analysis of Europe’s Multiple Crisis

0. Introduction

This article develops a theoretical framework for a feminist neo-Gramscian analysis of strategies of European crisis management since 2008. Our starting point is the theoretical notion of a multiple crisis, i.e. a crisis of a particular mode of capitalist development encompassing ‘multiple spheres of society, politics, environment, and world order, all simultaneous and over-lapping’ (Gills 2010, p. 3). The concept of a multiple crisis enables us to go beyond reductionist economism and look at the current economic crisis in its relatedness to a crisis in gender relations, gendered social subjectivities, and social reproduction.

How does the crisis affect people’s senses of themselves? What role do gendered forms of subjectivation play in political crisis management, and how can we grasp the relation of these? And what kind of theoretical framework do we need to understand these processes? We aim to develop a conceptual apparatus that allows to address these questions and highlight crucial dimensions of the crisis in its political management which remain hidden even within heterodox approaches in IPE. To do this, we focus on two different but intersecting strands within critical IPE, namely Feminist and neo-Gramscian IPE.

Our contribution is divided into three sections. First, we provide a brief overview of recent Feminist and neo-Gramscian analyses of the current crisis and its management in Europe. In the second part, we develop a theoretical framework that combines and integrates insights from Feminist and neo-Gramscian IPE. Through a thorough yet sympathetic feminist critique of core concepts of the neo-Gramscian tradition, and building on existing literature in this field, we propose three key dimensions of a Feminist neo-Gramscian IPE framework. These include an integral understanding of the state, production and reproduction; the re-definition and gendering of the Gramscian concept of the historic bloc; and, crucially the inclusion of gendered modes of subjectivation as a central dimension in the analysis of the crisis and its management.

In the third section of our contribution, we claim that a feminist neo-Gramscian framework could contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of current processes of crisis management that are based on a deepening of neoliberal strategies. Taking the politics of hard austerity imposed on Greece by the (institutions formerly known as) ‘Troika’ as an example,
we outline a research agenda that focuses on processes we call ‘crisis management by subjectivation’. This refers to the hidden resources of stability and hegemony in the context of a multiple crisis which involve the gendered (re-)allocation and subjective incorporation of social responsibilities in everyday life. Tracing possible avenues for future empirical research, we argue that analysing the ways in which these processes of subjectivation are appropriated, resisted, or transformed, is necessary for critical IPE in order to arrive at a more thorough understanding of the current crisis and the assessment of neoliberal austerity regimes.

1. Feminist and neo-Gramscian perspectives on the crisis

1.1 Feminist Analyses: Gendering of crisis and crisis management

A plethora of publications exists highlighting gender relations’ central role in the effects of the crisis since 2008, as well as in the ongoing crisis management. Feminist analyses largely focus on four dimensions of the financial crisis. First, they investigate the gendered dynamics that contributed to the outbreak of the financial and economic crisis. These publications focus on the commodification of feminized services, the precarious integration of women in paid labour and the associated declining wage share and bottom-up redistribution of wealth in general (cf. Seguino 2010). Focusing on subprime credits, Brigitte Young (2013) stresses that these cannot be analysed without putting them in the context of falling real wages and, hence, debt-financed everyday-life and consumption. In the US, especially women and Black people had to rely on these credits as a functional equivalent for lacking welfare programmes, reduced social benefits and stagnating income. In contrast to white and male lenders however, these groups at the same time had been disproportionately allocated subprime credits with high interest rates and unfavourable terms. Second, feminist approaches analyse direct effects of the crisis on the daily life and labor of women and men respectively. In the crisis’ first phase, the export sector was heavily affected by the ‘credit crunch’, which led to soaring unemployment rates in the global north, especially in ‘male sectors’ such as the automobile industry and construction. Women were mainly affected by the ‘second-round effect’, i.e. decreasing demand in the service sector and cuts in the public sector. Furthermore, feminist analyses look at how the crisis affects family arrangements and gendered divisions of labour in the family (cf. Elson 2010). With men losing their job, it is often women who – where possible – take over the role of the breadwinner even though they are often employed in part-time jobs. Women are also affected
by being forced to compensate for the lost or reduced family wage, e.g. by taking over more duties in the household (cf. Pearson & Sweetman 2010, p. 107; Young & Schuberth 2010, p. VI).

Third, the political crisis management is analysed in its gendered dimensions. Although this includes a multitude of different programmes and instruments (Walby 2009), almost all of them are characterised by conservative gender ideologies and show a male breadwinner bias. German stabilization policies, for instance, were mainly directed at saving ‘male jobs’ while neglecting the ‘female’ service or retail sector, reinforcing a gendered division of labour: men who again work as breadwinner and women who act – if at all – as an additional earner and housewife (cf. Sauer 2010). Similar patterns have been identified regarding the European Union’s Economic Governance (Klatzer & Schlager 2011).

On a more fundamental level, feminist scholars have shown that even the definition of ‘crisis’, on which political crisis management is based, is gendered and racialized. Referring to the fact that foreclosure rates for African Americans and Latinos have been higher in the 1990s than for the white middle class after 2008, Dara Strolovic (2013) demonstrates that hegemonic discourses depict some economic troubles as ‘crisis’, while characterizing others – mainly those of minority groups – as ‘normal’ or due to individual misbehaviour. Such a differentiation between ‘exceptional crises’ and ‘routinized crises’ (Emejulu & Bassel 2013) shows that ‘the very notion of economic crisis relies on assumptions and practices that reflect, reproduce, and constitute prevailing attitudes and normative expectations about racialized and gendered labour and economic inequalities’ (Strolovic 2013, p. 168).

Fourth, feminist analyses stress the relation between crisis and masculinity. Whereas some publications highlight the financial sector as the dominant institution of hegemonic masculinity (Annesley/Scheele 2011), others focus on the heated media debate on an alleged ‘crisis of masculinity’ and the subsequent promotion of a ‘transnational business feminism’ (Roberts 2012) by governments, NGOs and multinational corporations as a solution. The image of a risk-driven ‘investment-masculinity’ as cause of the crisis, as well as the subsequent promotion of the seemingly more prudent behaviour of women not only depoliticises and naturalises the capitalist crisis, but also leaves the structural masculinism, i.e. the institutionalization of male identities and lifestyles, and power relations of the international political economy untouched (Pruegl 2012, Elias 2013). Other scholars identify a re-masculinization of international financial governance. The current crisis management in Europe further empowers institutions like the IMF, the European Central Bank or the DG ECFIN of the European Commission. These are not only characterised by a lack of
democratic legitimation and underrepresentation of women, but also by developing and applying ‘male forms of knowledge’: current crisis management is dominated by abstract, neoliberal knowledge and a reliance on masculinized ideologies of the self-accountability of the individual, while neglecting necessary social practices of reproduction (Walby 2009, Klatzer & Schlager 2011).

Recapitulating current Feminist IPE analyses of the crisis, we first want to stress that they underline the necessity to look at (privatized) social reproduction, i.e. the reproduction of the species, the labor force and the provisioning of caring needs, its role and transformation during the developments since 2008. Therefore they emphasize the necessity to transcend conventional analytical divisions between ‘the private’, ‘the public’ and ‘the economy’, and to conceive reproductive work as a constitutive element of society’s material basis. Second, they indicate changes in gender orders by highlighting different patterns of unemployment, shifts in the gendered division of labour in the ‘private sphere’, and the systematic entanglement of gendered knowledge and political crisis management.

1.2 Neo-Gramscian analyses: Hegemony, historic bloc, organic crisis, or: From new to authoritarian constitutionalism?

Neo-Gramscian theories share with Feminist approaches their location within the field of critical, or heterodox, International Political Economy. They develop Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci’s theory of hegemony into a theoretical framework fit to analyze the international political economy of globalizing capitalism. Hegemony for Gramsci meant a modality of political power operating in the modern, capitalist nation state. This state, for him, encompassed “the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules” (Gramsci 1971, p. 244). In his pioneering work, Robert W. Cox (1981, 1983, 1987) developed this into the idea of international hegemony. The interplay of ideas, material capacities and institutions, he argued, produce hegemony not only on the level of the nation state, but as a specific world order, constituted by a particular configuration of social relations of production and forms of state. Building on Cox’s work, neo-Gramscian IPE has since focused on the ways in which neoliberal transformations have been implemented on a global level and, especially, how transnational social forces managed to garner consent for
neoliberalism on local, national, regional and global scales (Bieler & Morton 2004; Gill 2008).

Recently, neo-Gramscian scholars focused on the nature of the current crisis, and the (in-)stability of the neoliberal ‘global state-capital-nexus’ (van Apeldoorn, de Graaff & Overbeek 2012a, p. 468) since 2008. Here, Gramsci’s concept of the organic crisis constitutes an important point of reference. Gramsci distinguished periodically emerging, conjunctural crises from deep, structural or organic crises. An organic crisis marks the exhaustion of a political-economic-cultural mode of development, or historic bloc, and includes a crisis of political representation, moral and intellectual leadership, and, ultimately, a crisis of the state. Significantly, Gramsci understands ‘crisis’ not as a singular event, but rather as an historical period itself, a sequence of ruptures sometimes ‘lasting for decades’ (Gramsci 1971, p. 178) during which ‘the old is dying and the new cannot be born’ (Gramsci 1971, p. 276). The crisis turns into an ‘Interregnum’ (ibid.), a contested terrain on which social forces organize their struggles for different strategies of crisis management. The question thus becomes: Is the current global crisis an organic one? Does it signal ‘the end of [the neoliberal project’s, K.H. & B.O.] life-cycle’ (van Apeldoorn et al. 2012b, p. 479)?

To answer this question, neo-Gramscian IPE investigates the changing forms of political stabilization, the balance of consensus and coercion, and emerging forces of resistance and counter-hegemony. However, any answer to this question is predicated on an understanding of the precise nature of neoliberalism, and how it had become (or not become) hegemonic, in the first place. Stephen Gill argued early on that the processes of ‘deepening neoliberalization’ (Brenner, Peck & Theodore 2010) in the late 1980s and 1990s resulted in a constellation he called ‘new constitutionalism’ (Gill 1992, p. 165). This refers to the efforts of a variety of social and political forces to make neoliberal capitalism ‘the sole model for future development’ (Gill 2008, p. 139) by codifying, institutionalizing and, ultimately, constitutionalizing neoliberal policies (cf. Dierckx 2013). As he summarized it, through the practices of ‘new constitutionalism, multiple spheres of society are increasingly removed or insulated from democratic decision making. At least compared to the ‘Fordist’ historic bloc of the post-war era, it lacked a broad popular consensus, it did not grant significant material concessions to significant sections of the subalterns, and it strongly relied on coercive discipline (‘disciplinary neoliberalism’) and ‘panopticist’ surveillance (Gill 1995 p. 411).
This is highly significant, as a number of researchers in critical IPE suggest that in the current phase of prolonged crisis, or ‘interregnum’, the neoliberal ‘new constitutionalism’ is in fact radicalized, deepened and intensified by dominant social forces. This seems to be particularly true regarding the EU’s crisis management, which prioritizes strict fiscal discipline and austerity. Drawing on Gill’s work, Hans-Jürgen Bieling (2015) coined the term ‘crisis constitutionalism’ to refer to forms of crisis management that seek to enforce harsh austerity measures through mechanisms such as the EFSF/ESM, Six-Pack and Euro-Plus-Package, and through the European Commission’s and the ECB’s role in the ‘Troika’ policies. By dramatically limiting the scope for democratic decisions in countries such as Greece, Spain or Portugal, by empowering technocratic actors both on domestic and European levels, and by minimizing economic concessions to the subaltern classes, European crisis constitutionalism thus further reduces elements of consensus, undermining the minimal hegemonic qualities neoliberalism had possessed. Bruff, drawing on the works of Stuart Hall and Nicos Poulantzas, describes the present ‘shift toward constitutional and legal mechanisms and the move away from seeking consent for hegemonic projects’, as a rising ‘authoritarian neoliberalism’ (Bruff 2014, p. 116). Similarly, critical legal scholar Lukas Oberndorfer, analysing the primary legal bases of European economic policy, concludes that we are witnessing the “radicalization” of the new to an authoritarian constitutionalism’ (Oberndorfer 2014, p. 41; cf. 2015). These processes are not reducible to, but include the emergence of forms of political leadership that Gramsci termed “Caesarism”, in which repression, bureaucratism and corruption undermine the procedures of parliamentary democracy (Gramsci 1971, p. 219ff.). Nicola Short links this to the ‘neoliberal reconstruction of electoral politics’ which has created a ‘commodified logic of political leadership across political parties, redefining leadership in […] highly undemocratic, charismatic terms’ (Short 2012, p. 54). Keucheyer and Durand even interpret European crisis management as a whole as “bureaucratic Caesarism”. By this they mean the insulation of economic policies from democratic processes and popular pressure, yet without the emergence of a ‘charismatic personality’. This, they claim, amounts to a ‘Caesarism of an organisation or a bureaucracy, a case that was explicitly taken into account by Gramsci’ (Keucheyer & Durand 2015, p. 45).²

¹ Bruff distances his own analysis from Gill’s ‘new constitutionalism’ because, he claims, Gill sees the law as merely an instrument of (transnational) capital (Bruff 2014, p. 116). While this may be true, both authors share an understanding of the political, ideological and economic dimensions of the current crisis in which ‘in the absence of a hegemonic aura, neoliberal practices are less able to garner the consent or even the reluctant acquiescence necessary for more “normal” modes of governance’ (Bruff 2014, p. 115).

² We remain skeptical about the wider applicability of Gramsci’s concept of Caesarism to the current phase of crisis constitutionalism. Gramsci developed the term drawing on Marx’s analysis of ‘Bonapartism’. It is based on the assumption of an equilibrium or stalemate of social forces – where ‘they balance each other in such a
These analyses interpret the authoritarian dynamics in the currently dominant form of crisis management as a continuation and radicalization of the dynamics of new constitutionalism characteristic for the neoliberal historic bloc before 2008. They claim that, while the hegemony of the neoliberal project in Europe had been weak in the decades before 2008, we are now witnessing the disintegration even of the minimal hegemony of the ‘new constitutionalism’. In this sense, for them, the crisis represents both a change in the balance of force and consent and a dynamic of continuity, as coercive and authoritarian elements that had been present in the neoliberal project before are now coming to the fore.

2. Towards a feminist neo-Gramscian framework

In this section we aim to develop the contours of an integrated theoretical and conceptual framework, taking seriously the feminist critique of both orthodox and heterodox approaches in IPE. To do this, we are drawing on works indicating conceptual affinities of neo-Gramscian and Feminist Political Economy (cf. Whitworth 1994), and publications analyzing the feminization of the labour force in the context of global restructuring (Healy 2006). Moreover, we build on existing publications that make use of neo-Gramscian concepts in the field of Feminist Political Economy (cf. True 2003; Fudge & Vosko 2003), or conduct gendered analyses of globalization and social reproduction within a neo-gramscian framework (cf. Bakker & Gill 2003). While these works provide a necessary starting point for our efforts, they do not offer a satisfying theoretical integration of feminist and neo-Gramscian perspectives. This is confirmed by Steans’ and Tepe’s assessment that ‘the core theoretical conceptions and understandings [of neo-gramscian IR and IPE, K.H. & B.O.] have been left largely unquestioned (and unaddressed), while their general usage has been defended in favor of a more issue related research agenda’ (Steans & Tepe 2008, 134). They rightly lament ‘a lack of engagement with what these challenges [of feminist and gender analyses in IPE, K.H. & B.O.] entail for the underlying theoretical concept of hegemony in neo-Gramscian analysis’ (Steans & Tepe 2008, 135).

2.1 Conceptual dimensions of a feminist neo-Gramscian framework

way that a continuation of the conflict can only terminate in their reciprocal destruction’ (Gramsci 1971, 219) – which allows a third force to intervene. European crisis management, however, is characterized by the opposite: an overwhelming social and political power of neoliberal, transnational capital.
We agree with Steans and Tepe that serious *conceptual* engagement between neo-Gramscian approaches and Feminist IPE is still outstanding – not least with the aim to understand the current crisis. What follows is our proposal to address this challenge to develop an adequate feminist neo-Gramscian theoretical framework. We suggest constructing it by advancing a feminist critique of core neo-Gramscian concepts on three occasions.

*First*, while neo-Gramscian analyses generally resist the problematic dichotomy of ‘market’ and ‘state’, insisting on the analysis of the political economy in an integral sense, they often remain trapped in a narrow, and ultimately masculinist, understanding of ‘economy’ that equates the economic sphere with market-mediated waged labor and ‘does not read reproductive work as one of its central functions’ (Hajek & Kinzel 2011, p. 135). Against this, we argue for an *integral understanding of the state, production and reproduction* which considers the ways in which socially necessary reproduction work is carried out in a particular historic bloc as an integral and constituent part of this historic bloc. As Isabella Bakker has argued, this involves ‘biological reproduction of the species, and the conditions and social constructions of motherhood; […] the reproduction of the labor force […] and] the reproduction of provisioning and caring needs’ (Bakker 2007, p. 541). A genuinely integral analysis of a historic bloc, therefore, has to take into account how these different aspects of reproduction are socially organized, and how historical ‘shifts in the governance of social reproduction’ relate to dominant gender regimes (Bakker & Gill 2003, p. 33).

*Second*, we claim that the Gramscian notion of the historic bloc, re-conceptualized from a feminist perspective, is open to the theorization of gendered (as well as other) differences (Short 2013). The notion of historic bloc refers to specific periods of development in which forms of perpetuated crisis management are developed into a relatively stable hegemonic project, which organizes the social ‘structure’ (what Gramsci called the ‘economic activity’) and ‘superstructures’ (i.e. the integral state – political society and civil society – as well as popular culture, moral values and ‘common sense’) in a coherent whole. From a feminist viewpoint, it is critical to insist that each historic bloc is *necessarily and structurally gendered*. This includes what Gramsci called the ‘structure,’ i.e. relations of production, the division of labour within them, and the allocation of paid as well as unpaid forms of

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3 Of course, feminist economists initially insisted on the interconnectedness of these realms and indicated the ‘productive’ nature of ‘reproductive’ labor (see for instance the seminal work of Diane Elson (1998)). However, the notion of the state in neo-Gramscian and Feminist IPE differs, as the former goes well beyond the welfare state and focuses on the form, transformation and exercise of power instead.
reproduction work (Elson 1998). And it includes the ‘superstructures’ of the integral state, i.e. the institutions of political and civil society, where, as Ludwig and Wöhl put it, ‘abstract forms of subjectivity (either female or male) are filled with specific historical meanings, such as gendered attributes, which are diffused through state policies as well as within everyday practices’ (Ludwig & Wöhl 2009, 11). As both Wöhl (2007, p. 70) and Steans & Tepe (2008, p. 145) have argued, such a perspective can be linked to R.W. Connell’s concept of gender regime, which includes a ‘gender division of labor’, a ‘structure of power’ including institutional and bureaucratic power, and a ‘structure of cathexis’, or ‘the gender patterning of emotional attachments’ (Connell 1990, pp. 523, 525, 527). From a feminist neo-Gramscian perspective, gender regimes are a constitutive element of every historic bloc. A feminist neo-Gramscian analysis of currently dominant political projects of crisis management would have to focus on both changes and continuities in the neo-liberal, post-Fordist gender regime that was constitutive for the historic bloc since the 1980s, whilst taking into account the different scales – local, national, regional and global – on which they operate. This means that there is no singular ‘neoliberal’ gender regime, but a variety of them, both historically and spatially differentiated, and articulated in different historic blocs with different varieties of neoliberalism. They are, however, linked to transnational dimensions of hegemony, globalization and global governance (Sauer & Wöhl 2010).

Third, as Gundula Ludwig argues from a feminist perspective, gender relations are crucially regulated via the internalizing of gendered ascriptions articulated by the state (Ludwig 2009). Hegemony, Ludwig stresses, is not a relationship between fully constituted subjects. In order to integrate relevant sectors of the subaltern classes into a historic bloc, hegemony has to become part of what Gramsci called ‘common sense’. ‘In common sense’, Ludwig (2007, p. 198) writes, ‘subjects incorporate social norms, values and morals that are elaborated within the institutions of civil society, and deemed sensible and reasonable’ (ibid.). These norms, values and morals are deeply gendered and function according to a heterosexual matrix. Through a feminist reading of Gramsci’s analysis of early Fordism, Ludwig concludes that the production of a historic bloc is presupposed on ‘state interventions towards a particular form of subjectivation’ (Ludwig 2007, p. 200). From a feminist perspective, this cannot be overstated: Any analysis of the development and crisis of a historic bloc needs to take into account the *gendered forms of subjectivation* that are inscribed in it. It is this aspect we choose to concentrate on in the following sections.
2.2 Beyond consent vs coercion: Crisis management by gendered subjectivation

As discussed above, some neo-Gramscian authors argue that dominant forms of crisis management constitute a shift from new to authoritarian constitutionalism. Elements of coercion and repression are coming to the fore in the implementation of dominant political strategies, increasingly displacing hegemonic projects aiming at a broader social consensus. As a general observation of the political situation, especially in the European periphery, this seems to be a reasonable assessment. At the same time, however, we argue that this picture misses a crucial dimension that can be made visible only by integrating feminist IPE perspectives in our conceptual framework. The problem is that some of the neo-Gramscian analyses implicitly operate within an ‘either-or’ logic of hegemony. By this we mean an understanding of hegemony that operates between the two poles of consent and coercion as a kind of zero-sum game. If social consent decreases, coercion must increase; where the integrating aspects of hegemony go down, force and authoritarianism come up, in what we could call a hydraulic model of hegemony. This can be detected in formulations such as Apeldoorn et al.’s, who claim that during the crisis, neoliberalism has ‘gained an extra lease of life, albeit less as a hegemonic project than as a (last?) flight forward in which the repressive character comes to dominate the consensual aspects (as is so clearly demonstrated in the periphery of the Eurozone)’ (Apeldoorn, Graaf & Overbeek 2012b, p. 478). In a similar vein, Oberndorfer (2014, p. 27) states that with the turn to authoritarian constitutionalism we see the ‘replacement of consensus, which has become brittle, by executive legislation and force on various scale levels’. (see Bruff 2014, p. 115; Gill & Solty 2013, p. 62 for similar statements).

Such a view is problematic, mainly because the dichotomy of consent and coercion underpinning these statements tends to underestimate the stabilizing factors of the current period. The aspect that goes missing in this picture is that the politics of austerity, with their enormous social costs, are safeguarded not only through the mechanisms of authoritarian constitutionalism and coercion, but significantly through a shift in (gendered) identities and hence processes of gendered subjectivation. In order to understand the in/stability of current forms of crisis management in Europe, especially on the EU’s periphery, we need to include in our analyses the gendered ways in which these social costs are shifted towards subaltern individuals. This is specifically the case where the responsibility for socially necessary care and reproduction work, that had been at least in part organized through a welfare state and/or commodified wage labor in the service sector, is increasingly passed back on to forms of
unpaid domestic labor. Critical analyses of the crisis and its management would have to include a dimension that we want to call \textit{crisis management by subjectivation}. With the term ‘subjectivation’, we refer to Foucault’s (cf. 2007) governmentality studies and the systematic tie he identifies between power and subjectivity. In contrast to juridical, more hierarchical, prohibitive and punishing forms of power, governmentality implies governing as a ‘modern’ form of power, which subjectivizes by structuring the agency of individuals and collectivities. Foucault therefore speaks of ‘conduct of the conduct’, as government primarily working by ‘molding’ the context for agency. Specifically, ‘soft forms’ of power, like ideological and programmatic interpellations, discourses and social norms developed within the integral state and civil society, come into view in their role of shaping the self (cf. Bröckling, Krasmann & Lemke 2011, p. 12). Of course, neo-Gramscian approaches have frequently drawn heavy criticism from the Foucauldian camp in IPE (cf. Goede 2003) for their alleged ‘economism’. However, in line with a number of recent commentators, we deem it both possible and desirable to integrate a Foucauldian understanding of subjectivation into (neo-)Gramscian theories. After all, their respective concerns are much closer to each other than is often portrayed. As Ekers and Loftus put it, both Gramsci and Foucault allow us to investigate the ‘interactions between everyday practices, the materiality of ideology, and power’ (Ekers & Loftus 2008, p. 699). Indeed, in can be argued that there is an analysis of ‘subjectivation’ \textit{avant la lettre} present in Gramsci’s work on ‘Americanism and Fordism’. This argument has been put forward by Ludwig, who argues that there we can find a recognition on Gramsci’s part of the fact that a ‘specific form of subjectivity is […] the precondition for the reproduction of the mode of production’ (Ludwig 2009, p.97), a claim she connects to Foucault’s later studies of governmentality (Ludwig 2009, p. 106, Fn. 6). In a slightly different, yet not incompatible way, Bob Jessop and Ngai-Ling Sum have claimed that a Foucauldian perspective allows us ‘to open the “black box” of hegemony and domination to explore specific technologies of power’ (Jessop & Sum 2006, p. 163). Against the backdrop of feminist scholars questioning whether Foucault’s notion of the subject allows for agency and progressive politics (cf. Fraser 1990, McLaren 2002), we are adamant that a Foucauldian perspective is able to conceptualize subjectivation as structuring agency – and hence allows to think ‘moulded agency’ in the shifted terrain and context of austerity politics.

From a feminist perspective, the ‘subjectivizing dimension’ of political programmes is to be found in the ways they discursively (re-)allocate specific tasks towards particular gendered
zones of responsibilities, as well as to individuals marked as belonging to these zones. This understanding of subjectivation however not only conceptualizes the programmatic level of interpellations but also the ‘conduct of the self’: It also includes the processes of responding to such interpellations, i.e. processes of ‘becoming subjects’ in relation to these political programs, incorporating and/or resisting them in their everyday practices.

From this perspective, important questions can be raised: What role do gendered interpellations and (re-)allocations of responsibilities play in the management of an organic crisis? How are these appropriated, or resisted, in the individual’s everyday practices? Our theoretical intervention, centred around the notion of ‘crisis management by subjectivation’, suggests a widened analytical perspective that seeks to understand the dynamics of crisis management as part of a dynamic of transforming gendered subjectivities.

To illustrate how such an approach can deepen our understanding of current crisis politics and its effects, as well as our critique, we now briefly turn to the case of Greece in the final part of this article. Far from being a case study in its own right, this section aims to sketch a framework for future research informed by the concept of “crisis management by subjectivation”.

3. Crisis management by subjectivation in Greece

The Economic Adjustment Programmes (EAPs) instituted by the Troika in Greece in the face of the sovereign debt crisis since 2010 (EC 2010, 2011, 2012) are not just aiming at ‘household consolidation’. As has been shown by numerous analyses, they amount to a concerted effort to forcefully implement neoliberal policies and programs, similar to the IMF’s earlier structural adjustment programs for the countries of the global south in the 1980s. Maria Karamessini (2013, p. 166) calls the EAPs a neoliberal offensive and a ‘shock-therapy’, highlighting the massive dimensions of the program and the extremely tight schedule for implementing the measurements.

As several publications highlight, these policies have serious social consequences, from a rise in poverty and social inequality to an increased suicide rate and growing proportions of the population having to seek medical treatment in street clinics (cf. Matsaganis 2014, Kretsos 2012). Here we focus on the gendered effects of cuts and retrenchments in social spending and infrastructure. For example, the closure and merging of schools and kindergartens opens
up massive supply gaps in children’s day care. Impoverished middle-class-families are not able to afford private schools and day care anymore, increasingly relying on public services which in turn shortens the already scarce supply (cf. Karamessini 2013). Also the cuts in the pension system are expected to result in increased rates of old-age poverty. For an increasing number of older people social security is called into question and new forms of dependencies will emerge.

The crucial question from a feminist perspective is: By whom and in which contexts are these reproductive services, which formerly had been at least partly provided by the welfare state, being taken over? Studies of past crises show that these services for the most part had been transferred to the sphere of private households. Hence they again had been shifted to feminized zones of responsibility, as was the case in the Asian crisis at the end of the 1990s (cf. Lim 2000, Elson 2002). A few years earlier, similar processes had taken place in countries of the Global South which were targeted by the structural adjustment programs of the IMF and the World Bank during the 1990s. The liberalization policies not only led to a ‘feminization’ of labor, but also to cutbacks and privatizations in the field of social provisioning which had a massive impact on women’s lives as main providers as well as principal recipients of these services. Hence restructuring programs in the Global South entailed an unforeseen reallocation and reprivatisation of reproductive labor. This resulted in increased responsibilities for women to provide reproductive services unpaid and in the private sphere (Rai 2002, Peterson 2005, Elson 2002, Marchand/Runyan 2000).

The term budget consolidation, as used by the Troika programs, therefore becomes an euphemism for shifting necessary reproductive services and practices, which formerly at least in part had been taken over by public welfare institutions, to the realm of private self-accountability and individual self-organization. Here we see two important continuities to neoliberal policies and the politics of re-privatization diagnosed by feminists since the 1980s. First these austerity polices have to be contextualized in neoliberal gender regimes and forms of (gendered) subjectivation. In this context, Janine Brodie (2005) points to the simultaneous erosion and intensification of gender. On the one hand traditional gender roles and their institutionalizations in state regulation eroded since the 1980s, on the other hand, neoliberalism puts a renewed emphasis on the private sphere as provider of social services. Hence the current developments in part draw on prior neoliberal tendencies of individualization and the transfer of reproductive responsibilities towards the
gendered/feminized spheres of communities and families. Second, as many feminist scholars highlighted, the growing diversification of women’s lives and family structures in the context of neoliberal reforms (cf. Bakker 2003), we want to stress the importance of an intersectional approach when looking at the current crisis policies (cf. Strolovic 2013). We argue that it is not just women who are targeted as a constituted group by (implicit) policies of reprivatization. Rather, we have to remain sensitive to the dimensions of class and racialized/ethnicized identities and ask how these policies affect, for instance, middle-class, working class as well as migrant families differently, and which strategies they develop respectively. To put it differently, one could also speak of feminized individuals rather than women who are targeted by these re-privatization discourses and who have to perform additional unpaid work. However – and paralleling neo-Gramscian crisis analyses – we insist that these developments currently observed for instance in Greece do not constitute a mere continuity of the neoliberal policies of the last decades. Rather, austerity policies as articulated in the EAPs indicate a significant intensification regarding the pace as well as scope of policy reforms, welfare retrenchments and re-privatizations (cf. EC 2010, 2012) and therefore point to a qualitative leap.

The theoretical framework introduced above allows us to meet these analytic requirements and to go beyond both neo-Gramscian focus on the ‘authoritarian constitutionalist’ character of these processes, and the feminist focus on the restructuring of caring and reproductive work. It allows us to stress not only the stabilizing effects of reproductive work during economic crises, but also to highlight the strategic dimension of this form of crisis management. It is not just about the effects of such – seemingly otherwise gender-neutral – austerity politics, i.e. the ‘simple’ increase in privatized reproductive work. The Troika-Programs of economic adjustment rather implicitly but directly use and utilize caring relationships and the emotional and affective knowledge and practices inherent in these relationships as a source of societal stabilization – as a source of hegemony. The reprivatization of caring and reproductive work delivers socially necessary practices to the feminized sphere of private households, which are implicitly taken for granted by the austerity programs and the political powers enforcing them. The dominant political project of crisis management hence rests to a large part on the care of others as well as on the practice and the knowledge of those performing unpaid care work.⁴ The temporal and conditional

⁴ The fact that Greece as a conservative welfare state witnessed a considerable expansion after joining the European Union is of twofold relevance here: First the comprehensive setup as well as the sudden and massive retrenchment currently seen allows to observe re-privatization processes as described above in time lapse.
stabilization of crisis-driven social relations therefore – and partly at odds with neo-Gramscian concepts – can also be organized apart from consensus and compromise on the one side and direct coercion and repression on the other, as it draws on the hegemonic and patriarchal separation of the public and the private.

We claim that austerity politics in Greece, and the redistribution of reproductive work it includes, entail new gendered forms of subjectivation. The retrenchment of the welfare state and the new shift of reproductive work not least points to a massive reallocation of reproductive responsibilities. Politics of re-privatization thus implicitly draw on traditional concepts of privacy. In doing so they reactivate familiar images of female core competencies, gendered knowledge of care and the practices associated with it. Our argument here is not simply that women are taking over more reproductive work in the private sphere. Rather, following our theoretical considerations above, this simultaneously and necessarily implicates new gendered forms of subjectivation. Crisis management by subjectivation means that one needs to ask how the new tasks, responsibilities and competences, and the new forms of subjectivity they are related with, are reorganized both on the ideological level of interpellations and the practical level of (selective) incorporation and/or resistance to these interpellations. How are new interpellations and gendered forms of subjectivity articulated, so that this shifting of reproductive practices is actually adopted by people and hence working? These new divisions of labor fostered by the EAPs potentially entail new gender relations. These in turn are not stopping outside of the subject, but materialize in new forms of gendered subjectivities. It is in this sense that we want to speak about the crisis management as being executed by new forms of gendered subjectivities and therefore being shifted into the subjects themselves.

4. Conclusion

Starting from the observation that IPE scholarship is still lacking in conceptual engagements with subjectivation and the increasing necessity to deal with shifting forms of gendered subjectivities due to the massive reprivatization of reproductive tasks fostered by current crisis management, this article suggested a research agenda to address this research lacuna by focusing on processes of subjectivation in a feminist neo-Gramscian theoretical framework. Second, its historical familialism provides exactly these images of gendered division of labor now implicitly deployed in the austerity politics. (cf. Lyberaki & Tinios 2014)
Drawing on Greece as an example, we subsequently illustrated how such a framework could deepen our understanding of austerity politics currently fostered by the EC, the IMF and the ECB while avoiding an either-or-logic of hegemony and going beyond analyses which conceptualize re-privatization tendencies as a mere effect of these policies. With the notion of ‘crisis management by subjectivation’ we refer to the fact that austerity policies are using caring relationships as a source of societal stabilization, and that the reallocation of reproductive responsibilities to such an extent not only constitutes a qualitative leap compared to neoliberal policies known for decades, but also entails a necessary shift in gendered identities and the constitution of new feminized subjects.

Whether the gendered interpellations implicit in current austerity politics are being accepted or refused must be left for further empirical analyses. As a final point, we want to stress however, that the theoretical approach of crisis management by subjectivation has a political dimension as well. If the current forms of crisis management will be successful or not also depends on the question whether these new gendered interpellations, responsibilities and ascriptions are being accepted or rejected. Hence the potential for resistance to the austerity measures that constitute dominant political projects of crisis management, also lies in the politicization and refusal of these new, gendered ‘subjectivities of crisis’.

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