

The Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union and Bulgaria: Critiquing *The New York Times* 2019 Exposé of Corruption in the Common Agricultural Policy

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ABSTRACT

This paper critiques the portrayal of the utilization of CAP funds as forms of corruption in eastern Europe. This study analyzes the CAP from the perspective of its role in supporting European integration as a strategy for peace promotion focusing on post-Communist Europe. This New York Times investigative report illustrates certain biases regarding US politically prevailing normative assumptions regarding political economy. Despite the Trump phenomenon, they underestimate the significance of intense and increasingly salient post-Communist political polarization in Bulgaria and Eastern Europe in general. EU regional and sectoral economic cohesion policies including the CAP are vehicles to incentivize political elite network creation and cooptation to undercut potentials for militant nationalism. The rise of conservative populist nationalism in Europe and globally illustrates the intensified political challenges to peaceful integration and globalization. A consequence includes greater cultural diversification regarding the definition of private versus public interest, i.e., the nature of the state. Analysis of the challenge of corruption in Bulgaria from the CAP point of view provides an opportunity to explore deeply the conceptualization of the state as a control system. The concept of the rule of law and what it means in Bulgaria will be explored from this EU CAP perspective.

JEL: D73, F02, F36, F52, F53, F54, H83, M16, O19

KEYWORDS: Bulgaria, Common Agricultural Policy, European Union, Nomenklatura, Policy Network, Post-Communism

“Well, I’m not so sure that Putin put a stop to that corruption as so much nationalized, effectively, the corruption and put it under the control of himself and figures from his inner circle, creating a new oligarchy, not so much disrupting or dismantling the oligarchy of the ’90s, but creating a new, alternative oligarchy that was loyal to him and benefited from their proximity to him and owed their wealth to him” (Joshua Yaffa, Moscow correspondent for *The New Yorker*, in an interview podcast on *Democracy Now!*, 2021, para. 13).

INTRODUCTION

Malang and Holzinger (2020, 745) note that the European Economic Community formally launched the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in 1962 as a result of intergovernmental bargaining among the six original member states. The founders of the future common market in the 1957 Treaty of Rome included agriculture which comprised occupational employment for a large segment of their populations: “Moravcsik (1998: 89) reports that in 1956 agricultural employment was 41% in Italy, 25% in France and 15% in Germany; and agricultural GDP amounted to 25% in Italy, 15% in France and 11% in Germany” [*sic*]. On the eve of Brexit, agriculture accounted “for only 1.6% of GDP and some 5% of employment” among all 28 EU member states. The EU’s EUR-Lex portal states that “the CAP aims to: increase agricultural productivity by promoting technical progress and ensuring the optimum use of the factors of production, in particular labour; ensure a fair standard of living for farmers; stabilise markets; assure the availability of supplies; ensure reasonable prices for consumers.”

The CAP's two component programs are the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. The former "funds direct payments to farmers and measures to regulate agricultural markets." The latter "finances EU countries' rural development programmes" [sic]. The CAP's "share of the EU budget has steadily fallen in the last 30 years from 73 % in 1985 to 37.8 % for the period 2014-2020" (EUR-Lex, 2021). The EU CAP allocated 57.98 billion euros for dispersal to the EU member state governments for dispersal to their respective agricultural sectors in 2019 (European Commission, 2021). The front page of the *New York Times* November 3, 2019 edition reported on east European authorities channeling European Union Common Agricultural Policy funds for their political and material benefit. This investigative report noted that "[e]very year, the 28-country bloc pays out \$65 billion in farm subsidies intended to support farmers around the Continent and keep rural communities alive. But across Hungary and much of Central and Eastern Europe, the bulk goes to a connected and powerful few. The prime minister of the Czech Republic collected tens of millions of dollars in subsidies just last year. Subsidies have underwritten Mafia-style land grabs in Slovakia and Bulgaria" (Gebrekidan, Apuzzo and Novak, 2019, para. 4).

The report begins

"Under Communism, farmers labored in the fields that stretch for miles around this town west of Budapest, reaping wheat and corn for a government that had stolen their land."

"Today, their children toil for new overlords, a group of oligarchs and political patrons who have annexed the land through opaque deals with the Hungarian government. They have created a modern twist on a feudal system, giving jobs and aid to the compliant, and punishing the mutinous."

"These land barons, as it turns out, are financed and emboldened by the European Union" (Gebrekidan, Apuzzo and Novak, 2019, para. 1-3).

This investigative report illustrates some of the foundational laissez-faire elements of American prevailing assumptional views regarding the appropriate relationship of the state to the economy (Lipset, 1997). It also spotlights the trends in state evolution in post-Communist societies undergoing revolutionary change. The attitudinal milieu is one of national institutional disarray and normative dissensus, which observers tend to label corruption in comparison to relatively institutionalized west European polities.

A dilemma emerges in the application of scholarly research findings from the Western experience to post-Communist societies and elsewhere emerging out of authoritarianism. In the latter, a relative lack of societal institutionalized normative attitudinal consensus has existed on what constitutes the "public" versus the "private." Yet corruption has been defined as "an abuse of public roles or resources for private benefit" (Dvořáková, 2019, 104, quoting Johnston, 2005, 12). In post-Cold War, Washington consensus discourse, neoliberalism has emphasized the privatization of state functions. Private military and security contracting companies are increasingly employed, while international efforts continue to ensure state responsibility for their behavior (Davitti, 2020). Intensifying Western domestic political contestation has made the Weberian ideal-type portrayal of the state as a unified actor monopolizing the articulation of the public interest less relevant. State agencies and power networks politically enable and coordinate societal power centers (Al-Kassimi, 2019). The state as a site of contestation has been evident in post-Communist societies undergoing revolutionary normative change amidst polarizing confusion and normative, affective dissensus and dissonance.

The Orban government in Hungary was a particular focus of the November 2019 *New York Times* report but the investigative journalists also noted allegations of questionable use of CAP funds in Bulgaria. About 100 "entities" constituting Bulgaria's "farming elite" received 75 percent of allocated main CAP funds while one of the largest flour producers has been charged with fraud regarding the subsidies (Gebrekidan, Apuzzo and Novak, 2019, para. 21). The same 4000+ word report noted that EU investigators concluded that throughout post-Communist Europe, "politically connected landowners" utilized their influence to annex small farms. In Bulgaria, "land brokers" backed legislation enabling

these acreage acquisitions described earlier as “Mafia-style land grabs” (Gebrekidan, Apuzzo and Novak, 2019, para. 61-62, 4). The *New York Times* repeated its condemnations two days later in a paper editorial (*New York Times*, 2019). A former US ambassador to Bulgaria, James Pardew (2020), called for the EU to pressure the extended Borissov government to end alleged malfeasance contributing to anti-liberal political inertia. Yet Zankina and Gurov (2018) note that the opposition Bulgarian Socialist Party controls the presidency, playing a significant counterbalancing role to the policy thrusts of the Borissov government.

This paper analyzes the state institutional trend dynamics in Bulgaria in comparative perspective regarding the political legacy of Soviet Communist imperialism. The lustration debate has been one explicit response to this legacy. Some research shows that national lustration statutes, i.e., purging targeted Communist-era personnel from selected professional fields, reduce corruption (Rozic and Nisnevich, 2016). In Bulgaria lustration policies have been comparatively limited. “Unlike the Baltic states and some Central European countries, where anticommunism fitted easily into the new national narrative of Soviet oppression, Bulgaria has no consensual narrative of what communism was, and how society ought to come out of it now that it is no longer there” (Koleva, 2016, 363).

Another theme of this analysis is the building of alternative policy networks for economic profit and political influence to supersede the former nomenklatura. The latter were the national Communist party-vetted professional personnel under state socialism. After its Soviet imperial imposition, the Communist era party personnel elite and its generational descendants have benefitted materially and politically to a disproportionate extent under post-Communism. As a cohort, they have maintained their elite societal positions. They have done so utilizing the social, material and political resources available to them under late-Communism to prepare for and exploit the post-Communist phase and its opportunities. Nationalistic backlash against their continued elite status should be part of the analysis of the role of the CAP and other EU policies. They functionally contribute to constructing and fortifying alternative elite factional blocs in these young national liberal democracies.

Despite standing in opposition to Weberian bureaucratic rational ideals, patronage politics is partly a response to this backlash polarization and arguably serves as a functional political safety valve. Freeland (2017, 127-28) argues that “viewing patronage as a failure of governance rather than a competing form of governance leads to mischaracterizing incentives and may provoke violent backlash.” The “authority” of patron-client based state control systems “derives from a system of patronage which allows them to secure order through loyalty-based distribution of resources.” European integration progressively increases EU member state internal political exposure to multilevel political actor critique. These actors tactically maneuver at multiple EU levels of governance politics to achieve their respective goals. A consequence is greater political exposure of EU member state domestic social relations to critical comparative evaluation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Pluralization of the European Nation State

Bickerton (2020) argues that emphasizing the legal definition of national sovereignty underrates the significance of EU membership in forming and reproducing state power today in Europe. Joining the EU distinctively reconfigures the state. A state’s legitimacy, power and identity assume distinctive features of Europeanization resulting from membership in the EU’s transnational networks of governance. The ability of the state administration in the form of the government apparatus to express the goals and aspirations of the nation determines partly whether the public grants legitimacy to the authorities. A member state of the EU gains its legitimacy and authority additionally to some degree from belonging to a wider community of nation states. It gains this legitimacy and authority by acting not alone and independently as a typical sovereign nation state, but rather by acting alongside other governments, collectively. This assertion implies that politically influential constituencies within EU member states have vested themselves in the assertion and development of pan-European material and organizational interests. The development of these pro-integration interests affects the diplomatic

bargaining leverage in the form of policy option range broadly and the decisional political latitude of policy makers specifically, to make policy (Cottam and Gallucci, 1978).

This international European regional societal analysis, highlighted in the English school, contrasts modernity with pre-modern regime Europe (Lees, 2016). In the latter, national political awareness and participation was limited to a very small section of the adult population. With modernity, the rise of mass political participation brought with it nationalistic political values that challenged this trans-European aristocratic ruling elite class (Cottam and Cottam, 2001). Nationalism added to the political drives that required evolving regime accommodation to satisfy the public's legitimation demands that Bickerton highlights. In the latter half of the twentieth century, globalization of trade, finance and communication increased opportunities for social mobility and creativity amidst continuing value change. This collective value development included the rise of post-material values. Self-identification with broader imagined transnational communities for those able to exploit these opportunities came to challenge the nature of the positivist nation state. Globalizing interdependency witnessed the local and national lobbying activity of these transnational community members located in different national constituencies.

For the nationalistically parochial segments of the public, globalization and its neo-functional spillover policy effects has posed a threat to their own perceived intra-community institutional social status. It can produce a powerful political backlash among national publics that have a stronger allegiance to their national identity as represented by their national state government, e.g., Brexit. British Euroscepticism was strongest among the EU major powers because of the greater prevalence of nationalistic values in the British polity. Nationalistic values in the German, French and Italian politics have been collectively less intense and salient in part because their twentieth century history has been starkly less triumphalist and more tragic (DeDominicis, 2020).

Bickerton (2020, 29) continues that these integrative tendencies tend to make the EU itself essentially important for the member states in terms of the formation of their respective so-called national interests. Their respective national aims are formed through their officials and governments repeatedly interacting at the European level. Their respective national goals are not formed before they involve themselves in EU negotiations, but in the midst of this interaction. State-civil society and inter-state EU member interactions together display a "pluralist conception of interest formation." An EU member state's national aims acquire definition within a broader international environment of pooled, i.e., disaggregated, national sovereignty. Reaching consensus among the member states in negotiations with each other is easier, facilitating EU policy making.

The complexity of the EU policy making process is a functional consequence of the EU being a governance system. The invested cosmopolitan material and non-material group interests view the EU member state actors adopting decisions that complement a meaningful, substantive European identity. This substance includes concrete real benefits, e.g., European economic profit, as well as European security and status benefits. For example, one American academic called to postpone coordinatively American national holiday gathering for 6 months to control the Covid-19 pandemic. Wolfers (2020) highlights the benefits to the American national community of the coordination of its subnational group actors, e.g., families, to agree to postpone the Thanksgiving national tradition. These benefits would serve the American national welfare and the component subnational groups within it. "In economics, this is called a coordination game, one in which you want to make choices that complement those of others" [*sic*] (Wolfers, 2020, para. 23). Insofar as the European Union is not viewed as a veil for particularistic neocolonial nationalistic interests of particular EU great powers, the EU is a successful coordination game. The so-called EU democratic deficit derives from the perceived complexity of the EU policy making process. More positively, it also means that the EU is not perceived as a cover vehicle for Berlin's acquisition of German economic power-based regional hegemony (DeDominicis, 2020).

Bickerton's description applies to all states in the global polity; all national polities decide their national interest, if their respective leaders declare it, within a dynamic global context. Reinterpreting Bickerton's description regarding Europe would involve highlighting the legal requirements for

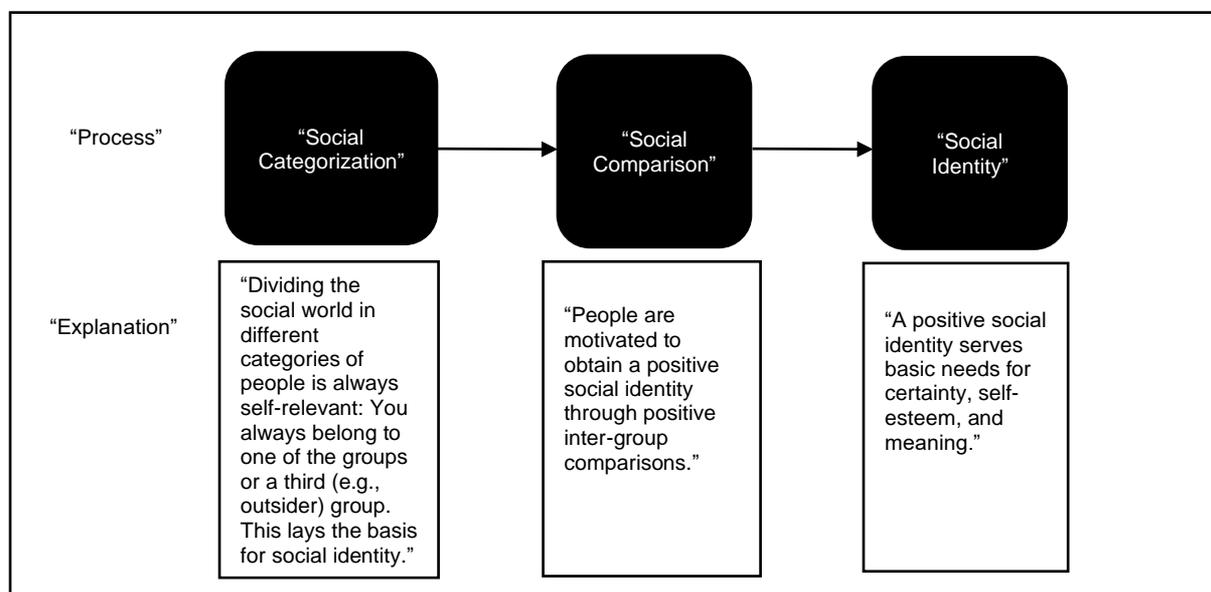
incorporating trans-EU consultation also as a moral and ethical obligation. Nationalism as an ideological doctrine may be more likely to be disdained. It facilitates institutionalization of a transnational European self-identity community, but it risks populist reactionary nationalist social movements. Bickerton (2020, 30) notes that simultaneously, this tendency tends to evoke “problems” regarding legitimacy and accountability. An analysis of the requirements for the public granting legitimacy to the authorities is inadequate if it does not account for nationalism (Cottam and Cottam, 2001). Factors contributing to European national political polarization include conservative populist reactions to increasingly influential cosmopolitan constituencies.

For the post-Communist east European states, European cosmopolitanism can inadvertently serve functionally to appear to legitimate the failure to provide reparations to the victims of Communism. This tendency may intensify to the extent that the descendants of the nomenklatura continue to bequeath their competitive advantages in resources, networks and education to their offspring. They consequently may appear to benefit disproportionately from this Europeanization process. The emotional response is likely to be hostile envy (Cottam and Cottam, 2001). A counteractive policy regarding these trends may involve the distribution of EU allocated Common Agricultural Policy funds within the national agricultural sector and other EU resources. Their allocation as patronage by nationalist populist governments may build alternative social and policy networks. Within these networks will emerge power elites, to use C. Wright Mills’ terms (1956). These EU subsidy policies like the CAP incentivize co-optation of these so-called oligarchs. They are creating patron-client networks utilizing patronage. These EU subsidy policies contribute to pluralizing the establishment elite in which the former nomenklatura generations have been disproportionately represented.

European Post-Communist Reform and Social Identity Evolution

Cottam and Cottam (2001) apply social identity theory from social psychology to analyze the political psychology driving nationalistic behavior. They note that individuals seek to maintain a positive self-image while engaging in social comparison while concurrently forming self-identity ingroups. Figure 1 below outlines the process of social categorization that sets the stage for individual mobility and collective action as identity management strategies outlined in Figure 2. This paper’s additional argument is that polarization of national polities is a form of social categorization and comparison. Its strength reflects the intensity and salience of conflicting proprietary claims to the substantive policy significance and meaning of national sovereignty within the international community.

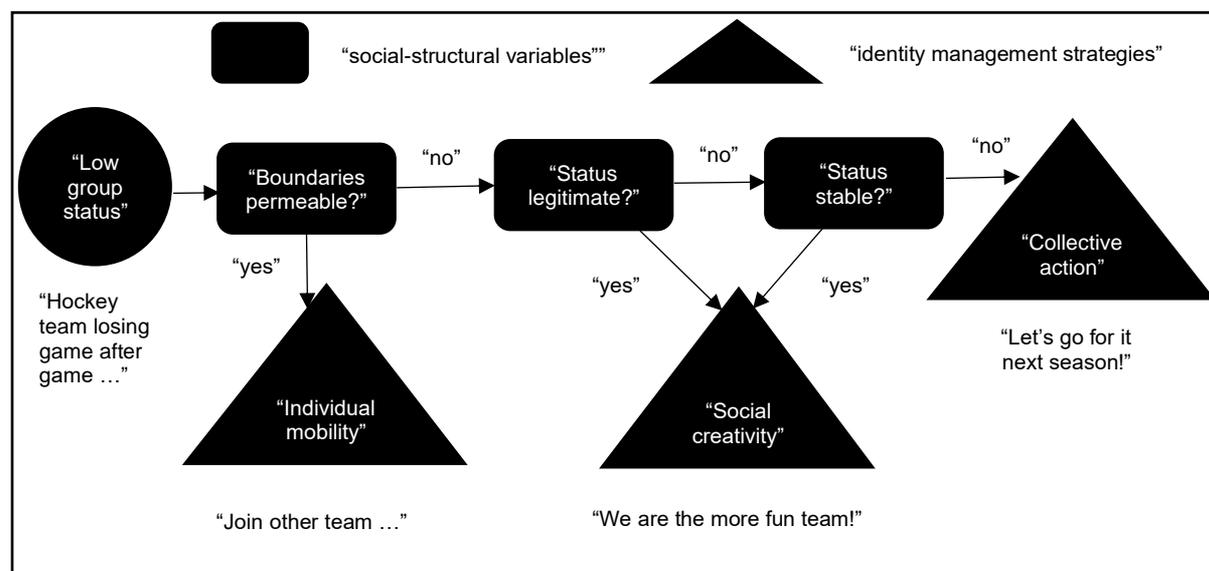
Figure 1: “Social Identity Definition”



Social identity theory's foundational motivational principles are that 1) an innate drive of the individual is to maintain a positive self-image, 2) individuals form ingroups versus outgroups, 3) individuals comparatively evaluate the social status of their ingroups with salient outgroups, 4) individuals tend to equate the comparative status of their ingroup with their self-image. If and when individuals comparatively evaluate themselves negatively within their societal contexts, then they will respond psychologically and socially, individually and collectively (see figure 2). Individuals have varying intensities of self-identification with a multitude of ingroups, but self-identification with a national ingroup is prevalent among homo sapiens and social competition can lead to violence (Fig. 1 from Scheepers and Ellemers, 2019, 8).

Upon comparing one's ingroup with another and perceiving one's own status as inferior and therefore one's self-image as negative, the perceiver can respond with three psycho-behavioral strategies. One strategy is social mobility, i.e., attempt individually to join the perceived superior status group. A second strategy is social creativity, i.e., the perceiver compensates by changing the evaluation criteria, selecting those on which the perceiver views their ingroup as superior over the outgroup. A third strategy is open intergroup conflict, i.e., social competition, in which the ingroup perceiver views the relationship with the outgroup as zero-sum. Any gain by the outgroup is perceived as coming at the cost to the ingroup. National self-determination movements by definition seek to break the relationship through secession to form their own sovereign community (Cottam and Cottam, 2001). Figure 2 (below) schematically summarizes a presentation of social identity theory precepts.

Figure 2: "Social-structural variables and identity management strategies"



Upon perceiving an ingroup negative social status self-evaluation, an individual member may choose three different response strategies. Individual social mobility seeks to join the superior status group if the boundaries are permeable, e.g., "in the United States, [...] classes are permeable but races, in most cases, are not" (Cottam and Cottam, 2001, 92). Social creativity involves compensatory reconfiguration of the comparison criteria to reconstitute the individual perceiver's positive self-identity ingroup evaluation. If dynamic interactive contexts destabilize social-structural features of intergroup status relations, then social competition, i.e., collective action by the ingroup to supersede the outgroup along the same status evaluation criteria, may be the social strategy response (Fig. 2 from Scheepers and Ellemers, 2019, 12).

This study elaborates on the identity management strategy of collective action as a form of political integration. In addition to collective action being employed in social competition, the collective action may be in the form of additional social creativity. Collective action may seek to supersede the relationship evaluation criteria upon which the zero-sum evaluation is based by fortifying new evaluation criteria. This new evaluation criteria may supplant the status quo institutional context by exploiting dynamic political opportunities. European integration strategy functionally aims to institutionalize, elaborate and fortify new substantive, supranational comparative evaluation norms. It operatively aims to supersede zero-sum international competition by developing pan-European institutions on the basis of new attitudinal orientations. These orientations may include global sustainable development imperatives as guided by international environmental protection conventions and the nascent institutions that have developed around them. These monitoring bodies have permanent secretariats and other institutional embodiments around which global civil society NGOs as well as for-profit sector organizations can coalesce and institutionalize.

The Europeanization of EU member states may be understood in these terms. It involves the inculcation through law and practice of actors into supraordinate, ‘European’ cosmopolitan ethical and legal criteria and imperatives. These imperatives ultimately apply in terms of policy requirements in the relationship of the national authorities including their obligations in their treatment of their respective citizenries. Heretofore marginalized groups, e.g., women, gain concrete benefits from this creation of supraordinate communities and the superordinate institutional obligations that embody them. Their existence creates both additional social creativity opportunities for these marginalized groups as well as individual social mobility opportunities for their members. These groups are marginalized if their members in effective view themselves as such. They may include conservative populist nationalists who view themselves as being status subservient to co-national cosmopolitans. They may see the latter as previously exploiting the utilitarian social mobility and class social creativity opportunities available under Communism. They then allegedly converted these relative utilitarian and social status advantages into advantages under the new post-Communist regimes. In sum, the stability of Europe requires the co-optation and integration of these conservative populist nationalist movements. The EU must accommodate them politically albeit through compromise and negotiation over the meaning of national sovereignty.

European integration may create opportunities for social mobility and social creativity for discontented constituencies in post-Communist societies. These dissatisfied groups otherwise may orient their attitudes in a zero-sum attitude towards the authorities, i.e., engaging in social competition social psychological strategic approaches. A dilemma is that the former nomenklatura as the most successful business elite in post-Communist states enjoy exceptional social mobility and social creativity options stemming from EU integration. They are prone to do so due to their greater economic wealth and more developed social networks whose foundations were laid under Communism by their forebears. EU integration may inadvertently intensify these societal conflicts as the former nomenklatura are perceived to benefit even further from Europeanization. Those nationalists perceiving themselves as not benefiting proportionately from Europeanization are prone to intensify their affective envy towards them. “In the case of envy, the unequal comparison [in perceived comparative social status] between oneself and another is seen as unfair. Feeling envious of others can alleviate feelings of guilt, since one’s own actions, which may have been considered wrong, can be reinterpreted as having been justifiable given the unfair behavior of the other party” (Cottam and Cottam, 2001, 103). Europeanization has the potential to intensify polarization, including support for militant nationalists.

The EU confronts trends in the Polish polity under the Law and Justice Party to remove legal obstacles to purging society of the legacy influence of collaborationists with Soviet Communist imperialism (Santora, 2017). The perceived perpetuation of nomenklatura-era social networks continues into the post-Communist, Europeanization era. Core supporters for lustration perceive these intergenerational networks to exist. One policy adviser to the conservative populist Polish government supporting judicial reforms opposed by the EU derides the claim that post-Communist Poland has an independent judiciary. “When someone tells me we are destroying the judiciary, I [Igor Janke, adviser] say, ‘What judiciary?’ [...] In the 1990s, he [Janke] contends, many of those guilty of committing crimes against the Polish people escaped justice. He calls them *“the red spiders.” Red spiders breed more red spiders*, and even though only two of the 80-odd justices on the Supreme Court have ties dating to the Soviet era, their influence is still felt, he [Janke] said, echoing the [Law and Justice] party line” [sic] [emphasis added] (Santora, 2017, para. 16-19).

To counter this trend, the EU acquiesces to the construction of counter-elite factional networks around former dissidents, e.g., Viktor Orban in Hungary and the Kaczynski twins in Poland (one, Polish President Lech Kaczynski, was killed in the Smolensk 2010 flight disaster). Their hostility to the media and the judiciary and their demands to reform them reflects in part the collective perception that these informal networks continue to benefit the old nomenklatura generational networks. While the Polish and Hungarian regimes stop from relying upon physical coercion against their opponents, the EU is likely to concede to this process of construction of counter-elite networks. The EU may even encourage it through the Common Agricultural Policy as these figures distribute domestically the CAP subsidies allocated to them from the EU budget as de facto patronage. The continuing reform of the agricultural

sector through privatization of Communist-legacy state-owned agricultural land provides extensive opportunities for patronage network construction. In contrast, in Italy, “privatizations notably reduced the perimeter of the economic public sector. The remaining state-owned companies were restructured to facilitate their integration into global markets and respect the prescriptions of EU law. Patronage at the lower levels has fallen drastically, as it is incompatible with constraints on public finances, made more stringent by the process of European integration” (Di Mascio, 2012, 388).

States with stronger nationalist resistance social movements under Communism against Soviet imperialism are more prone than Bulgaria to demonstrate these polarizations. Bulgaria did not display a mass social movement resistance to Communism and consequently the co-optation of aspiring elites into nomenklatura legacy-based ruling networks is more pronounced. Bulgaria’s anti-Communist elite opposition advocating reforms “failed to win the first post-communist elections” (Zankina, 2020, 111). Societal constituencies pressing for civil service reform were comparatively weak. Zankina notes that top-down pressure from the EU instead became the main driver for these reforms as Bulgaria sought to join NATO and the EU.

Constructing a cosmopolitan pro-Europeanization political coalition has to include a tactical focus on providing social mobility and social creativity opportunities. These openings should be readily available to post-Communist elites viewing themselves as the descendants of the nationalist opposition to Communism. It already has coopted the Communist nomenklatura generational descendants. The post-Communist, Bulgarian Socialist Party Prime Minister, Sergei Stanishev, while leader of the Party of European Socialists in the European Parliament, charged Bulgarian protestors as being “hirelings of shadowy oligarchic interests” (Krastev, 2014, 8). This coalition should target for integration Communist-era dissident generational descendants as well traditionally marginalized constituencies. The latter would include gender identity minorities, and women’s rights. “Within the European Union, it [Italy] is joined by Poland, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria in not responding to European Parliament appeals for member states to prosecute hate crimes and hate speech motivated by homophobia and transphobia” (Bubola, 2020, para. 8). Integration targets include ethno-racial minorities, e.g., Roma, Armenians, Jews and others. These integration foci would also include vulnerable national minorities that perceive themselves as having a national patron state, typically bordering their citizenship state. Europeanization would ideally be viewed as protecting their human rights.

The prerequisites for EU accession were first vaguely laid out in the Copenhagen criteria of 1993:

“Membership requires that the candidate country has achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities, the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union. Membership presupposes the candidate’s ability to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union” [emphasis added] (“Presidency Conclusions: Copenhagen European Council – 21-22 June 1993,” sec. iii, para. 2).

These accession standards functionally addressed nationalism by highlighting that economic reforms would be necessary so that national economic firms could compete against other EU competitor firms. The pressures of the single market would otherwise risk eliminating locally controlled capitalist enterprises within the new member state upon joining the single market. Nationalist hostility and polarization trends due to perceived neo-colonialism would be undercut in the general, vague requirement that the acceding state would be able to participate in the single market. It should ideally also be able to adopt and implement the *acquis communautaire*, i.e., the state must be relatively strong, meaning not overwhelmed by patronage and clientelism. To rephrase, the new member state institutions should be relatively effective in transposing and implementing the large body of EU policies. It is a daunting task; the *acquis* includes all policies adopted since the 1951 Treaty of Paris establishing the European Coal and Steel Community.

Others argue that the Copenhagen criteria were not effective because the conditionality formally required was not enforced. Schönfelder and Wagner (2016, 476-77, citing Kochenov, 2008) note the

claim that the accession conditionality instruments constituting that the Copenhagen criteria had minimal impact “in the areas of democracy and rule of law.” While the European Commission evaluated each candidate member’s status in meeting the criteria, the EU ultimately did not link this status to accession.

A prevailing public perception and attitude of partisan neutrality and legitimacy towards state authority requires factional elite collaboration and consensus to transfer power peacefully (Bari, 2018, Nielson, Hyde and Kelly, 2019). It can necessitate legal limitations on national governing power that populists portray as “undue constraints on the sovereignty of the people” in these globalizing-Europeanizing, i.e., polarizing, societies (Rupnik, 2016, 80). These assumptions have been problematic not only in Eastern Europe but in the US. The Trump led American populist reactionary social movement has been a threat to the rule of law and promotes polarization and hostility and suspicion towards state institutions (González and Ramírez, 2019). It is partly a reaction to the increasing political influence of traditionally marginalized and despised ethno-racial and gender-minorities and the accommodation of this influence by state institutions (Konrad, 2018). Parallel trends in polarization, hostility and suspicion have emerged in Europe, West and East, particularly following the 2015 refugee crisis. The EU may respond by providing social mobility and creativity opportunities for national actors--individual, group and corporate--that exploit the EU coronavirus economic recovery package opportunities. For example,

“The neighborhood [of Madrid, Cañada Real, with “a large Roma community”] has been a political football for decades, with several layers of government and different municipalities sharing responsibility for the vast stretch of land. Amid the political foot-dragging, about 15 nongovernmental organizations have stepped in to help the most vulnerable in Cañada Real. The number of Spanish aid workers has also risen since the [Covid-19] pandemic began, because travel restrictions have stopped them from working outside Spain” (Minder, 2021, para. 4, 6).

Agency utilizing path dependencies and neo-functional policy feedback build upon growing vested interests in integration. It can incrementally and progressively contribute to the integration of national sovereignties (Spandler, 2015). Cottam and Cottam (2001) note that populist resistance episodically may arise in various national polities, depending upon the idiosyncratic histories and beliefs prevailing in those polities. The UK was always among the most Eurosceptic of the EU member states. This attitude derives significantly from prevailing perceptions of its successful imperial history, contributing to public opinion susceptibility to pro-Brexit appeals. The substantive content of Brexit as a new trade treaty relationship with the rest of the EU is continually under negotiation. This diplomacy persists within the context of the awareness that nearly half of the UK’s trade and commerce remain with continental Europe. London has already accepted the principle that Northern Ireland will remain part of the EU’s single market. Scotland may insist on a new independence referendum. Copelovitch and Pevehouse (2019, 183-84) that much of the rest of the international community continues to move forward in promoting “international cooperation and integration.” For example, the remaining eleven members of the original Trans-Pacific Partnership moved forward with the initiative after the new Trump administration withdrew from it.

Supraordinate European community identities translate through legal mechanisms into superordinate political and legal institutions that take legal precedence over EU member state laws and legislation. These institutions should provide the increasingly attractive targets by which the ambitious and career-oriented seek individual social mobility into the supraordinate European community. It should also provide concrete benefits to produce increasingly attractive opportunities for substantive social creativity for those national identity communities. They would otherwise focus on zero-sum social competition with traditional perceived rivals and adversaries.

“[I]t is possible for hierarchy to co-exist with a certain kind of ontological egalitarianism. While in some cases hierarchical sociality presupposes basic ontological difference—that is, the people who inhabit different ranks in the system are considered to be fundamentally different types of beings, as in the caste system as Dumont describes it—in other cases people are regarded as ontologically equivalent, and the various ranks of the system are theoretically and often actually open to anyone. In

such instances, 'egalitarian hierarchy' is not a contradiction in terms, but rather an important analytical descriptor" (Haynes and Hickel, 2016, 5).

Relationships perceived as zero-sum equate functionally with polarization. Perceiving substantive individual social mobility and ingroup social creativity opportunities equates functionally with cooperation, collaboration and coordination of behavior including policy. Legally formalizing the latter is a significant part of the behavioral substance of integration.

European Integration and Social Identity

The European Union strategy for incorporating interdependency into social identity evolution is a comprehensive model. Bulmer and Lequesne (2020, 6) note the dynamic ways in which the EU and its member states interact as the member states formulate political tactics to generate effective inputs at the supranational EU level in pursuing their respective goals. The member states concurrently must each devise policies for incorporating EU policies at the national level. A result is a changing political opportunity structure within a member state for all actors, i.e., governmental and institutional actors, as well as for political parties and interest groups, along with less formal civil society actors. The EU milieu provides "new tactical and strategic opportunities for 'projection' for all these types of actors." This so-called projection applies in terms of influence and interests. The creation and utilization of this EU setting generates additional socio-political potentials for a broad array of actors to satisfy their social mobility and social creativity drives.

Bulmer and Lequesne (2020, 6) note that these "new opportunities" for projection do not come without costs. All of these actors become subject to new political constraints that emanate from the EU level in terms of policy commitments and legal obligations. Utilizing law and policy, EU integration incentivizes the emergence of a supranational moral and ethical community on these national member state foundations. The agglomeration of these moral and ethical norms and the affect that associates with them constitutes a set of beliefs regarding what is right/appropriate and wrong/inappropriate behavior, i.e., a culture. Belief in this cultural community as the largest with which its members typically have a primary intensity self-identification affective orientation constitutes a national self-identity community. It has this intensive affective tendency because it is believed to be a community of ultimate fate for its members, i.e., what happens to it, happens to its members. National self-determination in the form of a sovereign state is assumed to be necessary for its members to achieve full self-expression. Nationalism in the form of nationalistic behavior is a deep, primary intensity behavioral preoccupation with self-determination for the nation. It can be a polity drive that associates with a predisposition to stereotype the Other perceived as challenger to this national sovereignty (Cottam and Cottam, 2001).

The EU is far from having constituted a new EU national community, but it arguably is in the process of attempting to build one. A paradox lies in attempting to construct a new EU national community on the basis of existing national communities with their own states: nation states. Bulmer and Lequesne (2020, 6) highlight that the questions of "logics" emerge as a result of the interaction between the EU and the member states. Specifically, they pose the dilemma as to whether the so-called logic of political action in Brussels be paramount or should the logic of political action with a member state prevail. These logics are political systemic factors and constraints that interact. The functional aim of the EU is to impact on nationalistic drives so that they associate national self-expression with economic and political liberal values (Cottam and Cottam, 2001).

EU integration to increase, e.g., French, influence internationally through so-called pooling of sovereignty is an articulation of the rhetorical-ethical justification for subsuming French sovereignty. According to traditional conservative ethical principles, the national sovereignty is a paramount ethical imperative. Greater French influence in the international setting through in effect formally institutionalizing interdependency with Berlin and other EU member states is on one level paradoxical. It is plausible to many French polity constituencies in a world system with Washington and Beijing as predominant political poles. It is evidently comparatively less persuasive to the general British polity.

It collectively perceives legacies of the British Empire that provide London with diplomatic bargaining leverage sufficient to maintain British sovereignty. British Brexiters evidently assume that this diplomatic leverage estimation is sufficient for the UK to maintain British sovereignty, relative political status and economic well-being. Nationalists comparatively are more prone towards overestimation of their nation's relative power capabilities (Cottam and Cottam, 2001).

The longer-term consequence is to change prevailing views and also changing attitudes and beliefs and ultimately motivations away from nationalism. Institutionalizing interdependency can alter the composition and constellation of national political polity constituencies in a direction of transnationalism. Different constituencies emphasize and act as carriers of different motivations/values/drives (Cottam, 1977). The so-called respective logics of the respective policy making processes of each member state interact. A functional EU political strategic goal is to influence the member states at the more immediate level of incentivizing nationalism to exploit and thereby align with interdependency. A belief in inexorable interdependency may be expressed as cosmopolitanism, i.e., awareness of individual well-being ineluctably dependent upon transnational communities. Cosmopolitan values equate with universalistic, individual self-determination, i.e., human rights values.

In attempting to shape the EU policy making process, member states bring their own national collective institutional attitudes and beliefs. They interact, utilizing diplomatic bargaining amidst the formal and informal EU institutional environment (Cottam and Gallucci, 1978). The complexity of the EU policy making process with its diversity of constituent actors at subnational, national and supranational levels transforms these national initiatives. It diffuses them institutionally throughout the EU via bargaining negotiations among an array of institutional actors within the EU policy making process. Senior ministerial representatives meet to decide from a list of policy choice alternatives on a pre-planned agenda, including in the Council of the EU and the European Council. They are less prone to suspect that the policy process represents the obscured hegemonic aims of any particular member state, particularly Germany. Even the most recent Covid-19 pandemic aid program negotiated in July had to be approved by the European Parliament (Erlanger and Stevis-Gridneff, 2020). Creating and maintaining this perceptual milieu is necessary for the neo-functional spillover processes to occur via actors pursuing their social mobility and social creativity strategies.

Subverting susceptibilities to national zero-sum social competition in an EU founded by nation states is a necessary precondition for encouraging social mobility and creativity strategies among Europeans. Incrementalism is necessary to allow for the elaboration and evolution of international regime-based, transnational institutions. They provide these pro-EU ethical identity communities opportunities for individual social mobility and collective social creativity. Neo-corporatism is a tactical behavior pattern by which to achieve this institutional elaboration while still building upon the EU foundations amidst the nation state members. Different types of actors project their interests and influence in this systemically interdependent multilevel institutional milieu. It is legally based on treaty law between formally sovereign member states, to create supranational EU institutions. Bulmer and Lequesne (2020, 6) describe them to include of course national governments as their officials and ministers represent them, as well as "para-public agencies," i.e., regulatory bodies such as national competition agencies. They also include national parliaments, sub-national governments, political parties, interest groups and "civil society actors"; national courts "and, in a more diffuse sense, public opinion and conceptions of identity."

From the decision makers' perspective, public opinion may refer to a range of constraints focusing on electoral politics, e.g., public opinion surveys leading up to the electoral results themselves. Conceptions of identity impact on electoral politics but may be subsumed among constituencies insofar as latent but intense concern for national sovereignty becomes salient. It then becomes a motivation for collective national behavior, e.g., Brexit. Promoting European identity on an individual and ingroup level paradoxically builds upon national sovereignty to create something supraordinate that is more than the sum of its parts. It may ultimately perhaps supersede those components in a future sovereign superordinate EU. As noted on an individual level it promotes social mobility into a European community with real material benefits while also constructing this European polity community. The

European polity emerges through social creativity strategies of national communities vesting themselves into the European self-identity ingroup. Opportunities for building this European community emerges in a global polity context, i.e., vis-à-vis Russia or China or the global climate crisis or the US. The EU's national component communities engage in social creativity strategies with each other within an EU supranational institutional context (DeDominicis, 2020).

From this perspective, Brexit is substantive because it means that the UK will not be participating formally in the legal policy making institutions of the EU. Bulmer and Lequesne (2020, 6) ask two rhetorical questions: 1) have national governments made EU institutions their agents? or 2) are the EU's institutions transforming the national government institutions into administrative arms of the EU as components of what one analyst, Morten Egeberg (2006) describes as a "European administrative space?". EU institutions falling under the perception of being agents of one or an alliance of some of the member states at the expense of the interests of the other member states is a perilous condition. If all the EU member states view the EU institutions as the agents of all the member states, then it indicates success in building an EU ingroup self-identity community founded in EU/European principles. Nationalist political entrepreneurs and their constituency followers may not agree and may disrupt this process.

National legal systems have incorporated transnational social movement aims in part via international law. They apply *jus cogens* from international law, i.e., universal norms such as the ban on racism (Cassese, 2005). The EU is often portrayed as an elite-driven project. Bulmer and Lequesne (2020, 6) pose parallel questions regarding the EU's "transnational political parties" and "transnational interest groups." These EU-level parties and EU-level interest group lobbies evolve to serve supranational European community interests as agents of the national constituent member organizations. The EU provides social creativity options that provide concrete benefits include self-identity affirmation by official and unofficial national representatives within the global community. LGBTQ non-discrimination rulings by the US Supreme Court, e.g., are rhetorical manifestations of the legally binding results of the application of ethical norms with the authority of the state. It may affirm social creativity insofar as it reflects a global transnational social movement; the US would be otherwise out of step with Europe and much of the rest of the world. The state provides roles and institutions in this globalizing context.

The so-called golden rule, i.e., treat others as one would expect to be treated, generates social creativity if it affirms self-identity in the myriad social contexts in which it may be applied. As noted in the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry for it, it emerged in a traditional, small "tribal" society in the late bronze age, i.e., it probably was codified to affirm local ascribed roles and status (Puka, n.d., para. 73). It has expanded since early modernity to encompass consciousness of membership in broader communities. Citizens are aware that communities exist to which they belong and in which they are stakeholders, and we need to consider how to act in order to protect and promote the community. Emotion is important here. Generating social creativity as a national domestic regime control strategy may focus on uniting vis-à-vis an external national Other. It implies ingroup members are all allies against the enemy Other, and its members stereotype each other as friends bound together against the enemy, i.e., the enemy of my enemy is my friend. A theme in the encyclopedia entry is that the golden rule is a facet of shared community recognition as a factor shaping individual decisions about how to behave. Protecting the sovereignty of both the national and European community is part of this dynamic norm system of European governance.

Bulmer and Lequesne (2020, 10) highlight the analytical importance of "institutionalism," i.e., historical, sociological and rational choice institutionalism. They focus on the character of EU member state policies and how these policies are formulated domestically. Institutionalism also highlights EU-member state relations. Institutionalism has a longer tradition, federalism, as an important strategy for developing European integration. For those observers who wish to see the abandonment of the nation-state, it highlights the dialectical relationship between territorial member state interest interaction with a "de-territorialized political project" in producing EU policies and politics (Ibid., 12). The development of federal political systems witnesses their original dualist forms evolve into ever increasing overlap

between the levels of government, i.e., “cooperative federalism” (Ibid.). It is important for understanding the continuing imperative to achieve consensus between the different member states institutions at one level, and the EU institutions at another level. The emphasis on exercise of democracy in political systems by utilizing cooperative federalism promotes executive authority at the expense of control by parliaments and societies. It generates social mobility and creativity opportunities to avoid social competition strategies among nations and constituencies. It helps create the political conditions for constituting the content of achieving consensus in Europe.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This study centers on survey of the scholarly literature and news media reports of record. With the enlargement of the EU into Eastern Europe in 2004 and 2007, “the majority of the European agricultural households were located in the new member states” (Lovec and Erjavec, 2013, 126). The pace of change in the comparatively “underdeveloped productions structures” [sic] indicates the structural stresses rapidly transforming rural socio-economic institutions. During 2003-2011, “the number of agricultural households in the new member states has declined by 46.6 percent in Estonia, 44.2 per cent in Bulgaria, 34.4 per cent in Latvia and 30.7 per cent in Poland” (Lovec and Erjavic, 2013, 133 fn. 18, referencing Eurostat, 2011). Islamoglu (2016, 501-02, fn. 2) characterized the EU Common Agricultural Policy as functionally aiming to accelerate the building of “infrastructure” in these agricultural regions. The increasing Europeanization of the sector thereby makes it more amenable to foreign direct investment. It supplants small scale farmers with “mechanized agribusiness relying on migrant (transient) labor or reducing those producers to contract farmers subjected to the terms of transnational distribution networks.”

Bulgaria lags within the European Union regarding public policy to train, educate, consult and inform agricultural sector workers regarding innovations and policy requirements. 13 years after Bulgaria’s EU accession, “almost 93% of all agricultural managers are still with only practical experience and no agricultural training” [sic] (Bachev, 2020, 96). “Stimulating and sharing knowledge, innovation, digitalization and promoting their greater use is set again as one of the strategic (a “horizontal”) objective in the new programming period 2021-2027 for implementation of the European Union (EU) Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)” [sic] [Bachev, 2020, 62, referencing the European Commission, 2018].

Network analysis is a prominent focus in EU policy making process studies (Kenealy, Peterson and Corbett, 2018). Henning describes the political science field conceptualizing “policy network analysis” in two forms. One is a “quantitative sociological branch” diagrammatically mapping social relations. The other describes particular patterns of “state guidance” to negotiate a “collective decision in a common problem area” among “a plurality of state and private organizational actors” (Henning 2009, 153, referencing Héritier, 1996 [sic] and Mayntz, 1993, 39). Henning imposes a policy network analysis overview to integrate pluralist and corporatist paradigmatic perspectives on interest mediation:

“If policy networks are segmented, i.e. access to the government is biased in favour of a specific type of interest group like farmers, Henning and Wald (2000) call such a system clientelism or clientelistic pluralism, in contrast to pluralism which is characterized by many interest groups with more or less equal access to the government. Finally, if policy networks include interrelations among different interest groups, one can speak of cooperative rather than competitive lobbying systems. For the CAP, this creates four types of ideal-type lobbying systems: cooperative or competitive pluralism and cooperative or competitive clientelism” [sic] (Henning, 2009, 157).

The utilization of CAP resources to build clientelistic networks within the post-Communist member states is not surprising. Agricultural production networks are comparatively weak and underdeveloped in Bulgaria. “The main reason for the limited distribution of networks within the Bulgarian agribusiness and rural areas, according to the experts is the lack of trust between farmers, processors and traders [...]. This is largely predetermined by the specific development of agribusiness in Bulgaria over the last

25 years of broken links between production, processing and marketing, as well as the broken tradition of private farming” (Doitchinova, Terziyska and Zaimova, 2017, 444).

Labelling these behavior patterns as mafia-like implies that it is grossly illegitimate from a Western developed nation state perspective. In the post-Communist context, in which the emergence of effective nation-wide state institutions is an attitudinal belief that has yet to become prevailing, this break down into corruption is inevitable. The *Times* report characterizes the utilization of the CAP funds to create “a modern feudalism” while focusing on Hungary under the longtime Fidesz government of Viktor Orban (Gebrekidan, Apuzzo and Novak, 2019, para. 64). Privatization of large amounts of state-owned agricultural land focused on distribution to Orban political allies. Their larger land holdings would allocate greater proportional EU CAP subsidies to them. The outcome would incentivize the countryside to ally with Fidesz: “It is a type of modern feudalism, where small farmers live in the shadows of huge, politically powerful interests – and European Union subsidies help finance it” (Gebrekidan, Apuzzo and Novak, 2019, para. 71).

According to Zankina and Gurov (2018, 5-6), Bulgarian national March 2017 parliamentary elections operated under representative selection regulations adopted immediately before the vote. They became “the second parliamentary elections utilizing a preferential voting system.” They indicate a shift towards “regionalization” and “corporate voting” as well as “controlled” voting, i.e., employers/patrons influencing voting behavior of employees/clients. Zankina and Gurov (2018, 9) note that Bulgarian patron-client political economic behavior includes authorities awarding no-bid “advertising budgets of EU operational programs” to favored media outlets.

Use of the label, corruption, is as much a political act as it is an analytical one. Parochialism in power relations characterizes weak states. European Union standards, set by its two most powerful, foundational members, France and Germany, to a significant extent fix the criteria for modernity and development for the rest of Europe. The effort to eliminate corruption, i.e., to establish the so-called rule of law, involves creating a prevailing belief that most members of society are bound to and in fact tend to follow the law. It means creating this social psychological environment in which the modal citizen comes to believe it to be actual and true. It requires creating feedback that confirms and reinforces this institutionalization and the belief in it. It necessitates substantive, concrete social mobility and social creativity opportunities to be created and exploited. It entails agreement as to the national legitimacy of those forms of right and wrong, i.e., ethical versus unethical, behavior. Consensual agreement on these norms, or at least on their idealization, does not yet exist. European Parliament intervention in Hungarian and Polish internal political trends that contradict its understanding of rule of law has provoked a nationalist backlash by the targeted authorities (Steviss-Gridneff and Novak, 2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Feudalism is a label for a pattern of parochial institutionalization of power relationships in an environment of contingency and insecurity. As a Weberian ideal-type model, it consists of a system of bottomless triangles from the more powerful at the top of the pyramid and the lord’s vassals at the two base points. They in turn are lords to their own vassals below them. In feudalism at its most developed, the king was at the highest point with bottomless pyramid relationships continuing downward with the lowest class, e.g., serfs, at the very bottom. In return for obedience, the vassal receives security from external threats and dangers through this parochial, personalistic, clientelistic relationship. **In modern state patronage-based control systems,**

“The patron–client relationship is a complex one. While clients must remain loyal to their patrons to secure future transfers, even the top patron—the national leader—generally has at least a tacit obligation to secure privileges for the regime’s full clientele (Schatzberg 2001; Smith 2007). In this way, the state maintains order through a hierarchy of patrons that generates some legitimacy within society, even alongside the resentment that the corruption imperative often creates. What outsiders take

as a failure of governance, and what analysts have termed 'quasi-statehood' at best, represents an alternative, often capable mode of governance" (Freeland, 2017, 132).

The prevalence of these structures in post-Communist eastern Europe is not surprising given the pervasive contingency within these societies undergoing revolutionary transformations from Stalinism. The daunting, state-building tasks these societies face far exceeds the challenges confronting, e.g., the defeated and occupied former axis powers. Fascist Germany, Italy and Japan still relied on a capitalist political economy whose institutions provided the foundations for their respective postwar economic miracles. Capitalist institutions in post-Communist eastern Europe to varying degrees had to be constructed from comparatively much more primitive conditions. This writer during his field research in 1989 Poland encountered anecdotal accounts of Communist-era banking officials inquiring to their Western interlocutors as to how a bank checking account functions. The difficulties in acting ethically in post-Communist societies were most obviously illustrated in the immediate post-1989 phase. Communist-era laws were inappropriate for creating a capitalist economy. Successful businesspeople could not act according to the laws to be successful. Hence, businesspeople could be effectively labelled illegitimate in their behavior only if they engaged in the threat and use of physical force against their competitors and targets.

Post-Communism, Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism

Historically, domestic status achievement had become anchored in national ideals/standards/stereotypes. Nation states formed in relation to perceived, often zero-sum competition of the nation with other nations. Nationalists are more prone to view these relations in zero sum terms. Non-nationalists and cosmopolitans are more prone to perceive and exploit social mobility and creativity opportunities from globalization if they are available. An EU peacebuilding functional aim is to create a regional, if not global, international environment that mitigates perceived national insecurity and threat. This benign environment incentivizes the marginalization of the nationalists within their respective national policy making processes. Particularly business interests will seek to exploit these European social mobility opportunities and social creativity opportunities insofar as they promote corporate profitability.

National patronage and clientelism can be legitimated as Europeanization if they are used to facilitate European integration of the nation state. Militant supporters of Viktor Orban and the Kaczynski twins believe they are seeking to displace the elite exploiting their advantages derived from their communist nomenklatura progenitors. They are more likely to be mitigated in their militancy to the extent that their policies are legitimated as part of Europeanization. The post-Communist elite is less likely to be effectively stereotyped as the unfairly disproportionate beneficiaries of Europeanization in rhetorical discourse.

The commitment of national European polities to cosmopolitan values should not be overstated. "President Macron of France was honest enough to confess [...] early in 2018 that it was possible a [EU exit] referendum in France could even have yielded the same result as in Britain" (Bogdanor, 2020, para. 3). The election of Trump and Brexit illustrate that the modal citizenry is not cosmopolitan but are ethnic core group nationalists. Satisfying these militant populists is often largely symbolic, particularly if there is an immediate significant systemic economic dislocation in fulfilling their demands. The Trump administration declared its rejection of the North American Free Trade Agreement. "Many Americans who longed for a strongman will vote for Mr. Trump again. They revere him for tearing up NAFTA (even if the new version looks an awful lot like the old one) and slapping tariffs on Chinese imports and Korean washing machines (even if his unpredictable trade war forced the deepest contraction in the manufacturing sector in a decade)" (Stockman, 2020, para. 25).

The European Union can be conceptualized as an attitude, when expressed in the form of a belief, focusing on appropriate norms for conflict resolution among competitive and competing entities. Threat and use of coercion are not acceptable, chiefly since the EU is not sovereign. The EU begins as a system of governance, not government. It will become a system of government when it becomes sovereign,

i.e., it can enforce its will with threat and use of coercion, ultimately, if necessary. It cannot now do so. These conflicts include national identity value tensions, but resolution requires allegiance to limits on utilization of means to resolve them to include abstention from threat and use of coercion. These limits indicate the beginning of the emergence of sovereignty which develops through law. Community consensus on these norms of ultimate authority to resolve conflicts perceived as laying in particular institutions indicates sovereignty. Perceived intentions of the competing institutional actors claiming de jure or de facto sovereignty shapes these perceptions.

A Reporters Without Borders research analysis of Bulgaria's political economy has characterized political regime relationships as a new form of feudalism:

"Bulgaria has evolved from a strong communist regime to a modern feudalism, but without any real change of actors. The former oligarchy invested massively in the privatisation of the Bulgarian economy at the start of the 1990s and took control of all the key sectors such as energy, construction, natural resource management, transport, telecommunications and real estate."

"The situation in the media is similar, and according to the report it is not uncommon to find former high-level party and security officials or former intelligence officers managing media outlets" (Price, 2015, 28 citing Basille, 2009),

This same analysis of the Bulgarian media political economy places it within the context of the broader transformation of the old Communist elite into the political economic elite of the new regime. It notes comparatively that "the richest Polish businessmen today had extensive contacts with the security services prior to 1989" (Price 2015, 24, citing Horne, 2009). Price also references Ibroscheva (2012) whose research found that "controversial figures that had collaborated with the Communist regime own some of the most influential media outlets. The former spies' unique position in the media, for example, gave them unprecedented access to media resources like printing and broadcasting facilities, as well as access to substantial capital that was out of the reach of ordinary citizens" (Price, 2015, 24, citing Ibroscheva, 2012).

Price highlights research that shows the intergenerational focus of transfer of national political economic authority and status between the established and upcoming Communist party nomenklatura:

"[T]he revolutions of 1989 were, in effect, a change of actors, in which the younger generation of the nomenklatura simply ousted its older rivals. The change also involved a redistribution of political power to a group of more economically savvy and pragmatic nomenklatura members, many becoming prominent politicians, oligarchs and media owners through Eastern Europe. Where the transitions were peaceful, the formal rulers easily converted their political capital into economic assets and social status" (Price, 2015, 22-23, citing Kryshstanovskaya and White, 1996 and Steen and Ruus, 2002).

This transfer began before Communism's collapse with liberalization reforms which younger, lower level nomenklatura exploited most expeditiously given their familial authority positions. Entrepreneurial activity included joint ventures with Western companies along with earliest access to newly available credits and privatized state resources as the Communist elite prepared for liberalization (Kryshstanovskaya and White, 1996). Price (2015, citing Andreev, 2009) highlights the comparatively exceptional role that the former secret service personnel have played in shaping the post-Communist political party composition in Bulgaria and Romania. Their influence dominated privatization of state-owned assets in favor of powerful local actors while foreign investors were blocked. Price notes the increasing resentment and envy characterizing the orientation of public constituencies throughout eastern Europe. Their focus is on the appearance of informal agreements between current and former economic elites to maintain their positions while income disparities increase after EU accession. "80% of Romanians polled thinking that corruption levels grew or stagnated even after joining EU [in 2007]" [*sic*] (Price, 2015, 25, quoting Horne, 2009, 363).

Price (2015, 25) highlights the importance of research on the “postcommunist media landscape ... especially in relation to the origin of the funds with which private media outlets were launched or purchased. The majority of those who own media in Bulgaria ... consider it more important to own a media outlet as such rather than make a profit as this kind of media ownership is not profit-oriented but supports other political or corporate ambitions.” The US is also increasingly reflecting globalization trends. Most recent US news reports highlight the emergence of for-profit local media public relations outlets masquerading as local news outlets. They work with political campaigns to plant political campaign propaganda masquerading as local news reports on allegedly local digital news sites (Davey and Nicas, 2020). It reflects in part the increasing polarization of US politics and the consequent reflexive pluralization of the US digital news media’s output (DeDominicis, 2019).

A PATH FORWARD

During the latter stages of the US-Soviet Cold War era, economic interdependency was a vehicle for generating intensifying perception of threat from other states. Cottam (1994) notes that the 1973 global oil shock generated an intensely hostile response in the US, with threats of US military action against critical US Cold War containment allies, the Saudi royal family and the Shah of Iran. Saudi Arabia and Iran had been perceived as essential clients in US efforts to contain Soviet expansion in the Middle East. Media reports noted scenarios employing violence against the oil-producing states by the consuming states. Nervousness emerged regarding developments as to how this new source of international conflict would intersect with the Cold War and whether and how to achieve a new political system equilibrium. The economic upheaval generated a serious political crisis, but of relatively short duration with a steep decrease in the intensity of perceived challenge. This case illustrated the capacity of economic concerns to generate a very intense value conflict at the interstate level. The potential for a very dangerous conflict is evident.

The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated the disruption of social norms in the US which “has reinforced nationalist instincts” (Sanger, 2020, para. 7). President Biden competed with Trump in demagogically stereotyping China, labeling China’s chief executive a “thug” during his 2020 election campaign (Gladstone, 2020, para. 10). These accelerated nationalism-based trends are a collective attitudinal response to this accelerated change across the gamut of domestic traditional norms. These constitutive societal institutions, ranging from personal identities to global systems, are rules and roles and the affective orientations and symbolic collective idealizations that associate with them. Societal actors react to disruption and its insecurity, accelerating change trends via dynamic intensifying social identity management responses. One academic observer underlined the socio-political effects of the pervasive societal fear and anxiety amidst the pandemic. He portrayed it as a forewarning of the implications of the imminent cascading, chaos-inducing crises inherent in unaddressed intensifying anthropogenic global climate change:

“But along with the fear [of the Covid-19 pandemic], I remembered a lesson I’d learned in Iraq. I’d been a soldier in Baghdad in 2003-2004, where I saw what happens when the texture of the everyday is ripped apart. I realized that what we call social life was like a vast and complex game, with imaginary rules we all agreed to follow, fictions we turned into fact through institutions, stories, and daily repetition. Some of the rules were old, deeply ingrained and resilient. Some were so tenuous they’d barely survive a hard wind” [sic] (Scranton, 2021, para. 13).

Prior to the pandemic, international trends included domestic polarization tendencies already associated with globalization with the rise of populist nationalism, impacting national government foreign policy (Beichelt and Bulmer, 2020). Government responses to the Covid-19 pandemic accelerated these trends. Politically, scapegoating of a foreign actor mobilizes support while perilously risking contribution to an intensifying conflict spiral to crisis levels between Beijing and Washington.

In responding to a perceived economy-based threat from a foreign state competitor, “[a] strategy for addressing this conflict would have to be an elaborate one involving elements of both containment and détente. A combination of elements from both strategies would be necessary in order to deny certain

strategic options and to reduce misperception as an exacerbating factor in the conflict. The collective political capacity to be successful is questionable as the extended cold war conflict illustrated” [sic] (Cottam, 1994, 167). The EU may develop its capacities to develop and apply a sophisticated strategy incorporating elements of both containment and détente towards the US, Russia and China. Such a strategy would focus on polity constituencies within the target, politically strengthening cooperative elements while contextually weakening militant polity components.

Scapegoating China is politically convenient, addictive in the short term but dangerously short sighted. As Cottam and Cottam (2001) note, nationalistic actors which perceive intense threat may engage in social creativity via alliances with heretofore conflictual groups. These alliance members are self-servingly stereotyped positively for sharing the same perceived threat from a third actor. As noted above, the individual relationship analogue for this psycho-social dynamic is captured in the adage, the enemy of my enemy is my friend. Each actor has a function in the domestic and international alliance that is different but necessary. The functional promotion of postwar European integration utilized and exploited to varying degrees shared perception of threat from the USSR. A political psychological tendency is to solidify domestic core nationalist constituency political support by focusing on a perceived, shared common threat. The functional political systemic predisposition to embody the challenges to social cohesion in the form of an identifiable foreign challenge is significant.

The political impulse is to blame domestic socio-economic dislocation on a perceived aggressive, imperialist threat from foreign actor’s political economic national development strategies (Perlez, Mozur and Ansfield, 2017). The Trump administration “identified” Beijing’s “Made in China 2025” strategic development plan “as a long-term threat to big American industries like aircraft manufacturing, semiconductors and pharmaceuticals” (Bradsher, 2018, para. 5). The scapegoating includes concurrent selective, domestically polarizing targeting of stereotyped internal constituencies as channeling this threat, necessitating state corporatist intervention to counter it. According to Trump administration US trade representative Robert E. Lighthizer,

[...] *“A lemming-like desire for “efficiency” had caused many of them [US businesses] to move manufacturing over the past two decades to China, Vietnam and Indonesia, among other places.”*

“They did so to save on labor costs or to avoid environmental standards, but that wasn't the whole story. Offshoring was a trend that morphed into a craze. Egged on by Wall Street analysts and management consultants, or simply swept up by the herd mentality of their peers, businesses came to see offshoring as something they were expected to do to serve the interests of shareholders. Many failed to weigh independently the long-term costs or meaningfully consider alternatives.”

“For business, this strategy paid off in the short term. Cheap labor meant higher profits. But for America, the effects were traumatic. The United States lost five million manufacturing jobs. That, in turn, devastated towns and contributed to the breakdown of families, an opioid epidemic and despair” (Lighthizer, 2020, para. 3-5).

Countering these tendencies requires state strategic neo-corporatist intervention for the ultimately inseparably interlocked, interdependent pursuit of domestic and global social justice. Greater public support for education and training opportunities can be provided. Integration of sustainable development, i.e., Green New Deal-type programs to transform national infrastructure can also appeal to the working class. Supporting unionization efforts can be politically efficacious while at the same time promoting automation and technological change. These policies serve to counteract vulnerability to conservative populist demagogic appeals. The latter promotes perceptual and attitudinal trends viewing the target as an intense challenge in social competition, zero-sum relationship terms. Social justice promotion policies encourage abilities to recognize and exploit growing social mobility and creativity opportunities that emerge from globalization.

Herrmann (2019, 6) references Hans J. Morgenthau (1973, 252) in noting this tendency of state actors to engage in “nationalistic universalism.” That is, national leaders advocate international support for

their state's foreign policies, claiming they serve superior, universal ethical goals. To rephrase, state leaders tend to cloak the output of their foreign policy making process in broadly appealing ideological or religious symbols. To the extent that international audiences are persuaded, the state's influence to achieve its aims increases. To the extent that motivated reasoning drives foreign public opinions to accept these nationalistic universal claims of the initiator, the initiator generates influence over their thinking and behavior. Power is defined here as the "exercise of influence over the minds and actions of others" (Cottam and Gallucci, 1978, 4). These nationalistic universal claims combine with other power capabilities of the initiator. It provides a psychological route by which to acquiesce to or support the expansion of the national influence of the initiator. History is littered with failures to persuade targets to accept this hegemony often because of the nationalism of the target community being evoked by the perceived imperial threat from the initiator.

The EU may serve a useful function in dispersing European influence generation power sources so that Europe's influence is less likely to be viewed as a cloak for neo-colonialism emanating from Berlin (DeDominicis, 2020). The target makes this subjective assessment, other observers may differ, partly depending upon their own motivations and need for allies and assistance. A Ukrainian nationalist may view EU influence expansion into Ukraine quite benignly, particular insofar as it is seen as a counterforce to Russian imperialist intervention. Accommodating EU influence in Ukraine requires not appearing to aim in effect to replace Russian imperialism with German. Moscow's prevailing view is one in which the EU is perceived as the civilian soft power velvet glove for NATO hard power based, US efforts at neo-colonial hegemonic expansion. For the EU to be a more effective peace strategy governance system in Europe and the world, it needs to convincingly differentiate itself from the US/NATO.

Development of an effective capability for EU "strategic autonomy" is therefore recommended (Erlanger, 9/2020, para. 5). EU "containment" of the US was considered to become an imperative if Trump had remained in office (Cohen 2020, para. 6). As the editorial director of *Le Monde* Sylvie Kauffmann noted, that German Chancellor Angela Merkel declared "we, Europeans, must take our fate into our own hands" (Kauffmann, 2020, para. 17). Her call came after a contentious NATO meeting with US President Trump, but little resulted until "[a]gainst all odds, the coronavirus crisis has made Europeans more aware of the need to take charge of their own future. "European sovereignty" is now the order of the day in Paris and Berlin" (Kauffmann, 2020, para. 17-18). With Biden's election, the political imperative to allocate the political and material resources to encourage this so-called EU strategic autonomy capability will recede. Return to the pre-Trump status quo is unlikely (Erlanger, 11/2020).

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The goal of this paper has been to critique the role of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) as an instrument contributing to political integration among European nation states. The paper utilized data and information available in the public record while applying a political psychology-based theoretical conceptualization of nationalism. It triangulates with selected scholarly literature to provide this analysis of the Common Agricultural Policy as an east European national regime stabilization vehicle. The EU CAP subsidy programs functionally support co-optive patronage network political construction amidst ongoing transformational reform of the agricultural sector. It mitigates the salience of latent, intense nationalistic political polarization potential in these societies undergoing transformational change after two generations of foreign Communist imperial domination. The study applies a social identity theory-based conceptualization of the political psychology of nationalism. It finds that the CAP is in effect utilized to promote cooperative social identity management strategies.

These strategies functionally aim to alleviate the vulnerability to intensification of societal polarization around social competition, i.e., the perception of social relations as zero-sum. These alternative social identity management strategies include, first, social mobility, i.e., individual cooptation and assimilation. Second, social creativity, i.e., re-evaluating the perceiver's own ingroup identity positively via opportunistic alternative substantive criteria, emphasizes Europeanization including via the CAP.

Alternative political patronage networks via the support of EU policies such as the CAP emerge to compete successfully with the patronage beneficiaries of the old Communist elite. The latter have readily adapted to European integration. This peacebuilding imperative applies to these national societies with recent histories of intense political polarization exacerbated by recent foreign Communist imperial domination. The dynamics of social identity evolution via social competition, social mobility and social creativity in a globalizing context drives Europeanization in Bulgaria and elsewhere. European Union institutionalization involves norm attitude evolution reflecting actors' behavioral/psychological orientation to exploit broadening opportunities for integration and cooptation. This orientation has a formal legal institutional formulation basis around which to orient and direct this strategy in the form of EU treaties and institutions.

The Brexit referendum underscores for managers and public administrators the imperative to disincentivize through institutional reform the political exploitation of nationalist populism. Demagogic exploitation of intense but variably salient collective political cleavages around divisive nationalism remains a useful short term political strategy even in western Europe. Europeanization's acceleration of societal change exposes intensifying dissensus in post-Communist polities, heightening their vulnerability to internal polarization and nationalist conflict. Formal EU institutional change has subsequently avoided formal intergovernmental conferences and EU treaty amendment national referendums that demonstrably intensify internal political polarization (Bickerton, 2020).

The limitations of the paper lie in the conceptualization of the causal linkages between integration via encouraging substantive national group social creativity strategies with individual social mobility. Directions for future research include social psychological analysis of the evolution of the systemic, structural processes by which parochial identity evolves into national and transnational identity. European economic integration is also a process of pan-European culture building, embracing the level of the very parochial and personal while simultaneously national and transnational.

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