

WEB3, HEGEMONY AND ANONYMITY: THE TRANSNATIONAL SOCIAL IDENTITY DYNAMICS OF GLOBALIZED NATIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCY

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ABSTRACT

This paper highlights that hegemony has its foundation in the authority of the nation state, manifested clearly in the community value consensually affirmed in the value of fiat currency. State authority permits the potential for the existence of the so-called rule of law, both in its explicit legal forms and in its habitual patterns of behavior on the basis of mutual expectations. State regulation in enforcing property rights is critical for the real functioning of markets the outcomes of which functionally reaffirm state authority. This reaffirmation emerges both by reinforcing its material resources and also by seeking exceptions that exploit state authority while circumventing transparency. The release of the Panama, Paradise and Pandora papers reveal the arena of technically, typically legal financial market transactions. Yet they appear to violate commonly, habitually held normative assumptions in national communities, particularly in so-called developed societies. The reaction of many participants in these lightly regulated and even criminal endeavors is to challenge the legitimacy of the state authority that attempts to impose these obligations. The value of Web3 blockchains includes anonymity as a reactionary resistance to this state authority and hegemony. Cryptocurrencies are dialectical creations of national rule of law in the interstate system.

JEL: D73, E02, F5, H00, K4

KEYWORDS: Complex Interdependency, Corruption, Cryptocurrency, Hegemony, Nationalism, Social Identity Theory

INTRODUCTION

Persson and Povitkina (2017) analyze natural disaster preparedness and prevention as a public good. They acknowledge that in economics, so-called pure public goods are benefits from which no community members may be excluded. The benefit by one community member actor via the provided public good does not decrease provision of the good to the other community members, i.e., a public good is nonexcludable and non-rivalrous. The Covid-19 pandemic is a vast natural disaster. Public policy limiting the total costs of societal political, economic, psychological disruption in response to this public health crisis can be conceptualized as a public good. “Coping with natural disasters is one of the key functions of the state as a part of its task to provide security to its citizens. [...] [G]overnments’ ability to implement vulnerability reduction policies and their capacity to deliver public goods and services to all entitled recipients are also crucial for developing disaster preparedness” [*sic*] (Persson and Povitkina, 2017, 833-834). American internal political polarization regarding the necessity of Covid-19 vaccination mandates has been evident (Zhang et al., 2021). It illustrates that the effective provision of public goods, i.e., the so-called capacity to deliver them, ultimately depends upon the polity’s subjective prevailing views of government policy. This prevailing view functionally holds that the state authorities are promoting the public welfare through the identified policy. American political polarization intensified in reaction to the US authorities’ imposition with Covid-19 public health protection mandates (Prinski and Holyoak, 2022).

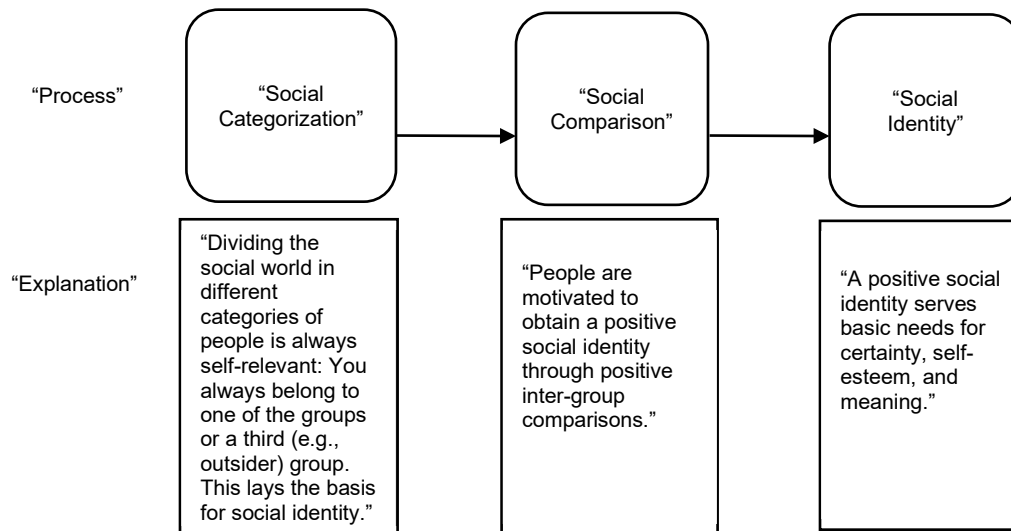
“The [US] government handling of the pandemic was heavily impacted by the feedback loops between the political polarization, media influence, systemic barriers, and pandemic fatigue” (Geisterfer-Black et al., 2022, 155). Provision of public goods is functionally synonymous with the public granting both the authorities, and the policy making process outputs they oversee, legitimacy.

Some policy obligations of the state authorities are less controversial than others. For example, comparatively fewer polity citizens reject the authorities’ claim that the state in the form of the government should provide for the common defense against foreign threats. National security is a public good from which all citizens are perceived as benefitting, even while the cost of providing it may be unevenly distributed. Creation of public goods includes establishing and promoting the emergence of prevailing views and attitudinal beliefs. According to this collective cognition perspective, societal provision of universal access to identified resources in the form of government policy is part of essential national infrastructure. For example, US political figures have promoted US universal access to childcare services as “family infrastructure” while highlighting idiosyncratic American policy legitimation challenges (Cass, 2021). Elite commentary on the Warren and Sanders US presidential campaigns on the eve of the Covid-19 pandemic crisis noted that the FDR administration established a national network of childcare centers. Utilizing funds from “wartime infrastructure” legislation, it encouraged women to enter the wartime crisis labor force (Covert, 2020, para. 5). The Truman administration shut down the program after the Japanese surrender, but the concept continued to circulate leading to the Congress passing national legislation that the Nixon administration vetoed in 1971. Prominent US Congress members advocating the institutionalization of a national US childcare program point to the US military’s childcare provision system for uniformed personnel as a “model” (Gupta, 2021, para. 8).

This cognitive perspective reflects the essential nature of institutions as consisting of actor roles and behavioral rules. They exist in the social perceptions and attitudinal beliefs and expectations held among societal actors. Public goods are national policy institutional infrastructure which the public has internalized as legitimate that societal actors utilize to seek social mobility and to engage in social creativity. Examples include public education provision. In so-called developed nation states, the authorities to whom the modal citizenry functionally grants representative legitimacy acquire additional capacity to generate influence over citizens’ minds and actions. They utilize appeals to institutionalized stereotypes of achievement status ideals to legitimate policies, i.e., the engage in paternalistic “nudging” of the citizenry (Machan, 2016, 161). Threats of authority coercion do not end but they become tertiary. In Weberian ideal-typical, so-called developed nation states, the authorities are hegemonic. The modal citizenry functionally grants, if not necessarily consciously acknowledges, that the authorities have the moral and ethical right to be the authorities. They regulate the institutions for managing social identity creation and evolution.

Figure 1 shows the basic principles of social identity theory. Social identity theory underlines processes of societal change in terms of perceptions, attitudes and values of self and other amidst social interaction. Social identity theory is the theoretical foundation for the analysis in the paper. It highlights the significance of human in-group vs. out-group formation as actors strive via social interaction to satisfy their evolving motivations and needs. These needs include positive self-esteem through identity affirmation. In response to a negative comparison of one’s self-identity in-group with a relevant out-group, the individual perceiver manages their social identity through management strategies. They include 1) competing with the out-group, i.e., social competition; 2) attempting to join the superior out-group if feasible, i.e., social mobility, and 3) reevaluating the in-group along alternative criteria, i.e., social creativity.

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).” [sic] (DeDominicis, 2021c, 40).

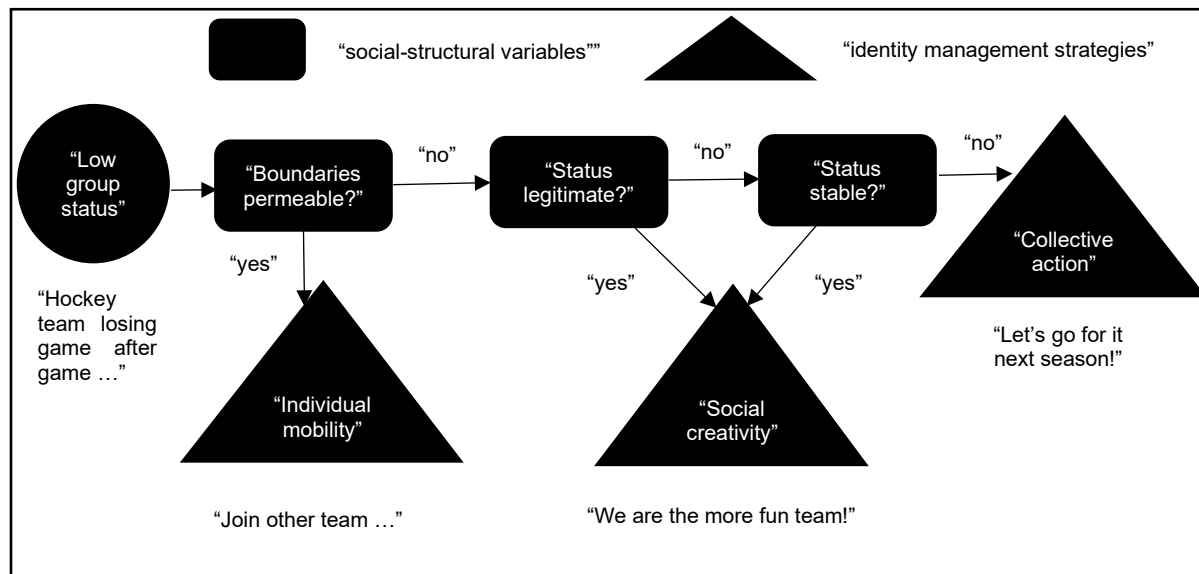
“Upon comparing one’s ingroup with another and perceiving one’s own status as inferior and therefore one’s self-image as negative, the perceiver can respond with three psycho-behavioral strategies. One strategy is social mobility, i.e., attempt individually to join the perceived superior status group. 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 [...] schematically summarizes a presentation of social identity theory precepts.” (DeDominicis, 2021c, 41).

“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.” (DeDominicis, 2021c, 40).

Social identity theory highlights a critical societal process in the evolution of “imagined communities” (Anderson, 1983). Legitimate authorities oversee the construction and elaboration of complex infrastructure to facilitate functional pursuit of group social creativity and individual social mobility acquisition. They respond to the functional exploitation of expanding perceived transnational interdependency. It thus lays the foundation for elaboration of awareness of global interdependency and the construction of global infrastructure as a public good. The emergence of web3 reflects the emergence within national communities of entrepreneurs seeking new opportunities for utilizing digital globalization. They build upon the foundation of existing international system of nation states. Cryptocurrencies still rely upon national political economic systems as the building blocks to construct decentralized financial institutions, e.g., as

represented by so-called stablecoins. The latter peg their cryptocurrency to a “stable asset,” e.g., the US dollar, and then utilize traditional financial assets as collateral to engage in financing activity utilizing cryptocurrencies (Yaffe-Bellany, 2022a, para. 4). They seek to exploit globalization for creating substantive opportunity structures for new routes towards group social creativity and individual social mobility (Manjoo, 2022). They seek to circumvent what their advocates view as increasingly surmountable obstacles to the pursuit of heretofore deviant group self-expression to achieve individual social development.

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).” [sic] (DeDominicis, 2021c, 41).

The New York Times has described “web3” as “a utopian vision of a more democratic internet controlled by regular people rather than giant tech companies” (Yaffe-Bellany, 2022b, para. 10). These “giant tech companies” are subject to government regulation. At the heart of the blockchain global ledger of cryptocurrencies is “decentralized finance” (Roose, 2022b, para. 3). Its alleged qualities are the absence of banks functioning as financial system “gatekeepers” (Yaffe-Bellany, Griffith and Livni, 2021, para. 12). They circumvent indirect government influence via surveillance and regulation of traditional financial institutions, i.e., banks undertaking their so-called due diligence function. As multitudes of early investors in cryptocurrencies lose their outlays, their rhetorical appeals for legitimation within the global community include appeals to a brighter future for humankind:

“It’s possible to imagine a future where you might look up the fate of every tax dollar you’ve paid, and government corruption becomes all but impossible; where beautiful and important stories and music, games and art would never disappear from the internet; where, instead of being forced to rely on a big power company, you might buy and sell surplus solar energy from or to your own neighbors, and never face another blackout. Wherever tamper-proof, independent record-keeping is needed, blockchain could keep all the receipts, available and safe, for anyone to see” (Bustillos, 2022, para. 18).

Bustillos acknowledges that the creation of this desired future requires integration of emerging blockchain technology with the existing national and global political economy. Social justice and equity issues focus

on human rights protection, which incentivizes creation, provision and promotion of public goods as institutional infrastructure, e.g., social capital. State authorities to whom the modal citizenry grants legitimacy oversee a political regime in which habitual obedience to mobilizational cues manifests itself, e.g., in voluntarism. One comparative study of Japanese, South Korean and Chinese civil societal responses to the Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the sui generis nature of national political authority. These three polities received global media spotlight attention regarding their comparatively effective earlier stage Covid-19 responses. Researchers “identified” [...] “multisectoral collaboration as a key factor in comprehending civil society's impact” (Cai et al., 2021, 131).

This paper's approach to public goods utilizing the social identity dynamics of nationalism amidst complex global interdependency incorporates the cognitive revolution in international relations theory. Neo-corporatist state leadership for accommodating and exploiting global interdependency emphasizes the recognition of identity through acquisition of positive status heretofore denied via marginalization (DeDominicis, 2021a). It incorporates the importance of identity and status as a collective motivation dynamically shaping the contours of bounded rationality in policy making processes (Herrmann, 1988, Hafner-Burton, Hughes and Victor, 2013). This perspective approaches the concept of public goods in relation to nationalism's political psychological impacts concerning the institutional evolution of a particular state. It contributes to the elaboration of the nature of the “sociotropic preferences” in worldwide social justice movements, e.g., Black Lives Matter, that shape political behavior. The “cognitive revolution” in international relations theory has highlighted the focus on factors shaping both individual and collective perceptual pattern tendencies determining policy behavior (Hafner-Burton et al., 2017, S21).

The processes for the creation, provision and expansion of public goods as institutional infrastructure features the role of social justice movements. They reflect and accelerate the disintegration of prevailing formal and informal institutionalized stereotypes of self and other. These stereotypes justify hierarchical relations which determine differential access to resources, e.g., the stereotype of the male breadwinner and the female housewife/homemaker performing unpaid labor. They also include segregation and marginalization which people of color and women had internalized and accepted via coercion and hopelessness. Nwabara (2018, 76) underscores that “[t]he power of imposition has created not only a desire to move towards White expectations of Blackness, but for one to renounce” their African racial dignity. They also include that ascriptive assumption that achievement is material, i.e., money, and commodification of the enslaved represented the apotheosis of superiority. “Rooted in histories of colonialism, slavery, and Jim Crow, and continuing on today in de facto discrimination, racism, and violence, whiteness has come to signify supremacy and mastery [...] whiteness and the slaves it subjugated became intertwined signs of the master's wholeness, completeness, and conquest ...” (Coble, 2019, 568).

By bringing so-called private societal relations into the public domain, social justice movements push the state authorities to adopt and reform policies that enforce behavioral change. Changes in behavioral patterns reinforce changes in behavioral attitudes and perceptual stereotypes. They functionally aim to expand opportunity structures for dialectical engagement in group social creativity and individual social mobility. The latter emerge from opportunities that polities construct by authorities responding with public policy to convert and institutional heretofore social deviance into social creativity. It thereby opens routes for individual social mobility. Examples include the legalization cannabis and the validation of the culture components associated with it including, commercial popular culture fashion and music market niches that consequently emerge.

This paper begins with a review of selected relevant scholarly literature on the political psychology of political regime development and construction within the context of the nation state. It applies the insights from social identity theory to conceptualize the functional harnessing of the appeal of nationalism to the creation and manipulation of markets to increase state power capability. It illustrates how the effective construction of Gramscian hegemony is evident in the emergence and function of a national fiat currency.

The significance of corruption is then analyzed from the perspective of social deviance transformed into social identity management strategies of social creativity and social mobility. It shows that the institutionalization of state authority is a public good that facilitates the creation, regulation and transformation of social deviance into social creativity and competitive mobility. The paper highlights the impact of the emergence of global complex interdependency on the construction of a world community that incentivizes web3 blockchain technology. The global digital community serves as an arena for the emergence of new opportunity structures for engaging in substantive global group social creativity and hence individual social mobility strategies. Cryptocurrencies dialectically build upon the foundational keystones of nation state great power fiat currency regulation. Their utilizers seek functionally to transform social deviance into social creativity and social mobility.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Development

In so-called, developed nation states, these sociological processes of so-called state building have proceeded to create statewide institutions. They are amenable to the creation of monetary currencies through facilitation of commodification for consumption. Variations in “labor commodification” was one measure postwar welfare regime analyses used to typologize capitalist national political economic diversity (Peck and Theodore, 2007, 738). This paper adds that commodification and stereotyping/archetyping are closely interrelated because they involve categorization and simplification that is institutionalized within the national polity. Its internalization is encouraged through the individual consumer’s focus on parochial utilitarian gratification of participation and economic status needs. The normative habitual, prevailing view within society is that price equates with the value of goods and services. As Marx highlighted, the role of domination in society is shifted from interpersonal relations to “the domination of things” over individuals (Musto, 2009, 393, Zizek, 2021, Mutakalin, 2014). “[V]alue becomes known as the mode of existence of the alienated consciousness of the private producer, a ‘socially valid’, therefore objective, form of thought” (Starosta, 2017, 123). This hegemony of what Marx labelled “commodity fetishism” is not a cognitive error, e.g., “false consciousness,” but a human adaptation to functioning and survival within capitalist society (Andrews, 2018, 744). Hopkin (2017, 467) references Polanyi’s concept of a dialectical “double movement” in modern capitalism. Market relations progressively permeate all aspects of society, undermining traditional relations of status and authority. They generate a resistance countermovement to apply the authority of the state to regulate and defend against this commodification of all social relations. This paper conceptualizes the emergence of the welfare state after the turmoil of the interwar period as an outcome of this dialectical interaction of these two movements. Institutionalization of global capitalist economic national interdependency, e.g., the Bretton Woods framework, was a concomitant of the developing welfare state within the Cold War nuclear setting (Obinger and Petersen, 2017).

This paper’s conceptualization of political economy views it as the application of state capabilities to generate and regulate social competition, social mobility and social creativity capacities. The postwar welfare state, to enhance political regime stability, functionally regulates these three fundamental self-identity management strategies for evolving societal actors. Ideally, “[h]igh degrees of inclusiveness, universality, and fairness create a reliable environment in which personal security is assured and status anxiety is reduced. [...] A major implication [...] is that these integrative institutional qualities provide a 'top-down' path to breaking out of the vicious circle of a lack of tolerance and conflict that is based upon this deficiency” (Kirchner, Freitag and Rapp, 2011, 220). Effectiveness functionally equates with regime stabilization and authority maintenance by the ruling elite.

Within this political economy, the authorities can utilize price signals as means by which to control society through utilitarian incentives. Government agencies within capitalist market economies orient their guidance of society within this prevailing system of price signals. The need to avoid excessive

commodification emerges when the excessive commodification produces so-called market failures. For example, the relative American lack of universal health insurance coverage during the Covid-19 pandemic may be conceptualized as a “market failure” in terms of its “social cost” (He et al., 2022, 7). This assessment stands in comparison to the perceived performance of other national polities. These so-called market failure outcomes can threaten regime stability, not to mention individual and community wellbeing.

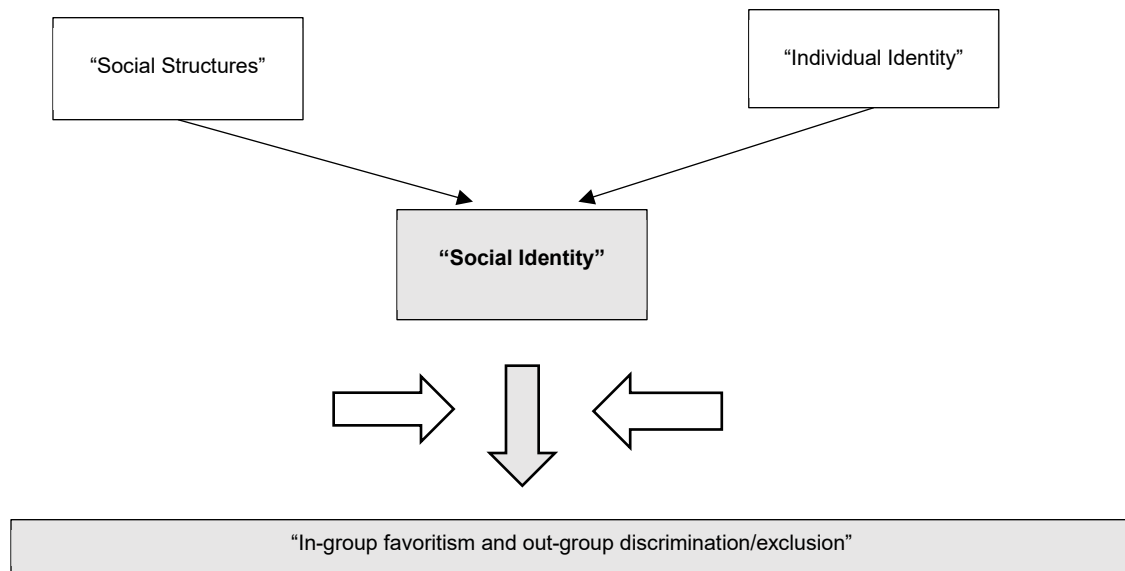
The authorities intervene to modify the opportunities structures. One aim is to limit the intensification of perception of intra-societal intergroup relations in zero-sum terms, i.e., as predominantly one of social competition. The state through its legitimation efforts in the form of normative active rhetorical/ethical appeals by its leaders attempt to coral these trends. One tactic is to counteract them with social creativity attractions by associating nationalism with liberal values. Also relevant is social mobility opportunity structure expansion through welfare state programs, i.e., public goods. Coercion as a response to regime authority challenges risks reinforcing social competition. The coercively deployed resources of the state can also cause the oppressed to disintegrate into anomic, desperate individuals and small groups. Their motivations may shift towards a focus on survival and security, the most basic of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, in an environment of perceived overwhelming contingency (Marie and SaadAdeen, 2021). The political regime control system type relies upon coercion beyond a tertiary level for authority maintenance. It is not most effective for mobilizing for generating effective external international diplomatic bargaining leverage instruments, *ceteris paribus* (Cottam and Gallucci, 1978). In the nuclear setting, great power international influence competition is increasingly indirect. This appeal includes perceived support for self-determination of subordinated national groups as a source of soft power appeal. Minimizing domestic reliance upon coercion for control is desirable to avoid if an actor has pretensions to being a great power in international relations. It accords with “the realist proposition that ideologies only prevail in international relations when they are associated with power” (Mendelski, 2018, 263). State authorities that rely upon terror as a crucial component of their domestic regime control formula are likely to display a power mobilizational disadvantage in terms of international appeal.

The increasingly political salience of so-called post-material values reflect the evolution of so-called developed nation states. The modal citizenry functionally assumes their safe and secure participatory national membership via citizenship in the polity’s core cultural community as a given (Diakoumakos, 2105). The state as a system of ethical and coercive authority norms dynamically evolves as individuals and in-groups strive to satisfy their evolving needs concurrently with the evolution of society (DeDominicis, 2021d). As Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2020, 30) note, a community must share a set of norms and values in order for those norms and values to evolve. “It takes shared meanings of norms [i.e., “how I normally *should* behave] and values [i.e., “how I *aspire* or *desire* to behave] that are stable and salient for a group’s cultural tradition to be developed and elaborated.” Sociological processes result in these norms and values: “Over time, the habitual interactions within communities take on familiar forms and structures, which we will call the *organization of meaning*” [*sic*] (Ibid., 32).

For the assimilated citizenry in these so-called developed, industrialized societies, self-expression values emerge, i.e., what some of the literature labels post-material values. These self-expression values show comparatively less of a correlation with liberalism in East Asia (Zhang, Brym and Andersen, 2017). This study suggests that individuals and groups engaging in social creativity respond to material threats, e.g., environmental degradation, by acquiring new status vehicles. They include in-group formation and membership in so-called new left social movements, as a motivation, but not the only motivation, for environmentalism (Mayeral and Best, 2018). Rising levels of literacy and education, along with increasing media access, facilitate in-group identification and communication. “[T]he application of social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) to the study of movements suggests that support to protest groups is predicted by perceived closeness to that group (e.g., workers’ rights of one’s own same category), by social identification with that group, and by not perceiving it to be threatening or in competition with the in-group” (Passini and Morselli, 2015, 11).

Figure 3 shows in schematic form the relationship of institutionalization to social identity evolution. Social movements are one form of this dynamic, dialectical interdependent process of state institutional development and social in-group evolution. Politics are more or less effective in constructing social opportunity structures for individuals to form in-groups that achieve social creativity affirmation leading to individual social mobility facilitation. The international system of sovereign nation states reflects the role of the nation in providing the most salient and affectively attractive opportunity structures. These opportunities are functionally assumed to be for individuals perceiving themselves as belonging to shared primary, terminal self-identity communities, i.e., nations (Cottam and Cottam, 2001). Their respective publics functionally evaluate them in terms of their efficacy in generating these opportunities. Those institutions that become ineffective in providing the opportunities for social status acquisition in developing society will be increasingly condemned as, in effect, parochial and corrupt. Digital globalization facilitates and accelerates in-group vs. out-group formation with varying degrees of institutionalization.

Figure 3: “A Schematic Diagram of Social Identity Theory’s Basic Principles” (Figure 3 image: Mor Barak, 2009, 247)



Social identity theory postulates that actors are predisposed to form in-groups displaying a predisposition to institutionalize. A function of this institutionalization is to create out-groups. The substantive significance of these in-groups depends upon this institutionalization. Social deviance is functionally defined as behavior perceived by the authorities of the in-group as outside the realm of acceptable in-group member behavior, thus leading to derogation and punishment of the offender. Derogation and punishment equate with exclusion from full membership from the in-group through, e.g., prosecution and incarceration for so-called illegal or criminal behavior. Social identity management strategy responses by the coerced may be to search for new in-group identities, e.g., transnational cryptocurrency investor community membership.

This paper argues that liberal democratic nation state politics encourage social creativity opportunity structure creation and exploitation. In sum, social deviance is comparatively less likely to receive a collective societal social competition response, i.e., to provoke functionally a response that view the deviance in zero-sum terms. Insofar as the functional collective response reaffirms the public’s functional granting of legitimacy to the polity authorities, then this response reinforces the authority norm system as a public good. To rephrase, it remains a shared ethical community that is greater than the sum of its constituency parts in the prevailing worldview of the modal citizenry. Globalization of the economy increasingly incentivizes the marriage of post-material values with diversification of organizational culture. The functional aim is to promote effective individual social mobility and group social creativity strategies. These organizations are more competitive within the international business community (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2020). So-called developed nation states as vast organizations are relatively less reliant on coercion as a control mechanism to enforce existing, ascriptively assigned authority norms of status and

behavior. They therefore allow social deviance a greater potentiality to acquire increased status in a globalizing environment via progressive social movements. Foundational work in modern sociology included a focus on the functional aspects of social deviance to facilitate social integration (Osrecki, 2017).

This analysis suggests that globalization increases the potential for acquisition of diaspora consciousness and coordination as part of these progressive social movements. As the global resonance of the US Black Lives Matter protests illustrated, transnationalism facilitates mobilizing against perceived national ascriptive status challenges (Zukin and Torpey, 2020). The dialectical relationship with social mobility is evident in the transracial, global consumer appeal of Black diaspora popular culture artifacts. For example, Rap music, is part of “what may be called a global hip-hop empire” (Watkins, 2010, 25). Liberalism supports development of social creativity opportunity structures that facilitate the undermining of institutionalized stereotypes/archetypes. The latter are an inherent aspect of commodification and institutionalization. Conceptualizing these opportunity structures for social creativity pursuit as complex institutional infrastructure captures the essence of neo-corporatism amidst global complex interdependency. In the abstract, developed liberal democratic nation state polities would enjoy a mobilization base advantage in supporting competitive creativity, e.g., so-called thinking outside the box. It would in theory be more amenable to competitive creativity than authoritarian polities, *ceteris paribus*.

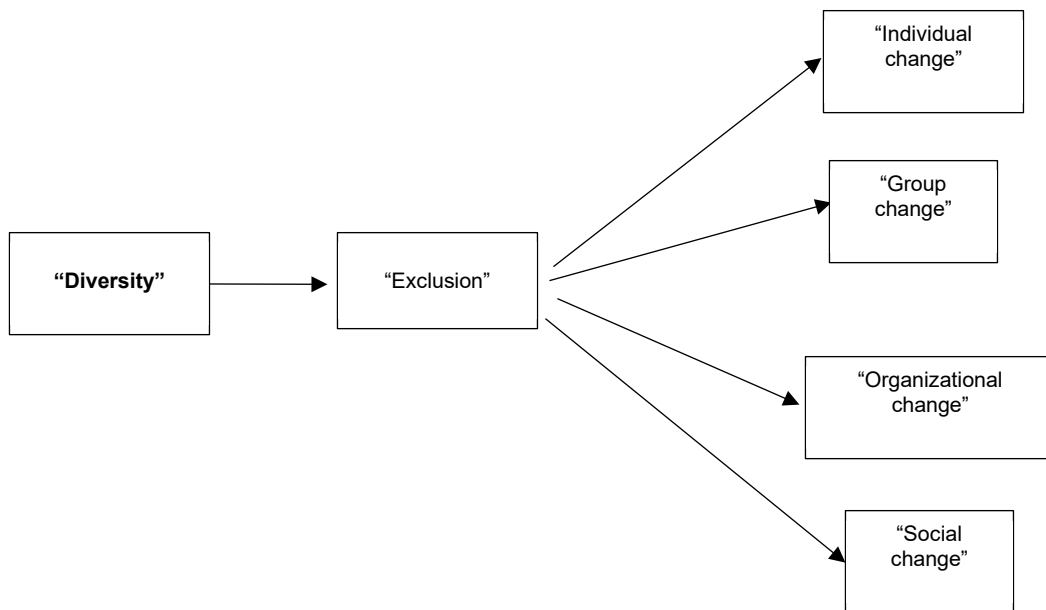
In comparatively stable, i.e., so-called developed nation states the governing authorities of these normative habitual obeisance-based regimes can display mobilizational capacity. During crises, the functionally assumed equation of the governing apparatus of the nation state as symbolic representation of the latter provides the former the capacity to mobilize the public (Cottam and Cottam, 2001). This effective manipulation of symbols that generates an intensely affirmative response from the attentive public has been called the rally around the flag effect. This affirmation of support for the chief executive derives from the collective attitudinal belief that the chief executive represents the nation. In the author’s state location, “nationalist sentiments can easily mobilize people and boost internal solidarity around political leadership in Korea, as the rally-round-the-flag effect theory explains” (Hwang, Cho and Wiegand, 2018, 705).

Despite overextension, the functional equation of the nation with the executive makes acceptance of blatant major diminution of the government’s foreign influence politically difficult for (Cottam and Cottam, 2001). “The precariousness of national prestige [...] is at the root of the RRTF [rally round the flag] phenomenon, which emerges when that national prestige is challenged [...] more than any other aspect of international conflicts, public opinion in the United States is concerned with national honor and the country’s international reputation for political resolve” (Feinstein, 2016, 308). The political difficulty of US administrations to extract the US military from Afghanistan illustrates this threat of negative domestic public opinion reaction to threats to American national prestige.

Figure 4 outlines in schematic form social identity theory’s conceptualization of the consequences of a perceiver’s comparative negative status appraisal of the perceiver’s in-group to relevant out-groups. It diagrams the change process in perceptions, attitudes and values that characterize local, national and global community development. It reflects the outcome of social interaction leading to in-group versus out-group status comparisons. Digital globalization facilitates this interaction among evolving so-called imagined communities. Social deviance including condemnation of heretofore taboo social activity, e.g., the cannabis trade and non-traditional gender roles, can evolve through legal reforms into social opportunity structures. These structures, in this Weberian ideal-typical model, provide concrete group social creativity options which in turn provide new individual social mobility paths. Social movements play a critical role in prodding the state to respond to certain forms of traditional social deviance into legitimated forms of social identity practice and behavior. Digital globalization enhances and accelerates the opportunities for the transformation of conflicting values heretofore rhetorically targeted as corrupt to transform into social creativity and social mobility. The reconciliation of conflicting national cultural values becomes an opportunity to generate transnational social capital. The latter facilitates the pursuit and satisfaction of group

social creativity options and individual social mobility paths. “[E]thical behavior in a multicultural environment can only be achieved when we integrate value orientations at a higher level” (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2020, 383). The authorities in sovereign state institutions that fail to satisfy these group and individual social status needs in a globalizing context increasingly lose their perceived legitimacy. Failure to adapt the regime can lead to authority and regime change.

Figure 4: “Paths to Address the Negative Consequences of Exclusion” (Figure 4 image: Mor Barak, 2009, 249)



Social actors experiencing derogation in their self-assessment through in-group authority condemnation of their behavior as deviant exploit complex interdependency including digital information facility to seek and gain out-group member support to form compensatory in-groups. Responses and reactions to complex interdependency as a consequence of broadening and intensifying globalization incentivize social creative responses that exploit globalizing interaction opportunities and facilities, e.g., the dark web. Social mobility opportunities concomitantly emerge that incentivize cognitive and affective reinforcement of in-group membership identity by the so-called successful actor operating outside of direct, immediate control of the state regulation. This successful actor exploits legal international limitations on state sovereignty.

Social deviance includes challenges to traditional, ascriptive marginalizing norms comprising those which progressives subsequently labelled as xenophobia, homophobia and misogyny. Progressive social movements seek and exploit social creativity opportunities by efforts at legitimation seeking self-identification with a supranational self-identity community (Baider and Kopytowska, 2018). Feminist movements aim to acquire greater national influence through “women’s lobbies” integrating Europeanization into their political strategies (Saurugger, 2020, 355). This legitimation can facilitate its utilization in a major power’s soft power narrative in international relations. This supranational self-identity community option has to provide concrete benefits which construction of a European internal market regulated by progressive law can provide. It encourages and supports group social creativity and therefore, dialectically, individual social mobility (DeDominicis, 2020). “Commodification of identity politics” within this process appears to be unavoidable, e.g., “gender mainstreaming” as a form of “career feminism” within capitalist societies (van Heerden, 2016, 7207).

European integration strategy functionally serves to encourage this social creativity by creating greater opportunity structures. EU leaders rhetorically articulated and ethically justified these policies in terms of Europeanization. Calls for sympathy towards Muslim immigrants include rhetorical appeals to recognize the “European dream” as a counterpart to the American dream that sustained earlier European emigrants (Frunză, 2017, 126). Europeanization creates significant practical material and status benefits through the

elaboration of the supranational EU policy representations of the supranational European community (Noversa, 2022). “[D]ue to the greater attention devoted by supranational bodies to career-related aspects of encouraging gender equality and hence, more Europeanized countries are more likely to associate having a supranational attachment with the need to support gender equality in matters of career and work-life balance” [*sic*] (Zapryanova and Surzhko-Harned, 2016, 562-63).

Social Identity and In-group vs. Out-group Formation

A necessary cognitive function exists in organizing the environment for an individual, and social identities serve this cognitive function. The role of social identities includes creating and defining the individual’s place in society. They provide a system of orientation for self-reference. Social identity has an intimate connection with a person’s self-image. People strive for a positive self-image, generally. The foundation of social identity-oriented behavior, according to social-identity theorists, is an individual’s “knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that identity” (Tajfel, 1978, 63). For the purposes of this paper, an important point which social-identity theorists make is that membership itself in a group is not sufficient to produce group behavior by a collection of individuals. Rather, the central glue which inspires what we call “group behavior” is identification with the group. Nationalism is one form of in-group behavior.

The foundational assumptions of the political psychology of social identity of in-group formation are the following: 1) both the creation and the destruction of groups is possible; 2) collapsing smaller identities into a new identity is one way to create them; 3) members can adopt roles which relate to a group’s existence and thereby identify with the group to reinforce a group identity and behavior; 4) the articulation of a group’s political norms of behavior can reinforce group identification; 5) perceiving the in-group as clearly distinct from other groups in society, thereby enhancing self-esteem and loyalty, will reinforce group identity and behavior; 6) the existence of a common enemy; 7) the members of a group share common goals (Cottam and Cottam, 2001, 122 fn.). Groups can also successfully merge under conditions when: 1) the perceptual individuation of an out-group member who the in-group group is bringing in can permit the admittance into an existing group; 2) the encouragement of cross-cutting organizational schemes can also assist; 3) when the context removes the cues which the community members associate with old group membership (Cottam and Cottam, 2001).

The socialization process as well as learning transmit social categories and images of others across the generations, and the community commonly recognizes and accepts them. This activity of categorization of oneself and of others is a psychological process. It is important to people, despite the fact that the categorization may not reflect the actual interactions between individuals. It contrasts individual experience versus group categorization (Ullrich, 2020). Social structure outside of the psychological realm is also important in determining these social categories. The broader social structure creates and provides the groups with which people self-identify. It also plays a significant role in providing the values, i.e., motivations, with which they evaluate themselves and others. Social structure also provides the real context for social movements such as national liberation struggles, conflict between groups, and collective action, i.e., action by groups. Cottam and Cottam (2001) note that social comparison is intrinsic to this process of social categorization, and self-esteem tends to be significantly dependent upon this social comparison. 1) Complementation and satisfaction of the individual’s values would have to occur from membership in a group in order for self-identification with a group to enhance self-esteem. 2) Self-esteem also receives enhancement from perceptions that the perceiver’s group is better than other groups in important ways, while being distinct and different from other groups. These perceptions can, but not necessarily, lead to stereotyping and discrimination, as well as in-group favoritism. Often, the members of the ingroup view it as immeasurably better than out-groups. In terms of personal and physical characteristics, people find members of the ingroup to be more attractive. They tend to be more helpful towards members of the ingroup than towards members of the out-group. They also tend to remember more about the in-group members.

In the case of attributing bad behaviors and outcomes as a result of in-group activity, the in-group will attribute cause to external pressures. Conversely, members will attribute successes and positive characteristics of members of the in-group to internal, long-term characteristics. In-group members will exaggerate the differences between the in-group and other groups. They will assume that members of out-groups share characteristics which the in-group members will overly generalize. In attitudes towards out-groups, people vary greatly. People will despise some, dislike others, regard others with indifference, and even like others. The social distance which they perceive, in other words, will vary. Digitization and social media have facilitated these processes of in-group vs. out-group formation.

Fiat Currency and Complex Interdependency

States have a monopoly on fiat currency creation. They gain the rentier benefits of sovereignty for the community to the extent that the fiat currency has international value, i.e., does not manifest comparatively high inflation that leads to its “debasement” (Tavlas, 2021, 16). The authorities employ the diplomatic influence leverage benefits from the status allocation by the so-called international community of representing and utilizing sovereign national authority. The reality of interdependency has undermined the sovereignty ideal of ultimate right of control over everything within the state’s territory. Government policy aims often require prudent international cooperation, coordination and compromise to maintain the functioning of the international financial system for respective national benefit. Epistemic awareness of this reality becomes more widespread due to globalization and the emergence of global finance and investor participation within it. To continue to preserve it, functionally decision making is increasingly at an international level, even while de jure sovereignty remains with states. The EU is the leading exemplar of this trend, e.g., the “pooled sovereignty” of the member states, to realize economic and monetary union (Kassim and Buth, 2020, 304).

Exploiting increasing interdependency is at the foundation of digital blockchain technology and cryptocurrencies. The creation and sale for purchase on international financial markets of Eurobonds illustrates the political effectiveness of this coordination. Insofar as a fiat currency is based on the belief of the existence of a sovereign state, the success of the EU in selling Eurobonds on financial markets is a significant development. It indicates that the belief prevails in the substantive existence of Europe. In 2021, “[N]early a year after European leaders decided to launch a massive, jointly financed recovery program to deal with the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, the European Union on Tuesday finally issued the first bond of what will amount to a total EUR800 billion (\$970 billion) borrowing spree over the next five years.” Equally significant was the market demand level low price yield for the Eurobonds, indicating strong confidence in the substantive credibility of the EU as an actor: “The result didn’t disappoint: Demand for the 10-year, EUR20 billion bond reached EUR142 billion, according to bankers, and it was priced at a yield of 0.086% -- compare this to the minus 0.23% yield on German bunds of the same maturity” [*sic*] (Briançon, 2021, para. 1-2).

Sovereign governments may run national fiscal budget deficits which contribute to national GDP. They also may attempt to avoid accelerating macroeconomic imbalances. The global financial community may perceive inflationary imbalances as indicating a decline in state regime domestic control capacity to meet future debt obligations. The collective confidence of the global financial community in this sovereign debtor’s capacity may change. This increase or decrease manifests itself in the changing interest rate on offer for the sale of its sovereign debt bonds. Soaring national fiscal deficits in Spain and Italy to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic economic crisis did not produce depreciation of the euro. “The presence of countries with balanced accounts, such as Germany, generates greater confidence in the common currency” (Jorge-Vázquez and Francisco, 2021, 11). Were they not in the eurozone, efforts by their respective national central banks to “monetize their fiscal deficits” would have caused their national currencies to “depreciate on the international markets” (Ibid.). The upshot is that these effective Europeanization processes construct supernational, i.e., EU, social opportunity structures that incentivize group social creativity and individual

social mobility strategies. Conservative nationalists are more prone to perceive these supranational institutions representing supranational identities as threats to national sovereignty. To build supranational institutions for a supranational community that potentially become intense in terms of self-identification with it requires utilizing the non-corrupt nation states as building blocks. The effective strategic utilization of these building blocks may potentially create supranational institutions and a supranational community that is more than the mere sum of its parts, e.g., the EU (DeDominicis, 2020).

Corruption vs. Hegemony

Creation of hegemony and the de facto functional, habitual belief in the authorities' provision of public goods requires functional community in-group membership self-identification by policy targets. The imagined community exists, including its system of authority norms, and institutions subjectively identified define this community. According to Scholl and Schermuly (2018, 185-86), "institutional schemes, perse, do not affect behavior, but rather an experienced institutional reality shaped by ideas and interpretations." When the representatives of this system of institutionalized authority norms appear corrupt, it is more or less a threat to the modal citizenry that self-identifies at a primary intensity level with the community. Wullweber (2019, 151) writes that institutionalization can equate with public habituation towards public obedience towards state authorities through a process of "sedimentation." "The more a discourse becomes sedimented, the more social meanings and practices become stabilized and taken for granted, and the more difficult it becomes for change to take place. Sedimentation does not happen passively but because of political struggles that seek to universalize particular interests." Sedimentation thus equates with control through Gramscian hegemonic institutionalization. The prevailing view within society assumes the universality of the interests which particularistic "intersubjective understandings support" (Mello, 2022, 15). Functionally in such conditions, the output of the state policy making process is presumed to be a public good. This paper aims to conceptualize the notion of sedimentation in terms of social identity theory. It adopts the perspective of the institutionalization through commodification and monetization of state authority control regimes. As Wullweber later notes, "Social sedimentation—the naturalization of relations of domination—involves the process of habit formation through repetition" (Wullweber, 2019, 152). This paper conceptualizes this normative habitual acceptance of existing status hierarchy as conforming with insights from Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012). They highlight the continuing reality of ascription of actor social status to actors within an organization versus status acquisition via achievement as the ideal-typical archetype of so-called modernity.

In this ideal-typical model, a corrupt leadership or administrator is by definition exercising authority to which the modal citizenry does not grant legitimacy. The power and "control" exercised is therefore viewed as "restrictive" and unjust, i.e., corrupt (Scholl and Schermuly, 2018, 186). This authority is viewed as exercised for particularistic, corrupt ends, i.e., ends that serve private gain at the expense of the public good. For Kant's "categorical imperative" to operate, a necessary condition is that the modal citizenry must grant legitimacy to the authorities (Pitts, 2020, 237). The United Nations claiming to speak for the world community in claiming legitimacy to authorize deadly force comparatively lack persuasiveness with legitimate national authorities domestically. In sum, the target public must view the authorities as representing their primary intensity self-identity community, according to this Weberian ideal-typical model. A prerequisite for this condition to emerge is the public's view that the authorities became the authorities through indigenous means. In sum, they come to power without perceived external imperial intervention violating national self-determination.

Corruption is concomitant with subjectively perceived parochiality, i.e., utilizing public authority for so-called private gain, often despite rhetorical universalistic, public good claim obfuscations. Increasing corruption correlates with increasing contingency and insecurity. Corruption exists when strong state institutions are not perceived as hegemonic within the prevailing view of the modal citizenry. Corruption may be conceptualized as the reconciliation of achievement with ascriptive parochiality. To the extent that

statewide institutions are perceived to exist, then the comparative evaluation of status occurs with more collective self-confidence. Commodity smuggling due to social deviance identification/illegal consumption intensifies this parochiality in the form of incentivizing the creation of organized crime structures. The illegal becomes more profitable as it becomes more perilous, incentivizing the creation of informal cooperation and support networks, e.g., organized crime in-groups. If they intersect with preceding normative habitual traditional parochial structures, they become organized crime so-called families and cartels. Organized crime structures have become highly salient in Latin American states. They emerged within a social environment of contingency and insecurity in pursuit of social mobility. The profitability of drug smuggling derives directly from its illegality amidst rural poverty and ethno-class/de facto class stratification. In Eastern Europe, they become more like corporations as extensions of the polity (DeDominicis, 2021c, 2021c).

Corruption can be conceptualized as requiring the lack of (imagined) community consensus on what constitutes morally and ethically right and wrong behavior. The public interest is represented by the policy output of the government which represents the state. Rule of law implies creating, implementing and enforcing the rules by which to regulate and guide dialectical social competition and social creativity strategies to achieve social mobility. Actors engaging in comparative self-evaluation encompass individuals and in-groups, including enterprises. Failure to provide legitimate regulation associates with fraud and corruption. Concomitantly, the existence of a community consensus on norms and values is necessary to determine behavior that is ethically and rhetorically idealized as unethical and illegal. State ineffectiveness or superficiality associates with corruption in terms of shaping individual community member behavior. It can undermine coordination of the national social creativity innovation and individual mobility mechanisms. It ultimately undermines the power potential base of the state. Investment firms engaging in fraudulent charades in claiming their innovations will generate large future profits to attract significant investments pocketed by executives are in effect “Ponzi schemes” (Goldstein and Kelly, 2021, para. 13-14). Statewide institutions must emerge and exist in order to have corruption. Giving gifts to superiors is not corruption if and when it is the predominant normative habitual expectation. No representative body for the community that has been legitimately tasked with regulating statewide institutions whose output speaks functionally in the imperative voice has declared it corrupt and illegal.

The prevalence of use of cash in the GDP of an economy correlates with the extent of corruption. A “negative relationship” exists between the strength of the so-called rule of law as a measure of governmental ineffectiveness and the proportion of cash to national GDP (Pietrucha, 2021, 11-12). Pietrucha (2021, 6) also notes that “The fact that cash is used (and its modern cryptocurrency alternatives) in illegal transactions and in the shadow economy is beyond doubt.” González-Gallego and Pérez-Cárceles (2021, 22) find that “that those countries with weaker institutions, quality of government and more tolerance towards corruption have a larger percentage of population that declares to use cryptocurrencies.” The recent interest in special-purpose acquisition companies (SPACs) illustrates economic liberalism’s foundations in converting social deviance into social creativity and social mobility. It functions amidst market social competition (Kelly, 2021). SPACs are suspect because of their purportedly vulnerability to serve as vehicles for fraud. They also increase opportunities for market participation by new investors and for start-up firms to obtain financing. Social deviance here refers to the challenging formal and informal norms rules of behavior to achieve economic success, i.e., Merton’s social strain theory (Burnham, Hyo and Zeng, 2018, 248). This social deviance may acquire legitimation from other members of the business, national and global communities as in fact a creative and profitable innovation. Examples include cryptocurrency products and new participatory investment applications. The latter include Robinhood and stock trading vehicles which initially received negative, not to mention skeptical, initial publicity within the business media (Hurt and Stancil, 2022). Their defenders characterized them as innovative business models contributing to national and global economic innovation and development (Hiltzik, 2022). In sum, they as business models become a component of the marketplace framework public good. The social deviance has become social creativity in addition to social mobility vehicles for status advancement. The reliance upon

ascriptive status, i.e., Silicon Valley startups utilizing young entrepreneurs with Stanford University pedigrees, leads to assumptions for significant social creativity potential. This ascriptive authority can also lead to corruption through failure of regulation via adequate due diligence. In coverage of the trial of “Elizabeth Holmes, the founder of the failed blood-testing start-up Theranos,” charged with defrauding investors with false claims of breakthrough medical technology capacity, Ovide notes,

“Whether she is found guilty or not, Holmes is right about the nature of start-up investing. It is about believing in a fantasy. Sometimes that yarn becomes Tesla, and lots of people get rich. And sometimes that fantasy evaporates. It’s part of the package” (Ovide, 2021, paras. 3, 15).

The labelled criminal is stereotyped and derogated for engaging in shameful behavior in the ideal-typical nation state, aside from being illegal. Engaging in criminal international trade activities, like drug smuggling, to help fund a self-determination movement is a regular behavior pattern. For example, the Taliban funded its effective resistance partly through drug smuggling. Legalizing illicit international trade and commerce, would be part of a global strategy of conflict resolution through international human rights promotion. It would require a diagnosis of the sources of the criminality in systemic oppression of marginalized groups. International criminality by its very nature exploits the opportunity structures created by the state. In sum, consumption that is illegal becomes both more dangerous and therefore more profitable for suppliers (Barnett, 2009). Self-determination and national liberation movements engaging in smuggling to fund their struggle are utilizing the state system-created status quo (Labrousse, 2005).

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The public record is utilized to highlight the analysis of corruption in relation to public goods as so perceived. It engages in process tracing to explain the development of group global social creativity strategies within the environment of the rapidly evolving global internet. Given this importance of public social status acquisition, the reliance of the public record is necessary. It utilizes triangulation with recent selected published scholarly literature in a predominantly deductive analysis to illustrate elements of the significance of the rise of web3.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Creating Public Goods

A facet of regime stabilization via public goods creation is transforming social deviance into group social creativity and individual social mobility to circumvent coercive and violent social competition. This transformation occurs through policies and laws. Dynamic processes of legitimation of authority amidst change involves continuing adaptation for public goods provision. Elites providing the public good of peaceful conflict resolution as a Weberian ideal type to escape the Hobbesian state of nature succeed in having the public grant legitimacy to their authority. This conception provides an elaboration on the meaning of the continuing provision of “order” as a “public good” beyond the rational actor model (Saetra, 2022, 2). Choe and Yun (2017) argue that defining public goods and this concept’s derivative, common pool resources, has emphasized the absence of excludability and rivalry from their provision. They argue that the identification of goods as excludable and rivalrous derives not from the physical nature of the goods, but rather according to their social construction as having such attributes.

This paper aims to illustrate how the socio-political psychological processes by which construction of public goods occurs. It emphasizes that the provision of the latter derives from the effective functional construction of legitimacy in the collective eyes of the national public by the state authorities. In the Weberian ideal-typical sense, the security and order they provide are a public good to the extent that their policy making authority is viewed as normatively ethical. The notion of excludability implies the contested

notions of boundary delineation of community in-group whose members may ethically share in the public good. Among the infinite set of imagined community in-groups to which actors belong, national in-groups are among the most salient and intense. Their functional construction has been an extensive research focus as has the construction of increasing salient and intense transnational and cosmopolitan self-identity in-groups. Having the authority to provide international financial system stability is a global public good. On that basis, international standards for evaluating achievement and status emerge. Participation for status acquisition becomes more feasible for the mass public due to the global internet infrastructure. It produces web3 opportunity structures for social creativity in global market interaction to create new market niches through regulated social competition. It thereby provides opportunities for social mobility nationally for individuals through the capital accumulation/wealth and international influence that organizations and individuals achieve. Participation includes economic participation. For example, the provision of valuable non-fungible tokens (NFTs) through the global internet generates global opportunities for their creation and sale for collectors and investors. In sum, they constitute a luxury good, that, like fine art, can be an investment. The owner of fine art gains status, i.e., “bragging rights,” while also making a profitable investment:

“It’s true that most NFTs aren’t valuable because they’re useful. And at the high end of the market – like the Bored Ape Yacht Club, or the NFT collections being auctioned off by Sotheby’s for millions of dollars – a lot of the value boils down to speculation and bragging rights” (Roose, 2022c, para. 19).

The digital economy facilitates this global process of status acquisition via social mobility through wealth accumulation. It facilitates social creativity strategies by shifting the status criteria from a national to a global level. The creation, provision and expansion of public goods as institutional infrastructure features the role of social justice movements. They reflect and accelerate the disintegration of prevailing formal and informal institutionalized stereotypes of self and other (DeDominicis, 2021a). These stereotypes justify hierarchical relations which determine differential access to resources, e.g., the stereotype of the male breadwinner and the female housewife/homemaker performing unpaid labor. They also include segregation and marginalization of people of color, which people of color and women had internalized and accepted. They also include that ascriptive assumption that achievement is material, i.e., money. Thus, those individuals who are wealthy, even if they inherited the money, are higher status, even genetically superior. By bringing so-called private societal relations into the public domain, social justice movements push the state authorities to adopt and reform policies to enforce policies that reflect and institutionalize behavioral change. Changes in behavioral patterns reinforce changes in behavioral attitudes and perceptual stereotypes to expand opportunity structures for dialectical engagement in group social creativity and social mobility.

Commodification and monetization is congruent with institutionalization. Commodification is essential for the utilization of utilitarian participation and economic incentives to control, organize and direct individuals formed into in-groups called organizations. Production of desirable consumables to generate organizational and therefore individual benefits in a socially competitive environment can lead to searches for externally appealing social creativity options. They include creation and occupation of new market niches. Success generates social mobility. Market research and marketing are in part also about expanding dynamic opportunity structures in the market for social creativity engagement by consumers. To create these new market niches requires elaboration of the institutional structure of organizations (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2020). Organizations develop and evolve institutionally to facilitate the utilization of the most effective resources that each individual within them can potentially apply. The development of educational institutions facilitates the development of the human resources available upon which to draw by all organizations, at least at a national base level. The organizations themselves also offer internships and in-house training building upon this base, e.g., literacy, numeracy, multilingual capacities. At a fundamental level, a resource, including labor, has to be commodified in order to utilize utilitarian economic and political control incentives. Poetry and other forms of art engage in the rhetorical/aesthetical appeal to

legitimize social deviance as social creativity within a pluralizing national polity. The appropriation of ascriptive social deviance via commodification, creates market aesthetic styles as forms of social creativity. It constitutes a critical feature of market-based capitalism, with its foundation in the legal, moral and ethical norm of private property, as a critical component of the polity's control system. For example, cultural products commodified and labelled as "cool" reflect appropriation and marketing appeal that coopts citizens as economic agents to regulate their social activity.

"In a 1966 article, "An Aesthetic of the Cool: West African Dance," [the late] Professor [Robert Ferris] Thompson set out what he considered a basic distinguishing element of Afro-Atlantic art and culture: cool, as a descriptor of ethics, attitude and style." "These are the canons of the cool," he told Frederick Iseman, one of his former students, in a 1984 Rolling Stone interview. "There is no crisis that cannot be weighed and solved; nothing can be achieved through hysteria or cowardice; you must wear and show off your ability to achieve social reconciliation. Step back from the nightmare. It is a call for parlance, for congress and for self-confidence." "In African art and aesthetics, he said, 'balance is the name of God'" (Cotter, 2021, paras. 17-19).

At the international level, the collective self-perception of the national in-group as functioning as a benign hegemon providing international public goods like order is likely to be self-serving. It is a rhetorical form of nationalistic universalism (Morgenthau, 1948). For the national groups seeking alliance with the purported benign hegemon against the formers' perceived adversaries, their socially deviant activities may be perceived as a form of social creativity. Positive ally stereotypes allow for social creativity to justify internally and externally strategies and behaviors against the shared common enemy (Cottam and Cottam, 2001). Effectiveness in accommodating these trends is significantly reflected in trends in comparative fiat currency valuations, i.e., trends in prices for goods and services. The provision of a currency is in effect a provision of a public good in the form of a national medium of exchange universally accepted. The provision of this universally fungible public good sets a critical parametric resource for commodification, organization and mobilization. It facilitates the regulation of societal interaction in terms of the dialectical relationships among social competition, social creativity and social mobility.

Cryptocurrencies

The significance of blockchain is that it both builds upon effective state enforcement of property rights and facilitates transfers ownership of private property from a national legal system to a global system. Transfers of ownership becomes globally transparent and permanently recorded while anonymity is maintained through its "distributed ledger technology" in a "non-centralised" global network (Perera et al., 2021, 1). The corruption aspect of cryptocurrencies has a critical connection to their lack of central issuance and regulation by a national government, as is essential in fiat currencies. State regulation of these transparent, anonymous transactions by national government is critically difficult, which enhances their appeal. It incentivizes "the use of cryptocurrencies for illicit transactions associated to illegal funds" (González-Gallego and Pérez-Cárceles, 2021, 14). Cryptocurrencies have acquired a journalistic association with corruption because they initially circumvented being legally subject to the sovereign law of a national regulator. In sum, they supposedly lack the public approbation of representing the common or public good which a national government ideally claims to represent and articulate. Yet, "defining corruption is complex" due to differing societal norms and values. González-Gallego and Pérez-Cárceles (2021, 14) focus empirically on the conceptualization of corruption as behavior that "erodes core values of democracy, including decision-making that emerges from public processes established accordingly to well-known rules and equal access" [*sic*]. Cryptocurrencies are superstructures constructed on the foundation of the international financial system, which in turn has its foundation in the fiat currencies of the great powers. Observers have characterized a fiat currency as "a group delusion" upon which a national monetary system exists as "a leap of faith. [...] Money is useful because others find it useful" (Coy, 2021, paras. 10-11). Characterizing money as a delusion detracts from the fact that from an ontological viewpoint, nation states

are delusions as well. They are very real in terms of people's thinking, and their power capacities underlie the great power fiat currencies whose interdependencies create the international monetary system. Power is defined here as "the *exercise of influence over the minds and actions of others*" [sic] (Cottam and Gallucci, 1978, 4). The governments of nation states occupy a central role in people's understanding of cause and effect in the world. Fiat currencies have their basis in this overwhelming pervasive and, at times, ruthlessly enforced shared ontology. The construction of new, transnational ontological edifices while utilizing these nation states as building blocks is the evident in the emergence of cryptocurrencies.

Cryptocurrencies commodify and monetize interdependency because they are built upon an internet that relies upon fiat currencies of nation states which regulate the global financial system. A conceptualization of cryptocurrencies is that they are the commodification and monetization of the awareness of interdependency. They are the emerging manifestation of a global polity through their reliance upon the global internet. They are a global ledger and the mining of them requires vast resources that produce utilitarian results that can enhance overall global efficiencies. As global ledgers they extrapolate the ownership of private property to the global polity level. National banks redeem cryptocurrencies because they gain profitable business from targets that see cryptocurrencies as facilitators. Libertarians romanticize cryptocurrencies as antidotes to the surveillance state (Edelman and Ruckner, 2022).

Cryptocurrencies are fiat currencies built amidst the regulated social competition between the national polities creating national fiat currencies. The global internet facilitates communicatory sensitivity of the emerging global trends in market niches. They exploit the institutional status quo while promoting the legitimation by utilitarian interest of social deviance through facilitating national social creativity and mobility options. By facilitating the translation of social deviance into individual social mobility and national group social creativity, it incentivizes cooperation. The Chinese leadership has banned cryptocurrency mining because it cannot readily control it (Qin and Livni, 2021). Cryptocurrencies emerged out of, or were seen to emerge out of, illicit international trade activity. They were useful circumventing sanctions and national oversight. They have moved into the mainstream. For their integration into so-called legitimate business transactions such as in real estate, one study calls for central bank of a state issuing a "fiat-collateralised stable cryptocurrency" (Perera, et al., 2021, 18). It would be a prerequisite, if only to reduce cryptocurrency volatility.

Acquisition of status is also acquisition of the right to generate more influence, i.e., authority. The acquisition of status in a Weberian ideal-typical so-called developed, i.e., nationally standardized nation state, may be substantively equivalent to this right. In sum, the modal citizenry in such a state functionally accepts, if not consciously acknowledges, that the authorities have the normative right to be the authorities. It is the right to increasing influence, i.e., to leadership responsibility, within the national community, or rather within the context of the national community. Ownership of something, including an NFT, becomes a mark of status, like owning other properties or even sums of money, i.e., a trophy asset. Even stolen or looted or illegally acquired antiquities become markers of status. They may indicate a claim to an aesthetic higher than national law. They also indicate a willingness to traverse national laws in order to bring something into the global marketplace for self-enrichment. Ownership of a trophy asset indicates social creativity because the owner has something that others do not. The owner acquired it in particularly creative, even illegal ways but still succeeded in converting it into his or her private property (Bourne and Knowles, 2021). Even their repatriation begins a global polity-level discussion regarding history, imperialism, changing ethics, nationalism and national self-determination (Marshall, 2022).

The modern era right to ownership of private property is the right to rise in status through achievement. States that are effective regulate and enforce property rights effectively to produce efficiently value through differentiation and integration. They generate effective opportunity structures for group social creativity that dialectically provide opportunities for individual social mobility. In sum, these state enforcement institutions integrate those heretofore derogated for social deviance (DeDominicis, 2022). Regarding NFTs

and cryptocurrencies, a crypto currency is an internet blockchain, i.e., a “distributed ledger system” (Wakabayashi and Isaac, 2021, para. 2). It acknowledges and certifies ownership of property in the digital universe, or metaverse. NFTs manifest this status through acquisition of items mutually desired, or acknowledged, as having and thereby marking status. The declared aims of crypto, or web3 more broadly as its proponents now label it, include its functional aim to “decentralize power and decision making” (Ibid., para. 29). It relies upon the building blocks of nation states underpinning the global economy, namely the global fiat currency providers.

The niche metaphor from ecology provides comparative insights because human collective and individual actors can create niches and then exploit them. It is an essential feature of power amidst interdependency. Human social identity management patterns are similar: other living organisms can shape the environment to affect competitors for resources. Positive self-identity status evaluation is a critical motivator for human social interaction behavior. Creating the niches that generate income and firm survival and prosperity require appealing to evolving consumer demands that are in turn shaped by market actor activity. These consumer preferences are endogenously created. They may be assumed as exogenous in a snapshot in time but strategy is about shaping this context which includes consumer preferences. Social media’s dysfunction is that it is undermining the public good of state regime authority legitimacy via algorithmic intensification of in-group vs. out-group polarization. State hegemonic legitimacy necessary to regulate effectively social competition to maximize national power potential base and therefore influence. This power potential base is always comparative, in regard to other states.

A PATH FORWARD

The Value of Anonymity

Cryptocurrencies have value because they are an “idea” that people “believe in,” i.e., a “belief” (Roose, 2022a, para. 33). In sum, believers view them as having significance for behavior by significant actors. Cryptocurrency therefore has value. That value includes circumvention or rejection of state authority and international hegemony. Cryptocurrencies provide a layer of anonymity, i.e., circumventing government oversight and regulation. Cryptocurrency users are paying for the value of identity obfuscation. Banks will buy cryptocurrency units from their holders and give them national currencies. Banks exchange these cryptocurrencies because many business actors want this value of anonymity. A large volume of business in the world economy that a state or group of states view at least skeptically, labelling it as part of the grey if not the black economy. Banks that redeem cryptocurrencies by converting them into national currencies are arguably complicit in supporting and facilitating illicit business. This indictment depends upon the particularistic point of view of one or another actor. The Pandora, Panama and Paradise Papers indicate how valuable obscuring identity to outsiders is highly valued to engage in so-called “money laundering” (Yeh, 2022, 1). For example, grave ethics issues surrounding access to Saudi funds continue to be tolerated by state authorities because of questionable government and individual objectives and conflicts of interest (Kirkpatrick and Kelly, 2022, Whitson, 2022). Commentators have noted apparent double standards by the governments of leaders of the so-called rules-based international order towards Russian versus other oligarchs (Varoufakis, 2022). They place economic sanctions on Russia for its responsibility for systemic violations of international humanitarian law in Ukraine. They continue their own apparent complicity in violations by Saudi Arabia in Yemen and economic sanctions on Afghanistan (Ghosh, 2022). Social deviance can become social creativity if the state authorities agree to grant legitimacy to it.

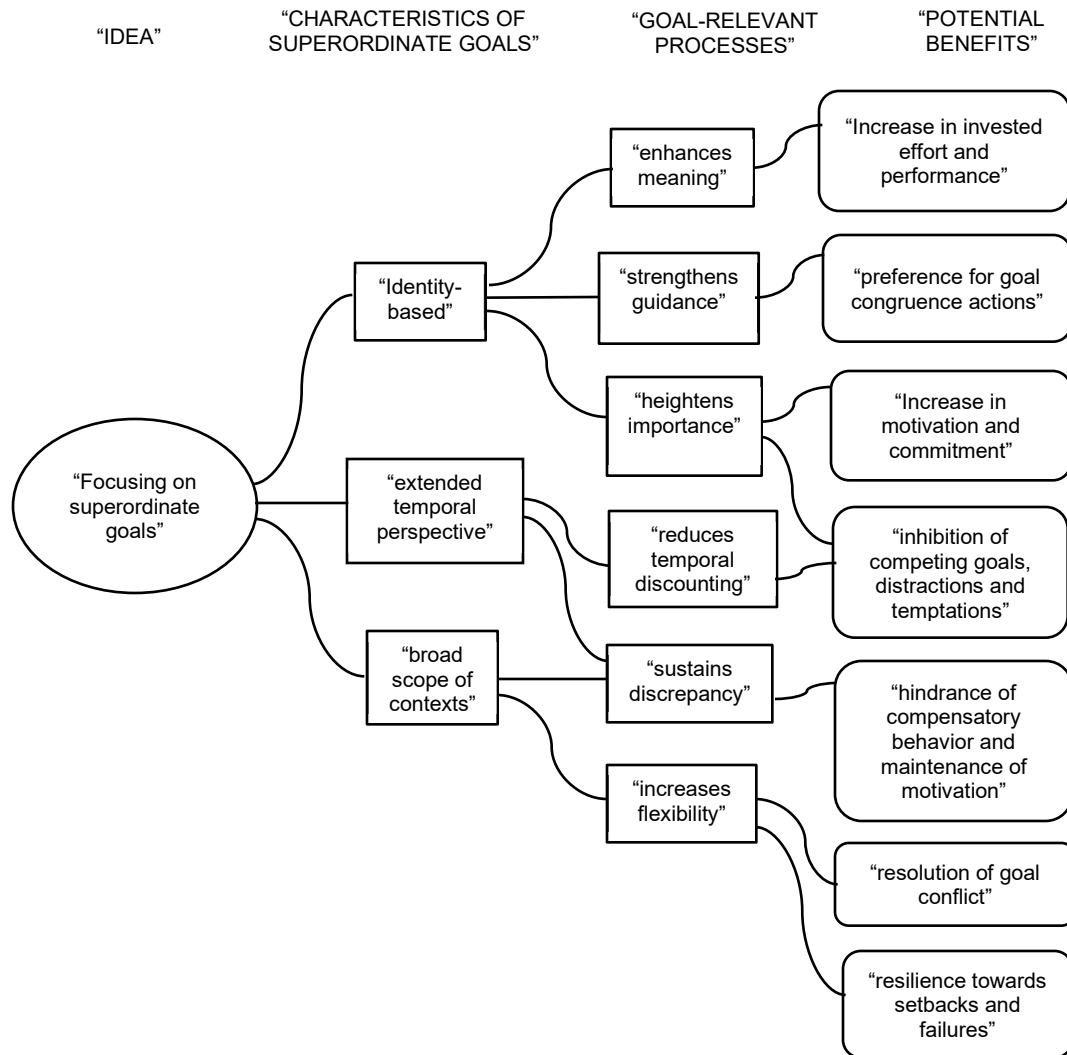
Ambiguity as a value, e.g., paying for the service of what some call money laundering, may be romantically rephrased as freedom or liberty. If decentralized autonomous organizations (DAOs) can coordinate their political efforts as an interest group, then they can lobby to limit state intervention against their anonymity/freedom/liberty. The desire for obscurity means that the existence of illegality must also continue. State regulation and surveillance continue so that anonymity has value. “A political system the

purpose of which is the fostering of human life and community must be organized so as to protect the rights to life, liberty, and their implementation, private property” (Machan, 2016, 179). The perception of the hegemony of the rule of law in an (imagined) community is necessary to have social achievement as basis for relative status acquisition. It stands in dialectical relationship to parochiality and normative habitual authority as corruption. Examples of the latter include rentier capitalism. For example, commodity traders respond to state-sponsored sanctions and embargoes on trade by creatively working to find workarounds, technically legal or otherwise, for which they charge rentier fees (Blas and Farchy, 2021). A modern economy cannot function without statewide institutions. Corruption is the breakdown of institutional attitudinal and emotive consensus. A hegemon can begin to impose these standards. Community loyalty as a reservoir of political resources allow for reform and revolution to rebuild statewide institutions, i.e., justice. Blockchain begins to build upon national parochiality to generate transnational status. For example, entrepreneurs smuggle profits out of corrupt Afghanistan. US aid fostered corruption, invidious comparison, i.e., perceptions of unfairness and corruption (Whitlock, 2021).

In sum, public policy should aim to facilitate the inclusion of “economic, social and governance principles” (E.S.G.) principles in corporate boardrooms and business school curricula (De La Merced, 2021, para. 7). The explicit commitment to corporate social responsibility is in effect the institutionalization of diversification to profit from globalization. In this vein, E.S.G. principles should include a commitment to national self-determination. Leadership guidance on national self-determination should rely on institutionalized non-governmental organizations that have a formal advisory relationship with United Nations human rights bodies. Such organizations include Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. Blockchain and web3 more broadly provides opportunities to increase the salience and formation of common global transparency standards. Figure 5 summarizes the benefits to performance that arise from the pursuit of superordinate goals, e.g., global sustainable development, for actor performance. Web3 blockchain technology may increase global transparency of social interaction. It can thereby promote global superordinate institutionalization of in-group actor pursuit of group social creativity and individual social mobility.

As highlighted above, a desired future in which corruption and bribery becomes increasingly difficult through blockchain payment transparency can occur if the world community adopts it. As more government bodies adopt blockchain fund transfer technology, those that do not become increasingly subject to more questioning as to their hesitation. The Taliban regime in Afghanistan, for example, has ample reasons to continue to permit the illegal drug trade as long as it is subject to American sanctions. These sanctions forbid banks from transacting with American dollars as gatekeepers with entities doing business with the Taliban, including humanitarian aid organizations. Blockchain’s transparency would facilitate its use by relief organizations by alleviating American concerns of payments going to undesirable actors. The upshot is that cases of systemic corruption tend to serve a political actor’s particular policy aims; political authorities may desire and promote the existence of corruption. The question of who is undesirable and why remains a political issue in which human rights non-governmental institutions must play a leadership role. As non-state actors, their rhetorical appeals are less likely in abstract to be received as a smoke screen for particularistic state foreign policy aims, cloaked in universal human rights verbiage (Cottam and Cottam, 2001). They need to provide leadership to lobby on behalf of the dispossessed, the marginalized and the suffering. Again, blockchain ledger payment technology will only promote common transparency standards if people and organizations push for it as a new tool in their anti-corruption toolbox.

Figure 5: “Overview of the Three Characteristics of Superordinate Goals and the Related Processes That Foster Successful Goal Pursuit.” (Höchli, Brügger and Messner, 2018, 5, Quoted in Dedominicis, 2021b, 27).



“If perceived as substantively and realistically proffered, then the “superordinate goals” in Figure 5 produce concrete benefits in terms of individual and group status advancement, while in traditional societies, status is ascribed at birth. For an imagined supranational community to be politically feasible, it must not be substantively vulnerable to the suspicious perception that it is a mantle for the particularistic nationalist agenda of one or subgroup of national members. As Hans J. Morgenthau noted, constituency leaderships will tend to cloak and legitimate their respective particularistic policy recommendations in broadly appealing ideological or religious symbols. It justifies a tendency he described as “nationalistic universalism,” defined in foreign policy as “for one nation and one state the right to impose its own valuations and standards of action upon all other nations” (Kagan,106, quoting Morgenthau 1948, 256).” [sic] (DeDominicis, 2021b, 27).

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The paper highlights the globalization of social mobility and social creativity behavior with the expansion of global markets. The ineluctability of globalization implies that the widening and intensifying awareness of interdependency continues with intensifying international conflict. This conflict itself encourages greater degrees of social deviance that state actors functionally aim to utilize. Global actors seek to develop in-group social creativity opportunity structures as well as individual social mobility opportunities. The paper has shown that the web3 is thus both a creature of state domestic and international hegemony while simultaneously resisting it. They thus are evidence of the globalization of opportunity structures for group

social creativity and individual social mobility activity in a dialectic process. Ideally, these processes should be encouraged in order to lessen the predisposition to engage in social competition that can escalate and intensify to mutually perceived zero-sum outcomes.

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