

THE SOCIAL IDENTITY DYNAMICS OF THE EUROPEANIZATION OF BULGARIA: RECONSTRUCTING GRAMSCIAN HEGEMONY IN A POST-NEOCOLONIAL BALKAN NATION-STATE

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ABSTRACT

This analysis proposes that a significant source of the systemic sources of so-called grand corruption and strategic corruption in Bulgaria lies in its long-term history of imperial and colonial subordination. It raises the epistemological issues of the perceptual basis for the identification of corruption. Corruption is a weaponized political label favoring particular political topographic characteristics and trends that support a regional international political hierarchical order, in this case American hegemony. The Bulgarian national community's complex component community identity profile is a product of generations of external domination which this analysis highlights. This legacy includes authority legitimation challenges that contradict establishment authority claims that their domination and control provide an invisible public good in terms of social order. Institutionalized habituated attitudinal predispositions among the public emphasize functionally the state authority as self-serving in its domestic control. The national state authority represents the control interests of an external hegemony. This domestic control ultimately serves the hegemonic interests of an external power, e.g., the Ottoman sultanate, the Soviet Union, or NATO/EU. Bulgarian constituency group and individual acquisition of greater social status via social creativity in relation to the state authority displays orientations towards serving the domestic national representative of the alien imperialist/colonialist hegemon.

JEL: D73, F54, H11, H41, H56, H83, H87, M48, N44

KEYWORDS: Bulgaria, Corruption, European Union, Hegemony, Imperialism, Social Identity Theory, Soviet Union, United States

“Is it fair for an enforcement agency to not enforce a law [the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act] on the books for 25 years, and then one day announce to the world that it will begin enforcing the statute in connection with conduct that occurred during that 25 year period?” Andy Spalding, senior editor of The FCPA Blog, said in an email. “In many ways, that is the Giffen question.” (Re: late CIA operative James Giffen’s prosecution for bribery of Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev “to grease the wheels of global commerce, especially with the CIA’s endorsement” Clay, 2022, paras. 28-29),

INTRODUCTION

This paper critiques the de facto equation of Europeanization with submission to American hegemony. It asks, what choices were made that allowed the EU to be equated as one of side of the same coin with NATO. France’s rejoining the NATO command structure in 2009 encouraged this perception. It comports with the claim that American liberal hegemony made the European integration process feasible. It highlights the consequences for national conflict resolution of the Europeanization process being equated with attitudinal orientation towards accepting American hegemony. Bulgaria is a case study of this process on the level of indirect conflict and influence competition between Moscow and Washington, with each

seeking to contain the other. The outbreak of this competition into violence is occurring in Ukraine. Independent variables in this case study include Bulgarian nationalism. The attitudinal institutionalization of Bulgarian nationalism through the Bulgarian state despite frustrated irredentism acquired predominance under the Communist regime. Shifting this orientation towards the North Atlantic Community is problematic in that the EU functionally favors stability and stabilization to maintain existing borders.

European integration's focus on developing vested economic and bureaucratic interests has tied it to American hegemony. The source of the anti-Moscow influence tendency institutionalized in European integration is to be found here. Challengers to these vested interests include Russia, stereotyped by Washington as the threatening rogue headquarters of so-called strategic corruption. It reflects a mirror image of neo-Stalinist stereotyping in Moscow of Washington and London, i.e., "the Anglo-Saxon world," as the imperial headquarters or heartland of politically threatening globalization (Medvedev, 2023). Communist Bulgaria was the most loyal ally of the Soviet Moscow, closely modeling and integrating its economic institutions with those of the USSR (Spenner and Jones, 1998). Becoming European means becoming coopted into the Washington-centric international political economic system (Vassilev, 2006). It is an intergenerational challenge in Bulgaria, with so many generations socialized into Russophile attitudes. Bulgarian defense minister Stefan Yanev lost his post after publicly rejecting the "war" label for the Russian February 2022 invasion of Ukraine. He advocated instead the term "military operation," echoing Moscow's rhetoric (Euronews, 2022).

For some national constituencies, to be European incorporates a drive functionally equated with a claim to entering a supraordinate status category (Jugert, Šerek and Stollberg, 2019). Being a European Bulgarian is significantly a desire to achieve individual social mobility. How to achieve this mobility in terms of how one ought to behave, i.e., what is ethical, is at the foundation of Bulgarian societal dissonance and dissensus. To be a European means to tolerate the traditionally derogated Other in Bulgaria, i.e., Greeks, Turks, Roma, Macedonians. "Cardinali et al. (2015) defined ethics as a moral code of norms that exist in society externally to a person, depending on culture and time, while ethical decision making is considerably challenging and complex (Spector, 2016)" (Dimitrios and Stavros, 2021, 1103). "European identity and attachment seem to satisfy a fundamental psychological need for people to be associated with positive identity" (Hadler, Chin and Tsutsi, 2021, 4). Being publicly acknowledged as a moral actor is equated here with acquisition of comparatively greater social status in the subjective actor's social self-perception.

Medarov places the current Bulgarian struggle over historical narratives regarding totalitarian Communism within the context of the global passage of so-called memory laws. "Although memory laws have different political motivations (left, right, conservative, liberal or nationalist), what they share, paradoxically, is the common attempt to overcome the rise of diverging identities (ideological, ethnic, religious or others). They are all provoked by the states' inability to contain their symbolic monopoly over national memory" (Medarov, 2020, 37). Diverging historical narratives reflect differing perceptions of the relative significance of historical experiences as contributive to contemporary national identity. They are selectively perceived to justify a particular vision of the most ethically proper authority norm system today and tomorrow.

The paper begins with a brief overview of social identity theory as the theoretical framework for conceptualizing the role of status anxiety in driving individual and collective national behavior. It then highlights the function of American hegemony in shaping global institutional opportunity structures for maintaining social status view collective social creativity and individual social mobility. Social competition, i.e., viewing a social relationship status as zero-sum, characterizes a source of violent nationalist conflict as between Ukraine and Russia in 2022. American hegemonic pretensions include a labelling of individual and state actors' behavior as being so-called corrupt. The paper proffers that the European Union's so-called Europeanization function has its foundation in the regional institutionalization of American hegemony. The interaction of the centuries-long legacy of imperialism and colonialism in what had been components of the Ottoman empire interacts with this Europeanization process.

The multigenerational challenge of corruption illustrates the component complexity of the national identity of these post-colonial nation states, e.g., Bulgaria, Greece and Egypt. Europeanization's roots in the Cold War under American hegemony incentivizes rejection of Russian political influence in polities previously under Soviet imperial hegemonic domination. The paper highlights Bulgaria as a case study of this battle against corruption, conceptualized as threats to the rule of law under Euro-Atlantic auspices. The paper proposes policy strategies focusing on Europeanization of professional codes of ethics in civil society and state agencies, with socialization in them being an emphasis in educational institutions. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of this approach in regard to prospects for peaceful conflict resolution between Moscow and the so-called West.

LITERATURE REVIEW

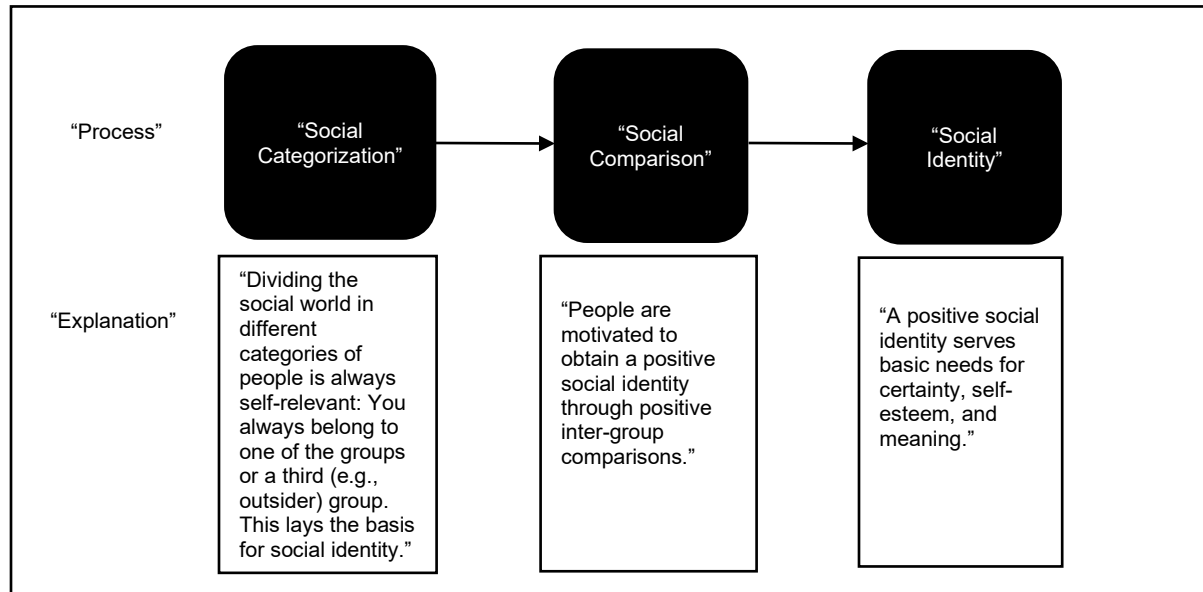
Social Identity Theory

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 state institutional 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.

“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” (DeDominicis, 2023, 2).

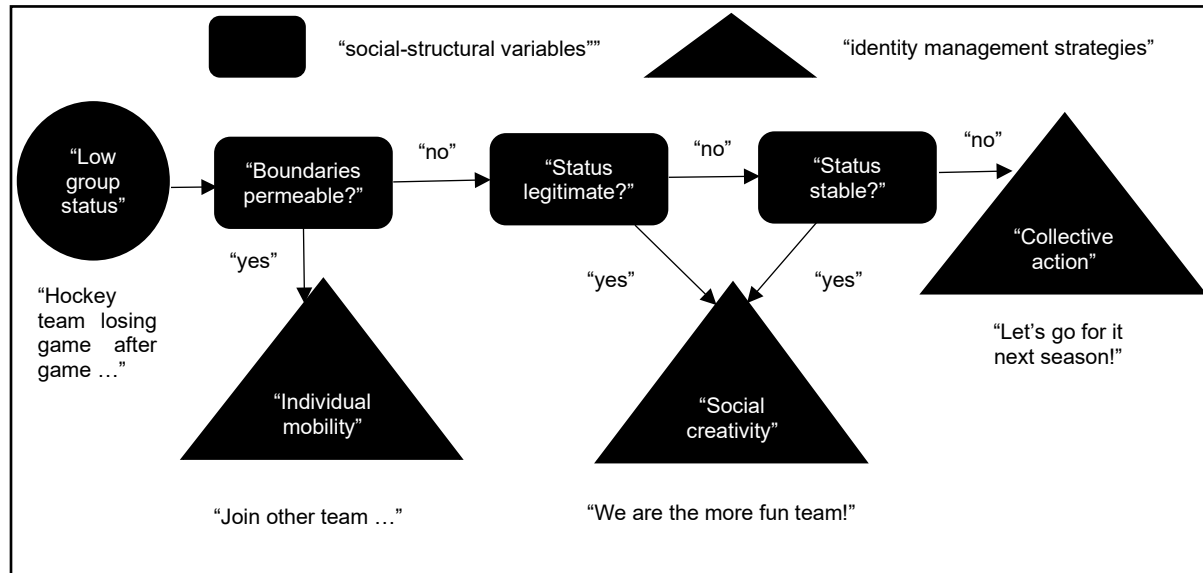
Figure 1: “Social Identity Definition”



“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, 2021b, 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, 2021b, 41).

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, 2021b, 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, 2021b, 40).

Professional ethics codes for the legal system as the core of the state are attempts to institutionalize social status through perceived rule of law to define and regulate social deviance. Parochiality is here conceptualized as pursuing so-called clique ingroup interests at the expense of a supraordinate community identity public good (Abrams and Vasiljevic, 2014). Authorities perceiving a challenge to their supremacy from such behavior label it as corruption through institutionalization of ethics via these professional codes of ethics. Those who fight corruption ideally rise in social status through relatively effective societal enforcement of this “frame” (Bartoszewicz and Eibl, 2022, 3). It should be institutionalized, i.e., the realization of the rule of law, to provide this substantive benefit. Social deviance transforms into social creativity through perceived success in global competition on behalf of the primary terminal self-identity community, i.e., the nation. These perceived challengers to national development may include internal and external sources.

US National Security and Corruption

The Biden administration’s focus on corruption and the “international rules-based order” has its foundation in American post-Cold War hegemony legitimation (Garamone, 2022, para. 1). This legitimation lies in the belief that American global leadership provided the political resources for freedom and prosperity against the Soviet Union, viewed as a totalitarian imperialist power. Moscow’s current attempts to disrupt this

system, according to this worldview includes corruption, i.e., the undermining of the global public good for illegitimate parochial imperial political gain by Moscow. This worldview emphasizes the necessity of the stability of its foundational institutional order under American postwar hegemony that has expanded globally. For example, money laundering, namely international money laundering, is the essence of the subversion of this system, which allegedly facilitates terrorist funding.

The Biden administration issued in December 2021 the “United States Strategy on Countering Corruption,” along with designating “the fight against corruption as a core United States national security interest” (White House, 2021, 4). It presents a typology of corruption:

“Illustrative Types of Corruption:”

“Corruption takes on many forms and is used to further various illicit behaviors. Illustrative types of corruption include, but are not limited to:”

“Grand corruption: when political elites steal large sums of public funds or otherwise abuse power for personal or political advantage.”

“Administrative corruption: the abuse of entrusted power for private gain—usually by low to mid-level government officials—in interactions with citizens and the private sector, including to skirt official regulations and extort citizens in exchange for their basic services.”

“Kleptocracy: a government controlled by officials who use political power to appropriate the wealth of their nation. Can include state capture.”

“State capture: when private entities improperly and corruptly influence a country’s decision-making process for their own benefit.”

“Strategic corruption: when a government weaponizes corrupt practices as a tenet of its foreign policy” [emphasis BD] (White House, 2021, 4).

It highlights Bulgarian actors that the Biden administration targeted for sanctions among the case examples that the Biden administration had already undertaken:

“Spotlight: Global Magnitsky and 7031©”

“Section 7031(c) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, and the Global Magnitsky Act sanctions program, as implemented by Executive Order 13818, have set the international standard for visa restrictions and economic sanctions regimes specifically focused on corruption. Taken together, these mechanisms have exposed corruption and blocked corrupt officials at all levels of government, including heads of state, members of parliament, governors, and mayors, from visiting and spending their ill-gotten gains in the United States.”

“On June 2, 2021, the United States executed the single largest anti-corruption action to date in the sanctioning of three Bulgarian individuals for their extensive roles in corruption in Bulgaria, as well as their networks encompassing 64 entities. The Treasury sanctions were complemented by actions taken by State to publicly designate two of the individuals, and three other Bulgarian public officials, under Section 7031(c), due to their involvement in significant corruption. This coordinated interagency action demonstrates the United States’ commitment to hold accountable those involved in corruption and to impose tangible and significant consequences on those who

engage in corruption as we work to protect the global financial system from abuse” [emphasis BD] (White House, 2021, 27).

The “three Bulgarian individuals” are “Vassil Kroumov Bojkov, a prominent Bulgarian businessman and oligarch; Delyan Slavchev Peevski [referenced below in relation to 2013-14 social protests in Bulgaria who would also be a focus of 2020-21 Bulgarian protests (BD)], a former Member of Parliament; Ilko Dimitrov Zhelyazkov, the former Deputy Chief of the Bulgarian State Agency for Technical Operations who was appointed to the National Bureau for Control on Special Intelligence-Gathering Devices; and the companies owned or controlled by the respective individuals” (U.S. Department of the Treasury, 2021, para. 3).

Section 7031(c) highlights that the executive branch of the US government determines who is corrupt:

“Sec. 7031(c), P.L. 116-94 (H.R. 1865, pp. 331-334)”

“FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET TRANSPARENCY

SEC. 7031. (a-b) Not Shown (c) ANTI-KLEPTOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS. (1) INELIGIBILITY.

(A) Officials of foreign governments and their immediate family members about whom the Secretary of State has credible information have been involved, directly or indirectly, in significant corruption, including corruption related to the extraction of natural resources, or a gross violation of human rights shall be ineligible for entry into the United States.

(B) The Secretary shall also publicly or privately designate or identify the officials of foreign governments and their immediate family members about whom the Secretary has such credible information without regard to whether the individual has applied for a visa” [emphasis BD].

[...] (US State Department, n.d.).

The Trump administration issued Executive Order 13818, “Blocking the Property of Persons Involved in Serious Human Rights Abuses or Corruption,” on December 20, 2017. Trump declared in the order that “serious human rights abuse and corruption around the world constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States, and I hereby declare a national emergency to deal with that threat” (Trump, 2017, para. 3). The Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act authorizes the US president to place sanctions on “any foreign person” that he “determines” to be engaged in systematic human rights violations and corruption (“Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act,” 2016, sec. 1263(a)).

The Biden administration reiterated its commitment to the “rules-based” international system in its October 2022 National Security Strategy. It highlighted the fight against corruption as a US “core national security interest” (White House, 2022, 18). So-called strategic corruption referenced in the US Strategy on Countering Corruption implies that corruption undermines the domestic political authority of US-allied regimes. Thereby, the diplomatic bargaining leverage of Moscow towards the target state is potentially enhanced.

As such, the competitive interference in the internal politics of third actors in the post-Cold War era, utilizes in Washington this discourse of corruption. It aims to resist Moscow’s influence generation efforts, but this competitive interference pattern of behavior was the hallmark of the so-called Cold War in the postwar nuclear setting (Cottam, 1967). Avoiding direct violent conflict between the so-called superpowers was an overriding imperative. The US and USSR competed indirectly but intensely within the internal political policy making processes of third actors everywhere. It was often undertaken covertly and informally to avoid provoking costly nationalist backlash resistance to the locally-perceived imperial interference (DeDominicis, 2019).

The European Union: American Hegemony's Subaltern

Haine and Solloum (2021, 57) assert that EU expansion into Ukraine in 2013-14 “was not geopolitical but technocratic” but “[o]f course that Europe was mistaken does not justify the Russian reaction.” The EU itself publicly intervened in Ukrainian domestic politics to encourage Kyiv street demonstrations against President Yanukovich’s late 2013 refusal to sign an EU association agreement. Lady Catherine Ashton, the EU’s first high representative for its Common Foreign and Security Policy and vice-president of the European Commission visited the Maidan demonstrations on the square (Riegert, 2013). Other demonstrations of Western political establishment elite solidarity with the Euromaidan protestors included senator John McCain who shook the hands of the protestors on December 15, 2013 (*Guardian*, 2013). US Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland made her notorious private recorded dismissal of the EU and its favored Ukrainian candidate for president (BBC, 2014). She publicly distributed food to protestors on Maidan square in Kyiv immediately after meeting with Yanukovich (EUObserver, 2013, CBS, 2013)). Nuland would return to the more senior position of Under Secretary of State in the Biden administration. This historical timeline provokes speculation as to whether Moscow would have ordered its 2022 invasion of Ukraine had Trump been re-elected in 2020.

European integration’s focus on developing vested trans-Atlantic economic and bureaucratic interests has tied it to American hegemony. High profile challenges emerged during the Cold War to American foreign policy dominance. French President Charles de Gaulle departure from the NATO military command structure and West German Chancellor Willy Brandt’s Ostpolitik, were “largely unsuccessful” (Chrysogelos and Martill, 2021, 1). The source of the anti-Moscow influence tendency institutionalized in European integration is to be found here. It associates with nationalism because the prevailing (but not the only) view in Europe was that postwar Moscow was the enemy of European national self-determination while the US allied with it (Danner, 1997, Christiaens, 2017). French president de Gaulle sought to counterbalance American hegemony, but the French accommodated after the Cold War ended and America experienced its unipolar moment (Bozo, 2014).

Ratti (2014, 373) argues that post-Cold War Paris demonstrated a “relentless effort to develop European defence” through strengthening the EU’s new European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP). Paris was unlikely to gain support from the EU’s more “pro-Atlantic” members unless France first rejoined the NATO command structure from which de Gaulle had originally withdrawn France in 1967. Paris first had to address the political fragility of the EU over its member states’ relationships with the US. It was glaringly evident in the “acrimonious rift between ‘Old’ and ‘New’ Europe in the build-up to the 2003 Bush administration’s overthrow of Saddam Hussein’s Iraqi regime” (Ibid.) French President Nicolas Sarkozy oversaw France’s formal return to the NATO military command structure in 2009, culminating moves initiated under Mitterrand and developed under Chirac. By February 2022, the prevailing worldview within the Putin regime in Moscow evidently viewed patterns in EU dissent from US-led NATO strategic behavior as at best tenuous (DeDominicis, 2022).

Degenhardt (2020, 140) observes that the label of “criminality” is “applied selectively as a result of the GN [Global North (BD)] preoccupation with security and stability.” The antipode to Europeanization is corruption via Russian actors and influence. Bulgarian Prime Minister Kiril Petkov equated fighting corruption in Bulgaria with resisting illegal foreign influence, particularly Russian foreign influence in the country (Kotseva, 2022).

Conceptualizing Corruption

Heywood and Rose (2014, 526) survey the literature on measuring the extent of corruption, bifurcating it into two categories: perception-based and non-perceptual approaches. They note the drawbacks of both perspectives, including that the literature elaborating perception-based measures has been relatively inert

in regard to elaboration of these concepts and indicators. They note that the literature utilizing non-perception-based approaches to measuring corruption are critically deficient in capturing the features of specific contexts essential for policy prescriptions. They state, “the focus on measuring corruption at the national level and producing league tables or other rankings is always likely to be misleading: corruption takes place in specific sectors and contexts – local, regional, national and increasingly, transnational – and that very variation is one of the key reasons that it is so difficult to develop appropriate measures.”

This study suggests a focus on regime legitimacy as the perspective to analyze corruption. It specifically focuses on how Gramscian hegemony is constructed to generate the public’s willingness to grant legitimacy to the authority of the ruling class. It is essential for the perception of corruption to emerge, or not to emerge within a national polity that displays full adult population political awareness. The nature of this acceptance can be comparatively evaluated and measured in terms of the mobilization base of the authorities regarding the public. A ruling elite that the modal citizen in a nation state perceives as foreign-imposed, i.e., a quisling regime, will display less mobilizational power potential *ceteris paribus* (Downes, 2009). The collapse of the American client regime in Afghanistan in 2021 illustrates the delegitimizing impact of foreign installation of a ruling elite (Moldovan, 2021). Foreign-imposed regime change creates daunting obstacles to the creation of a collective prevailing view that the state authorities represent the Gramscian “national-popular” will (Monshipouri and Dorraj, 2021, 204). In such an ideal-type polity, participatory, autonomous public opinion formation among the citizenry manifests corruption’s existence as a normatively negative, politically weaponized label for behavior. As such, the relative pervasiveness of corruption equates with the relative degree of normative dissensus on norms and values within a national polity.

The prevailing view in the North Atlantic community is that the Bulgarian polity manifests a comparatively weak administrative state capability as evidenced by its relatively high levels of corruption (Papakostas, 2013). Papakostas explains his focus on Bulgaria first because it

[...] “has been the recipient of the most comprehensive, to date, EU anti-corruption policy through the Coordination and Verification Mechanism and its activation in 2008. Second, because it is the laggard EU country with regard to its effectiveness in addressing corruption. Third, because as a result of EU pressure Bulgaria has introduced one of the most comprehensive anti-corruption legal frameworks in the world and is thus providing an opportunity to examine limitations of legal constraints as an independent variable for fighting corruption. And fourth, because it clearly imprints a political and social culture that derives from distinct pre-communist historical origins more than the other recent EU Member States” (Papakostas, 2013, 53)

In the 1989 Eastern European “demonstration effect” environment, mass protests also occurred in Bulgaria to bring down the Communist regime on 10 November 1989 (Pop, 2013). Prior to the late 1980s, Communist Bulgaria did not manifest a mass protest movement. “[U]ntil the late 1980s, dissident activities in the country consisted rather of separate, uncoordinated acts of individuals or groups, sufficient for raising concerns among the authorities who answered with immediate suppression, but not nearly enough for undermining their position” (Dineva, 2019, 43). In sum, the pro-democracy social movement in Communist Bulgaria emerged relatively late. It gestated comparatively less institutional social capital to support the transition to the post-Communist liberal regime. Lustration, i.e., publication of Communist secret police documentation of individual past collaboration with the security services, has partly compensated. It aims “to tackle the vestiges of the secret police networks in current business activities [which] resonates with similar regional attempts to use lustration as anti-corruption measures” (Horne, 2015, 139).

Explaining the relative absence of organized public dissent in the Bulgarian as due to exceptional levels of coercion is necessary, but not sufficient. Hardline post-1968 Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic developed significant sustained dissident-led social movements (Desposato and Wang, 2020). An explanation should include the paradoxes and dilemmas in Bulgarian “national” identity that significantly

stem from its largely externally dependent, colonial Balkan historical political evolution. Beginning in pre-modern, feudal conditions, generations of Bulgarians underwent lifetime socialization during periods of imperial intervention. The Orthodox Christian Bulgarian lands were under Ottoman Turkish Muslim control for centuries, before a comparatively brief period of sovereignty saw it pass under Russian Soviet domination. These experiences impacted behavioral attitudes passed to succeeding generations. Policy-relevant understandings of Bulgarian political attitudes towards their own respective state and community can benefit from a theory-informed consideration of the impact of imperialism. Respective national self-determination drives reflect this legacy. Nationalism is this drive for national self-determination through acquisition of the perceived situational political prerequisites for national sovereignty.

Corruption and Imperialism

Bulgarian normative dissensus derives from differentiated institutionalized, i.e., habituated attitudes for achieving social status as well as security which differ among societal constituencies. These intergenerational attitudinal polarization cleavages reflect early socialization. Accelerated postwar Urbanization was the setting where Bulgarian nationalism was most likely to associate with Communist socialization. Amongst this institutionalized, early socialization dissonance, Bulgarians' habitual default has been towards patron-clientelism. Under communism, this normative attitude institutionalized within a formal framework of Marxist-Leninist democratic centralism in terms of organizing selves. The Communist party institutionalized this pattern nationally. The Party was the institution of the ruling class aristocracy under the de facto ruling family of Todor Zhivkov.

“Corruption is not only an economic term, but according to some authors, it is described as a moral disorder and social behavior handed down from generation to generation [(Aydoğuş, Kutlu, & Yıldırım, 2005: 1-3).” [*sic*] (Çadirci, 2022, 295, Google translated from the original Turkish)]. As such, corruption is a problem of development, a normatively laden post-colonial term evaluatively comparing post-colonial polities with the former, formal imperial metropole. These former metropolises are typically nation states, whereas postcolonial states, display more or less arbitrarily drawn boundaries (Cottam and Cottam, 2001). These externally imposed territorial boundaries often overlap and intersect multiple primary intensity self-identity communities, e.g., so-called tribes. The public to whom the citizen owes primary self-identity allegiance is more often contested. The state authorities attempt to enforce the rule of law without primary representational community authority in the eyes of many. For example, a postwar Serbian nationalist diverting central government resources away from Yugoslav central government-determined policy ends would be labeled corrupt, if not treasonous.

The political weaponization of the concept of corruption promotes the stabilization of the post-colonial state territorial status quo. Developing states are nation-building states. Subversion of this functional end, e.g., via black market transnational smuggling and crime to destabilize existing state authorities, is corruption. The purveyors of this narrative divert attention from the ultimate strategic ends for this destabilization. These functional ends may include dismembering existing states to satisfy pan-nationalist and irredentist movements. Historical examples include the opium trade of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (Jovanović, 2018). Contemporary cases include the Taliban's reliance on the opium trade to fund its ultimately successful resistance to American colonial occupation.

The prevailing, evolving national system of dissonant conflictive Bulgarian norms and values reflects partly the end of the totalitarian Communist one-party state amidst Euro-Atlantic integration. Bulgaria ranks relatively highly in terms of prevailing perceptions of corruption within society. According to Transparency International, Bulgarian public opinion perceptions of the level of corruption in their own country stands at 42, with 100 being “very clean.” The global average for 2021 was 43, with 48% of Bulgarian respondents reporting that corruption increased in the previous 12 months. Bulgaria ranked 78th among the 180 countries surveyed (Transparency International, 2021). In comparison, Denmark ranked 1st, with a Danish aggregate

opinion view of corruption within Denmark at 88 out of 100. Subsystem interactions within social, economic and political spheres of the Bulgarian polity are under Euro-Atlantic overall hegemonic regulation. Various constituencies within the Bulgarian public that perceive themselves as benefitting from Euro-Atlantic integration to differing degrees. For example, European student youth benefit from the European mobility Erasmus+ Program. Research indicates a positive correlation between student participation in this mobility program and the enhancement of European components of self-identity (Öz and Van Praag, 2022).

The first post-1989 Bulgarian government to retain its governing mandate after an election (in 2014) was under Boyko Borisov, leading his party, the Citizens for the European Development of Bulgaria (GERB, i.e., 'shield' in Bulgarian). He appealed directly to the frustrated anti-corruption European self-identification aspirations of the Bulgarian national citizenry perceived as contributing to Bulgarian stagnation. Borisov remains the longest serving prime minister in post-1989 Bulgaria (Spirova and Sharenkova-Toshkova, 2021). "While GERB completed several major infrastructure projects and followed the austerity policies prescribed by the EU and the IMF, it was not successful in creating growth and combating corruption" (Barzachka, 2020, 780). Noteworthy is that the trigger for large-scale public support social movement protests that emerged in 2013-14 was the implementation of so-called government budgetary austerity cuts. In a comparative study of 2009-11 social movements protests in Slovenia and Bulgaria, Dinev (2022) found that

"[m]ost of the largest events during the ascending phase in Bulgaria and Slovenia were organized by trade unions against the privatization of formerly state-owned companies, pension reforms that increased retirement age, austerity measures in the public sector (specifically budget cuts in education and healthcare), and in favor of increasing salaries and for economic justice. In the same period, farmers and agricultural producers in Bulgaria mobilized blockades against budget cuts in the agricultural sector and informal groups held nationwide demonstrations against fuel prices, while academics and students challenged reforms in higher education" (Dinev, 2022, 18).

A bifurcation within the 2013-14 protests emerged to include an explicitly anti-oligarchic, pro-reform, pro-European urban elite-centered concentration. It targeted the Bulgarian National Assembly's confirmation of the above-mentioned Delyan Peevski, a Bulgarian media mogul and former Turkish minority establishment party MP, as head of the State Agency for National Security (DANS). The "#DANSwithme" protest featured an explicitly stronger political reform set of demands that anti-protest media narratives exploited. Nikolov (2016) highlights an example of the national identity polarizations among the Bulgarian national public, showcasing

"[t]he text that most clearly extends this discourse of bifurcation is an article by journalist Velislava Dareva (2013) entitled 'The rebellion of the well-fed' (in Bulgarian). In it she draws a clear between the 'February' [2013] protests, seen as a reflection of 'the despair of an entire nation', and the 'June' [2013] protests led by the few privileged, well-educated, and rich Bulgarians; by those who 'don't worry about electricity and bread. Who don't care about heating bills, child benefits, pensions. Who have their wonderful jobs and European salaries, who are sure and insured, glossy and glamorous, with outstanding CVs, with the overachieving curriculum vitae that was conceived once upon a time in the totalitarian corridors of power'." (Nikolov, 2016, 134).

Bulgarian traditional comparative stereotypes of Bulgaria and European great powers tend to elevate the latter (Curticean, 2008). Europeanisation advocates are more likely to perceive Bulgarian co-national resistance to conformity with European behavioral ideals as nationally detrimental, if not corrupt. Generational differences within the Bulgarian public since would intuitively seem to display greater support for Euro-Atlantic integration among the younger who more readily exploit mobility options (Rone and Junes, 2021). Their temporal position would reflect greater career and self-identity attitudinal predisposition

investments more broadly within the hegemonic Euro-Atlantic order. Older generations socialized to behaving as so-called good citizens within Communist Bulgaria would presumably have more invested in the remnants of the old order, in terms of norms and values. These *ancien regime* system values assumed the fusion of economic and political structures as the foundation of postwar, Communist-led modernization of Bulgaria. The collectively self-perceived relative inefficacy of the Bulgarian authorities to oversee systems of accountability triggered mass demonstrations in 1997 and again in 2013-14. ““Stop Communism” was a slogan found in Sofia’s urban spaces during the 2013-2014 protests [...], which also saw protesters characterizing Bulgarian politics and politicians as “red trash,” a label used variously since the 1990s” (Kofti, 2016, 69). The student movement eventually took the lead in the latter spontaneous mass demonstrations. “Especially for the younger activists, the struggle for social accountability had been clearly about their own future as a generation” (Pirro, 2017, 785).

Appealing for broader Bulgarian public opinion support appears comparatively problematic. Mihailova (2019, 185) tentatively concludes, “[a]s the results of the content analysis of 69 public positions of intellectuals in the period 2005-2019 show, the Bulgarian intellectual responds to political events but does not offer synthesized explanations of the present, projects, visions, strategies for the future.” This article’s proposition is that attitudinal dissonance and dissensus regarding how a so-called ideal Bulgarian citizen should interact with authority manifests itself partly through this absence. It is a legacy of generations of imperial, even colonial, domination. Unlike, e.g., Poland, Bulgaria’s democratization was not primarily a consequence of mass level social movement resistance to the Communist regime:

“According to writer Georgi Gospodinov [(...) 2013 (BD)], Bulgaria provides a particularly interesting case of post-socialism because it lacks a ‘rectifying revolution’ (Habermas, 1990, [183 (BD)]) as seen in, for example, Poland. Gospodinov (ibid., p.65) argues that in Bulgaria, ‘on 10 November [1989] we were told through the television that we were now free.’ He follows an interesting Foucauldian approach in his work, arguing that bodies have memories and that Bulgaria’s quite distinctive totalitarian regime caused a lack of a memory of resistance within the body” (Nikolov, 2016, 128).

This Bulgarian public attitudinal orientation tending towards authority avoidance and circumvention reflects the legacy of centuries of imperial-colonial control by the external, superordinate Other. Both the US government and the urban protesting leadership perceived the decade-long rule of GERB as overseeing the rise of “endemic” corruption in Bulgaria (Krsteva, 2021, 7). States are vast, complex organizations, of which nation states are one type (Cottam and Cottam, 2001). The Bulgarian nation state case appears to be further evidence comporting with Peter Drucker’s aphorism that [organizational] culture eats [the organizational leadership’s formal] strategy for breakfast (Engel, 2018).

The Cultural Legacy of Colonial Imperialism

Figure 1 is a schematic representation of the typologies of subjective perception of imperialism and colonialism by a citizenry demanding self-determination for the nation. In this conceptual framework, a nationalist values sovereign self-determination for the nation as a primary intensity motivation which shapes perception and behavior. Perceived threats to sovereignty are most obvious in over/formal direct imperial control, i.e., foreign conquest and occupation by an invading force. In the present era of near complete adult global political awareness, formal, direct imperialism generates the most resistance from local nationalists, raising the cost of the intervention. It was more common when popular awareness of the political sphere was limited to small percentage of the population, with the mass of the population politically engaged at most at the parochial, village level. To lessen costly nationalist resistance, interventions are masked with a patina of local agreement. For example, the foreign-imposed collaborationist ruler signs a formal legal agreement for military basing rights and legal immunity for the intervenor forces, as in 2001-21 Afghanistan. Obscuring foreign control further through avoidance of formal legal agreements while

working through a collaborationist local elite, e.g., a traditional local ruling family, constitutes indirect, informal control.

Figure 1: “Variance in Perceptions of Foreign Policy” from *Foreign Policy Motivation: A General Theory and a Case Study*, by Richard W. Cottam, © 1977. Reprinted by permission of the University of Pittsburgh Press.

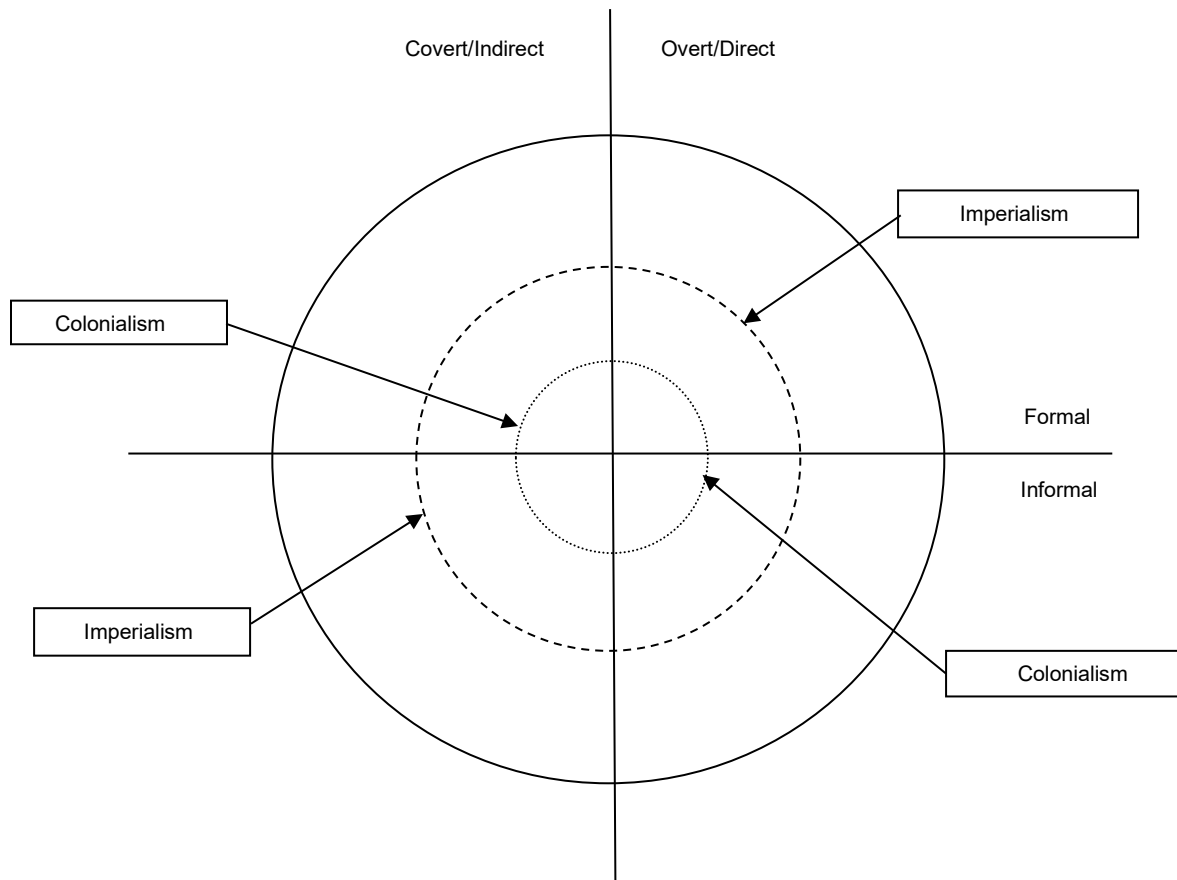


Figure 1 is an inclusive typology of the forms of imperial control that reflects the rise mass popular political awareness in the modern era incentivizing occupying powers to engage in what today is called neo-colonialism. It consists of informal, indirect control to obscure the foreign ultimate authority over local government policy as so perceived by local nationalists. Other constituencies, e.g., business classes, may not resist this foreign domination if they perceive the latter as protecting and promoting their economic interests. The traditional elite threatened by the radical pro-change nationalistic forces may also collaborate with the foreign imperial power. The latter is a colonizing power if the local nationalist citizenry views it as aiming to assimilate and erase the nationalist's primary, terminal self-identity community.

Table 1 highlights the history of Bulgarian national identity community development. It reflects the impact of extended periods of external imperial domination of Bulgaria from its ancient foundation as a polity by the Thracians. Early medieval period migrations culminated in the establishment of a recorded medieval state under the Proto-Bulgarian khans that eventually adopted Byzantine Christianity. The early medieval Bulgarian state was a first-rank power in Europe, evident in the creation of the Cyrillic alphabet and the translation of the Bible into Old Church Slavic. Bulgaria eventually alternated between direct control by and vassalage towards Constantinople. The Ottoman Muslim conquest in the late medieval period would not end until the latter half of the nineteenth century along with imperial Russian direct military intervention. The latter claimed hegemonic leadership of the Slavic and Orthodox communities (Tumanova, 2014, Miller and Resnick, 2003, Gorun, 2015).

Table 1: Imperialism and Colonialism in Bulgaria

	Formal	Informal
Direct	1) Macedonians/Greeks 2) Romans 3) Byzantines I 7) Ottomans	4) Slavs 5) Proto-Bulgarians
Indirect	6) Byzantines II 8) Russians	9) Soviets

Post-World War II Communist Bulgarian incentives to acknowledge and exploit Soviet Russian claims to hegemony include frustrated Bulgarian irredentism. The obstacles to Sofia’s unification of the so-called Bulgarian lands lie in Cold War de facto or de jure alliance of Belgrade, Athens and Turkey with NATO. The resurgence of EU/NATO conflict with post-Soviet Moscow has intensified Bulgarian national component community identity evolution to channel Bulgarian irredentism into EU mediation channels. Russian influence is therefore informal and to the extent it undermines pro-Euro-Atlantic policy and orientation, it is labeled as corrupt and a threat to Europe more broadly. Democratization permits expression of Bulgarian irredentism but Bulgaria’s collective self-awareness of its minor power status constrains it.

For this study, neo-colonialism consists of informal-indirect control. In sum, the nationalist subject perceives the imperial power concealing its control through utilizing local collaborators who maintain the public image of representing the sovereign authority of the nation. Historically, it typically involves working through a local ruling family dynasty, e.g., the Shah’s regime in Iran (US) and the Zhivkov regime in Bulgaria (USSR). Since 1989, Bulgaria is a post-neo-colonial nation state.

“The impact of these imperial experiences shapes the subsequent socio-political mobilizational processes of national identity value formation and behavioral political attitude expression. They include the ethnic, sectarian, racial or territorial identity community foci for nationalism as well as the prevailing attitudinal self-expression that associates with a particular national case (Rock, 2008). In direct, formal colonial rule, the imperial power imposes its ultimate control through placement of a supreme political ruler publicly representing the sovereign authority of the imperial state. This type of colonial experience has a greater potential to unify the native pro-reform elite of different constituencies in the community in the development of resistance to this form of imperial control. It is probably the least detrimental in terms of its community polarization legacy for state-society relations; the local population at least can more clearly ‘see’ who the enemy is. Japanese imperialism in Korea and Ottoman control of Bulgaria may be categorized as such. In contrast, indirect-formal rule is in place when local, traditional elites rule in the community with the ‘advice’ of the imperial power in the form of advisors, security arrangements, etc. Today, it may also be attempted through formal legitimation of an external intervention by international organizational mandates granted, for example, by NATO, the EU, ECOWAS or the UN Security Council” (DeDominicis, 2013, 50).

“Indirect-informal imperial control is maintained without the overt presence of imperial personnel. Local nationalist actors perceive the imperial power exercising ultimate control over the policies of the local ruling elite. During the postwar period, Moscow exercised control through its client elite in local Communist parties and the respective security apparatus in each Warsaw Pact country. If these control mechanisms collapsed, the USSR would intervene militarily, as in East Berlin in 1953, Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968. In 1989, the USSR had no military bases in Bulgaria and Romania, unlike in Poland, Hungary, East Germany and Czechoslovakia. A current topic of media speculation is whether the People’s Republic of China would militarily intervene to prevent the collapse of the DPRK regime so as to prevent reunification with the US-allied South (Lim, 2012). In this case, the nature of the North Korean regime would change with the overt presence of Chinese soldiers supporting the DPRK authorities. Such a scenario would constitute another test of the strength of pan-Korean nationalism today in the DPRK. Finally, in informal, direct imperial control, the imperial power invades and becomes the ruling class (e.g.,

Arabs into Egypt, Normans into England). In the contemporary era, one case that may plausibly be moving in this direction is the Israeli colonization of Palestine” (DeDominicis, 2013, 51).

“Informal imperial rule typically means that the imperial power does not acknowledge that it has ultimate authority within the country; the embassy of the imperial power works through the local bureaucracy (Chandler, 2010). Chandler (2010) focuses on Africa. David Chandler (2006), focusing on Eastern Europe, argues that imperial powers today do not admit that they are hegemonic because it is no longer acceptable to global public opinion. Chandler highlights the greater divide between the state authorities and their European and American international patrons, on the one hand, and the mass public in post-colonial states, on the other hand. The inference is that indirect control aims to reduce the costs of imperial control by lessening resistance to it through attempting to obscure it. This obfuscation can be promoted through a dependent, compliant local elite that has formal sovereignty. Whether or not the political influence of an external imperial power is intolerably high is a subjective judgment by different interest groups and evolving constituencies within the target community. One unfortunate legacy particularly of informal imperial intervention is a stronger propensity for the emergence and crystallization of local community identity cleavages. Consequent, polarizing stereotypes and intense suspicions are more likely to emerge within the previously subjected community regarding who ‘collaborated’ with the imperial powers in the past. In political competition, they are more likely to be portrayed as prone conspiratorially to ‘collaborate again’ in the perceived contemporary machinations of the imperial powers in the area. During intense conflicts, these tendencies may contribute to acts of genocidal violence against suspected ‘traitor.’” (DeDominicis, 2013, 50-51).

Socialist modernity reinforced traditional scapegoating of Bulgarian Muslims as the local inhabitant imperial legacies of neighboring Turkey. It functionally facilitated a coercive process of Bulgarian nation-building that the authorities equated with “building a socialist Bulgarian society” (Ivanov and Önsoy, 2022, 38). Rejection of neighboring postwar Macedonian national identity after 1960 also facilitated this functional role of establishing a foreign Other to oppose against modern Bulgarian identity (Maleska, 2013). The prevailing view in Sofia held the traditional neighboring rival Belgrade as responsible for this creation (Georgievski, 2020). It further incentivized Sofia’s national self-identification with Moscow as Tito’s Belgrade became officially non-aligned (Nehring, 2022). Sofia’s irredentist competition with neighboring Greece was transferred to the focus on the Warsaw Pact versus NATO. Athens would come to see Yugoslav Macedonia as an irredentist threat in reaction to its independence in 1992 (Nimetz, 2020). Sofia maneuvered to boost its influence towards Skopje by becoming a de facto defender Macedonian self-determination amidst the latter’s conflict with Athens (Lefebvre, 1994). The Athens-Skopje accommodation produced the 2018 Prespa Agreement. This agreement aimed to end Athens’ veto on Skopje joining Euro-Atlantic alliance organizations, with the Republic of North Macedonia joining NATO on March 27, 2020. Sofia’s then raised its own voice against Skopje acceding to the EU due to Sofia’s national self-identity demands towards Macedonia. The latter include official recognition of Macedonian as originally a dialect of Bulgarian (Beiber and Dimitrov, 2022).

Table 2 presents the Egyptian case simply as a comparison case with Bulgaria. Egypt is an Arabic-speaking nation state and as such differs from all other post-colonial Arab states created on the foundations of the 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement (Kitching, 2015/2016). Its identity profile is complex due to the long legacy of imperial and colonial control, with its ancient urban centers established before the Arab Muslim conquest. The complexity of its contemporary national self-identity component community profile intensifies challenges towards building ruling authority Gramscian legitimacy. The authorities rely on parochial utilitarian incentives via the state coercive control apparatus, along with coercion, to become significant mechanisms for control alongside nationalistic appeals (Yee, 2022).

Table 2: Imperialism and Colonialism in Egypt

	Formal	Informal
Direct	2) Greeks 6) French 8) British	4) Arabs 5) Mamelukes 7) Turko-Albanians
Indirect	1) Persia 3) Romans 9) British (1922-52)	10) USA 1974-1982

Authority orientation towards the governing apparatus representing the state displays an orientation comparable to other post-Ottoman nation states in the so-called Near and Middle East. Authoritarian regimes today suppress foreign policy behavior orientations giving overt expression to the strong pan-Arab and pan-Islamic component sentiments in Egyptian national identity self-expression. The Bulgarian liberal regime allows for Russophile orientations to express themselves in political party formations while active support for Russian pan-Slavic leadership claims are rejected in favor of Euro-Atlantic hegemony. Expression of these Russophile pan-Slavic orientations are relegated to the informal, often corrupt, commercial sphere. Egypt is a comparative case of a post-colonial nation state with a complex identity profile.

The legacy of imperialism is the creation of conflicting authority norms institutionalized in culture. Culture is transmitted to offspring and it interacts with new formal institutional orders. In medieval times, the aristocracy of the conquered lands of the Ottoman empire probably converted to Islam. They thereby alienated themselves from the peasantry. The Soviet system slotted into this historical predisposition, to create a ruling aristocracy beholden to Moscow. The Slavic metropole appealed to Bulgarian nationalism which was in dialectical tension with the Ottoman inheritance of authority norms. The abject became associated with the mass in the view of the de facto client aristocracy/elite implementing Soviet control (Karkov, 2018). The abject could be co-opted to satisfy social mobility needs by joining the party. Social creativity needs for deviance were needs of the minorities, which did not really have these options, as they became scapegoated as the abject.

Ruling authority legitimacy emerges through policies and decisions that support national social creativity and individual social mobility. They include national self-determination as foundation upon which to construct social creativity opportunity structures. To rephrase, the developed nation state is one that relatively effectively constructs a Gramscian hegemonic societal functional belief in the rule of law. This analysis construes rule of law broadly, i.e., the internalized, habitual acceptance of prevailing authority norms within a polity. These norms and values comparatively effectively regulate social identity management strategies. These outputs must provide substantive benefits to support constituencies, including the coercive apparatus, while repressing dissenters, stereotyped as deviant outcasts as the prevailing societal view. Manipulation of nationalist symbols functionally aims to legitimize policy make process outputs during periods of mobilization, e.g., during national political crisis events such as war. Coercion as a regime instrument of control operates at a tertiary level, associated with moral and ethical ideals the violation of which generates personal shame, if not necessarily always obedience. Societal opprobrium and censorship is the manifestation of this coercion. This role of coercion characterizes so-called developed advanced liberal democracies.

In so-called developing societies, coercion plays a more significant role, along with utilitarian cooptation of base constituencies for the ruling elite. It contributes to conditions of greater macroeconomic instability. The private good of various constituencies is sacrificed at the expense of macroeconomic systemic equilibrium. Other national macroeconomic systems within the interdependent, globalized international financial system react to these comparative control weaknesses, producing, e.g., sovereign debt default.

Nationalism and Corruption

As a Weberian ideal-type regime, “the rule of law is ultimately an inwardly focused and domestically implemented criterion and aspiration regarding a state’s organization and affairs” (McLaughlin 2020, 164). The belief in the rule of law is a public good if it becomes the politically prevailing public view towards

the behavior of the authorities. In sum, the regime has liberal democratic legitimacy in the collective, prevailing view of the public. Such a prevailing view correlates with reliance upon coercion to maintain control only at a tertiary level. Ideally, the rule of law is understood to be a functional goal that liberal democracy should deliver. Representation through institutionalized forms of public political participation including elections, aims to generate legitimacy of the authorities in the collective eyes of the public. The public, to rephrase, views the output of the policymaking process as representing the public will and therefore represents not the rule of individuals but the rule of law. Under conditions of Gramscian hegemony, to paraphrase Bismarck, the citizenry loves the sausage, but does not and in fact tends to avoid seeing what goes into making it. This critique highlights that modern macroeconomics is also a paradigmatic framework for state building and institutionalization of statewide institutions (DeDominicis, 2021a). It is a means for generating greater power potential base for the nation state authorities who adhere to the policy prescriptions of economic strategists. Thereby they can more readily transform that power potential base into diplomatic bargaining leverage (Cottam and Gallucci, 1978).

Imitation is a “subtle type of conformity” (Frost, 2021, 168). Among *homo sapiens*, a behavioral predisposition is to “mimic both the actions and the intentionality, i.e., the mental states of each other (Riordan, 2021, 243). Riordan references findings of Rene Girard (1923-2015), who labelled this tendency, mimesis. In inferential analysis, Girard highlights mimesis in terms of its contribution to the so-called process of hominization in evolution contributing to the emergence of *homo sapiens*. This process generates scapegoats, the sacrifice of whom for their non-conformity leads to their sacralization. This sacralization, in turn, serves as a symbolic reservoir from which to draw to legitimate social deviance as a form of social creativity in responding to changing community structural conditions. The emergence of Christianity and its diffusion throughout the Roman empire is a high-profile historical case study.

Nationalism’s emergence will tend to associate with a scapegoating tendency. It can be against the perceived contagion of the degenerate outsider when perceiving opportunity, or from local traitors serving the diabolical enemy when perceiving intense external threat (Cottam and Cottam, 2001). They would be targeted as deviance that fails to mime the prevailing norms. The belief that the state’s rule of law is critical for the defense of sovereignty is a modern notion. In post-colonial states, creating, propagating and institutionalizing this statewide orientation is a challenge. The legacy of colonialism includes the explicit and blatant subversion of the rule of law, i.e., the belief that the community is sovereign. With its roots in colonialism, the source of authority for the colonial state lies in comparative negative assessment of Self, relative to the metropole Other. The post-colonial state inherits this legacy of institutionalized disparagement and marginalization of the indigenous population. State authorities seek public legitimation of their rule in part from this legacy of internalized comparative inferiority. This inherited post-colonial institutionalized disparagement of Self may decay. This change process may take generations to create a new prevailing institutionalized community consensus around national sovereignty and self-determination.

The Weberian ideal-type nation state is modern analog to the medieval church. It establishes the moral and ethical order and what is venerated and sacred within it, i.e., romantic stereotypes of the national Self in opposition to the despised Other. What is the common enemy, or should be the common enemy, can become sources of community dissensus around norms and values. This formation of ingroup tendencies appears to be inevitable. The pan-global enemy according to the Americans includes terrorism and corruption violating the so-called international rules-based order. The legacy of colonialism includes dissonance over ideals to mimic regarding so-called moral and ethical behavior. One functional solution may be to develop a functional secular religion of a belief in so-called Europe. This end will require finding a sacred victim scapegoat: USSR/Russia.

A standard, general definition of corruption is the “abuse of public office for private gain” (Asencio, 2019, 263). Ideally, institutions of democratic political participation invest this public authority into individuals and groups acting as agents of the liberal democratic state. Liberal democracy is not an essential

requirement for legitimacy in the collective view of some segment of the public. Charismatic authoritarian populists may be viewed as representing the will of the nation in the eyes of many, if not most (Schmitt, 2005). An actor not perceived as acting in their private interest is not corrupt even if terribly cruel.

In Communist Bulgaria, the public interest became associated with the Party's nomenklatura monopolization of traditional control of the state via patronage. Post-Communist democratization "did little to curb the tradition of packing public administration with public supporters" (Spirova, 2012, 54). The disintegration of this control means lack of consensus today on what is the public interest because of the decaying authority norms system inherited from Soviet-imposed Communism. Creating a new public interest means creating a national community consensus on new community/statewide institutions of public authority generation. Euro-Atlantic hegemonic authorities label it corruption if it does not conform with Euro-Atlantic regional strategic foreign policy objectives. One comparative study of populist versus technocratic rhetoric in Serbia and Bulgaria highlights how Europeanization has been a vehicle for the concentration of power in the national executive (Domaradzki and Milosavljević (2021). A consequence has been the weakening of anti-corruption reforms through their rhetorical trivialization as EU conditionality serves as a vehicle for personal authority legitimation by ambitious state leaders.

In the postwar era, systemic corruption in Greece and Italy rooted in parochiality was tolerated by the Euro-Atlantic authorities. It allied with American hegemonic authority interests in politically marginalizing local actors perceived as more vulnerable to Soviet influence. Noteworthy for this study is the systemic corruption pervasive in neighboring post-Ottoman Greece on the eve of the 2009 sovereign debt crisis despite postwar integration into Euro-Atlantic structures (Papadimitriou and Zartaloudis, 2020). Prior to 2009, Europeanization did not appear to have institutionalized transparency in administrative governance by overcoming elite polarization around patronage dispensing utilitarian benefits. Intervention by the IMF, European Central Bank, the European Commission, i.e., the so-called Troika, illuminated the internal battles over Greek public debt statistics that made them glaringly invalid (Prévost, 2021). As an example of European ethical action, Prévost describes the struggle of one Greek economist to override habitual patterns of parochial opaque behavior to report valid statistics regarding the Greek debt. Andreas V. Georgiou, a former IMF economist, clashed with members of the governing board of the newly-created Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT). The Troika had demanded to address "the unreliability of Greece's public finance statistics" [*sic*] (Prévost, 2021, 437).

Representing a transnational epistemic community sharing a shared social scientific worldview, Georgiou eventually prevailed. He was subject to legal prosecution for his efforts in overcoming what had been the habitualized norm for managing Greek public finances. One 2011 study reports that Greece has spent more than half of its years since independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1832 in sovereign debt default. "Economists point to several deeply entrenched features of the Greek economy and Greek society in general that have prevented sustained economic growth and created the conditions underlying the current crisis. Chief among these are pervasive state control of the economy, a large and inefficient public administration, endemic tax evasion, and widespread political clientelism" (Nelson, Belkin and Mix, 2011, 373).

Carl Schmitt asserts that all significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized concepts. In sum, political theory addresses the state and sovereignty in a manner analogous to how theology addresses God:

"All significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts not only because of their historical development – in which they were transferred from theology to the theory of the state, whereby, for example, the omnipotent God became the omnipotent lawgiver – but also because of their systematic structure, the recognition of which is necessary for a sociological consideration of these concepts. The exception in jurisprudence is analogous to the

miracle in theology. Only by being aware of this analogy can we appreciate the manner in which the philosophical ideas of the state developed in the last centuries” (Schmitt, 2005, 36).

In sum, the sovereign is that which declares the exception. Schmitt focuses on the state, while this analysis incorporates explicitly the phenomenon of the nation state to conceptualize the normative active political authority of its ruling establishment. The sovereign in the modern era derives its authority from the so-called will of the people as represented by the government apparatus of the nation state. Corruption, i.e., the pursuit of private interest at the expense of the public good, undermines the sovereignty of the people, inferring from the framework utilized in this analysis. In post-colonial Bulgaria, normative habitual consensus is comparatively lacking on what is private versus public. According to, Bratu, Sotiropoulos and Stoyanova (2017, 123), referencing post-Communist Romania and Bulgaria, “[i]n such contexts, the classic public-private divide (on which the definition of corruption is based) loses meaning as there is no clear distinction between state officials and private business interests.”

Imperial domination, as subjectively perceived, by definition places the perceived lawgiver outside of the nation. Formal national self-determination may require generations after its acquisition to generate new prevailing attitudinal behavioral predisposition changes. These national component identity convergences around a consensus on the norms and values of behaving in accordance with a so-called good Bulgarian citizen. In modern Bulgaria the top-down state historically dominated society, including the church (DeDominicis, 2016). The disintegration of Communism left a society bereft of its traditional foreign sovereign whom its local subalterns managed on its behalf. For the nation to become sovereign required acquisition of a belief in national sovereignty as a norm and a value. Post-colonial utilization of the institutional legacy of the decaying neo-colonial national Communist state to acquire social status became a dissonance-generating endeavor. In a post-Communist environment of contingency and dissensus, parochial attitudinal orientation structures became predominant. Becoming European by excluding Russia is a comparatively challenging process in Bulgaria. It perhaps is not as politically difficult as in former Soviet republics and Russian provinces, with their “tenacious webs of patronage running all the way to various powerful patrons in Moscow” (Derluguian and Zhemukhov, 2013, 553). Patronage systems with their summit authorities in Moscow have been in more direct conflict with Euro-Atlantic integration pressures in new EU member states.

One cross-partisan, near-consensus generating issue in Bulgaria today appears to be the national self-identity affirming stereotype that Slavophone North Macedonians are really brainwashed Bulgarians (Gotev, 2022, Todorov, 2022). Bulgarians collectively accept that they do not have the relative power capability to change this situation via irredentist annexation and domination. On the eve of its February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, the prevailing view in Russia is that Russia did have this capability vis-à-vis Ukraine, a nation portrayed as forcibly separated from Russia (Putin, 2021). Echoing Hungarian post-Trianon frustrated irredentism, Serbian irredentism has so far failed to annex perceived Serbian lands 30 years since the collapse of Yugoslavia (Schweitzer, 2021). Corruption is thus likely to be a long-term feature of Balkan orientation towards claims of national authority targeted with dissonant distrust. Historically frustrated irredentism helps prime challenges to hegemonic claims of national authority by state governing apparatus representatives. It increases the instability of the institutionalization of hegemonic claims to effective creation and enforcement of the rule of law.

Social Deviance

Pan’s analysis highlights Carl Schmitt’s interpretation of the source of law through opposition to the Other on the basis of underlying existing political fault lines. Opposing values systems must exist as “a set of oppositions” that “is both the underlying schema for defining politics in a particular situation and the ideological basis for a set of laws” (Pan, 2009, 59). The Other may occupy the functional political role of the scapegoat. Riordan’s literature survey notes the significance of the “scapegoat mechanism” as one of

the critical components in the development of homo sapiens’ “socio-cognitive complex.” Riordan ranks it among the foundational components of the so-called deep social mind, along with the five other pillars: “egalitarianism, mentalizing, cooperation, language and cultural transmission” (Riordan, 2021, 253).

Victimization strengthens ingroup formation through displacement of aggression and the sacralization of the victim and its ritualization. Amidst modernity in which the ingroup members award status through achievement rather than through ascription by birth, the scapegoat is the internal collaborator with the source of the external threat. Amidst intense mobilization to exploit a perceived marvelous opportunity through external target perceived degeneracy, internal enemies are traitorous degenerates. They are to be sacrificed for the common public good of national ascendancy. Against external threats, internal enemies are traitorous demons to be sacrificed for the common public good of national security. The shift from habitualized ascription to perceived achievement for acquiring social status is intimately connected to perceived cultural differences that become national and automatically competitive. This consequent tendency to form ingroups was the theme of Sherif’s studies of the boys at Robbers Cave. “In this case, the boys in the camp quickly coalesced into competing factions and initial outliers in the groups conformed out of a desire to win competitions (i.e., be right)” (Mallinson and Hatemi, 2018, 3). The clash of civilizations expands this tendency beyond nation states.

The imitation of the European Union attitudes means internal tolerance. It means following the lead of the leadership after the leadership convinces public audiences that the EU is not a neo-colonial German empire (DeDominicis, 2020a). It means mimicking the representatives of the EU. Is it more difficult for Orthodox Bulgaria it is traditionally more oriented towards Russia, the outsider to Europe. Referencing a 2017 Pew Research Center survey, Soroka (2022, 15) notes that “[I]n the arena of international relations, majorities in these [Orthodox Christian] states—Ukraine is again the only outlier—agree that “a strong Russia is necessary to balance the influence of the West.”” To engage in mimesis, this tolerance must generate concretely perceived group social creativity and individual social mobility benefits. Formal and informal supranational institutions, to the extent they are perceived to regulate behavior with real, substantive consequences for choices, must exist (DeDominicis, 2020a). They provide the secular world substance of right and wrong, moral and immoral, ethical and unethical behavior.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Bulgarian Law and Policy

In the Bulgarian case, modern nation-statewide institution building accelerated under Communism (Mevius, 2009). With post-1989 liberalization, traditional behavioral attitudes of clientelism within the formal framework of Marxist-Leninist democratic centralism disintegrated into competitive patronage systems. Moral and ethical inhibitions become weak without effective belief that a significant likelihood exists that violators of formal regulations seriously risk being identified and prosecuted. The quest for social mobility to lead a safe, secure and dignified individual and family life incentivizes relying on these parochial structures to pursue personal material goals. They manifest as “established corruption channels” as well as “clientelism and favouritism” [*sic*] (Center for the Study of Democracy, 2014, 73).

Digitalization of the economy has increased opportunities for money laundering (Buchkova, 2021). According to Bulgarian law, money laundering is one type of economic crime being an “intentional act” that is “dangerous to the public” (Buchkova, 2021, 2-3). Money laundering is always a “secondary crime” insofar as it seeks to conceal illegally acquired economic material gains. Although Buchkova (2021) repeatedly uses the phrase, “dangerous to the public,” its meaning is not specified. This analysis may extrapolate it to denote being dangerous to the public interest for purposes of analytical clarification in political attitudinal terms.

In the ideal-typical nation state, the public perceives the authorities as legitimate and thus obedience and conformity to their commands is morally necessary. Legality determines what serves the public interest. In this ideal-typical worldview framework, the pursuit of individual gain serves the public interest if it is in accordance with the rule of law. Being a good businessperson equates with being a good citizen in the polity. If legal formulation, adoption, legitimation and implementation of policy is technically incompetent or incomplete, it contributes to cognitive dissonance between the ideal and the reality. Buchkova (2021, 3) continues that in the Bulgarian case, [...] “jurisprudence is united around the view that from subjective point the intent of the perpetrator should be derived not from the knowledge or assumption that the acquired property is result of a crime, but from his attitude to the socially dangerous consequences of the act, namely legalization of the acquired benefit or property in the economic, business or financial sphere” [*sic*].

In sum, the intent to violate the law as part of an ongoing criminal enterprise is the essence of organized crime. Systemic intent to violate the law implies an overriding organizational parochial community primary intensity self-identification. Buchkova (2021, 4-5) notes that in Bulgarian law, any individual who intentionally facilitates the criminal act of money laundering is also engaging in criminal behavior. Providing counsel and assistance as to how to proceed after the criminal acquisition of funds is also engaging in criminal behavior according to the Criminal Code. However, a contradiction emerges in that the Criminal Code does not label such facilitating behavior as itself money laundering. Such actions rather fall under other components of the Criminal Code, while the actions under the Anti-Money Laundering Measures Act are separate and explicit. The Code thereby adds an element of complexity and potential confusion in prosecuting money laundering cases in toto as well as in enacting preventive measures against money laundering.

An ideal-typical legitimate government of a nation state produces public policy that is, by definition, a public good. In this ideal-typical image, the good promotes the public will, which defines also concomitantly the public interest and the public welfare. Public policy, in this ideal-typical image, promotes and supports and reaffirms the legitimacy of the authorities in the collective eyes of the public. The imagined national community includes various international components that can be diverse due to the legacy of imperialism and colonialism. National subcomponents with a lingering loyalty to Russia may become vulnerable conduits for what Euro-Atlantic hegemony labels corruption. According to Madrueño and Silberberger (2022, 37) “[i]n this regard, IFFs [illicit financial flows] can also be understood as a subproduct of inefficient international policies and multilateral regulatory frameworks that have decreased the scope of action of nation-states and reduced the incentives for them to cooperate.” Competitive interference in the internal affairs of states obstructs cooperation to regulate financial markets and international tax collaboration as part of global governance.

The foundation of a product or service constituting a public good is that it must serve the well-being of a primary terminal self-identity community. Soviet Marxist-Leninists argued that labor was a public good because it served the well-being of the working class as supposedly represented by the vanguard of the proletariat, the Communist Party. This claim was arguably a display of Russian/Soviet nationalistic universalism internationally. “In a reality of insecurity and powerlessness, nationalistic universalism offers a false sense of superiority of the nation’s ideological pursuit of seemingly ‘universal’ values, with consequences for irrational, hubristic, pursuits in foreign policy” (Karkour, 2021, 542). In terms of its domestic impact, it was part of the national symbol system domestically to create a primary terminal identity community around the territorial community of the old Russia empire (Cottam and Cottam, 2001). It aimed to transcend the ethno-national divisions around a new identity territorial community as the new state opportunity structure for engaging in group social creativity and individual social mobility.

The Bulgarian Communist authorities repeatedly broached the Soviet leadership about acceding to the USSR (Nehring, 2022). In part, the Bulgarian Communist authorities were building upon the traditional Russophile attitudinal orientation towards Russia (Wenshaung, 2014). Bulgaria’s modern frustrated

irredentist nationalism gave it an added incentive to commit as a national ingroup to the alternative civilizational project led by the Soviet Union. It provided concrete national social creativity and individual social mobility options to a national polity traumatized by its irredentism frustrated by neighbors de jure or de facto allied with NATO.

Russia versus Europe

“Global asymmetries” within “the dispute over the hegemony of the world economy” delay effective action to counter illicit financial aid flows. They constrain the scope of action of states and reduce their incentive to cooperate in regulating certain areas of financial markets and global governance. They lead to features of the international regulatory frameworks that contribute to international tax loopholes which are of “particular importance for developing countries” (Madrueño and Silberberger, 2022, 37).

One anonymous Bulgarian analyst interviewed by a Slovak research institute highlighted the comparatively strongest pro-Russian attitudes in Bulgaria. Yet a strong majority of Bulgarians favored EU membership. “Similar proportion of those seeing a compatibility with both the EU and Russia can be attributed to the Bulgarians’ historically and geopolitically ambivalent position between East and West. An emotional-cultural affinity to Russia is mixed with an aspiration for emulating the Western economic and political model of success and prosperity, which results in broadly positive attributes towards both” (Milo, Klingova and Hajdu, 2019, 9).

This same 2019 study also finds that only 7% of Bulgarian survey respondents view Russia as a threat to Bulgaria while 86% reject this view (Milo, Klingova and Hajdu, 2019, 16). Similarly, only 9% of Bulgarian respondents see China as a threat while 82% explicitly reject this view (Milo, Klingova and Hajdu, 2019, 17). Further evidence of this relative dissensus is Bulgaria’s lowest ranking among the 7 countries surveyed (with Austria, Slovakia, Poland, Czechia, Romania and Hungary) in viewing NGOs as playing an important role in supporting a democratic society at 45%. 36% did explicitly stated that they did not have an opinion on whether NGOs are unfairly attacked by state representatives and the media (Milo, Klingova and Hajdu, 2019, 19).

The construction of Gramscian hegemony creates the prevailing attitudinal-emotive consensus on morally and ethically right versus wrong behavior. Bulgarian national ambivalence interferes, to rephrase, with the creation of a Gramscian consensus. It interferes, in other words, with the institutionalization of the rule of law. This dissensus apparently is evident in the relatively high degree of unwillingness or uncertainty of Bulgarians to respond to survey questions in a subsequent 2020 survey of respondents in Montenegro, Serbia, North Macedonia, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Hungary, Czechia and Poland. “These figures ranged from 15% on the matter of whether democracy is a good system for the country, 30% on attitudes towards NATO membership to 50% on the issue of threat perceptions” (Milo et al. 2020, 8). Attitudinal identity consensus facilitates the construction of Gramscian hegemony to create consensus stereotype of national norms and values that prevails in salience on how a so-called good Bulgarian behaves. In the ideal-typical Gramscian hegemonic environment, individual actor negative evaluation of Self, versus Other are assumptively presumed to be due to individual flaws and failures. The individual perceiver assumes him/herself to be individually culpable and condemnable. Such an actor functionally does not perceive systemic causation of social marginalization.

Again, mobilization against a perceived shared enemy facilitates the construction of hegemony, summarized by the adage, the enemy of my enemy is my friend. Postwar Bulgarian irredentism facilitated the generation of this common adversary that Russia also shared in the face of NATO. Post-Communist Europeanization ideally facilitates integrating these component identity communities within Bulgaria within this nation state with a complex identity profile. It is similar in its complexity to Egyptian national identity. As such, this identity appears to be strongly territorially focused. Briefly, Bulgarian nationalism

achieved its so-called national ideals of unification of the so-called Bulgarian lands within a Bulgarian state with the Treaty of San Stefano by Bulgaria in 1878. London concomitantly perceived Russia's military intervention to make this outcome possible as a threat to its own regional imperial interests. London perceived the newborn greater Bulgaria as a Russian satellite providing a staging ground for further Russian regional influence expansion at the former's expense. Threats of great power war led to the drastic reduction of the nascent Bulgarian state's territorial and legal status in negotiations at the Congress of Berlin. It set the stage for next half-century of Bulgarian expenditure of vast amounts of blood and treasure to achieve again the San Stefano treaty borders until the conclusion of World War II.

Noteworthy is that these borders corresponded with the borders of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church exarchate that the Ottoman sultan Abdulaziz re-established in 1870 (Hall, 2013, 85). The Ottoman Sultan thereby contributed to the Bulgarian nationalist movement. The Sublime Porte acted under pressure from its Bulgarian subjects to remove subaltern control from the Constantinople Greek Orthodox patriarch. The modern Bulgarian Orthodox Church as an institution was in this sense a creation of what developed into modern Bulgarian nationalism. The Bulgarian Orthodox Church, thus, has been relatively lacking in the autonomous national institutional capacity to serve as a repository of the authoritative ethical criteria for shaping civil society behavior (DeDominicis, 2016).

The Bulgarian post-Cold War authorities adopt administrative civil service institutions and laws that reflect best practice in the West. It adopts systems developed out of their experience but not out of the Bulgarian experience. For example, "[t]he Inspectorate Directorate is the other control body directly subordinated to the Minister of Interior, which assists the structures of the Ministry of Interior in clarifying signals of conflict of interest, verifying declarations under the Counter-Corruption and Unlawfully Acquired Assets Forfeiture Act and counteracting and detecting breaches of the Code of Ethics for civil servants and respectively - the Code of Conduct for Civil Servants - for employees with status under the Civil Servant Act and those under the Labor Code" ("Input by the Republic of Bulgaria," 2022, 14). The Bulgarian government's report to the European Commission under the Cooperation and Verification mechanism highlights reforms to the judiciary. More broadly, Bulgarian nationalism has been institutionalizing in the post-Communist/post-neo-colonial state within the European Union system. This institutionalization of EU member state nationalism is a component of Europeanization within the EU framework. It encourages nationalism's translation into a motive force for building and institutionalizing societal opportunity structures for dialectical group pursuit of social creativity and individual social mobility (DeDominicis, 2020a).

This analysis infers that a focus on civil society via the institutionalization of professional codes of ethics throughout the Bulgarian society is a long-term vehicle for Europeanization. It equates with the fight against corruption (Cooper, 2012). The panoply of institutions necessary for transforming these codes into perceived reality include transparent evaluation and grievance policies and procedures is necessary, i.e., their institutionalization. These projects are intergenerational in their gestation and development. Concomitantly, Europeanized Bulgarian nationalism is a counterpressure to tendencies towards European Union neo-colonialism. On the other hand, the nationalistic predisposition to perceive neo-colonial threat from the EU is also present. For example, at least one Bulgarian observer notes a tendency of wealthy EU member state governments to promote the interests of their respective nationally headquartered companies in the Bulgarian market (Medarov and McDonald, 2019).

"Failed or failing states" are the ideal-typical Weberian category of states with regimes that do not have the capacity to control their resources in accordance with the will of the Euro-Atlantic community (Atanasiu, 2022, 20). These authorities are the government officials recognized by the US as representing the sovereign state. The Biden administration's focus on corruption reflects this focus on the relative inefficacy of targeted state authorities. They are relatively weak in meeting their international obligations because of a relative incapacity exercise relatively effective control over the mass public. As the public fractures and polarizes

and retreats into parochiality, the inability to generate substantive, effective statewide institutions lead to the breakdown of legally regulated economic relations. Poverty and insecurity cause population emigration that generates hostile responses from the American public and America's European allies. The US government is not focused on the corruption of Saudi Arabia and Egypt because they control their populations relatively effectively from the perspective of US foreign policy regional aims (Harb, 2022). It does so through a combination of coercion, utilitarian and normative habitual control (Cottam and Gallucci, 1978). In Moscow's prevailing view, Washington's authoritarian conservative parochial client, Saudi Arabia, from which 15 of the 19, September 11, 2001 hijackers hailed, is a leading supporter of Islamist jihadism (Ziadeh et al., 2012).

Professional ethics codes for the judiciary are attempts to institutionalize social status through perceived rule of law to define and regulate social deviance. For Europeanizing states, behavioral parochiality, i.e., corruption, is to be labelled as corruption through institutionalization of ethics via substantive Europeanization of professional codes of ethics. To rephrase, ideally, those who fight corruption rise in social status. Europeanization has to be institutionalized to provide this concrete benefit. Parochiality becomes social creativity through perceived success in combat on behalf of the primary terminal self-identity community, i.e., the post-Communist nation state. This struggle is with external challenges and challengers in the primitive but powerful international legal system. These challengers may be Russia, stereotyped as the headquarters or heartland of corruption. It is a mirror enemy image of Bolshevik stereotyping of Washington and London as the headquarters or heartland of capitalism (Cottam, 1977). Bulgaria was a neo-colonial outpost of the USSR. Becoming European means becoming coopted into the so-called international rules-based order. It is an intergenerational challenge in Bulgaria, with so many generations socialized toward Russophilia. The perceived Ukrainization of the Ukrainian state through the institutionalization of Ukrainian language-use requirements was a source of perceived threat in the eyes of Moscow (Gye, 2022, Venice Commission, 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Legacies of Imperialism in the Balkans

Bulgarian state institutional internalization of the colonial self-image contributes to so-called corrupt behavior as a form of parochialism that undermines so-called professional ethics and ethical codes. Specifically, implementing them, complete with grievance procedures supported by a national legal system is the substantive challenge. These ethical codes are something relatively new. They have not been supported by the notion or illusion of the rule of law based upon the institutionalization archetypes/stereotypes of ideal self-image of the citizen. The Communist citizen obeys the party and its leadership. For example, it does not obey the church and its dictates as an alternative source of ethical behavior. The party becomes the new church, i.e., state theory is the secularization of theology as Schmitt pointed out and highlighted by Agamben (Pan, 2009). The church obeys and serves the state in the form of the authority, and so does the secular citizen. The state leadership declares the state of exception.

The awareness of corruption as a systemic factor undermining economic development became a serious conceptual focus in the latter stages of the postwar era amidst the Cold War: "The main concern is that corruption has a negative impact on the economic development [...] and it should be limited by the means of adequate legal mechanisms because it leads to misallocation of public goods, which undermines public confidence in the impartiality of state institutions, as well as the public confidence in the legal norms" (Krastev, Koyundzhiyska-Davidkova and Atanasova, 2020, 2). The portrayal of individual economic actors as reactive acquisitionists reflects a normative assumption about the acquisition of higher social status. Adam Smith's advocacy for this consumerist worldview reflects his challenge to the status quo authorities who appeared to be mercantilist obstacles to a greater national power potential base (Hitchen, 2022). Bratu,

Sotiropoulos and Stoyanova (2017, 147-48) highlight the importance of the ontological and epistemological aspects of corruption as being nationally idiosyncratic and dynamic:

[...] “[A]nti-corruption becomes a contemporary cultural and political form through which modernization is strategized, control is made manifest and history is dispersed as old institutions fade so that new institutional layers can be added. Furthermore, anti-corruption is a process, contextually shaped by international and domestic factors that relate to political priorities, organizational development, political party competition and a mass media market that dramatizes corruption. Attempts by political figures to gain and hold power are often legitimized through positive association with an anti-corruption agenda. Conversely, the need to discredit political opponents is negatively associated with corruption scandals.”

Bratu, Sotiropoulos and Stayanova (2017, 150) continue,

“The empirical implication is that we investigate anti-corruption episodes as processes that, far from being inherent to transitions, have been instrumental to the legitimation of new regimes and whose creation is the result of social and political manipulation. Without disregarding its moral or social benefits, we argue that anti-corruption has more often than not become a site for the negotiation of political agendas whose results have benefited the initiators and local elites. Unlike more traditional approaches, this article does not assume that anti-corruption is ‘good’ or ‘apolitical’ to societies because of its alleged merits.”

Unfortunately, generating an ontological consensus on authority norms, or at least a self-serving belief and perception of their existence, emerges more readily in perceiving a common enemy. The comparative Bulgarian authority challenges in mobilizing/influencing its public is evident in that Bulgaria has had the highest Covid-19 mortality rate among European states due to low vaccination rates (Statista, 2023). The comparatively lowest level of societal “media literacy,” i.e., the comparatively highest level of vulnerability to “fake news,” explain these comparatively lowest vaccination rates (Open Society Institute Sofia, n.d., DeDominicis, 2020b). Wartime arguably creates greater urgency to maintain the rule of law during a time of national crisis to coordinate more effectively the mobilization of national power capability base resources.

The creation of Europe as an imagined community in which Bulgarian identity is one constitutive national element appeals to tolerance of diversity within Europe. It supports an affectual orientation towards European decision making for those segments of national society effectively exploiting the career benefits of the European variant of globalization (DeDominicis, 2020a). Reinforcing European aims and objectives can provide concrete Bulgarian national group social creativity options for national ingroup intense self-identifiers as well as individual social mobility options. Promising individuals, i.e., pro-Euro-Atlantic prospective elites, may acquire attention from European authorities and receive material career benefits. These gains are presumably generally more sustainable if they are European versus ingroup parochial, i.e., corrupt, gains. The integration of Russia into Europe would facilitate this process, but this outcome appears very unlikely. Corruption is therefore more likely to be an intergenerational challenge in Bulgaria, as it is, e.g., in Greece and Egypt.

The USSR attempted to provide social creativity gains for its constituent national peoples, but it failed because of the de facto equation of the USSR with Russian core culture political dominance (Cottam and Cottam, 2001). Acquisition of supreme social status therefore required joining the Party and demonstrating loyalty to it by willingness to function as a secret police informer (Zabyelina, 2017). The Party became a separate ingroup identity community, deriving from Russian core culture, into which members assimilated. Bulgarian nationalism did not have as much of an issue with Russian nationalism because Bulgaria was traditionally a Russophile community not territorially contiguous to Russia. Bulgaria needed allies against

traditional nationalist adversaries in the form of Greece and Turkey and Serbia. For Bulgarian nationalism, modernity acquired its cognitive reconciliation with Russian Communist hegemony in opposition to the Western hegemony under which fell these traditional adversaries. Belgrade's Communist regime helped mitigate the historical hostility towards Sofia over Macedonia (Dragostinova, 2018).

A PATH FORWARD

The transnational components of corruption relate to international hegemony. Insofar as national self-determination is assumed to be a de facto human right, then frustrated nationalists will view these political obstacles as forms of corruption. In sum, treason against the nation constitutes sacrifice of the public good for private profit. The West does not allow itself to perceive militant pan-Arabism and pan-Islamism as national liberation movements. It is thus prone to overlook vast corruption in the US-allied parochial conservative authoritarian Arab monarchies (Reda and Proudfoot, 2022, Barany, 2020). Political Islam in US-allied Egypt historically has been to a significant degree a national liberation movement against perceived neo-colonialism. It focuses particularly on those subalterns that are stereotyped as the corrupted henchmen or puppets of the neo-colonial occupier. The religious faith component views these perceived collaborators as not only criminals, but sinners against God who deserve death (Tarța, 2021). The bifurcation between state and ummah, i.e., the community of Muslim believers, will lead to predisposition to view opponents as corrupt.

In terms of perceiving a shared threat, the ontology of corruption will reflect this tendency to perceive derivatively perceived allies as not corrupt will also manifest. Their corruption and brutality will be seen as the instruments of cold war in the nuclear setting against the conspiracies of the enemy. The imagined community they serve in terms of its public interest, may be positively stereotyped, e.g., the Cold War's so-called Free World. Augustine and Aquinas gave the world the notion of committing a lesser evil to avoid a greater one. An intense self-identifier with the imagined community does not consider a lesser evil, e.g., killing in pursuit of defeating a greater evil, e.g., colonial occupation, as a corruption or a sin. The lesser evil serves the public interest, the public good, the greater good against the evil malefactor. The latter is ultimately to blame for the corruption and cruelty in the world because it aims to erase the perceiver's imagined community ingroup.

The belief is in the existence of a holistic entity greater than the sum of its parts, i.e., a community. Religion, the belief in God, is a manifestation of this process at the normative habitual level of parochial identities. It interacts within a commonly perceived institutional context, e.g., the Roman Catholic church. Modern ethical codes emerge on the basis of the creation of national community identities insofar as the rule of law is desired and believed to exist, or at least to be possible. They serve to actualize the value ideals of a community. A national community is a primary intensity and terminally large self-identity ingroup for actors seeking positive social status within the international community. Parochiality again becomes corrupt when loyalty behavior on its behalf is perceived as threatening the sovereignty of the imagined national community. To rephrase, hegemonic discourse portrays this behavior as pursuing private interest at the expense of the public good. Evolution in this hegemonic discourse reflects prevailing attitude and belief change through effective social movement creation and institutionalization. In sum, it requires radical reform of the state, broadly construed as the system of authority norms within the community. Sustained contentious politics means creating and sustaining community identity creation for pursuit of justice.

Religion involves community rituals for the affirmation of ethical ideals, or values, in traditional societies. In modern, i.e., achievement-based status award societies, the legal system is the public ritual for affirmation of community identity in terms of ethical norms affirmation. Just outcomes are supposed to resolve disputes while affirming the claim to representation of the community by the authorities. To rephrase, conflict resolution ideally affirms the community authority itself as a public good. Outcomes that are perceived as unjust are therefore perceived as corrupt.

Collective consensual obedience to authority norms reflects the prevailing consensus emergence that moral and ethical behavior is in accordance with community expectations. In this ideal-typical context, the hegemonic belief emerges that it will generate social mobility for the ambitious seeking status enhancement. The imagined community including its ethical ideals reflect differing historical legacies from different colonial experiences. These colonial control mechanisms tend to emphasize exploitation of different component elements of the community. Again, consensual agreement has to exist on the primary terminal self-identity community the actors share. It is a prerequisite foundation for creating the institutional expectations of what a good citizen should do to uphold the public good or public interest.

Social identity theory provides a useful framework for conceptualizing the collective and individual motivational drivers behind social change in terms of Europeanization as professional socialization. “Research on the link between personal and social responsibility in higher education, for instance, shows that individual students’ values, beliefs, and aspirations tend to converge with those dominant within their student peer groups,” [...] (Maribel, 2021, 282-83). Early adult professional socialization therefore plays a critical role in accommodating notions of professional ethics. Higher education should inculcate awareness of the relevance of public and private citizen professional codes of ethics as a core concept. Europeanization of codes of ethics can be part of the curriculum.

Regarding enforcement of professional ethics through the corporate audit, it requires a European-wide Kuhnian paradigm shift. It “appears extremely timely and necessary to activate scientific community towards 'gathering', integration and systematization of existing elements of audit science, building up and developing of its structure, internal and external communications, identifying and filling in lacunae and gaps therein” (Baranov, et al. 2017, 1086). “For CEE [central and eastern European] countries, the concept of auditor independence is perceived as novel, being imported into legislation and Codes of Practice as part of the country's preparation to join the European Union” (Sucher and Kosmala-MacLulich, 2004, 279). As subsequent professional experience, e.g., “[a]uditor independence has for many years been seen as a crucial aspect of the credibility of the external audit function, as a monitoring device. Similar assertions to that above are included in professional Codes of Ethics in other countries or within the European Union (Eighth Directive, 1984; ICAEW, 1999)” (Sucher and Kosmala-MacLulich, 2004, 277).

Corruption in Bulgaria and the Balkans more generally highlights the lack of a societal consensus on the norm ideals regarding differentiation of the personal from professional obligation. This lack of consensus of how one satisfies one’s obligations to the public, i.e., non-private, arena, is the issue focus. Maribel (2021, 283) surveys the literature’s findings on professional socialization: [A] “robust professional identity is usually considered essential in assuring responsible professional behavior.” Professional socialization is the foundation of ethics. Maribel continues, “[t]aken together, these cognitive and cultural dimensions may be said to constitute prototypes, following social identity theory, which disciplinary in-group members use to represent themselves and distinguish themselves from others” (Maribel, 2021, 284).

The importance of disciplinary specialization creates social opportunity structures for engaging in individual social mobility and ingroup social creativity. Professional socialization is a critical component of globalization for the state in its functional focus on developing its power potential base. Developing a professional consensus within the profession in the nation state creates potential for professional adaptation and societal control. Maribel’s utilization of social identity theory highlights the importance of generating consensus, i.e., the construction of institutions, in the minds and actions of people. Those who view themselves in terms of their status under threat from this diversification of norms while lacking the skills to exploit them, e.g., multilingualism, will increasingly perceive a threat, contributing to societal polarization.

In the relative absence of such institutionalization, individuals degenerate into anomie behavior. The ability to award and acknowledge social status degenerates into materiality, i.e., simply material wealth. As Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2020) note, norms and values within a community must be shared to evolve and develop. The imposition of European standards implies the importation of globalization standards for status acquisition both for group social creativity and individual social mobility. Without these standards, consensus on how a good Bulgarian national citizen should act does not exist.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The construction of Gramscian hegemony is a forte of so-called developed nation states (DeDominicis, 2023). Neoclassical economics is a strategy for achieving it on behalf of the middle class. The national government budget is an expression of difficult choices in a society. It is a reflection of collective, institutionalized attitudes as stimuli response patterns. Austerity packages as part of conditional sovereign debt reform programs aim functionally to increase the control capacity of the state authorities. This capacity typically includes further commodification of labor. Corruption is a label applied to behavior perceived as disregarding formal legal obligations and also broader perceived community ethical obligations for parochial advantage. It is an ethnical rhetorical symbol that castigates for failure to uphold the imagined community public good as a Weberian ideal-typical notion of authority legitimacy. Macroeconomics as a field is ultimately a strategy for domestic regime maintenance including through an international coordination and cooperation component with other such regimes. The EU is most advanced in institutionalizing it, but it also exists among the so-called developed democracies. Keynesianism is by its essence liberal economic nationalism in the form of a strategy among the community of advanced industrialized states

As a member of the global system of states, any state strategy for generating power capability and influence will interact with other states. Economic policy is a component for developing the power capability of the state while simultaneously strengthening the control of the authorities. Maintaining this predominance requires adaptation to evolving trends in perceptions, attitudes and values domestically and globally. Status advancement through material acquisition is the key factor for a modern economy. National societal actor formulation of strategies for status enhancement is more difficult without a relative consensus on authority norms and values. A belief in demonstrated success in exploiting them individually and as a group indicates the emergence national consensus.

This study notes that the mobilization of North Atlantic resources to respond to the perceived Russian threat that intensified in 2022 has facilitated this Europeanization process. It reflects the impact of political psychological collective attitudinal and affective trends that emerge from perceiving a common adversary. The adage, the enemy of my enemy of my friend, summarizes the essence of this process. It facilitates collective nation state allied polity openness to policy diffusion from these allies. It encourages emulation and mimesis of so-called best practice policy models amongst these allies.

The theme of the Europeanization of Bulgaria requires a conceptualization, if not a definition, of Europeanization. In 2022, several weeks after the renewed invasion of Ukraine earlier in the year, Europeanization appears to have developed to become coterminous with Atlanticism. The normative issues within this conceptualization for this paper revolve under its implications for the European Union as a postwar peace strategy for Europe, if not for the world. In this regard, Europeanization as coterminous with Atlanticism has arguably been tragic. An explanation for Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine necessarily incorporates Russian responses to the integration of Ukraine with the so-called West. This so-called West is what Bulgarians label as so-called Euro-Atlantic structures. Europeanization of Bulgaria equates here with development of a societal consensus to pursue integration in these structures. Those Bulgarian post-communist constituencies that transition towards acceptance of the inevitability of this integration, either

acquiesce to it, if not accommodate to it. The costs of this integration include accommodation of Bulgarian Turkish minority political and civil rights.

The collective West's response to the Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine has made these Europeanization political debates very loud. The response also explicitly framed Europeanization as opposition to Russian influence. This motivation for European integration's broadening had precedent during and after the Cold War. Bulgaria gained admission into the EU in 2007 despite doubts about its preparedness to support its EU obligations in response to rising Russian influence there.

Europeanization may also assume discursive forms. Legitimacy is the essential factor, meaning the effective incentivization of the public to accept functionally the imperative voice commands of the polity authorities. The authority of the EU to a significant extent derives from it being functionally perceived as a vehicle for national member social creativity and individual social mobility. The Cold War international political system played a critical role in laying its foundations via American support. The North Atlantic alliance against a common perceived foe incentivizes critical constituencies within these alliance members to create broader imagined community with ethical obligations.

Limitations in this article include its focus on secondary sources through a survey of the relevant academic literature. Directions for future research include a sociological focus to operationalize the postulates and inferences in the paper in order to test them. A qualitative methodological approach to discern attitudinal orientations regarding participation in so-called corrupt behavior would be useful. Explanations including self-justifications for this behavior could provide insights into Bulgarian constituency orientations towards authority. They include strategies for constituency group engaging in social creativity and individual social mobility strategies. The conceptualization of Europeanization provided here includes normative construction of codes of ethics in daily professional life. As a phenomenological study, it might provide opportunities for participant observation of the lived experience of Europeanization.

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