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**Euroscepticism and The Rise of Right-Wing Populism:
Poland, the EU and Political Polarization**

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Abstract

In recent years there has been an increase in right-wing populism throughout Europe, especially in Poland there has been a public discourse regarding right-wing politics and Euroscepticism. This project engages in trying to understand why there has been an increasing support for right-wing politics in Poland and how this has affected the country's relationship with the European Union and if this right-wing populism has undermined the influence of the European Union. The research used in the paper is based on scholarly work within the relevant fields of Euroscepticism, political polarization and intra-European relations, expanding on official documents and reports testifying to the problem of increased political polarization and right-wing populism. In this project there are findings to suggest that there are several reasons why Poland has become politically polarized and has shifted towards right-wing political attitudes, with basis in a shared national identity and cultural conservatism. This has created tension between Poland and the EU at large. This research is important in understanding what contributes to political polarization in Poland, the reasons for increasing support for right-wing populism throughout Europe, and how populism have the potential to undermine, or reform, the working of the EU. This paper goes in depth with important areas believed to contribute to the political polarization in Poland and the effects it has on the EU in a time of increased Euroscepticism. The rise of right-wing political parties throughout Europe is a general tendency, yet the focus on Poland is due to the public discourse regarding Poland's tensions with the EU, which would provide a more specific understanding of what factors contributes to the support of right-wing political parties. This project finds that in Poland, the fall of communism started a political and cultural revolution which was heavily influenced by outside actors like the catholic church and the European Union. The catholic church became influential in shaping the culture and national shared values and identity in Poland. Whereas the European Union influenced Poland economically by opening them up to the common market and by funding and subsidizing areas of polish investments. This paper finds that cultural conservatism and shared national history and sentiments in Poland has contributed to their support of right-wing political parties and values. Yet, Poland does not try to undermine the influence of the EU per se, Poland is supportive of the EU's economic policies, but have a vested interest in reforming the EU to focus on the importance of sovereign states' interests, as oppose to an increasing federalization of the EU. The notion of the importance of the individual states' interests is becoming more apparent within

the EU with the evident increasing right-wing parties gaining traction on the national level, as well as in the EU elections, however, after seeing what the economic implication of secession with Brexit, the right-wing Eurosceptics – in Poland and beyond – are not pushing the agenda of leaving the EU, but rather to reform how the institution operates.

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Introduction

In recent years, the western world has witnessed a surge of political polarization, both in the USA and in the member states of the European Union. This increased polarization is due to an uptick in both right-wing and left-wing political parties and figures that has shifted the political agenda, both nationally and supranationally. There has been a special concern regarding the large increase in far-right political influence within the EU, and especially in the former communist states. This thesis aims to analyze this recent surge of far-right politics in Europe with a candid focus on Poland as an example.

The question to be analyzed is:

Why has there been an increasing support for far-right political parties in Poland and the EU, and does the increasing influence of said actors undermine the influence of the European Union as an institution?

This overall problem creates a multitude of sub-questions; what has brought Poland on the path towards right-wing populism? What has been the consequences for the Polish people thus far during this surge of the far-right and how can this be explained? Moreover, the question of political tactics arises, what tactics are - and have been – used to gain political traction by these far-right parties.

In an attempt to answer these questions and analyze the problems they create, several official sources from the European Union and publications from official Polish sources will be used, alongside scholars who have written extensively on the subject.

These questions are increasingly more important for the European Union and its members, because if this increasing influence of the right-wing parties gain enough traction in the political landscape it could potentially lead to the dismantling of the Union or at least create a substantial chasm between the member states. With the recent Brexit vote and increasing opposition to the union by many of the members, understanding these trends are vital if the European Union are to succeed.

Methodology

The methodological approach to this thesis will mainly be a qualitative approach to gathering data to make an analysis of the subject in question; certain quantitative measurements will be used, but they do not form a major part of the project. The data will mainly be extrapolated from scholars and experts in the specific field of study, as well as government reports and EU reports exploring the subject. However, given the instability of the political landscape in both Poland domestically and the EU at large, there will be a certain level of reliance on secondary scholarly analysis of the political initiatives and reports used. The logic of using Poland as a point of focus in assessing right-wing populism in Europe, and to determine whether EU's influence is being undermined in certain nation-states, is observational. Using Poland instead of another EU-sceptic nation is because Poland has faced a significant amount of criticism in their handling of certain issues within the EU and in their defiance of EU policy in recent time. Additionally, keeping the main focus of the project on one nation specifically, narrows the focus of the project and can assist in a more comprehensive picture of the relationships within EU and the domestic attitudes in a specific nation, which could potentially be generalized, rather than using a plethora of examples from a multitude of states. Moreover, the thesis will use two pairs of theories to answer different parts of the research question. To determine the relationship and influence of the EU and Poland, the theories of Neofunctionalism and Intergovernmentalism will be used. The reason for using theories regarding international politics is because they can aid in the analysis of the specific relationship between the nation-state and the EU as a supranational institution. The second pair of theories used are Social Constructivism and Populism. These theories are used in analyzing the domestic political situation in Poland, and how the anti-EU sentiment and the sitting right-wing government has ascended to power. Additionally, the theories can assist in determining how Polish politics has developed since the fall of communism, and how it has been shaped into what is apparent today.

In a project like this there are certain biases to address. There is a degree of researcher bias, in the sense that I am European and cannot escape the multitude of attitudes from both sides of the political spectrum. There might be a bias in the design of the project and I could have chosen a different approach in terms of method, theory or another nation to use as a focus point.

Moreover, the scholarly literature has their own viewpoint and political affiliation and loyalties in addressing their respective fields of study.

This project aims to contribute to the understanding of the relationship between the EU and Poland and how right-wing populism and anti-EU sentiment have flourished in Europe in recent years. Furthermore, if and how the EU has lost influence with this surge of right-wing populists, and what are the driving factors in Eurosceptic sentiment in Poland and throughout Europe in general. Moreover, the project will aim to aid in the understanding of how the domestic Polish political landscape have been shaped into what it is today, and what factors have been influencing in this regard.

Literature review.

Trying to keep the level of bias at a minimum in this project, there will be a use of sources representing both sides of the political and ideological spectrum. In terms of political ideology there will be a use of both right-wing and left-wing scholars. In terms of field of studies there will be an inclusion of a variety of fields, spanning from East-European culture, law, Christian history and influence and communist studies. There will be a representation of scholars who are advocating for increasing integration of Europe and scholars who are against.

Additionally, there will be a use of a variety of news media outlets with different viewpoints and countries of origin, spanning from The Guardian in Britain to Polish National Radio. These different media outlets have different approaches to the topics in question and different methods of relaying information to the public, hence the reason for using a multitude of media platforms, each with a different agenda.

Moreover, to establish the level of aid and subsidies Poland receive and how it is spent, the project will draw upon the concrete documents and published accounts from the European Commission, as well as documents from the European Parliament, and statistics and overall information from the EU at large. These documents can also be used to determine the contributions and benefit levels of specific countries to determine incentives and priorities.

Theory

The theories used to analyze the highlighted problems is Intergovernmentalism, and by extension the modified build-on theory of Liberal Intergovernmentalism, however, in order to put these theories into context, one has to explain neofunctionalism.

Neofunctionalism

The theory of neofunctionalism is rooted in the belief that a unified and federal Europe is inevitable. One of the main scholars dedicated to this theory of European integration is Ernst Haas who already in 1958 published his views on European integration; his devotion to Neofunctionalism and a dream of a federalized Europe.¹ Risse raises the conundrum of the depths of contemporary European integration, namely how some affairs and policies are more integrated than others i.e. foreign policy and security policies which are lagging behind other aspects of EU integration.² According to Haas, the main driver for European federalization is shifting loyalties from national to supranational interests. Moreover, Haas argues that the main reasons for shifting – or acquiring new – loyalties are: “1. Because they value the new center of attachment as an end in itself, 2. Because the new center of authority pressures them into conformity, or 3. As a side-product of otherwise instrumental behavior toward another ultimate end.”³ The third mechanism is explained as the assumption that if the stakeholders are satisfied by the performance of a specific organization, the loyalties are assumed to shift towards integrating into it.⁴ The first of these identified mechanisms is based on the term Haas coined “the good Europeans” i.e. the Europeans who support federalization on a purely ideological level and on a basis of identity, yet Haas did initially dismiss this mechanisms as a large factor in integration.⁵ The second identified mechanism of pressure into conformity is rooted in a sense of habitualization where the actors becomes accustomed to a supranational institution which then leads to a shift in loyalties.⁶ The third mechanism is somewhat a combination of the logic of the previous two; the greater an actor’s satisfaction is with a given institution’s performance is, the

¹ Thomas Risse, “Neofunctionalism, European identity, and the puzzles of European integration” Page 291.

² Thomas Risse, “Neofunctionalism, European identity, and the puzzles of European integration” Page 292.

³ Thomas Risse, “Neofunctionalism, European identity, and the puzzles of European integration” Page 293.

⁴ Thomas Risse, “Neofunctionalism, European identity, and the puzzles of European integration” Page 294.

⁵ Thomas Risse, “Neofunctionalism, European identity, and the puzzles of European integration” Page 294.

⁶ Thomas Risse, “Neofunctionalism, European identity, and the puzzles of European integration” Page 294.

more the actor will identify with said institution. This third mechanism is what coined the term “spill-over” regarding European integration.⁷

Many years after Haas’ neofunctionalism theory was published, it is still apparent that his initial assessment of multiple loyalties within and regarding the EU is still somewhat valid. The notion that actors can hold loyalties towards both the nation-state and the EU at large, is evident in a recent survey from Eurobarometer which revealed that “country first, but Europe, too” is the predominant attitude in Europe.⁸ To understand this concept of multiple identities/loyalties Risse presents the illustration of a Russian Matruska doll. Using his analogy of this, it would in my case, look like this; I, myself identifying as a Jutlander which is nested into my Danish identity which, again, is nested into my identity as a European. This Matruska doll analogy is applicable to both the common citizens and to the political elites.⁹

Since the EU was fundamentally an elite-driven project, Haas’ general attitude towards mass-public opinion and general loyalties was ambivalent. In addition, since EU is driven by the political elites, it is no wonder that there is a general gap between elite consensus on one hand and overall skepticism from the broader public concerning the EU. For the ordinary citizens, the EU is a distant entity still, as oppose to the nation-state. This is despite EU regulations and rules having infiltrated almost all facets of nation-state policies.¹⁰ This distance from the broader public and the EU institutions can have multiple reasons:

“First, while EU law is the law of the land, has direct effect, and overrides national law, EU authorities do not implement European rules and regulations, but national and subnational authorities do. ... Second and more important, ‘Europe’ has fuzzy boundaries. ... Third, the elite discourse about the EU is ambivalent at best when it comes to ‘shared values’ and ‘common fate.’ On the one hand, there is the conscious identity construction of a liberal and civic community emanating from EU institutions. On the other hand, national policy-makers routinely reify the nation-state in their dealings with Brussels. Whenever

⁷ Thomas Risse, “Neofunctionalism, European identity, and the puzzles of European integration” Page 294.

⁸ Thomas Risse, “Neofunctionalism, European identity, and the puzzles of European integration” Page 295.

⁹ Thomas Risse, “Neofunctionalism, European identity, and the puzzles of European integration” Page 295.

¹⁰ Thomas Risse, “Neofunctionalism, European identity, and the puzzles of European integration” Pp. 296-297.

they charge the EU for some tough decision at home, they adopt a populist rhetoric of conscious blameshifting ('Brussels made me do it')."¹¹

Intergovernmentalism

Intergovernmentalism is rooted in the theory of realism and identifies the importance of the notion of national sovereignty as the driving factor in international relations and politics. Intergovernmentalism as a theory regarding European integration started in the 1960's as a response to the federalist thinkers who believed that Europe would eventually morph into a single state i.e. Neofunctionalists.¹² The theory was originally presented by Stanley Hoffmann, and the state-centric dominated thinking throughout the 1970's was primarily based on his work. Hoffmann originally rejected the notion that European integration was caused by a snowball effect, i.e. a spill-over effect from policies implemented, instead Hoffmann suggested that international politics was characterized by a continuous conflict over interests from individual states.¹³ Hoffmann argued that the integration of nation-states into a union was not inevitable, rather it had the reverse effect and actually strengthened the notion of nation-states' sovereignty. Societal challenged did indeed pose a genuine threat to the nation state, however, individual state governments did still possess a large amount of power because; they hold legal sovereignty and political legitimacy given the democratic elections.¹⁴

In Hoffmann's later work his views are still very persistent, in 1989 Hoffmann explained the European integration after the agreement to create a truly common European market by the year 1992. This grandiose project of a complete common market is very technical, however the greater beneficiaries of this integration is both the producers and the consumers. Border control alone – in 1983 – compounded roughly 4 percent of the total cost of trade, exchanging currencies in 10 of the – at the time – 12 member states would cost 47 percent of the total toll.¹⁵ Hoffmann is very fond of this suggested level of integration of the markets, as it both benefits the union but is also very beneficial for the individual nation-states in terms of monetary gain and economic growth, as he explains: "European industrialists will achieve economies of scale that will allow

¹¹ Thomas Risse, "Neofunctionalism, European identity, and the puzzles of European integration" Page 297.

¹² Michelle Cini, "6. Intergovernmentalism" Page 90.

¹³ Michelle Cini, "6. Intergovernmentalism" Page 91.

¹⁴ Michelle Cini, "6. Intergovernmentalism" Page 91.

¹⁵ Stanley Hoffmann, "The European Community and 1992" Page 28.

them to operate more efficiently than if they were confined to their domestic markets, and the consumers will gain from the commission's competition policy, which is strongly supported by the jurisprudence of the European Court of Justice.”¹⁶ This economic integrationist standpoint might be a result of what Hoffmann experienced during the 1970's where high inflation, slow economic growth and high levels of unemployment were evident. The nation-states tried to cope with this stagnation by focusing on domestic markets and restricting foreign labor, which lead to even more stagnation and saw the rise of Japan as an emerging economy on a global scale due to their high level of manufacturing in these years.¹⁷

Overall, Hoffmann's position is somewhere between De Gaulle's policies and the neofunctionalists. “De Gaulle preferred a "Europe of states": a concert of governments that would build "Europe" – first in the West, ultimately in the East as well – on the basis of well-balanced bargains in areas of common or mutual interests.”¹⁸ Meanwhile, contrasting De Gaulle's policies: “ The earlier supranationalists often saw the states as the enemy; today's activists see them as indispensable partners, whose sovereignty is to be pooled rather than removed, and to whom enforcement of Community decisions is entrusted. ... The scope of the Community is larger, thanks to the EMS [European Monetary System] and to the mass of joint ventures, cross-border mergers and direct investment abroad that now ties members together.”¹⁹

Liberal Intergovernmentalism

The later extension of the theory of Intergovernmentalism was developed by Andrew Moravcsik and labelled Liberal Intergovernmentalism. Liberal Intergovernmentalism builds on the assumption that national governments play a game within two separate arenas simultaneously. On the domestic front, the governments seek to enhance their power and build relationships with domestic partners and coalitions, whereas on the international scene governments seek to push legislation and bargain in ways that enhance their political positions with key domestic constituents.²⁰ According to Moravcsik, the enlargement of the EU is a double-edged perspective as certain stakeholders see the EU enlargement as a radical and idealistic break in European

¹⁶ Stanley Hoffmann, "The European Community and 1992" Page 29.

¹⁷ Stanley Hoffmann, "The European Community and 1992" pp. 29-30.

¹⁸ Stanley Hoffmann, "The European Community and 1992" Page 33.

¹⁹ Stanley Hoffmann, "The European Community and 1992" Page 34.

²⁰ Michelle Cini, Page 96.

history, whereas the other side of the political spectrum is critical of the notion that enlargement is not happening at a fast enough pace. Moreover, if enlargement does not happen with the appropriate measures of federalization, it might lead to the crisis and gridlock within the EU institutions.²¹

Social Constructivism & Populism

The theory of Social Constructivism is rooted on intertwining notions, the overall philosophy of constructivism is based on the idea that knowledge is created through social interaction, the overall learning theory being that everyone is shaped by interaction and experiences which manifest itself in behavior based on these learning experiences, which in turns leads to the formation of a culture with peers.²² Social Constructivism also recognizes a member of a specific culture as an active knowledge-seeker and opinion-shaper, Social Constructivism recognizes the importance of symbols e.g. language and logic inherited from the culture of which the person belongs, and the individual constructs understanding and knowledge as a result of interaction and observance in a social context.²³ Social Constructivism holds that the specific structure with which an individual take action is both based on material and social factors, where the actor's identity and interests shine through by a mutual constitutive process between the actor and the social environment.²⁴ Quoting several scholars, Tanil explains that:

“Socially constructed rules, principles, norms of behaviour, and shared beliefs provide states, individuals, and other actors with understandings of what is important or valuable and what are effective and/or legitimate means of obtaining those valued goods. These social structures supply actors/states with both preferences and strategies for pursuing those preferences.’ ... ‘the structure of any social system contains three elements: material conditions, interests, and ideas. In this definition, shared ideas (or culture) make up norms and institutions, and constitute agents’ perceptions, identities and interests’ ... ‘interests cannot be pursued without a particular identity, and the identities, interests and behaviour of

²¹ Andrew Moravcsik and Milada Anna Vachudova, “National Interests, State Power, and EU Enlargement” Page 42

²² IGI Global. "What Is Social Constructivism".

²³ IGI Global. "What Is Social Constructivism".

²⁴ Gamze Tanil, “The Social Constructivist Fusion Perspective: A Theory for Europeanization” Page 492.

political agents are socially constructed by collective meaning, interpretations and assumptions about the world’.”²⁵

Populism is a highly debated concept and theory in modern academia, especially after the 2008 financial crisis and even more so after the election of Donald Trump as president of the USA. The scholars engaged in the theoretical debates on populism is yet to reach a consensus on the exact definition, but they do reach a consensus regarding its vagueness and elusiveness.²⁶ Populist politicians tend to be grounded in an anti-democratic discourse, using a rhetoric of unification of ‘the true people’ against the corrupt elites.²⁷ The populist rhetoric try to pin these two ‘homogenous’ groups against one another whilst siding with the ‘true people’ and argue the case for the sovereignty of these people and remove the obstacles standing in the way of the people.²⁸ This increasing polarization of people within a nation is arguably a severe threat to legitimate democracy, especially since populists tend to solely attribute legitimacy to themselves and their supporters in the wake of a division of the people.²⁹ The main trend in populist political attitude is to ostracize certain parts of society, most likely intellectuals, members of the judiciary, journalists and academics (sometimes resorting to labeling certain people as terrorists). Meanwhile, not everyone who criticizes the political establishment is necessarily populists, populists are generally anti-pluralists with a claim that they alone represent the people.³⁰ Reviewing the work of Müller, arguably, when populists are in power of a state they are somewhat forced to take a position of discarding the perceived enemy and resolve to authoritarian-like policy implementation by: “Seek[ing] to capture the state and use it to advance this agenda, thereby threatening judicial and media independence, civil service professionalism, and political pluralism – and with them liberal democracy itself.”³¹

²⁵ Gamze Tanil, “The Social Constructivist Fusion Perspective: A Theory for Europeanization” Page 492.

²⁶ Seren Selvin Korkmaz, "The Origins Of Populism: Bogus-Democracy And Capitalism" Page 2.

²⁷ Jeffrey C. Isaac, "What's In A Name?". Page 171.

²⁸ Seren Selvin Korkmaz, "The Origins Of Populism: Bogus-Democracy And Capitalism" Page 2.

²⁹ Seren Selvin Korkmaz, "The Origins Of Populism: Bogus-Democracy And Capitalism" Pp. 2-3.

³⁰ Seren Selvin Korkmaz, "The Origins Of Populism: Bogus-Democracy And Capitalism" Page 3.

³¹ Jeffrey C. Isaac, "What's In A Name?". Page 171.

Application of theories

The theories of Neofunctionalism and Intergovernmentalism will be used to analyze the relationship between Poland and the European Union. Neofunctionalism is not overly relevant in terms of Poland's relationship with the EU in this project, and the main Neofunctionalist term "spill-over" is mainly used to describe the European Commission's role in the aspect of funds and economic aid and subsidies. Meanwhile, Intergovernmentalism is a very apt description of the relationship between the EU and Poland, with the Polish sentiment of the rights of the nation-state and the importance of preserving sovereignty.

The theories of Social Constructivism and Populism will be used to determine the state of Poland on a domestic level. The theory of Populism will be used in determining how right-wing politics have excelled in recent time, and especially how it has shaped Poland and its implemented policies. Social Constructivism will be used to assess how Poland has reshaped their culture after the fall of communism, and how the people have shifted attitudes toward certain policies and issues. Especially in the political climate in Poland in recent years, it is apt to use both Social Constructivism and Populism to evaluate which areas of policy and public tension there has been contributing factors to the post-communist mindset of the Polish people and the general trends and directions in Polish politics – both foreign and domestic – there has been apparent.

These theories will be utilized via an inductive approach by first understanding the circumstances both within Poland and in the relationship between the EU and Poland, and then extrapolating how and if the theories are applicable to these circumstances.

Poland: A country lacking socio-historical identity

For many years Poland have been lacking an independent history, since the country has been subject to different occupations since the Second World War. It was initially occupied by Nazi Germany and after the war reached its conclusion, the era of communism began in Poland. Therefore, Poland had not had an independent national identity for more than fifty years when they finally obtained independence with the implosion of the Soviet Union and the fall of communism. Recently there has thus been attempts to rekindle a sense of collective memory to shape a new national identity in Poland. In trying to shape national identity there has been

multiple competing narratives from Polish history presented by the political elites.³² One of the parties that became prominent in the mid-2000's in the political debates is the populist conservative party "Law and Justice" (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, PiS) who started a debate about the importance of national identity in Poland.³³ The way Law and Justice shaped this debate was with two key components; firstly highlighting national traumas endured on the Polish people during their subjugation to "others" i.e. Germany, the Soviet Union and communism.³⁴ Secondly by introducing the notion of the "Fourth Republic" intended to finish the 1989 revolution against the communists and orchestrate an organized "de-communization" of the country as a whole, this would entail ending corruption and initiate extensive purges of former communists.³⁵ The return to national sovereignty in Poland meant a political swerve towards a more nationalist and conservative sentiment in the Polish people, yet this does not mean that the political left disappeared in Poland altogether, but it is clear that the fall of the communist regime was due to an exhaustion of their ideology.³⁶

As Poland had to shape their identity in the wake of national sovereignty, as Irena Grudzińska-Gross notes:

"The initial political slogan was that of the "return to Europe," which meant not only the joining of Western political institutions but also a return to one's own past, extending a bridge to the pre-war period while skipping over the period of 1945–1989. This was meant to erase a sequence of humiliating experiences—war, occupation, the communist period—both from the memory of a nation and from the personal histories of families and individuals."³⁷

However, before Poland could move forward completely there was a minor problem with restitution in terms of property rights. After the fall of USSR and communism, many East-European nations implemented restitution programs for the individuals and families who had had

³² Ewa Stańczyk, "Caught between Germany and Russia: Memory and National Identity in Poland's Right-Wing Media Post-2004" Page 289.

³³ Ewa Stańczyk, "Caught between Germany and Russia: Memory and National Identity in Poland's Right-Wing Media Post-2004" Page 289.

³⁴ Ewa Stańczyk, "Caught between Germany and Russia: Memory and National Identity in Poland's Right-Wing Media Post-2004" Page 289.

³⁵ Ewa Stańczyk, "Caught between Germany and Russia: Memory and National Identity in Poland's Right-Wing Media Post-2004" Pp. 289-290.

³⁶ Irena Grudzińska-Gross, "The Backsliding" Page 665.

³⁷ Irena Grudzińska-Gross, "The Backsliding" Pp. 664-665.

their property seized by the collectivist governments under USSR and communism used for collectivist farming, yet Poland stands out as the only nation that did not implement any legal act or restitution programs in the new successive parliament.³⁸ Moreover, Załączna notes:

“In Poland subjects of restitution can be divided into 3 groups. Group 1 consists of real estate taken over by means of nationalization, as well as individual administrative decisions (mostly expropriations without compensation). Group 2 refers to real estate taken over only in Warsaw due to a special law enacted in 1945. The last group refers to assets abandoned in the formerly eastern territory of Poland.”³⁹

Even though there is no restitution bill signed into law in Poland, there has been attempts to do so, most notably in 1994, late 1990’s, 2001 and 2005 respectively. Some of these were dropped on the parliament floor, some did not get further than a draft and one, in 2001, was vetoed by the president and since the parliament could not obtain the three-fifth majority to override said veto, the matter was dropped.⁴⁰ Despite no federal law regarding restitution, the civil and administrative courts have settled a number of individual cases regarding compensation for restitution claims, however the vast majority of individuals who are eligible for compensation are still waiting for a law on the subject. There might be several reasons for neglecting to enact a law on the matter. For starters, it is a very complicated process with massive ethical, technical and political problems, and it was not essential for carrying out economic reforms in the early 1990’s. In addition, the Polish authorities have estimated that 170000 people have a legitimate claim for restitution – even though the concrete number is unknown – and the cost of reimbursement for this would be of an estimated cost of more than 140 billion PLN in 2008 (roughly €32.5 billion). Additionally, there is the problem of returning property from current owners, especially given that many of these properties are now schools, hospitals and other federal buildings or institutions.⁴¹

In 2010 the Polish Union of Property Owners estimated that 300000 people had claim to lost

³⁸ Magdalena Załączna, “Restitution in the context of institutional lock-in” Page 155.

³⁹ Magdalena Załączna, “Restitution in the context of institutional lock-in” Page 159.

⁴⁰ Magdalena Załączna, “Restitution in the context of institutional lock-in” Pp. 160-161.

⁴¹ Magdalena Załączna, “Restitution in the context of institutional lock-in” Pp. 162.

property, but the sitting president, Donald Tusk, would not oblige to pay anywhere close to the alleged claims. Instead he tried to introduce a bill in parliament that would pay a predetermined amount to be settled over a period of 15 years, however, this bill stalled in parliament. Certain stakeholders in this also feared the potential claims of Germans who formerly owned property in what is now western Poland.⁴² In terms of the pros and cons of having it put in front of a court instead of a government administration, there are arguments to be made from both cases. An administration would expedite claims much faster than individual court cases, and it would use specifically set parameters for the size and feasibility of a claim of property. On the other hand, having to go through the legislative process in court ensures that it is not a falsified claim that is made, and that the property owner is compensated rightfully on a case-by-case basis.⁴³

According to Chodakiewicz, the answer to the issue of restitution cannot be found by making an appeal to the EU, it will only cause more anti-EU sentiment in Poland than what is already the case, he argues that, in the short term, one should hope for a conservative libertarian government, claiming that a government of this type will make property rights and restitution a high priority.⁴⁴ This may very well be the case since a libertarian conservative will believe in free-market solutions and property rights i.e. the fundamental pillar of capitalism, but it is also highly likely that the issue would be ignored by such a type of government. The latest initiative taken in the battle for restitution is that Poland in 2018 decided to apply political pressure on Germany for war reparations amounting as high as 850 billion USD. This claim was not made directly to Germany, but it can lead to tension within the EU. Furthermore, the German legal experts are convinced that Poland has no case, and that Germany cannot be held responsible for this type of reparation.⁴⁵

Poland's return to Christianity

One of the most – if not the most – influential Polish institution following the almost free elections of 1990 was the catholic church. Poland already had a great catholic influence at this time since the sitting pope was the polish native John Paul II.⁴⁶ In the summer of

⁴² Jan Cienski, "Poland's Lost Property".

⁴³ Marek Chodakiewicz. "Restitution Of Private Property In Poland: The Problem In Context".

⁴⁴ Marek Chodakiewicz. "Restitution Of Private Property In Poland: The Problem In Context".

⁴⁵ Marcin Goettig, "Polish Lawmaker: Due Reparations From Germany Could Stand At \$850 Billion".

⁴⁶ Irena Grudzińska-Gross, "The Backsliding" Page 666.

1990, while the teachers were on vacation, religion classes were introduced to the Polish school system. Religion classes were of course available before this instatement, yet it was only in connection to the churches and not mandatory for students, yet now the Polish taxpayer had to fund this type of education as well. This was merely the first step of the Catholic Church to gain influence on the daily life in Poland, and the monopolization of morality by the church.⁴⁷ According to Grudzińska-Gross, the Catholic Church today holds a superior status in Poland – higher than elected officials and legal authorities – as a vanguard of traditions, morality and national sentiment. The church is on the frontline of the contemporary culture war in Poland regarding issues like abortion, in vitro fertilization and same-sex unions. The church is currently spearheading the effort to liberate certain professions from the confines of the law e.g. teachers and gynecologists, to let the individual act on their conscience before the law i.e. the conscience that the Catholic Church has defined.⁴⁸

In the perspective of the EU at large, the Catholic Church has been a big proponent for federalization since the undertaking of the EU project with the Treaty of Paris and the Treaty of Rome.⁴⁹ Fifty years on, the religious communities in the EU is more visible than it ever was, and they are asking to be included in the political process in the EU, and they have established a direct link of communication within its institutions.⁵⁰ During the early years of the EU (and the cold war) the Catholic Church preached a message of peace in the east, which made relations between the east and west somewhat difficult. Moreover, the Catholic Church – in the 1950's – preached a message of unity while most other religious communities refrained from exploring this political question, yet both Pope Pius XII and Pope John XXIII (1938-1958 & 1958-1963, respectively) was major advocated for the unification and federalization of Europe.⁵¹

In addition to having political and social influence in Poland, the Catholic Church has also been awarded a lot of land. In 1950, the Catholic Church was compensated for the land that

⁴⁷ Irena Grudzińska-Gross, "The Backsliding" Page 666.

⁴⁸ Irena Grudzińska-Gross, "The Backsliding" Page 666.

⁴⁹ Lucian N. Leustean. "What is the European Union? Religion between Neofunctionalism and Intergovernmentalism" Page 165.

⁵⁰ Lucian N. Leustean. "What is the European Union? Religion between Neofunctionalism and Intergovernmentalism" Page 165

⁵¹ Lucian N. Leustean. "What is the European Union? Religion between Neofunctionalism and Intergovernmentalism" Pp. 165-166.

was nationalized under communism.⁵² Furthermore, in the years following the fall of communism, the church, with the formation of the Property Commission, was also eligible for compensation in the east that was under soviet occupation. In these years of political turmoil, the church seized the opportunity to claim property rights, and were compensated 240000 hectares of land that was lost when the new borders were drawn in the wake of the Second World War.⁵³ After a long string of corruption allegation, Poland shut down the Property Commission in 2011, but that commission delivered on their mission to reclaim church property. In essence, before the war, the church owned 400000 hectares of land in Poland, after the borders were re-drawn in the post-war years, the church retained a mere 160000 hectares of land.⁵⁴ The Property Commission, however did not have anything to do with the land seized before the implementation of Communism, but it did seize upon the opportunity for claims for land that was no longer Polish – and it worked. In 1950, 87000 hectares were nationalized, and by the time the commission was dismantled, the catholic church had seen the ‘return’ of 94000 hectares of land.⁵⁵ In other words, the catholic church was not simply entitled to compensation for nationalized land by the communist regime, it was also compensated to get it back – with interests – for free, in the post-communism years. As opposed to the Polish citizens who were, and are, also entitled to compensation but has not received any restitution.

EU aid and bargaining power

While certain political parties and figures in the post-cold war period was reclaiming the past, the societal trends were moving forward, and one specific pull-factor in terms of the sentiment to join the European Union was the neoliberal ideology of a common and profitable market that would be economically beneficial for Poland. Since the fall of the USSR and communism, Poland instituted a rapid privatization of companies, which created instability in terms of job security: “The cost of social transformation was high and notoriously painful, with an increase in poverty and social inequalities, in unemployment, especially among the old and the very

⁵² Giuseppe Sedia, "Poland's Property Commission On Trial For Deals That Handed Millions To Catholic Church"

⁵³ Giuseppe Sedia, "Poland's Property Commission On Trial For Deals That Handed Millions To Catholic Church"

⁵⁴ Maciej Psyk and Renata Anderson. "Double Compensation For Church Land Claims".

⁵⁵ Maciej Psyk and Renata Anderson. "Double Compensation For Church Land Claims".

young.”⁵⁶ These were some of the reasons that convinced Poland to join the EU in 2004. Since Poland joined the EU things have been moving fast for Poland, just three years after initially joining, Poland became a part of the Schengen Area.⁵⁷ Economically, Poland has benefitted greatly from entering the EU. according to the EU’s official numbers in 2016, Poland has contributed a total amount of €3.553 billion which equals a total of 0.87% of their Gross National Income (GNI). Whereas, in return, Poland has received a total sum of €10.638 billion which equals a total of 2.61% of their GNI.⁵⁸ Not only has Poland benefitted from the EU in general, in 2013 Poland was the largest beneficiary of EU funds overall. According to the European Commission, in 2013, Poland received more than three times as much in funding than they contributed. These funds were mainly used on regional policy (66%) and agricultural and rural development (32%).⁵⁹ In terms of agricultural development alone, Poland “receives a large share of the European funds for agriculture and is the top beneficiary of EU funds for rural development. Every year, around 1.4 million Polish farmers receive income support from the EU budget”.⁶⁰

In May 2014, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs published an article commemorating the ten years of EU inclusion. This article proudly stated that since the induction, Poland has undertaken more than 177000 projects worth upwards of approximately €130 billion of which roughly €72 billion was made using EU subsidies.⁶¹ Yet these facts were not the byline of the article, because in May 2014, Poland and the EU signed an agreement of funds running until 2020. In this agreement, Poland will receive €106 billion of which €82.3 billion will be spend on cohesion projects to reduce development inequality across different regions. It is noteworthy in this context that Poland will thus still be the largest beneficiary of EU funds.⁶² In addition, Poland allocated their funds differently than certain other EU members, exemplified by Poland using 44.58% of their 2016 funds on agriculture, 51.72% on regional policies of cohesion and a mere 2.4% on research and development.⁶³ In contrast, Denmark allocated their 2016 funds with

⁵⁶ Irena Grudzińska-Gross, “The Backsliding” Page 667.

⁵⁷ European Commission. "Poland - European Union - European Commission".

⁵⁸ European Commission. "Poland - European Union - European Commission".

⁵⁹ European Commission. "Poland - EU Budget In My Country – European Commission".

⁶⁰ European Commission. "Poland - EU Budget In My Country – European Commission".

⁶¹ Stanisławska, Aleksandra. "EU Funds In Poland"

⁶² Stanisławska, Aleksandra. "EU Funds In Poland"

⁶³ European Parliament. "The EU Budget At A Glance – Poland".

73.13% on agriculture, 2.15% on regional policies and 19.61% on research and development.⁶⁴ This comparison shows a large difference in culture and in the needs of each of these countries; where Poland might have more different types of farming, Denmark uses the majority of their EU funds on their farming business, while Poland is so much larger geographically that they are using half of their EU funds on regional cohesion.

Since the EU does not have the legislative capability to overturn national laws and reforms per se, it is difficult for the EU as an institution to implement reforms on a national level. E.g. in the last two years Poland has made significant reforms to their judiciary system and their national media; steps that might be considered a drift towards authoritarianism by the sitting Law and Justice party government in Poland.⁶⁵ It is not possible for the EU to halt funding towards Poland by law, but since Poland is the greatest beneficiary from the EU funds, it could be a significant bargaining chip when funds are to be allocated and negotiated for the next period of budgetary funding in 2021 onwards.⁶⁶ Moreover, the EU has warned Poland that they might call for a vote to implement article 7, which would strip Poland of any vote or say within the parliament,⁶⁷ yet this is very unlikely to be actually implemented since Hungary has pledged its allegiance towards Poland on this issue and has promised a veto vote, and since the decision has to be unanimous, this would halt the triggering of article 7.⁶⁸ This was discussed in the European Parliament already in December of 2017, and in March 2018 “[T]he European Parliament voted on Thursday [March 1st] 422 in favour to 147 against, with 48 abstentions, on a non-binding resolution to support the Commission’s tough stance towards Poland.”⁶⁹

EU skepticism

When Poland initially joined the EU, there was a lot of optimism given the EU’s neoliberal ideology of economic well-being for members, however, when the financial crisis of 2008 hit,

⁶⁴ European Parliament. "The EU Budget At A Glance - Denmark".

⁶⁵ Jon Stone. "EU Takes Unprecedented Action Against Poland To Halt Slide Towards Authoritarianism".

⁶⁶ Jan Strupczewski and Pawel Sobczak. "EU Lawmakers Back Action Against Poland Amid Democracy Concerns".

⁶⁷ Adam Easton et. al. 2017. "EU Acts Against Poland Judiciary Reforms"

⁶⁸ Radio Poland. "Poland Should Not Be Worried About EU Sanctions: Official"

⁶⁹ Jan Strupczewski and Pawel Sobczak. "EU Lawmakers Back Action Against Poland Amid Democracy Concerns".

that utopian view was somewhat distorted. As the neoliberal ideology started to fade, it became natural to turn inwards towards the nation, as the political elites did not offer any viable solutions via the EU, it was believed that only the nation itself would take care of the interests of the average citizen.⁷⁰ In the wake of the financial crisis, the richer and more prosperous nations that made it through the crisis better were willing to bail out the less fortunate member-states at the cost of public shaming and austerity. In the light of this, the EU was perceived as a morally superior supranational entity that transcended illiberal national values, yet for the shamed countries it meant that they now had the freedom to reconstruct that nation-state.⁷¹

Assessing the 2014 European Parliament election multiple things can be deduced; it was the lowest ever voter turnout to a European Parliamentary election with a mere 42.45 percent voter turnout, and that the Eurosceptics gained traction previously unseen.⁷² Eurosceptic parties from both the right and the left wing of the political spectrum gained 100 seats in the European Parliament from various member nations. The parliament members also represented parties that gained major traction on the national level in many member-states, e.g. “UKIP in the United Kingdom, the Front National in France, the People’s Party in Denmark, Syriza in Greece, the Five Star Movement in Italy and Sinn Féin in Ireland.”⁷³ The results of the 2014 elections were exceptional in Poland for multiple reasons, firstly the Law and Justice party almost tied with the Civic Platform party who usually wins EU elections by a large margin. The Law and Justice party is belonging to the Eurosceptic camp and very much against the federalization of Europe.⁷⁴ Secondly, this EU parliamentary election saw the appearance of Janusz Korwin-Mikke. Korwin-Mikke is an openly and strongly anti-EU right-winger belonging at the time to ‘his’ party named “Congress of the New Right”. In this 2014 election Korwin-Mikke made his return to the political scene after a twenty-one-year absence and declared at the onset of his return that: “we must destroy the European Union from the inside, or it will destroy us.”⁷⁵ The politics of Korwin-Mikke, according to his own publications, are centered around the philosophies of 19th

⁷⁰ Irena Grudzińska-Gross, “The Backsliding” Page 667.

⁷¹ Irena Grudzińska-Gross, “The Backsliding” Pp. 667-668.

⁷² Karol Chwedeżuk-Szulc and Mateusz Zaremba, “Janusz Korwin-Mikke and the Rest: The Polish Eurosceptic Right Wing” Page 121.

⁷³ Karol Chwedeżuk-Szulc and Mateusz Zaremba, “Janusz Korwin-Mikke and the Rest: The Polish Eurosceptic Right Wing” Page 121

⁷⁴ Karol Chwedeżuk-Szulc and Mateusz Zaremba, “Janusz Korwin-Mikke and the Rest: The Polish Eurosceptic Right Wing” Pp. 122-123

⁷⁵ Karol Chwedeżuk-Szulc and Mateusz Zaremba, “Janusz Korwin-Mikke and the Rest: The Polish Eurosceptic Right Wing” Page 123.

century capitalism but he also praises modern neoliberal thinkers like Hayek and Ludwig Von Mises. Korwin-Mikke identifies the success of 19th century capitalism as self-reliance, entrepreneurship and frugality.⁷⁶ Korwin-Mikke is very skeptical of the current state of socio-political and economic systems which he perceives as socialist systems where state-intervention and social welfare is strangling the taxpayers and are killing the individual's incentive to pursue development.⁷⁷ After his temporary success in the 2014 EU Parliament election, things went downhill for Korwin-Mikke. All his prior political adventures have ended in failure because he is notorious for his egocentrism and authoritarian-style administration of his parties. Despite his electoral success in 2014, the very next year he was ousted as leader of his own party, which in turn led him to launch a new party where he again is the number-one-man without question.⁷⁸

Around the time of the so-called 'Brexit' vote in Britain, Euroscepticism was at its peak in recent history. However, when the implications of this vote became evident, it somewhat frightened other political leaders as to what the risks of fueling this anti-EU sentiment really are. This 'existential threat' to the EU as an institution that Brexit caused has somewhat remedied the anti-EU sentiment a bit, and the 'new EU' – after Brexit comes into effect – must focus on making sure that a national election in any given country that can become a threat to the EU as an institution is closely monitored.⁷⁹ With the Brexit vote, the UK population's discontent with the EU as an institution was brought to light, but that does not mean that it was – and is – an isolated case of national interests trumping the pro-EU sentiments. According to a 2016 Pew Research poll: “[the] majority of the Greeks (68%) and pluralities of the Dutch (44%), Germans (43%), Italians (39%) and French (39%) all want some EU power returned to their national governments.”⁸⁰ It is noteworthy that the same poll showed that in France, Spain and Germany more than 25% of the participants wanted an increased federalization for the European union, yet this is not too surprising given that it is, now, the three largest and most influential countries

⁷⁶ Karol Chwedeżuk-Szulc and Mateusz Zaremba, “Janusz Korwin-Mikke and the Rest: The Polish Eurosceptic Right Wing” Page 129.

⁷⁷ Karol Chwedeżuk-Szulc and Mateusz Zaremba, “Janusz Korwin-Mikke and the Rest: The Polish Eurosceptic Right Wing” Page 129.

⁷⁸ Karol Chwedeżuk-Szulc and Mateusz Zaremba, “Janusz Korwin-Mikke and the Rest: The Polish Eurosceptic Right Wing” Page 132.

⁷⁹ Daniel Boffey, "Rising Euroscepticism 'Poses Existential Threat To EU'".

⁸⁰ Bruce Stokes, "Brexit Vote Highlighted UK'S Discontent With EU, But Other European Countries Are Grumbling Too"

within the European Union.⁸¹ In the following year, in 2017, the EU as an institution had made a huge comeback in approval within its member-states: “Majorities in nine of 10 EU member states, including 74% in Poland, 68% in Germany, 67% in Hungary and 65% in Sweden, now hold a favorable view of the institution. The lone dissenter is Greece (34%), which has been subject to EU-imposed austerity. Even in the UK, where just a year ago voters narrowly chose to leave the EU, 54% now voice a positive opinion of the European project.”⁸² This 2017 poll does show that the EU as an overall institution has regained some traction in terms of public opinion, trust and credibility, however, on two key issues, the trust in the EU as an institution from certain member-states is still very much lacking, namely on the issues of EU economic policies and immigration and refugee policy. In terms of economic policies, Greece, Italy, France and Spain all have a more than 50% disapproval of the EU’s handling of economic issues with Greece being the most dissatisfied with an 85% disapproval. In the same poll, however, it is noteworthy that Poland on the other hand has a 58% rating in favor of how the EU is handling economic issues.⁸³ The fact that Poland is largely in favor of the EU’s economic policies is most likely directly correlated with the fact that they, as previously mentioned, are the main beneficiaries of the allocated EU funds. When assessing the overall attitude towards the EU’s handling of the refugee crisis, the approval – or rather disapproval – ratings are even more drastic. Greece and Italy top the list of disapproval with 90% and 80% disapproval rating, this is highly likely because of those two nations being the first port of entry to Europe for the incoming refugees.⁸⁴ Sweden, Poland and Hungary constitute the rest of the top five nations with the highest disapproval/approval ratio towards the EU’s handling of the refugee crisis. Yet, what is the most stunning is that the median percentage of disapproval for the top ten nations is 66%, this is much higher than the median disapproval of the EU’s economic policies at 46% for the same top ten nations.⁸⁵

These aforementioned Pew polls were conducted in the spring of 2017, yet the trend of

⁸¹ Bruce Stokes, "Brexit Vote Highlighted UK'S Discontent With EU, But Other European Countries Are Grumbling Too"

⁸² Bruce Stokes, Richard Wike, and Dorothy Manevich. "1. EU Back In Favor, But Brussels' Handling Of Economy And Refugees Still Questioned".

⁸³ Bruce Stokes, Richard Wike, and Dorothy Manevich. "1. EU Back In Favor, But Brussels' Handling Of Economy And Refugees Still Questioned".

⁸⁴ Bruce Stokes, Richard Wike, and Dorothy Manevich. "1. EU Back In Favor, But Brussels' Handling Of Economy And Refugees Still Questioned".

⁸⁵ Bruce Stokes, Richard Wike, and Dorothy Manevich. "1. EU Back In Favor, But Brussels' Handling Of Economy And Refugees Still Questioned".

Euroscepticism continues into 2018. In the recent Italian election, the two Eurosceptic parties, the Five Star Movement and the Northern League gained significant political traction. The Five Star Movement came out as the big winners with 32% of votes while the Northern League got four times the number of votes than at the previous election.⁸⁶ The results of this election initiate a change in the political discourse in Italy, for more than thirty years Italy has been a very pro-EU nation yet now Italy is one of the most ‘Euromorose’⁸⁷ nations within the EU.⁸⁸ Comparatively, in 1991, Italy had 79% of the people’s approval towards the European Union, whereas that number was 36% in late-2017 with 41% of the populous expressing an ambivalent attitude towards the EU. This election has therefore dealt a severe blow to the European Union, placing Italy third on the list of least EU-friendly nations, only surpassed by Cyprus and Czech Republic.⁸⁹ It is difficult to predict how the new Italian government will approach the EU, some experts believe that even with a right-wing Eurosceptic government in power, Italy will not question their EU membership status, nor will they push for a withdrawal from the Union, the main consequence might be a more stubborn approach within the European Parliament in order to review and revise Italy’s position within the Union. Whereas other scholars believe that once the government have been formed, they are likely to ease up on their right-wing and Eurosceptic stances in order to legitimize and cement their status as a genuine and serious government.⁹⁰

Poland’s political polarization and ongoing culture war⁹¹

The 2001 national election in Poland changed the Polish political landscape significantly as it saw an increasing polarization within the Polish population. The election saw gained traction for both the far-right and the far-left at the expense of the center-right and center-left parties.⁹² Furthermore, since 2005, Poland has been governed by right-wing parties while the political left has been in decline for some time, and since 2005, some of the most debated topics in Poland are

⁸⁶ Claire Guyot, and Freya Kirk. "Italy: From Pro-European To Euroscepticism".

⁸⁷ The term “Euromorose” used by Guyot (and translated into English by Kirk) is a contraction of the words “Europe” and “Morose” to symbolize the diminishing attitude towards the EU on the part of Italy.

⁸⁸ Claire Guyot, and Freya Kirk. "Italy: From Pro-European To Euroscepticism".

⁸⁹ Claire Guyot, and Freya Kirk. "Italy: From Pro-European To Euroscepticism".

⁹⁰ Claire Guyot, and Freya Kirk. "Italy: From Pro-European To Euroscepticism".

⁹¹ The term “Culture War” is defined as a political conflict over cultural values; a situation in which people are polarized into opposing groups and everyone has to choose a side.

⁹² Clare McManus-Czubińska, William L. Miller, Radoslaw Markowski and Lack Wasilewski, “The New Polish ‘Right?’” Page 1.

those of collective memory, populism, gender and neoliberalism.⁹³ After a corruption scandal in 2002, the political right gained immense social support after the 2005 election and essentially split the power between the parties on the political right.⁹⁴ The favored reasoning for the popularity of the right-wing parties was the disdain towards the political elites, and the right-wing narratives were based on universalizing the topics that were presented with the beginning of Transition.⁹⁵ The right-wing political parties in the early 2000's made countless accusations that the riddance of the last remains of the communist-era was happening at too slow of a pace, these accusations led to a debate on the collective history of Poland.⁹⁶ The right-wing political parties pushed the narratives of the previous values of republicanism, such values needed to cultivate a national identity and increase political activity upon the entrance into the EU, and sustain their position once inducted.⁹⁷ This political shift started to diminish the positions of the political elites in Poland, especially with the new cultural dependency and general imitation of western values. These shifts led to a massive critique against political corruption and a trending support of the state being the champion of laws.⁹⁸ However, Gdula notes that the major problem with right-wing populism is; that instead of offering real reforms and political initiatives, it creates vicious conflicts. Meanwhile, in terms of economic issues they push for a continuance of the policies that were implemented by the political elites that they have rhetorically fought so hard against in their ascension to power.⁹⁹ Gdula makes the case that: “[t]he real opposition to populism necessitates challenging the construction of the entire public sphere and a redefinition of the line of the conflict, which again, should rather be the division between left and right and not a conflict of reason with irrationality.”¹⁰⁰ In order to oppose the right-wing parties in Poland, the left-wing party “Palikot Movement” was elected into parliament in the 2011 elections. This party was formed with a platform as an anti-clerical movement with the general agenda of e.g. supporting pro-marijuana legislation and championing the rights of sexual minorities.¹⁰¹ In the wake of the success of the Palikot Movement, there was a popular demand for city-rights, this

⁹³ Maciej Gdula, “The Architecture of Revival - *Left-wing Ideas and Politics in Poland after 2002*” Page 371.

⁹⁴ Maciej Gdula, “The Architecture of Revival - *Left-wing Ideas and Politics in Poland after 2002*” Page 375.

⁹⁵ Maciej Gdula, “The Architecture of Revival - *Left-wing Ideas and Politics in Poland after 2002*” Page 375.

⁹⁶ Maciej Gdula, “The Architecture of Revival - *Left-wing Ideas and Politics in Poland after 2002*” Page 375.

⁹⁷ Maciej Gdula, “The Architecture of Revival - *Left-wing Ideas and Politics in Poland after 2002*” Page 375.

⁹⁸ Maciej Gdula, “The Architecture of Revival - *Left-wing Ideas and Politics in Poland after 2002*” Pp. 375-376.

⁹⁹ Maciej Gdula, “The Architecture of Revival - *Left-wing Ideas and Politics in Poland after 2002*” Pp 385-386.

¹⁰⁰ Maciej Gdula, “The Architecture of Revival - *Left-wing Ideas and Politics in Poland after 2002*” Page 386.

¹⁰¹ Maciej Gdula, “The Architecture of Revival - *Left-wing Ideas and Politics in Poland after 2002*” Page 386.

social movement was interested in better accessibility to housing, social services, cultural institutions, influence in the planning of public spaces, influence in budgetary questions relating to the city, and even issues relating to the repression of the law.¹⁰² Various special-interest groups, in this regard, came together and formed a common platform called “Congress of Urban Movements” that has become a stakeholder and actor in city politics.¹⁰³ These two new political players are showing a sense of revival on the political left in Poland, one that sprung from party politics and the other from a grassroots movement, and they are even showing signs of populism, starting to produce political effects and initiatives.¹⁰⁴

Poland has been the target of massive criticism since the end of communism because of their harsh attitude towards homosexuals, sexual minorities and general views on issues of gender. In the era of communism in Poland, homosexuality was not a crime per se, as it was in other communist states i.e. Latvia. This is not to say that homosexuals were not prosecuted both officially and unofficially in Poland. Allegedly the Polish security services compiled a file of some 11000 “pink files” on alleged homosexuals.¹⁰⁵ When the Polish constitution was signed in 1989 there was an implementation of a vague clause stating that it is illegal to discriminate against people in political, social and economic life for any reason at all; and the Labor Code is the only piece of legislation that mentions sexual minorities specifically.¹⁰⁶ For some years in the late 1990’s and early 2000’s Poland appeared to be on a path towards a more open stance on the issue of sexual minorities, at least politically, however since the right-wing governments have enjoyed continuous success, the anti-gay sentiment in Poland seems to be facing a backlash.¹⁰⁷ In 2016 a Polish gay-rights NGO was attacked with rocks being thrown through the windows at their headquarters in Warsaw, this prompted the Warsaw police to authorize a protection detail outside the NGO for some months. Despite this, thuggish looking individuals, often in nationalist attire, would roam the streets outside the building to see if the police were still on patrol, and two

¹⁰² Maciej Gdula, “The Architecture of Revival - *Left-wing Ideas and Politics in Poland after 2002*” Page 386.

¹⁰³ Maciej Gdula, “The Architecture of Revival - *Left-wing Ideas and Politics in Poland after 2002*” Page 386.

¹⁰⁴ Maciej Gdula, “The Architecture of Revival - *Left-wing Ideas and Politics in Poland after 2002*” Page 386.

¹⁰⁵ Conor O’Dwyer and Katrina Z.S. Schwartz, “Minority rights after EU enlargement: A comparison of antigay politics in Poland and Latvia” Page 223.

¹⁰⁶ Conor O’Dwyer and Katrina Z.S. Schwartz, “Minority rights after EU enlargement: A comparison of antigay politics in Poland and Latvia” Page 223.

¹⁰⁷ Andrew Rettman. “[Interview] Gay Rights Face Backlash In Poland”.

more times the NGO reported incidents of vandalism.¹⁰⁸ According to the NGO, the larger cities e.g. Warsaw, Gdansk, Krakow and Poznan are considered safe havens by the gay community in Poland, yet they are unlikely to show their affection in public – even here. The NGO is very clear in stating that the situation is most dire outside the bigger cities in the rural areas.¹⁰⁹

The issue of abortion has been – and still is – a highly contagious political topic in Poland. As the catholic church gained political influence in the early nineties a lot of legislation affecting women were enacted, this includes very harsh anti-abortion legislation, banning sexual education in public schools, restricting public funding and subsidies on contraceptives and strict laws regulating in vitro procedures as a means of fertilization.¹¹⁰ These measures did come with a certain contestation, a two-sided debate akin to the one we continuously hear about from the USA. On one side there is the pro-choice people with the arguments based on individual rights, the right to choose and the women's right to control their own bodies. These arguments were put forward as the standard liberty of any civilized country in Europe, and the enactment of such legislation would be a step backwards in the direction of the social movements.¹¹¹ On the opposing side were the right-wing conservatives and the proponents of the catholic church with arguments surrounding the defense of life, traditions and fundamental moral values.¹¹² As recently as 2016 there was a proposal in the Polish parliament to tighten the laws on abortion, this time thousands of women, liberals and sympathizers took to the streets of Warsaw to protest this proposed legislation.¹¹³ As a response to this women's march, the following year on the annual march proclaimed "sanctity of life march" in April, the catholic church rallied its supporters, and 10000 people took to the streets of Warsaw to advocate the pro-life cause. In addition to the march in Warsaw, in the northern city of Szczecin some 20000 people marched in the streets for pro-life, and given that the first march was in 2006, the fact that the catholic church can still round up such immense numbers is astounding.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁸ Andrew Rettman. "[Interview] Gay Rights Face Backlash In Poland".

¹⁰⁹ Andrew Rettman. "[Interview] Gay Rights Face Backlash In Poland".

¹¹⁰ Maciej Gdula, "The Architecture of Revival - *Left-wing Ideas and Politics in Poland after 2002*" Page 380.

¹¹¹ Maciej Gdula, "The Architecture of Revival - *Left-wing Ideas and Politics in Poland after 2002*" Page 380.

¹¹² Maciej Gdula, "The Architecture of Revival - *Left-wing Ideas and Politics in Poland after 2002*" Pp. 380-381.

¹¹³ Ben Hennessy, "Polish Women March Over Abortion Rights".

¹¹⁴ Radio Poland, "Thousands Turn Out For Pro-Life Marches In Poland"

Refugees and migrants have been a hugely controversial topic in Poland, and in the countries of Europe at large. In 2015, the European Commission brought forward the notion of helping the countries that bear the brunt of the mass arrival of refugees, by delegating the refugees and migrants while showing solidarity with the other EU nations. However, not a long time passed before the sentiment towards accepting forced migrants in Poland began to decrease. A contributing factor to the anti-immigrant sentiment might be the political election campaign of the Law and Justice party in 2015, that ran on the platform of securitization and protection against the threat of outside influences on Polish life.¹¹⁵ The hostile rhetoric of the Law and Justice party continued to feature prominently in their public appearances, this rhetoric has aided in cultivating a national sentiment and have cultivated national values. The deputy minister in charge of migration policy alludes to the terrorist attacks on the European mainland as a factor in the importance of safety and security.¹¹⁶ As a consequence, authorities have started the implementation of legislation and mechanisms to criminalize migration, an unexpected tool to assist in this endeavor was the EU. EU regulations have already dictated the importance of collecting intelligence on migration and the controlling thereof; this is to include the collection of data on both international immigrants and domestic immigrants to be stored on various databases.¹¹⁷ According to Witold Klaus, some of the spill-over from the highly inflammatory rhetoric used by Law and Justice and the continuation of their right-wing policies and nationalist stand on immigration, has led to the undermining of the judicial system and supreme courts in Poland. Furthermore, he argues that the implementation of new surveillance laws that expand the general surveillance capabilities of the Polish government – on the pretext of citizen safety – is not having a large impact on citizens per se.¹¹⁸ Examining the attitude of the Polish people in general regarding immigrants, there is a disconcerting observation to be made, according to a Polish opinion poll the populous are favorable towards immigration; as long as it is Ukrainians. When the participants in the survey was asked if Poland should receive Ukrainian refugees from war-torn areas, 60% agreed while 33% was opposed to the idea. However, when the same

¹¹⁵ Witold Klaus, “Security First: New Right-Wing Government in Poland and its Policy Towards Immigrants and Refugees.” Page 523.

¹¹⁶ Witold Klaus, “Security First: New Right-Wing Government in Poland and its Policy Towards Immigrants and Refugees.” Pp. 523-524.

¹¹⁷ Witold Klaus, “Security First: New Right-Wing Government in Poland and its Policy Towards Immigrants and Refugees.” Page 524.

¹¹⁸ Witold Klaus, “Security First: New Right-Wing Government in Poland and its Policy Towards Immigrants and Refugees.” Page 524.

participants were asked if Poland should receive refugees from the Middle East and Africa, a total of 25% said that Poland should, whereas 71% of the participants disagreed to variant degrees.¹¹⁹ One explanation for this disproportionate answer could be the more similarities in culture to the Ukrainians fleeing versus the people from the Middle East.

Jan Cienski makes a provocative allegation as to why Poland are hesitant to accept their share of refugees:

“Poland is one of the most homogenous countries in Europe ... That wasn’t the case until the Second World War ... ethnic Poles only made up two-thirds of the country [before the war] ... The blood-drenched harrowing of the war, followed by post-war border shifts and ethnic cleansing, created a racially pure Poland for the first time in history — fulfilling the dreams of earlier generations of extreme nationalists. Despite being in the EU, there’s little appetite in Poland to create a West-European style multi-ethnic society.”¹²⁰

Meanwhile, the Polish government explains their hesitation regarding their acceptance of refugees with the notion that it was the previous government – led by Civic Platform – that accepted a percentage of the refugees, and that the sitting government are under no obligation to honor that promise. Whereas Civic Platform leaders, under massive pressure from Brussels, claimed that their government initially did not want to accept refugees but agreed anyway, but now, with a change of government, the leaders of the opposition said that Poland would not tolerate a top-down influence from the EU, and that it is up to the individual nations to rule on these matters.¹²¹ One would think that with the sitting liberal pope, the catholic church would be malleable in the matter of refugee allocation, but the chief of the prime minister’s cabinet office said that even though she is a pious and good Christian catholic – and that a good Christian is someone who helps – that is not necessarily transferable to accepting refugees.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Bart Bachman, “Diminishing Solidarity: Polish Attitudes Toward The European Migration And Refugee Crisis”.

¹²⁰ Jan Cienski, “Why Poland Doesn’t Want Refugees”

¹²¹ Jan Cienski, “Why Poland Doesn’t Want Refugees”

¹²² Jan Cienski, “Why Poland Doesn’t Want Refugees”

Neoliberal tendencies in Poland has fulfilled a consequential role in the shift towards capitalism for the Polish economy, much like the way in which populism allowed for the criticism of a liberal democracy.¹²³ In this relation, Gdula explains: “For many years of the transformation period, the economic debate was structured by a dichotomy of inefficient socialist and efficient capitalist economy and dominated by experts pointing to the need to cut taxes, privatize state property, cancel the restrictions concerning relations between workers and employers, and calling for public debt reduction. Their voice was treated as an impartial, scientific presentation of the principles governing a healthy economy.”¹²⁴ Reflections on the concept of neoliberalism in Poland has created a two-sided development in attitude, firstly the criticism towards neoliberalism as being an unfair system of capitalism, and secondly, the very real class system that is created when neoliberalist policies are implemented which can lead to certain tensions in civic society.¹²⁵ The biggest shift from the socialist state to the incorporation of neoliberalism was that of the work force. In 1992, skilled workers represented 35% of the Polish workforce, but by 2005 that number was reduced to 28%. While 7% does not appear like much, in reality, it meant the disappearance of roughly 2.5 million jobs.¹²⁶ Meanwhile, the Polish middle class increased it’s share of employment from 11% in 1992 to 24% in 2005. The middle class gained much more by the incorporation of neoliberalism than did the workers, mostly due to a higher degree of job security and higher earnings.¹²⁷

When the shift towards a neoliberal approach to economy happened in Poland, it was initially very profitable for the nation, and the open market of the EU meant that the EU as an institution became synonymous with economic prosperity, but this optimistic view suffered a severe blow when the financial crisis hit in 2007-2008.¹²⁸ The neoliberalist vocabulary suggested that economic solutions were a political necessity and this somewhat limited the political horizons. Once the notion that the EU was a source of economic well-being was disturbed by the financial crisis, it made it logical for the people of Poland to turn inwards towards the state to protect them, yet the political elites did not offer any other solution to the economic crisis.¹²⁹

¹²³ Maciej Gdula, “The Architecture of Revival - *Left-wing Ideas and Politics in Poland after 2002*” Page 387.

¹²⁴ Maciej Gdula, “The Architecture of Revival - *Left-wing Ideas and Politics in Poland after 2002*” Page 387.

¹²⁵ Maciej Gdula, “The Architecture of Revival - *Left-wing Ideas and Politics in Poland after 2002*” Page 387.

¹²⁶ Maciej Gdula, “The Architecture of Revival - *Left-wing Ideas and Politics in Poland after 2002*” Page 389.

¹²⁷ Maciej Gdula, “The Architecture of Revival - *Left-wing Ideas and Politics in Poland after 2002*” Page 389.

¹²⁸ Irena Grudzińska-Gross, “The Backsliding” Page 667.

¹²⁹ Irena Grudzińska-Gross, “The Backsliding” Page 667.

Undermining the EU amid right-wing polarization

Poland has made decisive and vigorous political changes in the last few years which could easily be construed as EU defiant, most recently the major changes in the judiciary which makes it possible for the executive branch of government to effectively interfere with the workings of the judiciary. On the surface this looks akin to the measures that were made apparent by Hungary beforehand, the most notable difference is that in Poland there was not a constitutional majority to these implemented measures. This again could be construed as a move towards authoritarianism, given the potential to pass new laws without constitutional approval, and seizing control of the judiciary.¹³⁰ In addition, Poland's response is that they are being unfairly singled out, as they point to Orban's Hungary that have been harsher in the undermining of the judiciary and national media outlets. Poland points to another EU case of double standards when it comes to Spain. When Catalanian politicians staged a referendum on Catalanian independence from Spain, the national government in Spain imprisoned democratically elected officials; this has led to Poland pointing to the fact that it is indeed Spain – and not Poland – who are imprisoning opposition politicians. However, the EU brushed this off easily, answering that the Spanish government acted within their constitution and did not censor the media.¹³¹ Poland continuously argues that the reason they are being singled out and criticized is because of their cultural conservatism.¹³² On this notion, Poland does have a case. In November 2017, on the day of the 99th year of Polish independence after the First World War, Poland held what might be the largest ever right-wing march in European history.¹³³ Present at the right-wing march was also a gathering of anti-fascist anti-protesters, but they faded away in the large crowd of nationalist who marched in the name of national identity.¹³⁴ These annual marches have been shrouded in clashes between protestors and police, but since 2015, as Law and Justice claimed power, the marches have been more peaceful, yet the nationalist causes were apparent with multiple signs featuring anti-Islamic, anti-gay and anti-EU sentiments. Some of the featured protest signs even featured references of the Catholic church's crusades with the slogan "Deus Vult" i.e. "god wills

¹³⁰ Wojciech Przybylski, "Reforms In Poland: Undermining The European Order".

¹³¹ Gideon Rachman. "Europe's Biggest Test Will Come In Poland".

¹³² Gideon Rachman. "Europe's Biggest Test Will Come In Poland".

¹³³ Michal Kranz. "60,000 People In Poland Held One Of The Largest Far-Right Marches In Europe Ever".

¹³⁴ Michal Kranz. "60,000 People In Poland Held One Of The Largest Far-Right Marches In Europe Ever".

it”.¹³⁵ Amidst these recent developments; deflections, finger pointing, civic anti-EU sentiments and questions surrounding war reparations, one could perceive Poland as being on a path towards leaving the European Union, but that is a highly unlikely outcome. There are signs of hope for Polish cooperation with the EU. After the threat of implementation of article 7, which would severely damage Polish influence within the EU and possibly hit Poland with sanctions, there has been amendment proposals on part of Poland in certain areas; such as the retirement age of judges and on the issue of appointment of presidents of courts.¹³⁶ Moreover, the importance of reconciliation between Germany and Poland is crucial for both sides for geographical and historical reasons, and there has been signs of Polish willingness to cooperate with the EU and Germany to remain a part of the European Union. In the beginning of 2018 when the Poland-EU conflict was at a high point, Poland did show a willingness to make compromises and settlements. Poland made a reshuffle of their government and rotated/removed some of their representatives in the EU that were regarded as ‘crazy’.¹³⁷ Currently the EU is taken up with issues of reforming the eurozone and consequences of Brexit, but this seeming willingness from Poland to cooperate with the EU could be perceived as an extension of an olive branch, and the EU should be inclined to take it. Arguably, because if they do not, it might come back to haunt them, as Poland, and more so, Hungary “[are] challeng[ing] the EU’s very basis as a community of democratic, law-abiding nations”¹³⁸

The two arguments for Poland’s want to stay as a member of the EU rests on Intergovernmentalism and Social Constructivism on an international scale. Tanil makes the argument that EU institution has a profound effect on representatives in a social sense and going beyond the inclusion of an internationalization of norms and rules.¹³⁹ This notion is asserting that the representatives from national governments will be ‘resocialized’ within the EU and in turn change their ideas, identifications and actions. In effect this would mean that the social learning within the EU will spread to the nation-state when the representatives return home after having changed their perceptions. However, the flaw in this theory is the possible misconceptions from the representative. As Tanil notes: “[one] need to distinguish between instances in which actors

¹³⁵ Michal Kranz. "60,000 People In Poland Held One Of The Largest Far-Right Marches In Europe Ever".

¹³⁶ Adam Bodnar. "Europe Can Save Poland From Darkness"

¹³⁷ Gideon Rachman. "Europe’S Biggest Test Will Come In Poland”.

¹³⁸ Gideon Rachman. "Europe’S Biggest Test Will Come In Poland”.

¹³⁹ Gamze Tanil, “The Social Constructivist Fusion Perspective: A Theory for Europeanization” Page 487.

merely adjust means and strategies to achieve their given goals and preferences, called *single-loop learning*, and situations that lead actors to change their goals and preferences, called *double-loop learning*.”¹⁴⁰ This internationalization of Social Constructivism seems unlikely when looking at the actions and sentiments displayed in the behavior of both Poland and the EU at large, rather than what might be more of a neofunctionalist spill-over of ideas from the top down, it seems more likely that the opposite is true. It seems more like Poland takes grievances to the EU and hope to reform the EU from wanting more inclusion, into an increased focus on the interests of nation-states instead of federalization.

It is more likely that Poland is adhering to the philosophy of Intergovernmentalism. The Polish government has not shown any desire whatsoever to leave the European Union, they have criticized their political handling of certain topics i.e. refugees and migrants, but never disagreed to the extent that they are willing to pay the price of an exit. Given the national history narrative that Law and Justice is pushing in their populist rhetoric, and their boasting of national culture and values, it is unlikely that they are willing to give much wiggle-room for reforms in the area of migrants, however, given that they are the biggest beneficiary of EU mandated funds and subsidies, Poland simply cannot afford to leave the EU, nor would they benefit from leaving the European market. They have shown signs of Intergovernmentalist tendencies in their willingness to bargain with the EU, most recently their efforts to appease the EU regarding their judicial reforms. Even though, as previously mentioned, there is an anti-EU rhetoric and attitude in the civil society in Poland – and other EU nations – that does not necessarily mean that there is a willingness to be excluded. Rather a call for a reformation of the structures within the EU, a change in the processes and policies with a greater focus on the sovereignty of the nation-state, rather than an increasing federalization with a limiting of states rights. Therefore, it does not seem like Poland is trying to undermine the EU as an institution per se, but rather they are kind of spearheading an effort from a group of nations within the European Union, to institute a reform of the overall philosophy of the ‘elite’ with a Neofunctionalist mindset of increasing federalization, to a larger focus on the different interests of different nations within the Union.

¹⁴⁰ Gamze Tanil, “The Social Constructivist Fusion Perspective: A Theory for Europeanization” Page 487.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the main reason behind the increasing support for far-right political parties in Poland – and the EU in general – is a mixture of populist rhetoric and Euroscepticism regarding key areas of EU policies i.e. economic policies and refugee and migrant policies. When it comes to Poland, the far-right politics have gained influence through populist rhetoric of a shared national history, identity and culture since the fall of communism, helped by a large influence of the catholic church. When Poland moved towards western values of neoliberal tendencies i.e. privatization and private property rights, there was an apparent problem with the question of restitution. Poland did not implement any legislative acts to ensure that the people who had their land nationalized, or stolen from them, would be compensated. This is inconsistent with the right-wing's praised conservative values of capitalism i.e. private property. Despite this the catholic church received more dispensation for lost – or nationalized – property than they were entitled to. This shows the political power and influence the catholic church has in Poland. Moreover, the catholic church has gained a lot of influence as a sort of 'moral guardian' in the ongoing culture war within Poland. Especially on issues relating to gay rights, gender equality and pro-life the catholic church is hugely influential in shaping the public opinion and is backed by the sitting far-right populist government on these matters. This vigorous cultural conservatism in Poland is a contributing factor to their Euroscepticism, and when Brexit happened, it cemented a peak in Euroscepticism. However, the view of the EU as an institution has gained more and more acceptance since then, perhaps because the countries where far-right Eurosceptical parties are in power have seen what the economic costs of secession are.

The notion that Poland is effectively trying to undermine the influence of the European Union is largely untrue. Overall, the EU has a decent approval rating in Poland as a whole, it is merely when it comes to state's rights and migrants and refugees that Poland is very skeptical of the EU. Therefore, Poland is adhering to the philosophy of Intergovernmentalism, in an attempt to ensure that the sovereignty of nation-states is not taken away. Poland simply cannot afford to secede from the European Union, since it needs the funds from the EU to stay afloat economically, given that Poland is the largest beneficiary from the EU funds. Therefore, Poland is not trying to undermine the EU as an institution per se, but given their populist rhetoric and cultural conservatism, they have adopted a strong support of state sovereignty, at least in terms of national culture, which they are keen to preserve. Yet, they have shown themselves to be

malleable when threatened by the EU with sanctions, and a potential future prospect of a cut in funding when the next economic funding negotiations are due. Therefore, it is safe to assume that Poland wants to reform the modus operandi of the EU to be more focused on states' rights and national culture instead of increasing federalization.

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