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MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE OR MANAGERIAL DOMINANCE? A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON EU GOVERNANCE IN THE POST-MAASTRICHT ERA

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Abstract

This study analyses the post-Maastricht era multi-level EU governance through the lens of the Theory of Managerial Revolution, put forward by James Burnham in "The Managerial Revolution" and improved by Samuel T. Francis among others. The study contrasts managerialism with the multi-level governance (MLG) theory, which gained prominence following the Maastricht Treaty. Focusing mainly on the supranational level in European governance and its interactions with other levels, it is argued that the emerging managerial class/elite has been rising to a dominant position. The study employs a detailed literature review, presents a qualitative and theoretical discussion and links these to empirical facts such as the growing mass and scale of EU governance and the surging share of environmental policy in its external governance. The study first proposes a detailed theoretical framework on managerialism, presenting its differences from the proximate concept of technocracy. Then, the framework is applied to post-Maastricht EU governance in tandem with MLG. Although MLG envisions decentralization through dispersion of authority across multiple levels, it is argued that the real result has been quite the opposite, as the growth of mass and scale of EU governance and reliance on managerial expertise to guide the complex and strategic policymaking environment in the post-Maastricht era is argued to have led to centralization of power in the hands of a unified managerial elite. This phenomenon is better explained by the managerialism theory rather than the MLG theory. The study also employs securitization only as a secondary analytical lens contributing to understanding managerial practices. The unique theoretical discussion and findings of the study are expected to initiate a wider discussion in the scholarship on EU governance and European integration. Managerialism is offered as an alternative of complementary theoretical lens to MLG. The study focuses mainly on proposing a novel theoretical model. It is aimed to form as a basis for future research focusing on deeper empirical testing.

Keywords: *Managerialism, Technocracy, Managerial elites, Multi-level governance, Maastricht treaty, European integration.*

ÇOK DÜZEYLİ YÖNETİŞİM Mİ, YÖNETSEL HAKİMİYET Mİ? MAASTRICHT SONRASI DÖNEMDE AB YÖNETİŞİMİNE YENİ BİR BAKIŞ

Öz

Bu çalışma, Maastricht sonrası dönemdeki çok düzeyli AB yönetişimini, James Burnham tarafından "The Managerial Revolution" adlı eserde ortaya atılan ve Samuel T. Francis ve diğerleri tarafından iyileştirilen YönetSEL Devrim Kuramı merceğinden analiz etmektedir. Çalışma, yönetselciliği Maastricht Antlaşması'nın ardından önem kazanan çok düzeyli yönetişim (MLG) teorisiyle karşılaştırmaktadır. Esas olarak Avrupa yönetişimindeki uluslararası düzeye ve bu düzeyin diğer düzeylerle etkileşimine odaklanarak, ortaya çıkan yönetselci sınıfın/eliten baskın bir konuma yükseldiği savunulmaktadır. Çalışmada detaylı bir literatür taraması yapılmış, nitel ve kuramsal bir tartışma sunulmuş ve bunlar AB yönetişiminin büyüyen boyut ve ölçeği ile dış yönetişiminde çevre politikasının artan payı gibi ampirik gerçeklerle ilişkilendirilmiştir. Çalışma ilk olarak yönetselcilik üzerine detaylı bir kuramsal çerçeve sunmakta ve teknokrazi kavramından farklarını ortaya koymaktadır. Daha sonra bu çerçeve, ÇDY ile birlikte Maastricht sonrası AB yönetişimine uygulanmaktadır. ÇDY, yetkinin birden fazla düzeye dağıtılması yoluyla adem-i merkezîyetçiliği öngörse de, Maastricht sonrası dönemde AB yönetişiminin kitleliliğinin ve ölçeğinin büyümesinin yanı sıra

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karmaşık ve stratejik politika oluşturma ortamına yön vermek için yönetsel uzmanlığa duyulan ihtiyacın, gücün birleşik bir yönetsel elitin elinde merkezileşmesine yol açması nedeniyle gerçek sonucun bunun tam tersi olduğu savunulmaktadır. Bu olgu, ÇDY teorisinden ziyade yönetselcilik teorisi ile daha iyi açıklanmaktadır. Çalışma ayrıca güvenikleştirmeyi yalnızca yönetsel uygulamaların anlaşılmasına katkıda bulunan ikincil bir analitik bakış açısı olarak kullanmaktadır. Çalışmanın özgün kuramsal tartışması ve bulgularının, AB yönetimi ve Avrupa bütünleşmesi üzerine yapılan çalışmalarda daha geniş bir tartışma başlatması beklenmektedir. Yöneticilik, ÇDY'ye alternatif ve tamamlayıcı bir teorik bakış açısı olarak önerilmektedir. Çalışma esas itibarıyla yeni bir kuramsal model önermeye odaklanmaktadır. Gelecekte yapılacak daha derin ampirik testlere yönelik araştırmalar için bir temel oluşturulması amaçlanmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: *Yöneticilik, Teknokrasi, Yönetici elitler, Çok düzeyli yönetim, Maastricht antlaşması, Avrupa bütünleşmesi.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The political system of the European Union (EU) is incredibly complex with a wide range of stakeholders involved. The Maastricht Treaty (1992) is a major turning point in the evolution of European integration. Following this treaty that marked the beginning of the European Union and integrated it into a pillar structure to be abolished in 2009 with the Treaty of Lisbon, the EU has increasingly expanded its competences and widened its scope of activity. The Maastricht Treaty and the subsequent developments have enabled the EU to achieve an unprecedented enlargement as well as a deepening of integration. The post-Maastricht era of European integration will constitute the main topic of interest in this article. This era is not only marked by subsequent enlargements enabling the participation of a greater number of Member States in European politics and governance but also the emergence of a greater number of actors involved in European governance, such as interest and lobbying groups, local and regional authorities, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that have become entrenched in it ever since. In this context, the concept of multi-level governance (MLG) or multi-layered governance has become prominent in the post-Maastricht era in understanding and analysing European integration.

First introduced by Gary Marks (1993) in his work entitled “Structural Policy and Multi-Level Governance in the EC”, published around the time of the Maastricht Accord, the framework has gained significant traction in EU scholarship and inspired studies including works of Hooghe and Marks (2001), Bache and Flinders (2004), Bache (2012), and Bache, Bartle, and Flinders (2022). The framework divides EU governance into three levels: the supranational level, which consists of the core institutions of the EU; the Member States level; and a third level consisting of subnational actors. After being laid down by its pioneers Marks and Hooghe, MLG has become a notable theory in understanding and analysing European integration, particularly in the post-Maastricht era. Although relatively weak in predictive power, it offers “a simplified way of understanding what European policy-making looked like on a day-to-day basis in (certain) policy areas” (Stephenson, 2013: 818). According to Schmitter and Kim (2005: 5), MLG is:

‘an arrangement for making binding decisions which engages a multiplicity of politically independent but otherwise interdependent actors – private and public – at different levels of territorial aggregation in more-or-less continuous negotiation/deliberation/implementation, and that does not assign exclusive policy competence or assert a stable hierarchy of political authority to any of these levels.’

This article will look at post-Maastricht EU governance through the lens of MLG and contrast MLG with the theory of ‘Managerial Revolution’. The study will employ a detailed literature review, present a qualitative and theoretical discussion, and link it to empirical facts where appropriate. The study will put the core premise of MLG, which foresees that decentralization is achieved as a result of the dispersion of authority across multiple levels of governance to test via the theory of Managerial Revolution. It will be studied whether the emergence and expansion of the managerial elite across multiple levels of governance lead to an opposite outcome by causing centralization of governance in the hands of the unified managerial elite. By doing so, the study aims to fill in the gap in the existing literature on MLG by questioning the widespread assumption that MLG results in decentralization. By clarifying how managerialism interacts with MLG, the scholarship on EU governance will be equipped with a novel outlook that can help elaborate further unique research in the field. In this regard, first, a conceptual and theoretical framework on managerialism must be elaborated to show which sense of the

term is used, how it differs from technocracy, and how it relates to post-Maastricht multi-level EU governance. Due to the limitations of scope, the article will focus only on certain elements of the supranational level in EU governance in the post-Maastricht era and, by analysing the developments, contrast MLG with managerialism.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ON MANAGERIALISM

From the turn of the 20th century onwards, the conceptualization of the emergence of a new social class of managers was introduced and gained prominence in the Western world, mainly the US. The works of James Burnham, in particular, “The Managerial Revolution: What is Happening in the World” (1941) conceptualized the emergence of a new social class called the managers and argued that managers are taking over power both in the perpetually expanding state institutions and in private companies through structures that increasingly become corporate. According to Burnham, the traditional (capitalist) class/elite was replaced or was being replaced by the new managerial one. Interestingly, the core ideas and foresight on such a shift towards managerialism can even be traced back to the 19th-century liberal thinker John Stuart Mill (2004: 199), who predicted:

‘The form of association, however, which if mankind continue to improve, must be expected in the end to predominate, is not that which can exist between a capitalist as chief, and work-people without a voice in the management, but the association of the labourers themselves on terms of equality, collectively owning the capital with which they carry on their operations, and working under managers elected and removable by themselves.’

This statement shows that, as early as the 19th century, Mill heralded the footsteps of the transition in society towards the emergence of management as the dominant element of organisation. Burnham also observes the ‘separation of ownership and control’, seen both in managerial corporations where the owner capitalist class has given up decision-making to corporate managers, and in the managerial state, in which the traditional political elite, elected democratic representatives, have given up their decision-making to the unelected bureaucratic managers.

Since managerialism displays similarities to technocracy and the two terms are often used interchangeably or as complements in various contexts, an important issue in building our conceptual framework is the confusion between technocracy and managerialism. Given that technocracy is a key focus in debates about the EU—some even labelling it a technocratic Union—it is essential to clarify the differences between the two concepts. Many scholarly works conflate managerialism with technocracy, which can obscure their distinct meanings. While the two are related, studies specifically addressing their differences and applying these distinctions in analysis are rare. By examining the definitions, implications, and literature surrounding both terms, we can identify crucial distinctions that will inform the discussion in this paper.

Technocracy’s roots can be traced back to Ancient Greece, specifically to the idea of the ‘philosopher king’ proposed by Plato (1943) in “The Republic”. Plato envisions an ideal society ruled by philosopher kings. These rulers are not chosen for their wealth, birthright, or popularity, but for their wisdom, knowledge, and virtue. Some of Plato’s ideas, particularly the concept of the philosopher king, inspired Enlightenment thinkers who further developed the notion of governance based on reason, knowledge, and expertise. However, while Plato focused primarily on virtue, the Enlightenment thinkers shifted their focus to reason. The transformation of the philosopher king into scientific experts took place during the so-called Scientific Revolution, characterized by the rapid advancements in natural sciences from the 16th century onwards, reaching its ultimate height with Isaac Newton. This resulted in an utmost trust in science and the new scientific method as first formulated by Francis Bacon and Rene Descartes (Tatar, 2019). This is why, in *New Atlantis* (2016), Francis Bacon talks about a political utopia in which the philosopher king is replaced by a scientist. In this regard, ‘positivists’ Henri de Saint-Simon and Auguste Comte can be given as the main thinkers who influenced technocratic thought (Hayek, 1941).

However, Enlightenment thinkers did not coin the term ‘technocracy’. It was introduced by American engineer William Henry Smyth (1919: 211-215). He defined technocracy as a system of governance based on technical expertise rather than political considerations, referring to it as a “national industrial government.” Smyth (1919: 214) envisioned a society where “the rule of the people [is] made effective through the agency of their servants,

the scientists and engineers.” During the Great Depression, the Technocracy Movement, led by Howard Scott and supported by thinkers like Thorstein Veblen, briefly gained prominence by trying to transform Smyth’s ideas into a political movement. However, the movement was short-lived.

As a more modern and nuanced definition, according to Fischer (1990: 18), technocracy, refers to the adaptation of expertise to the tasks of governance. It gives rise to a theory of governmental decision-making designed to promote technical solutions to political problems.” This definition links technocracy to the concept of governance and emphasizes experts. Contrary to Smyth who viewed technocrats as the servants to make the rule of the people more effective, here, expertise and technical solutions are more prone to predominate.

As a more recent example, in his work entitled “Technocracy in the European Union”, according to Radaelli, (1999: 11-12) technocracy is tied to contemporary societies and is mainly driven by economic considerations. His conceptualization views technocracy as a political regime and highlights the nexus between economic objectives and technocratic governance by placing the economy in a decisive position in technocracy. Additionally, Burnham (1941: 162) himself addresses the Technocracy movement that briefly gained popularity in the US following the Great Depression. He distinguishes between managerialism and technocracy as follows:

‘Technocracy’s failure to gain a wide response can be attributed in part to the too plain and open way in which it expresses the perspective of managerial society. In spite of its failure to distinguish between engineers and managers (not all engineers are managers many are mere hired hands and not all managers are engineers) yet the society about which the Technocrats write is quite obviously managerial society, and within it their “Technocrats” are quite obviously the managerial ruling class.’

The key aspect of his argument is the assertion that ‘technocrats’ function as a managerial ruling class. He differentiates between managers and technocrats by contrasting engineers with managers. Burnham (1941: 162) further contends that while managerialism is more adept than technocracy at forming a ruling ideology and states that technocracy “fails also in refusing to devote sufficient attention to the problem of power”.

To elaborate, William F. Enteman (1993) positions managerialism alongside other contemporary ruling ideologies such as capitalism, socialism, and democracy, asserting that Western industrial societies are primarily managerial rather than any of these three. He proceeds to discuss the fundamental principles of society from the perspective of managerialism (1993: 190-191): “Managerialism asserts that society is made up of numerous subunits. ... specifically denies that the fundamental nature of society is an aggregation of individuals. ... asserts that social decisions are made as a result of the interaction of the units identified as constituting the fundamental reality of society.”

He then summarizes the interactions of these subunits in managerial government.

‘By and large, the units do not interact. The management of units interact. ... Individuals attempt to have their impact through their memberships in groups. The groups have their impact through management. ... The government is a part of the managerial process. The management of different groups will attempt to influence the direction of government action.’

Enteman highlights key characteristics of managerialism as an ideology asserting that society consists of sub-units reliant on their management to influence government direction. In fact, he describes a structure that echoes core tenets of MLG, emphasizing the interactions among multiple units seeking to impact government decisions. However, he asserts that management holds the primary power and influence within each group, leading to a dominant managerial class.¹ In contrast, MLG envisions a pluralist and non-hierarchical system, allowing for open participation from all groups without any unit holding a dominant position.

Although Burnham’s original theory highlighted important aspects of the evolution of post-WW2 Western society, it also had glaring limitations. In this regard, there have been various attempts to refine, expand, or

¹ Since Burnham was still under the impact of Marxist methodology and dialectic when he put forward “the Theory of Managerial Revolution” in 1941, he used the term ‘class’. However, in the Machiavellians: The Defenders of Freedom (1943) he would adopt a realist political theory inspired by the four elite theorists that he dubbed ‘The Machiavellians’. After this point, the managers were referred to as an ‘elite’.

challenge Burnham's theory, which became necessary over time. The most significant shortcoming was his prediction of a hard transition to a managerial society, illustrated by the Soviet Union, which he characterized as an advanced managerial society, and Nazi Germany, which he deemed a fairly advanced managerial society. Burnham highlighted power dynamics, class struggle, and ambitions of the emerging managerial ruling class, predicting their ascent to absolute power through complete control of the means of production. A quick look at the evolution of Western societies reveals that while the emerging managerial class is significant and has gained influence in political, economic, and social spheres—sometimes undermining political representation and legitimacy—traditional forms of representation within democracy and segments of the conventional political and economic elite have persisted. Furthermore, contrary to Burnham's prediction, Nazi Germany not only lost the war but also faced total defeat and collapse, while the Soviet Union would eventually also collapse.

Burnham himself also updated his own model by introducing elite theory (a sociological model) to his initial heavily materialist treatise. In "The Machiavellians: Defenders of Freedom" (1943), he links managerialism to the ideas of notable elite theorists such as Gaetano Mosca, Vilfredo Pareto, and Robert Michels, and managers are portrayed as an "elite" instead of a "social class". Many authors who studied managerialism after Burnham have integrated elite theory into their works, including Gottfried (2001), Francis (2016), and Parvini (2022).

Among the authors who addressed the shortcomings of Burnham and introduced an updated, more sophisticated version of the theory of managerial revolution, Samuel T. Francis comes to the fore with his seminal contribution, "The Leviathan and its Enemies". He argues:

'In the "soft" managerial regimes of the United States and Western Europe, the existence of political democracy, a consumer-driven capitalist economy, and a mass culture demands forms of elite domination through manipulative means. In the "hard" managerial regimes, such as those of the National Socialists and the Soviet Communist Party, the absence of mass participation at the time managerial elites began to emerge enabled and perhaps required the new elites to rely on coercive means of domination. There are obvious differences between the soft and hard models, but the underlying similarity—which arises from a common reliance on mass bureaucratic organisations, the application of technology to social and political arrangements, and an elite that acquires power and rewards from bureaucracy and technology—cannot be ignored or denied.' (Francis, 2016: 11).

Francis provides an improved version of Burnham's theory better suited to recent developments in Western societies. First, unlike Burnham, who focuses on means of production and offers limited insight into the emerging managerial class in state bureaucracy, Francis also underlines the importance of the mass (managerial) state. He notably emphasized the "mass and scale" of managerial societies as an essential component of the managerial revolution. According to him, since management is primarily concerned with managing mass organisations², their growth and expansion increase the power of the managerial elite. Moreover, the growth of mass organisations is a self-sustaining process as the managerial elite works on promoting it. The managerial elite tends to institutionalize and bureaucratize their dominance by setting up permanent structures to routinize their rule. While his work too has some parallels with the literature on technocracy, and he emphasizes the role of technical skills in managerialism, he also clarifies why he prefers to call this ruling class "managerial" rather than "technocratic", which will illuminate the central argument of this article (Francis, 2016: 93-94):

First, similar to Burnham, he highlights that the term "technocracy" implies a linkage to physical science and engineering, which makes it less suitable for explaining the societies in question compared to management, which also encompasses the social and organisational sciences. Second, he suggests an important distinction by stating that technical skills do not lead to power, but rather, power comes from "the operation and direction of mass organisations in state, economy and culture" (Francis, 2016: 93). Therefore, the key to managerial dominance lies in the revolution of mass and scale. From this, it can be inferred that a technocratic structure would become

² When writing about "mass organizations" Francis (2016: 3) refers to organisations that have the following characteristics: "in government, in the form of bureaucratized mass states, whether constitutional or totalitarian; in the economy, in the form of mass corporations, public agencies, and unions that direct and regulate production and consumption; in society, in the form of mass churches and religious movements, mass universities and educational institutions, mass media, and mass associations that contain and discipline the population." He continues by adding that "The rearrangement of human societies within and under mass organizations was necessary to contain, discipline, and provide services for the new mass populations and the exponential growth of social interaction that resulted from population increases" (Francis, 2016: 4).

managerial and also has to become managerial only when it reaches a certain degree of mass and scale (the more mass and scale, the more managerial it gets, without being subject to a certain quantitative threshold). It should be noted that the process is self-serving in that the emergent managerial class relying on the increased mass and scale also works to further increase it. Finally, Francis also claims that the scholarship on technocracy often draws upon different aspects of managerial society and the managerial elite. Within this framework, Francis (2016: 10) divides the skills required to direct mass organisations into three categories, which are “purely technical or scientific skills”, “verbal and communicational skills”, and “administrative skills”.

In summary, according to Francis, managerialism is a broader term that encompasses a larger size of governance and an elite including but not limited to technocracy, and it relies on mass organisations and their operation and control. A mass organisation exhibits a higher proclivity for managerialism as it enlarges, encompassing an ever-greater number of sectors in a given society, ranging from economic to political and social spheres. Since such a society becomes extremely large and complex, it requires an outstanding amount of technicality to be governed, which shifts power into the hands of an elite that is specially trained in the above-elaborated managerial skills. Technocracy mainly focuses on technical skills or economic objectives, as Radaelli suggests; thus, it operates effectively within limited fields. In contrast, the managerial elite draws strength from all segments of mass society, transcending sectoral boundaries by managing various mass organizations and their subunits.

A highly relevant concept introduced by pluralist thinker Suzanne Keller, who studied the rise of the managerial elite, is “strategic elites.” Highlighting the strategic role of managerial elites, Keller (1991: 65) summarizes the social processes that contribute to their proliferation as follows:

- “The growth of population
- The growth of occupational specialization
- The growth of formal organization, or bureaucracy
- The growth of moral diversity.”

She states (Keller, 1991: 71-72):

‘The growth of size and complexity make spontaneity inadvisable. There is a need for planning, for formalized communication, and for coordination of diverse activities in separated institutional spheres. Reliance on particularly striking, devoted, and brilliant leaders is not enough—they may emerge too late or not at all. Positions of leadership must be established in advance of acute need, and individuals must be preselected to fill them.’

Keller (1991: 20) defines strategic elites as “those whose judgments, decisions, and actions have important and determinable consequences for many members of society.” In other words, strategic elites are those who set a given society’s strategy as their name suggests. She therefore distinguishes them from what she calls ‘segmental elites’, a term that covers “Beauty queens, criminal masterminds, champion bridge players, and master chefs all hold top rank in certain pyramids of talent or power, but not all are equally significant in the life of society” (Keller, 1991: 20). The strategic elites thesis therefore makes a similar point to managerialism in its emphasis on planning, specialization, and the growth of bureaucracy and defines a similar elite. What is new, however, is the accent placed on the term ‘strategic’. Emphasizing the strategic nature of the managerial elite helps highlight how their roles extend beyond technical problem-solving. Managerial elites are concerned with aligning policy outcomes to broader strategic goals, ensuring policy coherence, and managing stakeholder relations across multiple levels, further amplified by the growing mass and scale of organisations.

Within this framework, the next section will analyse mainly the supranational layer of post-Maastricht European governance and aim to show the emergence of managerialism by contrasting MLG and managerialism. The main reason for such a phenomenon will be shown as the unprecedented enlargement and deepening of European integration, which enabled the EU to reach the mass and scale conducive to managerialism compared to earlier stages of integration. Second, the rise of MLG enabling participation of a growing number of stakeholders in the system will be shown as a contributor to managerialism and indeed a centralizing factor instead of a

decentralizing one, leading to the proliferation of mass organisations, subunits, and complex interactions at multiple levels of governance. Managerialism contrasts with the core assumption of MLG, which envisions a decentralized and non-hierarchical system and dispersion of power with the involvement of independent yet interdependent stakeholders. The study's first unique contribution will be the fact that it applies the framework of managerialism to MLG. While both frameworks count a vast number of studies and scholarship, no scholar in the MLG scholarship has been detected to have conducted a study that incorporates the theory of managerial revolution. On the other hand, while the aforementioned authors who built upon Burnham's work have made comments about Europe, these have not dealt specifically with MLG to present such a study. The second unique contribution of the study is the debate on managerialism and technocracy presented in this chapter. The study effectively distinguished between these two concepts and presented an alternative to the widely used term technocracy in works touching upon the EU. Since the study's argument resides on a dual framework, the study identifies three main claims for its argument that put managerialism in contrast with MLG:

- Growth in mass and scale of European governance conducive to managerial dominance at the expense of different stakeholders in a similar way to the separation of ownership and control in mass corporations, where legal stockholders are dominated by managers,
- Reliance on managerial practices and strategic projects in policymaking that serve managerial purposes rather than representing various politically independent but interdependent actors,
- Centralization of power in the hands of a unified managerial class/elite rather than the decentralization of power through the dispersion of authority across multiple levels among various stakeholders as assumed by MLG.

In this regard, the following section will focus mainly on the supranational core of the EU and aim to show that this level of governance and its interactions with other levels have increasingly shifted towards managerialism.

3. SUPRANATIONAL LEVEL IN MULTI-LEVEL EU GOVERNANCE IN THE POST-MAASTRICHT ERA AND THE EMERGENCE OF MANAGERIALISM

The Maastricht Treaty, effective November 1, 1993, established the European Union (EU) and introduced a pillar structure that included the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and Justice and Home Affairs (JHA). The Single European Act (SEA) also included a title for environmental policy, which was made a European policy with the Maastricht Treaty. The EMU led to a unified currency (Euro) and the establishment of the ECB. Apart from the Single Market and the furthering of economic integration, which had resided at the core of the European project since its inception, this section delves into the sectoral enlargement of EU action and the growing bureaucratization linked to it, which both enabled the supranational core of the EU to reach an unprecedented mass and scale and, due to the strategic nature of new areas of Union action and the growing diversity of the stakeholders involved, led to a looming tendency for managerial leadership. This section focuses on cohesion policy and the EU's external action as regards the evolution of CFSP within the broadened security agenda and investigates how these may have contributed to the managerialization of the EU.

3.1. EU's Cohesion Policy and Managerialism

The Cohesion Policy and Structural Funds formed the inspiration for Marks' initial work pioneering MLG. As set out in the introduction, one of the main tenets of the theory is that authority is dispersed across multiple levels of governance, leading to decentralization. For instance, Hooghe et al. (2020) emphasize the importance of decentralization and dispersion of authority across multiple levels in MLG. In this regard, however, decentralization is taken as dispersion of authority *within* Member States and its failure is attributed to their reluctance and/or resistance to MLG schemes as exemplified by Papageorgiou and Verney (1992), focusing on the Greek case. In a similar fashion, Bache et al. (2010) examine the impact of cohesion policy and related pre-accession aid on the development of MLG by focusing on cases of Greece, Slovenia, Croatia, and Macedonia, and simply measure MLG's success in decentralizing authority *within* these particular states. Authors miss the question of whether or not decentralization and dispersion of authority result from MLG when the full mass and scale of EU governance is considered. Taking a look at the matter through the lens of managerialism can reveal drastically different findings.

The innovation of Cohesion Policy and Structural Funds brought by Maastricht also resonates with our framework on managerialism. As Leonardi (2005: 13) suggests, ““cohesion” represents one of the fundamental elements that permit the expansion and consolidation of the EU into a wider and deeper organization.” As the main objective of the Cohesion Policy is to reduce regional disparities and promote territorial cohesion within the EU, its design and implementation reflect an inherently strategic endeavour. The European Commission is the “deviser of programmes, in partnership with local and regional authorities or sectoral stakeholders and agencies” (Wallace, 2005: 83). This role goes beyond mere policy oversight, positioning the Commission as a strategic manager that sets the guiding principles and priorities for Cohesion Policy while also ensuring that implementation aligns with broader EU objectives (Dąbrowski, 2014). It should be noted that the significance of cohesion policy has grown proportionately to the growing mass and scale of the EU. Cohesion policy has gained significance, first with the integration of Spain and Portugal 1986, then following the 1995 enlargement of Austria, Sweden, and Finland, and the notable 2004 “Big Bang” enlargement, which integrated 10 new Member States. The inclusion of Central and Eastern European States, marked by asymmetry and divergence with older members, has intensified the challenges of achieving cohesion. Furthermore, the European Commission’s influence grew with the introduction of the Cohesion Policy in 1988 and the vital role of Structural Funds in addressing regional disparities. Although Member States are the main contributors to these funds, they rely on the Commission’s expertise and impartiality, leading to a “separation of ownership and control” in fund redistribution.

Cohesion policy serves not only as an instrument for regional development and reducing disparities but also exemplifies complex interactions between various governance levels, akin to subunit dynamics. The driving force behind these interactions is the partnership principle, rooted in subsidiarity. The Commission, acting as the agent of Member States, sets overarching goals tied to the EU’s broader objectives and employs funds to guide and collaborate with national and subnational authorities. This process mirrors how strategic managers coordinate diverse divisions within mass organizations, with local actors, such as municipalities and civil society organizations, executing specific projects. Ferry and McMaster (2013) analysed the interactions between cohesion policy and national regional policy systems involving intermediate units within the framework of MLG with particular emphasis on Central and Eastern Europe, and found that the interactions are not only complex and strategic but also differ from one country to another. These interactions are not merely technical but involve strategic negotiation and adaptation, as domestic authorities enjoy autonomy in implementation, yet the Commission plays a major role in oversight and monitoring to ensure compliance with objectives (Mendez, 2011: 524), which include objectives related to competition, green economy, connectivity, social inclusion, and sustainable development (European Commission, 2024). According to Allen (2005: 214), “The European Commission has also sought to exploit the implementation of structural fund spending in order to further the cause of multi-level governance in the EU by encouraging the participation of regional and local government and representatives of civil society.”

In addition, the inherent complexity, technical requirements, growing mass and scale, and fierce competition among the lower-level stakeholders naturally lead to a booming need for expertise and effective management within such organisations. The Multiannual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 published by the Commission (2024) states “CSOs’ participation in dialogue and policymaking is key in bringing expertise from the ground and devising policies that meet people’s needs, and thus vital to fulfil the central commitment of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind.” (European Commission, 2024: 2). As can be seen, CSOs are expected to bring in expertise, in other words, managerial skills, in line with the commitment to a strategic long-term objective. Nakada (2004: 15) sheds light on the corporatist tendencies of the post-Maastricht surge of partnership between EU institutions and lower-level stakeholders and argues that, in the EU, “Civil society is regarded as an assemblage of organizations. Such organizations will be involved in policy processes in an institutionalized way for the sake of policy effectiveness and legitimacy.” His observation also resonates with Caroline Boin’s (2010) observations when she called the CSOs “the friends of the EU”, stating the EU is using taxpayers’ money to finance NGOs that would lobby for environmental policies. Similarly, regarding CSOs, the Economic and Social Committee (EESC, 1999), “the voice of organised civil society in Europe”, states “only those with a certain basic organisational machinery and which are qualitatively and quantitatively representative of their particular sector can be expected to make a positive contribution to European integration.” The emphasis is placed on the CSOs’ organisational excellency, relevance

in their respective sectors, and ability to positively contribute to strategic goals of European integration rather than representing the civil society as such.

This approach inevitably leads to managerial dominance at the lower levels of governance since only the organisations meeting these requirements would be eligible for support and funding. Indeed, it is well-known that CSOs operating within the EU often hire eurocrats who possess expertise and experience in EU affairs for both the top management and officer roles. Members of the top management in NGOs may include individuals with eurocrat portfolios, meaning they are part of the managerial elite. For example, the executive director of European Citizen Action Service (ECAS), a prominent European NGO that receives funding from the EU is a senior EU professional with plenty of experience in management roles in the NGO sector and has the ability to manage a wide range of projects and has extensive knowledge in areas such as EU Funding Rules and Procedures and EU Structural and Cohesion Policy among others (ECAS, 2024). Therefore, it can be observed that the EU's Cohesion Policy in the post-Maastricht era displays the characteristics of managerialism as presented by the argument and main claims of this study, namely because:

- It exhibits separation of ownership and control (control shifts to the managerial elite at the expense of owners of each particular level of governance i.e., civil society or Member State governments) linked to an increase in mass and scale conducive to managerial dominance,
- It relies on broader strategy-driven managerial projects that serve managerial objectives rather than representing other stakeholders,
- Although dispersed across multiple levels, due to reliance on managerial skills, the power and authority are ultimately centralized in the hands of a unified managerial elite dispersed across multiple levels, capable of effectively controlling and implementing the Union's agenda.³

3.2. Post-Maastricht EU External Action and Managerialism: CFSP and Beyond

The beginning of European integration was dominated by economic and social objectives of 'low politics'. The 'high politics' of foreign policy, security, and defence was left to individual member states and cooperation relied on structures outside the EC framework, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Western European Union (WEU). The first attempt to move the EC towards a coordinating role in high political matters such as foreign policy was initiated with European Political Cooperation (EPC). Although EPC can be seen as a precursor to the CFSP, it remained, as Ifestos (1987: 49) described, a "procedure rather than an institutional structure" due to its purely intergovernmental nature and lack of formal treaty basis. CFSP, on the other hand, brought a formalized and institutional structure based on the treaties although remaining intergovernmental and largely making decisions under the consensus-based Union method (Smith, 2004; Keukeleire and MacNaughtan, 2008). Although the intergovernmental Council of Ministers remains the main body governing the EU's foreign policy, the Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER) has created a principal-agent situation (Smith 2004: 224) by serving as an agent that prepares the work of the Council. While MLG is relatively less prominent in CFSP compared to other post-Maastricht policy areas because of its intergovernmental nature, Smith (2004: 746-747) suggests that MLG is enhanced in CFSP because of elite socialization at the individual level and adaptation of national bureaucracies to CFSP requirements at the organizational level.

In addition, in both Maastricht and the following Treaties, the EU saw both rapid growth in its institutional coordinating functions, and the creation of strategic posts such as the office of High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (HR) with the Amsterdam Treaty and the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS) with the Lisbon Treaty. The High Representative / Vice President (HR/VP) (named after Lisbon) autonomy was improved with each treaty amendment, and s/he gained the right to make proposals along with the MS with the Treaty of Lisbon. The HR/VP chairs the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) and the EEAS, which has a core staff in Brussels and over 140 EU delegations worldwide, each contributing to the fulfilment of strategic objectives while taking an active role in the administration. Further, Vanhoonacker and Pomorska (2013) analyse how the HR and EEAS make efforts to build an agenda-setting role. The main resource of the

³ A further analysis of this phenomenon is possible by adapting the "Jouvenellian model", sourced in the thought of 20th-century French political scientist Bertrand de Jouvenel and further conceptualized by (Didin 2024), but this is beyond the scope of this study and may be studied in a later work.

CFSP system that helps it to take on a leadership role is its ability to “manage, mediate and regulate the differing (sometimes sharply) and competing (sometimes significantly) interests of EU member states” (Maurer and Wright, 2021: 389), in other words, unite the MS around a common and unified agenda reminiscent of a CEO of a large corporation who manages the divergent interests and preferences of stockholders. The CFSP system has led to the establishment of institutions, posts, and a bureaucratic structure with a strategic focus at the supranational level, allowing it to manage a diverse mass organisation. Although this structure is still the ‘property’ of member states (with major players like France and Germany taking a leading role), and the strategic direction is set by the European Council, there is a growing reliance on managerial leadership to maintain coherence in EU foreign policy. This creates a dynamic conducive to the separation of ownership and control, where member states retain autonomy but increasingly depend on supranational managers and experts to handle issues at the EU level and mobilize common resources, similar to a corporation where stakeholders rely on executives to manage common resources strategically.

Although these developments are certainly relevant to our framework as they show corporatist tendencies in CFSP, it can be claimed that, due to the remaining tight grip of Member States, when foreign and security policy is viewed from the traditional point of view, the EU’s external action only partly aligns with our dual framework contrasting MLG with managerialism and our main argument. However, from the 1990s onwards, specifically in the post-Cold War era coinciding with the post-Maastricht era, the traditional security approach has increasingly given way to a widened security approach encompassing different sectors of security in addition to the state-led traditional sectors of security that predominantly focus on military security. Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde (1998) defined five sectors of security including environmental, economic, societal, and political sectors of security in addition to the traditional military security. Waever (1995) notably coined the term securitization, which has been instrumental in broadening the concept of security in international relations. Securitization is the process in which state actors frame certain issues as existential threats, redefining them as security matters, thereby justifying extraordinary measures and the suspension of normal political rules to address them. Simultaneously, in the EU, issues such as energy and climate change have been increasingly securitized in the post-Maastricht era (Christou, 2021). For example, the EEAS (2022) views “Climate change and environmental degradation” as “an existential threat to Europe and the world.” This fits into the explanation of Francis (2016: 45) of how a managerial government tends to portray problems in a wider framework and justify the employment of managerial measures and solutions as a response, which in turn leads to the growth in the mass and scale of managerial organisations. This tendency, observed mainly by the Copenhagen School, has arguably had an impact on the EU’s approach to security, which has experienced a sectoral enlargement in favour of managerial control in EU governance.

In addition, Lavenex (2004) analyses EU external governance according to three ‘soft security’ issues of justice and home affairs, environmental and energy policy. She examines the responsibilities acquired by EU institutions in governing these fields and states that (2004: 681) “‘soft security’ risks constitute the background of the enlarged EU’s enhanced engagement to the east and to the south.” and “form the broader geostrategic background of recent initiatives on ‘wider Europe.’” It can be observed that the introduction of instruments of ‘soft security’ to the external governance agenda of the enlarged EU has equipped the managerial elite with an expansive instrument linked to both internal and external governance. Keukeleire and Delreux (2014: 222-241) view environment, climate, and energy policies as among “the external dimension of internal policies”. As a result, the external governance of the EU is increasingly defined around the objectives related to promoting the Union agenda with a growing emphasis on its environmental policy and norms. Damro (2012: 55) analysed how the two post-Lisbon institutions (HR/VP and EEAS) contribute to the ‘environmental integration’ in the EU’s external governance. Since we have already seen the importance of environmental objectives in the previous chapter on cohesion policy and their links to our dual framework on managerialism and MLG, these developments can be viewed as a managerial spillover to external governance. Moreover, unlike the traditional sectors of security covered by the CFSP which usually require unanimity, environmental policy embodying the environmental sector of security makes decisions under the Community method. Therefore, the increasing share of environmental policy in the EU’s external governance resulting from the securitization of this policy area equips the supranational managerial elite with significant power in a domain seemingly dominated by the Member States.

In parallel with these, since its inception into the Community agenda with the Single European Act (SEA) in 1987, environmental policy has grown steadily both in complexity and resources. Started with modest funding mobilized through the Structural Funds, and continued with the subsequent programmes, the first of which had a budget of €400 million (CINEA, 2024), currently, ‘the fight against climate change’ has a 30% share within the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework, i.e., €587 billion in total (European Commission, 2021). In this regard, the European Green Deal (EGD) is arguably a prime example of managerialism in the context of environmental security as it is an inherently scientific and strategic project. The EGD “underlines the need for a holistic and cross-sectoral approach” (European Council, 2024), focuses on overarching aims to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050, and is governed through a complex system that integrates strategic planning, multi-level and multi-sectoral coordination, as well as stakeholder engagement, with the Commission playing a major managerial role. In other words, it is the ‘solution’ of the managerial elite to the ‘urgent’ ‘problem’.

Moreover, the EU’s climate action not only has increased its share in the budget and become engaged in distant objectives but also has increasingly taken a permanent and institutionalized form, exemplified by the establishment of agencies such as the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA).⁴ This tendency reflects Francis’ (2016: 339) observation that “once the emerging elite has established its power, however, it will seek to institutionalize its dominance in more permanent and stable forms.” In this sense, the EU, as an institutional actor, has embedded climate considerations within its internal and external governance framework to ensure the continuation and stabilization of these policies. Since the Fit for 55 package within the EGD “underpins the EU’s position as leading the way in the global fight against climate change”, (European Council, 2024) both allocating immense resources and setting distant goals are justified in a manner that boosts the mass and scale of managerial structures. The securitization of the environment links to our main argument as it shows that, although MLG remains relatively weaker in CFSP, it is brought to the broader security agenda of the EU. This phenomenon not only enhances the mass and scale of external governance but also incorporates a more suitable policy area for strategic management and the involvement of a larger number of stakeholders, thereby linking it more firmly to our argument and main claims.

4. CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

This study offers a novel outlook on the scholarship of EU governance by constructing a unique analytical framework on based on managerialism theories and integrating it into and contrasting it with the established Multi-Level Governance framework. It has been argued that, in the post-Maastricht era, the governance of the EU has shifted towards managerialism, defined as a mode of governance that goes beyond the traditional notion of technocracy.

The main argument is supported by several characteristics of managerialism, including the separation of ownership and control, the revolution in the mass and scale of EU governance, and the rise of complex, multi-actor interactions. These features, combined with the sectoral enlargement of the Union beyond its initial economic mandate to encompass cohesion policy as an instrument to make strategic distribution and foreign policy, which also enlarges to include environment and climate through securitization, illustrate a governance structure that has moved away from a purely economic and technocratic orientation to a more complex, multi-sectoral managerial

⁴ A technocratic project, on the other hand, such as building a dam, operates with a clear scope: a specific budget, a defined schedule, and a concrete endpoint when the objective is to be achieved. In contrast, the European Green Deal (EGD) embodies a managerial approach, characterized by a series of distant objectives—first the 2030 Agenda, followed by climate neutrality by 2050. Rather than detailing specific projects, the EGD’s budgetary frameworks provide broad funding tied to priorities without specifying the particular initiatives and projects. As set out in the framework of the study, the managerial project encompasses technocratic projects such as innovation and developing clean energy sources, yet transcends it. This open-ended approach can equip the managerial elite with elite substantial leverage, granting them the ability to shape projects as they see fit, manage stakeholder relationships, and maintain control over the long-term agenda by institutionalizing the programme. Without clear end goals, there are no criteria based on which they can “fail”, thus they can operate with little accountability. In doing so, they ensure they can build a permanent structure to manage as their name suggests. Another example of such a phenomenon can be European integration itself, which lacks a concrete end-goal. The extent of deepening remains unclear and debated and the priorities of the European project change over time by adapting to internal and external circumstances. The scope of enlargement is also uncertain, as it’s ambiguous and often debated/updated where the geographical boundaries of Europe lie, in other words, how many member states the EU could possibly admit in its final form. This indefinite trajectory provides further opportunity for managerial elites to expand their influence, much like in the EGD, by shaping the evolution of the project without the constraints of a finite objective.

polity. Both the deepening of integration and the unprecedented enlargement of the EU to admit new Member States has been observed to play a major role in this transformation by directly affecting the mass and scale of EU governance. Furthermore, the institutionalized and bureaucratized supranational structures in the post-Maastricht era have been observed to have led to a situation of separation of ownership and control. As agents of the Member States, they have increased their influence not only by bringing the necessary expertise and managerial coordination skills, but also by building effective interactions and cooperations with other, in some cases lower-level actors operating within the multi-level governance system. The proliferation of these actors in MLG thanks to the increasing mass and scale of governance has played a facilitating role in this process. As a result, it is argued that, contrary to the premises of MLG, the emergent managerial elite leads to centralization.

Ultimately, this study aspires to stimulate a wider discussion in the literature on European governance, proposing managerialism as a key concept that reflects the evolution of the EU beyond traditional integration theories to either fill in their gaps or broaden and enrich their analytical perspective. By contrasting managerialism with MLG, the study offers a nuanced perspective on how the EU's governance structure has evolved, effectively bridging the gap between theoretical models and empirical developments. In this regard, building a solid understanding of the role of managerialism in the EU's multi-level governance framework or other theoretical frameworks will be crucial for future academic inquiries and policy debates.

Due to limitations of scope, only the selected aspects of the supranational level in the MLG of the EU are treated. Further research is required to provide a more detailed discussion about both the selected aspects and other elements of the supranational level of EU governance. Furthermore, while the introduced research framework has proven compatible with developments in the post-Maastricht era and adaptable to the MLG framework, it requires empirical testing across different policy sectors and levels of governance to validate its broader applicability. This could include detailed case studies on how managerialism influences policy implementation in areas such as energy, digital policy, and environmental regulation, as well as a detailed study of Justice and Home Affairs (JHA). Discourse analysis can also be useful in showing the communication skills and strategies of the emergent managerial elite within the EU to secure their position. In addition, securitization and widening of security have been employed as a minor and secondary approach relevant only to some parts of this study, portrayed only as a facilitating factor to sectoral enlargement and the emergence of managerial structures and practices rather than a part of the full research framework. However, the theory of securitization and its literature can be further adapted to managerialism and constitute the main theoretical framework of further studies with a greater focus on relevant issues. Managerialism can also be applied to and examined in tandem with other theories in the EU studies literature such as neo-functionalism, liberal intergovernmentalism, or federalism.

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3. This article was screened for potential plagiarism using a plagiarism screening program (Bu çalışma, intihal tarama programı kullanılarak intihal taramasından geçirilmiştir).

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