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Narratives in European Union Enlargement

- The impact of experience on continuity and change

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Abstract

Enlargement has become a current subject as attention has been brought to its process and direction. The aim of this thesis is to study the narrative within enlargement in the European Union. The primary material consists of fifteen transcribed speeches, held by Commissioners for Enlargement and Presidents of the European Commission during the period 2001-2020. The study takes into account how the narrative within and the approach to enlargement has changed during this period. The research questions that guides the text are: To what extent and why has the narrative and approach to enlargement been affected by previous enlargement rounds? How can the narrative and approach to enlargement be understood based on Discursive Institutionalism? The method applied is a Narrative Analysis, derived from the version by William Labov and Joshua Waletzky and it has been supplemented with two own additional functions, with inspiration from the theoretical framework. One function determines the type of idea visible in the speeches, while the other function places the speeches within a discourse. The structure of the utilized Narrative Analysis includes the following eight functions: abstract, orientation, complication, evaluation, resolution, coda, ideas and discourse.

Discursive Institutionalism by Vivien A. Schmidt formulates the theoretical framework for the thesis and it categorizes different types of ideas as policies, programs or philosophies. Subsequently, ideas can be understood as cognitive and normative. Ideas are consequently placed within a discourse that is coordinative or communicative. Accordingly, the main aspects of the theory constitute the structure for the analysis. Furthermore, the results of the study indicate that trends have developed over time concerning the content of the narrative on and how it is communicated. The conclusions indicate that the experience of previous enlargement rounds has affected the narrative and the approach, since the fundamentals remain important in the narrative while the approach is adjusted. Lastly, the narrative and approach to enlargement can be understood based on Discursive Institutionalism in accordance with the four fundamental assumptions of the theory.

Key words: The European Union, Enlargement, Narrative, Approach, Experience, The European Commission, Speeches, Discursive Institutionalism, Narrative Analysis.

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1 Introduction

The European Union has expanded both numerically and geographically through several enlargement rounds. The accession by new Member States to the EU is considered to be successful in terms of European integration because of the contributing stability and the attractiveness of a membership, despite the extensiveness of the process and its entailed requirements. Enlargement can be understood both as a process and a policy. Gradual adaptation by the prospective member states in order to fulfil the membership criteria represents the process, while the policy refers to the goals and principles that defines the aim of the absorption of the new members. There have been five occasions in which accession processes have taken place and each accession has brought different challenges for the European Union as a whole and for its members.¹

Enlargement is generally perceived as one of the most successful foreign policies, however, there are difficult aspects and criticism has been directed towards the strategy. First, there is a low support for enlargement and there is a supposed enlargement fatigue as a result of previous rounds of enlargement. Second, the progress in candidate countries tends to be perceived as inadequate. Third, Member States have gained an increased influence in enlargement, which has resulted in a tighter control of the process. Fourth, enlargement has been affected by the rise of nationalism and populism, leading to that the commitment to proceed is less prioritized.² In terms of criticism towards earlier enlargement rounds, the 2004 enlargement is perceived as a success although its scope has been described as difficult in terms of adaptation.³ Consequently, the 2007 enlargement was characterized by the introduction of benchmarks due to issues with crime and corruption in Bulgaria and Romania.⁴

¹ Juncos, Ana E. and Pérez-Solórzano Borragán, Nieves. "Enlargement." In *European Union Politics*, edited by Michelle Cini and Nieves Pérez-Solórzano Borragán, 227-240. 5th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. p.228.

² Ibid. p.237-238.

³ Vucheva, Elitsa. "EU still 'digesting' 2004 enlargement five years on." *EUobserver*. 1 May 2009. <https://euobserver-com.ludwig.lub.lu.se/enlargement/28049> (Retrieved 2020-03-24).

⁴ Kubosova, Lucia. "Brussels under fire for being too soft on Bulgaria and Romania." *EUobserver*. 27 Apr. 2007. <https://euobserver-com.ludwig.lub.lu.se/enlargement/23952> (Retrieved 2020-03-24).

The European Commission has recommended that the EU should start opening talks with Albania and North Macedonia. During a Council meeting in Luxembourg in October 2019, the EU ministers gathered to consider this topic. A majority of the EU countries were in favour of enlargement but France opposed the suggestion of moving forward on talks with both countries and stressed the need of reforming the accession process.⁵ Shortly after the Council meeting, France presented a proposal on how the rules should be modified for countries striving to join the European Union. A “non-paper” was shared with the EU countries with the aim of altering the current accession process.⁶ The French proposal was based on four principles: gradual association, stringent conditions, tangible benefits and reversibility.⁷ Consequently, the proposal suggested a structure of seven stages in the accession process, underlining a gradual enlargement for prospective Member States.⁸

In November 2019, six EU Member States articulated support for the French proposal on reforming the accession process in a letter that was sent to Jean-Claude Juncker, the President of the European Commission at that time. The letter was signed by Foreign and European affairs ministers of Austria, the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovak Republic, Italy and Slovenia. Deficiencies in the accession process were especially stressed in the letter and a deadline was proposed for March 2020 to open negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania. Accordingly, the signatories of the letter requested for the Commission to present proposals for enhancing the effectiveness of the accession process by January 2020.⁹

⁵ Barigazzi, Jacopo. “EU ministers once again fail to reach deal on North Macedonia and Albania.” *POLITICO*. 15 Oct. 2019. <https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-ministers-once-again-fail-to-reach-deal-on-north-macedonia-and-albania/> (Retrieved 2020-05-01).

⁶ Herszenhorn, David M and Momtaz, Rym. “France outlines proposal to overhaul EU accession process.” *POLITICO*, 17 Nov. 2019. <https://www.politico.eu/article/france-outlines-proposal-to-overhaul-eu-accession-process/> (Retrieved 2020-05-01).

⁷ “Non-Paper Reforming the European Union accession process.” 2019. <https://g8fip1kplyr33r3krz5b97d1-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Enlargement-nonpaper.pdf>, (Retrieved 2020-05-01) p.1.

⁸ *Ibid.* p.4-5.

⁹ Momtaz, Rym, Barigazzi, Jacopo and Bayer, Lili. “6 Countries write to Juncker to support EU enlargement reform.” *POLITICO*, 19 Nov. 2019. <https://www.politico.eu/article/6-countries-write-to-juncker-to-support-eu-enlargement-reform/>. (Retrieved 2020-05-01).

An additional aspect is that Croatia took over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union on 1 January 2020 and holds the position until 30 June 2020.¹⁰ One of the priorities is to make progress in the accession processes. North Macedonia and Albania have candidate status and the Presidency is striving for an opening of accession negotiations. Accordingly, the Presidency will promote the possibility of making progress with Bosnia and Herzegovina in order for the country to achieve candidate status.¹¹ On 5 February 2020 the European Commission presented a proposal with the purpose of taking the EU accession process forward, enhancing the importance of making the process more credible, politically stronger, more dynamic and predictable.¹² The approach to and development of enlargement has consequently become a current topic on the agenda for the European Union. Since enlargement has an extended tradition, there is a significance of studying how the narrative and approach to enlargement has changed over time, in order to understand the current situation and the future for enlargement.

1.1 Historical Context

The following section provides a brief background to European history and a historical overview of previous enlargements in the European Union. Consequently, the purpose is to determine the historical context in which enlargement has occurred, when enlargement has been a present subject and what the impact of enlargement has meant for the policy area. The historical context is based on the book *Roller-coaster: Europe, 1950-2017* by the British Historian Sir Ian Kershaw.¹³

There were six founding members of the European Economic Community (EEC) and it was not widened until 1973. Against the background of that president Charles de Gaulle

¹⁰ Croatian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. "A strong Europe in a world of challenges." *Programme of the Croatian Presidency of the Council of the European Union*. 2020. https://vlada.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/Vijesti/2019/12%20prosinac/31%20prosinca/web_FINAL_PROGRAMME_EN_FINAL.pdf. (Retrieved 2020-05-01). p.3.

¹¹ Ibid. p.8.

¹² European Commission. "A more credible, dynamic, predictable and political EU accession process – Commission lays out its proposals." 5 Feb. 2020. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_181 (2020-05-01).

¹³ Nationalencyklopedin. "Ian Kershaw." <https://www-encyklopedi.ludwig.lub.lu.se/uppslagsverk/encyklopedi/l%C3%A5ng/ian-kershaw> (Retrieved 2020-05-03).

vetoed against a British membership, the original six members who founded the organization in 1957 remained in their entity. France was the main drive force against a British membership while the remaining five countries had a more favourable approach. Georges Pompidou, the succeeding French president, opened up the possibility of proceeding with a British membership. Subsequently, negotiations were opened and the United Kingdom became a member of the EEC on 1 January 1973. At the same occasion, Denmark and Ireland also joined.¹⁴

Between 1974-1975 the regimes in Spain, Portugal and Greece collapsed within the span of a few months.¹⁵ Despite differences in the ending of the three dictatorships, Kershaw argues that the most significant and common factor was that the outdated tune of the regimes did not respond to the new political culture that emerged among the younger people. Consequently, the new leaders in the three countries sought a membership in the European Community (EC). In 1981 Greece joined while Spain and Portugal followed five years later in 1986.¹⁶

The widening of the European Union is described as not straightforward by Kershaw. Arguments in favour of first deepening the structures before proceeding with extension were presented, although other arguments based on the opposite of prioritizing widening over deepening were also presented. A criteria based on democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, protection of minorities and a well-functioning free market economy, was established in Copenhagen in 1993 for new Member States to meet. Before this decision Finland, Sweden, Norway and Austria were in the process to be admitted as members and the countries had no issues with fulfilling the criteria. All countries except Norway became members on 1 January 1995, since there was a Norwegian referendum against a membership.¹⁷

On 1 May 2004 ten new countries became members of the European Union: The Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Cyprus and

¹⁴ Kershaw, Ian. *Roller-coaster: Europe, 1950-2017*. The Penguin History of Europe: 9. London: Penguin Books, 2019. p.164-165.

¹⁵ Ibid. p.293.

¹⁶ Ibid.p.305-306.

¹⁷ Ibid. p.430-431.

Malta. According to Kershaw, the widening was welcome, however, the European Union started to face an economic imbalance between the old and the new members. The financial problem grew greater when Romania and Bulgaria became members of the European Union in January 2007. Subsequently, neither of the two countries did fully meet the membership criteria that had been set in Copenhagen in 1993. Romania and Bulgaria did not achieve the standard of liberal democracy, the rule of law and had remaining issues with corruption and organized crime.¹⁸ Lastly, Croatia joined the European Union in 2013, despite remaining issues with corruption and criminality. Kershaw describes this particular enlargement as a way of sending promising signals to the Balkan states.¹⁹

Membership in the European Union continues to be sought after by countries in the neighbourhood of the EU and enlargement is considered to be a successful foreign policy. Nevertheless, in light of the current challenges that exist, it has become difficult to predict how the challenges will affect enlargement in a long-term perspective.²⁰ As the character of the European Union has become increasingly complex, tight and technical aspects have emerged in the conditions for membership. Internal dynamics has also affected enlargement rounds and questions concerning the effectiveness of the Union have arisen as a result of enlargement.²¹

1.2 Aim, Scope and Research Questions

Enlargement is an extensive policy area in the European Union, but it has not constantly been a central priority for each presiding Commission. There are several factors that influence the enlargement process and the path ahead is not always as clearly defined. The political landscape and other policy areas have a significant impact on whether a state should be considered as a potential candidate, candidate country or whether accession negotiations should be initiated. Consequently, a process follows that is considered as lengthy and bureaucratic, before an enlargement finally takes place. Against this background, there is a substantial focus on the outcomes following summits and meetings

¹⁸ Ibid. p.475-476.

¹⁹ Ibid. p.479-480.

²⁰ Juncos and Pérez-Solórzano Borragán, "Enlargement.", p.237.

²¹ Ibid. p.239.

where enlargement is considered. Hence, signals and statements about enlargement constitutes a significant factor in how the policy is perceived. Accordingly, when fragments are the main influence in the development, there is reason to specifically study the narrative within enlargement.

The aim of this thesis is to study the narrative in the European Union enlargement from a historical perspective. The research is based on a collection of fifteen transcribed speeches during the period 2001-2020, where the narrative and approach will be studied. In this regard, the primary material will include the expectations and experiences of enlargement and take previous enlargements into account that occurred during this period (2004, 2007 and 2013). This period can be considered to have shaped the policy area for enlargement and it is consequently perceived as an appropriate delimited period to study. Furthermore, the primary material has been limited as far as possible to speeches about the experience of enlargement, the approach to enlargement, enlargement as a policy and the future for enlargement.

Discursive Institutionalism constitutes the theoretical framework and it is based on the works of Vivien A. Schmidt, a Professor of European Integration, International Relations and Political Science.²² The theory highlights in particular different types of ideas and how they can be placed within a discourse. Furthermore, the applied method is based on a Narrative Analysis and its structure has been adapted to reflect the purpose and material of the thesis. One of the authors of the applied method is the American Linguist and Professor of Linguistics and Psychology, William Labov.²³ The other author of the method is Joshua Waletzky. Accordingly, the method is utilized to examine the narrative of the European Commission, through its representatives and the theory provides a framework for understanding the ideas and discourses embedded in the narrative. The thesis is guided by research questions that are based on the historical perspective, the narrative within enlargement and the selected theoretical framework. The research questions applied in the thesis are the following:

²² Boston University: Frederick S. Pardee School of Global Studies. "Vivien Ann Schmidt." <https://www.bu.edu/pardeeschool/profile/vivien-a-schmidt/> (Retrieved 2020-05-03).

²³ Nationalencyklopedin. "William Labov." <https://www.nes.se.ludwig.lub.lu.se/uppslagsverk/encyklopedi/l%C3%A5ng/william-labov> (Retrieved 2020-05-03).

- To what extent and why has the narrative and approach to enlargement been affected by previous enlargement rounds?
- How can the narrative and approach to enlargement be understood based on Discursive Institutionalism?

1.3 Disposition of Research

After the first sections of the thesis in the form of introduction, historical context and aim, scope and research questions, the text is followed by a presentation of the material as a summary of the primary- and secondary material. This chapter describes the approach and use of the primary material, which consists of fifteen transcribed speeches held by Commissioners for Enlargement and Presidents of the European Commission. The secondary material entails books, news articles and other documents that founds a basis for the structure and history of enlargement. Furthermore, the second chapter is structured as a presentation of existing research and includes the own contribution to the research field. Existing research is principally divided into subjects of the experience of enlargement, the European Union's approach to enlargement and the future for enlargement. Subsequently, the third chapter explains the theoretical framework and methodology applied in the research. Discursive Institutionalism constitutes the theory of the thesis and the method is based on a version of a Narrative Analysis. The fourth chapter present the findings of the research. Subsequently, the fifth chapter is an analysis of the findings and it is divided into two sub-chapters based on the structure of the theoretical framework, where the first sub-chapter is an analysis of the ideas and the second sub-chapter is an analysis of the discourses. Consequently, the sixth chapter comprises a discussion and the conclusion.

1.4 Material

1.4.1 Primary Sources

Against the background of that the purpose of the thesis is to study the narrative within enlargement from a historical perspective, the primary material consists of transcribed speeches. The selection includes fifteen transcribed speeches that have been held by the

Commissioners for Enlargement and the Presidents of the European Commission, during the delimited time period from 2001 to 2020.

The time period being studied has been delimited to the years between 2001 to 2020 as the study intends to place a special emphasis on the three most recent enlargement rounds that occurred in 2004, 2007 and 2013. In light of that enlargement is an extensive policy and process, it is perceived as necessary to take the years prior and after an enlargement into account, thereby starting the period of study at 2001. Furthermore, the selection of speakers is based on their roles as representatives of the European Commission. In this regard, the speakers represent the European Commission's direction and approach to enlargement. The selection of speeches is based on their relevance for expectations, experiences, agenda, approach and process for accession and enlargement. In other words, the core of the speeches refers to enlargement while their orientations vary. Consequently, the material takes into account speeches that occur both before and after decisions, but a greater emphasis has been placed on speeches that are held after a decision, in order to highlight the experiences of enlargement. The audience of the speeches vary to some extent but mainly consists of participants at conferences in which the speeches are held. Meanwhile, some speeches indicate on a broader character, for example, statements following press conferences or occasions when the whole Union is to be addressed.

The collection of transcribed speeches has been derived from the archived websites for Presidents of the European Commission and Commissioners for Enlargement as well as from the website of the European Commission. It would have been desirable to retrieve all speeches from the same source in order to make the selection representative, but due to archived materials and inaccessibility on certain websites this has not been a possibility. The transcribed speeches are as evenly distributed in the delimited time period as possible. A certain exception has been made in this regard concerning the years 2014 and 2019, where two speeches have been retrieved for each year. This is due to that new European Commissions came into office or that significant events occurred during the years in question. Furthermore, two speeches have been selected for each Commissioner for Enlargement and one speech has been selected for each President of the European Commission. The exception in this case concerns former President José Manuel Durão Barroso, since Durão Barroso led two consecutive commissions.

The source criticism that can be directed towards the primary material is that there are difficulties in making a representative and equal selection of transcribed speeches. Accessibility has had a certain impact on the selection due to limitations in the different sources. Consequently, the more expressive and verbal aspects do not appear in the transcribed version of speeches in comparison to a video or voice-based version. Using a material that emphasizes tone, body language and expressions would have contributed to more versatile aspects, but it would nevertheless have been difficult to take these factors into account in the analysis.

1.4.2 Secondary Sources

The secondary material mainly consists of books in order to explain the practical aspects concerning enlargement of the European Union and present the historical context for enlargement. Furthermore, news articles, program declarations and additional documents are utilized to display the current situation in which enlargement figures. Against this background, the secondary material is utilized to provide a background to the policy area for enlargement and explain the current situation and attention for enlargement. Literature of interest in this case are mainly sources that demonstrate the structure of and the approach to enlargement in the European Union and sources that account for the history in the European Union and in Europe. A particular emphasis has been placed on sources that establishes a timeline for when each enlargement has occurred in order to explain how they should be perceived in a historical context.

The sources utilized to explain the current and medial state of enlargement are web-based news sources that centres on the European Union, such as the EUobserver and POLITICO. Consequently, the program declaration of the Croatian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the non-paper presented by France have been included as sources to present examples of the recent attention for enlargement. The books that constitute the secondary material for the structure and history of the European Union are *European Union Politics* by Michelle Cini and Nieves Pérez-Solórzano Borragán and *Roller-coaster: Europe 1950-2017* by Ian Kershaw.

2 Existing Research

The research area for enlargement is extensive and it includes numerous central aspects. Existing research refers to, for instance, enlargement in relation to economic aspects, related policy areas and relations with Member States and candidate countries. A comprehensive amount of the research concerns how other policy areas and the decision-making process are affected by enlargement. In view of the fact that enlargement is a historic and significant policy for the European Union, there is a wide range of research that covers both individual enlargement rounds and research that examines enlargement in its entirety. Furthermore, there is also an amount of the research that is aimed at geographically specified areas in relation to enlargement. This part of the previous research especially refers to the Western Balkans and Turkey.

Existing research that is considered as relevant for the thesis is primarily research that is based on previous experiences of enlargement, the future for enlargement and the European Union's approach to enlargement. Based on these three orientations, the research area contributes to an overview of the experiences that can be derived from enlargement, how the approach to enlargement has changed over time and what can be expected for the future for enlargement. In the texts that highlight enlargement in relation to experience, conditionality and monitoring are emphasized as specifically important aspects. The significance of the process between accession and enlargement is stressed in the texts that refers to the future for enlargement. Lastly, the texts that covers the approach to enlargement highlights in particular features such as time frames, language, vagueness and inconsistency.

It is within the field presented above that the thesis is placed and aims to contribute with further research to the area. By studying the narrative within and the approach to enlargement, a broader insight can be given about to what extent these factors has changed over time and how previous experience has affected enlargement. Against the background of that it is primarily signals and statements that constitutes the range of the European Union's approach to enlargement, it is perceived as valuable to examine in particular the narrative and the approach.

Heather Grabbe, Director of the Open Society European Policy Institute, presents six lessons that can be derived from the experience ten years after the Eastern enlargement.²⁴ The European Union's use of transformative power is perceived as different towards Turkey and the Balkans, compared to the precursor of Central Europe. Grabbe emphasizes that a membership is the strongest form of conditionality and therefore one of the lessons is to ensure that the commitments are fully met.²⁵ Another lesson described by Grabbe is that the EU is significantly weaker when domestic politics are influenced by populism, in comparison to its otherwise stronger ability to support and guide in reform.²⁶ Subsequently, Grabbe stresses the importance of maintaining the accession process consistent and credible.²⁷ Grabbe concludes that there are major strategic choices facing the European Union in that there is a need to either respond to external challenges or continue to highlight internal consensus, in order to preserve the European Union in its current state.²⁸

David Phinnemore, Professor of European Politics, presents the lessons learned from the 2007 enlargement.²⁹ Phinnemore describes the accession of Bulgaria and Romania as not lacking significance, despite it being somewhat overlooked by its precursor, the "big bang" 2004 enlargement.³⁰ One of the most distinguishing factors of the 2007 enlargement is the time span between the accession and closure of negotiations in comparison to previous enlargements, according to Phinnemore.³¹ Consequently, the monitoring afterwards is described by Phinnemore as considerably more structured and formal in the case of Romania and Bulgaria, which corresponds to the concerns about the states being less prepared to join the EU.³² Phinnemore emphasizes that enlargement is more than a dynamic process since there is an evolvement in the handling of enlargement.³³ Finally,

²⁴ Open Society Foundations. "Heather Grabbe." <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/who-we-are/staff/heather-grabbe> (Retrieved 2020-05-03).

²⁵ Grabbe, Heather. "Six Lessons of Enlargement Ten Years On: The EU's Transformative Power in Retrospect and Prospect". *Journal of Common Market Studies* 52 (2014): 40-56. DOI: 10.1111/jcms.12174. p.41-42.

²⁶ Ibid. p.45.

²⁷ Ibid. p.49.

²⁸ Ibid. p.54.

²⁹ College of Europe. "David Phinnemore." <https://www.coleurope.eu/whoswho/person/david.phinnemore> (Retrieved 2020-05-03).

³⁰ Phinnemore, David. "From Negotiations to Accession: Lessons from the 2007 Enlargement." *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 10, no. 2 (2009): 240-252. DOI: 10.1080/15705850902899321. p.241.

³¹ Ibid. p.243.

³² Ibid. p.245.

³³ Ibid. p.249.

Phinnemore concludes that there were important differences in the two enlargement rounds, especially in terms of how the European Union handled them. Consequently, the enlargement in 2007 of Romania and Bulgaria represents the unpredictability of the EU enlargement process, according to Phinnemore.³⁴

Péter Balázs, Director of the Center for European Neighborhood Studies, focuses on the future for enlargement in the European Union.³⁵ Balázs states that since the first enlargement there has been a norm of that an expansion of the European Union occurs every decade, a notion that has not been interrupted because Croatia joined in 2013. Furthermore, Balázs stresses the importance of future EU enlargement forecasts considering the Western Balkans states and Turkey first, instead of prioritizing EU membership for other eligible European states.³⁶ According to Balázs, only fully consolidated states can be handled and accepted by the European Union. Not following this rule could impose consequences in terms of internal and external relations of the Union.³⁷

Frank Emmert is a Professor of Law and one of the authors to an article focusing on the legal aspects of enlargement.³⁸ The other author of the article is Siniša Petrović, Professor of Law.³⁹ Emmert and Petrović states that enlargement can be perceived as a continuing process in terms of expanding the European Union geographically. At the same time, it is emphasized that when a law only has a basic framework, there are influential powers on how it should be applied.⁴⁰ Emmert and Petrović argue that there are two purposes that are served in the accession negotiation when a candidate country proceeds to become a new Member State. The first purpose is to secure its will and ability to fulfil the obligations of a membership. The second purpose is the European Union's ability to ensure that there is space for the incoming Member States.⁴¹ Furthermore, Emmert and Petrović conclude that

³⁴ Ibid. p.250-251.

³⁵ Central European University. "Péter Balázs." https://people.ceu.edu/peter_balazs (Retrieved 2020-05-03).

³⁶ Balázs, Péter. "The future of EU enlargement." *International Issues & Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs* 22, no. 4 (2013): 3-20. p.3-4.

³⁷ Ibid. p.8.

³⁸ Indiana University: Robert H. McKinney School of Law. "Frank Emmert." <https://mckinneylaw.iu.edu/faculty-staff/profile.html?Id=166> (Retrieved 2020-05-03).

³⁹ University of Zagreb: Faculty of Law. "Siniša Petrović." <https://www.pravo.unizg.hr/en/sinisa.petrovic> (Retrieved 2020-05-03).

⁴⁰ Emmert, Frank and Petrović, Sinisa. "The Past, Present, and Future of EU Enlargement." *Fordham International Law Journal* 37, no. 5 (2013): 1349-1420. p.1354.

⁴¹ Ibid. p.1358-1359.

the negotiation framework for upcoming countries to join the European Union already indicates on some differences compared to those that were applied in the case of Croatia.⁴² One example of this is described as the approach to benchmarks that were initiated for Chapter 23 Judiciary and Fundamental Rights and for Chapter 24 Justice, Freedom and Security, which were introduced after Croatia's ended negotiations. Emmert and Petrović describes that these specific areas are important for the functioning of the EU and that the negotiations with Croatia were most complex in these specific chapters.⁴³

Erhan İçener is an Associate Professor of Political Science and International Relations.⁴⁴ Dimitris Papadimitriou is a Professor of Political Science.⁴⁵ İçener, Phinnemore and Papadimitriou describes enlargement as a noticeable feature in terms of European integration, although the enthusiasm for enlargement has diminished since the “big bang” enlargement. Against this background, the authors examine the development of enlargement on a basis of variables that influence each round of enlargement. Consequently, the authors suggest a framework for examining the approaches to enlargement and accordingly contribute to an understanding of change and continuity within the enlargement process. “Member state preferences” is the first variable, which entails the Member State's willingness to oppose or support the European Union. The second variable is “the activism of supranational institutions”, which is the European Commission's ability to take the enlargement agenda forward. “The EU's capacity to enlarge” is the third variable and includes the institutional integrity and ability to expand. Subsequently, the fourth variable is “popular support” for enlargement. Accordingly, the “narrative frame” is the fifth variable and it represents the EU's approach to the enlargement rounds.⁴⁶ Consequently, the narrative frame is highlighted as a significant and influential variable that should not be ignored in the context, although it is not necessarily the determinant variable in enlargement.⁴⁷

⁴² Ibid. p.1404.

⁴³ Ibid. p.1406.

⁴⁴ Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University. “Erhan İçener.” <https://www.izu.edu.tr/akademisyen?id=52196> (Retrieved 2020-05-03).

⁴⁵ The University of Manchester. “Dimitris Papadimitriou.” <https://www.research.manchester.ac.uk/portal/dimitris.papadimitriou.html> (Retrieved 2020-05-03).

⁴⁶ İçener, Erhan, Phinnemore, David and Papadimitriou, Dimitris. “Continuity and change in the European Union's approach to enlargement: Turkey and Central and Eastern Europe compared.” *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 10, no. 2 (2010): 207-223. DOI: 10.1080/14683857.2010.486948. p.207-210.

⁴⁷ Ibid. p.220.

Geoffrey Pridham is a Professor Emeritus of Politics.⁴⁸ Pridham presents political conditionality as a visible, central and extensive element in the enlargement process. Consequently, Pridham states that there is an assumption of asymmetrical aspects of enlargement in terms of the relationship between prospective Member States and the European Union.⁴⁹ Pridham focuses on three aspects in order to present a broad analysis, which derives from a conditionality policy and its entailed process, challenges and management. Consequently, Pridham translates these concerns to relationships that are based on the EU's decision-making, post-communist democratization and the enlargement process to facilitate a framework that can be applied to the evolution of conditionality.⁵⁰ Subsequently, Pridham presents four factors that can be perceived as influential in the policy after 2004. First, with further enlargement the countries in pre-accession appear as increasingly difficult cases. Second, the experience from the 2004 enlargement resulted in lessons regarding the political conditionality. Third, a new European Commission came into place and practiced a different approach. Fourth, the notion of "enlargement fatigue" was linked to the EU's crisis in constitutional reform.⁵¹ Pridham concludes that there is a broader scope in political conditionality, that the procedures for a political conditionality has become tighter and that there is a less enlargement-friendly environment where political conditionality is more difficult to control.⁵²

Michael Leigh is a Senior Adjunct Professor of European Studies.⁵³ Leigh states that greater accounts should be taken by European leaders in terms of creating a strategic narrative that guides actions. External policies such as the European Neighbourhood Policy has been damaged by not being able to establish this, according to Leigh.⁵⁴ Due to former crises, the European Union has been deprived of a coherent narrative in order to keep its

⁴⁸ University of Bristol. "Geoffrey Pridham." <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/spais/people/person/geoffrey-f-pridham/> (Retrieved 2020-05-03).

⁴⁹ Pridham, Geoffrey. "Change and Continuity in the European Union's Political Conditionality: Aims, Approach, and Priorities." *Democratisation* 14, no. 3 (2007): 446-471. DOI: 10.1080/13510340701303303. p.446.

⁵⁰ Ibid. p.448.

⁵¹ Ibid. p.454.

⁵² Ibid. p.468.

⁵³ John Hopkins University: School of Advanced International Studies. "Michael Leigh." <https://sais.jhu.edu/users/mleigh2> (Retrieved 2020-05-03).

⁵⁴ Leigh, Michael. "A view from the policy community: a new strategic narrative for Europe?." *European Security* 28, no. 3 (2019): 382-391. DOI: 10.1080/09662839.2019.1648257. p.382.

soft power asset. Prosperity, security and stability previously formulated the narrative but it has in several cases lost its friction. Furthermore, while enlargement of the European Union is perceived as an efficient policy tool, several Member States has begun questioning its achievements. Consequently, Leigh describes the approach to certain terms such as values and interests, as contributing conflictions in the EU's foreign policies. Subsequently, the enlargement process has been undermined and it reduces the credibility in political conditionality with actors, such as the Balkans.⁵⁵ Lastly, Leigh stresses the importance of lifting concrete achievements in order to build the perception of the European Union. The community has an important role in contributing to an understanding for and an awareness of how the EU is perceived and it can contribute with an impact on the strategic narratives.⁵⁶

In summary, the existing research addresses the experience, future, challenges, opportunities and different perspectives in relation to enlargement. A comprehensive amount of the research refers to a specific time period or a round of enlargement where there is a clear focus on the cause and effect. Against this background, my perception is that there is not as much research that covers the overall historical perspective of enlargement or research that places a specific emphasis on the narrative and approach to enlargement. Consequently, this thesis aims to contribute with research concerning how the narrative within and approach to enlargement has been affected by previous experience.

⁵⁵ Ibid. p.383-385.

⁵⁶ Ibid. p.389-390.

3 Theory and Method

3.1 Theory: Discursive Institutionalism

The aim of the thesis to study the narrative within enlargement from a historical context and the theoretical framework fulfils a purpose of identifying the content of the narrative and consequently how it is communicated. Subsequently, it is of great importance that the theory contributes to an understanding of how the narrative is structured and how it interacts with its context and recipients. Based on this structure, trends and developments can be made visible in the narrative. The theory applied in the thesis is Discursive Institutionalism by Vivien A. Schmidt and it will provide a framework for the analysis in order to understand the ideas and discourses that are embedded in the narrative.

Vivien A. Schmidt introduces Discursive Institutionalism (DI) as the fourth type of new institutionalism, which is distinguishable from Sociological Institutionalism (SI), Historical Institutionalism (HI) and Rational Choice Institutionalism (RI). According to Schmidt, there are four common aspects that can be found in Discursive Institutionalism. First, ideas and discourses are considered as significant despite various definitions. Second, the institutional context is important for the setting of ideas and discourse. Third, ideas are placed in what Schmidt describes as a “meaning context” where discourses follow a “logic of communication”. Fourth, the view of change is dynamic which eliminates potential obstacles that are common in the three older types of institutionalism. Furthermore, Schmidt states that there is an importance in making a distinction between approaches that focuses on ideas and discourse. Subsequently, Discursive Institutionalism is described as innovative in its capability to illustrate continuity and change. Schmidt declares that the main argument in favour of Discursive Institutionalism is its ability to provide an understanding of political action.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Schmidt, Vivien A. “Discursive Institutionalism: The Explanatory Power of Ideas and Discourse.” *The Annual Review of Political Science* no. 11 (2008): 303-326. DOI: 10.1146/annurev.polisci.11.060606.135342. p.304-305.

According to Schmidt, policies, programs and philosophies usually include two sorts of ideas, namely cognitive and normative. Cognitive ideas are described as what something is and what should be done about it. Normative ideas are characterized as what is perceived as good or bad about something in terms of what should be done about it. Furthermore, cognitive ideas can be referred to as casual ideas due to their ability of providing functions for political action and serving a purpose of justifying policies and programs due to their orientation in necessity and interest-based logic. Accordingly, cognitive ideas are divided into three levels, where the first level is covers how solutions to a problem come through a policy offer. The second level refers to how problems are defined through programs in order to identify the methods for solution. Lastly, the third level entails principles and norms and resides in the deeper base of the program. The same structure is found in normative ideas, where the first level describes how the general public's ideals and aspirations meet the policies. The second level is based on how programs resonate with the first level policies as well as how it corresponds with the base of the third level, which entails public life and the principles and norms attached to it. Schmidt stresses the difficulties concerning a criterion for the ideas on the first and second levels, representing policies and programs, but emphasizes that it is more difficult to determine the criteria for the third level that includes philosophies and founds the base for policies and programs. Lastly, Schmidt concludes that there are difficulties in the process such as how ideas subsequently proceed to action, since several actors and aspects can affect it. Hence, a discourse is needed to determine the factors of agency.⁵⁸

Schmidt explains that the word discourse refers to the ideas represented within a discourse as well as the associated processes in which ideas are expressed. The notion of why some ideas fail while others succeed is due to how, where and to whom they are projected. These aspects are explained within a discourse. Consequently, aside from the different levels and types of ideas, a discourse can articulate other forms, such as narratives. Accordingly, Schmidt presents two types

⁵⁸ Ibid. p.306-309.

of discourses. The first discourse is called the “coordinative discourse”, which entails groups and individuals within policy construction and it can include people who have ideas and access to policy making. The other type of discourse is called the “communicative discourse” and it takes place in a political scope, where the presentation of political ideas is delivered to the general public. In other words, the results from a “coordinative discourse” are shared through the “communicative discourse”. Within the “communicative discourse”, those who are targeted, citizens and voters, are able to contribute to it.⁵⁹

The structure of the discourses is described as from top to down, due to that the ideas are formulated by policy elites, communicated by political elites and then communicated to the public. It is not uncommon for the coordinative and communicative discourses to be intertwined by the political elite in order to present a coherent political program. In other cases, there may be no connections between the coordinative and communicative discourse, since closed debates do not reach the public or that the public may be unable to understand certain technicalities. The latter form is described as especially common for the European Union. Furthermore, Schmidt stresses that political actors are not able to control a public debate as a result of a discourse. The success or failure of coordination and communication by a discourse is measured by tracing it. Finally, coherence and consistency are advantageous for a discourse’s credibility but there should be an expectation for ambiguity or vagueness. Elements of vagueness is perceived as beneficial in case there are radical differences in the interpretation of a discourse.⁶⁰ Schmidt explains that there are difficulties in communicating with the public in any other way than by vague terms, as the underlying negotiations can risk being compromised.⁶¹

One criticism that can be directed towards Discursive Institutionalism is that the perspective is structured as a top-down approach and may not succeed in observing indications from below in the same way as from above. Consequently, there is not a particular explanation of to which extent the various factors permeate each other.

⁵⁹ Ibid. p.309-310.

⁶⁰ Ibid. p.311.

⁶¹ Ibid. p.313.

This may impose difficulties in the creation of a clear distinction between, for example, the type of ideas. Finally, the theory may be limited to the choice of problem and material being studied. This is against the background of that it requires a wide range of policies, philosophies and programs that should accordingly be placed in a context of a specific group and the public. Lastly, it is not always possible to follow a line of developments in terms of ideas or discourses.

Against this background, a short explanatory and summarizing section will follow to concretise the practical use of the theory. Ideas will be derived from the speeches and categorized as either policies, programs or philosophies. Consequently, each speech in the findings is categorized within a discourse that is either coordinative or communicative. In the analysis, the types of divided ideas will be presented with examples of how cognitive and normative ideas appear within each type of idea. Through this structure, the narrative within enlargement can be studied from a historical perspective and how it is reflected in different types of ideas and discourses. Finally, the analysis will be divided into chapters of ideas and discourses.

3.2 Method: Narrative Analysis

The method applied in the thesis is a version of a Narrative Analysis. In view of the fact that the primary material is based on a selection of transcribed speeches and that the aim of the thesis is to study the narrative within enlargement, this method is perceived as the most suitable one. In the research, it is of particular importance to study how the narrative within enlargement has changed over time and how experience influences the narrative. Consequently, the utilized method has been chosen because its structure takes the different aspects of a speech into account. The thesis will be based on the version of a Narrative Analysis by William Labov and Joshua Waletzky.

Alexa Robertson describes stories as compelling and as a way to make reality more vibrant. Accordingly, storytelling contributes to a sense of belonging, where Robertson emphasizes narrative as a beneficial tool in politics. Society is more understandable through stories and a narrative clarifies the political and cultural setting. Robertson describes that insights in politics and society can be presented in a clear way in the study of

narratives. Narratives were formerly utilized in order to organize events and fill a lack of evidence that emerged. Robertson makes a distinction between “the narrative mode”, where knowledge is reproduced and “the narrative turn”, where a social aspect is emphasized in form of actions and identity.⁶² Consequently, Robertson summarizes the fundamental concept of narrative as a description of something that has occurred, which can be in imagination or reality. Another common definition of narratives derives from the notion of action based on an organization of events.⁶³

The insights that emerge from narratives depend on a situation and context. While some scholars emphasize the importance of a unique experience, others claim that insights about a particular culture primarily develops from repetitive characteristics, familiarity or general spreading.⁶⁴ Furthermore, several researchers state that the own conditions for the narrative in question are of great importance and that how the text is structured is an essential issue in this setting. The context should consequently be central in the interpretation of a text.⁶⁵ Regarding criticism towards the method, Robertson emphasizes the challenges of maintaining a transparency towards the material. It is not uncommon for the material to be summarized in order to make the scope more feasible and it is important to not create a narrative of a narrative. Subsequently, Robertson states that even if the material is intertwined, different narratives must be kept apart.⁶⁶ Lastly, Robertson describes that the promotion of reliability is necessary in a Narrative Analysis and evaluating the study of narratives is essential to ensure credibility in the interpretations and patterns.⁶⁷

William Labov and Joshua Waletzky states that studies of narratives in several respects are derived from old traditions and that the function of them are difficult to distinguish. Consequently, it is of great importance to examine the most fundamental and simplest structures of narratives in relation to their original functions. Labov and Waletzky suggests

⁶² Robertson, Alexa. “Narrativanalys.” In *Textens Mening Och Makt: Metodbok I Samhällsvetenskaplig Text- Och Diskursanalys*, edited by Göran Bergström and Kristina Boréus. 3 ed. [ext.] 219-261. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2012. p.220-222.

⁶³ Ibid. p.229.

⁶⁴ Ibid. p.234.

⁶⁵ Ibid. p.236.

⁶⁶ Ibid. p.252-253.

⁶⁷ Ibid. p.255.

that these type of structures are found in personal experiences in oral versions.⁶⁸ Although the authors justify the method's suitability for verbal material, the primary material in the study is based on transcribed speeches. The rationale for this is based on that the functions of the method are applicable on the material and that the speeches are formulated to be presented vocally.

The model presented by Labov and Waletzky is an overall structure of narratives. The first part of the structure introduces an "orientation", a function with the purpose of guiding the listener to a place, time, person and behavioural situation. An orientation cannot always be found in a narrative and not all four aspects can be fulfilled to set this function. Furthermore, in cases where the orientation is displaced, it can influence an another function, such as the evaluation. The second function introduced is a "complication", which is explained as a complicating action emerging from a series of events, although there can be several complications. According to Labov and Waletzky, a result often terminates a complication. Determining the orientation, complicating action and result does not constitute a complete narrative and therefore the third function "evaluation" is introduced. Outside factors are usually answered within narratives as a way to establish a point, but also as a way to emphasize the character of uncommon elements. An evaluation can be regarded as the breakdown of a complication and result. Consequently, in an evaluation the importance of a result is presented and stated.⁶⁹ Labov and Waletzky describes the evaluation as where the attitudes of the narrator are revealed and where the importance is emphasized. The fourth function is a "resolution", where the result of a narrative is defined and it includes a return to the original problem. In certain situations, an evaluation and a resolution might overlap with each other. The fifth and last function of Labov and Waletzky's model is a "coda", a possibly applicable function provided that the narrative does not end with a resolution. In this regard, the coda is a function of returning to the present moment.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Labov, William and Waletzky, Joshua. "Narrative Analysis: Oral Versions of Personal Experience." In. *Essays on the Verbal and Visual Arts: Proceedings of the 1966 Annual Spring Meeting of the American Ethnological Society*, edited by June Helm, 12-44. Seattle/London: University of Washington Press, 1967. p.12.

⁶⁹ Ibid. 1967, p.32-35.

⁷⁰ Ibid. 1967, p.37-39.

The model presented by Labov and Waletzky has since its original form presented above been interpreted and updated. In the version that Alexa Robertson reproduces, the structure consists of a total of six functions. The method applied in the thesis is based on this structure and is further supplemented with two own additional functions. The original structure contains the following functions: abstract, orientation, complication, evaluation, resolution and coda.⁷¹

In order to combine the method with the theory in a suitable manner, the version of a Narrative Analysis will be supplemented with two own additional functions, with inspiration from the theoretical framework. Consequently, the narrative distinguished from the primary material can be put into a context of the ideas and discourses that have characterized the development in the narrative within enlargement. The seventh function applied is referred to as “ideas”, where the transcribed speeches will be categorized as either policies, programs or philosophies. The purpose of this function is to indicate how different types of ideas appear over time. Subsequently, the eighth function applied refers to a “discourse”, where it is determined whether the speech should be placed within a coordinative or communicative discourse. The purpose of this function is to emphasize the form of the speech and to whom it is directed. Finally, the model applied in the research will be structured as follows:

1. Abstract
2. Orientation
3. Complication
4. Evaluation
5. Resolution
6. Coda
7. Ideas
8. Discourse

⁷¹ Robertson, “Narrativanalys,” p.229.

4 Findings

The structure of the study is based on a combination of Labov and Waletzky's model of a Narrative Analysis and the two added functions "ideas" and "discourse", based on inspiration from the theoretical framework. Within the function "ideas", the speeches are categorized as either policies, programs or philosophies. In the function "discourse", the speeches are categorized as either coordinative or communicative. The two added functions will form a basis for the analysis in the form of sub-chapters. Consequently, the eight functions that constitute the structure are: abstract, orientation, complication, evaluation, resolution, coda, ideas and discourse. The study includes fifteen transcribed speeches and are derived from the delimited period 2001-2020. Two speeches have been selected for each Commissioner for Enlargement and one speech for each President of the European Commission. Lastly, the speeches follow a chronological order to concretize the historical perspective and development for the narrative within and the approach to enlargement.

1. "The enlargement process", Commissioner Günter Verheugen, 21-22 May 2001, Brussels.

Abstract: The agenda for and success of enlargement are central themes in the speech. Consequently, the narrative considers the significance of enlargement for European integration and includes the aims that are derived from the European Union's foundation of peace, security, stability and prosperity.

Orientation: The orientation of the speech is during the Second European Cohesion Forum on 21-22 May 2001 in Brussels.

Complication: The complication in the speech is represented by the notion of that no candidate country has fully met the Copenhagen criteria.

Evaluation: In this round of enlargement, it is perceived as of greater importance to consider the pace and the right type of negotiation, which is in the interest for a strong enlarged Union. There is a clear impact on the public opinion in the candidate countries based on the signals that are sent out by the EU.

Resolution: Messages that influence further reform in candidate countries are decided by the Union and there is a choice of pursuing reliable promises without further obstacles to

enlargement or to pursue an inconsistent approach, risking dangerous consequences in the candidate countries.

Coda: The burden should be carried out fairly due to the weaknesses of incoming states compared to the strength that resides in the Union. Furthermore, solidarity should not be confused with rights since it can undermine the foundation of the community.⁷²

Ideas: Policy

Discourse: Communicative

2. “EU Enlargement – Challenges and changes”, Commissioner Günter Verheugen, 6 February 2003, London.

Abstract: The central themes that summarize the narrative of the speech are experiences and scenarios for enlargement in a context of European history and common values.

Orientation: The orientation of the speech is that it is held on 6 February 2003 for the German Society at the LSE.

Complication: In the context of enlargement, there is effort remaining for both the European Union and the candidate countries. Vigour and determination are significant terms for how the candidate countries should drive their preparations for accession forward.

Evaluation: The evaluation is that there are arguments addressing both advantages and disadvantages of enlargement. Consequently, these arguments have displayed that the opportunities and benefits outweigh the risks and that this needs to be further communicated.

Resolution: The resolution of the speech is based on the question of how the positive effects of enlargement and the prospect for enlargement should be highlighted.

Coda: The notion of learning from experience in terms of enlargement constitutes the coda of the speech. It is stated that close cooperation based on common principles culminate in common goals that indicate the approach to achieve the objective.⁷³

Ideas: Philosophies

⁷² Verheugen, Günter. “The enlargement process.” 21-22 May 2001.

https://ec.europa.eu/archives/commission_1999_2004/verheugen/speeches/sp21052001en.htm

(Retrieved 2020-04-15).

⁷³ Verheugen, Günter. “EU Enlargement – Challenges and changes.” 6 Feb. 2003.

https://ec.europa.eu/archives/commission_1999_2004/verheugen/speeches/sp06022003en.htm (Retrieved

2020-03-31).

Discourse: Communicative

3. “Enlargement and the prospects for growth”, Romano Prodi, President of the European Commission, 30 April 2004, Trieste.

Abstract: European integration is the central theme and constitutes the abstract of the speech. There is an emphasis on politics, culture and history that combine the commonalities of the continent.

Orientation: The orientation of the speech is that the presentation refers to new economic opportunities for Central Europe and that the speech is held on 30 April 2004 in Trieste.

Complication: The capacity of each country defines how they pursue opportunities, nevertheless enlargement is expected to generate additional growth in the new Member States.

Evaluation: Economic opportunities will develop through enlargement for both new and all members of the Union. However, its impact will not be experienced as even in its entirety.

Resolution: The process demonstrated through European integration corresponds to globalization and preventing this development is comparable to going against the laws of nature.

Coda: Europe will continue to maintain its prosperity, defend the fundamental values and preserve its interdependence in the world, based on its ability to unite the continent in democracy and peace.⁷⁴

Ideas: Policy

Discourse: Communicative

4. “Building a New Consensus on Enlargement: How to match the strategic interest and functioning capacity of the EU?”, Commissioner Olli Rehn, 19 May 2006, Brussels.

Abstract: The central themes of the speech are the present stage and the following steps for the enlargement policy. The narrative includes satisfactions and challenges of previous enlargements and these features constitute the abstract.

⁷⁴ Prodi, Romano. “Enlargement and the prospects for growth.” 30 Apr. 2004.
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_04_214 (Retrieved 2020-04-01).

Orientation: The orientation of the speech is at the European Policy Centre on 19 May 2006 in Brussels.

Complication: Support for enlargement by the public opinion has suffered and scepticism has grown towards further advances in enlargement. Consequently, enlargement fatigue should not be ignored, however, a resistance towards populism is needed and the added value from carefully managed EU accessions must be emphasized.

Evaluation: Doubts have existed during every enlargement despite that the capacity to absorb new members have been displayed in institutional, financial and political aspects by the Union. The majority of Europeans are positive to enlargement, nevertheless an informative approach about its future and impact is needed.

Resolution: Strategic interest and the functioning capacity needs to be emphasized in the new consensus on EU enlargement. The focus should be on the present EU and its functioning capacity, instead of the future and an abstract absorption capacity.

Coda: Current enlargement countries are on the path of joining the EU, not rushing towards accession. The impression of a road not leading anywhere would damage the conditionality and strategic interests.⁷⁵

Ideas: Policy

Discourse: Coordinative

5. “A stronger Europe through deepening and widening” Commissioner Olli Rehn, 8 April 2008, Brussels.

Abstract: The narrative is founded on how a deepening and widening can provide strength if they are used properly. Furthermore, there is an emphasis on how these factors have contributed to the position that the European Union has in the world today.

Orientation: The orientation of the speech is during the “EPP Conference on Enlargement and consolidation of the European Union” on 8 April 2008 in Brussels.

Complication: A reference is made to the renewed consensus and it is explained that it is formed on consolidation, conditionality and communication. The complication is found in the communication due to a loss of narrative, in which a dialogue needs to be established with the citizens in order to address their concerns.

⁷⁵ Rehn, Olli. “Building a New Consensus on Enlargement: How to match the strategic interest and functioning capacity of the EU?.” 19 May 2006.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_06_316 (Retrieved 2020-04-06).

Evaluation: Enlargement is best ensured through honesty as well as in its causes and effects. Consequently, the EU's capacity to integrate new members must be considered in order to maintain the strategic interest.

Resolution: Improving the quality of the accession process should not result in something overly complicated since it can cause blockages in a process that is already perceived as complicated.

Coda: The agenda for enlargement is defined for the forthcoming years but evolution is still possible since the world continues to change. Emerging situations demands for an ability to adapt dynamically, in order to ensure success in future policies.⁷⁶

Ideas: Philosophies

Discourse: Communicative

6. "EU Enlargement – 5 Years After", José Manuel Durão Barroso, President of the European Commission, 2 March 2009, Prague.

Abstract: The narrative of the speech is summarized by what the Member States that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007 have contributed with and in what ways it has made the Union stronger.

Orientation: The orientation of the speech is during a conference on enlargement and it is held on 2 March 2009 in Prague.

Complication: In the context of the Lisbon Treaty and enlargement, the significance of acting, cooperating and promoting a common approach are emphasized. The global financial and economic crisis will cause attacks against achievements, open societies and that the widening of the EU has preceded the deepening.

Evaluation: The evaluation of the speech is directed towards those who attack enlargement, with the aim of preventing the deepening of European integration. It is emphasized that widening and deepening have always been connected.

Resolution: The resolution is based on the notion of enlargement functioning as an effective tool in order to spread peace, democracy and prosperity to the whole continent.

Coda: The coda of the speech is that enlargement should proceed when it is perceived as appropriate. Consequently, lessons should be taken into consideration and the renewed consensus will constitute the base.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Rehn, Olli. "A stronger Europe through deepening and widening." 8 Apr. 2008.
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_08_184 (Retrieved 2020-04-15).

Ideas: Policy

Discourse: Coordinative

7. “Western Balkans – towards a more integrated Europe”, José Manuel Durão Barroso, 14 April 2011, Brussels.

Abstract: The narrative is summarized by highlighting the cooperation and dialogue between the institutions of the European Union and National Parliaments. Consequently, experiences of enlargement are also central elements in the speech.

Orientation: The orientation of the speech is at a Joint Parliamentary Meeting on 14 April 2011 in Brussels.

Complication: Significant challenges remain, for example political issues and name disputes. Subsequently, there are extensive challenges in the region in terms of rule of law and freedom of expression.

Evaluation: Democracy, stability and beneficial socio-economic developments are contributed through a European perspective in candidate and potential candidate countries. Prosperity and well-being of the citizens are central aspects in the reforms and therefore the progress must maintain credibility and sustainability.

Resolution: Every country is responsible for their European future and the pace of the accession process depends on their delivery on central reforms. Ownership, leadership, mutual respect and willingness for cooperation are central elements in the resolution.

Coda: The countries displayed ambition when they set goals in order to become EU members and the ambition must consequently be converted to strong reforms. Subsequently, this conversion is needed from the countries in the region and from countries in the enlargement process.⁷⁸

Ideas: Program

Discourse: Coordinative

8. “Enlargement: Need for bold visions”, Commissioner Štefan Füle, 3 December 2013, Brussels.

⁷⁷ Durão Barroso, José Manuel. “EU Enlargement – 5 Years After.” 2 Mar. 2009. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_09_83 (Retrieved 2020-04-06).

⁷⁸ Durão Barroso, José Manuel. “Western Balkans – towards a more integrated Europe.” 14 Apr. 2011. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_11_267 (Retrieved 2020-04-07).

Abstract: Enlargement as a transformative power and the lessons learned constitutes the narrative of the speech. Consequently, the abstract is characterized by the need of a broad perspective on enlargement in order to achieve success and consider the concerns of citizens.

Orientation: The orientation of the speech is during the Friends of Europe conference, at the event “Western Balkans: Fast lane, slow lane” on 3 December 2013 in Brussels.

Complication: The complication is represented by the increasing concerns within the EU of admitting new members. Negative aspects oversee the benefits and there is a need to deliver on reforms and meet the accession criteria in the enlargement countries.

Evaluation: The Copenhagen criteria and EU values still remain at the core but it evolves with experience. Neither the EU or the countries will benefit from short cuts and the ability to tackle reforms controls the pace.

Resolution: An economic and fiscal vision defines the future expression of EU and ideas are presented about a political union. Discussion participation is important to determine the future for the European Union and it is described as friendly to enlargement.

Coda: It is time to ensure the continuation for enlargement and that it functions with integration in order to form a basis for those who want to go deeper.⁷⁹

Ideas: Policy

Discourse: Coordinative

9. “New Europe and enlargement in a new political context”, Commissioner Štefan Füle, 11 April 2014, Prague.

Abstract: The abstract of the speech is based on what enlargement has contributed with and how the vision of its future should be formulated.

Orientation: The orientation of the speech is at the Conference on 10 years of the Czech membership in the EU: “The Czech Republic and Europe through each other’s eyes”, held on 11 April 2014 in Prague.

Complication: There are doubts about the level of preparedness among new Member States rather than about enlargement in its entirety. Furthermore, the future of the European Union needs to be addressed when the vision for enlargement is considered.

⁷⁹ Füle, Štefan. “Enlargement: Need for bold visions.” 3 Dec. 2013.
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_13_1011
(Retrieved 2020-04-16).

Evaluation: The emphasis on credibility is central to the re-telling of the original enlargement story. The new approach focuses on each country's deficiencies early and consistently in the accession process and the progress outcome set the pace forward.

Resolution: There is a need for a political and institutional framework appropriate to a complex European Union, adaptable for change, with a dynamic to deepen European integration and comfortable for the countries who are not ready for that stage.

Coda: The European Union should revisit to its original purpose as a project of promoting peace, stability and prosperity. If the support fails for those who want to be transformed through the common values, others could interfere.⁸⁰

Ideas: Philosophies

Discourse: Communicative

10. "EU and Montenegro in partnership to prepare the country for accession",
Commissioner Johannes Hahn, 21 November 2014, Podgorica.

Abstract: The abstract is characterized by the addressing of concerns following a statement made by President Juncker about countries' prospects for joining the European Union within the next five years.

Orientation: The orientation of the speech is at a meeting of the European Integration Committee on 21 November 2014 in Podgorica.

Complication: The broad public opinion has a relatively negative attitude towards enlargement due to a common perception of enlargement being more of a burden than a benefit.

Evaluation: There needs to be a modification in the public image of enlargement and that should be sought after by all, since it is in everyone's interest. Benefits of and the advancements in reforms needs to be visible to the people.

Resolution: An essential requirement within the negotiation process is to align the national legislation with EU rules and candidate countries can negotiate transition periods. However, when a country joins the European Union it has to apply EU legislation.

⁸⁰ Füle, Štefan. "New Europe and enlargement in a new political context." 11 Apr. 2014.
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_14_323
(Retrieved 2020-04-07).

Coda: There is no doubt concerning the enlargement process and there is a commitment to Montenegro's European perspective, in which the journey must be completed by the country itself but the Commission will remain by its side.⁸¹

Ideas: Program

Discourse: Coordinative

11. "2015 Enlargement Package", Commissioner Johannes Hahn, 10 November 2015, Brussels.

Abstract: The narrative is based on assuring that the work on enlargement is not still and that a European perspective remains important. Furthermore, the abstract emphasizes activities with partners in the pre-accession process, preparing them for challenges and securing a European path in a political crisis.

Orientation: The orientation of the speech is at the presentation of the 2015 Enlargement Package on 10 November 2015 in Brussels.

Complication: A complication is not determined in the speech, but the refugee crisis is mentioned as the factor of promoting close cooperation with countries in South-East Europe in order to ensure stability in the continent.

Evaluation: New elements in the Enlargement package constitute the evaluation of the speech. The strategy covers that the basis for land reports is strengthened, a clearer guidance is offered, the EU expectations are clarified, that reporting follows a scale of measuring progress and there is an increased transparency in reporting, directly linked to fundamental reforms.

Resolution: In this regard, the resolution is based on the areas that will receive a particular emphasis in the work forward. It includes and stresses the rule of law and an economic development that enhances competitiveness.

Coda: The next year is described as an eventful time for the enlargement countries. Where the countries stand and what they need to do have been set out for the upcoming year and in the longer term. Consequently, enlargement countries must deliver on the committed reforms.⁸²

⁸¹ Hahn, Johannes. "EU and Montenegro in partnership to prepare the country for accession." 21 Nov. 2014. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_14_2045 (Retrieved 2020-04-13).

⁸² Hahn, Johannes. "2015 Enlargement Package." 10 Nov. 2015. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_15_6041 (Retrieved 2020-04-16).

Ideas: Program

Discourse: Coordinative

12. “President Jean-Claude Juncker’s State of the Union Address 2017”, Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, 13 September 2017, Brussels.

Abstract: The speech is constructed to give a presentation of the state in the European Union. The narrative is characterized by observing past challenges and describing the way forward for the EU, which also constitutes the abstract of the speech in its entirety and the section concerning enlargement.

Orientation: The orientation of the speech is in the form of a State of the Union Address, held on 13 September 2017 in Brussels.

Complication: No further enlargement will occur within the mandate of this Commission and Parliament. This is due to that no candidate is perceived as ready.

Evaluation: The European Union will become greater than 27 in numbers, but this will occur after the current mandate.

Resolution: Accession candidates must give utmost priority to the rule of law, justice and fundamental rights in the negotiations.

Coda: A credible enlargement perspective for the Western Balkans is necessary in order to gain more stability in the neighbourhood.⁸³

Ideas: Program

Discourse: Communicative

13. “Europe address – Dr Ursula von der Leyen President-elect of the European Commission”, Ursula von der Leyen, President-elect of the European Commission, 8 November 2019, Berlin.

Abstract: The speech is characterized by European history, the challenges that Europe faces and the role of Europe in the world, which is the narrative for the entirety of the speech and the section aimed at enlargement.

Orientation: The orientation of the speech is at the Allianz Forum on 8 November 2019 in Berlin.

⁸³ Juncker, Jean-Claude. “President Jean-Claude Juncker’s State of the Union Address 2017*.” 13 Sep. 2017. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_17_3165 (Retrieved 2020-04-14).

Complication: If the Western Balkans are not given the possibility of joining the European Union there is a risk that others step into the breach, such as Saudi Arabia, Russia, Turkey or China.

Evaluation: Europe and the Western Balkans share the same continent, history, culture and challenges. North Macedonia and Albania has been asked for a lot. They have delivered and the promise of beginning accession talks must be kept.

Resolution: A European perspective was assured at the Western Balkans Summit in Thessaloniki in 2003 by Heads of State and Government.

Coda: Strategic measures must be taken regarding the external interests of Europe and it also applies to the enlargement policy. It is in the interest of the European Union that there is a European perspective in the Western Balkans.⁸⁴

Ideas: Philosophies

Discourse: Communicative

14. “Remarks by Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi at the press conference following the Accession Conference between the EU and Serbia”, Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi, 10 December 2019, Brussels.

Abstract: The narrative is characterized by emphasizing the commitment to a EU perspective for the Western Balkans by the new Commission. Furthermore, it is stated the outcome of the conference is a positive signal for the whole region.

Orientation: The orientation of the speech is at a press conference after the Accession Conference between the EU and Serbia on 12 December 2019 in Brussels.

Complication: There is still work to do, nevertheless there is hope and encouragement from the session and results will be generated.

Evaluation: The evaluation is represented by an aspiration to include speed and dynamics in the process, in which the Commission is ready to work as much as necessary.

Resolution: There is an ambition to outline a set of criteria that can modify the methodology of enlargement negotiations and it will be presented in January. Four criterions are mentioned: credibility, predictability, dynamic and political leadership.

⁸⁴ von der Leyen, Ursula. “Europe address – Dr Ursula von der Leyen President-elect of the European Commission.” 8 Nov. 2019. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_19_6248 (Retrieved 2020-04-14).

Coda: The coda of the speech is based on a referral to the four criterion presented and that a proposal will be presented in January.⁸⁵

Ideas: Program

Discourse: Coordinative

15. Remarks by Commissioner Várhelyi at the European Policy Centre briefing: Reforming enlargement policy?”, Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi, 18 February 2020, Brussels.

Abstract: The speech is characterized by that enlargement is back on the agenda since there is an extensive interest for the topic. Furthermore, the Western Balkans are described as placed in the heart of Europe and it is therefore a part of Europe.

Orientation: The orientation of the speech is during a briefing at the European Policy Centre on 18 February 2020 in Brussels.

Complication: The complication of the speech is based on the failure of starting accession negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania and the need to address the damage and trust in the two countries.

Evaluation: Addressing the challenges in the complication represents the evaluation. Identifying and addressing the Member States’ concerns are also included, leading to a request of revising the enlargement methodology.

Resolution: The resolution is based on three pillars and constitutes a new approach. First, the adoption of the revised methodology by the Commission. Second, agreement from the Council to begin accession negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania. Third, the Zagreb strategy which is an investment plan for the Western Balkans.

Coda: The presentation shows the direction forward but it is conditional on delivery of the candidates.⁸⁶

Ideas: Program

Discourse: Coordinative

⁸⁵ Várhelyi, Olivér. “Remarks by Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi at the press conference following the Accession Conference between the EU and Serbia.” 12 Dec. 2019. <https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024/varhelyi/announcements/remarks-commissioner-oliver-varhelyi-press-conference-following-accession-conference-between-eu-and-en> (Retrieved 2020-04-17).

⁸⁶ Várhelyi, Olivér. “Remarks by Commissioner Várhelyi at the European Policy Centre briefing: Reforming enlargement policy?” 18 Feb. 2020. <https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024/varhelyi/announcements/remarks-commissioner-varhelyi-european-policy-centre-briefing-reforming-enlargement-policy-en> (Retrieved 2020-04-17).

5 Analysis

The Narrative Analysis was utilized in the findings to display developments in the narrative from a historical perspective and Discursive Institutionalism will be utilized as a framework for analysing the ideas and discourses embedded in the narrative. The analysis will be structured in accordance with the two main aspects that are included in Discursive Institutionalism, namely “ideas” and “discourse”. The first chapter analyses the transcribed speeches based on the type of idea they are categorized as. In this case, the ideas that appear in the speeches are categorized as either “policies”, “programs” or “philosophies”. Consequently, the categorization of ideas and the historical development of the narrative are exemplified with quotations from the speeches that highlights both “cognitive” and “normative” ideas within each type of idea. The second chapter analyses the “discourse” that the speeches are placed within. In this regard, there are two types of discourses, the “communicative” discourse and the “coordinative” discourse. Subsequently, the discourses are exemplified through selected quotations, although discourses are analysed on the basis of their entirety. Lastly, each chapter is introduced with a brief overview and is later concluded with a summarizing analysis, in order to present an overview of how the narrative and approach to enlargement has changed over time.

5.1 Ideas

Schmidt underlines that policies, programs and philosophies usually entail two sorts of ideas, namely cognitive and normative ideas. Cognitive ideas are described as what something is and what should be done about it. Normative ideas are characterized as what is perceived as good or bad about something in terms of what should be done about it.⁸⁷ Consequently, it is the type of ideas and their character that are particularly central. In other words, developments and trends can be made visible in how ideas are constructed and presented.

⁸⁷ Schmidt, “Discursive Institutionalism: The Explanatory Power of Ideas and Discourse,” p.306-307.

Policies

Policies represent the first level in cognitive ideas and refers to how solutions to a problem come through a policy offer. Accordingly, normative ideas also represent the first level and it consists of how the general public's ideals and aspirations meet the policies.⁸⁸ In this regard, policies represent the type of ideas that are formulated as solutions to a specific problem and consequently how the solutions correspond to the assumptions of public life. Subsequently, a relationship can be analysed between the ability to create problem solutions and how it is later followed by a type of evaluation by the public life.

Cognitive

Enlargement will only succeed if the negotiating result is ratifiable everywhere, i.e. if risks remain calculable and excessive demands are not placed on either side. This is true both for the Union and for its negotiating partners in central and eastern and southern Europe.⁸⁹

Copenhagen criteria and EU values remain at its core, but it evolves, building on past experience. Lessons of previous enlargements clearly point to importance of addressing the fundamentals first. Crucial to demonstrate credibility and sustainability of process. Short cuts don't help the EU or the countries themselves. The process is more sophisticated and rigorous. Pace depends on countries' own merits in tackling difficult and deep reforms.⁹⁰

The quotations above have been categorized as cognitive ideas within policies because there is a weight on problems and solutions. The first quotation emphasizes the importance of enlargement remaining measurable and without excessive demands. The problem in this case is the conditions for success and the solution is based on an approach where the emphasis relies on standardization. Consequently, the second quotation is focused on allowing enlargement to be built on past experiences and a toleration of that the process is given the required time. The problem is based on a dissuasion of shortcuts and accordingly, the solution is to rather emphasize that the ability determines the way forward.

Regarding the cognitive ideas within policies, there are certain developments that can be taken into consideration. One could argue that the narrative has evolved from a broad perspective for enlargement with a focus on the applicability everywhere but that it then

⁸⁸ Ibid. p.307.

⁸⁹ Verheugen, "The enlargement process."

⁹⁰ Füle, "Enlargement: Need for bold visions."

transitions to an approach that emphasises the process as more individual and dependent on each country's own abilities. Furthermore, the approach to demands seems to have undergone a shift from not placing disproportionate demands to instead emphasise that fundamentals needs to be addressed primarily. On the other hand, a common narrative that is found in both quotations is the emphasis on what favours and harms the process, suggesting a theme that seems to persist over time. The developments in the narrative can be understood as that there initially was an aspiration to have a holistic perspective, applicable in all cases, but experience indicates that each case must be considered separately due to the complexity of the process.

Normative

Of late, we have heard grim warnings about the risks of enlargement. There is a risk in everything we do. But we at the Commission have made careful preparations, as have all the new Member States. This is the most thoroughly prepared enlargement in our history.⁹¹

As for those who attack enlargement for preventing any deepening of European integration, I say: check your history books. Widening and deepening have always gone hand-in-hand.⁹²

In terms of normative ideas within policies, the criticism is based on the principles of the public. The public's ideals and perceptions are central elements in the quotations above and they have therefore been categorized as normative ideas within policies. The first quotation emphasizes an awareness of warnings concerning enlargement and states a certain reservation since there are always risks. Furthermore, the criticism is addressed by stressing the degree of preparation, consideration and cautiousness. On the other hand, the second quotation is aimed directly at the critics by questioning what their perceptions are built on. One could argue that it indicates on an argument of that the critics' perceptions are based on inaccuracies.

The quotations differ considerably in terms of accepting and responding to criticism. It could be implied that the narrative has been developed in terms of experience of criticism, where a defensive tone has become more prominent. One could understand the development as experience shows that it is not sufficient to meet criticism with assurances

⁹¹ Prodi, "Enlargement and the prospects for growth."

⁹² Durão Barroso, "EU Enlargement – 5 Years After."

and that a stricter tone and approach is necessary as additional enlargements have occurred. In this regard, one could perceive the development from a perspective based on time. The first quotation occurs shortly before the most extensive enlargement occurred while the other quotation is built on the experience of two completed enlargements. Against this background, assumptions can be made of that the ideal of the public is likely to have influenced the development of the narrative.

Programs

Based on Discursive Institutionalism, programs are represented in second level of cognitive ideas and is about how problems are defined through programs in order to identify methods for solution. Consequently, normative ideas reside in the second level and are based on how programs resonate with the first level policies as well as how it resonates with the base of the third level of public life and its attached norms and principles.⁹³ In this regard, programs within cognitive ideas can be perceived as the extension of policies. This is due to the fact that problems are defined through the programs and this is subsequently where the problem solving becomes more tangible and practical. Consequently, the normative ideas within the programs stand for the interaction between both the policies and the philosophies, fulfilling a purpose as a unifying factor.

Cognitive

These countries were ambitious when they set the goal to become EU members, now they need to keep that ambition and translate it in vigorous reforms. That is what we need from the countries in the region and also from all the countries which are part of the enlargement process.⁹⁴

Ladies and Gentlemen, if we want more stability in our neighbourhood, then we must also maintain a credible enlargement perspective for the Western Balkans. It is clear that there will be no further enlargement during the mandate of this Commission and this Parliament. No candidate is ready.⁹⁵

Cognitive ideas within programs refers to how problems are defined through programs. In this case, programs are represented as reforms and the presented direction for enlargement. The first quotation indicates on a problem as the ability to transform ambition to reform

⁹³ Schmidt, "Discursive Institutionalism: The Explanatory Power of Ideas and Discourse," p.307.

⁹⁴ Durão Barroso, "Western Balkans – towards a more integrated Europe."

⁹⁵ Juncker, "President Jean-Claude Juncker's State of the Union Address 2017*."

and that the program represents the expectations on the countries in the enlargement process. Consequently, there is an emphasis on continuing to follow the presented path in order to reach the final goal of membership. In the second quotation, however, the problem is constituted by that no candidate is ready and subsequently the program is represented by the formulation of a perspective. The weight is on the importance of maintaining credibility in order to ensure stability.

One could understand this development as if the narrative initially entailed encouraging elements in explaining ambitiousness in the striving for a membership by stating the expectations in order to reach the goal, although over time it is adjusted to a perspective that does not explain expectations or a path forward. It could be implied that the practical and desirable direction disappears and is replaced by an abstract perspective. Subsequently, the space for improvement is limited for the countries in the enlargement process. The possibility of demonstrating ambition or whether being ready is withdrawn because it is decided that no one is perceived as ready. Initially, there are more positive orientations in the programs and later a more restrictive stance is developed. The significance of experience becomes prominent in this regard, since the narrative is first characterized by what is needed from the other part and then it is developed to emphasize the maintenance of what is credible.

Normative

I don't want to hide the fact that the broad public opinion on further EU enlargement is currently rather negative. This is because EU citizens see enlargement as a burden rather than a benefit. So the public image of enlargement has to change and we all have to work for this as it is in all our own interests.⁹⁶

So this is the priority number one for the current geopolitical Commission, to gain back trust and confidence in the Western Balkans, trust and confidence that we have lost in the Western Balkans and in the Member States when it comes to enlargement process. If we cannot achieve this, how can we be credible elsewhere when it comes to other foreign affairs difficulties and challenges?⁹⁷

Normative ideas within programs refers to how programs resonate with the first level policies and how it resonates with the base of the third level of public life and its attached

⁹⁶ Hahn, "EU and Montenegro in partnership to prepare the country for accession."

⁹⁷ Várhelyi, "Remarks by Commissioner Várhelyi at the European Policy Centre briefing: Reforming enlargement policy?."

norms and principles. The first quotation is based on that there is a negative public opinion on the policy enlargement and whether there should be further enlargement. Consequently, an explanation follows to describe that it is because enlargement is perceived as a burden instead of a benefit and a solution is presented since it is in all interests to change the perception. On the other hand, the second quotation is based on a priority of gaining back a trust and confidence that has been lost. A solution is not presented in the second quotation, instead there is a questioning of the ability and capacity.

A development in the narrative can be observed because initially there is a return to the core of what the public image is based on but then the direction is changed to instead address the risks that can arise if a restoration of trust and confidence is not established. One could argue that a shift has occurred in the narrative where there is initially a motivation of the public image as a misunderstanding of the significance of enlargement, but over time it is rather about repairing the damage as a result of failure. The narrative indicates on changes in that the positive and encouraging approach turns into a problematizing and questioning of the capacity. Consequently, this indicates that the experience of enlargement has had an impact on the narrative and that it possibly comes to a point where a positive future outlook does not weigh heavily enough to convince.

Philosophies

According to Discursive Institutionalism, ideas in form of philosophies are found in the third level of cognitive ideas as principles and norms in the deeper base of the program. Furthermore, philosophies also stand as the third level of normative ideas, which entails public life and the principles and norms attached to it.⁹⁸ In this regard, philosophies fulfil two aspects. First, it is the principles and norms that lay the foundation for what enlargement is and what it means. Second, philosophies include public life and all the norms and values attached to it. What is important to take into account in this case is how well the philosophy of enlargement, in its principles and norms, stands against its counterpart in public life.

⁹⁸ Schmidt, "Discursive Institutionalism: The Explanatory Power of Ideas and Discourse," p.307.

Cognitive

Enlargement brings with it a new political order based, for the first time in modern European history, on common values and a shared desire for harmony and cooperation. The age-old dream of a united Europe is now beginning to take shape. We are leaving behind us the age of wars, hostile neighbours and unequal opportunities that did Europe so much harm. Instead, we will achieve a degree of European unity without precedent in the history of our continent.⁹⁹

We must be more strategic when it comes to Europe's external interests, and this also applies to enlargement policy. It is in our interest for the Western Balkans to have a European perspective. We share the same continent, the same history, the same culture and the same challenges. We have asked a lot of North Macedonia and Albania and they have delivered – now we must keep our word and start accession talks.¹⁰⁰

Cognitive ideas in philosophies refers to the principles and norms in the base of the program. Due to the clear orientation in values, collaboration, visions, culture and history, the quotations above are categorized as cognitive ideas in philosophies. The first quotation emphasizes what enlargements contributes with and that it is based on commonalities, such as history, harmony and cooperation. The vision of how the future Europe is formed is described with a painting and vision-oriented narrative. While the second quotation similarly has a base derived from commonalities, the approach is rather based on managing enlargement from a perspective of strategic interests. The weight is no longer on the significance of enlargement, but rather on how enlargement should be adapted in order to maintain its status.

There are indications of that the narrative has changed and those factors should be taken into account accordingly. One could argue that the emphasis on the significance of enlargement has diminished over time and that it has instead become increasingly important to shape enlargement accordingly based on current interests. There are also implications of that a development has occurred in the narrative from where cohesiveness and the commonalities are stressed, but that it is then transformed to a direction of promoting interests. Furthermore, there are indications of that the narrative has changed from previously being driven by a sense of community to instead underline obligations that has arisen as a result of unfulfilled promises. The foundations and principles can be

⁹⁹ Verheugen, “EU Enlargement – Challenges and changes.”

¹⁰⁰ von der Leyen, “Europe address – Dr Ursula von der Leyen President-elect of the European Commission.”

perceived as relatively unchanged, but how it affects the approach forward displays more changeable elements.

Normative

As I have outlined here today, enlargement is a success story in terms of democratic transformation and growing prosperity throughout the continent. But somewhere along the way, the narrative was lost. We have to engage in a genuine dialogue with the citizens, and to address the legitimate concerns many of them have, e.g. worries about future job opportunities.¹⁰¹

Enlargement was and is the European Union's most effective tool for strengthening security and prosperity in Europe; for transformation. Enlargement has helped economically the old and new Member States and the EU as a whole. At the same time, many doubts have arisen, but they were rather about the level of preparedness of the new Member States than about enlargement itself.¹⁰²

Public life and the principles and norms attached to it are included within normative ideas in philosophies. The quotations above have been categorized as normative due to their orientation in that they in different ways refer to communication with the public and that they also are based on experiences of the public life. The first quotation observes the loss of a narrative and the need for a dialogue with the citizens. An establishment of a dialogue is emphasised as a contributing factor of addressing concerns among the citizens. The second quotation, on the other hand, is more oriented in what the doubts are based on. Accordingly, the quotation displays that it is primarily the degree of preparedness among Member States that causes doubts and that there are not necessarily doubts concerning enlargement as a whole.

The narrative indicates on continuous and changeable elements that should be taken into consideration. What is common in the quotations is that there is an emphasis on success and transformation as a result of enlargement. On the other hand, it could be implied that there has been a development in the narrative where there initially is a modesty regarding deficiencies but over time it changes to point out clearly which component that constitutes doubt. One could understand the development in the narrative based on that experience displays that criticism should be addressed against the situation in which it emerges. Furthermore, there are indications of that the practical outcome of the criticism has

¹⁰¹ Rehn, "A stronger Europe through deepening and widening."

¹⁰² Füle, "New Europe and enlargement in a new political context."

changed, where decisiveness is prominent initially but over time it becomes increasingly important to point out the cause of doubt.

Analysis

Two factors that motivate the utility of Discursive Institutionalism are based on the theory's ability to explain continuity and change while providing an understanding of political action.¹⁰³ This assumption can be analysed in accordance with the aspects derived from the analysis of the different types of ideas. From a historical perspective, there are both existing and changing elements in the narrative within ideas that should be taken into account. Regarding the continuity, there are recurring themes in the narrative that refers to enlargement in a context of meaning, foundation, contribution and extent. This implies that the political action for enlargement should be understood as motivated by a return to the fundamental foundations. In terms of changes in the narrative, one could argue that the approach has become narrower and more restrained. The broad view of enlargement is replaced by an orientation of observing each case. Encouragement and improvements are replaced by closed opportunities and a reparation of trust. This indicates that the experience of enlargement has affected the narrative and approach in order to make it more suitable to its conditions.

5.2 Discourse

A discourse entails the ideas represented within the discourse as well as the associated processes in which ideas are expressed. The reason to why some ideas might fail and others succeed is due to how they are projected, where and to whom, which is explained within a discourse. Furthermore, aside from the different levels and types of ideas, a discourse can articulate other forms, such as narratives.¹⁰⁴ In this regard, discourses explain how the communication is designed and where it is directed. Consequently, it is the content of the narrative and how it is communicated that is analysed.

¹⁰³ Schmidt, "Discursive Institutionalism: The Explanatory Power of Ideas and Discourse," p.305.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. p.309.

Coordinative

The “coordinative” discourse refers to groups and individuals within a policy construction. Consequently, it can also include people who have ideas and access to policy making.¹⁰⁵ In this regard, the coordinative discourse includes quotations which may be perceived as technical or exclusionary, since information is expressed between the lines or assumes that the recipient has a clear understanding of the subject or background.

Clearly, we cannot ignore the enlargement fatigue, but we should not raise our hands up in the face of it. In other words, we must resist the temptations of populism and instead underline what concrete added value a gradual and carefully managed EU accession process provides for Europe by extending the zone of peace, liberty and democracy.¹⁰⁶

The European perspective contributes to consolidate democracy and stability and benefits the socio-economic development of candidate and potential candidate countries. Those reforms are ultimately for the well-being and the prosperity of their citizens. So the progress made has to be credible and sustainable.¹⁰⁷

Aligning your legislation with the EU rules is an essential requirement of the negotiation process. Candidate countries can of course negotiate transition periods. But what is not up for negotiation is the fact that when a country joins the EU, it has to apply EU legislation.¹⁰⁸

The next level is to integrate them into the European Union, and this is what we are working for. If we don't do it, others will come and try to exert their influence. The region is at the heart of Europe, we cannot afford that. So this is the priority number one for the current geopolitical Commission, to gain back trust and confidence in the Western Balkans, trust and confidence that we have lost in the Western Balkans and in the Member States when it comes to enlargement process.¹⁰⁹

The quotations above have been categorized within the coordinative discourse due to that the narrative is designed in a certain way and that it appears to be aimed at individuals and groups active in policy construction rather than the public. There are developments in the narrative that should be taken into account in this regard. Initially, there is an emphasis on the importance of resisting populism. Subsequently, the importance of a European perspective is rather stressed and consequently that the progress needs to be credible and

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. p.310.

¹⁰⁶ Rehn, “Building a New Consensus on Enlargement: How to match the strategic interest and functioning capacity of the EU?”

¹⁰⁷ Durão Barroso, “Western Balkans – towards a more integrated Europe.”

¹⁰⁸ Hahn, “EU and Montenegro in partnership to prepare the country for accession.”

¹⁰⁹ Várhelyi, “Remarks by Commissioner Várhelyi at the European Policy Centre briefing: Reforming enlargement policy?”

sustainable. Furthermore, a change in the narrative occurs and the legal aspects are specifically highlighted. Lastly, a development emerges in that the risks due to a lack of integration is stressed.

Common to the quotations is that the use of language in several respects can be considered as more technical, legal and difficult in comparison to the communicative discourse. The way in which the information or problems are explained presupposes that the recipient is aware of a situation, scenario or what is intended, as certain information is expressed between the lines. What is referred to as the lure of populism or influence from elsewhere requires background facts in this context. One could argue that one development that has arisen in the narrative of the coordinative discourse is that there is initially a more actionable urge to resist, for example, populism and that it then proceeds to a more abstract and hypothetical scenario, where it is not explicitly specified what another influence is or where it comes from. This implies that experience has influenced the narrative over time, since awareness of potential risks are mentioned before they arise, in order to stay one step ahead of the situation.

Communicative

The “communicative” discourse takes place in a political capacity, where the presentation of political ideas are delivered to the broad public. In other words, the results distinguishable from a “coordinative discourse” are later shared through a “communicative discourse”. Within the communicative discourse, those directed by this discourse, such as citizens and voters, are able to provide to it as well.¹¹⁰ In this regard, the communicative discourse entails quotations that expresses ideas in a manner that is adapted and designed in order to reach a wide audience. Hence, the ideas are based on history, values, opportunities and challenges that can be accepted or understood by the public.

While many people focus on the problems and weaknesses which quite understandably remain in these countries, they often overlook the enormous progress, the courage, the many talents and the unstinting efforts mobilised by these countries every day.¹¹¹

As a consequence of deepening integration and a parallel gradual widening of our

¹¹⁰ Schmidt, “Discursive Institutionalism: The Explanatory Power of Ideas and Discourse,” p.310.

¹¹¹ Verheugen, “EU Enlargement – Challenges and changes.”

zone of liberty and prosperity, Europe is today much safer and more prosperous than it was when the integration process started. With 27 Member States and a population of close on 500 million, today's European Union is much stronger and more influential in global governance than the EEC 50 years ago with its 6 Member States and a population of less than 200 million.¹¹²

Today, in the globalisation era, it is true again that size matters, as does the influence that derives from it. European Union with 28 Member States and more than half a billion inhabitants is stronger. Together we can face better the consequences of globalisation, the financial crisis or climate change. And the deepening of integration creates conditions for fostering unity among Member States.¹¹³

It is in our interest for the Western Balkans to have a European perspective. We share the same continent, the same history, the same culture and the same challenges. We have asked a lot of North Macedonia and Albania and they have delivered – now we must keep our word and start accession talks.¹¹⁴

The quotations above have been categorized within the communicative discourse due to that political ideas are delivered to the public. There are indications of that the narrative has evolved in what the core of the communication is based on. Initially there is an emphasis on that progress tends to be overlooked due to a centralisation on the weaknesses and problems instead. Subsequently, the narrative is later anchored in security and strength, as a result of the work that has been carried out. Furthermore, the narrative is developed to explain the importance of size and strength in relation to globalization. Lastly, the narrative is formed to emphasize the significance of a European perspective and the obligations that have arisen.

Common to the quotations is that the base is founded on a historical background where the emphasis relies on the achievements, thereby demonstrating the importance of cooperation and the factors that have led to the current position of the European Union. A clear sense of community and belonging are central within the quotations, which can be interpreted as a way to reach a wider audience with an accessible message. One development that can be derived from the narrative is that initially the quotations contain relatively grand messages with an emphasis on successes. Over time, the narrative evolves to becoming more clearly founded on current situations with associated challenges and emphasizes the importance of keeping promises. One can perceive the approach as going from emphasizing the success

¹¹² Rehn, "A stronger Europe through deepening and widening."

¹¹³ Füle, "New Europe and enlargement in a new political context."

¹¹⁴ von der Leyen, "Europe address – Dr Ursula von der Leyen President-elect of the European Commission."

and possibilities to being transformed into a duty of fulfilling expectations. It can be implied that the discourse is shaped by the experience of how messages are perceived and accepted by the public.

Analysis

Coherence and consistency are factors that contribute to the credibility of a discourse but ambiguity or vagueness should be expected to some extent. In cases of radical differences in the interpretation of a discourse, vagueness is perceived as helpful.¹¹⁵ The assumption regarding the significance of coherence, consistency and vagueness can be analysed in accordance with the presented discourses. In this case, coherence can mainly be found in the communicative discourse. One could argue that the narrative displays elements of coherence in the form of descriptive guidelines, where what is done and what should be done appears. It indicates on a sort of ideal in the narrative that persists over time. Furthermore, it could be implied that coherence can be found in the described conditions. This is reflected in how security, size and strength characterize the narrative historically and how these terms are utilized in order to describe the state of the European Union. Consequently, elements of vagueness are arguably found in the coordinative discourse. The addressing of certain topics indicates on a vagueness in the narrative based on that the direction is constantly changing. It entails references to populism, socio-economic development, legal aspects and influence. On the other hand, it confirms the theory's assumption of vagueness as an advantage in extensive differences. Subsequently, the experience of enlargement has affected the discourses in which the content and communication is formulated.

5.3 Summary Analysis

In order to analyse the overall picture of developments in the narrative of enlargement, the analysis is concluded with a link to the four aspects that characterize Discursive Institutionalism. The basis of the theory is founded on the importance of ideas and discourses regardless of the definition, the importance of the institutional context, that the ideas are placed in a "meaning context" and follows a "logic of communication" and

¹¹⁵ Schmidt, "Discursive Institutionalism: The Explanatory Power of Ideas and Discourse," p.311.

finally, the dynamic perspective on change.¹¹⁶ In accordance with the four basic assumptions of the theory, ideas and discourses can be understood as significant aspects for the development in the narrative within enlargement. The importance of ideas and discourses emerges from the adaptability of the narrative being built on both continuity and change. It could be implied that the content of the narrative represents the continuity while the approach stands for change. Consequently, in this case the significance of an institutional context refers to that the narrative is adjusted accordingly to the status and condition of the European Union. Subsequently, one could argue that in this regard the meaning context derives from that the ideas of enlargement are formulated in compatibility with a current situation. Furthermore, the logic of communication refers to how the messages are adapted to create an impact among its recipients. Lastly, it could be implied that the changing and lasting elements in the narrative, represented in the content and approach, corresponds with the theory's notion of a dynamic perspective on change.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. p.304.

6 Discussion and Conclusion

6.1 Discussion

The aim of the thesis has been to study the narrative in the European Union enlargement from a historical perspective. A Narrative Analysis based on the version by William Labov and Joshua Waletzky, which was complemented with two additional functions, has been utilized in the research. The primary material consisted of fifteen transcribed speeches by Commissioners for Enlargement and Presidents of the European Commission during the period 2001-2020. The theoretical perspective was based on Discursive Institutionalism by Vivien A. Schmidt, in which different types of ideas are determined in order to place them within a discourse. The research questions that guided the work were the following: To what extent and why has the narrative and approach to enlargement been affected by previous enlargement rounds? How can the narrative and approach to enlargement be understood based on Discursive Institutionalism?

The results that can be presented from the thesis are both quantitative and qualitative. Based on the findings, it appears that the most common type of idea is programs and that it is primarily the coordinative discourse that represents the communication. Furthermore, the results indicate that certain trends have developed where shifts have occurred over time. Initially, ideas were primarily shaped as policies and philosophies, but over time they are rather constructed as programs. A similar development can be found in the discourses, where the communicative discourse was the most common type but over time the coordinative discourse has become more prominent. Consequently, the qualitative results refer to how continuity and change are displayed in the narrative within enlargement. The emphasis on foundations and commonalities demonstrates a continuity of the narrative while a change is reflected in how the approach is formulated accordingly to a situation.

Narrative Analysis as a method provided a clear structure in how each function contributed to a good overview of the narrative. The method was selected because it offered conditions for examining existing as well as changing elements in the material. However, the method is best suited for verbal material and a possible improvement in this case would have been to make it more adaptable to the selected material. Since a Narrative Analysis is a

relatively open method, it is also important to emphasize that the interpretations and the practical use of it may differ. Studying transcribed speeches has been advantageous since the information presented is described in an expressive and holistic way. The choice of material was based on that the content is dynamic and descriptive in comparison to formal policy documents. What could have been done differently is to increase the amount of speeches in order to emphasize a more extensive oversight, although it would have required additional time and a larger scope. Transcribed speeches do not include tone, expressions and gestures as aspects, but it limits the proportion of subjective interpretations. Discursive Institutionalism fulfilled its purpose as a theory and was selected due to its ability of displaying continuity and change in different types of ideas and discourses within a particular area. The theory created conditions for categorizing and analysing the narrative within enlargement from a historical context. An improvement in this regard would have been to include a complementary theory that focuses on strategic or institutional narratives.

Consequently, the themes that emerged from the findings and analysis can be compared to the existing research presented in the thesis. Heather Grabbe presented the experiences gained through enlargement where one of the lessons was to ensure that commitments are fully met, since a membership is the strongest form of conditionality.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, the maintenance of a consistent and credible accession process is another lesson from the experience of enlargement, according to Grabbe.¹¹⁸ These experiences are also reflected in the findings, since the narrative has recurring elements of commitments being fully met and there is an emphasis on the importance of a credible process. On the other hand, one observation that can be derived from the thesis indicates that commitments extend longer, since it also entails the initiating of the promised process once commitments have been fully met. It is thus a multifaceted experience that characterizes both the process and narrative of enlargement.

¹¹⁷ Grabbe, "Six Lessons of Enlargement Ten Years On: The EU's Transformative Power in Retrospect and Prospect," p.42.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. p.49.

Erhan İçener, David Phinnemore and Dimitris Papadimitriou states that there has been a decrease in enthusiasm for enlargement.¹¹⁹ It is an observation that is reflected as a prominent theme in the analysis of the thesis. What differs, however, is that the thesis' analysis take into account how this observation is implemented in the narrative for enlargement. Enthusiasm and support for enlargement figures as a recurring theme in the narrative, but an approach to this development also emerges. The emphasis is not only on paying attention to the decrease in support for enlargement as a fact, but there is also an emphasis on problematizing certain interpretations and understandings of enlargement. Against this background, the analysis indicates on how the reduction in support or enthusiasm for enlargement is used as a tool to justify the direction forward. One could argue that although the experience has contributed to a decline in support or enthusiasm, its transformation into a narrative can navigate towards a more favourable direction in order to maintain credibility.

Michael Leigh stressed the importance of creating a strategic narrative in order to guide actions.¹²⁰ Consequently, Leigh emphasized that concrete achievements should be lifted in order to build the perception of the European Union.¹²¹ The significance of a strategic narrative has not been recognised in the thesis. However, the narrative has been described as lost and the recurring themes in the material indicate that some type of strategy is embedded within the narrative. It is mainly visible in the several references made to the fundamental foundation, history and principles that characterize the European Union. On the other hand, the thesis may to some extent contradict the statement of that the uplifting of concrete achievements would contribute to the building of a perception of the European Union. The motivation for this is that relatively concrete achievements are central in the narrative over time, but it does not necessarily seem to have contributed to a perception of the European Union or enlargement. One could interpret this as that it might not be within achievements that the problem resides and that there are further factors that should be prioritized in the construction of the perception of the European Union.

¹¹⁹ İçener, Phinnemore and Papadimitriou, "Continuity and change in the European Union's approach to enlargement: Turkey and Central and Eastern Europe compared," p.207.

¹²⁰ Leigh, "A view from the policy community: a new strategic narrative for Europe?," p.382.

¹²¹ Ibid. p.389.

Against the background of that the previous research is based on enlargement in relation to experience, future and approach, the research contribution of this thesis is highlighting the significance of experience in the narrative within enlargement from a historical perspective. This paper has connected several aspects of enlargement that has previously been researched separately, which contributes to a holistic perspective. The research supplement is thereby placed within the research area for enlargement, where there is a distinct focus on studying narratives, previous experience and the historical context. Consequently, questions have arisen during the course of the work, opening up for further research areas. Due to delimitations the thesis has not studied strategies, credibility and public opinion on a deeper level. Future research could, for example, consider whether there is a strategic narrative within enlargement and how it has been adapted to the political contemporary time. Another suggestion for future research is to study the significance of credibility and public opinion for the narrative within enlargement.

Enlargement has become an increasingly central issue in the European Union. The background for this is partially due to the non-paper presented by France and the European Commission's proposal to make the accession process more credible, politically stronger, dynamic and predictable. The outcome of the thesis indicates that previous experiences of enlargement are mainly based on internal and common grounds. However, recent developments raise questions of whether a shift has occurred in which external experiences and perceptions have gained an increased impact on the narrative within enlargement. The historical context illustrates that Member States initially had an extensive influence on enlargement and since the French proposal had a major impact last year, it might indicate that the future narrative of the European Union enlargement may not be primarily constructed or influenced by the European Union.

6.2 Conclusion

The thesis was based on the notion of that enlargement has become a current matter on the agenda for the European Union. Due to the extended tradition of enlargement, the orientation of the thesis was to study how the narrative and approach to enlargement has changed over time. Accordingly, the aim of the thesis was formulated as to study the narrative in the European Union enlargement from a historical perspective.

The extent to which and why the narrative and approach to enlargement has been affected by previous enlargement rounds can be understood based on the findings and the analysis presented in the thesis. Experience of previous enlargement rounds that has affected the narrative can be perceived as twofold, in which its extent refers to both existing and changing elements. A continuity in the narrative is represented by referring to enlargement in relation to recurring themes, such as meaning, foundation and contribution. In terms of changes, however, the approach is more adaptable to the specific situation. This indicates that the experience of previous enlargement rounds has affected the narrative and the approach, because the fundamentals remain important for the narrative while the approach is adjusted in order to be suitable for the given conditions.

In regards to how the narrative and approach to enlargement can be understood based on Discursive Institutionalism, it can be concluded in accordance with the four basic assumptions of the theory. First, ideas and discourses can be perceived as important aspects for the development of the narrative and approach within enlargement. Second, the narrative and approach resides in an institutional context in which they can be adjusted in accordance with the status and condition of the European Union. Third, a meaning context is based on ideas of enlargement and the logic of communication is based on how messages of enlargement are adapted to make an impact on its recipients. Lastly, a dynamic perspective on change can be understood as the changing and lasting elements in the narrative within enlargement.

The results presented in the thesis could be utilized as a basis for a broader study of narratives within European Union enlargement. This could, for example, concern a study involving further institutions than solely the European Commission or by studying the narrative for enlargement within the European Union in its entirety. Furthermore, the methodological approach could be applied to study another policy area or subject specific to the European Union, in order to examine its narratives from a historical perspective. Consequently, the related questions that were left outside the study concerns the strategy that determines the direction for enlargement.

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