ENLARGEMENT AS A CASE SHOWING DELIBERATIVE AND REVERSIBLE NATURE OF THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

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Abstract: This paper reports on a case study on the EU's enlargement process which aims to provide an empirical answer to the question whether the European integration is irreversible or not. In line with a Habermasian logic, the study has found that both the existing members' and new comers' behavioural patterns were mainly shaped by instrumental/strategic actions, which were inappropriate to the logic of appropriateness, during the enlargement process from the 1970s to the 2010s. Therefore, this finding supports the argument that the European integration is an outcome of member states' deliberative actions; thus, it might be reversible when member states' significant interests clash with this integration process.

Keywords: European Integration, Enlargement, Communicative Action, Agent-structure Model.

GENİŞLEME: AVRUPA ENTEGRASYONUNUN MÜZAKEREYE DAYALI VE TERSİNE DÖNEBİLİR DOĞASINI GÖSTEREN BİR VAKA

Öz: Bu makalenin amacı AB'nin genişleme süreci üzerinden bir vaka çalışması yürüterek Avrupa entegrasyonu tersine dönebilir mi sorusuna ampirik bir cevap sunmaktır. Bu çalışma Habermascı bir mantık içerisinde 1970'lerden 2010'lara kadar süregelen AB genişleme sürecinde hem aday hem de üye ülkelerin davranışlarının uygunluk mantığına uygunsuz bir şekilde yarar odaklı stratejik hareketlerle şekillendiğini bulmuştur. Böylelikle bu bulgu 'Avrupa entegrasyonu üye ülkelerin bilinçli hareketlerinin bir ürünüdür ve üye ülkelerin hayati çıkarları bu entegrasyon süreci ile çakışırsa süreç tersine dönebilir' argümanını desteklemektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Avrupa Entegrasyonu, Genişleme, İletişimsel Eylem, Yapan-Yapı Modeli.

I. Introduction

The end of the Cold War created a benign political atmosphere in which the European integration had a chance to vertically and horizontally flourish in the 1990s and early 2000s. In line with this real-life development, the constructivist assumption about the future of the European integration also became highly popular in the EU studies. According to those assumptions, member states were in an Europeanization process, through which they would be melted in the EU pot, a common European identity would evolve from European nations, and a gradually deepening supranational integration would be possible (Besson, 2006; Cowles, Caporaso, and Risse, 2001; Eriksen, 2005; Habermas, 1998, 2004; Risse, 2010; Schmitter, 2000; Shore, 2001). However,

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these assumptions were scattered by the recent developments. Mainly, the member states have a tendency to sideline the EU rules as a response to the rise of realpolitik. To illustrate, due to the securitization of immigration issue, Germany, Austria, France, Denmark and Sweden decided to control their own national borders (Baczynska, 2016; Traynor and Smith, 2016). Secondly, the discussions on Brexit and Grexit could be seen as national objections to Brussels' existing central power. Thirdly, sovereign debt crisis showed that there was not a solidarity among the EU's nations because the rich nations objected to bailing out other members suffering from national debt crisis, and in return, the indebted nations also revolted against the austerity plans dictated by the EU (Zielonka, 2014). Fourthly, Euroscepticism has been institutionalized as a political position against a supranational EU across the member states.

As a result, it could be argued that all Europe has woken up from a dream, and the constructivist approaches have difficulty in explaining *new Europe*. Thus, there is also a decline in the popularity of the constructivist approach in the EU studies (Blavoukos and Oikonomou, 2012; Coman and Crespy, 2014). As a result, the question: *whether the European integration is reversible or not* has become more important in the EU studies after the euro crisis (Giddens, 2013; Hayward and Wurzel, 2012; Webber, 2014; Zielonka, 2014; Zimmermann and Dur, 2012). In this sense, this paper aims to contribute an academic answer to this question by carrying out a case study on the EU's enlargement process in line with a critique of constructivism. The EU's enlargement represents the horizontal integration of Europe; thus, findings from this research might provide empirical arguments to be used to anticipate the future of the European integration process.

II. The Critique of Constructivism and the EU's Enlargement

This study mainly focuses on the critique of constructivism that it has a unidirectional/deterministic logic emphasising only one possible behaviour pattern of nation-state (an evolution from Lockean culture of anarchy to Kantian culture of peace) (Drulák, 2006). In particular, the constructivist approach perceives member states as norm-abider agents in the EU structure. Therefore, according to this approach, they would irreversibly get socialized in the EU and unconsciously adopt the EU's norms/values (Europeanization process). As a result of this socialization process, they would develop a common identity and relevant norms, and behave accordingly (a logic of appropriateness to the EU identity and norms would drive member state behaviour). Therefore, nation-state would gradually be melted into the EU pot and a supranational EU would be the final destination of the European integration process (Besson, 2006; Cowles, Caporaso, and Risse, 2001; Eriksen, 2005; Habermas, 1998, 2004; Risse, 2010; Schmitter, 2000; Shore, 2001). According to this reasoning, the EU's irreversible supranational destination mostly depends on 'socialization/Europeanization of member states'; thus, member states are

considered as an internal part of the European integration (Sending, 2002). However, this paper argues that member states are at the same time nation-states who are the most institutionalized actors in the world system; thus, they are actually exogenic actors in the EU with their stronger national identity, norms and institutions. As a result of this fact, constructivism might exaggerate the effect of 'Europeanization/socialization' on them.

Related to this problem, Thomas Risse tries to develop a better understanding with an aim to explain Europeanization in nation-state behaviour as a deliberate action. Instead of the above-mentioned 'norm-abider agent' understanding, he defines member states as deliberative actors in a normative environment from a Habermasian perspective (Risse, 2009). According to this understanding, member states deliberatively construct a collective reasoning via argumentation/persuasion and they have a tendency to abide by that new collective reasoning (communicative action) (Risse, 2000; Risse and Sikkink, 1999), therefore, the internelization of new European norms are possible through a communication process between member states (Sending, 2002: 462). Finnemore and Sikkink (1999) also accept that 'logic of appropriateness' is not the only reason driving nation-state behaviour, but according to them, persuasion is the key linking an agent's (nation-state) action to social structure (the EU).

To have a better understanding of the question how persuasion will be achieved between member states, Habermas's typology of agent actions might be more explanatory. First of all, it should be underlined that Habermas is not against the utilitarian models explaining agents' behaviour as a deliberative/instrumental action, but according to him, these models are not enough to develop a theory of rational action (Heath, 2001). For that reason, he develops a typology explaining agents' actions in a deeper framework (Maat, 2009). After defining rationality as 'a problem solving action' (Habermas, 1984: 12), he formulates three categories explaining agents' actions as instrumental, strategic or communicative actions. According to this categorization, instrumental and strategic actions are motivated by 'egocentric calculations of success'; however, although instrumental action is non-social, strategic action is a social action through which one agent tries to manipulate/convince another one or become more successful than it. Contrary to these success oriented actions, communicative action is a social action in which agents have an orientation to reaching understanding (ibid: 285-286). Therefore, according to Habermas (1984: 286):

In communicative action participants are not primarily oriented to their own individual successes; they pursue their individual goals under the condition that they can harmonize their plans of action on the basis of common situation definitions.

According to this understanding, the European integration should be an outcome of a set of communicative actions implemented by member states if the

integration is 'irreversible'. However, this paper has analysed the EU's enlargement waves and revealed that the EU's horizontal integration process actually suffers from a lack of 'communicative action'. Firstly, the paper has found that the existing member states' behaviour was mainly driven by instrumental and strategic actions; thus, they did not hesitate to implement inappropriate behaviour to the EU's norms. For example, they stretched out the enlargement related negotiations and did not hesitate to use their 'veto power' as a last resort to secure their national interests. On the other hand, the accession negotiations did not produce communicative actions perfectly embedded by new comers as a result of the hierarchical nature of the accession process; therefore, the Europeanization via enlargement conditionality was actually reversible and new comers easily displayed inappropriate behaviour to the EU's norms in the post-accession era. As a result, the findings of this paper showed that the EU's horizontal integration process suffers from a lack of communicative action; thus, they support the argument that the European integration might be reversible if it does not satisfy member states' national expectations. To show the findings above in detail, the paper firstly focuses on the existing members' inappropriate behaviour in the EU's enlargement process, and secondly, on new comers' inappropriate behaviour to the EU's norms.

A. The existing members' inappropriate behaviour

If the EU's enlargement process is analysed at a rhetorical level, it might be seen as an outcome of a communicative action. In particular, if European integration is considered as a 'lifeworld' for the member states in which they are harmonizing their specific interests via communication, this lifeworld represents the entire continent of Europe. Thus, every European country has a right to be part of it. In this sense, it will be awkward for the existing member states to object to any enlargement in this lifeworld. Especially, as enlargement is a complex issue to make clear cost-benefit calculations (Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig, 2009), it could be assumed that this complexity might bind member states' 'egocentric calculations', and the argument: *enlargement expands peace and prosperity further in Europe* might be influential over member states as a 'better argument' driving their attitudes towards enlargement. However, if the issue is analysed a bit further, it can easily be realized that enlargement actually causes significant changes and revisions in the EEC/EC/EU lifeworld; thus, the enlargement process cannot be governed by a 'better argument', but it contains serious negotiations among the member states (Finlayson, 2005: 52). Therefore, the EU's enlargement should not only become a 'better argument' but also its outcomes should be 'reasonably well' for member states.

From this perspective, the paper has found that despite their rhetorical support for enlargement, the member states' specific interests became more apparent in the enlargement related negotiations and their behavioural patterns were more similar to instrumental and strategic actions. In this regard, the most

noticeable inappropriate behaviour of member states against their initial rhetorical support for enlargement was *veto threat*. Here, the most famous case is the French President de Gaulle's double veto against the British applications in 1963 and 1967 despite the other members' strong criticisms (Dedman, 2009). At the Dublin European Council (3–4 December 1984), Greece declared that it would veto the Iberian accession until guaranteeing getting more financial aid (via Integrated Mediterranean Program) despite being another newly joined Mediterranean country and despite the criticisms of the other nine members (Brown, 1984; Getler, 1984; Lewis, 1984; The European Council, 1984). The poorer members were worried that the EFTA enlargement might result in a power shift from poor south to rich north within the Community (Hutton, 1992); thus, at the Brussels Summit (11 May 1992), Spain, Portugal and Ireland stated their intention to veto any Community decision if the EFTA countries were included in the decision making process before a satisfactory agreement on the cohesion funds (Piedrafita, 2006). Greece again threatened to veto the Eastward enlargement if Cyrpus was excluded from the accession process (Bideleux and Jeffries, 1998: 648). The Dutch finance minister Gerrit Zalm also used this tool in the case of the Eastward enlargement in 1997 to push other members to accept a fairer financial system (according to the Netherlands' national interests) (Butler, 1997; O'Brennan, 2006: 45). Just before the Luxembourg European Council (1997), Spain hinted that it might veto the Eastern enlargement if its financial concerns were not met (Walker, 1997). Austria set out the resumption of the accession negotiations with Croatia as a condition to allow starting the accession negotiation with Turkey in 2005 (Watt and Smith, 2005). Greece blocked the accession negotiation with the FYR of Macedonia because of the dispute on the name: 'Macedonia', which was also a Greek region's name (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 2009). Despite being a fervent supporter of the EU's enlargement, even Britain declared that it would veto any further enlargement unless the other EU members agreed to reform the EU's free movement of people principle to prevent the immigration influx from new members to Britain in 2013 (Meade, 2013; Waterfield, 2013). More dramatically, Cyprus, Greece, Romania, Slovakia, Spain do not recognize Kosovo's independence; thus, the EU does not have a common position on it.

In addition to the direct *veto threat*, the member states' instrumental and strategic actions also stretched out the enlargement related negotiations. For example, the Iberian enlargement process started in the late 1970s but ended in 1986 due to the difficult negotiations between the existing members on how to finance the Iberian enlargement and how to integrate the applicants' agriculture sector in the Community system. To illustrate, France and Italy asked for a protection mechanism for their own farmers before the accession of the Iberian countries (Duchene, 1982), and it took several years to reach a consensus on this mechanism. In addition to this, the solution of the British rebate problem became an implicit condition for the achievement of the Iberian enlargement

(Glencross, 2009: 95; Ruano, 2005: 268). Despite the consensus among the member states about the EFTA enlargement, it became a part of 'deepening vs. widening' discussions in the early 1990s. Especially, according to France, the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty was an important conditionality to the EFTA enlargement because the deepening of the integration should have a priority over the enlargement (Krotz and Schild, 2013; Preston, 1997). Although many studies explain the Eastward enlargement as an outcome of member states' moral duty (Bafoil, 2013; Casier, 2008; Risse, 2010; F. Schimmelfennig, 2001; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2002; Sedelmeier, 2005; Sjursen, 2002), it required deep structural reforms in the EU system (the EU's governance and finance, the CAP, and Structural and Cohesion Funds); thus, it went hand in hand with two history-making intergovernmental conferences (the 1996 IGC and 2000 IGC), in which member states were highly sensitive about their national preferences. To illustrate, the 1996 IGC aimed to reform the EU's financial system, the CAP, and the Structural and Cohesion Funds; however, the national preferences were so diverse that they could not reach a consensus (Sedelmeier, 2000). Therefore, the Agenda 2000 was initiated in 1997 to achieve those reforms, but the member states could not reach a consensus until the Berlin European Council on 25-26 March 1999 (The European Council, 1999). The 2000 IGC was launched in 1999 to reform the EU's governance prior to the Eastward enlargement, and after a three-year negotiation process, the member states could finally reach an agreement on the Eastward enlargement at the Copenhagen European Council on 12-13 December 2002 (The European Council, 2002). In terms of the EU's enlargement towards the Western Balkans and Turkey, it is still an ongoing but open-ended process in which 'bilateral conditionality' originating from member states' specific interests is the main obstacle to achieving any progress (e.g. Greece vs. Macedonia, Cyprus vs. Turkey, Croatia vs. Serbia).

B. New comers' inappropriate behaviour

The Constructivist understanding assumes that applicant countries are willing to adopt the EU's norms; thus, enlargement might result in irreversible Europeanization in their behaviour. However, as noted above, this assumption is an outcome of a unidirectional logic focusing on one possible reality (Europeanization via enlargement) (Guba and Lincoln, 1989) but this 'limits the space for critical thinking' (Zehfuss, 2002: 262). Firstly, we need to be critical about this possibility because of the fact that an identity replacement from nation state towards the EU should be harder than the mentioned constructivist expectation as national-level socialization might dominate the EU-level socialization that is a relatively new undertaking compared to nation-state (Zürn and Checkel, 2005: 1075). In this sense, the embeddedness of a common action by parties needs harmonization of national interests 'on the basis of common situation definitions' (Habermas, 1984: 286). Therefore, Risse (2000: 19) also points out 'non-hierarchal' relationship between parties as a key to the

development of a communicative action. Despite this fact, when the EU's enlargement process is analysed, it could be easily seen that it has a hierarchal system in which applicant states are in an inferior position compared to the existing members during the accession negotiations, and actually, these negotiations are not real negotiations between equals but a process screening to what extent applicants have adopted the EU's existing rules/norms dictated via enlargement conditionality (Moravcsik and Vachudova, 2002). As a result of this hierarchical relationship, the accession negotiations could not produce a communicative action embedded by candidate states, and after getting rid of the accession conditionality as the sword of Damocles above their head, they might display behaviour inappropriate to the EU's norms (especially in politically controversial issues) (Grabbe, 2014).

The most noticeable example supporting this argument is Britain. Britain was not a constitutive partner of the European integration project in the 1950s; thus, the integration was governed mostly under the influence of France (Ruttley, 2002: 230). In line with France's priorities, the integration was institutionalized on a path going towards a supranational inward-looking integration, however, Britain's national system was mostly comply with an intergovernmental outward-looking one (Crowson, 2007). On the other hand, the application emerged as a necessary instrumental/strategic action for Britain according to the post-war international parameters; therefore, she had to accept the accession conditionality determined by the existing members (Gowland, Turner, and Wright, 2009). As a result, when Britain became a member of the Community in 1973, an immediate anomaly between the national and the Community system emerged, and since then, Britain has challenged supranational proposals and tried to drive the integration process towards a more intergovernmental outward-looking path (George, 1996; Gifford, 2008). In this sense, even the term: 'Euroscepticism' was coined to define Britain's position in the Community (Milner, 2000). As a result of this anomaly, 'renegotiation of the terms of entry' is always on the British political agenda, and a second EU membership referendum (Brexit) takes place in June 2016 after her first membership referendum in 1975. Similar to Britain, the Scandinavian countries have also had a Eurosceptic position defending their national systems against the central power of Brussels since their full membership, which was an outcome of 'exogenous' enforcements like the enactment of Single European Act and the rise of globalization (Bieler, 2000; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005; Tatham, 2009).

As a counter argument, the Mediterranean and the Eastward enlargement might be introduced as good examples proving Europeanization of authoritarian states via enlargement. At first glance, it is acceptable that newly formed democratic regimes in those countries needed the EU membership to strengthen their legitimacy; therefore, they were keener to adopt the EU norms. However, despite this fact, their Europeanization is still reversible. Firstly,

Europeanization as a newly constructed phenomenon affecting member states' behaviour might be 'viable' in a limited time and space (see: Glaserfeld, 1984, Christiansen, Jorgensen, and Wiener, 2001). In addition to this, member states as nation-states are exogenic actors in the EU who are highly responsive to any significant change in the international arena. Therefore, they might change their behaviour patterns and behave differently in different time-space horizons. Especially when they face an international exogenous shock like the recent financial crisis, rise of realpolitik or the immigration crisis, they might change their behaviour patterns. To illustrate, the sovereign debt crisis in the EU in connection with the global financial crisis has showed that the convertibility of the Mediterranean countries' Europeanization is actually possible as the negotiations on potential solutions to this crisis were power oriented and suffered from a lack of communicative action. As a result, the Mediterranean nations revolted against the hegemonic position of the EU (Kaldor and Selchow, 2015). The lack of communicative action in the negotiations also aroused fear and mutual suspicion among the EU nations (Zielonka, 2014). Related to this point, even Risse (2014) accepts that the politicization of the EU issues in the members states' public spheres after the euro crisis might lead to 'de-Europeanization' and 're-nationalization' if political leaders in Europe cannot construct a sufficient 'communicative space' to govern this politicization. And actually, 'de-Europeanization' has already entered the academic discourse to emphasize the inappropriate behaviour of the new members to the EU's norms (Ágh, 2015, 2016; Öniş and Kutlay, 2016; Raagmaa, Kalvet, and Kasesalu, 2014; Triandafyllidou, 2014). For example, Hungary and Poland emerged as two 'illiberal' democracies' of the EU (Friedman, 2016; Muller, 2016; The Economist, 2015; Zalan, 2016), and the Hungarian Prime minister Viktor Orbán explicitly praises 'illiberal democracy' as a more appropriate model for Hungary and refuses the adoption of 'West European' style of democracy by arguing that member states should have a right to interpret democracy according to their own political culture (European Union News, 2015). In addition to them, after passing the accession conditionality, Romania and Bulgaria relaxed their effort to institutionalize 'rule of law' in their domestic systems. As a result of this experience, the EU members decided to make the accession process tougher at the December 2006 summit by implementing justice and corruption tests for candidates (The European Council, 2006). However, despite this effort, 'rule of law' as an important EU norm was not sufficiently institutionalized in these members (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 2013; Vucheva, 2008). In other words, they witnessed a kind of 'de-Europeanization' in the post-enlargement era as well (Iancu and Ungureanu, 2013). Additionally, the gravitational power of the EU over the applicant countries is also in decline after the euro crisis; thus, a 'de-Europeanization process' is also a case for them (e.g. see: Ovali, 2015).

III.   Conclusion: A Reversible Integration

Whether the European integration is reversible is becoming a more important question in the EU studies in the wake of the recent financial crisis. Therefore, this study aims to offer an empirical answer to this question by analysing the EU's enlargement process (the EU's horizontal integration process) in line with a critique of constructivism. The paper is critical about the constructivist perception of member state as a norm-abider internal agent in the EU structure. However, it argues that member states are actually nation states that are the strongest and well-institutionalized actors with a high sensitivity to global affairs. This means that they are not an internal part of the EU structure, through which their unconscious Europeanization would be possible. In this sense, as noted above, Hebermasian logic also accepts that the European integration is an outcome of deliberative actions of member states. Furthermore, according to this logic, 'irreversibility of it' depends on a shift in member states' behaviour from instrumental/strategic action to communicative action.

The paper has analysed the EU's enlargement waves from this perspective and found that neither the existing members nor the new comers properly performed this behaviour pattern (communicative action) in the EU's enlargement process. In other words, according to the findings, member states (both existing and new comers) did not hesitate to behave inappropriately to the EU's norms/identity contrary to the constructivist assumptions originating from 'logic of appropriateness'. Firstly, the existing members performed instrumental/strategic actions during the enlargement process. To illustrate, they did not hesitate to use their 'veto power' or to stretch out the enlargement related negotiations to guarantee their national interests. In addition to this, the paper has found that enlargement conditionality or accession process did not result in a communicative action embedded by the new comers because of the hierarchal nature of the accession negotiations; therefore, the new comers had a tendency to reverse their behavioural pattern according to their national preferences in the post-accession era if these preferences clash with the EU's norms/identity. As a result, these findings about member states' behaviour derived from the EU's horizontal integration process suggest that the European integration might be reversible once it clashes with member states' significant national interests or a change in the international parameters pushes member states to behave differently.

These findings have also suggested that the unidimensional (the EU centred) understanding of the 'agent-structure model' should be enriched. The European integration is still an ongoing process; thus, it is hard to define it as a 'structure' with a fixed identity and norms. Therefore, using the 'logic of appropriateness' emphasizing the EU's identity and norms as the main determinants of member state behaviour is too deterministic (also see: Moravcsik, 2001). This paper has already provided many examples showing inappropriate behaviour of member states to the EU's identity and norms. As a

result, we have an important question: To what extent this ongoing process is a per se structure, independent from the broader international system and nation state. Firstly, nation-state is the strongest political institution in the world politics; thus, to what extent is it meaningful to define it as a norm-abider individual/agent in a looser ongoing institutionalization process (EU)? Secondly, the international system can also be considered as a broader structure in which the EU might adopt an agent role. Therefore, the EU scholars need to devote more attention to 'agent-structure' discussions in the discipline of IR (e.g. the nature of agents and structures and their relationships, and 'level of analysis' problem) (e.g. see: Carlsnaes, 1992; Dessler, 1989; Doty, 1997; Wendt, 1987) to make nation state behaviour in the EU, and through which the future of the EU, more knowable.

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