MAXCAP

Maximizing the integration capacity of the European Union

Newsletter

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SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

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Editorial

Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter informing you about the launch of a three-year research project, entitled "Maximizing the integration capacity of the European Union – lessons of and challenges for enlargement and beyond" (MAXCAP)! Our project officially started on April 1st, 2013 and is funded under the EU's Seventh Framework Programme for Research (FP7).

MAXCAP will start with a critical analysis of the effects of the 2004-2007 'big bang' enlargement on stability, democracy and prosperity of candidate countries on the one hand, and the EU's institutions on the other. We will then investigate how the EU can maximize its integration capacity for current and future enlargements. Adopting an inter-disciplinary and mixed methods approach that combines desk research, in-depth interviews and Q-methodology, MAXCAP will

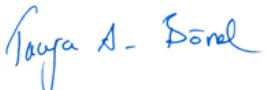
a) explain the effects of the EU's integration modes and strategies on democracy and socio-economic development in the new members, candidates and neighbourhood countries
b) inquire into the relationship between the widening and deepening of the EU by establishing conditions for effective decision-making and implementation in an enlarged EU
c) identify the social limits to the EU's integration capacity related to citizens' perceptions of the last and future enlargements
d) study the EU's current and past negotiation strategies in the context of enlargement and investigate to what extent they need to be adjusted to changing conditions in the EU and the candidate countries
e) examine how the EU employs different modes of integrating countries with highly diverse economic powers, democratic qualities of governance, and institutional capacities
f) assess whether alternative models, such as the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), can be successful in bringing countries closer to the EU.

Our nine-partner consortium of academic and research centers from all over Europe will deal with these issues in five substantial work packages, flanked by three work packages dealing with the management of the project, the compilation of overall findings and lessons, and the dissemination of results. MAXCAP Partners are Freie Universität Berlin (coordinator), Leiden University (co-coordinator), London School of Economics and Political Science, Eidgenössische Hochschule Zürich, Sabanci University, European University Institute, Balkan Civil Society Development Network, Central European University, and Sofia University.

This newsletter will inform you about our research activities and our Kick-Off Conference, which took place from May 30th – June 1st, 2013 in Berlin. We will start with a report about our round table on the lessons to be drawn from current and previous enlargements and the ENP for the EU's future capacity to implement its rules and norms beyond its borders. We will also describe the research to be done in each work package and reflect upon the insights we gained from the discussions at the Kick-Off Conference. Last but not least, the newsletter provides you with an overview of our various dissemination activities aimed at involving all of you in a lively debate about the EU's past, present and future integration capacity.

We hope you will enjoy reading about MAXCAP's research activities. Stay in touch!

Best regards,



Tanja A. Börzel — Project coordinator

Antoaneta Dimitrova — Project co-coordinator

Report: Round Table

"Ever wider? Lessons of and Prospects for Enlargement and Beyond"

Round table held at the Delegation of the European Commission in Berlin on May 30th, 2013
by Julia Langbein

MAXCAP's Kick-Off Conference started with a public round table dealing with the lessons to be drawn from current and previous enlargements and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) for the European Union's future capacity to implement its rules and norms beyond its borders. Representatives from the European Commission, various academic institutions and the European Academy Berlin were invited as panellists. The round table attracted nearly 80 participants, among them academics, students, journalists and policymakers. Tanja A. Börzel, MAXCAP's Coordinator and Director of the Center for European Integration at Freie Universität Berlin, moderated the event.

Tanja A. Börzel at the round table in Berlin

Börzel began the discussion by citing a recent Ernst & Young survey published in May 2013, which revealed Croatia to be the second most corrupt country in Europe, after Slovenia. Since Croatia will join the EU on July 1st this year, she asked whether the EU learned anything from Bulgaria's and Romania's accession to the EU in 2007. Axel Walldén, policy advisor at DG Enlargement, argued that Bulgaria and Romania should not be singled out as the only reference points in this respect. Countries participating in both 2004 and 2007 enlargements provide lessons with respect to the fragility of democratic institutions, rule of law, balance of power and corruption. For example, ever since the European Commission had decided to postpone Slovakia's accession back in 1997 due to the country's deteriorating political situation, it has been clear that political criteria have to be discussed together with technical issues. At the same time it is difficult to deal with corruption in the absence of an acquis and standard measurements. According to Walldén, the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM), introduced in 2007 to address Bulgaria's and Romania's shortcomings in the fields of judicial reform, corruption and organised crime, has many drawbacks by creating a division among member states into two categories. It was avoided in the case of Croatia through better preparation of the candidate country during the pre-accession period.

Antoaneta Dimitrova, MAXCAP's Co-coordinator and Associate Professor of Public Policy at Leiden University, added that it is, indeed, problematic to label only two countries (Bulgaria and Romania) as corrupt, while other EU member states, such as for example the Czech Republic and Italy, face challenges to democratic institutions and state capture problems as well. In addition, the focus on problems regarding corruption in Central and Eastern Europe fully ignores that the new member states have also achieved lots of progress in terms of democratic development, which few expected back in 1989. The one-sided critical rhetoric of political elites in the EU-15 has influenced public perceptions of recent enlargements in the old member states in a way that makes it more difficult to negotiate future enlargements.

While 'enlargement fatigue' constitutes a big problem in the old member states, some new members still show enthusiasm about the European project and even want to join the euro in times of crises. Klaudijus Maniokas, member of MAXCAP's Advisory Board and Chairman of the Lithuanian consultancy ESTEP, explained this puzzle with the fact that euro adoption is, in many new member states, a political and security project and not necessarily a purely economic one. Countries like Latvia and Lithuania aim to join the eurozone in order to increase their interdependencies with the EU and to shift further away from Russia's orbit. Eckart D. Stratenschulte, Director of the European Academy in Berlin, added that the adoption of the euro is also fuelled by power considerations. Joining the euro area is on Poland's political agenda since parts of the current Polish government fear that the country could be left out of key arenas of EU decision-making if it did not join the club. Wade Jacoby, Director of the Center for the Study of Europe at Brigham Young University in Provo/Utah, stressed that there are also economic arguments for joining the euro, since euro adoption gives countries access to the European Central Bank's liquidity facilities. Further, Jacoby enriched the debate by presenting an US-American view of the European integration project, which is changing as the financial crisis seems to move from the US to Europe. According to him, the US is eager to learn from the EU's successful experience to help reform other countries both in political and economic terms, but the EU's success is obscured by present economic difficulties.

Finally, the discussion shifted to the ENP. Eckart D. Stratenschulte argued that a key mistake in the debate about the ENP is to assume that strong conditionality is a necessary condition to foster domestic reforms in the neighbourhood. Indeed, strong rewards, such as EU membership, helped to strengthen liberal elites in the Central and East European candidate countries during the Eastern enlargement. However, the carrot of membership is not necessarily the appropriate reward for domestic change in every context and for different kinds of elites. According to him, powerful elites in the Eastern neighbourhood countries are not interested in supporting democracy or the rule of law if such reforms undermine their privileged position in the domestic political game. The politics of conditionality ignore that the interests of ruling elites are not identical with the interest of the country as a whole in such a context. Put differently, conditionality cannot be an effective instrument to foster political reforms if the target country lacks democratic political structures. Therefore, democracy can simply not be promoted from the outside. This is certainly also a lesson learned from enlargement. Axel Walldén stressed that conditionality is only effective under certain conditions. For instance, he added, nobody should be surprised that EU conditionality is less effective in a strong country with a booming economy like Turkey.

During the Q&A it was stressed that enlargement does not necessarily only concern democracy promotion and economic development. In the context of the Western Balkans enlargement, it is first and foremost about conflict management. The audience also reminded panellists that bilateral relationships among member states and candidate countries should be taken into account as a factor impeding the EU's integration capacity (e.g. the problems between Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia over the latter's official name). Further, members of the audience challenged the view that the actors that matter for enlargement and the ENP are governments only. According to these commentators, during pre-accession negotiations as well as in the post-accession period, the EU has been ignoring the necessity to empower non-state actors through capacity building measures. The lack of awareness by policy makers such as the European Commission may be due to the fact that it puts too much emphasis on the transposition of EU law rather than on its implementation. In a similar vein, some participants stated that membership conditionality might, indeed, not be effective to create reform-minded political elites. However, EU membership is an important carrot for civil society actors fighting for political and economic reforms in the neighbourhood countries.

Tanja A. Börzel summarized the lessons learned from the discussion for MAXCAP's future research activities by concluding that the consortium should pay more attention to the security aspects of enlargement, bilateralism as a factor hampering the EU's integration capacity and the role of civil society in fostering political and economic reforms in the context of enlargement and the ENP.

Report: Work Package 1

"The Transformative Power of Europe: Structural Effects on New Members, Candidates and Neighbours"

Leader: Prof. Dr. Tanja A. Börzel

Work Package 1 in session at the Kick-Off Conference

The aim of Work Package 1 (WP1) is to assess the extent to which enlargement has been a success in political, economic, and social terms for the new member states, how the Eastern enlargement's structural effects compare to the domestic changes observable in (potential) candidates, and to what extent the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) deploys transformative power in the absence of a membership perspective.

At the Kick-Off Conference, the scholars involved in WP1 presented their approach to determine to what extent the EU has contributed to liberal democratic transformation and socio-economic development in the new EU members, current and potential candidates as well as neighbourhood countries.

The paper by Tanja A. Börzel and Vera van Hüllen addressed the political effects of enlargement and the EU neighbourhood policy. The literature suggests that domestic political change is first and foremost endogenously driven. Strong political competition is a precondition for external actors such as the EU to play a democratizing role by empowering existing liberal elites. Where political competition is weak or absent, as is the case in some of the Western Balkan candidates or the neighbourhood countries, Börzel and van Hüllen argue that the EU rather stabilizes ongoing domestic change (including negative developments resulting in more authoritarian regimes).

Similarly, the paper by Adam Fagan and Tanja Hafner-Ademi emphasized the unintended consequences EU conditionality can cause in the Western Balkans. The authors' primary objective is to establish a framework for consequent empirical research on how these unintended consequences arise and perpetuate, eventually seeking to draw more general conclusions as to how EU conditionality may be revised and strengthened. In the coming months the political strand of WP1 will systematically review available macro-quantitative as well as qualitative data to examine and assess the political effects of EU modes of political integration (see WP5). After having mapped out the democratic changes, the second task will be to identify the factors that explain the observed variation.

The presentation by László Bruszt and Visnja Vukov focused on the structural effects of EU integration from a socio-economic perspective. The authors pointed out a lack of studies investigating how the simultaneous operation of different dimensions of economic integration, including negative, monetary and regulatory integration as well as cohesion policies and the imposition of economic criteria for

accession, affects socio-economic outcomes in the new members states and (potential) candidate countries. Further, most (economic) studies provide an overview of the main economic developments in the pre- and post-accession period but rarely link these outcomes to direct and indirect EU effects. MAXCAP researchers will try to fill these two gaps by exploring socio-economic effects through a macro-level econometric analysis as well as firm-level and sectoral studies.

Following up on the research agenda presented by Bruszt and Vukov, Dorothee Bohle's presentation focused on the question how the various dimensions of EU economic integration affect the opportunities and vulnerability of these countries in light of the current economic crisis. On the one hand, foreign direct investments facilitated technological innovation resulting in a relatively fast increase in complex manufacturing exports. On the other hand, the lending policy of predominantly foreign banks triggered rapid credit growth among households in most of the Central and Eastern European economies, leading to unsustainable credit booms.

In the context of MAXCAP, Bohle will study whether EU integration brought about "compressed development" (Whittaker et al, 2010[1]) in the new EU member states urging their governments to create transnational rather than national networks in order to deal with increasing international interdependencies and their repercussions on the stability of domestic markets. She will also investigate cross-country and cross–sectoral variation in developmental pathways of the new EU member states.

The key question dominating the subsequent discussion was to what extent political and socio-economic developments in new EU members, candidates and neighbours can be attributed to the EU. Scholars must keep in mind that the EU is not the only, and in many areas, not the most influential actor. One of the key methodological challenges this work package faces concerns the question how to isolate the EU as an explanatory factor for domestic change.

Involved partner institutions and scholars:
Freie Universität (Prof. Dr. Tanja A. Börzel, Dr. Julia Langbein, Bidzina Lebanidze), Leiden University (Dr. Antoaneta Dimitrova), London School of Economics and Political Science (Prof. Dr. Adam Fagan), Eidgenössische Hochschule Zürich (Prof. Dr. Frank Schimmelfennig), Balkan Civil Society Development Network (Tanja Hafner-Ademi), European University Institute (Prof. Dr. László Bruszt, Visnja Vukov), Central European University (Prof. Dr. Dorothee Bohle), Sabanci University (Prof. Dr. Meltem Müftüler-Baç)

1 Whittaker, D., Zhu, T., Sturgeon, T., Tsai, M. and Okita, T. (2010) 'Compressed Development', Studies in Comparative International Development 45(4): 439-467.

Report: Work Package 2

"Effective Decision-Making, Differential Integration and Implementation in an Enlarged EU"

Leader: Dr. Ulrich Sedelmeier

Work Package 2 (WP2) assesses the impact of enlargement on the effectiveness of the EU's policy-making, both in terms of decision-making and implementation. The analysis shall generate insights into the extent to which "widening" may or may not have negative consequences for "deepening" (further integration) or even just for maintaining the functioning of its institutions and policies.

Work Package 2 at the conference

In this context, the four presentations in the session on WP2 focused, firstly, on the EU's continued ability to take decisions swiftly and efficiently, and secondly, on its ability to enforce the implementation of its legislation with enlarged membership.

Dimiter Toshkov's review of the existing academic literature on the impact of enlargement on the decision-making capacity of the EU found that the decision-making machinery has not ground to a halt. Moreover, enlargement has neither crippled the EU's potential to devise new policies, nor its conflict-solving capacity. Empirical enquires into the functioning of the EU after enlargement have found what is probably best described as gradual adaptation rather than complete transformation. The adaptation has been more far reaching in the Council and with regards to the negotiation mode and culture, rather than to the output of the process as such. Toshkov outlined some venues for further research. Most promising appears to be a policy-by-policy analysis that examines the problems of the EU agenda and the EU response since 2004.

Asya Zhelyazkova's presentation shifted the focus from the impact of enlargement on the speed and volume of decision-making to its quality and the nature of the EU's legal system in general. Her presentation addressed the question whether the EU's legislative outputs have become more flexible in response to a greater heterogeneity of preferences in the enlarged EU. Specifically, the project will focus on the following possible responses: an increase in the use of less binding policy instruments, an increase in differentiated integration, and an increase in non-compliance with EU legislation after enlargement. In response to the discussion at the Kick-Off Conference, the next stages of this project will further define the notion and the role of 'soft law' in the context of EU policy-making. Zhelyazkova will also consider possible interactions between the three aspects of the EU's legal system ("soft" law, differentiated integration and non-compliance) and distinguish more explicitly the effect of enlargement from other factors that are conducive to these developments in the legal system.

Ulrich Sedelmeier's presentation focused specifically on the third aspect of the EU's internal integration capacity discussed by Asya Zhelyazkova: the question of a possible increase of non-compliance with EU legislation

in the enlarged EU. He found that contrary to expectations being particularly problematic about the implementation of EU legislation, data on infringements of EU law in the EU member states suggest that if anything, most new member states outperform almost all old member states. Sedelmeier's preliminary analysis suggested that different aspects of the use of accession conditionality might explain the good record of new members. He outlined different directions for MAXCAP to further research explanations for the compliance patterns in the enlarged EU, and in particular to investigate the claim in the literature that characterises implementation in the new members as a combination of good formal compliance and deficient application.

Meltem Müftüler-Baç's presentation extended the question of the EU's capacity to enforce its legislation from member states to candidate countries. She addressed the question whether differentiated integration might be able to provide for new modes of accession and an integration of candidates into the EU's internal market. A related aim of this ongoing research is to analyse the EU enlargement process from a differentiated integration perspective, keeping in mind the fact that the EU might have already reached the limits of its expansion.

The lively discussion benefited greatly from the thoughtful comments from a practitioner's perspective of Martin Kröger (from the Commission's Secretariat-General) and an academic perspective of Bernard Steunenberg.

Involved partner institutions and scholars:
Freie Universität (Prof. Dr. Tanja A. Börzel), Leiden University (Dr. Antoaneta Dimitrova, Dr. Dimiter Toshkov), London School of Economics and Political Science (Dr. Ulrich Sedelmeier), Sabanci University (Prof. Dr. Meltem Müftüler-Baç), European University Institute (Prof. Dr. László Bruszt), Eidgenössische Hochschule Zürich (Dr. Asya Zhelyazkova)

Stein Rokkan Prize for Comparative Social Science Research 2013

Awarded to MAXCAP partner Dorothee Bohle and Béla Greskovits (both CEU, Budapest)

MAXCAP partner Dorothee Bohle and Béla Greskovits (both CEU, Budapest) have been awarded the Stein Rokkan Prize for Comparative Social Science Research 2013 in recognition of their book „Capitalist Diversity in Europe's Periphery". The Stein Rokkan Prize for Comparative Social Science Research is awarded for very substantial and original contributions in comparative social science research. The prize award ceremony will take place at the International Social Science Council's Conference in Montreal, October 13th - 15th, 2013.

Report: Work Package 3

"Citizens' Perceptions of Enlargement and Their Influence on Future Enlargements"

Leader: Dr. Antoaneta Dimitrova

MAXCAP's third Work Package (WP3) analyzes citizens' perceptions and discourses on enlargement, comparing them between older, mostly sceptical EU member states and new members as well as potential and current candidates. By focusing on citizens' perceptions in a bottom-up approach, WP3 takes seriously the EU's "democratic deficit", addressing the rising concern in research about the transformation of public attitudes on EU integration from "permissive consensus" to "constraining dissensus" (Hooghe and Marks, 2008[1]), which has also spilled over to the EU enlargement policy and process.

At the Kick-Off Conference in Berlin, Dimiter Toshkov and Elitsa Kortenska started out by presenting current public opinion studies and trends in existing research and analyzed the main negative aspects of enlargement for public opinion. Together with Antoaneta Dimitrova and Bernard Steunenberg, they highlighted the relevance of the elites - public gap in the Eastern enlargement round that had predominantly been a political elites' project. Contrasting public discourses on enlargement across Europe, the authors stated that EU public attitudes towards the last enlargements had been formed in the absence of debate in the older member states while vividly discussed referenda had taken place in Central and Eastern Europe. As a result, old member state citizens' mainly negative perceptions of the last EU enlargement could put a break on future ones, if elites did not provide cues for perceptions.

Antoaneta Dimitrova presenting at the Kick-Off Conference

Furthermore, Dimitrova and Steunenberg elaborated on the arguments for researching discourses and not simply public opinion trends in order to understand how policy makers could find a common ground for future enlargements. Stressing that discourses go beyond perceptions and attitudes, representing a shared set of understandings about a certain domain, they explained why Q-methodology could be a suitable approach for identifying and analyzing public discourses in old, new and potential member states.

WP3 also covers the study of public opinion towards Turkey's EU accession as one of the most challenging cases of candidate countries. The possible causes of Turco-scepticism in the EU member states and their national political and cultural contexts were identified by Emre Hatipoğlu, Meltem Müftüler-Baç and Brooke Luetgert, providing promising links to the aforementioned discourse research design.

Involved institutions and partners:
Freie Universität (Prof. Dr. Thomas Risse), Leiden University (Dr. Antoaneta Dimitrova, Prof. Dr. Bernard Steunenberg, Dr. Dimiter Toshkov, Elitsa Kortenska), London School of Economics and Political Science (Prof. Dr. Adam Fagan), Sabanci University (Prof. Dr. Meltem Müftüler-Baç, Dr. Emre Hatipoğlu, Dr. Brooke Luetgert), Balkan Civil Society Development Network (Tanja Hafner-Ademi), Sofia University (Prof. Dr. Georgi Dimitrov)

1 Hooghe, L. and Marks, G. (2008) 'A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus', B.J.Pol.S. 39: 1-23.

Report: Work Package 4

"Designing the Enlargement Process: Strategies and Negotiations Past and Present"

Leader: Prof. Dr. Meltem Müftüler-Baç

Work Package 4 (WP4) focuses on the credibility of the EU's strategy in enlargement negotiations and identifies factors that affect the dynamics of negotiations. WP 4 further investigates the differences between negotiation strategies of different kinds of candidates (e.g. large and small, economically more and less advanced) and explores to what extent the EU has used these strategies in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). Finally, WP 4 seeks to establish whether specific changes in enlargement strategy, e.g. a different chapter opening sequence or the introduction of new tools such as benchmarks, have been adopted in order to ensure more effective and sustainable reforms in candidate states.

At the Kick-Off Conference, WP 4 scholars presented four papers on the factors that shape the pace and nature of EU enlargement strategies and negotiations. Meltem Müftüler-Baç and Arzu Kibris developed a game theoretical framework, modelling EU accession negotiations as a Bayesian game. The authors presented possible equilibrium outcomes and payoff mechanisms for the EU and the candidate countries. The EU-Turkey accession negotiations were used as a test case for the model's main predictions.

Adam Fagan drew inferences from the experience of Central and Eastern European enlargement about the Western Balkan's capacity for Europeanization. He criticized the Europeanization literature's implicit assumption that formal change would trigger a transformation of practice via social learning and empowerment of pro-reform actors. Instead he pledged to take a relational perspective on the applicant's state capacity, arguing that the configuration of power relations across the nexus of state, society and market impacts on the (dis)connection between formal institutional capacity and practice.

Frank Schimmelfennig's presentation aimed at analyzing the EU's credibility as the key factor shaping its conditionality. According to Schimmelfennig, both the credibility of the conditional enlargement promise and the credibility of the conditional threat of exclusion are necessary conditions for conditionality to succeed. He argued that the EU's promises have become increasingly credible during the 1990s turning the Eastern enlargement process into a "credibility game". After the 2004 enlargement, however, credibility has been weakened and varies across candidates, policies and negotiation stages.

Georgi Dimitrov in discussion with a conference participant

In this context, Schimmelfennig encouraged MAXCAP researchers to establish effects of credibility under hitherto unexplored varying conditions such as differentiated integration, saliency, internal divisions, and special relationships.

Georgi Dimitrov pointed out that a conceptual re-orientation in negotiation strategies with South-Eastern Europe could benefit from examining the crucial preconditions of successful strategic thinking, a process that appears to be missing to a certain extent within the Western Balkans.

The subsequent discussion on the factors determining the success of past and future enlargement strategies was greatly enriched by remarks from MAXCAP Co-Coordinator Antoaneta Dimitrova and MAXCAP Advisory Board Member Malinka Ristevska Jordanova.

Involved partner institutions and scholars:
Leiden University (Dr. Antoaneta Dimitrova), London School of Economics and Political Science (Prof. Dr. Adam Fagan), Eidgenössische Hochschule Zürich (Prof. Dr. Frank Schimmelfennig), Sabanci University (Prof. Dr. Meltem Müftüler-Baç, Dr. Arzu Kibris), Balkan Civil Society Development Network (Tanja Hafner-Ademi), Sofia University (Prof. Dr. Georgi Dimitrov)

Report: Work Package 5

"Modes of Political and Economic Integration in the Context of Enlargement and the Neighbourhood"

Leader: Prof. Dr. László Bruszt

The aim of Work Package 5 (WP5) is to investigate the various modes of integration used by the EU to create and strengthen the sustainability of EU-conforming domestic institutions in the previous, current and potential candidates and neighbouring countries. More specifically, WP5 will:

Firstly, investigate the modes of integration through which the EU has tried to support state building as well as fighting corruption and organized crime in new members, candidates and neighbours. How has the EU adjusted its goals and tools of intervention developed during the Eastern enlargement of 2004 when facing more acute problems of state building in South Eastern Europe and in the Western Balkans? What kinds of alternative modes of political integration has the EU developed to mitigate its limited leverage in the absence of accession conditionality?

As elaborated in the presentation given by Tanja A. Börzel at the Kick-Off Conference in Berlin, the first task of the state-building strand of WP5 will hence be:

- The development of an inventory of the EU's goals and modes of political integration that systematically traces their evolution over time
- The assessment of the application of the modes of political integration with a particular focus on the goals of promoting and protecting democracy and statehood in new members, current and potential candidates, and neighbours
- The identification of alternative modes of political integration paying specific attention to the member state governments, transnational NGOs, and multinational companies.

Tanja A. Börzel presenting her paper in Work Package 5

The state building strand of WP5 will also analyze in more details the role of the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM) in the fight against corruption in Bulgaria and Romania, and the paper by Georgi Dimitrov, Kaloyan Haralampiev and Stoycho Stoychev presented the analysis of the reports of the European Commission under CVM. Furthermore, WP5 will analyze the specific challenges of integration in the context of the Western Balkans, elaborated in the presentation of Adam Fagan.

Secondly, WP5 will examine the evolution of modes of integration through which the EU has tried to mitigate competitive asymmetries between the different parts of Europe and to further the sustainability of the EU market rules after accession. How has the EU adjusted the mode of economic integration that emerged during the Eastern enlargement of 2004 when facing more profound problems of economic development in South Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans, and Turkey? What kinds of alternative modes of economic integration did the EU develop vis-à-vis the neighbourhood countries? Modes of economic integration and different theoretical approaches in explaining this integration have been discussed in the paper by László Bruszt and Julia Langbein.

By investigating different political and economic modes of integration, the findings of WP5 will also help to explain divergent political and socio-economic effects of EU enlargement and the neighbourhood to be studied in WP1 as well as the differential implementation of the acquis investigated in WP2.

As presented at the Kick-Off Conference, both political and economic strands of WP5 have started to develop tools for analyzing different modes of integration employed by the EU, distinguishing between direct and indirect strategies of political integration aimed at different public and private actors on the one hand, as well as between different goals and means of economic integration conceptualized as different types of conditionality, capacity building, EU demands definition, and monitoring compliance mechanisms on the other hand. There is, however, still the need for closer dialogue between the different strands of the WP5, in particular when it comes to the analytical tools for understanding modes of integration, as well as in developing the conceptualizations of different combinations of integration strategies which would allow us to better understand the differential effects of strategies dependent on the particular configurations within which they occur. This should also help us to assess how the EU can better adjust the modes of integration to the challenges of the present and future enlargements and in the neighbourhood.

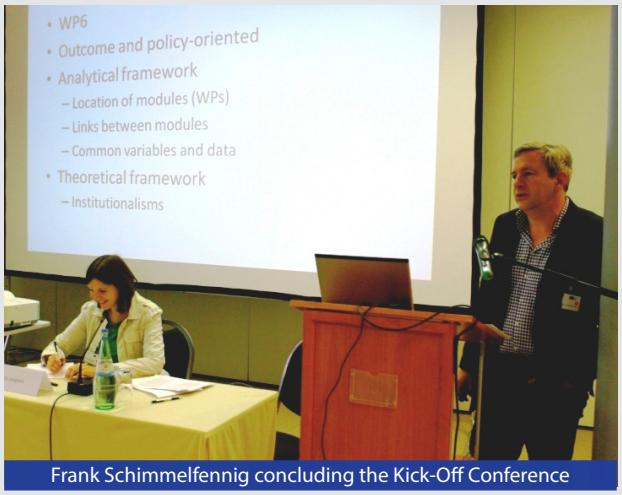
Involved partner institutions and scholars:
Freie Universität (Prof. Tanja A. Börzel, Dr. Julia Langbein, Bidzina Lebanidze , Yasemin Pamuk), Leiden University (Dr. Antoaneta Dimitrova), London School of Economics and Political Science (Dr. Ulrich Sedelmeier, Prof. Dr. Adam Fagan), Eidgenössische Hochschule Zürich (Prof. Dr. Frank Schimmelfennig), European University Institute (Prof. Dr. László Bruszt, Visnja Vukov), Central European University (Prof. Dr. Dorothee Bohle), Balkan Civil Society Development Network (Tanja Hafner-Ademi), Sofia University (Prof. Dr. Georgi Dimitrov, Dr. Stoycho Stoychev)

Report: Work Package 6

"Synthesis: Lessons, Limits, and Prospects of Enlargement"

Leader: Prof. Dr. Frank Schimmelfennig

At the initial stage of MAXCAP, it is the task of Work Package 6 (WP6) to establish a common theoretical and policy-oriented framework that will guide the research in the various work packages, and ensure the synthesis of the findings at the end of the project. This entails three specific challenges which were discussed at the Kick-Off Conference and which the research groups in MAXCAP will have to collaborate on during the coming months.



Frank Schimmelfennig concluding the Kick-Off Conference

What does "maximizing the integration capacity" of the EU mean for the different aspects and components of the enlargement process?
Following the overall rationale of MAXCAP, we want to be able to say how and under which conditions the EU can increase its integration capacity in the enlargement process, and make recommendations on how this goal can be achieved. This requires a common understanding of what integration capacity is and what "maximizing integration capacity" means for the case of negotiations, compliance, or modes of integration. In addition, "maximizing integration capacity" may result in conflicting goals among the various aspects of the enlargement process. Maximizing integration capacity for compliance may not necessarily be synonymous with the best impact on new members' economies and democracy. Maximizing public information and support in the enlargement process may not easily go together with negotiating strategies that maximize the chances for accession. Finally, MAXCAP examines both internal (within the EU) and external integration capacity (vis-à-vis non-member states) – both of which are likely to involve policy trade-offs.

How do the individual aspects and components of enlargement identified by MAXCAP interact and influence each other?
Enlargement is a dynamic process including several stages. Countries start as non-members without any institutional statuses. Then they become associated in some way – as neighbours or candidates. At the end of successful accession negotiations, they join the EU as a new member. Each stage or "status" produces effects on the political and economic systems of the non-members (see WP1) and on their alignment with or adoption of EU policies and rules (see WP2). If these effects are positive from the point of view of the EU, meaning that they consolidate democracy and market economy in the non-member countries and produce effective implementation of EU policies and rules, non-members may upgrade their status until they finally become full members. This is the basic conditionality underlying the enlargement process.

MAXCAP further examines three kinds of processes that link and influence these outcomes: "modes of integration" (see WP5), "negotiations" (see WP4), and "public perceptions/discourses" (see WP5). In other words, the assumption is that the status of non-member countries and the impact the EU has on them also responds to the EU's choice of integration modes, negotiation setup and strategy as well as public discourses and public opinion. In addition to achieving a better understanding of how these elements fit together, MAXCAP is in a good position to study how the results of one enlargement round feed back into integration modes, negotiations, and public discourses for the next candidates. What are the lessons learned from the 2004/2007 enlargement for the accession of the Western Balkans? How is EU enlargement policy influenced by the experience and the behavior of new member states? Does the EU learn from previous enlargement rounds – and does it learn the right things?

What can we learn theoretically from the study of enlargement in the various work packages?
In the past decade, the study of enlargement in political science has been heavily influenced by institutionalist analysis and the debate between rationalist institutionalism on the one hand, and sociological or constructivist institutionalism on the other. Following the debate at the Kick-Off Conference, MAXCAP will critically review the theoretical and methodological tools of institutionalist analysis for the study of enlargement.

Involved partner institutions and scholars:
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After the Kick-Off Conference: A Commentary

"Enlargement as a Modernization or Harmonization Project?"

First impressions from our Kick-Off Conference - first published on www.eurosearch.wordpress.com

by Antoaneta Dimitrova

On 30 May 30th, 2013, we publicly opened a three-year research project evaluating the lessons of the EU's previous enlargements, especially the 'big bang' enlargement to the East as well as possibilities for integration in the future.

The presentations at the Kick-Off Conference in Berlin outlined plans for research, but also already sketched some interesting puzzles and questions. A key question which has occupied me – and other scholars – for many years, was raised by one of the European Commission speakers: in his view, fulfilling criteria for accession to the EU is not necessarily the same as becoming more developed economically. He suggested that pushing a development agenda through enlargement has its limits. It was stressed that the objective of pre-accession preparations is designed for candidates to become as similar to the EU member states as possible – policy-wise, mostly – as it has always been in past enlargements – through adopting the acquis.

From this perspective, economic development cannot be an accession criterion as such as it could delay accession forever. Neither was the EU's political criterion from Copenhagen intended to be equivalent to a fully fledged programme for democratization. In a way, the Eastern enlargement's overall success and the reform progress of the participating countries can make us forget the limits of the EU's mission and possibilities there.

It is fully understandable that the European Commission and, indeed, other EU institutions need to define their mission in enlargement in terms of the EU's overall strategy and in concrete terms based on pre-defined accession criteria. However, for most of the scholars dealing with the last enlargement, the modernization, development and democratization effects of the last enlargement appear unmistakable. There are, in fact, many scholars and commentators who see the completed Eastern enlargement primarily as a modernization project, whereby the term "Europeanization" is used to denote structural reform, state building, restructuring, growth etc. Our project consortium colleague, Prof. László Bruszt, for example, has written about the state-making effects of the EU's big bang enlargement, which he sees as unintended consequences of the EU's 'demanding performance criteria'.

Similarly, among experts and policy makers engaged in this process from Central and Eastern Europe, "Europeanization" was used to denote their reform goals and equaled improvement of governance, economic development and administrative efficiency. I have talked to numerous civil servants and members of European integration working groups for whom joining the EU was the same thing as "Europeanization" and ultimately equivalent to "becoming like the Netherlands/Denmark/Germany…".

Remembering the start of post-communist transformations, however, democratization and economic reform – uncertain as they were in some countries - were domestically initiated and driven processes, which the EU was initially reluctant to commit to. Only after 1993, when the EU offered the so-called accession perspective for Central and Eastern European states, did the Union provide a goal and a kind of reform template for the states that became serious candidates.

So, as I have argued elsewhere, there are good historical – and analytical reasons – to keep post-communist transformations and pre-accession preparations separate. Yet, there are also reasons to claim that the two processes reinforced each other and the one would not have succeeded without the other. This may be different for states that become candidates for accession at a different stage in their political and economic development.

In other cases, as one of the conference papers noted (an earlier version of this argument has been developed elsewhere), the EU may act as a stabilizer and not as a 'democratizer'. We should not forget that the provisions of the EU's acquis (regulations and policies resulting from bargains between older member states), which candidates must adopt almost entirely before accession, may not be beneficial for all economies and in all institutional settings. In other words: despite more than a decade of scholarship, commentary and analysis, there may still be some major unanswered questions about the effects, processes and mechanisms underlying the EU's enlargement: one of several themes which the MAXCAP project will research in the coming years. We will keep you posted.

Disclaimer: This post is written in personal capacity and does not represent the views of the MAXCAP partners, Leiden University or the European Commission, which funds this project under its Seventh Framework Programme.

MAXCAP's Dissemination Strategy

"Stay Informed"

This first edition of the bi-annual MAXCAP Newsletter represents only one element of our manifold dissemination activities. In fact, MAXCAP news and outputs will be spread by a diversified set of communication strategies in order to foster the public debate on EU enlargement and the Union's past, present and future integration capacity.

If you would like to be updated about the project's progress and events automatically, please make sure you subscribe to our MAXCAP mailing list via **maxcap@zedat.fu-berlin.de**.

On our website **www.maxcap-project.eu** you will find anything related to MAXCAP, such as a news section, the project's publications, e.g. the working paper series, notifications of our public events etc. We will also outreach to the tech-savvies by channelling our news and insights through social media such as Twitter and an existing blog managed by Leiden University, one of MAXCAP's partner institutions (http://eurosearch.wordpress.com/).

Visibility and multiplier effects will unfold thanks to our public briefings for policy-makers, journalists and civil society across our partners' respective regions. In this context, we would like to call your attention to our next briefing that will take place in early December 2013 in Berlin as a comment on the Eastern Partnership Summit 2013 in Vilnius. MAXCAP researchers will also attend some policy briefings and seminars to be organized by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom project in the Southern Caucasus in Tbilisi, Georgia, in order to foster dialogue with local experts from an Eastern neighbourhood country. Further, our resource database, to be managed by our partner ETH Zurich, shall support both academics and students in their search for previous and most recent publications and documents on MAXCAP relevant themes.

Future dissemination activities include the organization of and participation in conferences, round tables or lecture series. Our first round table to a public audience, entitled "Ever wider? Lessons of and prospects for enlargement and beyond" has already taken place on May 30th, 2013 in Berlin at the Delegation of the European Commission during our Kick-Off Conference.

Finally, MAXCAP aims at having an impact on the academic and policy community that goes beyond the project's lifetime. We will place an extra emphasis on effectively conveying the project's findings to policy makers, including closed door briefings with EU officials. MAXCAP's particular mix of partner institutions as well as our dissemination activities shall contribute to the creation of a community of scholars working on issues related to enlargement and the neighbourhood policy in old and new member states, current and potential candidates as well as neighbourhood countries. We will also recruit junior scholars for a Young Researchers Training Course to be organized during our mid-term conference in late 2014/ early 2015 by our partner Sabanci University in Istanbul, in order to contribute to fuelling interest in the young generation of scholars.

In sum, MAXCAP's numerous dissemination events, targeted at both practitioners and academics, shall allow us to strengthen the link and maintain a dialogue between the academic community and policy makers on matters relating to the EU's future external and internal integration capacities.