



COMPARING DISCOURSES ABOUT PAST AND FUTURE EU ENLARGEMENTS

Core Arguments and Cleavages

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Antoaneta Dimitrova, Elitsa Kortenska and Bernard Steunenberg

Abstract

This paper compares discourses about EU enlargement among citizens in six different European countries. We discover that there are bridging discourses and connecting arguments among the citizens of the old (Netherlands and Germany), new (Poland and Bulgaria) and candidate states (FYROM, Serbia). We make a cross country comparison between the key assumptions, arguments, emotional responses, perceptions and expectations about the last EU enlargement and potential future enlargements. We discover that country discourses can be grouped along seven lines of arguments and responses, depicting the EU alternatively as a source of better governance, in terms of expected benefits or losses, and a community of ideals, among others. There are common perceptions about EU enlargement which can serve to bridge differences between member states: old and new member states share discourses that see enlargement as a rule based process, or in terms of perceived utility. There are also cleavages between different clusters of arguments which indicate lines of argument which do not go together: Enlargement as a rule based process versus enlargement as enhancing the EU's global role. Our analysis of the clustered discourses suggests that there are possible lines of argumentation and communication that can be used to advance enlargement and frame future enlargement policies as well as discourses of skepticism and rejection that resonate with citizens in a number of countries and are not conducive to future enlargement.

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1. Introduction

The enlargement of the European Union (EU) in 2004-2007 was a process of intergovernmental negotiations that culminated in accession of twelve new members to the EU and affected the lives of citizens in incumbent and acceding member states alike. To discover what citizens thought, felt and understood from this process, we have conducted a bottom-up study of discourses in six European countries. Not surprisingly, citizens have little interest in and knowledge of the intricacies and constraints of bargaining about the adoption of the *acquis* of the Union, transition periods, derogations and exemptions - what enlargement negotiations essentially are about (Avery/Cameron 1998). Citizens have, however, formed expectations about and experienced the consequences of the EU's past enlargements. Furthermore, as our extensive fieldwork has revealed, citizens make connections between past and future enlargements of the EU, especially in candidate states and recent entrants. What this paper does is to analyze, compare and contrast the citizens' viewpoints across countries and evaluate how these can be placed in the broader context of research in European integration and future policies on enlargement.

The discourses we analyze and compare in this paper represent an account of the understandings, perceptions and arguments regarding enlargement of citizens in Germany and the Netherlands (founding EU members), Poland and Bulgaria (2004 and 2007 entrants) and Serbia and 'the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia' (FYROM) (candidate states). In our initial analysis identifying the discourses within these six European countries (Dimitrova/Kortenska 2015), we have used the work of John Dryzek and his collaborators to conceptualize discourses as "shared means of making sense of the world, embedded in language [...] [and] grounded in the assumptions, judgments, contentions, dispositions and capabilities" of citizens, enabling them to organize information about a certain domain along common storylines (Dryzek 2000: 18; Dryzek/Berejikian 1993; Dryzek/Braithwaite 2000: 243; Dryzek/Holmes 2002; Dryzek/Niemeyer 2008: 1).¹ In Dryzek's interpretation discourses are an expression of both rational arguments and emotional reactions, are based on people's intersubjective understandings and perceptions and contain their personal judgments (see Dryzek/Braithwaite 2000). Therefore, we regard assumptions, arguments, judgements, dispositions and emotional responses as elements of our discourses and use some of these, especially arguments, dispositions and emotional responses to label and group discourses.² As Dryzek and Holmes (2002) point out, this conception of discourses is closest to Bourdieu's notion of a 'discursive field', constituted by the extreme positions actors can occupy. This field is defined by the institutional and national boundaries of each polity and by the actions and statements of political actors (Dryzek/Holmes 2002: 5, 17).

The normative foundations of this research can be found in the work of John Dryzek as well. Dryzek and Holmes (2002) investigated discourses about democracy in Central and Eastern European (CEE) states. They suggested that in new democracies, discourses can serve as the 'software' to the institutional 'hardware' provided by the constitutions and laws adopted in the initial stages of transitions to democracy. As Dryzek has consistently argued, to develop democracy further, scholars and politicians need to place a stronger

1 A wide range of definitions and contextual use of discourses exists, ranging from Habermas' (1989) communicative action and the role of the public sphere to Schmidt's (2006, 2010) discursive institutionalism, to mention but a few. We do not address this debate and literature here as it is beyond the scope of this paper.

2 Based on this definition, we use the term narratives as equivalent to discourses in this paper.

emphasis on deliberation, a process in which the understandings of citizens of core aspects of political life are established (Dryzek 2000; Dryzek/Berejikian 1993). We will address the possibility for deliberation provided by our discourses at the end of this paper.

2. Method and Approach

The cross-country comparison presented below is conducted on the basis of the discourses we have previously identified in the six countries (see Dimitrova/Kortenska 2015). The method we have used to identify the country discourses, the so called Q methodology, does not aim to establish the attitudes and opinions of citizens towards enlargement or specific candidates for accession, the way the Eurobarometer or other mass surveys do. It is a bottom-up, reconstructive approach, starting with citizens' own language and their intersubjective understandings embedded in spoken communication (Dryzek/Berejikian 1993). It is used to model, aggregate and interpret people's subjective views about a certain domain (EU enlargement, in our case) by means of combining focus groups and individual interviews with a statistical analytical approach (Brown 1980; McKeown/Thomas 2013; Stephenson 1953; Watts/Stenner 2012).³ The interest in reconstructing citizens' views, understandings, and emotional responses towards a certain domain is common to many of the studies applying Q methodology (Robin 2005; Steunenberg et al. 2011).

To aggregate the variety of individual viewpoints, the method uses factor analysis, ultimately resulting in several factors – in our case – representing different narratives about enlargement.⁴ The data, starting with statements from the several focus groups conducted in each country, interview data of subjects and ultimately factors, are aggregated at country level. They are rooted in the deep history and current politics and events of the specific countries we have selected and worked in (see also Dryzek/Holmes 2002).

Our application of the Q method, starting with group discussions and the statements they generate, also determines that the identified discourses are grounded in the communication of citizens to citizens. We have assembled country Q sets consisting of statements as expressions of citizens' understandings, formulated in their own language.⁵ In contrast to other studies (Dryzek/Berejikian 1993; Robin 2005; Steunenberg et al. 2011), there are no statements from media in the Q sets. Therefore, the country discourses discussed in this paper are expressions of namely citizens' views and understandings, which set them apart from

3 Each Q study begins with the identification of a broad and diverse totality of statements on the topic of enlargement, expressed in verbal communication between citizens themselves and in their native language. From this broad range of opinions, claims and emotional responses a smaller set of items is selected. These selected statements are then used in individual interviews in which the respondents are asked to rank order them according to their own agreement or disagreement with each statement. The results from each individual interview, the so-called Q-sort, is a completed order of statements and represent the individual's subjective viewpoint on the topic. The collected Q-sorts per country are then correlated with one another, and the correlation matrix is factor analyzed. Then a Varimax rotation is performed to crystalize the factor solutions, which are subsequently interpreted in the context of each country.

4 An extensive description of the steps in Q methodology, the selection of countries, statements and individuals, and the specific application of factor analysis to this study can be found in Dimitrova and Kortenska (2015).

5 The first stage of the fieldwork – group discussions to collect statements in each country – lasted from February to June 2014. The individual face-to-face interviews for administering Q-sorts continued from August to December 2014.

discourses found in studies of political elites, media and public debates as well as from public opinion polls.

We have selected a broad and varied group of respondents for both fieldwork stages of the country studies: the focus groups and individual interviews (Q-sorts, in the method's term). The variance in the profile of respondents we have engaged ensures that we discover opinions and dispositions which have not been captured by Eurobarometer and other mass surveys.

The Q method is a qualitative method that combines individual interviews with statistical techniques and therefore has a high degree of replicability. Nevertheless, it is possible to imagine that a different group of participants could have come up with different expressions of ideas, arguments and emotions. However, our own careful examination of the individual interviews conducted within each country and the country datasets shows that certain ideas, arguments and feelings keep (re-)appearing. This points to the nature of the discourses which we analyze in this paper: fluid, yet persistent sets of assumptions, arguments, judgements, dispositions and emotional responses. The resulting narratives capture and reflect elements of national or European identity, historical legacies, perceptions of geopolitics and geography, personal experiences and economic shifts.

In this paper, we present possible ways in which the country discourses we have identified can be used as connecting narratives for enlargement policy on both EU and national level. In the first section, we discuss briefly how we view discourses in the context of different literatures in political science and European studies. Then, in the next section we present an interpretative overview of how the different country discourses we found relate to each other, grouping them in terms of the meaning they carry and the substance of the arguments and responses they contain. In the following section we go a step further and offer a meta-comparison of the discourses, again based on essential arguments and concepts they refer to. This additional analytical strategy allows us to identify the main cleavages in perception in relation to past and future EU enlargements. The comparisons in the paper highlight the possible frames policy makers can use when communicating future enlargements. Some narratives of enlargement policy would resonate with some groups of arguments, but not others. Thus the cleavages we identify will not only ultimately show the potential basis for coordination of a new policy, but also highlight constraints on what politicians can and cannot do with regard to EU enlargement.

3. Discourses in Context

Before delving into the meaning of the discourses on EU enlargement we have found in six European countries, some discussion is needed of how they relate to core concepts of political science. Even though the current study is rooted in ideas of deliberative and discursive democracy (Dryzek 2000), its focus and findings contribute to the broad debate on the role of public opinion and/or attitudes in European integration (Hooghe 2007; Risse 2010), the debate on the EU's democratic deficit and the role discourses can play in communication (Schmidt 2006, 2007, 2010) as well as to the specific literature on enlargement (Herranz-Surrallés 2012; Schimmelfennig 2001; Friis 1998). We will briefly discuss how our approach and findings differ and relate to each of these literatures in turn.

In terms of the relationship between discourses as we have found them through Q methodology and the key concepts of identity and interests, we suggest that they contain expressions of both. Similarly to Risse (2010: 20-32), we do not see discourses as expressions of permanently fixed identities, nor as fluid, constructed and re-constructed narratives influenced by media and current events. More specifically, the discourses on enlargement we have identified (Dimitrova/Kortenska 2015) clearly contain expressions of national or even local identities. On the one hand, they are manifestations of social knowledge acquired in the process of living in the countries we studied. As such, they are rooted in the deeper history and current events in the respective countries (Dryzek/Holmes 2002). At the same time, they are intersubjective expressions of understanding of complex phenomena such as EU enlargement. The discourses unite different social groups, with a certain way of looking at the phenomenon of enlargement. Last but not least, they clearly contain expressions of people's interests as they perceive them for themselves, for their community, or their country.

An important feature of discourses in general and of the ones we work with in particular is that they are embedded in institutional settings (see also Schmidt 2006, 2007, 2010). The relevant institutional contexts for our discourses are enlargement negotiations and key decisions taken in their context. Their format is determined by the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) setup of negotiations. The institutional setting of negotiations encompasses the chapters' structure, the role of the Council of Ministers (approves joint Council positions) and the European Parliament (approves the Accession treaty), the preferences of key veto players such as the member states (governments and parliaments), the candidates (the same political actors) and the European Commission as a mediator and agenda setter. In several studies of European Union decision-making some scholars have demonstrated the role discourses can play as constraints or resources for political actors acting in difficult institutional settings (Friis 1998; Karakasis 2013; Schimmelfennig 2001; Schmidt 2010). Discourses, in the sense of elite narratives used to frame a policy, have been shown to matter in the decision-making around the 2004-2007 'big bang' enlargement. As Friis (1998) has shown, the European Commission together with some member states was able to frame enlargement negotiations in a way influencing the position of more reluctant member states and setting the EU agenda. Schimmelfennig (2001) has provided compelling evidence of the power of discourses and shared norms and ideas in enabling or constraining the outcome of decision-making at the national and EU levels. He showed that rhetorical commitment to common community norms was crucial in overriding the reluctance of opponents to Eastern enlargement. More recently, Karakasis (2013: 240-3) has shown how elite narratives on the causes of the euro crisis have acted as frames constraining and influencing decision-making in the Eurozone. Yet more evidence on the power of discourses, and various ways to understand them, comes from existing studies on media discourses as 'framing' and 'priming' public opinion towards enlargement (Dursun-Ozkanca 2011; Lecheler/de Vreese 2010; Maier et al. 2012; Maier/Rittberger 2008).

However, there is no perfect congruence between the institutional setting and historical circumstances surrounding the last enlargement (2004-2007) and the prevailing discourses we have found among citizens. In fact, a number of the country discourses and discourse groups identified below indicate a dissonance between enlargement policy and citizens' understandings of it and of European integration in general. Dryzek and Holmes (2002: 6) see such a dissonance as containing an inherent risk of instability and protest. In our case, we see it as another indication of the gap between elites and the public on European integration.

Our findings resonate with the findings of previous studies highlighting the end of the ‘permissive consensus’ among citizens on European integration and the role played by identity in shaping public attitudes towards Europe (Eichenberg/Dalton 2007; Herranz-Surrallés 2012; Hooghe 2007; Hooghe/Marks 2005, 2009; Startin/Krouwel 2013; for review see Toshkov et al. 2014).

In the context of broader studies of European integration and of the EU’s democratic deficit, some scholars (Schmidt 2006, 2010) have emphasized the role discourses could play to compensate for the structural and institutional discontinuities in the EU’s composite polity or in decision-making and communication in national and supranational contexts.

In her analysis of the EU as a composite polity, Schmidt distinguished two types of elite discourses relevant to policy making at EU and national levels: coordinative and communicative ones. She has labelled the discourses shaped by policy-makers and policy actors directly involved in decision-making as coordinative. Such discourses are expected to emerge while policy actors “coordinate the construction of policy often using ideas conveyed by policy ‘entrepreneurs’ and/or developed discursive communities” (Schmidt 2006: 253). The coordinative discourses emerge in the interaction among policy actors, while the public is not part of this communication and therefore isolated from these discourses. This process carries over to the political sphere where communicative discourses as expressed by political actors and leaders within the national context and to national publics take place. In other words, this is where political leaders “communicate the ideas developed in the context of coordinative discourse to the public” (Schmidt 2006: 253).

The main difference between our approach and the majority of these studies of discourses⁶ is that they have focused on elite and media discourses (Dursun-Ozkanca 2011; Hawkins 2012; Herranz-Surrallés 2012; Lecheler/de Vreese 2010; Maier/Rittberger 2008; Maier et al. 2012; Moisio et al. 2012; Pijpers 2006). Regarding enlargement communications, Herranz-Surrallés (2012: 392-8) reveals significant differences between the arguments and logics within the coordinative and communicative discourses on enlargement in her study on Germany. She shows that there has been a significant difference between arguments used by political elites in making and coordinating enlargement policy at the EU level, on the one hand, and the arguments employed in communicating the policy decisions to the national publics (presented in the media), on the other (Herranz-Surrallés 2012: 395-7).

Our empirical interest is to identify the similarities and dividing lines existing in relation to the issue of enlargement among ordinary citizens. Just like Dryzek and Holmes, we are driven by the belief that it matters what people think about enlargement (2002: 15) and will discuss the implications of our findings for enlargement policy at the end of this paper.

Before we can aggregate similar discourses to find these basic cleavages, we first compare and group the discourses across countries based on our reading and interpretation of the core arguments and orientations they represent within each narrative and each country.

6 With the obvious exception of the work by Dryzek and collaborators mentioned in the previous section.

4. Comparing Country Discourses

We have identified a variety of discourses within the countries we researched (Dimitrova/ Kortenska 2015). An overview of the discourses, with labels assigned to describe them, is presented in Figure 1. These labels have emerged in the process of interpretation and reading of the statistical results within each country and reflect our interpretation of the main arguments and emotional responses in the respective narrative.

Figure 1: Discourses on EU enlargement among citizens

Country	A	B	C	D
Poland	Celebrating EU Values & Ideals	Rejecting a Bureaucratic Monster	Pragmatic Evaluation	-
Bulgaria	The More the Merrier	Striving for a Union of Rules & Values	The Forgotten Village	-
The Netherlands	Ideals Driven Acceptance	Utilitarian Rejection	Deepening before Widening	-
Germany	Questioning Integration	Enlargement for the People	Rules-driven, More Gradual Enlargement	Realizing Europe's Global Potential
Serbia	Cautiously Positive Expectations	Mistrust & Hostility	The Devil's in the Conditions	Moving towards EU Rules & Institutions
FYR Macedonia	European Rules & Standards	EU for Business	Not Ready Yet	Accession & Preparation

In the following paragraphs, we identify a number of ways in which discourses can be grouped based on the core arguments they contain and the direction of these arguments in shaping positions to EU enlargement. Grouping the discourses based on the specific arguments and orientations they express allows us to highlight the shared viewpoints among the citizens within the six countries.⁷ This interpretative strategy also enables us to highlight the shared ideas and bridging arguments in the different countries, which might drive either opposing or supportive positions towards previous and future enlargements. What is important to note is that our findings in all countries point to orientations towards EU enlargement, which hardly fit clear pro or con positions on this issue. Instead, the discourses reveal a spectrum of perceptions, arguments, attitudes and emotional responses ranging from unequivocal approval and advocacy of enlargement (Bulgaria, The More the Merrier) to absolute rejection (The Netherlands, Utilitarian Rejection). The method we have used crystallizes these extreme positions, but also distinguishes the nuanced narratives and arguments which lay in between them. We start with a group of discourses that speak of the EU as a rule-based community.

⁷ It is worth noting that not all countries are represented in each group, as some arguments were not found in each discourse and each country.

4.1 The EU as a System of Common Rules

A number of discourses in the six countries refer to the EU as a community of rules, which are or should be the same for all countries and citizens. On the side of the candidates and the CEE members, these discourses praise the EU for its institutions and express a clear understanding that enlargement happens on the basis of rules and readiness of a country to adopt the EU's rules. Next to this, citizens in recent entrant countries and candidates expect the common rules to lead to economic convergence, or what some statements refer to as 'common standards'.

Table 1: The EU as a rule-based community

Country	Discourse	Key Statements*
Bulgaria	Striving for a Union of Rules & Values	61. The EU has to enlarge, only under clear-cut criteria. The enlargement mainly is attained on a political basis. The states that are not ready in legal, political and economic terms, shall not be let in, they shall not become members in this way.
		52. The entire European Union shall reach the same level of development, so that everyone lives under the same standards. I mean – same union, same community, same standards.
Germany	Rules-driven, more Gradual Enlargement	32. If the living conditions in Bulgaria are not changed, and we are in the EU, and if people have to migrate to Germany, and only then have their life improved, then I believe any such enlargement is pointless.
		16. If you want to join, you need to meet strictly our rules. Yet, the rules are not clear for all 28 members. If you live in Bulgaria or Croatia, they have a completely different EU there.
The Netherlands	Deepening before Widening	50. I believe that the enlargement has to be prepared better, it has to follow a more consistent course, certain conditions have to be strictly met. And then the country will join independently (on its own behalf)...
		62. Let's try to make the European Union meaningful by keeping an eye on the new tendencies as well. I support the enlargement, yet it should be done selectively, not only in terms of money, but also by including much more.
Serbia	Cautiously Positive Expectations	10. I want us to join the EU since I want a better life for my children. It is better for their education, it means higher employment levels, sufficient income, it means they will be able to set up their own families.
		5. We are still kind of "green" as far as EU accession goes. We want to just jump in, instead of go step by step.
Macedonia	European Rules & Standards	19. EU requires that the criteria for entrance are fulfilled because the European Union will not accept a member which does not have a well-functioning state, if the state doesn't fulfill the accession criteria.
		9. What I hope will happen once we join the EU: I hope we have well-functioning state institutions, an operating legal system – i.e. rule of law, improvement of the economic environment and an improved quality of life.
		21. We are not yet ready to join the EU.

* The numbers in front of each statement represent their respective ordered numbering in the country's Q set.

On the side of the founding member states, these narratives express a preference for slower and more gradual enlargement, to make sure candidates have adapted to the EU's rules. They also mirror the desire of citizens of new member states to see economic convergence. However, in the older member states, this is used as an argument to limit accession of 'new' member states to the EU. In the older member states, these discourses also stress arguments in favor of deepening ('getting the EU in order', 'responding to the crisis' and clarifying the EU's rules before widening [enlargement]). The whole set of related discourses is presented in Table 1.

4.2 *The EU as a Source of Better Governance*

A number of the discourses in the new and candidate states also refer to the EU as a rule-based community, but they especially stress the importance of domestic governing institutions, rule of law, and the domestic implementation and compliance with rules in general and not only EU criteria. The discourses contain both recognition of domestic problems in the area of rule of law and a normative evaluation that countries need to tackle corrupt relations and practices as part of EU accession (Table 2).

In the case of Bulgaria, there is also some disappointment that reforms have not become a reality yet and mistrust that they will take place in the future. These findings mirror the results of public opinion surveys and analyses, which point to the lack of trust among Bulgarians towards political institutions altogether (Tanasoiu/Colonescu 2008; Elgün/Tillman 2007).

A number of discourses from candidate and 'new-er' EU member states share the argument that EU rules are important not only as a source of improvement of economic relations, but also of aspects of state governance and politics. There is only one such discourse in the founding member states, the one we have labelled 'Enlargement for the People' in Germany. However, this discourse calls for improving the internal governance of the EU itself in contrast to the emphasis on domestic governing structures in new members and candidates.

Table 2: The EU as a source of better governance

Country	Discourse	Key Statements*
Bulgaria	Striving for a Union of Rules & Values	10. So, you see, a lot of people thought that when we join the EU our wages will be rocketing; that everything will be handed on a silver platter to us, yet, unfortunately, it didn't happen for us.
		24. The EU helps societies in certain ways, for instance by programs, yet only certain people get access to these programs. The majority of people and those who have no clear idea about the administrative part hardly ever get a hold of the money.
		31. Even if we were not EU members, it would all be the same. Because in general the problems are not related to the European Union, but to the way in which they have been handled in this country. With or without the European Union, we would not start working in a different way.
Macedonia	Not Yet Ready	44. I think it is better we join the EU. First because of corruption, then everything will come to its right place.
		56 We only think we are ready, the politicians tell us so. If we were ready though, we would have already been a member.
	Accession & Preparation	35. Why the EU membership has proven no problem for Slovenia? Because they would first put their affairs in order, set up a system and work hard on it, so afterwards it was easy for them. While we want to join the EU, but we don't want a system. This is the problem.
		40. The people in the EU are not stupid, they know what kind of country we are and in what condition we are. This is why they are giving us the chance to get us ready, the companies, the people and everything that is necessary, so in the end we will join.
Serbia	Moving towards EU Rules & Institutions	38. The advantage of the EU is that the power and might are held by the institutions. Here they are held by individual people.
		56. I expect that our integration into the EU will influence among other things the economy, agriculture, healthcare, as well as produce a significant segment of results related to the field of education.
Germany	Enlargement for the People	57. Well, for me, the question about the enlargement is first of all the question about the direction of that enlargement? And for me, the involvement of citizens plays a crucial role.
		64. People and personal development have to go to the foreground as priority; this is why everyone should be invited to join the EU. It is quite a different matter whether or not this is financially feasible.

* The numbers in front of each statement represent their respective ordered numbering in the country's Q set.

4.3 Focusing on EU Ideals and Values

The discourses in the third group see the EU not only as an economic and rule-based community, but also as one of shared ideals and values (Table 3). They express the normative conviction that this is what the EU should be about and that a candidate's prosperity should not be the only criterion for enlargement. These

discourses aggregate a view of European integration which is driven by an idealistic vision of a unified Europe as a historic achievement. Respondents both in the Netherlands and in Poland refer to the foundations of the European community and the values it symbolizes – liberty, solidarity, diversity, peace and prosperity. These discourses echo pro-European elite discourses, which have been driving European integration since its beginning (Herranz-Surrallés 2012; Schmidt 2007, 2010). They celebrate cultural diversity and are therefore positive about further enlargement and integration.

Table 3: European ideals and values

Country	Discourse	Key Statements*
The Netherlands	Ideals-driven Acceptance	29. <i>If you thought only of money and wealth, you would have never had a European Union in the spirit in which it was conceived.</i>
		49. <i>Yes, but you can't say that the European Union may expand only if each country adds something, in the sense that it should be for our benefit.</i>
		4. <i>More countries in the European Union constitute a wealth, so we need to be positive and stay positive.</i>
Poland	Celebrating EU Values and Ideals	1. <i>I don't want to look at Europe only in political and economic terms. For me it is a conglomeration of communities, multicultural, facilitating the exchange of information and ideas.</i>
		52. <i>What incredible times we are living in, to have become part of the EU. This is the result of aspirations dating hundreds of years back. So let's build Europe further together, expand and enjoy it. There will always be flaws.</i>
		8. <i>This is the idea behind the EU, we talk, discuss, and come up with this or that. I still believe that the European Union civilizes us, if it weren't for it, there would be more corruption, less attention to the environment.</i>

* The numbers in front of each statement represent their respective ordered numbering in the country's Q set.

The discourse within this group from Poland identifies European values as the motivation behind citizens' aspirations to join the EU. However, it is worth noting we have not found such clear value-laden discourses among Serbian and Macedonian respondents. It is also worth noting the socio-economic background of the Polish interviewees subscribing to this discourse.⁸ This narrative resonates mostly among respondents with high levels of education from big and medium-size cities, in office or managerial positions. By contrast, in the Netherlands, this discourse appeals to respondents of all ages, education, occupation and location.

Some of the other discourses also contain aspects of values and ideals. We do not include them here, as, in these cases, such arguments are not pivotal but remain in the background. By contrast, the Polish and Dutch discourses presented in Table 3 are highly coherent in their view of enlargement with ideals and values at its core. They also reflect some sense of a common European identity as expected in the literature (see Risse 2010). In the case of Poland, a number of studies point to the importance of identity in driving support for

8 Almost all discourses unite respondents with various socio-economic backgrounds and from different local contexts, but a few groups of respondents are more homogeneous than others. When this is the case, we mention these as special points of interest.

Polish membership (Bielasiak 2002; Kemmerling 2008). The narratives in this group cross over dividing lines between East and West. They share similar ideas about the EU as a community of common values and ideals.

4.4 *Utilitarian Perspectives*

In almost all countries we find narratives about enlargement which refer to utilitarian/interest considerations (Table 4). The perceptions of costs and benefits as expressed by citizens in these discourse are in line with the findings of those studies on public support for enlargement and the EU which emphasize utility considerations (Azrout et al. 2013; Balestrini et al. 2012; Boomgaarden et al. 2011; Dixon 2010; Doyle/Fidrmuc 2006; Eichenberg/Dalton 2007; Englün/Tillman 2007; Gabel 1998; Guerra 2013; Hooghe/Marks 2005; Karp/Bowler 2006). There are, however, important nuances in the broad group of utility oriented discourses.

Some discourses refer to expected benefits for future generations – explicitly in Bulgaria, Serbia and Macedonia. Rather than emphasizing immediate personal material gains, respondents refer to expectations of the long-term structural and economic benefits for their local and national communities (as in statements such as ‘I am not asking Europe to give me money...’ from Serbia). This resonates in the arguments in the existing literature about the relevance of utilitarian factors for support towards the EU and of community benefits (Doyle/Fidrmuc 2006; Englün/Tillman 2007; Guerra 2013; Hooghe/Marks 2005; Tanasoiu/Colonescu 2008).

In the founding member states, these utilitarian perspectives result in a highly negative position towards previous and future enlargements. In the Netherlands, the discourse ‘Utilitarian Rejection’ employs the same set of arguments to form an opposing viewpoint and understanding of enlargement – one of direct rejection. These discourses resemble the communicative discourses highlighted by Herranz-Surrallés (2012) particularly with regard to the justification of Eastern enlargement. According to Herranz-Surrallés, the emphasis in communicating the ‘big bang’ enlargement has been on the “costs of non-enlargement, or the material benefits that enlargement would bring to the incumbent EU countries – and to Germany in particular” (Herranz-Surrallés 2012: 394).

The narratives we find in the Netherlands and Germany contain an understanding of enlargement in which the economic costs of immigration are crucial. The Dutch respondents telling the ‘utilitarian rejection’ story begin with strong expressions describing the negative economic consequences of CEE immigration in ‘old member states’. They explicitly mention immigrants and immigration from ‘new’ EU members and their effect on the labour market, as the respondents perceive it.

These discursive positions can be seen as an illustration for the findings of quantitative studies which have consistently revealed the negative effects of attitudes and perceptions towards immigration on support for European integration (Boomgaarden et al. 2011; McLaren 2002, 2007; De Vreese/Boomgaarden 2005). There is abundant evidence of the significance of xenophobic feelings and perceptions of economic and cultural threat in the existing literature that analyzes determinants of opposition towards a widening and deepening of European integration (Boomgaarden et al. 2011; De Vreese/Boomgaarden 2005; McLaren 2003, 2007, 2012).

Table 4: The utilitarian look on EU enlargement

Country	Discourse	Key Statements*
Poland	Pragmatic Acceptance	49. Perhaps in the future our children and the children of our children will live a bit better thanks to the European Union. The growth of the EU is inevitable, if only everything follows a positive direction.
		7. I don't think that the enlargement of the European Union will put our labor market at significant risk.
Bulgaria	The More the Merrier	57. I want the EU to enlarge towards the Scandinavian states, because in this way rich countries will become EU members.
		5. The benefit of EU enlargement for the Western Balkans will come from the fact that there will be no customs officers and border guards at border check points.
Serbia	Cautiously Positive Expectations	10. I want us to join the EU, since I want a better life for my children. It is better for their education, it means higher employment levels, sufficient income, it means they will be able to set up their own families.
		50. I think it would be better for everyone, but mostly for the young people, if we join the EU, because they will maybe have a window to the world, they can escape this poverty and leave.
	Devil's in the Conditions	43. The only positive thing related to the EU is that it gives work. One can go there and work.
		64. I don't want Europe to give me money. Let Europe help the infrastructure. That's all I want.
Macedonia	EU for Business	38. I think that the EU makes it easier for both business and politics; problems are solved easier, when you are in the same Union, it is easier for the business, the barriers along the borders are simplified, as for employment, people are able to move anywhere without any obstacles.
		64. The EU organizes imports and for those that are not member states they are restricted but free among the member states. When we become EU member states, our markets will be open so that people will be able to import and export.
The Netherlands	Utilitarian Rejection	24. I think unemployment is the biggest problem. It is related to the enlargement. Now that the Romanians and the Bulgarians don't need visas they can work anywhere in the EU and many companies think: "They are cheaper workforce and we can earn more."
		20. I now think that it (i.e. the enlargement) has been too expensive.

* The numbers in front of each statement represent their respective ordered numbering in the country's Q set.

As evident in the discourses in the Netherlands, perceived utility arguments strengthen citizens' fears of future enlargements, which in turn may result in rejection of European integration altogether. These findings fit well with the findings of recent analyses that identify increasing levels of immigration and labour immigrants from CEE member states as the cause of the increasing opposition to enlargement among EU publics (Balestrini et al. 2012; Hatipoglu et al. 2014; Lahav 2004; Luedtke 2005; Toshkov/Kortenska 2015).

Governments, political elites and media have predominantly emphasized the utilitarian arguments for Eastern enlargement (Herranz-Surrallés 2012; Lubbers 2008; Moisio et al. 2013; Pijpers 2006: 95). This appears to have backfired in the perceptions of citizens considering their own gains and losses. This strategy is also different from the communication of the accession of Spain and Portugal in the 1980s, which was communicated to the public mainly through value-based elite narratives emphasizing ‘responsibility’, ‘solidarity’, ‘liberty’ and ‘democratic values’ (Herranz-Surrallés 2012: 392). The elite communication of the so-called Southern round of enlargement seems to have been closer to the two discourses in the previous group on values (Table 3) rather than to the utilitarian ones outlined in Table 4.

4.5 Enhancing the EU’s Global Role

A number of discourses center on arguments in favor of EU enlargement, which relate to its role in ensuring stability and security in Europe and the world – its geopolitical and strategic importance. Next to this, these discourses refer to enlargement as a way to increase the significance of the EU as a global economic power.

Table 5: The global role of the EU

Country	Discourse	Key Statements*
Bulgaria	The More the Merrier	63. All Balkan countries should join the EU so that they do not fight with each other [...] / 7. It will be easiest if Russia were to join.
		46. EU’s enlargement to the Western Balkans is a good thing. The more power and free borders we have in this region, in light of the complex historical relations we have on the Balkans, the better it will be to have someone on the top to smooth out the relations.
		48. One of the benefits of EU enlargement towards the Western Balkans is that maybe in this way Bulgaria is not so much an external border of the EU.
Germany	Realizing Europe’s Global Potential	52. For me it comes first, I stand for Europe, there is no doubt about it. I think it is very important.
		24. This freedom of movement from the North to the South or from the East to the West, this is a huge advantage for everyone because everyone is capable of something.
		58. From this point of view I really support the enlargement. Especially in the context of what needs to be presented to the US, China, India, the developing African states, to some extent, to achieve a certain balance.
Serbia	Moving towards EU Rules & Institutions	9. I think it is in the EU’s benefit to enlarge to the regions in Europe, which in this case are not as developed as compared to the well-regulated system that Europe actually is. I think the EU enlargement is a necessity.
		15. I see Europe and the EU integration as an inevitable process of globalization of the new world order.

* The numbers in front of each statement represent their respective ordered numbering in the country’s Q set.

The geopolitical awareness of these discourses is a credit to citizens. Arguments about Europe's role in the world are expressed among citizens in founding, recent and candidate member states. These discourses closely relate to the coordinative discourse on EU enlargement, which Herranz-Surrallés (2012: 390-2) finds when analyzing EU official documents of the Southern round of enlargement. Policy actors (Council, European Commission, European Parliament) expressed commitment to enlargement for the 'reinforcement of the position of the European Community in the world' (European Parliament, 1997 as cited in Herranz-Surrallés 2012: 391). We find similar arguments in this group of discourses (Table 5).

4.6 *Questioning Integration and Enlargement*

A number of countries have a discourse which questions the foundations of the EU, the rationale of enlargement and/or the effects of the process on national and EU governance (Table 6). In most of the public opinion literature, euroskepticism is used as a concept referring to full opposition to/rejection of European integration and the two are used interchangeably in many recent studies (Brack/Costa 2012; Fitzgibbon 2013; Usherwood/Startin 2013; Vasilopoulou 2013). The narratives in this group represent evidence that skepticism and opposition to enlargement should not be equated. Often these narratives reveal a critical view of the EU itself, its democracy and involvement with citizens, or the manner in which enlargement has taken place.

In the founding member states, for example in Germany, criticism is expressed by questioning the consequences from the accession of the CEE members, i.e. for them as well as for the Union. Furthermore, citizens express dissatisfaction with the lack of consultation and sufficient information on enlargement, on which conditions countries are allowed to join and what the process entails.

In CEE member states and in candidate states, in their turn, there are also citizens who doubt and question the promised positive effects of accession. There are also those who express feelings of disappointment as they have not benefitted from the process of accession and those who fear negative consequences for the economy and society. An example is the Bulgarian discourse which we have labelled 'the Forgotten Village'.

Doubt within candidate countries is related to the uncertain prospects of the process of enlargement, the blurred and sometimes unclear criteria and conditions for EU membership, and the EU's commitment to their accession. Similar to the citizens of the founding member states, there are also those who express disappointment simply at not being consulted or informed properly.

It is important to point out once more that these highly critical and skeptical narratives do not necessarily lead to rejection or opposition of the process, in contrast to the next group we will examine. Instead, they represent expectations and conditions set by citizens themselves towards the EU and domestic governments to grant their approval for the process. Such an example is the Serbian discourse 'The Devil's in the Conditions' in which citizens demand more clarity from the EU about issues they care about. Furthermore, some skeptic discourses are concerned with the fairness of the enlargement process and the credibility of the EU membership perspective.

Table 6: Skepticism and disappointment

Country	Discourses	Key Statements*
Germany	Enlargement for the People	57. Well, for me, the question about the enlargement is first of all a question about the direction of that enlargement. And for me, the involvement of citizens plays a crucial role.
		42. The issues related to the enlargement of Europe are strongly related to the fears that people don't have a clue about these countries. What are their economic systems? What kind of problems may affect us too?
Bulgaria	Forgotten Village	42. In the countryside, people are more interested in their everyday way of living, their daily survival... people hardly take any interest in the EU... the people living in the rural areas...
		20. They (the EU) have completely forgotten about us, the people living in the smaller towns and villages...
		40. Has anyone asked us if we want to join the European Union or not? The politicians took that decision...
Serbia	Devil's in the Conditions	22. The people living in the villages here will not be able to make brandy once Serbia becomes an EU member.
		36. We are not well-informed whether all of Serbia is going into the EU, what is the pace of progress, what it is going to receive.
		17. The EU will fall apart as we become its member.
	Moving towards EU Rules & Institution	23. The process of EU enlargement is something to which the citizens can't contribute anything or disrupt by their own actions.
		30. Some states in the EU have more rights than others.
		60. Let's join the EU and see how it goes, then if we don't want that anymore we can leave the EU.
Macedonia	Accession & Preparation	56. We only think we are ready, the politicians tell us so. If we were ready though, we would have been a member already.
		2. We may have some ideals about the EU - family, community - yet in fact the EU does not exist.

* The numbers in front of each statement represent their respective ordered numbering in the country's Q set.

4.7 Firm Rejection

Among the discourses we have discovered there are a number of statements and sentiments that reject enlargement and which share great similarity across the researched countries (Table 7). It is not clear whether they can actually play a coordinating function, because of their inward looking orientation, but the similarities should nevertheless be brought into view. These discourses share approaches, arguments and emotional responses with the previous group of skeptical discourses, but they appear less open to persuasion, but rather unambiguous in their rejection of both the EU and enlargement.

In Germany and the Netherlands, the rejection stems from a vocal and consistent opposition to European membership altogether, European integration as a whole and, as a consequence, any further enlargement. They express a highly negative image of the EU itself, in their eyes a costly, heavy, and meaningless entity, a 'regulatory octopus'. The Polish discourse 'Rejecting a Bureaucratic Monster' follows a similar logic and

shares a similar image of the EU with the discourses we find in 'older' member states. In Poland, rejection is coupled with strong criticism of the EU itself, its functioning, institutions and policies and their perceived negative effects on Polish society.

Table 7: Rejection and vocal opposition to the EU

Country	Discourses	Key Statements*
The Netherlands	Utilitarian Rejection	24. I think unemployment is the biggest problem. It is related to the enlargement. Now that the Romanians and the Bulgarians don't need visas they can work anywhere in the EU and many companies think: "They are cheaper workforce and we can earn more."
		20. I now think that it (i.e. the enlargement) has been too expensive.
		2. I think the European Union is a big money eating machine. Too many people work there and everyone wants to work there... we are talking about big money and I think that for now it can't enlarge.
Poland	Rejecting a Bureaucratic Monster	39. The EU is turning into such a twisted, unnatural bureaucratic monster, seeking to regulate all aspects of our lives and limiting, bit by bit, our freedom.
		57. No, I would not accept all candidates. Because then we would have a world Union and not a European one.
		17. We need to wait, to wait until the EU collapses on its own.
		21. My position is different. I think the European Union is such a rigid structure that without any internal reforms it will not be able to enlarge. I even have the feeling that, if nothing changes, in the end the EU may fall apart.
Serbia	Mistrust and Hostility	19. Which one of the less developed countries that has become EU member is better off at present? None.
		47. The terms for EU membership that are imposed on Serbia have not been imposed on the other countries, in the political sense for instance - the separation of Kosovo. I am afraid this tension will continue to build up.
		12. I am against EU membership.
		48. All this talk about the integration into the EU is quite meaningless the way it is used by the politicians to convince the people to do things that politicians otherwise can't.
Germany	Questioning Integration	6. If the roots (of the EU) are in fact yet too weak, i.e. it grows wider and bigger, yet the roots are weak, then it will topple down fast, simply because there are too many contradictory discussions.
		4. Currently, unfortunately, I think Europe acts more like an octopus, a regulating octopus.
		Respondents strongly disagree that: For me it comes first, I stand for Europe, there is no doubt about it. I think it is very important.

* The numbers in front of each statement represent their respective ordered numbering in the country's Q set.

In the Serbian ‘Mistrust and Hostility’ discourse, rejection is rooted in fears of loss of national sovereignty and the cost of accession for Serbia. These arguments add up to expectations for a worsening of the economic situation and to claims about a lack of benefits for recent entrants, such as Bulgaria and Croatia. This narrative among Serbian respondents suggests a loss of credibility of the EU membership perspective as a result of the perceived unfairness of the EU’s conditions, a recurring theme for candidate countries.

The core arguments based on which we differentiated and compared the discourses above were compiled as a result of a process of careful interpretation of the content and meaning of each discourse in terms of their key statements and overall structure (Dimitrova/Kortenska 2015). Our comparison reveals various similarities in these core arguments between the discourses among citizens in different countries. An example is the utilitarian argument on enlargement, which refers to the benefits or costs of the process. This argument, although differently phrased, connects discourses in Poland, Bulgaria, Serbia and Macedonia emphasizing the benefits of EU membership (see Table 4).

There are, however, some discourses that express multiple arguments and complex dispositions. The ‘Utilitarian Rejection’ discourse in the Netherlands, for example, refers to the utilitarian argument (emphasizing the costs of enlargement) and at the same time voices strong rejection of EU membership. Other discourses only connect to one core argument, which may mean that these represent a more limited and one-dimensional specific perspective on or understanding of enlargement. An example is the Polish discourse on ‘Celebrating EU Ideals and Values’, which is driven by an idealistic vision of a unified Europe. These different patterns of overlapping or mutually exclusive arguments, understandings and orientations are characteristic of discourses identified by means of the Q methodological approach and reflect the multi-faceted, sometimes contradictory nature of people’s subjective orientations towards a certain domain.

5. Underlying Cleavages

In the last part of our analysis, we take advantage of the multi-faceted, gestalt nature of discourses to extract from them key elements and orientations and bring our comparison to a higher level of abstraction and simplification. The point of this exercise is to see whether, despite the great multiplicity and nuance in the views, some underlying cleavages related to basic orientations and values can be identified.

Therefore, as a next step, we perform a meta-analysis in which we explore more systematically the differences and similarities of the discourses as described for the core arguments identified so far. Our meta-analysis is based on the use of types of core arguments by each of the discourses. These types correspond to the seven core arguments as presented in the preceding sections. As indicated, some discourses use several core arguments, while others stick to only one. We scored the use of these arguments per discourse and used a data reduction technique to support our qualitative interpretative analysis.⁹ The result is that we

⁹ As a supporting tool we used a factor analysis with varimax rotation in which we included all factors with an eigenvalue higher than one. The varimax rotation helps to distinguish as much as we can between unique core arguments; the selection criterion on the number of factors is set in such a way that we check for communalities between core arguments but also allow unique arguments to reappear, which is important for our purposes.

find that the core arguments refer to a more limited number of underlying cleavages. These cleavages, and their connection to the various discourses, are summarized in Tables 8 to 11.

The first cleavage is perhaps the most complex one since it combines two core arguments, which are contrasted to a third one. Based on our analysis, as shown in Table 8, the core arguments on the EU as a source of better governance and the skeptical view on EU enlargement seem to go hand in hand. The underlying point is that in both arguments people would like to have a better system of governance in which citizens play a more prominent role. The ‘governance’ argument focuses primarily on the effect the EU may have reforming the domestic institutions, while the ‘skepticism’ argument highlights the disappointment of many citizens on the lack of responsiveness of current political elites. The search for better and more democratic institutions, in which citizens are more involved, but also better informed and treated without corruption, seems to be the connecting theme. The ‘utilitarian’ argument is the reverse of this cleavage focusing on the benefits of enlargement in terms of candidates/new entrants, or, as in the case of the Netherlands, costs. This cleavage seems to divide core arguments between those favoring democratization versus more personal gains.

Table 8: Meta factor analysis - democratization versus personal gains

Country	Discourses	governance (+)	skepticism (+)	utility (-)
PL	Pragmatic Evaluation			V
BG	More the Merrier			V
	Striving for a Union of Rules & Values	V		
	The Forgotten Village		V	
NL	Utilitarian Rejection			V
DE	Enlargement for the People	V	V	
SR	Cautiously Positive Expectations			V
	The Devil's in the Conditions		V	V
	Moving towards EU Rules & Institutions	V	V	
MK	European Rules & Standards			V
	EU for Business			V
	Not yet Ready	V		
	Accession & Preparation	V	V	

The second cleavage we find is based on two opposing core arguments, namely the ‘EU as a Rule-based Community’ and ‘Rejection and Vocal Opposition to the EU’. Interestingly, as Table 9 reveals, discourses using one of these arguments do not use the other. While the ‘rule-based’ argument presumes a well-organized and supranational form of governance in Europe, the ‘rejection’ argument claims that this organization has turned into a ‘bureaucratic monster’ that is inefficient and not in the interest of ordinary citizens, and possibly falling apart. These opposing arguments illustrate an underlying cleavage on a normative concern between supranational versus national modes of governance.

For our interpretation, we only focused on core arguments that have a coefficient of 0.4 or higher on a specific factor. We also would like to emphasize that we did not select the core arguments with the purpose of performing such an analysis. In this respect, when assigning a discourse to one or more core arguments, we were only guided by the meaning and details in the sentence constructions of each discourse.

Table 9: Meta factor analysis - supranational versus national modes of governance

Country	Discourses	rule (+)	reject (-)
PL	Rejecting a Bureaucratic Monster		V
BG	Striving for a Union of Rules & Values	V	
NL	Utilitarian Rejection		V
	Deepening before Widening	V	
DE	Questioning Integration		V
	Rules-driven, Gradual Enlargement	V	
SR	Cautiously Positive Expectations	V	
	Mistrust & Hostility		V
MK	European Rules & Standards	V	
	Not yet Ready	V	

The third cleavage is one between the ‘rule-based’ argument, as in the previous one, and the ‘global role’ of the EU (see Table 10). The latter argument deals with the importance of Europe’s role in the world, as an answer to the on-going process of globalization. Here ‘Europe’ is not so much seen as a governance model, as expressed by the ‘rule-based’ argument, but as a community or ‘us’ in the broader perspective of world-politics. It seems to be a divide between governance and community in its perspective on the EU.

Table 10: Meta factor analysis - governance versus community

Country	Discourses	rule (-)	global (+)
BG	More the Merrier		V
NL	Deepening before Widening	V	
DE	Rules-driven, Gradual Enlargement	V	
	Realizing Europe’s Global Potential		V
SR	Cautiously Positive Expectations	V	
	Moving towards EU Rules & Institutions		V
MK	European Rules & Standards	V	
	Not yet Ready	V	

The last cleavage is based on the ‘European ideals and values’ argument, mainly contrasting to the ‘utilitarian’ argument (see Table 11). The ‘ideals and values’ argument is found in a limited number of discourses. This emphasizes the importance of immaterial gains in the process of European integration. Liberty, solidarity and other important norms should be taken as a point of departure for further integration. Clearly, this argument nicely contrasts with the ‘utilitarian’ argument, which focuses much more on personal wealth and gain. This cleavage seems to emphasize the importance of immaterial versus material value orientations of citizens.

Table 11: Meta factor analysis - immaterial versus material value orientations

Country	Discourses	ideals (+)	utility (-)
PL	Celebrating EU Values & Ideals	V	
	Pragmatic Evaluation		V
BG	The More the Merrier		V
NL	Ideals-driven Acceptance	V	
	Utilitarian Rejection		V
SR	Cautiously Positive Expectations		V
	The Devil's in the Conditions		V
MK	European Rules and Standards		V
	EU for Business		V

6. Beyond Public Opinion Surveys

The various narratives about EU enlargement we have analyzed above include ideas what enlargement should have been about, how the EU should deal with future enlargements and reflections about the new shape of the Union. Next to the aforementioned groups and cleavages, which display parallels with findings of quantitative studies of public opinion, we have found a few discourses that are overlooked by most public opinion surveys.¹⁰ These express arguments not represented in elite and media discourses and mostly not captured by the questions of existing surveys. Nevertheless, they are a valid and important set of perceptions and concerns. For example, in Bulgaria, the 'Forgotten Village' discourse captures the way enlargement is understood among those who may have answered Eurobarometer questions about enlargement with a 'don't know', those who feel left out and uninformed about the process of EU enlargement and membership. In Macedonia, the discourse 'Not yet Ready' united only respondents declaring Albanian ethnicity, who seem to share a distinct point of view, sufficiently different from other Macedonian discourses.

The different country narratives which question or reject enlargement allow us to understand that rejection of future enlargements, which we also see in public opinion studies, is based on different arguments and can potentially be addressed by different policies. There are those who reject the accession of specific countries only, while not fully rejecting enlargement, as public opinion surveys show (Azrout et al. 2013; de Vreese et al. 2008; Dixon 2010; Gerhards/Hans 2011; Hatipoglu et al. 2014; Toshkov et al. 2014). A typical example from our findings is the 'Forgotten Village' (e.g. statement No. 20 in Table 6) discourse from Bulgaria where disappointment with the delayed/unrealized benefits of Bulgaria's accession is coupled with a strong rejection of Turkey as a potential member (e.g. No. 55 'If it was for me, I would not let Turkey in' and No. 58 'Europe does not want Turkey, because it is against the Islamization of Europe').

¹⁰ For an extensive review of available public opinion data and a state of the art of the literature on public opinion towards EU enlargement see Toshkov et al. (2014).

7. Conclusion: Citizens' Discourses and Enlargement Policy

This paper has examined and compared discourses bearing in mind the broader context of the EU's accession negotiations and enlargement policy. Given the institutional rules defining enlargement negotiations as a strictly intergovernmental process, it is clear that citizens have currently little direct involvement with or influence on enlargement. We present the country discourses with the realization that they do not yet exist in an institutional setting where they can influence policy directly. We argue, however, that the commonalities and cleavages identified above provide sufficient grounds for engaging citizens in deliberation on future enlargement rounds. Furthermore, we argue that some of the discourses on enlargement discussed above can represent suitable frames to resolve deadlock in enlargement negotiations or provide arguments to bridge the positions of reluctant member states (e.g. the Netherlands) and candidates (e.g. Serbia). The groups of country discourses we have identified in the first part of the analysis show just how such bridging frames and arguments can be found in different clusters of discourses.

Socialization and the formation of European identity has been the focus of interest of a large body of literature on European integration as well as public attitudes towards it (Checkel/Katzenstein 2009; Dixon 2010; Inglehart 1970; Lubbers 2008; McLaren 2002, 2007; Robin 2005). Some of the discourses we discovered contain references to such a European identity and to a community of ideals and norms such as democracy and good governance, for example the Dutch and Polish ideal-laden discourses in Table 3. These mirror both the discourses among EU policy-makers and the political elites' discourse at home on the accession of Spain and Portugal (Herranz-Surrallés 2012). On the other hand, we have found a cluster of discourses where utility arguments dominate.

Following Dryzek and Holmes (2002), we see the above-mentioned narratives among citizens as resources for EU policy making and as a form of institutional 'software' adding national differences to the way institutional rules on enlargement function. The nature of our findings also suggests that citizen discourses on enlargement can, depending on their content, be constraints or resources for policy action.

Next to the use of the discourses as possible frames for future enlargement and as a bridge between arguments of enlargement in different countries, we find it is also important to explore them as means of policy legitimation and further deliberation. We argue that even if citizens are not currently involved in decision-making on enlargement, they should be consulted in enlargement negotiations. This argument is not only a normative but also an empirical one. Past experiences with EU referenda show that citizens are often very much engaged with major decisions on European integration. In these referenda, such as the Dutch on the European constitution, citizens expressed their discontent of not being consulted on previous key decision in European integration, such as the introduction of the euro or previous treaty changes (Schmidt 2006: 39; Voermans 2010). We believe that just like treaty revisions, enlargement negotiations and accession treaties will be politicized at a later date, when elites do need citizens' approval. Therefore it is better to find a mechanism to bring the discussion on enlargement into the public sphere and give different arguments a place in the political arena. This is especially important for discourses expressing feelings of having been marginalized and not consulted in enlargement decisions such as the ones united in our group six, 'Questioning Integration'. Even in skeptic discourses, we have found a number of arguments

and responses that lament the lack of citizen involvement. Finding channels to discuss and deliberate the merits of candidate countries and enlargement in general may also alleviate some of the skepticism on the issue.

This argument echoes Risse's (2010) plea in favor of politicization of debates on the EU. As he rightly points out, leaving political debates about European integration to euroskeptic extreme parties risks achieving what mainstream parties have tried to avoid, namely further losses in popular support for European integration and de-legitimization for EU policies (Risse 2010: 247). The same can be said about discussing enlargement with citizens, because the fact that governments do not have a legal or even a political obligation to communicate to citizens about forthcoming enlargements does not mean that there should be no balanced domestic debate on this topic. To avoid discussing enlargement will mean that eventually, when accession treaties have to be ratified, or at a later moment when citizens do have the chance to express their disapproval, they may punish any future governments for not taking their opinion into account.

Our position on deliberation does not mean, however, that discussing the membership of Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro or even Turkey with citizens has to be a losing proposition because of the downward trend in public opinion. As our analysis shows, there are a number of possible lines of justification and understanding what enlargement has been and should be about, making future accessions possible. Citizens, even skeptical ones, do not close the door on future enlargements. They clearly want momentous decisions to be a matter of public deliberation. Our research shows possible avenues of such a deliberative dialogue between policy-makers, governments, and European citizens.

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