

EPIC Second Cohort - 1st Advanced Research Workshop
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**Thesis Provisional Title: The Road to Damascus? From Copenhagen to Helsinki:
National Preferences and Enlargement**

Research Overview

In the European Council in Helsinki (December, 1999), the EU finally recognised to Turkey the status of candidate country after a long period of protracted and contested negotiations. That became possible only after, among others, a significant shift of the Greek side that finally gave its assent to the Turkish candidature. There are two main issues that arise from such a policy development. The first is related to the factors that have altered Greek policy considerations and led to this shift. The second issue is the realisation yet another time of the fact that the incremental ‘policy without strategy’ (Sedelmeier and Wallace, 1996; Zelonka,1998) answer of the EU to the calls of the candidate countries for rapid integration in the EU structures has been due to the inherent differences among member-states as regards the scope and pace of enlargement. In this process, each member-state has different priorities and different concerns. To understand, therefore, the EU policies and reactions on enlargement, it is imperative to look at the national level and analyse the decisive parameters that shape national preferences and attitudes.

The main objective of my research is exactly to identify the parameters that have shaped at a macro level member-states’ negotiating stance. It is a policy-oriented research project that intends to analyse causes of behaviour by looking at the interactions among different political actors at domestic, EU and international level.

Theoretical Framework (see Figure 1)

The significance of enlargement for the future of the EU and the numerous implications for its organisational structure and institutional functioning classify enlargement decisions to the ‘history-making’ level of decision-making. The founding Treaties will require re-negotiation and all the policies and initiatives of the EU will need to take into consideration the new configuration of membership. Therefore, IR theories seem best able to grasp the multiplicity of the process of enlargement. Different levels of analysis, though, will stress the explanatory significance of different actors. At the *international-systemic level*, it is the state’s position in relation to other actors (capabilities and relative power) that will determine

the behaviour of the state, as the (neo-)realists have long argued. In contrast, a *domestic-level analysis* emphasises societal factors; the mechanisms of aggregation of individual interests and the political institutions of the polity, according to traditional liberal and institutionalist principles. Finally, the role of individual statesmen and their personal or psychological characteristics may be also considered as a plausible explanation at an *individual level of analysis*.

I shall examine all three levels, using the ‘two-level games’ theoretical framework (Putnam 1988), which allows the parallel analysis of both domestic and international levels with political leaders performing the role of intermediaries. In the EU environment the role of transnational links between socio-economic groups also has to be considered. Therefore, the analysis will proceed along the lines of (i) *specification of domestic politics*; (ii) *the international negotiating environment*; and (iii) links between those two through the activities of the *national executive* and the *transnational actors*.

As regards *domestic politics*, it is essential to define the set of the potential international agreements that is acceptable in the domestic environment; i.e. the ‘win-set’ (Putnam, 1988). The larger the win-set, the more likely is an agreement. The main parameters that define the size and scope of the win-set are the *preferences and coalitions of domestic groups*, their relative position in the *domestic institutional structure* of the polity, and, finally, *the strategies of the national negotiators in the international level*. Thus, the main hypothesis deriving from the literature on the impact of economic liberalisation and globalisation on domestic politics is that when the domestic socio-economic groups that will bear the burden of enlargement have a significant role at the domestic political environment, the member-state is going to adopt a more sceptical position (Milner and Keohane (eds.), 1996). A number of subsequent hypotheses frame the analysis. As far as the preferences of domestic groups are concerned, the degree of homogeneity of the constituency becomes an important factor. The more homogeneous and the more convergent the preferences of the domestic actors are, the more restricted the win-set will be and the more rigid the negotiating stance of the state. This is the case in issues outside the economic sphere, where it is difficult to perceive situations where all the segments are “winners”. But it could well be the case in issues of overall national concern. The politicisation of the issue has also a considerable impact. Whenever activist-interest groups successfully mobilise the mass, the negotiating stance should be expected again to become more rigid. A third element is the distributional balance in the range of the possible win-set outcomes. Costs and benefits concentrated on

specific groups enhance the stake for these groups and their role in shaping the final inventory of win-set solutions. Finally, the intensity of preferences can be influential in allowing or blocking tradeoffs across different issues. These tradeoffs could either change the preferences of the recalcitrant groups or reshape the domestic configuration of coalitions and preferences to enable an expanded win-set and therefore an agreement (Evans, 1993).

As regards the *domestic institutional structure*, the ratification procedure should be in the foreground, encapsulating the role of social groups in the political stage. Strong dependency on a constituency, which benefits from an international agreement would be expected to lead to its ratification, unless the ‘deprived’ groups have a strong hold on the decision-making process (i.e. veto power). Disproportionate enfranchisement¹ can be, therefore, another important constraint on the size of the win-set. Party affiliation to social groups, partisan political activity and discipline in parliamentary systems must be explored. Of course, the institutional arrangements will also affect the relative autonomy of the statesman as an independent actor. The importance of the latter in shaping the win-set is related to the extent to which (s)he can trace and apply synergistic linkages. In addition, the domestic or international political standing of the political leaders may also turn out to be a catalyst for tipping the balance for or against co-operation.

Moving on, the *international negotiating environment* is a determinant of the interstate bargaining outcome (Moravcsik, especially 1993b). In the case of the EU, *the institutional framework and the decision-making rules* may be an opportunity for or a constraint on successful negotiating outcomes. As regards enlargement, the final decision has to be approved by all member-states. In that respect, each member-state has the power to block the whole process and therefore, domestic groups that will bear the cost, have a strong incentive to exercise pressures on the national governments. At the same time member-states that favour one specific candidate can actively support his inclusion at the process by credibly threatening to obstruct any further progress. Therefore, the hypothesis here is that the requirement for unanimity enhances the leverage of recalcitrant member-states and makes the executive more vulnerable to pressures from domestic socio-economic groups that oppose enlargement. At the same time unanimity provides the opportunity to member-states to advocate for their favourable candidate.

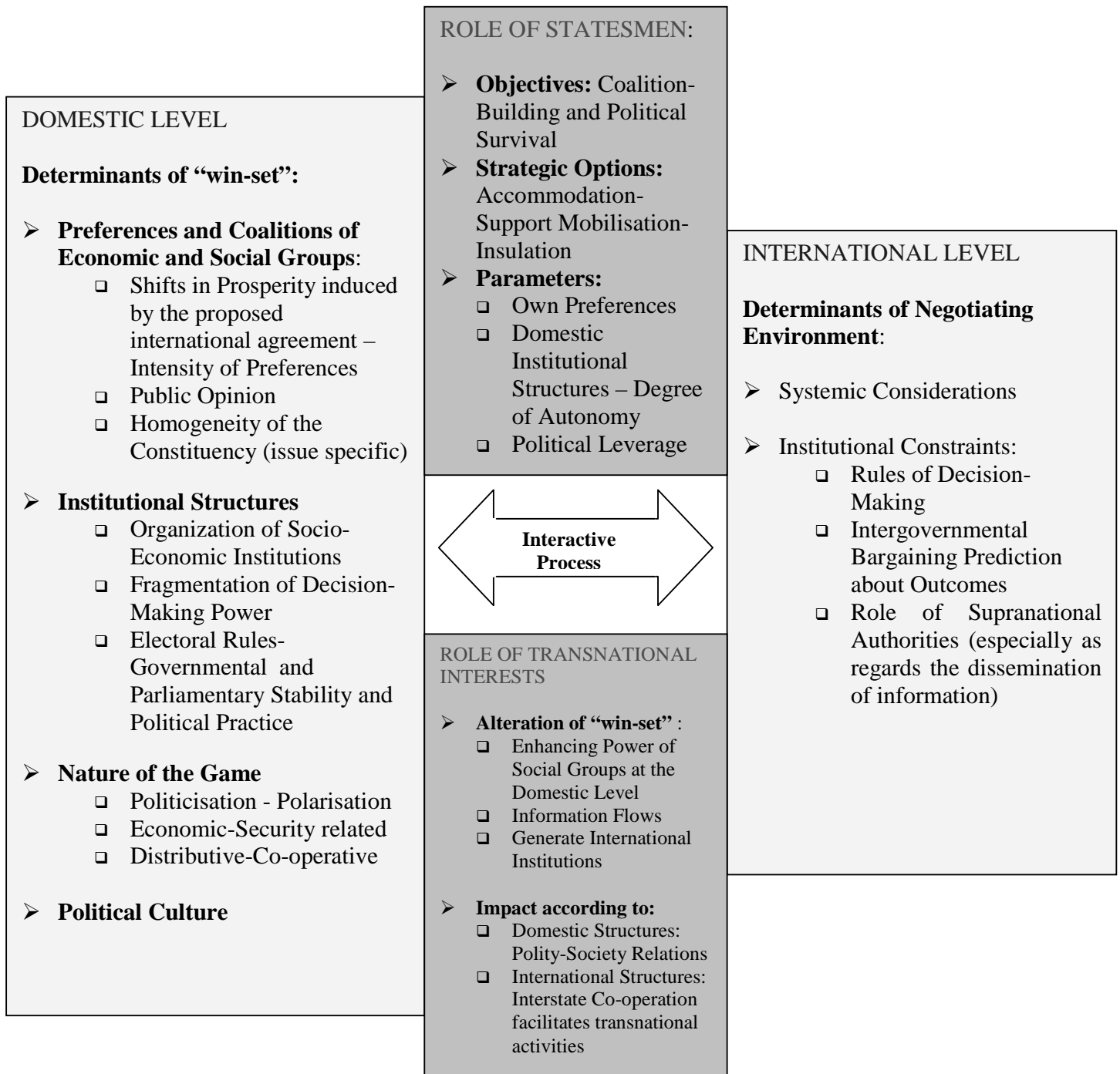
¹ The term “disproportionate enfranchisement” is used to suggest that a social group has leverage in the political decision-making disproportionate to its actual size and significance.

As regards the role of the *national executives* and the *transnational actors*, this depends on the autonomy that the former enjoys and the organisational efficiency of the latter. Autonomy is a function of the domestic institutional structures, the political leverage of the executive and the power of the agenda-setter in each system. Efficiency is a question of co-operation and influential access to the EU institutional bodies, especially the Commission and the European Parliament, either as providers of subjective information or as successful lobbying groups. Therefore, the greater the autonomy of the executive during the enlargement negotiations, the less the national negotiating position will reflect the pressures of the domestic interest groups. At the same time, domestic interest groups with international links and access to the EU institutional bodies should be expected to be more successful in influencing national negotiating position on enlargement.

Methodology and Sources

To understand the EU policies, naturally, all fifteen member-states should be incorporated in the analysis, a venture neither realistic nor feasible given the time and resources constraints of a Ph.D. thesis. At the same time, given the intergovernmental decision-making framework under which the final decision will be taken, every country is pivotal due to its veto power. The above suggests that every country is equally interesting, which renders the task of selection more difficult. If a comparative analysis is undertaken, then obviously countries will have to be selected accordingly, with the most preferred format being that of two case-studies (Greece and UK, selected on the basis of different importance of foreign policy- and socio-economic considerations) followed by two 'shadow cases' (yet undefined) that will help control for some of the characteristics of the case-studies (i.e. geographical proximity could be one control variable to chose, country size another, special links with a candidate a third one etc.). An alternative research design would be that of a multiple case-study, exploratory in nature, allowing for some methodological laxity.

Figure 1: “Two-Level Games” Theoretical Framework



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