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**The long and winding road to a domestic consensus on enlargement?
Parliamentary positions and framing on EU enlargement in the
Netherlands between 2004 and 2020**

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The long and winding road to a domestic consensus on enlargement?

Parliamentary positions and framing on EU enlargement in the Netherlands between 2004 and 2020

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Joël Audenaerde

Abstract

In which ways has EU enlargement been framed in national parliamentary debates? And what positions do actors take on enlargement? And finally, do partisan dynamics explain these positions and frames? This thesis provides an assessment of the debate on enlargement in the Dutch national parliament between 2004 and 2020. It aims to build upon research on the nationalisation of the enlargement policy. Are the positions of national governments similar to those of parliamentary actors? Empirically, this thesis shows that enlargement in debates has lost salience over time and that mostly positions have become more negative. In terms of framing, the debates in the Netherlands are characterised by a strong focus on pragmatic frames. Both these positions can be explained by strategical considerations; a party in government tends to emphasise pragmatic frames more so. Moreover, the cultural axis of partisan dynamics explains that more conservative parties are generally more critical of enlargement.

Keywords: Enlargement; national parliaments; politicisation; party politics; salience

1. Introduction & Research Question

After a period of high saliency in the history of European integration, the European Union's (EU) enlargement policy is no longer at the forefront of domestic political debates as the number of enlargement activities has steadily gone down since 2004 – the year when ten new member states were welcomed.¹ Nevertheless, since then, a new emphasis has been placed on the other countries in the EU's neighbourhood, of which Croatia was last to attain membership in 2013 after Romania and Bulgaria had joined in 2007. An earlier date that marked the height of the EU's enlargement policy was the 2003 Thessaloniki summit, where the prospect of membership for the Western Balkan countries was unequivocally established.² In sum, five countries are currently – with different speeds in the accession process - considered candidate countries to the EU: Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey; whereas Bosnia & Herzegovina and Kosovo have the status of potential new candidate countries.³ In addition to discussions on the readiness and goodness of fit of these potential new member states, each individual accession trajectory to the European Union brings about political tensions on the nature and direction of European integration. It invites political actors to debate the criteria of becoming a part of the EU or even contest the nature and direction of European integration as a whole; whether they see the EU as a community of values that needs to be protected or merely as an economic project. Strikingly, when the Netherlands and France rejected the European constitution in 2005, a possible enlargement of the European Union towards Turkey – as well as the 2004 enlargement - had constituted a large part of the surrounding discourse.⁴

Seemingly, since the height of the enlargement policy around 2004, other events and developments on a European scale, including the so-called Euro- and refugee crises, have had a more profound impact on the course of debates on European integration than the accession of new member states.⁵ Still, enlargement is seen as among the most successful – yet divisive in terms

¹ Mlada Anna VACHUDOVA, "EU Leverage and National Interests in the Balkans: the Puzzles of Enlargement Ten Years On", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 52/1, 2014, 122-138, 122-123.

² John O' BRENNAN, "On the Slow Train to Nowhere? The European Union, "Enlargement Fatigue" and the Western Balkans", *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 19/2, 2014, 221-242, 222.

³ For an official overview, see: European Commission, <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/countries/check-current-status_en>, consulted July 2021.

⁴ Peter MAIR, "Political Opposition and the European Union", *Government and Opposition*, 42/1, 2007, 1-17, 2-3.

⁵ For these debates, see: Arndt WONKA, "The party politics of the Euro crisis in the German *Bundestag*: frames, positions and salience", *West European Politics*, 39/1, 2016, 125-144. Dominic HOEGLINGER, "The politicisation of European integration in domestic election campaigns", *West European Politics*, 39/1, 2016, 44-63. Stella GIANFREDA, "Politicization of the refugee crisis?: a content analysis of parliamentary debates in Italy, the UK, and the EU", *Italian Political Science Review*, 48/1, 2018, 85-108.

of public opinion - policies of the EU.⁶ However, even though the legacy of the policy has not faded away, the underlying enlargement strategy of the European Commission (EC) regarding the expansion of the EU's borders has been consistently rethought to strengthen the process, with a renewed focus on the rule of law in candidate countries during the accession process.⁷ Instead of an enlargement process that has lost some of its speed, the policy has a different shape entirely - leaning more heavily on conditionality, discernible objectives and rewards or penalisations for aspiring member states, which at the same time has meant that 'old' member states have changed their position regarding any future enlargement rounds but also that the surrounding discourse in national contexts has changed over time.⁸

Therefore, the question arises what exactly still drives the enlargement of the EU towards new member states as the process itself has been reformed and the accession of new member states is no longer seen as the inevitability it had once seemed in the 1990s and early 2000s, when a different historical context, based on pan-European ideals and norms drove the enlargement process.⁹ However, scholars now broadly agree that the policy has come to a relative standstill, which was again confirmed in 2014 by the Commission of President Jean-Claude Juncker, who stated that no additional countries would be joining the EU during his legislation.¹⁰ In order to understand this seemingly changed attitude towards an ever-widening European Union, it is vital to go beyond the perspective of how the process has changed and how the European institutions have approached enlargement.

Namely, national governments have seemingly become wary of widening European integration in absence of domestic public support.¹¹ In line with this, perhaps a more striking change that has become apparent recently is the reluctance of member states to continue the enlargement process at all. At the heart of accession talks with North Macedonia for instance lay opposition, premised on historical and cultural disagreements. Moreover, the case of North Macedonia and Albania in December 2019, when France, joined by Denmark and the Netherlands,

⁶ Mlada Anna VACHUDOVA, "EU Leverage and National Interests in the Balkans: the Puzzles of Enlargement Ten Years On", 122. David PHINNEMORE, "Beyond 25—the changing face of EU enlargement: commitment, conditionality and the Constitutional Treaty", *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, 8/1, 2006, 7-26, 7-8.

⁷ Anna SZOŁUCHA, "The EU and Enlargement Fatigue: Why has the European Union not been able to counter enlargement fatigue?", *Journal of Contemporary European Research*, 6/1, 2010, 1-16, 2-3. Tanja BÖRZEL, Antoaneta DIMITROVA and Frank SCHIMMELFENNIG, "European Union enlargement and integration capacity: concepts, findings, and policy implications", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 24/2, 2017, 157-176.

⁸ Gergana NOUTCHEVA, *European Foreign Policy and the Challenges of Balkan Accession, Conditionality, legitimacy and compliance*, London: Routledge, 2014, 89-91.

⁹ Marie-Eve BÉLANGER, "Europeanization as a Foundation of the European Construction", in: Ramona COMAN, Thomas KOSTERA and Luca TOMINI (red.), *Europeanization and European Integration From Incremental to Structural Change*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, 29-49.

¹⁰ Stefanova BOYKA, *The European Union and Europe's New Regionalism*, Switzerland: Springer International, 2018, 4.

¹¹ For an overview per country, see: Rosa BALFOUR and Corina STRATULAT, "EU member states and enlargement towards the Balkans", *EPC Issue Paper*, 79, 2015, 1-10.

rejected opening up accession negotiations with the respective countries, shows the wider hesitance of member states - with no clear cultural or historical bias against certain candidate countries - to further widen the European Union.¹² In the scholarly literature, authors have duly paid attention to concepts such as enlargement and accession fatigue, which denote the growing unwillingness of both member states and candidate countries to actively take part in the enlargement process, whereby the perceived benefits of membership of the EU are no longer universally seen as beneficial.¹³ As a result, the status quo thus tended to be maintained.

These clear interruptions of the enlargement process coming from individual member states invites to take a closer look at the domestic environments in which the policy has been contested and politicised. In recent academic research, the focus has shifted from the role of EU institutions in the enlargement process towards the member states themselves and the ways in which the policy can seemingly become dominated by national agendas, or rather how member states have increasingly asserted their influence over the enlargement policy and have become an addition to the European Commission as main actors in the process.¹⁴ While vetoes of member states towards accession countries are not a new phenomenon, with the 1960's opposition of France towards the United Kingdom and opposition to Greece becoming a part of the Eurozone as prime examples, it is fruitful to understand the myriad of national contexts and debates that underlie opposition to further enlargement.¹⁵

1.1 Research question

So far in academic research, analytical frameworks explaining domestic involvement in the process of enlargement and the rise of 'enlargement fatigue' have been applied to public opinion and the positions of national governments rather than the underlying discourse by political parties and actors in national parliaments that can possibly explain these positions.¹⁶ After 2004, and partly the 2007 enlargement of the EU with Romania and Bulgaria, the negotiations processes started or continued with member states that brought about new discussions on their eligibility and the virtues

¹² For an overview, see: Balkaninsight, <<https://balkaninsight.com/2019/10/25/strict-but-fair-dutch-approach-to-eu-enlargement/>>, consulted 2021.

¹³ John O'BRENNAN, "On the Slow Train to Nowhere? The European Union, "Enlargement Fatigue" and the Western Balkans", *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 19/2, 2014, 221-242, 222.

¹⁴ James KER-LINDSAY, Ioannis ARMAKOLAS, Rosa BALFOUREt al., "The national politics of EU enlargement in the Western Balkans ", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 17/4, 2018, 511-522. Christophe HILLION, "The Creeping Nationalisation of the EU Enlargement Policy", *SIEPS*, 6, 2010, 1-61. Dimiter TOSHKOV, Elitsa KORTENSKA, Antoaneta DIMITROVAet al., "The 'Old' and the 'New' Europeans: Analyses of Public Opinion on EU Enlargement", *Maxcap working paper*, 2, 2014, 1-41.

¹⁵ Anna SZOLUCHA, "The EU and Enlargement Fatigue: Why has the European Union not been able to counter enlargement fatigue?", 6.

¹⁶ James KER-LINDSAY, Ioannis ARMAKOLAS, Rosa BALFOUREt al., "The national politics of EU enlargement in the Western Balkans ". 512-513.

of enlargement in general, not only based on the normative idea of what constitutes Europe but also on the pragmatic utility of expanding the European Union, which could also erode as a decision making power.¹⁷ Therefore, in line with the distinction between normative and pragmatic ideas of enlargement previously incorporated by Helene Sjurzen, this thesis aims to add to the research on the evolution of discourse on enlargement in national parliaments and the political parties that have contested the policy based on different justifications. It empirically researches whether debates on enlargement have changed since the ‘Big Bang’ enlargement in 2004. Within this framework, I look at both the relative salience and differences in frames and positions in parliamentary discourse between 2004 and 2020 in the Netherlands. Therefore, using a combination of methods, the research question asks: in which ways has EU enlargement been framed in the national parliamentary arena since 2004 and which positions have parliamentary actors taken? Subsequently, the thesis statistically explores how partisan dynamics explain these positions and frames.

As European integration has become an important part of national discourse, it is only natural to study enlargement in this context as well.¹⁸ Because accession treaties have to be ratified by both the European Parliament as well as all the national parliaments of member states, actors in parliaments have the opportunity to contest the actions of their government on a supranational level but also signal their position on the merits of enlargement to a wider audience, which makes national parliaments an appropriate venue to study the politicisation – or the “increasing contentiousness of decision making” - of enlargement by political actors.¹⁹ Despite this connection with the electorate, discourse in national parliaments does not always follow from public cues and is mostly formed independently, although this connection will not be analysed further in the current thesis.²⁰

To research discourse on enlargement in national parliaments, the national parliament of the Netherlands, or the ‘*Tweede Kamer*’, serves as a case study. As a founding member, the Netherlands can prove to be of value to the current debate as its parliamentary discourse on enlargement has not yet been researched in academic literature. Furthermore, the country plays an

¹⁷ Helene SJURZEN, "A certain sense of Europe? Defining the EU through enlargement ", *European Societies*, 14/4, 2012, 502-521.

¹⁸ Sandra KRÖGER and Richard BELLAMY, "Beyond a constraining dissensus: The role of national parliaments in domesticating and normalising the politicization of European integration", *Comparative European Politics*, 14/2, 2016, 131-153.

¹⁹ Liesbet HOOGHE and Gary MARKS, "The Neofunctionalists Were (almost) Right: Politicization and European Integration", *Constitutionalism & Governance beyond the State*, /5, 2005, 1-19, 3.

²⁰ Marie-Eve BÉLANGER and Frank SCHIMMELFENNIG, "Politicization and rebordering in EU enlargement: membership discourses in European parliaments", *Journal of European Policy* 28/3, 2021, 407-426; Antoaneta DIMITROVA and Elitsa KORTENSKA, "What do citizens want? And why does it matter? Discourses among citizens as opportunities and constraints for EU enlargement", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 24/2, 2017, 259-277.

interesting role in the debate on enlargement as it has been at the forefront of the discussion on blocking enlargement steps in the case of Serbia, Croatia, North Macedonia and Albania, proving it to be an overall ‘brakeman’ in the enlargement process.²¹ Through a new dataset of statements on enlargement in the Dutch national parliament between 2004 and 2020, covering a relatively long period of debates, this thesis aims to contribute to a wider debate on the discourse on enlargement in national parliaments as it researches whether actors take a negative, positive or conditional position on enlargement and whether they frame their argument based on normative or pragmatic justifications. Not only does this provide new insights into the debate on enlargement on the member state level, it also statistically poses to explain the ideological and strategic dimensions that drive the discourse of actors in national parliaments. Thereby, this thesis aims to empirically fit a gap on what is more widely deemed as the domestic source of opposition to the EU’s foreign policy.²²

Through this case study and the applied methodology, this research finds that enlargement discourse in parliamentary debates has become less salient and viewed more negatively but that this change is not consistent over time. Moreover, in recent years the debate seems to gravitate more towards the earlier years after 2004. In terms of framing, enlargement in parliamentary debates in the Netherlands is mostly justified in pragmatic terms rather than normatively, where it differs slightly from other countries. Moreover, parliamentary actors in the Netherlands view enlargement in terms of the process itself and consider the utilitarian benefits or absence thereof rather than the identity or belonging of candidate countries to the EU. Regarding party political competition, this research shows that, following earlier studies on European integration, it can once again be confirmed that cultural lines play a more important role in contesting enlargement than an economic left-right dimension. Lastly, in terms of qualitative analysis, a specific focus in parliamentary debates emerges on the process of enlargement itself, which shows an active position of parliamentarians on how the European Commission approaches the enlargement policy.

In what follows, first of all, the literature review presents an overview of the existing research on enlargement, the role of national parliaments and the politicisation of European integration. Then, a theoretical framework for the thesis is discussed followed by a series of hypotheses to guide the empirical part of the research. Subsequently, the data and methodology are introduced, whereby a combination of qualitative coding and statistical analysis are used. In the

²¹ Andrew MORAVCSIK and Frank SCHIMMELFENNIG, "Liberal Intergovernmentalism", in: Antje WIENER and Thomas DIEZ (red.), *European Integration Theory*, Oxford University Press, 2009, 67-87, 81. Anjo HARRYVAN and Jan VAN DER HARST, "2002-2005: Dissonanten nemen toe. Keerpunt in het Nederlandse Europadebat", in: Anjo HARRYVAN and Jan VAN DER HARST (red.), *Verloren Consensus, Europa in het Nederlandse Parlementair-Politiek Debat 1945-2013*, Boom, 2013.

²² Natasza STYCZYNSKA, Góra MAGDALENA and Marcin ZUBEK, *Contestation of EU Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Actors, Arenas and Arguments*, 9-30.

main sections, the sources are analysed based on the distinction between normative and pragmatic framing by actors and the political parties they belong to. Finally, a regression analysis explains the relation between positions and frames and the ideological and strategical characteristics of political parties. To conclude the current thesis, the final remarks reflect on the outcomes and on possible alternative future research on enlargement.

2. Literature review

‘Under what conditions does the EU deepen or widen?’ is one of the central questions in the literature on European integration and has led many authors to theorise the speed and process in which the European Union evolves.¹ In the case of the EU’s enlargement policy, as a part of its foreign policy, a common approach in neofunctionalism and liberal intergovernmentalism is to look at the interdependence between member states and candidate countries as a driver of further enlargement.² However, at a moment when the enlargement policy has seemingly hit a standstill and when public opinion is no longer in favour of enlargement, scholarly literature has increasingly pointed towards the domestic politicisation and national politics of the policy at the root of the lack of support for accepting new member states.³ While the position of national governments in the European Council and the role of EU institutions have received scant attention, the broader national discussions and specifically, national parliaments have been left out so far of this discussion. Therefore, in this literature review, I present an overview of the current scholarship on enlargement, the turn towards research on national parliaments and finally literature on politicisation of European integration that leads towards an empirical approach on the discourse and partisan politics on enlargement in the Netherlands.

2.1 Enlargement: institutional or member-state politics?

In order to understand the EU’s enlargement policy, scholarly literature has often taken an institutional perspective; the focus has been on the role of the EU’s institutions in the process of accession negotiations and the structural development of candidate countries.⁴ Following these approaches, the central question lies with the underlying reasons why the EU, as a polity, wishes to enlarge and why neighbouring countries have expressed an interest in applying for membership.⁵

¹ Frank SCHIMMELFENNIG, Dirk LEUFFEN and Berthold RITTBERGER, "The European Union as a system of differentiated integration: interdependence, politicization and differentiation", *Journal of European Policy*, 22/6, 2015, 746-782., 764-765

² Arne NIEMANN and Philippe C. SCHMITTER, "Neofunctionalism", in: Antje WIENER and Thomas DIEZ (red.), *European Integration Theory*, Oxford University Press, 2009, 45-66, 61-63. Andrew MORAVCSIK and Frank SCHIMMELFENNIG, "Liberal Intergovernmentalism", 80-83.

³ James KER-LINDSAY, Ioannis ARMAKOLAS, Rosa BALFOURET al., "The national politics of EU enlargement in the Western Balkans". 513.

⁴ See an overview in: Frank SCHIMMELFENNIG and Ulrich SEDELMEIER, "Theorizing EU enlargement: research focus, hypotheses, and the state of research", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 9/4, 2002, 500-528; Frank SCHIMMELFENNIG and Ulrich SEDELMEIER, *The Politics of European Union Enlargement, Theoretical Approaches*, Routledge, 2009. For an example in the Netherlands, see: Sandrino SMEETS, "Unanimity and exposure in the EU Council of Ministers – or how the Dutch won and lost the ICTY debate", *European Journal of Political Research*, 54, 2015, 288-304.

⁵ Mlada Anna VACHUDOVA, "EU Enlargement and State Capture in the Western Balkans: A Failure of EU Conditionality?", in: Jelena DZANKIC, Soeren KEIL and Marko KMEZIC (red.), *The Europeanisation of the Western Balkans A Failure of EU Conditionality?*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, 63-85.

For example, compared to previous enlargement rounds, the candidate countries in the Western Balkans provide, due to the smaller size and levels of development, fewer economic benefits for EU member states but at the same time have started to feel alienated by the longevity of the enlargement process, which is often referred to as ‘accession fatigue’.⁶ In addition, Frank Schimmelfenig’s external incentives model theorises the development of Europeanisation in candidate member states, which puts forward that institutional reluctance coming from the EU negatively influences the willingness of candidate member states to comply with the requirements of membership of the EU.⁷ At the 1993 European Council summit in Copenhagen, the criteria required for membership of the European Union were officially codified into the ‘Copenhagen criteria’. Christophe Hillion has deemed this formalisation as the evolution from a procedure of enlargement into a policy, which has been necessary to structurally transform countries into becoming ready for membership of the EU.⁸ In this institutional approach to enlargement, the evolution of conditionality – or the whole range of conditions and criteria aspiring member states have to uphold in order to join the EU - has been at the forefront of recent scholarly research.⁹

Following the introduction of the concept of accession fatigue in candidate countries, concurrently, enlargement fatigue has proven to be an enlightening concept in the literature to explain a state of arrested development of the enlargement policy and the interplay between individual member states.¹⁰ To reiterate, enlargement fatigue refers to the observable loss of enthusiasm coming from EU institutions and from within member states to fully commit to the progress of the policy.¹¹ Although domestic debates on enlargement have been linked to individual opposition of member states towards accession countries, evident in the historical French opposition towards the United Kingdom, institutional approaches have been at the centre of research.¹² Namely, enlargement fatigue has followed from the problems that arose from the accession of ten member states in 2004, the debate on Turkish membership and the experiences

⁶ John O’ BRENNAN, "On the Slow Train to Nowhere?", 234.

⁷ Frank SCHIMMELFENNIG and Ulrich SEDELMEIER, "The Europeanization of Eastern Europe: the external incentives model revisited", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 26, 2019, 1-20.

⁸ Christophe HILLION, "The Creeping Nationalisation of the EU Enlargement Policy".

⁹ Asya ZHELYAZKOVA, Frank SCHIMMELFENNIG, Ivan DAMJANOVSKI et al., "European Union Conditionality in the Western Balkans: External Incentives and Europeanisation", in: Kevin FEATHERSTONE, Spyros ECONOMIDES and Vassili MONASTIRIOTIS (red.), *The Europeanisation of the Western Balkans, A failure of EU Conditionality?*, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, 15-38. Eli GATEVA, *European Union Enlargement Conditionality*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, 174-215.

¹⁰ Anna SZOLUCHA, "The EU and Enlargement Fatigue: Why has the European Union not been able to counter enlargement fatigue?"

¹¹ John O’ BRENNAN, "On the Slow Train to Nowhere? The European Union, "Enlargement Fatigue" and the Western Balkans".

¹² Anna SZOLUCHA, "The EU and Enlargement Fatigue: Why has the European Union not been able to counter enlargement fatigue?", 6.

with the 2007 enlargement round with Bulgaria and Romania.¹³ These negative experiences have led to an introspection and a debate on the nature of the EU as a polity, which is most aptly summarised by the term ‘absorption capacity’.¹⁴ Even though this term has never been uniformly defined, at its core it describes the ability of the European Union to take on new member states while maintaining its effectiveness in governance. Therefore, this part of the literature on enlargement has focused on the institutional aspects that define enlargement, on the processes of conditionality, on the interplay at the supranational level between wideners and deepeners, at the ability of the EU to transform countries in its neighbourhood and the decision making power of the EU itself.¹⁵

So far, within research in enlargement, individual member states have been incorporated mostly in terms of their respective governments’ positions at the EU level. For example, Henning Tewes described how Germany’s internal struggles after reunification were merged with its foreign policy position, while others have pointed at the national policy agendas that make up the enlargement policy.¹⁶ Central to this research is to find an explanation as to why governments approach enlargement differently, and how this makes them either ‘drivers’ or ‘brakemen’ of the policy.¹⁷ Nevertheless, while the role of member states in these negotiations has not been underrepresented, prevailing research does not yet fully consider the underlying factors that shape the positions of individual member states towards enlargement. For example, from a liberal intergovernmentalist perspective, enlargement fatigue from a member state perspective could be explained by a situation of asymmetric interdependence, wherein candidate countries have more to benefit than the existing member states have to gain; thus, creating the opportunity for political contestation on the issue.¹⁸ As telling as this perspective is, it does not explain the evolution of debates and discourse within member states on enlargement or point further towards the influence of national agendas on the enlargement policy. Accordingly, recent research has increasingly narrowed its scope to consider the national approaches towards enlargement, which has shown a wide variety of factors that differentiate individual member state attitudes towards enlargement,

¹³ John O’ BRENNAN, "On the Slow Train to Nowhere? The European Union, "Enlargement Fatigue" and the Western Balkans", 225.

¹⁴ Eli GATEVA, *European Union Enlargement Conditionality*. 41; Christophe HILLION, "The Creeping Nationalisation of the EU Enlargement Policy", 26-29.

¹⁵ Dimiter TOSHKOV, "The impact of the Eastern enlargement on the decision-making capacity of the European Union", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 24/2, 2017, 177-196.

¹⁶ Henning TEWES, "Between deepening and widening: Role conflict in Germany's enlargement policy", *West European Politics*, 21/2, 1998, 117-133. James KER-LINDSAY, Ioannis ARMAKOLAS, Rosa BALFOUREt al., "The national politics of EU enlargement in the Western Balkans ", 513.

¹⁷ James KER-LINDSAY, Ioannis ARMAKOLAS, Rosa BALFOUREt al., "The national politics of EU enlargement in the Western Balkans ".

¹⁸ Mlada Anna VACHUDOVA, "EU Enlargement and State Capture in the Western Balkans: A Failure of EU Conditionality?", 66.

such as the ties of a member state towards a region or specific applicants.¹⁹ This approach fits with earlier research by Helene Sjurzen, who questions the driving forces behind enlargement; whether enlargement fits into member states' view of the European integration process in general and if the EU is seen a community of values or if utilitarian arguments in favour or against enlargement are most crucial in the accession process.²⁰ Above all, on the enlargement process in the Western Balkans, James Ker-Lindsay and others have underlined the absence of scholarly debate on the domestic political debates that shape the views on enlargement on a European-wide scale.²¹

2.2 A turn to national parliaments

In recent work, the concept of nationalisation – or for some the (re)nationalisation - of the enlargement policy has been set out, which denotes that member states have increasingly publicly contested the progress of the policy.²² In addition, Christophe Hillion thoroughly explained the process of 'creeping nationalisation' of the enlargement policy: enlargement of the European Union is "increasingly dominated, if not held hostage, by national agendas" through increased parliamentary scrutiny.²³ Perhaps a most striking example is the French introduction of the possibility to hold a referendum prior to the accession of any candidate country, which in addition to the veto of the parliament also gives a voice to citizens.²⁴ However, as Vachudova noted, national interests are in itself not the driving force of the EU's policy towards candidate countries.²⁵ Even though certain developments can be observed, such as obstruction of the accession process by member states, there is no consensus or deeper understanding of the drivers of this constraining element. Effectively, a gap in enlargement research exists that explains the member state perspectives and the underlying domestic contestation that arises at a time of enlargement fatigue and a downturn of enlargement activities.²⁶

¹⁹ See, a specific example in the case of Germany and the ties to the region: Theresia TÖGLHOFER and Cornelius ADEBAHR, "Firm supporter and severe critic – Germany's two-pronged approach to EU enlargement in the Western Balkans", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 17/4, 2017, 523-539.

²⁰ Helene SJURSEN, "A certain sense of Europe? Defining the EU through enlargement".

²¹ James KER-LINDSAY, Ioannis ARMAKOLAS, Rosa BALFOUR et al., "The national politics of EU enlargement in the Western Balkans".

²² Rosa BALFOUR and Corina STRATULAT, "EU member states and enlargement towards the Balkans". Ana E. JUNCOS, "The European Union and the Western Balkans Enlargement as a security strategy", in: Spyros ECONOMIDES and James SPERLING (red.), *EU Security Strategies Extending the EU System of Security Governance*, London: Routledge, 2017, 49-66.

²³ Christophe HILLION, "The Creeping Nationalisation of the EU Enlargement Policy".

²⁴ Natasha WUNSCH, "Between indifference and hesitation: France and EU enlargement towards the Balkans", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 17/4, 2017, 541-554.

²⁵ Mlada Anna VACHUDOVA, "EU Enlargement and State Capture in the Western Balkans: A Failure of EU Conditionality?", 69.

²⁶ Natasza STYCZYNSKA, Góra MAGDALENA and Marcin ZUBEK, *Contestation of EU Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Actors, Arenas and Arguments*, 11-15.

In turn, the shift of the scholarly debate on enlargement towards a more member state focused approach has been accompanied by studies into the relationship between public opinion and national governments' position on the widening of European integration. In recent years, a growing body of literature has focused on the attitudes of citizens towards the European Union, and parallel to that, a focus on perceptions of its enlargement policy. While the attitudes towards the EU have been generally favourable, multiple rounds of enlargement have mostly raised negative connotations with citizens towards welcoming new member states, showing a growing divergence of attitudes between national elites and citizens.²⁷ For example, it has been argued that a lack of communication by policy makers instead of an all-encompassing aversion towards the EU shapes public opinion.²⁸ These scholars have argued that policy makers can and should turn to citizen discourses to address unfavourable opinions on issues on the European Union. However, while academic research on public opinion has posed to explain the negative connotations enlargement can raise with citizens, it has not yet fully explored the ways in which political actors contest this policy in the public sphere and thereby give cues to citizens or how they mobilise this contestation in elections.²⁹ Therefore, it is key to turn to policy makers to explain domestic discourses on the enlargement policy, and national parliaments act as the main forum for public debate on issues of European integration.

Namely, in understanding the nationalisation of the enlargement policy, one turn has been overlooked, which can be deemed as the parliamentary turn. Even though politicisation of European integration has been studied extensively, the role of national parliaments in the enlargement policy has only received limited attention.³⁰ Here, the work of Frank Wendler has an important role in research on national parliaments, which continues a line of work that views 'misfits' between European and domestic policymaking as the cause for partisan politicisation of European integration. In addition, his work builds further on the changing role of national parliaments in European decision making.³¹ For a long time, due to their limited decision making powers, national parliaments have been deemed as 'sleeping players' in the context of European

²⁷ Mikko MATTILA and Tapio RAUNIO, "Drifting Further Apart: National Parties and their Electorates on the EU Dimension", *West European Politics*, 35/3, 2012, 589-606. Antoaneta DIMITROVA and Elitsa KORTENSKA, "What do citizens want? And why does it matter? Discourses among citizens as opportunities and constraints for EU enlargement".

²⁸ Jamie E. SCALERA, "Opening the Floodgates? Migration as a Catalyst for Domestic Contestations of Enlargements", in: GÓRA MAGDALENA, Natasza STYCZYNSKA and Marcin ZUBEK (red.), *Contestation of EU Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy*, Copenhagen: Djof Publishing, 2019.

²⁹ Sara HOBOLT and Catherine DE VRIES, "Public Support for European Integration", *Annual Review Political Science*, 19, 2016, 413-432, 422.

³⁰ Pieter DE WILDE and Michael ZÜRN, "Can the Politicization of European Integration be Reversed?", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 50/1, 2012, 137-153, 139.

³¹ Frank WENDLER, "Justification and political polarization in national parliamentary debates on EU treaty reform", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 21/4, 2014, 549-567; Frank WENDLER, *Debating Europe in National Parliaments, Public Justification and Political Polarization*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

integration.³² However, since the Treaty of Lisbon, national parliaments have gained a foothold in the European decision making process and gained formal powers through increased control of legislation, which has instrumentalised political communication between national parliaments and the EU's institutions.³³ Beyond the changing role of national parliaments in European governance, research on the communicative function - or how positions are taken and arguments are framed by parliamentary actors – of these venues on European integration is still in its early stages. Recently, among others, Arndt Wonka has shown that topics of European integration gain traction in national parliaments as it is the main arena for domestic actors to debate EU politics and to hold governments accountable at the EU-level.³⁴ As the process of enlargement contains multiple moments where a veto is possible by the respective member states' governments as well as the European Parliament and the national parliaments, seemingly enlargement has the potential to become a more contested issue.³⁵

Therefore, debates in national parliaments provide political parties with an arena to contest the EU's enlargement policy and subsequently frame it accordingly. Precisely here, Bélanger and Schimmelfenig have recently made a step towards understanding the discourse parliamentary actors use in debates on enlargement in a national context and the partisan competition that follows. According to their framework, contestation on enlargement flows from discourse that can be characterised as either 'debordering' or 'rebordering'.³⁶ Following this logic, domestically, enlargement is either framed within a framework of disappearing EU borders or through stressing the need for more strict control of the European Union's external borders, and thus opposing further enlargement.³⁷ More importantly, their work opens up the connection between discourse in national parliaments and party political contestation or politicisation of European integration and enlargement by empirically looking at the positions actors take over time and what frames they use.

³² Thomas WINZEN, "The institutional position of national parliaments in the European Union: developments, explanations, effects", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 2021, 1-15.

³³ Anna-Lena HÖGENAUER, "The Dutch Parliament and EU Affairs: Decentralizing Scrutiny", in: Claudia HEFFTLER, Christine NEUHOLD, Olivier ROZENBERG et al. (red.), *The Palgrave Handbook of National Parliaments and the European Union*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, 252-271. Anna-Lena HÖGENAUER and Christine NEUHOLD, "National Parliaments after Lisbon: Administrations on the Rise?", *West European Politics*, 38/2, 2015, 335-354.

³⁴ Arndt WONKA, "The party politics of the Euro crisis in the German *Bundestag*: frames, positions and salience", 128; Katrin AUER and Tapio RAUNIO, "Introduction: Connecting with the Electorate? Parliamentary Communication in EU Affairs", *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, 20/1, 2014, 1-12.

³⁵ Elitsa KORTENSKA, "The Limits of EU Enlargement Linked to Citizens' Perceptions of Past and Future Enlargements", *MAXCAP*, 32, 2016, 1-33, 6.

³⁶ Marie-Eve BÉLANGER and Frank SCHIMMELFENNIG, "Politicization and rebordering in EU enlargement: membership discourses in European parliaments"; Frank WENDLER, "Justification and political polarization in national parliamentary debates on EU treaty reform".

³⁷ Marie-Eve BÉLANGER and Frank SCHIMMELFENNIG, "Politicization and rebordering in EU enlargement: membership discourses in European parliaments".

3.3 Politicisation of the enlargement policy

A strand of literature has been dedicated to the so-called ‘politicisation’ of European integration; furthermore, theorising that issues of European integration have had a profound effect on partisan dynamics.³⁸ Firstly, due to different empirical focuses, research on politicisation has not yet led to a consistent and unified explanation of the concept but has provided a basis from where to conduct empirical research. Predominantly, three aspects in the literature have broadly been defined to explain the occurrence of politicisation of European integration, namely: heightened salience, expansion of actors and increased polarisation.³⁹ In addition, studies on European integration have observed the dynamics that drive politicisation, such as the role of political actors, how they mobilise on certain issues and what frames they use to justify their position.⁴⁰ Thus, research on politicisation, European integration has been connected to the broader literature on partisan dynamics.⁴¹

In recent scholarly literature, two opposing expectations have been constructed in politicisation research to explain the direction of discourse on European integration and to assess what drives it.⁴² On the one hand, as Hooghe and Marks delineated, since the Maastricht treaty, regarding European integration, a ‘constraining dissensus’ has appeared, replacing a previous state of ‘permissive consensus’, which means that as a topic European integration has become salient in the public eye and citizens’ doubts or concerns can no longer be systematically ignored by elite actors. Thus, elites do not have the capacity anymore to “shape the nature, direction and speed of integration” anymore without citizens, which concurrently means that political actors need to defend their position publicly or can stand to win electorally by contesting European integration and by extent, enlargement.⁴³ Moreover, European integration as a topic of discussion in the public sphere is seemingly there to stay in its appearance, even though it is rather unclear where this

³⁸ Pieter DE WILDE, Anna LEUPOLD and Henning SCHMIDTKE, "Introduction: the differentiated politicisation of European governance", *West European Politics*, 39/1, 2016, 3-22; Swen HUTTER and Edgar GRANDE, "Politicizing Europe in the national electoral arena: a comparative analysis of Five Western European Countries, 1970-2010", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, April, 2014, 1-30; Edgar GRANDE and Swen HUTTER, "Introduction: European integration and the challenge of politicization", in: Swen HUTTER, Edgar GRANDE and Hanspeter KRIESI (red.), *Politicising Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

³⁹ Christoffer GREEN-PEDERSEN, "A Giant Fast Asleep? Party Incentives and Politicization of European Integration", *Political Studies*, 60/1, 2012, 115-130. Michael ZÜRN, "Politicization compared: at national, European and global levels", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 26/7, 2019, 977-995.

⁴⁰ Swen HUTTER and Edgar GRANDE, "Politicizing Europe in the National Electoral Arena: A Comparative Analysis of Five West European Countries, 1970-2010", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 52/5, 2014, 1-30.

⁴¹ Marc HELBLING, Dominic HOEGLINGER and Bruno WÜEST, "How political parties frame European integration", *European Journal of Political Research*, 49, 2010, 496-521; Dominic HOEGLINGER, "The politicisation of European integration in domestic election campaigns".

⁴² Edgar GRANDE and Swen HUTTER, "Introduction: European integration and the challenge of politicization", 3.

⁴³ Liesbet HOOGHE and Gary MARKS, "A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus", *British Journal of Political Science*, 39/1, 2009. Pieter DE WILDE, Anna LEUPOLD and Henning SCHMIDTKE, "Introduction: the differentiated politicisation of European governance", 4.

increased politicisation eventually leads to.⁴⁴ As authors have pointed at the occurrence of ground-breaking ‘events’, such as the 2005 Constitutional Treaty referendums in respectively France and the Netherlands or Brexit, these could also be observed as outliers instead of evidence of an ever more politicised state of being.⁴⁵ Perhaps most vital in their postfunctionalist research outline, Hooghe and Marks described the increased politicisation of European integration and its consequences for structural conflict between political parties.⁴⁶ Following this logic and as subsequently argued by scholars of European integration, politicisation of European integration engages with economic as well as identarian frames and has given rise to a new cleavage in European politics.⁴⁷ As a consequence and perhaps the main argument of Hooghe and Marks, a halt on further European integration can occur and therefore a situation of ‘constraining dissensus’ appears. These authors have argued that the ‘sleeping giant’ of European integration has awakened and that it has an impact on the ways in which arguments are justified.⁴⁸ On the other hand, an opposing stream of arguments has posed that European integration has remained a relatively marginal topic in domestic politics, unable to profoundly shape patterns of conflict and competition. For example, Christoffer Green-Pedersen has argued that the incentives for political actors to politicise issues of European integration is missing in order to have a profound impact on domestic party competition.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, although these two opposing assumptions have led to a widespread empirical understanding of European integration in the public sphere, it has not yet not led to a deeper understanding of the frames and driving forces of politicisation in national parliaments.

In sum, this literature review has provided an overview of the current scope of work on enlargement, a venue in the form of national parliaments where research on nationalisation of the enlargement policy fills a gap and, finally, an approach from the existing literature on politicisation of European integration that can explain the direction of the discourse on enlargement.

⁴⁴ Paul STATHAM and Hans-Jörg TRENZ, *be Politicization of Europe: Contesting the Constitution in the Mass Media*, London: Routledge, 2013. Pieter DE WILDE, Anna LEUPOLD and Henning SCHMIDTKE, "Introduction: the differentiated politicisation of European governance", 9.

⁴⁵ Luuk VAN MIDDELAAR, *Alarums & Excursions Improvising Politics on the European Stage*, Newcastle: Agenda Publishing, 2019.

⁴⁶ Liesbet HOOGHE and Gary MARKS, "A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus", 8.

⁴⁷ Ibidem. Hanspeter KRIESI, "Restructuring the national political space: the supply side of national electoral politics", in: *Political Conflict in Western Europe*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012, 96-126. Frank SCHIMMELFENNIG, Dirk LEUFFEN and Berthold RITTBERGER, "The European Union as a System of Differentiated Integration: Interdependence, Politicization and Differentiation", *Reihe Politikwissenschaft / Institut für Höhere Studien, Abt. Politikwissenschaft*, 137, 2014, 1-25, 15.

⁴⁸ Vivien SCHMIDT, "Politicization in the EU: between national politics and EU political dynamics", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 26/7, 2019, 1018-1036.

⁴⁹ Christoffer GREEN-PEDERSEN, "A Giant Fast Asleep? Party Incentives and Politicization of European Integration".

3. Theoretical framework

The empirical analysis in this thesis flows from the research question that asks how enlargement has been framed and which positions actors have taken in national parliaments since 2004. To conceptualise this, the theoretical framework looks at the existing literature on framing and politicisation of European integration to formulate hypotheses on the direction of discourse on enlargement. Both the positions that actors take in debates regarding accession countries as well the frames they use to justify their position are telling of the overall discourse on enlargement and the role of political parties herein. In other words, this section serves to guide the source material, which will be introduced in the next chapter. First of all, this section provides the basis of two types of framing, which has been used in scholarly research on enlargement, namely normative and pragmatic conceptions. Secondly, I look at what can explain discourse on enlargement and its direction over time.

3.1 Framing in national parliaments

In the current thesis, a focus is placed on actors in national parliamentary debates: what positions they take and how they justify or ‘frame’ these. Partly, this is a departure from earlier research that has mostly focused on framing of European integration in the media; for example, a newspaper analysis can make a connection between domestic political parties and public visibility of their arguments.¹ In addition, expert interviews and election manifestos have been used extensively to research the dominant frames on European integration.² However, despite clear methodological advantages – for example the interaction with wider audiences - of these approaches, a direct voice unmediated voice of political actors and the parties they represent is absent in these studies.³ In short, framing refers to the whole process of creating a ‘scheme of understanding’; frames do not merely arise due to their creation by a particular actor but can only exist as they are distributed and understood by a wider public.⁴ However, the focus of the current thesis is the venue where frames are created: in national parliaments by domestic political elites who justify or contextualise their

¹ Edgar GRANDE and Swen HUTTER, "Introduction: European integration and the challenge of politicization"; Swen HUTTER and Edgar GRANDE, "Politicizing Europe in the National Electoral Arena: A Comparative Analysis of Five West European Countries, 1970-2010". Dominic HOEGLINGER, "The politicisation of European integration in domestic election campaigns".

² Martin DOLEZAL, Edgar GRANDE and Swen HUTTER, "Exploring politicisation: design and methods", in: Swen HUTTER, Edgar GRANDE and Hanspeter KRIESI (red.), *Politicising Europe, Integration and Mass Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016, 32-60, 44.

³ Marc HELBLING, Dominic HOEGLINGER and Bruno WÜEST, "How political parties frame European integration ", 98.

⁴ Ibidem.

positions through certain frames.⁵ In his seminal contribution to the field, Robert Entman clarified this as followed: “To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation.”⁶ In this way, debates in national parliaments contain “politically consequential deliberations on the conditions and merits of enlargement and provide rich and relevant information on the Europe-wide enlargement discourse across the political spectrum”.⁷ Following this basic conception of frames, in a next step, it is vital to categorise or group frames as to be able to provide more clarity on how actors in a parliamentary setting debate enlargement. Although slightly simplified, the framework regarding the categorisation of frames used for this thesis is based on the conception by Jurgen Habermas on the classical distinction between pragmatic, ethical-political and moral categories of argumentative justification.⁸ Although in recent research, a similar classification has focused on cultural, economic and other utilitarian frames, here a simple distinction between pragmatic and normative frames is used.

As noted above, national parliaments have, in addition to their representative function, a communicative function wherein framing of enlargement becomes an active strategic construction, which is the consequence of ‘(mis)fits’ arising between the national and supranational level.⁹ Underlying the difference of argumentative structure in discourse is both a rationalist as well as a constructivist mode of thought, which will guide the empirical part of the current research. In essence, what separates these two is the difference between a rational logic of ‘consequentiality’ and a constructivist logic of ‘appropriateness’, which has consequences on the expectations of actors’ frames in national discourse on enlargement.¹⁰ To clarify, a rationalist approach is centred on a pragmatic level, whereby arguments have a clear focus on the ‘output’ or ‘utility’ of European integration. As will be expanded upon in the methodological section of this thesis, pragmatic arguments are those that benefit the interests and preferences of actors.

⁵ Carlos CLOSA and Aleksandra MAATSCH, "In a Spirit of Solidarity? Justifying the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) in National Parliamentary Debates", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 52/4, 2014, 826-842.

⁶ Robert M. ENTMAN, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm", *Journal of Communication*, 43/4, 1993, 51-58.

⁷ Marie-Eve BÉLANGER and Frank SCHIMMELFENNIG, "Politicization and rebordering in EU enlargement: membership discourses in European parliaments".

⁸ Frank WENDLER, "Justification and political polarization in national parliamentary debates on EU treaty reform".

⁹ Thomas RISSE, *A Community of Europeans? Transnational Identities and Public Spheres*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2010. 98 Frank WENDLER, *Debating Europe in National Parliaments, Public Justification and Political Polarization*. 32 Thomas RISSE, *A Community of Europeans? Transnational Identities and Public Spheres*. 98 Also see Adam Silkes contribution on this topic, where he defines (mis)fits arising between elites and the public: Silke ADAM, "Domestic adaptations of Europe: a comparative study of the debates on EU enlargement and a common constitution in the German and French quality press", *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 19/4, 2007, 409-433.

¹⁰ Frank SCHIMMELFENNIG and Ulrich SEDELMEIER, *The Politics of European Union Enlargement, Theoretical Approaches*. 10; James G. MARCH and Johan P. OLSEN, "The Institutional Dynamics of International Political Orders", *International Organization*, 52/4, 1998, 943-969, 957.

Conversely, a constructivist approach focuses on the values of European integration. In the conception of Habermas, this is divided into an ‘ethical’ and a ‘moral’ approach but are seen as one category – as normative frames - in this thesis. Thus, arguments in this category are broadly justified by references to ‘duties’, ‘the collective us’, which can be based on nationalism or religion, and the compatibility of values between the EU and prospective new member states, which refers to justifications that are for or against enlargement based on what is right or what is just. In the next part, I will further theorise what explains these frames in parliamentary discourse and the positions actors take on enlargement.

3.2 ‘Drivers’ of enlargement debates: hypotheses

In a next step, the theoretical assumptions on the politicisation of European integration serve to answer the question on what explains discourse on enlargement in national parliaments. Thereby, it is important to note that the current research follows an actor-centred approach on framing and positioning on European integration and specifically enlargement, foregoing whether debates actually find wider resonance in the public sphere.¹¹ Therefore, the goal here is not to repeat the argument whether politicisation of enlargement within the debate on European integration fully occurs or not but rather how the discourse actually takes shape. In this sense, it is crucial to remember the aspect previously mentioned on national parliaments, namely that politicisation of European integration is not coincidental; it needs to be mobilised by political actors.¹²

First of all, I engage with the positions and frames on enlargement in national parliaments to describe the evolution of discourse over time. As Peter Mair noted: ‘in addition to the imputed location of a party’s core identity, and in addition to the evidence provided by the formal policies which it adopts or is obliged to adopt, we need to know more about how Europe actually plays in national political discourse, as well as about the way in which it is conceived’.¹³ Thus, not only is it vital to understand the role of enlargement in national discourse but also the connection with the core identity of parties in their arguments.¹⁴ Here, debates on enlargement produce two kinds of information: political actors as a part of political parties state their position on an accession country as either positive, conditional or negative. Subsequently, these speeches contain frames that justify their position. Since 2004 enlargement activities have gone down and the negotiations process with

¹¹ Hanspeter KRIESI, "Political Mobilisation, Political Participation and the Power of the Vote", *West European Politics*, 311-2, 2008, 147-168.

¹² Liesbet HOOGHE and Gary MARKS, "A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus", 18/

¹³ Peter MAIR, "Political Parties and Party Systems", in: Paolo GRAZIANO and Maarten P. VINK (red.), *Europeanization New Research Agendas*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, 154-166, 162.

¹⁴ Marc HELBLING, Dominic HOEGLINGER and Bruno WÜEST, "How political parties frame European integration".

prospective member states has taken longer and proven more difficult. In research by Bélanger and Schimmelfenig, they have deemed this as an increase of the discourse on external rebordering, which assumes that the borders of the European Union have become more fixed over time, and is accompanied by an increasingly negative position in national parliaments on enlargement.¹⁵ In addition, the end of the ‘permissive consensus’ and the start of a situation of ‘constraining dissensus’ - as described in the literature review - assumes that citizens and by extent political actors have become more sceptical of European integration and further enlargement. Especially in the case of enlargement, research on citizens’ discourse has shown hesitation and widespread negative opinions on accepting new member states to the EU.¹⁶ Concurrently, one of the main features of a situation of ‘constraining dissensus’ in politicisation research is that European integration has become more salient as political parties have increasingly contested it.¹⁷ Therefore, ‘integration by stealth’, outside the spotlight of the public is seemingly no longer an option for parliamentary actors that are in favour of further European integration, which assumes that these actors need to bring enlargement to the forefront in the national parliamentary arena. In sum, two hypotheses on increased saliency and negative positions are formulated:

(H1): Parliamentary discourse on enlargement becomes more salient over time.

(H2): Parliamentary positions on enlargement become more negative over time.¹⁸

Secondly, debates on new member states have often raised questions on which countries constitute Europe as well as the interplay between widening and deepening of European integration.¹⁹ In particular, recent research has pointed towards the importance of collective identity and cultural values in the politicisation of European integration.²⁰ For example, Bélanger and Schimmelfenig view increasing rebordering discourse on enlargement in terms of a growing share of statements that refer to geographic and cultural features of aspiring member states.²¹ What brings these arguments together is that they represent a normative approach to enlargement instead of a

¹⁵ Marie-Eve BÉLANGER and Frank SCHIMMELFENNIG, "Politicization and rebordering in EU enlargement: membership discourses in European parliaments".

¹⁶ Antoaneta DIMITROVA and Elitsa KORTENSKA, "What do citizens want? And why does it matter? Discourses among citizens as opportunities and constraints for EU enlargement".

¹⁷ Liesbet HOOGHE and Gary MARKS, "A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus".

¹⁸ Marie-Eve BÉLANGER and Frank SCHIMMELFENNIG, "Politicization and rebordering in EU enlargement: membership discourses in European parliaments". Who argue the same.

¹⁹ Frank SCHIMMELFENNIG and Ulrich SEDELMEIER, "Theorizing EU enlargement: research focus, hypotheses, and the state of research".

²⁰ Thomas RISSE, *A Community of Europeans? Transnational Identities and Public Spheres*.

²¹ Marie-Eve BÉLANGER and Frank SCHIMMELFENNIG, "Politicization and rebordering in EU enlargement: membership discourses in European parliaments", 5.

pragmatic utilitarian one. Similarly, scholars of politicisation have delineated a relationship between highly contentious debates and the use of cultural or normative frames. Underlying this is that after far-reaching European economic integration, national and cultural identity have become an important factor of identification with European integration for citizens rather than solely the economic benefits.²² This has been termed as the ‘cultural shift hypothesis’. Regarding enlargement, a focus on normative frames could therefore also be expected as the enlargement policy has progressed to more countries in the European neighbourhood, with an increased boundary gap between old member states and accession countries.

(H3): Parliamentary framing of enlargement is increasingly centred around normative discourse instead of pragmatic frames.

In a last step, this thesis aims to uncover the relationship between positions and frames on enlargement and core identities of political parties that convey them. Here, the goal is to explain why political parties have chosen to stress certain kinds of frames and positions. Two possibilities for parties to contest enlargement emerge: respectively whether European integration is contested on ideological or strategic grounds. First of all, ideology has been used in scholarly literature to explain positions and frames of parties on European integration.²³ Moreover, following H3, there is disagreement on whether Europe is contested along cultural, economic or both lines and by which political parties. Traditionally, regarding the economic aspect, parties on the economic left are expected to be more opposed to enlargement based on their opposition towards increased market liberalisation while parties on the economic right are proponents of more European economic integration through a widened EU. In this case, an economic left-right axis would explain parties’ position on enlargement.²⁴ However, as noted, a shift has been observed in the politicisation of European integration by political parties through an increasing importance of a cultural axis. For example, scholars have pointed towards an increase in attention on issues of identity and borders in debates on accession negotiations between the EU and Turkey. The underlying logic is that political parties act in an increasingly globalised political space, placing importance on both

²² Edgar GRANDE, Swen HUTTER, Alena KERSCHER et al., "Framing Europe: are cultural-identitarian frames driving politicisation?", in: Swen HUTTER, Edgar GRANDE and Hanspeter KRIESI (red.), *Politicising Europe. Integration and Mass Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016, 181-206; Hanspeter KRIESI, "Restructuring the national political space: the supply side of national electoral politics".

²³ Marie-Eve BÉLANGER and Frank SCHIMMELFENNIG, "Politicization and rebordering in EU enlargement: membership discourses in European parliaments". Martin DOLEZAL, "Restructuring the European political space: the supply side of European electoral politics", in: Hanspeter KRIESI, Edgar GRANDE, Martin DOLEZAL et al. (red.), *Political Conflict in Western Europe*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2012, 127-150.

²⁴ Dominic HOEGLINGER, "The politicisation of European integration in domestic election campaigns", 47.

economic as well as cultural frames but with a clear focus on the latter.²⁵ With this development in mind, the dimensions of European politics have undergone changes noted in politicisation research, wherein parties are divided between two cultural poles, namely consisting of traditional, authoritarian and nationalist (TAN) parties on the one side and green, alternative and libertarian (GAL) parties on the other. Hooghe and Marks as well as Hans Peter Kriesi see conflict on European integration arise between these groups, whereby parties on the TAN side, including radical right parties as well as more mainstream conservatives, oppose further European integration and enlargement based on a perceived threat to national sovereignty and culture and tend to emphasise this through normative frames.²⁶ Alternatively, which flows from the opposite, a classic economic left-right dimension, which views that European integration is still a contest between supporters of market liberalisation on the right and regulated capitalism on the left, could explain positions and frames on enlargement. In this view, parties on the economic left take a negative position on enlargement based on pragmatic frames.²⁷

(H4a): Political parties on the GAL side of the political space are more likely to be in favour of enlargement whereas parties on the TAN side are expected to take a negative stance and emphasise normative frames.

(H4b): Political parties on the economic left side are more likely to be against further enlargement and use pragmatic frames to justify their position.

Finally, an alternative conception of enlargement in national parliaments is based on strategic considerations of parties that do not necessarily reflect cultural or economic issues but are based on the opportunities for political actors that drive their stances in debates on enlargement. In this view, parties on the fringes are more inclined to politicise and contest enlargement than parties that are considered part of the mainstream. Accordingly, political entrepreneurs outside of the government have more incentives to contest enlargement because it makes them different from

²⁵ Dominic HOEGLINGER, Bruno WÜEST and Marc HELBLING, "Culture versus economy: the framing of public debates over issues related to globalization", in: Hanspeter KRIESI, Edgar GRANDE, Martin DOLEZAL et al. (red.), *Political Conflict in Western Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, 229-253.

²⁶ Liesbet HOOGHE and Gary MARKS, "A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus"; Hanspeter KRIESI and Swen HUTTER, "Politicizing Europe in times of crisis", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 26/7, 2019, 996-1017.

²⁷ Simon HIX and Christopher LORD, *Political Parties in the European Union*, London: Palgrave, 1997; Simon HIX, "Dimensions and alignments in European Union politics: Cognitive constraints and partisan responses", *European Journal of Political Research*, 35, 1999, 69-106.

large mainstream parties.²⁸ There are two ways this can manifest itself. First of all, following the logic of an ‘inverted U curve’, parties on the radical left and right mobilise on enlargement based on the idea that it differs them from ideologically moderate parties. On the radical left, parties are expected to have a negative view enlargement based on economic opposition or pragmatic arguments against more market liberalisation as more integration could lead to more economic inequality while radical right parties tend to emphasise normative frames in their opposition towards Europe in the assumption that it threatens national sovereignty. In sum, this assumes that two poles, although on different arguments, arise with a mostly negative conception of further enlargement.²⁹

Secondly, a more moderate view of this ‘strategic competition’ hypothesis is possible. This approach thinks of party political competition in general terms of government and opposition instead of opposition by radical poles of the political spectrum. Here, opposition towards further enlargement is part of a wider idea that Euroscepticism is the politics of opposition.³⁰ Therefore, I assume that parties that are part of the government are less likely to take a negative position on enlargement. Subsequently, in the case of the Netherlands, successive governments have often taken a ‘strict and fair’ approach to enlargement, which means that the government has chosen to focus mostly on the process of conditionality in the enlargement policy.³¹ This country-specific attitude to enlargement leads to the expectation that government parties do not contest enlargement based on normative ideas but rather through pragmatic frames. Two hypotheses can be formulated on the strategic aspects of a party political approach:

H5: ‘Radical’ parties on both the left and right fringes of the political spectrum are more likely to contest enlargement than mainstream parties but they do not use the same frames.

H6: Parties in government are less likely to take a negative position on enlargement and tend to emphasise pragmatic frames in their discourse.

²⁸ Nick SITTER, "The European Question and the Norwegian Party System since 1961: The Freezing of a Modern Cleavage or Contingent Opposition?", in: Aleks SZCZERBIAK and Paul TAGGART (red.), *Opposing Europe? The Comparative Party Politics of Euroscepticism Volume 1 Case Studies and Country Surveys*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 328-347.

²⁹ Gary MARKS, Carole J. WILSON and Leonard RAY, "National Political Parties and European Integration", *American Journal of Political Science*, 46/3, 2002, 585-594. 587. Bruno WÜEST, Marc HELBLING and Dominic HÖGLINGER, "Actor configurations in the public debates on globalization", in: Hanspeter KRIESI, Edgar GRANDE, Martin DOLEZAL et al. (red.), *Political Conflict in Western Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, 254-276.

³⁰ Nick SITTER, "The European Question and the Norwegian Party System since 1961: The Freezing of a Modern Cleavage or Contingent Opposition?".

³¹ Steven BLOCKMANS, "The Netherlands", in: Rosa BALFOUR and Corina STRATULAT (red.), *EU member states and enlargement towards the Balkans* dl. 79, 2015, 211-221.

4. Research Design and methods

As noted in the theoretical framework, framing in this thesis is understood as ‘justifications for arguments’ used by political actors in parliamentary debates. Emanating from previous scholarly work on enlargement and European integration, two methods appear most apposite to classify frames in the current research. First of all, a benchmark for the current analysis of parliamentary debates comes from the work of Frank Wendler, who has researched ‘discursive framing’ based on the distinction between ‘normative’ and ‘pragmatic’ justifications in debates on European integration – including those focused on enlargement - in different European national parliaments – but excluding the Netherlands – between 2010 and 2013.¹ In his research design, frames expressed by parliamentary actors serve as an independent variable to analyse polarisation between political parties. Conversely, Bélanger and Schimmelfenig conceive of framing in debates on enlargement as a dependent variable, as they pose to explain the driving forces of party political competition.² Both approaches view national parliaments as the central venue where discourse on enlargement is formed and a combination of both is applied here. Therefore, following the theoretical framework, here, frames serve as the dependent variable and this thesis poses to explain the patterns underlying the use of normative and pragmatic justifications or frames by political actors.

First of all, this section argues why national parliaments are suitable arenas to research framing and politicisation of enlargement and subsequently why the Dutch national parliament, the ‘*Tweede Kamer*’, can prove to be a useful addition to the existing scholarly literature. Secondly, the research design section presents the sources, namely the records of parliamentary debates, used for the empirical part of the research. Finally, I delineate the methodology to code the positions and frames of parliamentary actors as well as the analysis of the sources.

4.1 Case selection

The role of national parliaments in the EU’s decision-making process is twofold: on the one hand, parliaments are involved in key decisions, such as ratifying accession agreements, and hold governments accountable for their actions on the European level in committee meetings or plenary debates. On the other hand, national parliaments have a communicative function: to inform the

¹ Frank WENDLER, "Justification and political polarization in national parliamentary debates on EU treaty reform"; Frank WENDLER, *Debating Europe in National Parliaments, Public Justification and Political Polarization*.

² Marie-Eve BÉLANGER and Frank SCHIMMELFENNIG, "Politicization and rebordering in EU enlargement: membership discourses in European parliaments".

electorate as the main public forums for dialogue on issues related to the European Union.³ Therefore, parliamentary debates provide valuable information on the ways in which political parties frame European integration, and specifically enlargement in this case.⁴ To expand on the communicative role of national parliaments, this classification can be split up into two aspects. Firstly, through debates in national parliaments and subsequently through the media attention for these debates. As Katrin Auel delineated, there is a correlation between these two aspects, as the frequency of debates increases depending on the media attention for the debated issue. For example, as the Eurocrisis gained more attention, it became a more debated issue in national parliaments.⁵ Furthermore, research on national parliaments shows a connection between the politicisation of policies related to European integration and the underlying reasons for why parliamentarians highlight these issues. For this reason, Rauh and de Wilde have set out in their work to understand ‘why and when’ national parliamentarians engage in public debates.⁶ Nevertheless, even though the attention for media reports and politicisation of European integration has been highly insightful, the role of the structure of argumentative justifications in national parliaments has only been meagrely covered.⁷ Especially in the case of the EU’s foreign policy, of which enlargement is a part, the ways in which arguments have been framed has only received scant attention.⁸

Therefore, in this thesis, the central idea is not simply to understand ‘why and when’ parliamentary actors engage with enlargement but rather to also explain the ways in which these actors take a position and frame the topic. Herein, national parliaments provide an interesting analytical angle to study elite actors first-hand without the interference of media reporting. Whereas politicisation ‘unfolds’ in the mass media, i.e. it finds broader resonance with a wide audience, national parliaments have an important role as it is the arena where party political competition unfolds, wherein “justifications of some can be continuously challenged by others”.⁹ Overall, despite national parliaments relatively limited institutional powers in the EU’s decision-making

³ Katrin AUDEL and Tapio RAUNIO, "Introduction: Connecting with the Electorate? Parliamentary Communication in EU affairs", *Journal of Legislative Studies*, 20/1, 2014, 1-12.

⁴ Marc HELBLING, Dominic HOEGLINGER and Bruno WÜEST, "How political parties frame European integration".

⁵ Katrin AUDEL and Oliver HÖING, "Parliaments in the Euro Crisis: Can the Losers of Integration Still Fight Back?", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 52/6, 2014, 1184-1193.

⁶ Christian RAUH and Pieter DE WILDE, "The opposition deficit in EU accountability: Evidence from over 20 years of plenary debate in four member states", *European Journal of Political Research*, 57, 2018, 194-216.

⁷ Edgar GRANDE and Swen HUTTER, "Introduction: European integration and the challenge of politicization"; Dominic HOEGLINGER, Bruno WÜEST and Marc HELBLING, "Culture versus economy: the framing of public debates over issues related to globalization"; Hanspeter KRIESI, "Restructuring the national political space: the supply side of national electoral politics".

⁸ Natasza STYCZYNSKA, Góra MAGDALENA and Marcin ZUBEK, *Contestation of EU Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Actors, Arenas and Arguments*.

⁹ Katrin AUDEL and Tapio RAUNIO, "Introduction: Connecting with the Electorate? Parliamentary Communication in EU affairs". 4 Pieter DE WILDE, "The Operating Logics of National Parliaments and Mass Media in the Politicisation of Europe", *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, 20/1, 2014, 46-61, 49.

process, their influence has increased over time through both the creation of new institutional procedures, such as the subsidiarity control system which, and European Affairs Committees (EAC's), an additional possibility is given to parliamentary actors to directly hold governments accountable for actions performed on the EU level as well as to debate propositions of the European Commission.¹⁰ For example, yearly, the Dutch European Affairs Committee and the relevant government representatives debate the 'Enlargement Package' of the European Commission, which explains the EU's policy on enlargement and progress in accession countries. In the case of the widening of the EU, national parliaments have an additional role as enlargement is a 'constitutional issue', meaning it needs to ratify an accession treaty before the accession of a new member state to the EU. Subsequently, debates on enlargement can be seen as "consequential deliberations on the conditions and merits of enlargement".¹¹ Thus, national parliamentary actors can both use their position to communicate their arguments and justifications for electoral advantage and can actively influence outcomes in the enlargement process.¹² Consequentially, debates on enlargement provide a rich source of information on the ways in which domestic elite actors conceive of widening of European integration.

To test the assumptions on positions and frames taken in enlargement debates, an in-depth case study on the Netherlands is at the heart of the current research. The Netherlands is an important case to study framing and positions of parliamentary actors because of its stance in the discussion on an ever-widening European Union. As previously noted, a distinction herein can be made between 'drivers' and 'brakemen' of the enlargement policy, wherein the Netherlands is part of the latter group of countries.¹³ In addition, as a founding, highly developed member state that can be characterised as a stable democracy, the Netherlands presents itself as an interesting case as it has been at the forefront of scholarly attention for Euroscepticism due to the 2005 Constitutional referendum, whereby the enlargement debate on Turkey played a crucial part that led to its rejection, which means that parliamentary contestation of enlargement has found a wider audience beyond the plenary setting.¹⁴ Furthermore, successive enlargement rounds have found Dutch governments taking a more and more pragmatical 'strict and fair' position towards European integration and widening of the Union, which is partly at odds with the assumptions on the

¹⁰ Thomas WINZEN, "The institutional position of national parliaments in the European Union: developments, explanations, effects"; J. KESTER and M. VAN KEULEN, "De Tweede Kamermethode: versterkte parlementaire invloed op Europese besluitvorming", *Regelmaat*, 26/6, 2011, 303-314.

¹¹ Marie-Eve BÉLANGER and Frank SCHIMMELFENNIG, "Politicization and rebordering in EU enlargement: membership discourses in European parliaments", 4

¹² Christian RAUH and Pieter DE WILDE, "The opposition deficit in EU accountability: Evidence from over 20 years of plenary debate in four member states".

¹³ Steven BLOCKMANS, "The Netherlands".

¹⁴ Anjo HARRYVAN and Jan VAN DER HARST, "2002-2005: Dissonanten nemen toe. Keerpunt in het Nederlandse Europadebat".

importance of cultural frames in research on European integration.¹⁵ Despite attention for politicisation of European integration in the Netherlands in a multitude of studies through the analysis of newspapers and the position in the European Council of successive governments, a focus on parliamentary debates and partisan conflict is as of yet still missing.¹⁶

4.2 Data

Empirically, this thesis focuses on publicly available sources from the Dutch lower house or chamber of representatives (*Tweede Kamer*) between 2004 and 2020. As a starting point, 2004 has been chosen because it includes the year of the largest accession round so far - consisting of ten new acceding countries - and is assumed to be the starting point of a more critical stance towards an ever-widening EU as well as a reconfiguration of the EU's enlargement policy itself.¹⁷ The available data is obtained from the Dutch national parliament's online information system (*Officiële bekendmakingen*).¹⁸ Three types of documents were used to analyse speeches by political actors. First of all, I include plenary debates on issues of European integration, usually held before and after European Council summits; the reports of these plenary debates are referred to as '*Handelingen*'. Depending on the issues at hand, enlargement is debated between members of parliament (*Tweede Kamerleden*) and government representatives, both of which I refer to as parliamentary actors. Secondly, debates in the committee meetings were consulted as they provide rich information on arguments and their justifications regarding foreign affairs. Every month, the 'General Affairs Council' (GAC) of the Council of the European Union intervenes with the relevant ministers of all EU member states. Subsequently, together, the commissions for 'European Affairs' (*vaste commissie voor Europese Zaken*) and 'Foreign Affairs' (*vaste commissie voor Buitenlandse Zaken*) of the chamber of representatives have a common meeting (*algemeen overleg*), where they debate the outcomes of the GAC. As mentioned, the European Affairs committee also intervenes yearly to debate the progress of enlargement. In these meetings, parliamentarians question the responsible ministers and state secretaries on their position on a European level and parliamentary actors positions themselves in debates. Finally, each year, the Dutch government presents the so-called 'State of the European Union' (*Staat van de Europese Unie*), wherein its views regarding the EU's state of affairs and future are listed; subsequently, a plenary debate follows that gives parliamentary

¹⁵ Mendeltje VAN KEULEN, *Going Europe or Going Dutch? How the Dutch Government Shapes European Union Policy?*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006, 100.

¹⁶ Sandrino SMEETS, "Unanimity and exposure in the EU Council of Ministers – or how the Dutch won and lost the ICTY debate"; Steven BLOCKMANS, "The Netherlands".

¹⁷ Marie-Eve BÉLANGER and Frank SCHIMMELFENNIG, "Politicization and rebordering in EU enlargement: membership discourses in European parliaments".

¹⁸ See officiële bekendmakingen for all the publications of parliament: <<https://www.officielebekendmakingen.nl/>>

actors ample room to delineate their views on topics such as enlargement. These plenary debates are more lengthy and are also attended by Dutch members of the European Parliament (MEP's) and thus provide another rich source for researching positions and frames on enlargement.

To identify relevant debates on enlargement in these three settings, a wide range of search queries ran in the database, using relevant keywords, which led to the identification of 219 parliamentary protocols and 1753 coded statements. However, not every debate contains a similar number of speeches that refer to enlargement. Most insightful are debates and committee meetings preceding either the ratification of an accession treaty or important steps in the accession process, such as the opening of negotiations with a candidate country. Finally, debates have been handpicked based on their thematic relevance as well: in order to manage the amount of coding, a selection was made between accession countries. As part of the most recent accession states since 2004, Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia were chosen because their membership perspectives were aptly discussed. In addition, debates on Turkey and the other Western Balkan countries were included in the selection, as they are all either candidate, applicant or potential candidates; therefore, debates are still ongoing on the perceived benefits of their accession. Subsequently, although included in other research, countries of the Eastern Partnership and Iceland were left out of the research. In the case of Ukraine, and the importance of the debate on the 'association agreement' in the Netherlands, research has already been conducted.¹⁹ As a critical note, it could be argued as a teleological decision as actors in 2004 could not have been aware of the development of the EU's enlargement policy and thus do not necessarily make a distinction when justifying their arguments in favour or against further enlargement. Nevertheless, in this case, manageability is a valid argument to counteract this possible pitfall.

4.3 Empirical strategy

The methodology section is divided into two parts. First of all, following the introduction in the theoretical framework, it contains an explanation of the ways in which positioning and framing of political actors regarding enlargement are conceptualised. Secondly, I explain how the retrieved data serves as the basis for the empirical analysis. To reiterate, the goal of the thesis is twofold: on the one hand, positions and frames on enlargement are descriptively analysed. On the other hand, following Bélanger and Schimmelfenig, the relationship between political parties' characteristics and their positions and frames on enlargement are researched further.

¹⁹ Hans VOLLAARD, "Democracy vs Imperialism: The Dutch Referendum on the EU-Ukraine Agreement", in: Magdalena GÓRA, Natasza STYCZYNSKA and Marcin ZUBEK (red.), *Contestation of EU Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy*, Copenhagen: Djof Publishing, 2019, 53-78.

4.3.1 Coding

To research both these aspects, a ‘claims-making approach’ is applied, based on the framework of Koopmans and Statham.²⁰ Their applied method – mostly used to study the ‘European public sphere’ - views claims as “units of strategic action that articulate political demands, calls to action, proposals, or criticisms, which, actually or potentially, affect the interests or the integrity of the claimants or other collective actors”.²¹ In effect, it means that parliamentary speeches are taken as claims and which, depending on whether actors refer to different candidate countries in the same statement, can contain multiple claims. In contrast to a ‘core sentence’ method, a choice is deliberately made to include whole speeches of parliamentary actors rather than individual grammatical sentences, whereas the current preferred method allows for more room to determine the chosen frame by the parliamentary actor. Thus, for each claim or statement, the type of actor (*parliamentarian or government representative*), the political party of the speaker (*and whether it is part of the current government*), the position on enlargement, frames and several keywords were coded using a qualitative data analysis programme (*Atlas.ti*) to simplify the process. All these were coded by the author, avoiding intercoder reliability.

Coding positions, frames and keywords requires additional explanation. First of all, actors’ positions are divided into three values: claims can be coded in favour or opposed to enlargement or as conditional statements, referring to the idea that further enlargement is possible but only after fulfilling certain criteria. For example, an actor in 2004 could refer to the positive outlooks of Romania joining the European Union, only in case it is successful in reforming its judicial system. These three values are coded with a numerical value of respectively 1 (*positive*), 0 (*negative*) or 0.5 (*conditional*); thus, making it possible to calculate average positions towards further enlargement.

Secondly, as mentioned in the theoretical framework, ‘frames’ on enlargement are constructed as binary: arguments are either justified ‘normatively’ or ‘pragmatically’.²² Normative frames are those that refer to either a ‘moral’ or ‘ethical’ framework to argue in favour or against further enlargement. The former points towards arguments referring to norms and values of a particular community, such as the European Union, whereas the latter touches upon frames of a ‘universal’ nature, i.e. when a decision is the ‘right thing’ to do. For example, when an actor refers to the ‘human rights situation in Turkey’ as an argument against enlargement, it is because of an

²⁰ Ruud KOOPMANS and Paul STATHAM, "Theoretical Framework, Research Design, and Methods", in: Ruud KOOPMANS and Paul STATHAM (red.), *The Making of a European Public Sphere Media Discourse and Political Contention*, Cambridge Cambridge University Press, 2010, 34-59.

²¹ Ibidem. 55, also see: Ruud KOOPMANS, "Who inhabits the European public sphere? Winners and losers, supporters and opponents in Europeanised political debates", *European Journal of Political Research*, 46, 2007, 183-2007.

²² Frank WENDLER, "Justification and political polarization in national parliamentary debates on EU treaty reform".

adherence to universally acceptable, moral, arguments rather than an expression of solely a European identity. Despite the distinction between ‘ethical’ and ‘moral’, in this thesis, these types of arguments are grouped together under the ‘normative’ denomination.

Conversely, pragmatic frames can be explained through a ‘consequentialist logic of action’ and thus pose to justify actions through their utility.²³ As an example, legal, economic and political arguments can be thought of in this categorisation. Thus, when a political actor refers to the economic benefits of enlargement or to the importance of strengthening the rule of law as part of the conditionality mechanism instated by the EC, as the respective country can otherwise form a threat to the stability of the EU, these are classified as pragmatic frames during the coding process.

Despite clarifying the overall frames, confusion can arise on the exact phrasing of actors and what this means for the classification of the utilised frames. Perhaps the most apt discussion is how to conceive of the so-called ‘political criteria’ of the enlargement process. As a part of the Copenhagen criteria - those that an accession country needs to comply with in order to join the EU - these political criteria require candidate countries to achieve ‘stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and protection of minorities.’²⁴ On first thought, because of their universal nature, references to these criteria in justifying an argument pertains to a ‘moral’, and subsequently, a normative, conception of enlargement. However, ‘political criteria’ in itself is a rather vague term that is often interpreted differently, depending on the enlargement round and the candidate countries.²⁵ Namely, a reference to ‘political criteria’ can also be contextualised by a political actor mentioning the importance of institutional stability for the stability of the EU. Therefore, in some situations, frames can even both be conceived as pragmatic as well as normative depending on the context.

Lastly, for every speech keywords or additional frames are assigned that further describe the ‘core arguments’ used by political actors and parties. These serve as a qualitative additional explanation of the frames that are assigned to parliamentary claims. Most of all, this acknowledges that the binary distinction of frames does not fully capture the whole range of debates on enlargement. Actors that either have negative or positive positions on further enlargement can make use of the same frames but that does not mean they are also referring to the same core arguments. Thus, in this thesis, the goal of coding these additional keywords is to provide additional

²³ Helene SJURSEN, "A certain sense of Europe? Defining the EU through enlargement "; Helene SJURSEN, "Why Expand? The Question of Legitimacy and Justification in the EU's Enlargement Policy", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 40/3, 2002, 491-513; Frank WENDLER, *Debating Europe in National Parliaments, Public Justification and Political Polarization*.

²⁴ See for reference: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/policy/glossary/terms/accession-criteria_en

²⁵ Ronald JANSE, "Is the European Commission a credible guardian of the values? A revisionist account of the Copenhagen political criteria during the Big Bang enlargement", *International Journal of Constitutional Law*, 17/1, 2019, 43-65.

information on the core structure of the debate on enlargement. By coding speeches that, for example, refer to ‘human rights’, ‘economics’, ‘borders’, ‘freedom of movement’, ‘religion’ and others, another level is added to the analysis. A speech has a minimum of one keyword coded up to as many as the political actor refers to in their claim.

4.3.2 Methodology

The final section of the research design presents the empirical application of the coded data, which includes both a qualitative and a quantitative approach. As the data contains coded claims for sixteen years, it is possible to make a descriptive analysis of when the debate on enlargement was most salient and what type of frames and positions were predominantly used during the time frame, which serves as the basis to answer H1, H2 and H3. Furthermore, two indicators used by Frank Wendler in his work on parliamentary debates can be applied in the analysis: emphasis (ES) and position (PS) scores. The former shows the relative number of one type of justification in relation to all the frames, which means that per year and overall it is possible to see which frames are emphasised by political parties. Moreover, the latter represents the share of positively coded claims in relation to all the statements on enlargement within a particular frame, which shows the positions of political parties on the different types of argument.²⁶ Because some years contain fewer statements, on an annual basis it is difficult to show the amount of polarisation between parties on enlargement but over the whole period, groups of parties can be identified depending on the type of discourse they use. Although it is not the goal of this thesis to reiterate the existence or not of politicisation of European integration, two of its main components are nevertheless incorporated.

In the next step, positions and frames figure as the dependent variable in a regression analysis to measure what influences these. As for the independent variables, I again draw on the methodology of Bélanger and Schimmelfenig in relation to enlargement, namely on the ‘ideological and institutional characteristics of the parliamentary parties’ to answer H4a and H4b.²⁷ Therefore, to identify the cultural and economic stances of political parties, the GAL-TAN and economic left-right positions are taken from the commonly used Chapel Hill Expert Survey.²⁸ As the database does not contain position for all years of the current research, linear interpolation was applied for

²⁶ Frank WENDLER, *Debating Europe in National Parliaments, Public Justification and Political Polarization*. 69, Although not similarly named, also used by: Dominic HOEGLINGER, "The politicisation of European integration in domestic election campaigns".

²⁷ Marie-Eve BÉLANGER and Frank SCHIMMELFENNIG, "Politicization and rebordering in EU enlargement: membership discourses in European parliaments". 11; Also see: Dominic HOEGLINGER, Bruno WÜEST and Marc HELBLING, "Culture versus economy: the framing of public debates over issues related to globalization".

²⁸ BAKKER, Ryan, Liesbet HOOGHE, Seth JOLLY, Gary MARKS, Jonathan POLK, Jan Rovny, Marco Steenbergen, and Milada Anna Vachudova. 2020. "1999 – 2019 Chapel Hill Expert Survey Trend File.

the intervening years.²⁹ As for the independent variable for whether a party is in government or opposition, which serves to answer H5 and H6, this is simply coded as a 0 for a party in opposition and as 1 for a party that is in government. In a final step of the quantitative analysis, multinomial and binary logistic regression is applied to explain the positions and frames of political parties, which is delineated in detail in chapter six. Lastly, the coded keywords are aggregated and used to provide context on the frames used during the time period on different candidate countries and by political parties.

²⁹ See Annex 2 for the data on the linear interpolation.

5. Descriptive analysis

The analysis of the source material presents, first of all, a descriptive analysis of the evolution of positions and framing of enlargement in the Dutch national chamber of representatives. Empirically, I find that parliamentary discourse on enlargement in the Netherlands largely follows the ‘strict and fair’ position of successive governments. Although mostly government representatives refer to their position with this specific slogan, other actors in parliamentary debates also tend to emphasise pragmatic frames and take a conditional position on enlargement, which leads to the idea that enlargement is not seen in normative terms but that adherence to the process itself is most important. However, this only presents an overall picture and discourse of enlargement has more sides and parliamentary actors refer to a wide range of benefits and hazards of a possible new accession round.

In the descriptive analysis, two important aspects of what is deemed politicisation are used to present the debate on enlargement in Dutch national parliament. First of all, this is issue salience, the most basic aspect of politicisation, or whether enlargement over time was seen as an important issue by actors in parliamentary debates.¹ Secondly, polarisation occurs only when actors have differing ideas on the direction of enlargement. In this part, the aim is to find what kind of frames are most salient and whether there are opposing camps in debates, which use different types of discourse on enlargement. A last common aspect in measuring politicisation is to look at actor expansion. However, in the current case, this will not be incorporated as actor expansion is mostly dependent on the number of parties represented in the chamber of representatives, which could skew the results. For example, in committee debates and usually plenary sessions, only one representative acts for the whole party. Overall, the descriptive analysis shows when discourse on enlargement was most salient and what types of frames were used between 2004 and 2020.

5.1 Overview

To start the analysis of plenary debates, committee meetings and debates on the ‘State of the European Union’, statements on enlargement are divided over the selected candidate countries included in the research. Around the starting point of the research in 2004, parliamentary discourse is focused on the aftermath of the ‘Big Bang’ enlargement, the countries also referred to in the Dutch debates as the ‘Ten of Laeken’, which refers to the European Council meeting where the

¹ Pieter DE WILDE, Anna LEUPOLD and Henning SCHMIDTKE, "Introduction: the differentiated politicisation of European governance".

number of countries for the 2004 accession round was reduced from twelve to ten – delaying the accession of Bulgaria and Romania. The impact of the accession of ten new countries to the EU was domestically followed by an intense debate on the future of the European Union and the strict adherence to the Copenhagen criteria for any further enlargement.² In this context, the next round of enlargement with Bulgaria and Romania as well increasingly closer ties with Turkey are crucial to understand the hesitation on the part of parliamentary actors towards further enlargement. The 2005 Constitutional referendum had shown that public support for European integration could no longer be described as ‘permissive’ but a critical stance in the public sphere had clearly appeared.

Therefore, one of the points that arise from an analysis of the keywords is that European enlargement requires public support to succeed.³ For example, parliamentarians often normatively refer to the ‘will of the people’ or think that a referendum, such as in France, would be needed for any future rounds of enlargement.⁴ Similarly, as mentioned in the literature review, mostly between 2005 and 2007, the absorption capacity of the European Union was questioned, together with the idea that the process of enlargement should be more important than the speed at which countries can join.⁵ For example, a member of the Socialist Party ‘SP’ questioned the speed of EU integration and added that a critical note on enlargement needed to be acknowledged as there are limits to the absorption capacity of the EU.⁶ References to the absorption capacity - otherwise known within the EU as ‘integration capacity’ - in statements on enlargement are linked to the EU’s “capacity to function” and can partly be seen as a criticism of European governance. At the same time, absorption capacity is a term that aptly shows the divergence between the EU and the domestic political context, which is shown by a study – requested by the then Dutch government and chamber of representatives in 2010 – on this issue. A main conclusion of this study is that the term, which emanated from the EC, in itself is difficult to define and that there it there is no simple explanation on what would impact the absorption capacity.⁷ It is telling that discussions on the absorption capacity have become less frequent in the ‘*Tweede Kamer*’ over time in favour of debates on the readiness of candidate countries.

Despite these developments in discourse on enlargement since 2004, a majority of members of parliament voted in favour of accession in the rounds of 2007 with Bulgaria and

² Robert LEONARDO, *Cohesion Policy in the European Union The Building of Europe*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. 171. See for example in: Handelingen II 2005/2006, nr. 44, p. 2928-2968

³ See Annex 1 for an overview of the occurrence of the keywords.

⁴ Natasha WUNSCH, "Between indifference and hesitation: France and EU enlargement towards the Balkans".

⁵ Peter VAN GRINSVEN, Mendeltje VAN KEULEN and Jan ROOD, *Over verkiezingen, politisering en het Nederlands Europa-beleid*, Den Haag: Nederlands Instituut voor Internationale Betrekkingen Clingendael 2006.

⁶ Handelingen II 2005/2006, nr. 44, p. 2928-2968, 2937.

⁷ Anna SZOLUCHA, "The EU and Enlargement Fatigue: Why has the European Union not been able to counter enlargement fatigue?". 9 VAN STADEN, e.a., *Het vermogen van de EU tot verdere uitbreiding*, 71, July 2010, 1-54.

Romania and in 2013, when Croatia joined the EU. Contrarily to literature on European integration, Harryvan and Van der Harst noted that due to overwhelming public support of the EU, the permissive consensus is still lingering on.⁸ The ratification of the accession treaties by national parliaments is another sign that a constraining dissensus might not have fully arrived on enlargement as well.

However, parliamentary consensus in these accession rounds does not mean that there has been no contestation. Even though there was a broad parliamentary consensus in favour of the accession of Croatia, the enlargement process in 2013 was not at the same place as it was in 2004. Because of the negative experiences after the accession of Bulgaria and Romania and the introduction of an additional element of conditionality in the form of the 'Cooperation and Verification mechanism' (CVM), discourse on strict conditionality has been at the heart of Dutch debates on enlargement.⁹ Furthermore, countries of the Western Balkans had their own complicated history and started with a lower economic development.¹⁰ In addition, for the Netherlands, cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) had been an important requirement during negotiations with especially Croatia and Serbia.¹¹

While accession negotiations with Croatia proceeded and eventually led to accession, negotiations with other candidate countries have proven to be lengthy and difficult. Figure 1 aptly shows the duration of the process through the share of statements on enlargement per country between 2004 and 2020. As an individual country, most statements were dedicated to Turkey (34%). This discourse was most relevant before and after the result of the constitutional referendum in 2005 and peaked again around the EU-Turkey deal in and before 2016. In this year, migration was the most coded keyword.¹² Statements on Bulgaria and Romania (12%) are most relevant around 2007, in the period – and just after - of the accession of these countries. As a region, the Western Balkan is discussed most widely (47%) and has been at the core of debates since 2007. In the last years of the studied time period, the cases of Albania and North-Macedonia have been at the forefront of parliamentary scrutiny. Lastly, 8% of the coded statements were made by parliamentary actors on EU enlargement in general; not a specific country or region was mentioned but the process as a whole.

⁸ Anjo HARRYVAN and Jan VAN DER HARST, "Support for EU Membership and the 2012 General Elections: On the Tenacity of the Permissive Consensus in the Netherlands", in: M. BACHEM-REHM, C. HIEPEL and H. TÜRK (red.), *Teilungen überwinden. Europäische und internationale Geschichte im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, München: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag GmbH, 2014, 613-621.

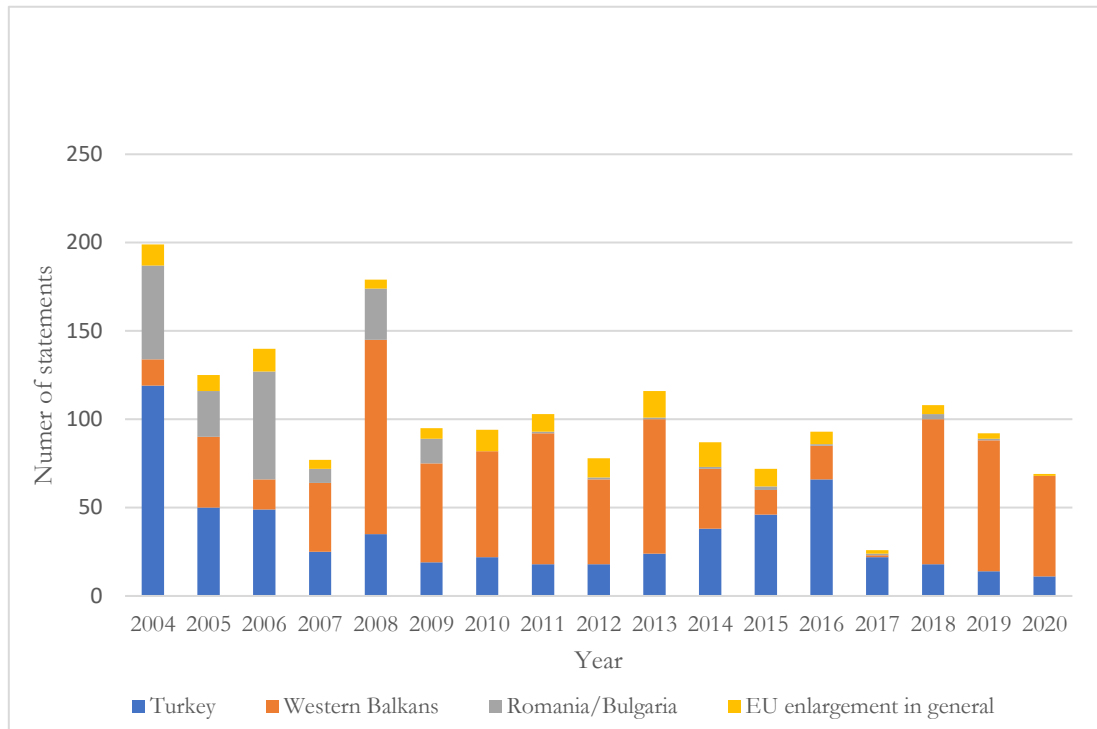
⁹ See for example: Kamerstukken II, vergaderjaar 2008–2009, 23 987, nr. 90

¹⁰ James KER-LINDSAY, Ioannis ARMAKOLAS, Rosa BALFOURET et al., "The national politics of EU enlargement in the Western Balkans".

¹¹ Steven BLOCKMANS, "The Netherlands".

¹² Natasza STYCZYNSKA, Góra MAGDALENA and Marcin ZUBEK, *Contestation of EU Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Actors, Arenas and Arguments*, 19.

Figure 1: statements on enlargement countries in the Dutch 'Tweede Kamer' between 2004 and 2020



5.2 Salience

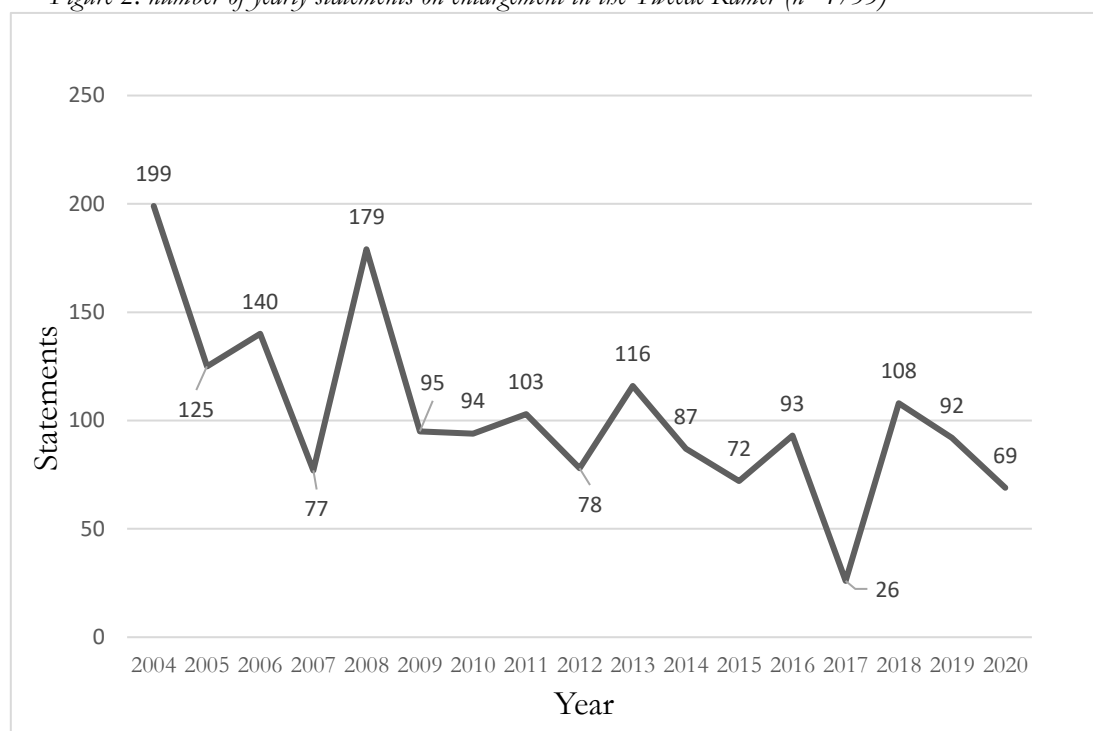
Salience refers to the importance or visibility of a topic in debates. While this does not tell us much about the wider resonance of enlargement in the public sphere, it shows the relative importance parliamentary actors place on enlargement over time. H1 expects that enlargement becomes more salient over time in debates. Earlier studies have already shown that European integration in the Netherlands – including enlargement – has become more salient in newspapers.¹³ Figure 2 presents the evolution of the number of statements on enlargement in the *Tweede Kamer* between 2004 and 2020. In Dutch parliamentary debates, statements on enlargement peaked in 2004, in the aftermath of the approval of the ‘Ten of Laeken’ and has never reached similar heights since then. However, despite a decline in speeches in 2017, enlargement also did not become markedly less salient over time. Moreover, the notable decline to only 26 coded speeches in 2017 is an outlier, which can be explained by multiple factors.

Overall, statements on enlargement are highly dependent on the state of the accession process itself and the strategy of the European Commission herein. When Bulgaria and Romania joined the European Union in 2007, the ratification process in the EU’s national parliaments

¹³ Martin DOLEZAL, Swen HUTTER and Bruno WÜEST, "Exploring the new cleavage across arenas and public debates: design and methods ", in: *Political Conflict in Western Europe*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

already occurred in 2006, when more than 40% of the statements referred to these two countries. Since 1999, the EU's accession process with the Western Balkan countries has partly been driven by its 'Stability and Association Process' (SAA), which is dependent on its method of conditionality.¹⁴ The respective countries are offered rewards for successful reforms, cooperation and Europeanisation that eventually leads to accession. As a precursor to becoming a candidate country is the signing of the 'Stability and Association Pact' (SAP) between the EU and the respective country. For example, in 2008, a SAP was signed between the EU and Serbia, which explains the relative salience of the debate this year. Moreover, in 2008, according to the assigned keywords, besides a focus on conditionality, the ICTY was one of the main focal points in Dutch parliamentary discourse. Conversely, the SAP with Montenegro, which was signed in 2007 did not nearly gain the same amount of traction in national parliament.

Figure 2: number of yearly statements on enlargement in the Tweede Kamer (n=1753)



Therefore, saliency partly relates to the individual relation between member states and candidate countries, which in the existing literature has been used as an explanatory factor to account for 'drivers' and 'brakemen' in the enlargement process. Both geopolitical as well as

¹⁴ Christian PIPPAN, "The Rocky Road to Europe: The EU's Stabilisation and Association Process for the Western Balkans and the Principle of Conditionality", *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 9, 2004, 219-245, 229-238.

economic interests can be a deciding factor for the emergence of debate in national parliaments.¹⁵ Following the analysis of Sandrino Smeets on the position of the Dutch government in the European Council on Croatia and Serbia, parliamentary actors – both government representatives and parliamentarians – similarly stressed in their discourse that full cooperation with the ICTY was necessary before any steps in the enlargement process could be made.¹⁶ In sum, differences in the saliency of enlargement in debates can partly be explained by the respective candidate countries. Furthermore, institutional developments can cause an increase in saliency – such as the EU-Turkey deal, which concurrently renewed debates on the status of Turkey in the enlargement process. Lastly, the European Commission – as the executive of the enlargement policy – recommends whether a candidate country is ready for opening of accession negotiations. In 2017, there was no significant step in the enlargement process, which explains the low saliency in the Dutch national parliament.¹⁷ Subsequently, increased saliency in the years 2018-2020 follows the recommendation of the EC to open up accession negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania, which attracted a renewed parliamentary interest on enlargement. In sum, based on an analysis of saliency over time, enlargement has not become more salient over time and H1 is rejected.

5.3 Positions on enlargement

As described in the theoretical framework, H2 expects positions on enlargement to be increasingly negative over time due to a decline in the number of enlargement activities and unfavourable public opinion among citizens. Again, specific candidate countries attract more negative opinions than others – such is the case for Turkey and Albania. However, the overall unfavourable attitudes among citizens could lead to increasingly negative positioning in national parliaments and even to a consensus among political parties opposing further enlargement.¹⁸ While a permissive consensus on European integration might still exist in the Netherlands, due to largely positive attitudes among citizens on the EU, debates on enlargements point at a different image.

Figure 3 presents the evolution of positions on enlargement. Parliamentary actors can take a negative, conditional or positive position on enlargement, which respectively are coded as 1, 0.5

¹⁵ An interesting case here is the French opposition towards enlargement, see: Natasha WUNSCH, "Between indifference and hesitation: France and EU enlargement towards the Balkans"; Andrew MORAVCSIK and Frank SCHIMMELFENNIG, "Liberal Intergovernmentalism".

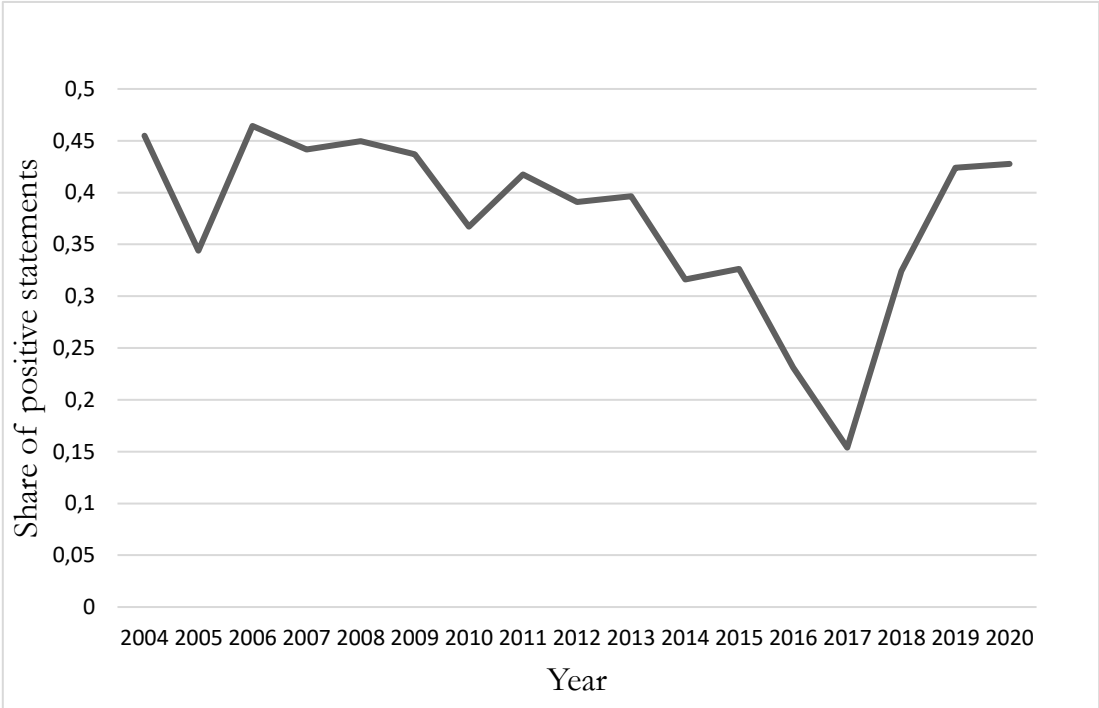
¹⁶ Sandrino SMEETS, "Unanimity and exposure in the EU Council of Ministers – or how the Dutch won and lost the ICTY debate".

¹⁷ See for an overview of all enlargement activities with the WB countries and Turkey: Antoaneta DIMITROVA and Elitsa KORTENSKA, "Enlargement as foreign policy in the Western Balkans: Has it reached its limits?", *MAXCAP*, 1-34, 2019, 18.

¹⁸ Antoaneta DIMITROVA and Elitsa KORTENSKA, "What do citizens want? And why does it matter? Discourses among citizens as opportunities and constraints for EU enlargement", 265-266.

and 0 and are aggregated per year here. Bélanger and Schimmelfenig, in their research on enlargement in different national parliaments encountered an overall positive discourse on enlargement - in the European Parliament as well as in France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Poland and the United Kingdom with an average position of 0.7.¹⁹ Conversely, positions in the Netherlands are predominantly negative, where the average position over time is 0.39 and 2006 as the year with the most positive position of 0.46. Categorised by regions, only a slight difference in positions arises: Turkey is viewed most negatively (0.31), the Western Balkan countries slightly above the average position (0.43) and Bulgaria and Romania most positively (0.52).

Figure 3: average yearly positions in the Tweede Kamer on enlargement (n=1753)



Overall, debates in the Netherlands on enlargement have become more negative over time, which confirms H2 partly. Only in 2018 does the discourse on enlargement become more positive again, when the debate is centred on North Macedonia and Albania. During this time frame around half of the statements concern the opening of accession negotiations with these two countries. Several parties follow the governmental line of ‘strict and fair’ and take a conditional stance towards opening accession negotiations, arguing that mostly Albania is not yet ready. Others reject this notion and claim that both countries are still far away from any further step towards enlargement. However, although scarcely, parliamentary actors from the green party ‘GroenLinks’, the social

¹⁹ Marie-Eve BÉLANGER and Frank SCHIMMELFENNIG, "Politicization and rebordering in EU enlargement: membership discourses in European parliaments", 10.

democratic labour party 'PvdA' and the market-liberal 'VVD' and social-liberal 'D66' parties are in favour and use the argument that both countries have shown enough progress and need to be rewarded for their efforts. In this argument, the geopolitical context of cooperation and enlargement perspectives for the Western Balkan countries is once again put forward.²⁰

Therefore, even though conditional and negative statements still make up the biggest share of the discourse, there is a break with the previous period. A closer look at the statements made in parliament shows that 62% of the statements are put forward in a conditional manner, while only 9% are positive and 30% of the speeches contain a negative position. While a conditional position towards enlargement does not necessarily imply incompatibility of countries with the EU, these positions are telling on the length of the process. Perhaps the most striking example here is the case of Turkey, for which an association agreement in the form of the Ankara agreement has been in effect since 1964 but the process has been in a state of relative standstill in recent years.²¹ Furthermore, North Macedonia has had the status of candidate since 2005 but the requirements of the process of conditionality have not yet been met. According to actors speaking in parliament, reforms in North Macedonia should be more extensive before accession negotiations can be opened while at the same time, accession is coupled with the process of Albania, whereas Dutch parliamentary actors argue in favour of decoupling these countries.

Results in this research present a more negative position on enlargement and European integration compared to earlier studies, with the analysis of Frank Wendler as an exception, who similarly finds that between 2005 and 2012 discourse on enlargement in several countries is negative rather than positive.²² Specifically, the Dutch case can be explained by both a focus on country individual factors as well as a methodological difference. First of all, successive Dutch governments' position of 'strict and fair' is partly mirrored in the parliamentary debates and committee meetings, wherein actors emphasise the importance of strict conditionality. Only a few statements contain references to the geographical or cultural borders of Europe and the direction of the European Union. In addition, for the countries in the Western Balkans, full cooperation with the ICTY became an essential part of the Copenhagen criteria and, therefore, part of the process of conditionality. In turn, this mostly conditional attitude towards enlargement has made the Netherlands a 'brakeman' on a European scale, whereby government representatives were clearly supported in the chamber of representatives.²³

²⁰ The keyword 'geopolitical' is used 26 times in these years; *Handelingen II 2018/2019*, nr. 94, item 34, p. 1-34

²¹ Eli GATEVA, *European Union Enlargement Conditionality*, 10.

²² Frank WENDLER, *Debating Europe in National Parliaments, Public Justification and Political Polarization*, 127.

²³ Steven BLOCKMANS, "The Netherlands".

Secondly, methodologically, the approach taken here differs from earlier research on enlargement, which has taken plenary debates as the main source of parliamentary discourse. Here, committee meetings are also incorporated. Subsequently, there is a slight difference in output between plenary sessions that have a wider resonance in the public sphere and committee meetings, which gives speakers more opportunities to go into a detailed justification of their position. For example, during the plenary session on the 1st of February in 2006, the upcoming parliamentary ratification of the accession agreement with Romania and Bulgaria was discussed in attendance by both ambassadors of the respective countries.²⁴ In committee meetings, parliamentary actors took a more precautionous and conditional position towards Bulgaria and Romania. Nevertheless, in plenary debates, broad support was expressed overwhelmingly (0.7) compared to the overall average position (0.52).

5.4 Frames

After establishing that parliamentary discourse on enlargement in the Netherlands leans towards a negative position, a distinction between normative and pragmatic frames aims to understand in which ways political actors perceive enlargement.²⁵ H3 expects, based on the ‘cultural shift hypothesis’, that normative frames highlighting either ‘exclusive’ or ‘inclusive’ identities become more dominant in parliamentary discourse on enlargement. Conversely, Anna Herran-Surrallés has specifically analysed the substance of discourse on enlargement in party manifestos, which has shown an evolution towards justifications based on pragmatic arguments rather than normative ideas that enlargement is centred around European common values.²⁶

Similarly, parliamentarian actors in the Netherlands tend to emphasise pragmatic aspects of enlargement over normative justifications, which fits in with the tendency to take a conditional position as actors mostly refer to the process of reforms necessary for candidate countries in order to become a member state. Figure 4 presents the evolution of frames in the *Tweede Kamer* on enlargement, whereby a score of 1 would indicate the use of pragmatic justifications only and a score of 0 would mean that actors only frame enlargement normatively. Pragmatic discourse clearly is used mostly to describe enlargement: the average score over the time period is 0.66, which

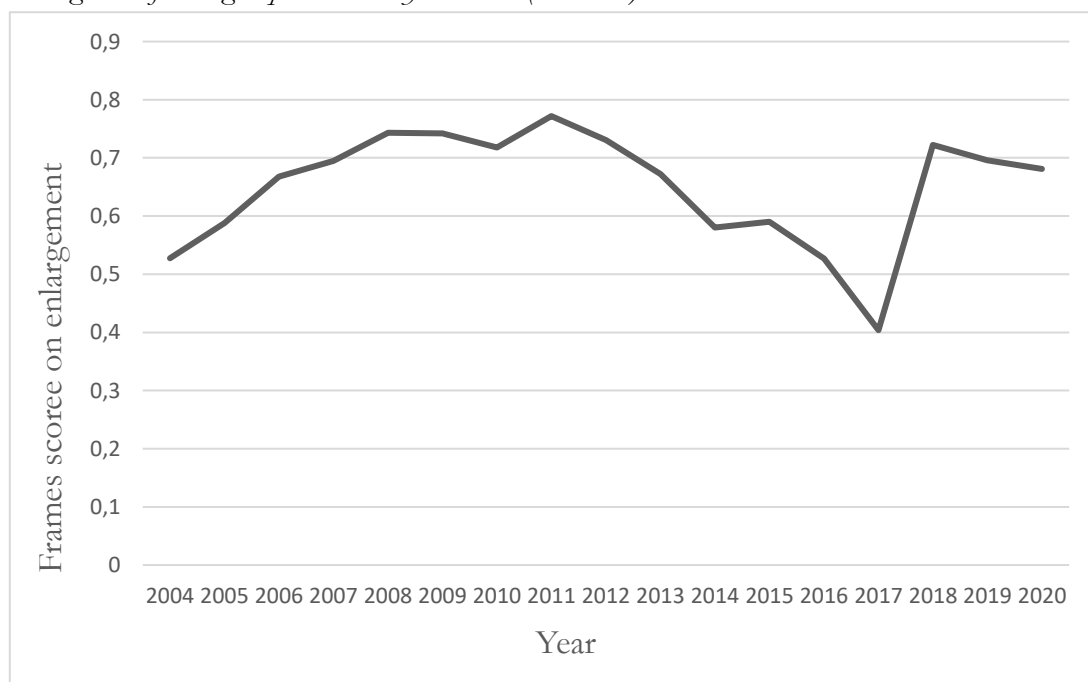
²⁴ Handelingen II 2005/2006, nr. 44, p. 2928-2968; Hilde REIDING, "Van harte welkom in de Europese-Unie? Pro-Europese en Eurosceptische afwegingen bij de toedreding van mediterrane en Oost-Europese landen tot de Unie", in: Carla van BAALEN, Hans GOSLINGA, Alexander van KESSELE et al. (red.), *Jaarboek Parlementaire Geschiedenis, De Verenigde Staten van Europa*, Centrum voor Parlementaire Geschiedenis: Nijmegen, 2012.

²⁵ Marc HELBLING, Dominic HOEGLINGER and Bruno WÜEST, "How political parties frame European integration ", 497.

²⁶ Anna HERRANZ-SURRALLÉS, "Justifying Enlargement in a Multi-level Polity: A Discursive Institutional Analysis of the Elites–Public Gap over European Union Enlargement", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 50/3, 2012, 385-402, 399.

disproves H3. Helene Sjursen already observed a rational, utilitarian formulation of arguments regarding enlargement in official EU documents, which is most notable in the case of Turkey with possible consequences on the long term process. For example, Sjursen argues that normative justifications helped to mobilise support for enlargement in member states.²⁷ In comparison to earlier enlargement rounds, the ongoing process with multiple candidate countries has seemingly not raised normative conceptions of the expansion of the EU. Both the accession of Spain and Portugal as well as the 2004 ‘big bang’ enlargement had raised sufficient arguments based on the values and belonging of countries to the same European sphere. In the Dutch case, the 2004 enlargement round had been framed based on normative ideals but as Harryvan and Van der Harst showed, it was also minorly contested on pragmatic arguments, based on the increasing costs of enlargement.²⁸ Here, in over one-third of the coded statements on enlargement that had a pragmatic frame, actors mentioned either being cautious of moving too fast with candidate countries or the necessity to adhere to the process of conditionality. Moreover, a recurrent theme in pragmatic discourse is for actors to mention the need for further reforms in candidate countries, with references to crime and corruption and the rule of law. In terms of the utility of enlargement, parliamentary actors refer to either the benefits of new member states within the single market or the increasing cost of further enlargement. Conversely, normative frames in the ‘*Tweede Kamer*’ tend to focus on geography, human rights, history, political criteria, values and the will of the people.

Figure 4: framing in parliamentary discourse (n=1753)



²⁷ Helene SJURSEN, "A certain sense of Europe? Defining the EU through enlargement ", 516.

²⁸ Anjo HARRYVAN and Jan VAN DER HARST, "2002-2005: Dissonanten nemen toe. Keerpunt in het Nederlandse Europadebat".

Empirical research here observes a notable change since 2004. A steady increase occurs in the share of pragmatic justifications of positions - reaching its height in 2011 with a score of 0.77; subsequently, a decline sets in after, when discourse becomes relatively more normative, which coincides with an increasingly negative position on enlargement since 2011. Only after 2017, pragmatic justifications increase again due to the debate on Northern Macedonia and Albania, which tends to focus on the process of reforms in the respective countries. In both cases, there is a minimal amount of parliamentary opposition towards these countries based on normative conceptions. However, there is a consensus among parliamentarians and government officials that these countries – and especially Albania is seen as not yet fulfilling the criteria – are not ready for the opening of accession negotiations. An analysis of the keywords used by actors in these debates shows that almost a quarter of statements refer to upholding conditionality and the duration of the process, i.e. that both countries need more time or that actors rather avoid mentioning a date for eventual accession. In addition, specific steps in the conditionality process are mentioned, such as the necessary reforms in the area of rule of law and issues with crime and corruption.

Lastly, results categorised according to countries or regions differ slightly. On Turkey, the candidate country that is individually discussed most widely, discourse is more normatively framed than in the general results with a framing score of 0.5, which indicates that it has a slightly unique position in parliamentary debates. To add to this, while the pragmatic debate on Turkey is similar to other candidate countries, with a focus on conditionality and reforms, normative discourse features a multitude of references to human rights, migration, religion, values and historical disputes. For example, of the 168 references to human rights in statements, over 90 are made in reference to Turkey. In contrast, the average frame score for the Western Balkan countries is at 0.80 and for Romania and Bulgaria at 0.74, which means that discourse is mostly pragmatic. As Blockmans has suggested in his analysis of the Dutch governmental position on enlargement, these groups of countries are mostly seen by parliamentary actors as geographically and culturally close to the European Union. Therefore, normative discussions tend to be absent and pragmatic justifications on the utilitarian benefits or detriments of their membership is discussed. In sum, H3 can be rejected because enlargement is mostly framed pragmatically. However, a trend did arise in the studied period that points at an increased importance of normative discourse in the Netherlands on enlargement, albeit mostly centred around negotiations with Turkey.

5.5 Political parties: positions and frames

While Christoffer Green-Pedersen views salience as the most important aspect of a politicised issue, here I loosely combine saliency with another aspect commonly used in literature on European integration, namely contestation between political parties.²⁹ Even though issue salience might be considered the most basic dimension of why an issue becomes contested, an issue might also be part of a wider change in political conflict.³⁰ Here, I conceptualise this contestation or polarisation solely descriptively as: the pattern of conflict that arises between political parties in parliamentary discourse on enlargement.³¹ It is not in the scope of this thesis to create an index of whether enlargement can be considered politicised as not all parties have made enough statements in each year to calculate a meaningful statistic. Moreover, scholarly literature on European integration has already broadly described an increase in saliency and politicisation on issues regarding the European Union.³² Therefore, the aim of this section is to present how positions and frames used in Dutch parliamentary discourse lead to an interaction between political parties in enlargement. To illustrate, this part shows both position and emphasis scores of political parties (in percentages) in the normative and pragmatic debates. Emphasis scores represent the relative amount of normative or pragmatic justifications a political party uses compared to the total statements of the same party. In addition, positions scores are calculated based on the relative amount of positive and conditional statements, compared to the total amount of statements in a particular type of discourse. Included in this section are ten Dutch political parties that have made statements on enlargement throughout the timeframe 2004-2020. For simplicity, a difference in the plots is not made between parties in government or opposition.³³ Through this analysis, an answer to H5 can partly be formulated, on whether contestation appears more strongly on the fringes of the political spectrum. For the categorisation of political parties, a similar division is used by Helbling, Hoeglenger and Wüest.³⁴

First of all, figures 5 and 6 plot the positions of Dutch political parties within respectively the normative and pragmatic dimensions of enlargement discourse. As has already become evident

²⁹ Christoffer GREEN-PEDERSEN, "A Giant Fast Asleep? Party Incentives and Politicization of European Integration". 117. Pieter DE WILDE, Anna LEUPOLD and Henning SCHMIDTKE, "Introduction: the differentiated politicisation of European governance".

³⁰ Edgar GRANDE and Swen HUTTER, "Introduction: European integration and the challenge of politicization", 8.

³¹ Pieter DE WILDE, Anna LEUPOLD and Henning SCHMIDTKE, "Introduction: the differentiated politicisation of European governance".

³² See an overview in: Johannes KARREMANS and Marina Costa LOBO, "Revisiting the politicization of the EU, A three-dimensional approach", in: Marina Costa LOBO, Filipe CARREIRA DA SILVA and José PEDRO ZÚQUETE (red.), *Changing societies: Legacies and Challenges, Citizenship in crisis*, Lisbon: University of Lisbon, 2018, 51-71.

³³ The following parties are not included: 50PLUS, Partij voor de Dieren and Forum voor Democratie. The respective parties did not have enough statements to make a meaningful calculation on their position and emphasis.

³⁴ Marc HELBLING, Dominic HOEGLINGER and Bruno WÜEST, "How political parties frame European integration ", 508.

in the section on positions, most of the normatively justified statements have a negative position. Only two parties, the social democratic party 'PvdA' (72%) and the green party 'GroenLinks' (58%) tend to view these normative frames positively. Only two parties emphasise normative discourse over pragmatic frames, namely the 'LPF' and 'PVV' – both can be classified under the populist and/or radical right group – and have an overwhelmingly negative position (respectively 16% and 2%) on further enlargement. While the radical left socialist party 'SP' also views enlargement negatively (23% in normative discourse and 27% in pragmatic), it tends to do this mostly through pragmatic justifications. Seemingly this follows the expectations of H5 and the literature on European integration that parties on the radical left-wing oppose further European integration based on opposition to market liberalisation and economic inequality. However, in the case of the 'SP', a majority of the arguments do not refer to economic aspects but follow general arguments on conditionality, rule of law reforms and the process of enlargement. Furthermore, negative positions on enlargement are not exclusive to radical parties but also appear on the mainstream level. Namely, both smaller culturally conservative Christian parties, the 'SGP' and the 'ChristenUnie' also have a mostly negative view on enlargement, while they switch between normative and pragmatic frames. Mostly in the case of Turkey, these parties tend to emphasise normative justifications as they feel religious and geographical differences create a boundary gap that is unbridgeable.

Lastly, both liberal parties 'D66' and 'VVD' as well as the Christian democratic 'CDA', all mainstream parties that have been a part of multiple governments, are grouped together and use pragmatic justifications in more than 70% of their statements, while their position in both dimensions of discourses is around the conditional value of 50%. Another mainstream party that has been part of two governments in the time period, the 'PvdA', takes a similar position in terms of pragmatic discourse but is more positive when using normative frames. Overall, these four parties tend to take a similar position and use similar frames, which tentatively points towards contestation between government and opposition parties.

These two plots show that there is some general agreement on enlargement: most political parties tend to emphasise pragmatic arguments and take a conditional position herein. Furthermore, these pragmatic justifications tend to have a higher position score than normative arguments. On average the position for pragmatic arguments is 0.42, while for normative arguments this is only 0.34. However, an inverted 'U-curve' as hypothesised in H5 cannot be fully confirmed because more parties than just those on the fringes emphasise negative positions on enlargement.

Figure 5: Party positions in normative discourse

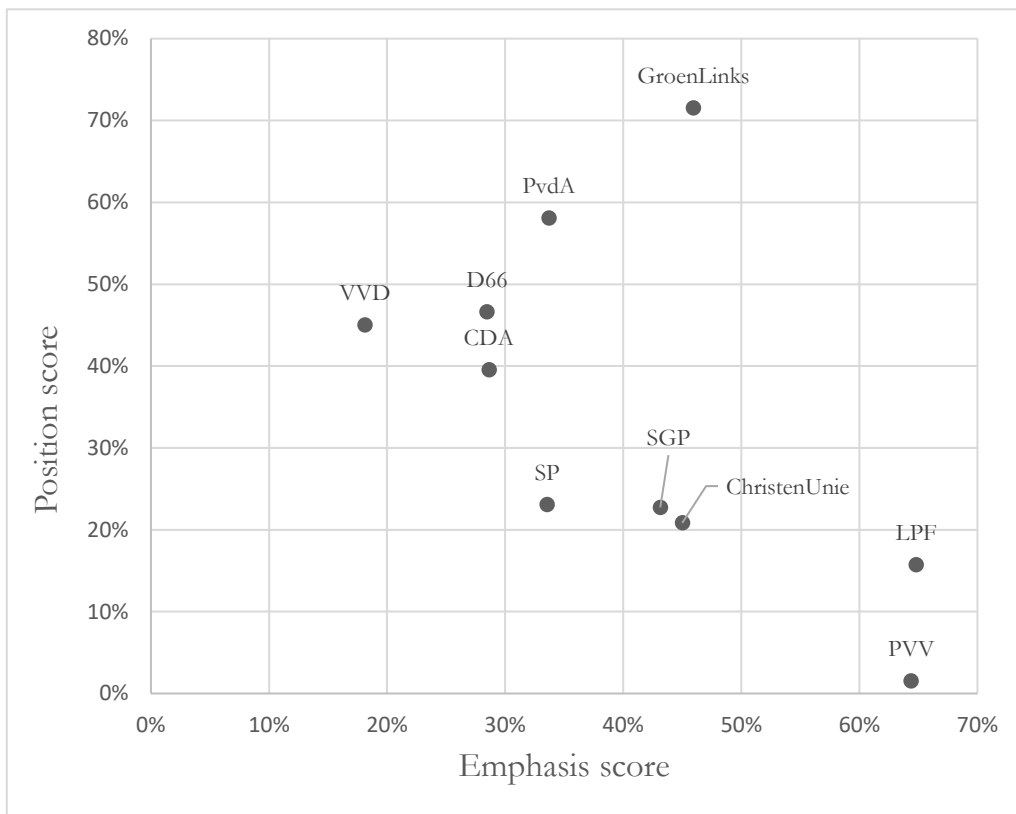
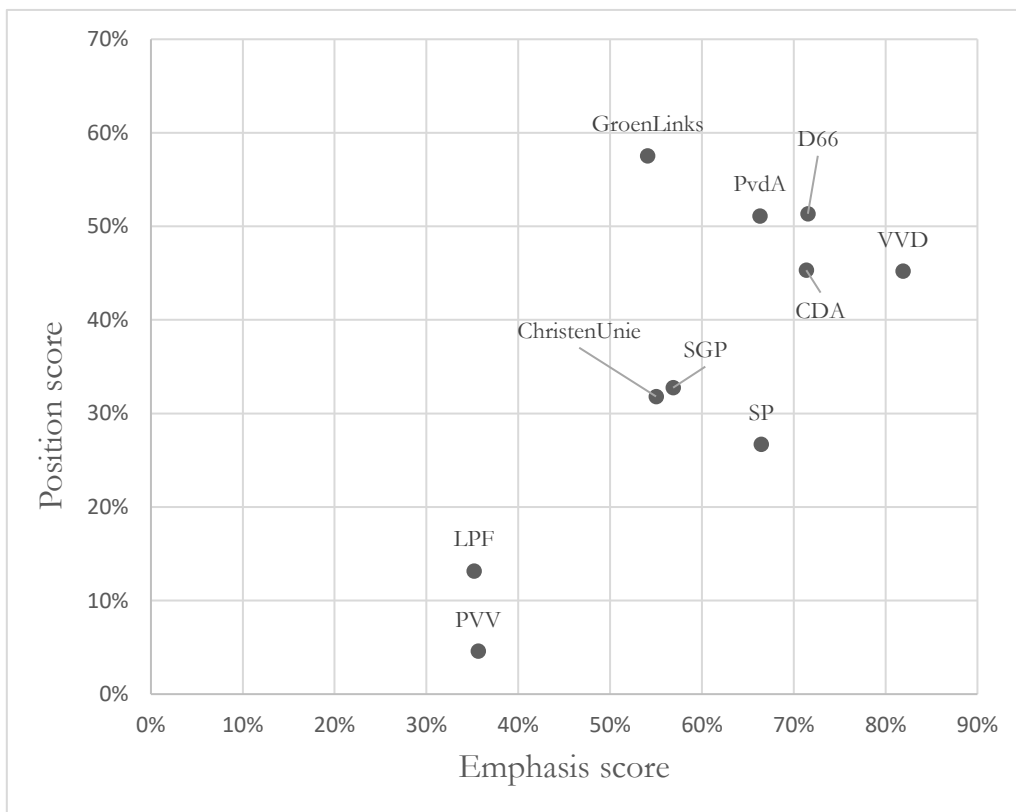


Figure 6: Party positions in pragmatic discourse.



6.1 Drivers of the Dutch parliamentary discourse on enlargement

The statistical part of this thesis examines what explains the aforementioned positions and frames used by actors in parliament. From the previous chapters, it has been established that political parties differ in their positions on enlargement depending on the frames used for their argument. Following the theoretical assumptions, three types of patterns are empirically tested here that could drive party political contestation. First of all, these are based on ideological patterns, namely political parties' position on the economical left-right scale and on the cultural GAL-TAN axis can explain H4a and H4b. Subsequently, the strategic competition hypothesis 6 assumes that parties in opposition take a more negative position on enlargement and parties in government tend to emphasise pragmatic frames in debates and committee meetings. To expand on the research design, two types of regression analysis are used to present the data. First of all, to explain the first dependent variable, positions of political parties, multinomial logistic regression was used with three possible outcomes (0, 0.5 and 1) because the proportional odds assumption was not met to conduct an ordinal logistic regression. To explain the second dependent variable, frames, a simple binary logistic regression was conducted wherein the dependent variable can either take the values 0 (normative frame) or 1 (pragmatic frame). Several statements were coded both as containing normative as well as pragmatic justifications in case they included both in the same sentence. In the descriptive analysis, these were given a value of 0.5. These statements were separated into two different codes to be able to have a binary dependent variable. For the country effects, dummy codes were used to account for differences between the discussed countries by parliamentary actors. In addition, because not all years contain the same number of statements on enlargement, dummy codes were used for different successive governments to account for differences in positions and frames between years.

6.1 Regression results

Tables 1 and 2 show the results of both the multinomial and binary logistic regressions on respectively the positions and frames used by parliamentary actors. The first model presents the result of the influence of ideological and strategical independent variables, while the second model also takes into account the fixed effects of differences between candidate countries.

Table 1: multinomial regression model predicting party positions.

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Base model		Fixed country effects	
	Conditional	Positive	Conditional	Positive
	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>
Government – Opposition	-2.08**	-1.86**	-2.02**	-1.83**
GalTan	-0.34**	-0.63**	-0.34*	-0.63**
LRecon	-0.02	-0.06	-0.01	-0.05
Constant	6.72**	4.91*	6.66**	4.934*
Pseudo R-Square	0,181		0.183	
N	1729		1729	

Note: reference category for both models is a negative position on enlargement. Outcomes therefore reflect the likelihood of parliamentary actors in opposition taking either a conditional or positive position on enlargement. Other control variables used but not shown are governmental effects, i.e. to account for different time periods. (*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01)¹

Table 2: binary regression model predicting frames.

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Base model		Fixed country effects	
	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>
Government – Opposition	0.72**		0.67**	
GalTan	-0.11**		-0.10**	
LRecon	0.05*		0.05*	
Constant	0.65**		0.28	
Pseudo R-Square	0.06		0.09	
N	1918		1918	

Note: in contrast with the multinomial model, the reference category here is 0, or the value for a normatively framed statement.

Results between the models do not differ widely, which confirms what Bélanger and Schimmelfenig – albeit relying upon a different conception of frames – also noted on discourse on enlargement in

¹ Presentation on a multinomial model, see: Sara HOBOLT and James TILLEY, "Fleeing the centre: the rise of challenger parties in the aftermath of the euro crisis", *West European Politics*, 39/5, 2016, 971-991. 981.

national parliaments. Although frames and positions on enlargement differ depending on the candidate country debated, discourse can still be explained by the characteristics of the political parties.²

First of all, whether a parliamentary actor belongs to a party in government or opposition influences both their position on enlargement and which frames they use, which is what is expected from hypothesis 6. The result on frames in table 2 also confirms the expectation that pragmatic frames are more likely to be used by parties in government. Based on the descriptive analysis, this again fits into the pattern that political parties tend to follow the official ‘strict and fair’ approach of successive Dutch governments. In essence, a strict adherence to the Copenhagen criteria is what marks this position. Qualitatively, I find that in a few cases, this strict adherence is also contested by political parties. For example, contestation on opening accession negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia arose because some parliamentary actors argued that a renewed European perspective was necessary for the respective countries.³ Furthermore, the focus of government parties on pragmatic frames also shows a general focus on the evolution of the enlargement policy. Namely, parliamentary actors have highlighted the need to change the direction of the policy, with a more strict focus on chapters of rule of law, and thereby urge the government to step up in the Council.⁴ In addition to the pragmatic approach of parties in government, the regression result on positions in table 1 shows that actors of parties in government are more likely to take a conditional or a positive position than an opposition party. Therefore, opposition parties in the Netherlands are more likely to take a negative position and use normative frames on enlargement than opposition parties, which fits into the general pattern of contestation of European integration. For so-called challenger parties – that did not hold office before – contestation of enlargement can provide an opportunity to differentiate electorally from mainstream parties, which is fitting for the ‘SP’ and ‘PVV’ in the Dutch case.⁵ However, challenger parties do not only account for a different position. For example, as previously mentioned, the smaller Christian party ‘ChristenUnie’, which has been a part of multiple governments, also tends to take a more negative position than average political parties. In addition, the pro-European ‘GroenLinks’ is an outlier and has the most positive stance on enlargement but has never been a part of a government.

²Marie-Eve BÉLANGER and Frank SCHIMMELFENNIG, "Politicization and rebordering in EU enlargement: membership discourses in European parliaments", 15.

³Handelingen II 2018/2019, nr. 91, item 32, p. 1-8

⁴Georgi DIMITROV and Anna PLACHKOVA, "Bulgaria and Romania, twin Cinderellas in the European Union: how they contributed in a peculiar way to the change in EU policy for the promotion of democracy and rule of law", *European Politics and Society*, 22/2, 2021, 167-184. Eli GATEVA, *European Union Enlargement Conditionality*, 18.

⁵Catherine DE VRIES and Sara HOBOLT, "When dimensions collide: The electoral success of issue entrepreneurs", *European Union Politics*, 13/2, 2012, 246-268, 251.

Secondly, ideological differences between political parties are researched to test hypotheses H4a and H4b. The latter expects that parties on the economic right favour market liberalisation and that enlargement of the European Union could provide economic benefits. From the analysis of keywords of the coded statements, around 10% of the pragmatic frames contain references to economic cooperation with candidate countries.⁶ Regarding the influence of the position of political parties on the economic left-right scale, the regression results for positions are not significant, which means there is no strong effect here. In terms of framing, left-right positions are significant, which means that parties on the economic right tend to emphasise pragmatic frames, albeit without a strong effect. Although radical left parties, to which the ‘SP’ belongs to according to the CHES expert survey between 1999 and 2019, take a generally negative position towards enlargement, there is seemingly no consistent or strong pattern that explains positions and frames based on the economic stance of parties. This rejects H4b and confirms the finding in the descriptive analysis. Namely, parties on the moderate left have been shown to take a relatively positive stance on enlargement, which echoes earlier research on European integration.⁷

Lastly, during European election campaigns, it has been shown that radical right parties use opposition towards European integration in their mobilising strategies for elections.⁸ So far, in this thesis, results point towards a similar pattern but the question remains whether there are certain partisan characteristics that explain discourse on enlargement. The GalTan dimension of party politics envisions differences between parties within a cultural dimension. According to the ‘cultural shift hypothesis’ (H4a), I expect that parties on the culturally conservative side or TAN side of this dimension tend to be more inclined to take a negative position on enlargement and use cultural or normative frames to justify this. Conversely, parties on the GAL side are expected to have a more positive and inclusive conception of European integration and see European integration as a natural progression. Although it is vital to be careful to label any significance in the results as a sign of a ‘politicised’ debate, Marks and Hooghe as well as Kriesi assume that an increasingly contested situation is accompanied by more frequent use of normative or cultural frames. Results from the regression analysis only partly confirm this. Both regression models show that the ideological indicator GalTan is significant to explain partisan effects on positions as well as frames. Firstly, results in table 1 are measured against a reference category that represents a negative position. Although the effects are not as strong compared to the government-opposition

⁶ For example in, when the enlargement process in the Western Balkans is explicitly linked to the economic crisis: Kamerstukken II, vergaderjaar 2011–2012, 21 501-02, nr. 1113

⁷ Martin DOLEZAL, "Restructuring the European political space: the supply side of European electoral politics". Marie-Eve BÉLANGER and Frank SCHIMMELFENNIG, "Politicization and rebordering in EU enlargement: membership discourses in European parliaments".

⁸ Maurits MEIJERS and Christian RAUH, "Has Eurosceptic Mobilization Become More Contagious? Comparing the 2009 and 2014 EP Election Campaigns in The Netherlands and France", *Politics and Governance*, 4/1, 2016, 83-103.

independent value, for the dependent variable positions, the regression analysis indicates that actors from political parties on the culturally TAN side are less likely to take either a conditional or – and a stronger effect is measured here – a positive position than those on the GAL side. The descriptive analysis already tentatively pointed at this conclusion. For example, ‘PvdA’, ‘GroenLinks’ and ‘D66’ – all considered progressive according to the GalTan scale – on average take a more positive position on enlargement than other parties.⁹ Secondly, table 2 shows that culturally conservative parties tend to be more likely to use normative frames in their discourse. For example, the radical right ‘PVV’ as well as the two smaller Christian parties, ‘SGP’ and ‘ChristenUnie’ all score higher on the TAN scale and emphasise normative frames more often than other parties. Conversely, the mainstream Christian democratic ‘CDA’ – also on the conservative side of the cultural axis – has an average position close to the overall average on enlargement and has emphasised mostly pragmatic frames. Thus, their position as government party has seemingly had more influence on their positions and justifications on enlargement than their ideological characteristics. Based on these results, H4a is confirmed through the regression analysis and the cultural dimension of partisan dynamics influences the positions and frames in debates on enlargement.

In sum, following the work of Bélanger and Schimmelfenig on national parliaments, results on enlargement discourse in the *Tweede Kamer* point towards the overall importance of partisan dynamics. Both strategic and ideological differences between political parties that actors belong to are found to be statistically significant in explaining positions and frames. Although this does not necessarily mean that enlargement can be considered politicised – because other factors such as wider resonance in the public sphere are absent here – results here point towards a ‘constraining dissensus’. There is enough difference in the positions taken and frames used by political parties to conclude that enlargement, within the broader area of European integration, has been contested in parliamentary discourse since 2004.

⁹ See Annex 2 for the exact positions of political parties on the GalTan scale.

7. Conclusions

The analysis of our novel dataset, covering 219 parliamentary protocols and 1753 coded statements on enlargement discourse in the Netherlands, provides an insight into a member state perspective on enlargement. The research question asked in which ways EU enlargement has been framed in national parliaments and what the positions were between 2004 and 2020. In addition, an additional question asks what the driving forces are behind both positions and frames. Underlying these questions is the broader idea of why the European Union widens and why certain countries are given preference to others. Namely, enlargement of the EU has a profound impact on its institutional design and could “jeopardize the legitimacy”.¹

First of all, the results of this thesis partly confirms the findings of both the literature on European integration as well as recent studies on enlargement in national parliaments. One of the main theoretical assumptions in the last decades on European integration has been that the ‘permissive consensus’ has been broken and that a ‘constraining dissensus’ is there to stay. The present analysis of salience and positions shows that - in the parliamentary debates in the Netherlands – enlargement has become less salient and viewed more negatively over time, which once again confirms that the permissive consensus has been broken. However, theoretical expectations by among others, Liesbeth Hooghe and Gary Marks put forward that an increase in the contestation of European integration goes together with a generally heightened salience, which is not the case for enlargement.² However, in contrast to Bélanger and Schimmelfenig, results here also point at a generally more negative conception of enlargement and the volatility of debates in national parliaments, which are highly dependent on the progress of the enlargement policy in the European Union and on the role of the EC as the executive of the policy.

Secondly, the present thesis shows that the discourse on enlargement by parliamentary actors mirrors that of the governments’ position. Whereas earlier research on parliamentary discourse on enlargement and European integration has shown that cultural or normative frames have an increasing role in politicisation of Europe, pragmatic justifications have been clearly shown to dominate the debates. National parliaments are venues for political actors to question the governments’ actions at the supranational level. However, this research has shown that the debates on enlargement are centred around the same themes, which could lead to a premature conclusion

¹ Helene SJURSEN, "Why Expand? The Question of Legitimacy and Justification in the EU's Enlargement Policy". 491

² HOOGHE Liesbet and Gary MARKS, "A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus", *British Journal of Political Science*, 39/1, 2009; GRANDE Edgar and Swen HUTTER, "Introduction: European integration and the challenge of politicization", in: Swen HUTTER, Edgar GRANDE and Hanspeter KRIESI (red.), *Politicising Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

that in the perceived process of nationalisation of enlargement, national governments are mostly supported on a domestic level.

Thirdly, the partisan dynamics on enlargement also point at the strongest relation between government-opposition and (conditional) support for enlargement and pragmatic justifications for these positions. In addition, the results from the empirical study show that the discourse on enlargement in the Dutch national parliament is partisan. The cultural axis is determinant for the parties' position on enlargement, which at the same time confirms that topics of European integration also follow more general lines of political conflict. However, despite the cultural 'drivers' in terms of framing and positions, pragmatic frames largely determine the discourse on enlargement. Two diverging explanations can account for this development. First of all, pragmatic frames on enlargement could be more connective to normative frames than I set out here. For example, a conditional pragmatic approach to enlargement could flow from the idea that the EU as a polity has reached its limits. Secondly, the presented cultural GalTan dimension or axis, could be more connected to the economic and pragmatic dimension than previously thought.

Finally, although the current research presents an insight into what I called the 'myriad of national contexts' that shape enlargement, it is limited to only one case study. Because of the volatility of the debates, general conclusions on broader developments within the EU and the role of national parliaments are hard to make. Therefore, additional research into debates on enlargement is necessary. Or, alternatively, the Dutch case can be applied to a broader range of topics on European integration, which would provide more information on what characteristics set the enlargement debate apart.

On a last note, this research has not focused on the connection between parliamentary actors and public opinion on enlargement. However, scholars have made the connection between normative assessments and favourable opinions towards candidate countries. Therefore, in the context of the longevity of the enlargement process, there is a point to be made that the constraining dissensus or the hold of public opinion the policy of enlargement could grow in the coming years due to the emphasis on pragmatic discourse.

8. Annex

Annex 1: keywords and their occurrence in enlargement statements.

Keywords	Occurrence
Absorption capacity	59
Borders	56
Civil society	17
Conditionality	507
Consistency	57
Cooperation	47
Corruption	151
Crime	78
Culture	20
Democracy	108
Dialogue	25
Domestic position	21
Economy	147
Education/science	4
Employment	16
Environment	2
Belonging	15
Migration	71
Freedom of Speech	115
Future	24
Geography	48
Geopolitics	55
History	101
Human Rights	168
ICTY	174
Information	7
Integration or institutional	54
Cost or benefit	33
Minorities	75
Nationalism	10
Partnership	14
Conflict	168
Political criteria	60
Previous experience	38
Process	374
Referendum	20
Reforms	131
Religion	92
Rule of Law	292
Security	4
Sovereignty	2
Stability	43
Strict (and fair)	39
Values	94
Will of the people	85

Note: keywords analysis is partly derived from the borders project: “Constructing Europe's Borders Project: Frames definition and Aggregation Protocol”

Annex 2: GalTan & Left-Right economic dimension CHES with linear interpolation.

Table 3: GalTan

Year	CDA	PvdA	VVD	D66	GL	SGP	SP	LPF	CU	PVV	50PLUS	PvdD
2004	6,80	3,48	5,33	1,97	1,92	9,33	4,28	5,44	8,59			
2005	6,75	3,59	5,22	2,24	2,16	9,31	4,75	5,44	8,50			
2006	6,70	3,70	5,10	2,50	2,40	9,29	5,22	5,44	8,40	6,57		
2007	6,81	3,78	5,02	2,27	2,28	9,33	5,22		8,16	6,72		
2008	6,92	3,85	4,94	2,04	2,16	9,37	5,22		7,91	6,86		
2009	7,03	3,93	4,86	1,80	2,05	9,40	5,22		7,67	7,01		
2010	7,14	4,00	4,79	1,57	1,93	9,44	5,21		7,43	7,15		3,80
2011	6,97	3,75	4,87	1,43	1,70	9,56	4,94		7,49	7,31		3,43
2012	6,79	3,50	4,96	1,29	1,46	9,68	4,66		7,55	7,47		3,07
2013	6,62	3,25	5,04	1,14	1,23	9,80	4,39		7,61	7,62		2,70
2014	6,44	3,00	5,13	1,00	1,00	9,92	4,11		7,67	7,78	4,33	2,33
2015	6,59	3,02	5,10	1,08	0,97	9,67	4,15		7,76	7,67	4,59	2,45
2016	6,73	3,03	5,08	1,15	0,94	9,41	4,19		7,86	7,56	4,84	2,57
2017	6,87	3,05	5,05	1,23	0,91	9,15	4,23		7,96	7,45	5,09	2,69
2018	7,01	3,06	5,03	1,31	0,88	8,89	4,27		8,06	7,34	5,35	2,81
2019	7,15	3,08	5,00	1,38	0,85	8,64	4,31		8,15	7,23	5,60	2,92
2020	6,95	3,17	4,97	1,15	0,98	9,16	4,45		8,44	7,62	5,85	2,52

Table 4: LRecon

Year	CDA	PvdA	VVD	D66	GL	SGP	SP	LPF	CU	PVV	50PLUS	PvdD
2004	5,89	3,67	7,95	5,17	1,95	6,50	0,95	8,11	4,73			
2005	5,73	3,62	7,92	5,19	1,97	6,50	1,03	8,11	4,43			
2006	5,56	3,56	7,89	5,22	2,00	6,50	1,11	8,11	4,13	8,29		
2007	5,80	3,56	7,99	5,29	2,25	6,50	1,21		4,35	7,53		
2008	6,03	3,57	8,09	5,36	2,50	6,50	1,31		4,57	6,76		
2009	6,27	3,57	8,19	5,43	2,75	6,50	1,40		4,78	6,00		
2010	6,50	3,57	8,29	5,50	3,00	6,50	1,50		5,00	5,23		3,56
2011	6,51	3,48	8,30	5,76	2,92	6,50	1,38		4,78	5,06		
2012	6,53	3,40	8,31	6,03	2,83	6,50	1,25		4,56	4,89		
2013	6,54	3,31	8,32	6,29	2,75	6,50	1,13		4,33	4,72		
2014	6,56	3,22	8,33	6,56	2,67	6,89	1,00		4,11	4,56	3,67	
2015	6,58	3,30	8,30	6,49	2,61	6,94	1,08		4,15	4,94	3,82	
2016	6,61	3,38	8,26	6,43	2,55	7,00	1,15		4,19	5,32	3,98	
2017	6,64	3,46	8,23	6,36	2,50	7,06	1,23		4,23	5,70	4,14	
2018	6,66	3,54	8,19	6,30	2,44	7,11	1,31		4,27	6,08	4,30	
2019	6,69	3,62	8,15	6,23	2,38	7,17	1,38		4,31	6,46	4,45	
2020	6,87	3,25	8,42	6,52	2,66	6,89	1,40		5,03	6,87	5,29	

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