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Does Group Size Matter? European Governance after Enlargement

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1. Project Summary

In this research project we analyze the impact of group size on political decision-making. How does group size affect policy stability? Does it change the decision-making processes in political systems? The issue of group size has attracted the attention of different disciplines and literatures. Our project focuses on the European Union (EU). In particular, we analyze whether Eastern enlargement has changed the practices and outcomes of EU decision-making. Enlargement is an empirical but also a theoretical challenge for European studies. Empirically, it is important to know how enlargement has modified EU decision-making. What changes in terms of legislative output have taken place after the enlargement? First findings underline that enlargement has not lead to gridlock – perhaps with the exception of the European Constitution – and that the changes in terms of legislative output are less strong than expected. This, of course, raises some theoretical questions since both most rationalist as well as constructivist theories of EU decision-making clearly predicted more policy-stability (the latest enlargement round has greatly increased the economic, social, political and cultural gaps between the member states). It is an open question whether the theories were wrong or whether they were wrongly applied. In order to address these theoretical shortcomings our project resorts to sociological group theories. In particular, existing models of EU decision-making will be enriched by integrating processes of oligarchization, formalization and adaptation. Whereas oligarchization and formalization relate to institutional questions and the decision-making structures, adaptation focuses on the behavior of the new and old member states.

The project applies a set of different methods. Econometric analyses, network analyses and case studies will be complemented by agent-based models. Although agent-based modeling has produced promising results in other fields of political science it so far has only rarely been applied to the study of the EU. Agent-based models, however, seem well suited to get a better grip on the dynamic mechanisms of policy-making in the European multi-level system of governance.

All in all, our project contributes to an ongoing multi-disciplinary debate about group size. By combining different theories of group decision-making the project more broadly fosters the development of our theoretical understanding of EU governance. Agent-based modeling is expected to guide our research into the black box of decision-making. The application of this method in combination with other sophisticated tools of analysis guarantees the scientific quality and innovative character of our contribution. Finally, on an empirical front, our research provides a rigorous account of the effects of Eastern enlargement as one of the most important steps in recent European integration.

The project will be organized in two parts. While one part will address the impact of enlargement on our dependent variable policy stability, the other analyzes the intervening sociological variables. This second part feeds into the work of the first, as the intervening sociological variables influence policy stability. In terms of organization, the project will be conducted by Dirk Leuffen and Frank Schimmelfennig with the support of two PhD students, Robin Hertz and Thomas Jensen.

2.1 State of the Art

The variable group size has caught the attention of many scholars from different backgrounds. From biologists and economists to sociologists and political scientists, all have emphasized the importance of this variable for the functioning of a group. Regardless whether this group is a pack of wild dogs (McCloud 1997), a team of human beings (Hackman and Vidmar 1970), or a number of nation-states (Alesina and Spolaore 1997), group-size seems to matter. As our research project focuses on group-size changes in the European Union and aims at applying sociological theories of group dynamics to the field of European politics our review of the literature limits itself to sociological theories of group dynamics and the literature assessing EU enlargement.

Sociological Theories of Group Dynamics

Various sociologists, but also economists, have analyzed the influence of group size on the functioning of a group (Simmel 1902, 1908; Olson 1965; Oliver and Marwell 1988; March and Olson 1989). On the theoretical front, the common understanding of, for instance, Simmel (1902) and Olson (1965) is that larger groups lead to more complex group dynamics, making it more difficult to provide collective goods optimally. Simmel (1902) stresses, however, that the effects of an increase in group size might be alleviated by organizational changes – as the group increases formal structures tend to replace the personal and immediate cohesion that is observed in smaller groups. Oliver and Marwell (1988) argue, on the other hand, that if the costs of collective action are taken into account, larger groups can actually exhibit more collective action than smaller ones due to the greater amount of resources at their disposal. Empirically, the influence of group size on the dynamics of group interactions has mainly been tested via experiments (Brewer and Kramer 1986; Albanese and van Fleet 1985; Oliver and Marwell 1988; Davis 1950; Terrien and Mills 1955; Williams 1951; Hare 1952; Thomas and Fink 1963). Thomas and Fink (1963) provide an overview over 31 studies testing the impact of group size. They come to the conclusion that "group size has significant effects on aspects of individual and group performance, on the nature of interaction and distribution of participation of group members, on group organization, on conformity and consensus, and on member satisfaction" (383). Unlike smaller groups Hackman and Vidmar (1970) find that large groups are associated with considerable disagreement and a large degree of competitiveness (43). Hare (1952) concludes that as "the size of a discussion group is increased from five to twelve members the degree of consensus resulting from the discussion decreases when the time for discussion is limited" (267).

Next to the studies which explicitly address group size as an important factor determining group dynamics, other sociologists have stressed different mechanisms that influence the functioning of a group. Two of these mechanisms are of importance to our research project: oligarchization and adaptation. Literature on both of these is shortly discussed below. In his early study of party life Robert Michels (1989, 351) introduces his "iron law of oligarchy". He finds that minorities in groups tend to gain particular power. For Michels (1989, 20) "the few always dominate". His explanation is functional – political groups simply need leadership (cf. Michels 1989, 370). Following personal ambitions leaders counterbalance the "immovability of the masses" at the micro-level (Michels 1989, 370). Many scholars have analyzed Michels "iron law of oligarchy" (e.g. Cassinelli 1953, Breines 1980, Rohrschneider 1994). Assessing the "iron law of oligarchy" from a theoretical perspective, Mayhew and Levinger (1976) show that it does not only hold for groups containing a very large number of members but that it can be applied to groups with less than five members, depending on the length of interaction. Additionally, Mayhew and Levinger (1976) link polarization of power structures to group size, showing that both are positively related.

The concept of adaptation has also been addressed by various scholars in a variety of contexts (e.g. Fox-Wolfgramm et. al 1998; McKinley 1993, Knill and Lenshow 1998). DiMaggio and Powell (1983) indicate that by institutional isomorphism group members generally adopt to "a logic of appropriateness" (March and Olsen 1989). Sociological institutionalism and organization theory underline the importance of adaptation for group sustainability and behavior. According to mimicry theory, when unsure in a new environment social actors will copy the older group members' behavior. Adaptation depends first of all on actor constellations. Goethals (1987, 225), for example, highlights that "self-attention theory suggests that individuals are more likely to match to standards […] as they feel proportionally outnumbered by others who define appropriate standards of behavior."

The insights of sociological studies on the relationship between group size and decision-making dynamics are numerous. Next to the considerations of Simmel, relating to formalization, we have picked out two other sociological theories, namely theories of adaptation as well as the iron law of oligarchization formulated by Michels (cf. Bailer and Leuffen 2006). So far these theories have not systematically been applied to the case of EU enlargement. Our research project will fill this gap and assess how useful these sociological theories are for understanding the impacts of group size changes on decision-making in the European Union. Part 2.3.2 will outline how the three sociological theories could be applied to the context of EU decision-making.

Analyzing EU Enlargement

Before turning to empirical analyses of how enlargement has impacted on EU decision-making we shortly outline the main theoretical considerations made by the literature. Research on enlargement has rapidly grown in recent years. After a descriptive starting period (cf. Grabbe 2002; Ersboll 1994; Browning and Joenniemi 2003; Glenn 2003; Phinnemore 2002; Nugent 2004; Heidenreich 2004; De Witte 2002), enlargement research quickly turned theoretical. Whereas one strand of the literature has focused on explaining the reasons for enlargement (cf. Schimmelfennig 1999, 2002, 2003a; Sedelmeier 1998, 2000, 2002; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2002; Lewis 2003; Friis 1997; Friis and Murphy 1999; Moravcsik and Vachudova 2003; Baldwin 1995; Breuss 2001; Brown et al. 1997; Wallace 2000), a different strand has addressed its consequences. Our project relates to this second branch. Most of this literature is anchored in a rationalist framework. We distinguish two approaches of analyzing the effects of enlargement on EU decision-making: a veto-player related approach (König and Bräuninger 2004; Tsebelis and Yataganas 2002; Dobbins et al. 2004) and an a priori voting power approach (Baldwin and Widgrén 2003, 2004, 2005; Baldwin et al. 2000; Bilbao et al. 2002; Johnston 1995; Felsenthal and Machover 2004). The a-priori voting power literature is based on the calculation of all possible coalitions and the fraction of coalitions within the Council that reach a qualified majority. While the veto-player approach combines preferences and institutions to predict outcomes, the a-priori voting power approach focuses on institutions. The simplifying assumptions and the validity of both approaches have widely been debated (cf. Hörl et al. 2005; Lane and Berg, 1999; Garrett and Tsebelis, 1999a, 1999b; Felsenthal et al., 2003; Albert, 2003). For example the neglect of actors' preferences in the a-priori voting power approach has often been criticized (cf. Steunenberg et al. 1999; Pajala and Widgrén 2004). Although the focus of these two approaches is different, their predictions point into the same direction: enlargement is generally said to have a strong impact on the EU's decision-making capacity (cf. Kerremans 1998). In Tsebelis' (2002) terms it should clearly increase policy stability. Tsebelis and Yataganas (2002, 304), for instance, conclude that "it will be almost impossible to alter the legislative status quo" and Baldwin and Widgrén (2004, 6) agree that "the Nice Treaty rules cripple the EU's ability to act since they make it very difficult to find winning majorities" in an enlarged Union. A notable exception from the generally pessimistic outlook on enlargement is provided by Steunenberg (2002, 112). He uses computer simulations to predict that "under qualified majority voting, enlargement will not affect the Union's ability to take new decisions". Having outlined the theoretical literature we now turn to the empirical findings on the effects of enlargement.

The surge of theoretical literature on EU enlargement in the wake of Eastern enlargement is slowly being complemented by empirical work assessing the theoretical predictions. So far very few studies have systematically assessed the impact of earlier enlargement rounds (e.g. Baldwin 1992). Although not the focus of his studies, Golub (1999, 2007) analyzes the impact of enlargement on decision-making speed. Conducting an event-history analysis he finds that "after every single enlargement decision-making was faster than during the period when Council negotiations involved only six member states" (Golub 2007, 169). Analyzing the impact of preferences on the duration of legislative decisions König (2007), on the other hand, finds that "the ever-growing EU is moving towards an ever-slower EU" (436). Turning to the literature assessing the impact of Eastern enlargement provides a similar picture: the empirical analyses fail to provide coherent results.

Since the new member states joined the EU in 2004 – and 2007 for Bulgaria and Romania – empirical evaluations of the consequences of the latest enlargement rounds are only at their beginning. Most findings so far have not yet passed a preliminary stage and are, to date, generally presented in unpublished papers. Empirical research on the effects of enlargement has so far focused specifically on the institutions of the European Union and more generally on overarching issues like dimensions of conflict and legislative output. While only very few studies have addressed how enlargement impacted on the functioning of the European Commission (Peterson and Birdsall 2007; Kurpas and Schönlau 2006) several scholars have focused on analyzing the effects of enlargement on the EP (cf. Hix and Noury 2006; Szczepanik 2006; Settembri 2006; Voeten 2006; Bale and Taggart 2006; Maurer et al. 2007; Whitaker 2006).

Next to the EP, the Council has been at the center of empirical studies focusing on the impact of enlargement. Extending existing voting behavior analyses (cf. Hayes-Renshaw et al. 2006; Lane and Mattila 2001; Mattila 2004; Heisenberg 2005) to the first period after enlargement, Mattila (2006, 6)

concludes that "the share of the contested decisions has not increased after the enlargement […] if anything the share of contested decisions has decreased." Hagemann (2007) and Hagemann and de Clerck-Sachsse (2007) support these findings and conclude that no new vs. old blocs can be identified within the Council (see also Mattila 2007). Very preliminary findings on Coreper by Lempp (2006) indicate that the transition can be considered as harmonious rather than chaotic. In an ex ante study Zimmer et al. (2005) find that enlargement should increase the north/south and net-contributors/net-receivers dimensions of conflict. They do not find evidence of a north-south-east dimension of conflict, which before had been predicted by, for instance, Kerremans (1998) and Kaeding and Selck (2005) and has been identified after enlargement by Naurin (2007a). Based on a network analysis Naurin (2007a) observe a north-south cleavage prior to enlargement and a north-south-east divide after enlargement. Extending the DEU dataset to a time-period after enlargement, Thomson (2007) analyses actor alignments following enlargement and compares the performance of two decision-making models prior to and after enlargement (the compromise model and the procedural model). His general conclusion is continuity, although he does find an east-west cleavage for distributional issues. Settembri (2007) distinguishes three dimensions on which the impact of enlargement can be analyzed: output, process, and potential. Generally, he finds that enlargement has changed decision-making in the European Union. The process has become more bureaucratic, with less political input from the highest levels.

The findings to date present a very diverse picture on the effects of enlargement. While various changes have been detected several scholars also find continuity in how the EU makes decisions. The proposed research project will add to the existing literature by drawing on sociological group theories to identify, theoretically as well as empirically, possible mechanisms through which enlargement impacted on EU decision-making.

2.2 Own Research (Leuffen, Schimmelfennig, Hertz, and Jensen)

Our previous research has touched on several fields relevant to the planed research project and in the case of Schimmelfennig has impacted on the enlargement literature at large. Concerning the proposed project we have reviewed the relevant literatures, collected and further developed a set of theories and elaborated the research designs with which we plan to test these theories. The theory development is documented in a range of papers presented at different conferences (cf. Schimmelfennig and Leuffen 2004; Leuffen 2006a; Leuffen 2006b; Bailer and Leuffen 2006). In these papers different decision-making theories are linked to the issue of group size. A range of different hypotheses on the effects of group-size are derived from rationalist as well as constructivist theories. These have then been tested in first quantitative and qualitative pilot studies. In Bailer and Leuffen (2006) the three sociological theories of oligarchization, formalization and adaptation are first introduced to the case of EU enlargement. In this paper, the empirical relevance of these theories is illustrated using data on the EP provided by Farrell et al. (2006).

Using ex post data on legislative output, Leuffen (2006c, 18-19) concludes that Eastern enlargement has indeed reduced the EU's legislative output (cf. also Dehousse et al. 2006). This finding, in fact, corroborates the theoretical predictions formulated by the veto-player approaches. However, the findings are very preliminary and need to be controlled, for example, for anticipation effects. In his case study on the Agenda 2007 Leuffen (2006c), in addition, emphasizes that one should refrain from blaming the new member states for the increase in policy stability. On the contrary, in this particular case it seems as if old member states are slamming on the brakes.

Hertz and Leuffen have developed some first agent-based models of EU enlargement. Most of these models build on the exchange model of Stokman and Van Osten (1994). For example, we have modeled the number of time steps it takes until all possible mutually beneficial exchanges are conducted. Setting different random seeds and drawing actor positions randomly for different number of actors, the game yields an interesting, although not necessarily predictable result. As the number of actors increases, the number of total exchanges increases linearly. The number of time steps needed for all possible exchanges does however not increase linearly but logarithmically. In other words, the time needed to decide on a specific issue does not increase proportionally with the additional number of member states, but depends on the number of incumbent states. Specifically, we should not expect a dramatic increase in the number of

days a legislative proposal remains within the EU decision-making apparatus per additional member state when comparing pre 2004 enlargement data to post 2004 enlargement data. Due to the logarithmic nature of the curve we should, however, find a more drastic increase per new Member State when regarding the impact of the second "northern enlargement" in 1995. Such models, although still very rudimentary allowed us to get acquainted with the technique. Hertz already has successfully submitted a term paper containing a first adaptation and oligarchization model to Professor Cederman's ABM course at ETH (Hertz 2007).

In addition, Hertz and Leuffen have constructed a data set containing all EU legislation from 1976 to 2007. All in all, more than 20000 legislative acts are recorded. The data has been collected from Prelex by applying a computational technique called deparsing. This data-set will be used to quantitatively analyze the effects of different enlargement rounds. In fact, we have started analyzing that data estimating count and survival models and have presented first findings at the ECPR conference in Pisa in early September 2007 (Hertz and Leuffen 2007). The count models inform about the number of legislative acts over time. The survival analysis focuses on duration. Amongst other things, this analysis reveals some interesting variations across different enlargement rounds. These differences need to be exploited in more detail in order to get a better understanding of the causal mechanisms underlying theses patterns.

In his master's thesis, Hertz (2006) has already started to extend the 'Decision Making in the European Union' (DEU) dataset (Thomson et al. 2006). Focusing on the change in EU decision-making after the 2004 enlargement in the Agriculture and Fisheries sector he, in particular, tests the compromise and the exchange models (see Stokman and Van Osten 1994). Analyzing the dynamics of the negotiation process he finds that the spirit of decision-making has fundamentally changed after enlargement: consensus-building has deteriorated. Methodologically this analysis implied programming the models in Matlab.

Jensen has taken basic courses on network analysis at the University of Zurich (Uwe Serdült) as well as advanced courses at the Essex Summer School (John Skvoretz). In a term paper (Jensen 2007) for Schimmelfennig's European Governance Course he applies an exponential random graph model to data on Council working group relations provided by Naurin (2007b). Using Markov Chain Monte Carlo estimations he finds substantive differences between old and new member states. His analysis highlights the use of network analysis for a better understanding of the informal structures of decision-making after enlargement.

In terms of organization, we have already established working relations with colleagues in the discipline who will collaborate on parts of this research. For example, Professor Robert Thompson has accepted exchanging post-enlargement data (for further information on our partners compare the section on personnel).

2.3. Research Plan

2.3.1 Aims of Research

The principal aim of our research is to get a better understanding of European governance after enlargement. Enlargement is a major step in recent European integration and we want to study how enlargement has changed the processes and outputs of EU decision-making. The key independent variable of our x-centric analysis is group-size. The key dependent variable is policy stability, later operationalized as legislative output in terms of quantity, duration of legislative acts as well as quality (=distance to reference point). In terms of theory development, we include sociological group theories into our analysis of post-enlargement governance. Existing group theories such as Michel's oligarchisation, or Simmel's formalization theory as well as adaptation theories are – in modified versions – applied to the case of the EU. In terms of research design these theories relate to intervening process variables that link group-size to policy output. We expect that these theories should guide us to better understand central features of the enlargement process, the integration of new member states into an existing decision-making system, and the conditions under which group size matters. Processes and structures of interaction should thus inform us about "what is going on" in the enlarged EU. The project will not, however, be restricted to theory

development alone but will also investigate the empirical fit of these theories. Applying a set of different methods on various data-sets we test our theories empirically. Amongst other methods we will use agent-base models to formally establish the theoretical links between group processes and outcomes of decision-making. In general, we thus hope to complement the existing literature by taking a more theory-guided perspective on post-enlargement governance in the EU.

The following parts will outline our planned research first by introducing our theoretical perspective. By combining rational institutionalist decision theories with sociological group theories we derive a set of hypotheses concerning the outputs as well as processes of EU decision-making. We then present the operationalisation of our key variables as well as the methods that we intend to use. In this part we will also provide a short introduction to agent-based modeling since this is a methodological innovation of the project. Finally we outline the datasets that we plan to use.

2.3.2 Theory

Negotiation analysis usually starts with defining who sits at the table. In the next step, the actors' preferences are recorded. After turning the institutional crank, the output is produced. As a matter of fact, however, often the predictions that such simple models generate do not correspond to the decisions that are actually taken by real-world actors. In many cases, even more complex models cannot account for decision-making in the EU (cf. Achen 2006; König and Proksch 2006). There clearly seems to be more going on in the black box of decision-making than what we can imagine by simply looking at formal decision-making rules (cf. Héritier 1999; Heisenberg 2005; Lewis 2005; Lewis 2003; Lewis 1998). In this research project we will incorporate insights from sociological group theories into a rationalist framework of EU decision-making. In particular, we use rationalist decision-making models as baselines that we intend to enrich by including sociological group variables. In particular, we will add insights from oligarchization, formalization, and adaptation theory. These sociological theories relate to the processes of decision-making. In our research, these processes constitute intervening variables that link group size to political outcomes. By combining the mechanisms identified by sociological group theories with rationalist decision-making models we hope to provide a more complete picture of how changes in group size impact on policy-stability. We see this as a contribution to theory development, more generally.

2.3.2.1 Group Size and Policy Stability

How is our key independent variable 'group size' linked to our dependent variable 'policy stability'? Veto player theory certainly provides the most obvious and elegant theoretical link between group size and policy stability (cf. Tsebelis 2002). Veto player theory's starting point is the rational institutionalist law that political outputs result from institutions and preferences (cf. Plott 1991). Given stable institutions, a growing number of decision-makers is under specific conditions assumed to lead to growing cores and/or shrinking win-sets. In particular, this depends on whether the preferences of the new veto-players are absorbed by the old veto-players (cf. Tsebelis 1995, 297; Drüner et al. 2006). According to veto-player theory, growing win-sets and/or shrinking cores increase policy stability (cf. Tsebelis 1995, 297; Tsebelis 2002, 25). But why should the heterogeneity of preferences increase with a growing group size in the first place? Social groups generally do not form at random but actors with similar preferences or backgrounds are likely to align in a first step. New members joining an existing group should accordingly increase preference heterogeneity in that group. When taking up the case of EU Eastern enlargement we clearly see structural differences between the old and new member states. This concerns economic structure and development, but also historical, cultural, and political backgrounds. Given these differences a growing heterogeneity of preferences can be assumed (cf. also Zimmer et al. 2005; König and Bräuninger 2004). Accordingly, our first, still very general hypothesis captures the relation between group size and policy stability.

H1: Enlargement as an increase in group-size leads to an increase of policy stability.

Note again that the causal mechanism rests on the assumed increase of preference heterogeneity. Institutions enter this framework by introducing different decision-making rules or procedures – for instance, we should expect stronger effects under unanimity than under qualified majority voting – and through the definition of who qualifies as a veto-player, in the first place. It is precisely these two institutional features that are addressed in more detail by the formalization and the oligarchisation scenarios introduced below. Formalization investigates whether the formal rules are being followed in EU decision-making and how that relates to the issue of group size. Oligarchization focuses on the definition of which actors are actually responsible for taking decisions in the EU. The relevant actors might be different from what we would expect by simply looking at the formal rules. Thus our analysis will take more informal institutions into account. Adaptation theory relates closer to the preference part by focusing on actor behavior. The sociological theories are thus added to the theoretical starting point of veto-player theory. From a sociological perspective on group interaction they focus on processes and establish an intervening link between group size and policy stability. The sociological processes can counterbalance the policy stability effects postulated by veto-player theory.

2.3.2.2 Sociological group dynamics on EU level

Oligarchization

As outlined above Michels (1989) "iron law of oligarchy" basically stipulates that "the few always dominate". How can this be related to EU enlargement? A starting point is Mayhew and Levinger (1976) who conclude that as group size increases, the polarization of power structures increases. A first glance at events leading up to the enlargement seems to prove the point. For example, during the Amsterdam and Nice Intergovernmental Conferences the larger states tried to maximize their decision-making powers; and, indeed, in both treaty negotiations they gained more voting power in comparison to the middle- and smaller-sized member states (cf. Baldwin and Widgrén 2004). Also, Germany is the only country that was able to maintain its number of parliamentarians in the EP (cf. Wessels 2001). These are examples of shifts in the distribution of power relating to changes in group size. Basically, we expect structures of decision-making to be affected by the entry of new members. We therefore ask whether a few member states dominate the decision-making process informally. Applied to EU enlargement, this leads to following hypothesis:

H2: Enlargement leads to a closer alignment of a few member states that informally dominate the decision-making process.

How does this hypothesis relate to the existing veto-player framework? The theory of oligarchization clearly addresses the impact of informal practices on decision-making output. It stipulates that informal decision-making practices, namely the dominance of a few member states, can determine political outcomes. Oligarchization therefore redefines who functions as a veto player in the decision-making game. More precisely, if there are oligarchic structures the number of veto players should decline. As the new member states are generally small or medium in size oligarchization tendencies of large member states after enlargement should decrease the influence of the new member states. In such a scenario the possible effects on an increase in group size are reduced. This is reflected in hypothesis H2.1:

H2.1: Oligarchisation reduces the negative effects of an increase of group size on policy stability.

The impact of enlargement on policy stability should decrease as oligarchization increases. When a growing group size leads to oligarchization and oligarchization reduces policy stability the initially expected negative effects are reduced.

Formalization

Our second sociological group theory goes back to Simmel (1908). Simmel hypothesized that an increase of group size should lead to formalization (cf. Simmel 1908, 39ff.). Formalization in Simmel's terms is closely linked to efficiency. Whereas in small groups coordination can be organized informally, a growing

number of group members make informal agreements more cumbersome. When actors realize that they cannot reach their goals by informal means they fall back or establish formal rules. Thus formalization is instrumentally applied by rational actors. Therefore, we expect to find evidence for formalization especially when such processes foster efficiency. Hypotheses 3, however, captures the general rule.

H3: Group size and the degree of formalization are positively linked. The larger the group, the more formalized decision-making becomes.

In the EU various informal rules have traditionally guided decision-making (cf. Lewis 1998; Lewis 2003; Heisenberg 2005). The Luxembourg compromise is a typical example. The high amount of consensual decision-making in the Council despite the formal existence of qualified majority voting highlights the importance of informal norms (cf. Hayes-Renshaw et al. 2006; Mattila 2004; Lane and Mattila 2001; Thomson and Hosli 2006, 17). Already Haas (1958, 523) underlined that the "decision-making code […] shows that the categories of legal competence of the Treaty do not determine all votes." If there is a change towards more controversial voting this would thus correspond to formalization. Since formalization should according to this theory occur where it can foster efficiency, formalization should prevent gridlock and facilitate decision-making. This effect is captured by hypotheses 4.1.

H3.1: If there is a growing formalization of the decision-making procedures policy stability should diminish.

Formalization and oligarchization are phenomena that do not have to exclude each other. An oligarchy can consolidate its power in formalized rules. But oligarchization can also develop informally and that will be our focus here. Ultimately it is an empirical question whether informal oligachization or formalization occurred after the enlargement.

Adaptation

Our third sociological approach relates to the behavior of the new and old member states. This part of our research is inspired by the growing literature on socialization in the European Union (cf. Checkel 2005; Schimmelfennig 2003b). For the time being we focus on behavior since this concept captures preferences, strategies but also norms of actors. We follow mimicry theory in its prediction that unsure new group members should generally tend to copy the behavior of older group members. Similarly, self-attention theory stipulates that actors will be more likely to adapt to standards of behavior if they feel proportionally outnumbered by others who define these standards. Both theories manifest themselves in the same patterns of behavior. Following these theories we should expect a convergence of behavior of the new and old member states. In particular, we should expect that the new group members adopt a similar behavior as displayed by old member states.

H4: When new member states enter the EU, they will adapt to existing norms, practices, and codes of conduct.

If the new member states' behaviour corresponds more closely to that of the old group members, adaptation should reduce the changes in terms of policy stability that we would otherwise expect after enlargement. This is captured in hypotheses 4.1.

H4.1 Adaptation reduces the effects that an increase of group size has on policy stability.

In order to introduce a more dynamic perspective, we will, in a later step, introduce a time dimension. Two scenarios can be imagined. Following a learning scenario we should expect more differences to occur between old and new member states directly after the accession of the new member states. Alternatively, we could imagine greater confusion to arise after a "honeymoon period". If the newcomers, for example, find out that they are not treated as equals by the old member states they could, in response to such an oligarchization, become more rebellious. This might result in more abstentions or no votes in the Council of Ministers or in "loud and proud" behaviour (cf. Szczepanik 2006). Of course, all newcomers do not need to behave in the same way, depending, for instance, on domestic politics but also on their chances of

becoming distinguished members of the club (cf. DiMaggio and Powell 1983, 155). For example, given its economic development, Slovenia would be a good candidate for a quickly adapting state.

In our further research we more clearly need to distinguish different types of adaptation, for example, adaptation of norms, preferences or strategies. A more detailed specification of the theoretical foundations as well as of the conditions and expectations of adaptation theory will be part of our further research.

2.3.3 Operationalization of key variables

The key variables of our analysis are our independent variable 'group-size', the dependent variable 'policy stability' and the intervening process variables identified by our sociological group theories. After turning to each one of them separately we briefly introduce the most important control variables that we plan to incorporate into our models.

The 'Group-Size' Variable

'Group size' is the key independent variable in our x-centric research strategy. In the context of the European Union group size is measured by the number of member states. Enlargement thus constitutes a change in group size. Eastern enlargement will be in the centre of this research. Ideally, all enlargement rounds should be considered when analyzing the effects of changes in EU group size. Whenever possible, previous enlargement rounds will therefore be included in our research. This works, for example, in our econometric analysis of EU legislative output over time. Unfortunately DEU type data is only available for the EU15 and recently also for the EU25 and EU27. Therefore previous enlargement rounds cannot be analyzed using such data.

The Dependent Variable 'Policy Stability'

Policy stability can be captured in different ways. Firstly, it can be measured by the number of directives, regulations, and decisions adopted by the EU institutions over a given period of time. We opt for decisions, regulations, and directives as they constitute the main legislative acts of the European Union and they are subject to the various inter-institutional decision-making rules. Secondly, the duration legislative acts remain within the decision-making process also informs about policy-stability. The more time it needs to pass a legislative act, the higher policy stability. The duration legislative acts remain within the decision-making process will be measured by the days that pass from the submission of a legislative act by the Commission to the final adoption of a bill by the Council and the Parliament. Thirdly, we implement agent-based models which capture the dynamics of the decision-making process. Similar to the models presented in *The European Union Decides* these models function within a multidimensional space in which preferences, a reference point, and the bargaining outcome can be identified. In this context policy stability is operationalized by the distance between the final decision outcome and the reference point as the situation to which all actors would return if no decision was made. The reference point, as defined here, does not need to be equal to the status quo. When the status quo position equals the outcome of a proposal, two scenarios are possible. The first does not indicate policy stability as in this scenario a decision was made to maintain the prevailing law. If for instance the agreement on fisheries quotas has to be renewed and a decision is made to maintain the existing quotas within the next year, the outcome of a proposal will equal the status quo, although a decision was made successfully. Here the status quo does not equal the reference point. The reference point in this example equals the point to which the Member States would return if the fishing quotas were not extended at all, i.e. no decision was made. In the second case, an outcome equal to the status quo indicates gridlock and therefore policy stability. Here the status quo equals the reference point and cannot be altered because the actors fail to agree on a common solution.

The issue scales in the DEU dataset are not comparable across issues. They are determined by the two most extreme positions in the negotiation (usually the reference point and the position of the actor with the most extreme desire for change). Distances on the issue scales can therefore not be compared across issues. In order to make comparisons across issues we introduce a ratio of change. The ratio rc is calculated as follows:

$$rc = |RP\text{-}O| / |RP\text{-}E|$$

Here RP-O is the distance between the reference point and the outcome of the negotiations and RP-E is the distance between the reference point and the position furthest away from the status quo. The ratio therefore ranges from 0 to 1 with 0 indicating that no change occurred, i.e. policy stability is high and 1 indicating low policy stability. In this case the outcome of the negotiations equals the position of the actor furthest away from the reference point. As this ratio is measured in percentages, it can be compared across issue scales.[1]

In addition, after having identified the model with the best fit we can run that model on our data and introduce some counterfactual variation along our group-size variable. In particular, given post-enlargement data we could remove the new member states and see how the predicted outcomes differ in comparison to the true outcomes in the enlarged EU. In particular, the distance to the reversion point will be compared (cf. Leuffen 2006a; Leuffen 2007). This is a simple way to get around the problem of issue comparability.

Intervening Variables

How do we operationalize the intervening variables identified by our sociological group theories? Oligarchisation points towards the unequal power of different member states in EU decision-making. We will capture it by conducting a network analysis. The degree of centralization should inform about the informal decision-making structures. In addition, we integrate oligarchic structures in our ABM by giving more power to specific actors. Different indicators can inform about formalization, as, for example, the abolishment of the culture of consensus (this will be included into an ABM) or an increase of informal decision-making bodies such as the trialogues in which representatives of the Council, the EP, and the Commission meet informally. Here, the duration of different legislative steps can be used to record formalization. In the context of the European Union, this for instance means, that changes in the average number of days that pass between the first and second reading in the Codecision procedure should yield an indication of how important informal processes are. An average reduction in the days recorded between two official steps in a legislative procedure indicates greater formalization, an increase in the number of days an increased importance of informal bargaining processes (cf. Settembri 2007). Concerning the Codecision procedure, an increase in the time period between for instance the Commission submission and the adoption of a legislative act at the 1st Council reading could be the result of a shift to find settlements in informal trialogue meetings. Adaptation will, in a first step, be captured by new and old member state's voting behavior in the Council.

Control Variables

Different control variables need to be accounted for in the different parts of our research. In the quantitative analysis of legislative production we, for example, need to take preferences, decision-making rules, policy areas and effects of the internal market program into account (cf. Golub 1999; König 2007). Concerning the sociological theories we control, for instance, for decision-types, the composition of groups, the existence of group norms, the constellation of actors, different salience's actors hold for specific issues, and power relations.

2.3.4 Methods

In order to analyze the hypotheses outlined above a variety of methods will be implemented. We believe that only the use of different methods can provide a complete picture and trustworthy evidence on how decision-making changed after EU enlargement. Implementing only an econometric study would not enable us to substantively dig into the black box of EU decision-making. Similarly, only assessing the processes of

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[1] The ratio of change is problematic in that it gives great importance to the actor holding the most extreme position. Nevertheless, the ratio provides a way of how one could compare distances across issues.

EU decision-making via agent-based models will always raise the question on the arbitrariness of model implementations. Here case studies and network analyses are of crucial importance. The mix of different methods aims at improving the validity of our findings. In the following, each of these methods are discussed separately, shortly outlining in what part of the research project they will be used. It is only the sum of the individual parts that will be able to paint a convincing picture of how decision-making within the EU has changed after the enlargement.

Table 1 summarizes our ideas concerning the operationalization and the use of methods in relation to the different theories introduced above. Note that the oligarchization, formalization, and adaptation scenarios take the value of intervening variables in terms of our principal dependent variable policy-stability. They focus on decision-making processes and dynamics that then impact on political outputs. Since they will, however, also be analyzed by themselves they are listed as dependent variables in table 1.

Table 1: Testing the theories

Theory / dependent variables	Operationalization	Methods
Policy-stability	▪ Legislative output ▪ Duration ▪ Distance Output - SQ	▪ Count models ▪ Duration models ▪ Model test (ABM)
Oligarchization	▪ Decision-making structures	▪ Network Analysis ▪ Model test (ABM)
Formalization	▪ Formal vs. informal practices of decision-making ▪ Culture of consensus ▪ Changes in the duration of legislative steps	▪ Econometric analysis ▪ Model test (ABM) ▪ Case studies
Adaptation	▪ Convergence of voting behavior ▪ Actor strategies	▪ Econometric Analysis ▪ ABM ▪ Case studies

Statistical Analyses

Statistical analyses will be applied in the first and second part of the research project. In the first part, dealing with policy stability, we will analyze how legislative output of the European Union has developed over time. This clearly relates to hypotheses 1. We will assess the impact of group-size changes from 5 enlargement rounds (Greece in 1981; Spain and Portugal in 1986; Sweden, Finland, and Austria in 1995; the Eastern enlargement in 2004; Rumania and Bulgaria in 2007). More specifically we will implement a count model approach using a negative binomial regression. As our analysis covers several decades we account for the time-series nature of the underlying data. Additionally we conduct an event history analysis assessing how group-size changes have influenced how long legislative acts remain within the decision-making process (cf. Schulz and König 2000; König 2007; Golub 2007). In Hertz and Leuffen (2007) we, for instance, run an event history analysis on a gamma distribution.

In addition, statistical analyses will be used in the second part of the project dealing with the intervening variables derived from the sociological group theories. Here, large-n studies will be conducted when analyzing formalization and adaptation. In order to better understand the decision-making structures we will, for example, analyze the duration of legislative steps. This analysis will be based on the Prelex dataset used for the analysis of legislative output and will therefore include information on 5 enlargement rounds (see part on datasets). The statistical analysis concerning adaptation will in a first step be conducted on a data-set on Council voting behavior. In particular, we plan to estimate whether there is a convergence of voting behaviors of old and new member states.

Agent-based Modeling

A methodological innovation consists in giving agent based modeling a prominent place in the research design. Because agent-based modeling is far from a common tool used in the field of European politics we shortly outline why we think it is suitable for our research project. Traditional game theoretical models usually rely on fixed and static actors. They assume common and complete knowledge and focus on equilibrium outcomes. As a matter of fact, their theoretical elegance thus comes at the price of some unrealistic assumptions. In this project, we intend to relax some of these traditional assumptions without losing too much analytical rigor by introducing agent based modeling to the analysis of post-enlargement decision-making.

Since Conway's Game of Life (cf. Gardner 1970) which builds on the concept of cellular automata (von Neumann 1966) agent based modeling has been used in many different areas of the social sciences. While, to only name a few areas, neighborhood segregation (Schelling 1978), the dynamics of political cooperation (Laver 2005), party behavior in spatial elections (Kollman et al. 1992), the emergence of collective behavior (Epstein 2002; Cederman 1997, 2003), the importance of institutions (Kollman et al. 1997), the evolution of norms (Axelrod 1986), and the dissemination of culture (Axelrod 1997) have been analyzed by agent-based models, the European Union literature, for the time being, has to a large extent ignored this technique. Notable exceptions are Kollman (2003), Sam et al. (2004), and Spiekermann and Warntjen (2007).[2] Kollman (2003) compares a rotating Council presidency with an elected presidency in a highly stylized agent-based model. He finds that with few members (15) and many complicated policy issues to solve, the rotating presidency is able to produce higher aggregate utility levels than various models of elected presidencies. As the number of members increases to 25, the rotating presidency mechanism is outperformed by elected presidency mechanisms for all degrees of policy difficulties. Although Kollman's model is extremely stylized his results clearly underline the benefit of agent-based modeling. He finds that game theoretic models "allow for the comparison of equilibria generated by different institutions, but they do not allow for the comparison of the trajectories of policies that institutions may induce in the process of searching for new policies" (Kollman 2003: 73). This, in fact, is precisely what agent-based models allow us to do.

Several authors have pinpointed the advantages of agent-based modeling in the social sciences (Gilbert 2007; Axtell 2000; Epstein 1999; Bonabeau 2002; Cederman 1997; Axelrod 1997; Page 1999; Johnson 1999). In general, four advantages can be highlighted. First, agent based models can visualize the entire dynamic history of a process. This advantage is highly relevant to our research question. It is hard to imagine that we can paint a detailed picture on how legislative output evolved due to an increase in group-size without assessing the dynamics of the decision-making process. The second advantage concerns the definition of 'agents'. In agent-based models, agents are generally thought of as processes that are implemented in a computer program and that have the following four characteristics: autonomy (they control their own actions), social ability (they can interact with other agents), reactivity (they perceive their environment and respond to it), and pro-activity (they can take the initiative in form of goal-directed behavior) (Wooldridge and Jennings 1995). In particular, the agents' autonomy is the second important advantage of the agent-based model approach. The third advantage is actor heterogeneity – different actors can act differently. The fourth advantage is that the perfect information assumption can be relaxed (cf. Epstein 1999). We find that these advantages, clearly, make agent based modeling a promising tool for the analysis of EU governance.

In our research project, ABM is used in two ways. When analyzing formalization and oligarchization we design and implement agent-based models to empirically test the predictions of our theories. This empirical test is relevant for the first and second part of our research project. Related to the first part, we test whether formalization and oligarchization actually play a role after enlargement (H2 and H3). In the second part ABMs will be used to link formalization and oligarchization, as intervening variables, to our dependent

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[2] The agent-based modeling technique should not be confused with the more general usage of computer simulations within the political science field. Non-agent based simulations as used, for instance, by Adams (1997) and Lin et al. (1996) to analyze probabilistic spatial voting and by Steunenberg (2002) who assesses the impact of EU enlargement on EU decision-making.

variable policy stability (H2.1 and H3.1). The ideas presented in the following should be understood as illustrations on how an implementation of an agent-based model could look like. Note, however, that model development will be a central task of our future research.

The models presented by Steunenberg and Selck (2006) could function as a starting point of our analysis. They are procedural models of EU decision-making (see also Crombez 1996), focusing strictly on the formal procedures that frame decision-making and disregard negotiation dynamics in the decision-making process. The unitary actors of our model are the Commission, the Member States, and the European Parliament. Unlike in the models presented by Steunenberg and Selck (2006) these actors do not have perfect information but, as is common in agent-based models, act under situations of uncertainty. More specifically, they cannot be sure of the preferences and salience of the other actors. In order to develop scenarios that capture the sociological concepts of interest we extend the procedural model by including a negotiation process. We demonstrate how such a process could look like for the QMV version of the consultation procedure. In the bargaining process the member states voice their concerns about the proposal made by the Commission, to the Council Presidency. Concerns are voiced whenever the proposal is further away from the ideal position of a member state than the reference point. The Presidency can then decide to take such concerns into account and amend the Commission's proposal.[3] The Council first votes on the amendments of the Presidency, i.e. the amended and the initial versions are compared. In a final step the Council votes on the whole proposal. In this step the proposal is compared to the reversion point, i.e. usually the status quo. The sociological concepts can then be included in the following way. In the formalization scenario the Presidency calls for a vote and disregards all concerns voiced by member states whenever there is a qualified majority supporting a proposal. Due to uncertainty, this does not need to be in the first bargaining round. The formalization scenario functions as a baseline model in our analysis. In the informalization scenario, informal norms influence EU decision-making. One of the most often identified informal norms is the culture of consensus. Assuming therefore, that the Presidency wants to bring all members on board, the presidency will take concerns of all member states into account and will make amendments to the proposal so that all member states can support the proposal. We should therefore obtain different outcomes for these two scenarios. The oligarchization hypothesis postulates that some member states are more important than others. We take this into account by a Presidency which only accepts concerns from "oligarchs". Additionally, the "oligarchs" vote on amendments by themselves, shifting the outcome in their favor, while still having to take into account the other member states positions for the final vote on the whole proposal.[4] In a first step we define oligarchs as the large member states. In a second, we refine our definition on the basis of the insights obtained from our network analysis. Running different model specifications on an extended DEU dataset and comparing their predictive accuracies will yield empirical results concerning the importance of oligarchic structures and formal processes for EU decision-making before and after enlargement. In additional steps the model and its scenarios could be made more realistic by introducing different degrees of uncertainty and/or different strategies by which member states decide whether to voice a concern. Programmed in an agent-based fashion, these models extend the existing decision-making models by relaxing various assumptions and by including a stronger focus on dynamic processes.

In contrast to the empirical use of ABMs outlined above, we will use ABMs merely for theory development when analyzing adaptation. The simple reason is that in order to empirically assess adaptation by an ABM, we would need time series DEU type data. As this kind of data is not available we focus on theory development when including adaptive processes into our agent-based model. Focusing on adaptation of behavior, we start off by analyzing the conditions under which different bargaining strategies converge or diverge. Starting from the model outlined above, i.e. a procedural model extended by uncertainty and a bargaining process, the innovation in terms of model development now lies in adding a time component. Unlike before, the member states have a memory of previous negotiation rounds. As we are interested in strategy convergence / divergence over time we also need to include different strategies which determine when a member state voices a concern about a Commission proposal. Possible strategies can range from very simple ones like "always raise a concern" or "never voice a concern" to strategies incorporating the

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[3] How exactly the presidency decides on which amendment to make, still needs to be specified.

[4] In a different scenario, the oligarchs could also have the power to adopt a legislative act without needing to consult with smaller member states.

position of the proposal and the status quo in relation to an agent's ideal point and/or an agent's salience. Depending on their relative performance in previous rounds we then expect agents to adapt to more successful bargaining strategies as time progresses. Again the model could be extended by additional degrees of uncertainty, by factors influencing the choice of strategies (e.g. an annoyance factor, assuming that if one member state voices a concern about a Commission proposal in every round, the other member states get annoyed and start to ignore the 'trouble maker'), and by allowing for multiple strategies of a single agent. Using such an agent based model will help to formulate more concrete hypothesis concerning how new member states adapt to the behavior of old member states or whether old member states might incorporate some of the strategies used by new member states. Different starting scenarios are imaginable concerning for instance the number of new member states. Furthermore, old member states, using similar strategies, could face new member states using different but homogenous strategies. Old member states could also face new member states with different but heterogeneous strategies. Assessing these different scenarios will enable us to identify different conditions under which group-size matters. ABMs should therefore inform us about some of the dynamic developments and patterns of integration. Empirically, the time or sequence hypotheses derived by an ABM can possibly be tested with data on voting behavior in the Council[5].

Network Analysis

In order to better understand the informal decision-making structures in the EU before and after enlargement we will execute network analyses. Since long established in the policy analysis field this technique has now gained a growing prominence in institutional analysis, too (cf. Pappi et al. 1995, König 1998), and has successfully been applied to the EU (cf. Stoiber 2003). We will use a network analysis to get an informed understanding of the oligarchization scenario but also of the actual decision-making practices, more generally. Daniel Naurin's dataset includes network data capturing Council working group relations before and after the 2004 enlargement (cf. Naurin 2007b). This data has already been used by Jensen (2007) and an extended version of his data-set would be a perfect starting point for our future analysis. The network data will be used for the development of our ABMs. Of course, network analysis is a methodological challenge. We think, however, that it is a promising technique that can enhance the validity of our findings on the structures of post-enlargement decision-making.

Case Studies

Finally, the quantitative parts of the project will be rounded up by case studies (cf. Lieberman 2005). Open interviews can inform about decision-making practices as well as challenges of post-enlargement decision-making. In general, case studies can help unveiling the dynamics of decision-making. For example, Leuffen (2006c) analyzed the negotiations on the multi-annual financial framework Agenda 2007 and is able to show that institutions established before the enlargement greatly served to discipline new member states and facilitated reaching a solution. In particular, the part of the project on adaptation should profit from qualitative case studies. Since the state of large-n data concerning this research question is rather poor qualitative information can contribute to better understanding if and why specific countries adopted to group norms and/or specific behavior. Ideally, the qualitative process-tracing should be linked to the adaptation steps identified in our ABM. For the time being, we refrain from defining specific case studies that we wish to execute. We expect to identify "interesting cases" when collecting our data for the extension of the DEU dataset.

2.3.5 Datasets

Our quantitative research will be based on a set of different datasets. In order to implement our statistical analysis of legislative output over time we rely on the PreLex dataset provided by the European Commission. This dataset contains information on the inter-institutional processes of all legislative acts

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[5] Follow up research could also assess these processes by turning to voting patterns in the European Parliament.

including, e.g. the type of act, the legislative procedure, the date of Commission submission, the date of the Council common position and the date of the final adoption. We have deparsed the entire dataset containing information over 20000 legislative acts from the Commission's website into an Excel-Spreadsheet covering a period from January 1976 to May 2007. This data-set contains approximately 1200 directives, regulations, and decisions since the 2004 enlargement and is a solid ground for a large-n analysis[6]. In Hertz and Leuffen (2007), we already executed first analyses on this dataset.[7]

The second dataset used is the DEU dataset and the post-enlargement extension of the DEU dataset presented by Prof. Robert Thomson (cf. Thomson et al. 2006; Thomson 2007). We plan to further extend the dataset presented by Thomson (2007). Generally, the DEU dataset contains information on the preferences, the salience, and the voting power of the member states, the Commission and the European Parliament for controversially discussed issues of pre-selected legislative acts. Additionally, the bargaining outcome and the reference point are recorded. The extension of the DEU-dataset is supposed to include information on around 100 controversial issues (Thomson has already collected information on 55 controversial issues for a time period after the enlargement). The data will be collected via expert interviews in Brussels. Data gathering will therefore consume a substantial amount of resources. We, however, believe it is important to collect this information for two reasons. The information ensures that we can empirically assess the negotiation dynamics at the European level. Without such information the bargaining mechanisms are not accessible and the agent based models of EU decision-making cannot be tested empirically. We believe that extending the DEU-dataset to a time period after enlargement will allow us to build on the progress of Thomson et al. (2006) and Thomson (2007) (cf. Bueno de Mesquita 2004, 137). This, in turn, will constitute a solid building block on the way to a better understanding of the effects of enlargement on EU decision-making.

In addition, we plan to use the data provided by Naurin (2007) in our network analysis. Mattila's (2007) dataset on Council voting behavior will be used for the analysis of adaptation processes.

2.4 Milestones and timing

We present our milestones in form of a timetable covering the period from March 2008 to February 2011, i.e. the period after the official start of the project (cf. table 2). In addition, we shortly outline the expected output and the main tasks of the key persons involved in the implementation of the research project.

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[6] By taking into account legislative acts adopted until the end of 2008, we further increase the number of cases. In general, we find that the timing of our analysis is rather appropriate. On the one hand, we are close enough to enlargement to record the integration processes of the new member states, for example through expert interviews. On the other hand, the period is long enough to guarantee that we are not just observing shock effects but possible long term effects of enlargement.

[7] Once the dataset provided by König et al. (2006) linking Prelex and Celex data is updated to the period after the enlargement we will switch to using this dataset.

Table 2: Milestones of the Project

1st year	- Organization of kick-off conference at ETH - Continuation of theory development - Model development - Programming of agent-based models (ABM) - Further elaboration of research design/operationalization - Data collection/interviews in Brussels - Visit of summer schools - Conference participations
2nd year	- Completion of datasets - Process hypotheses generation by ABM (adaptation) - Econometric analysis - Network analysis - Model tests - Eventual reformulation of theories - Conference participation - Publication of first working papers
3rd year	- Completion of empirical analysis - Writing and submitting journal articles - Summarizing findings in book - Finalization of the two PhD theses - Closure conference

Expected Output

In terms of output our goal is to write a book in English language on EU decision-making after enlargement. In this book we will present the findings of our research and combine our different theoretical and methodological approaches in terms of a nested analysis. The book will broadly capture the effects of enlargement on EU decision-making processes as well as outcomes. Especially the ABM part but also the part linking the sociological group theories to the EU should be of interest even beyond the group-size and enlargement literatures. Individual chapters of the book will be submitted as articles to leading political science journals. Since the dissertations of the two PhD students will closely be linked to the research project this will consist an output of its own. In addition, we will make our data-sets available to the scientific community.

Allocation of Tasks / Organization

The project's core group will consist of four researchers: Dirk Leuffen, Frank Schimmelfennig, Robin Hertz and Thomas Jensen. Jensen currently is still enrolled as a student in the CIS *Master in Comparative and International Studies* program and has worked as a student assistant at the Chair for European studies since two semesters. He has a solid background in European studies as well as in political science, work experience in the European Parliament and is methodologically skilled. In the project, Jensen will be engaged in the data-collection. Besides that his focus will be on the parts relating to the mechanisms of decision-making. In particular, he will execute the network analyses. This year, Jensen took courses on network analysis at the University of Zurich (U. Serdült) as well as at the Essex Summer School (J. Skvoretz).

Robin Hertz has been working as an assistant at the Chair for European Studies since last October. He holds a Master's degree in International Relations with specialization in International Economics from HEI, Geneva, and a Bachelor of Arts in Economics and Politics from the University of Sussex. Given his strong methodological backgrounds in quantitative methods as well as in formal modeling his focus will be on the model development and implementation in ABM. His expertise with the DEU dataset will, in addition, be valuable when it comes to collecting post-enlargement data. He has recently successfully submitted his PhD research proposal to ETH.

Leuffen and Schimmelfennig will be responsible for the coordination of the project. Schimmelfennig has a strong background concerning the new member states but also of enlargement questions at large. In the project, his empirical focus will be on adaptation and the question how the new member states integrate into the EU structures. Leuffen as the principal investigator will broadly be engaged in the different parts of the project. He plays a leading role as to theory development as well as the conceptualization of our research. He takes the responsibility for the organizational parts of our research project, for example, also concerning the data collection. Together with Hertz, he has already been working on the implementation of the agent-based models and executed first econometric analysis. In addition, he will select and design most of our case studies.

Besides the core team we envisage close research collaboration with external colleagues. So far, Prof. Robert Thompson (Trinity College Dublin) has accepted sharing post-enlargement data with us. He is willing to advice us concerning the DEU-type data collection. Stefanie Bailer (University of Zurich) who, too, was a member of the DEU team will also consult us on this issue. With Bailer we have, in addition, worked on the theoretical framework of the planned research. Finally, Bailer can support us on questions relating to the European Parliament. Thilo Bodenstein (FU Berlin) will be associated to the part of the project on adaptation. His expertise on convergence makes him an ideal partner for the analysis of behavior of old and new member states over time. Finally, we will be able to draw on the expertise of Nils Weidmann (ETHZ/International Conflict Research) for the development and technical implementation of our agent-based models.

2.5 Relevance of Research

Our project is relevant from a theoretical, empirical, and methodological perspective. Focusing on EU enlargement our research contributes to the broader literature on group-size and political decision-making. Group size is an exciting variable. Most political decisions are taken in or by groups. Analyzing how this variable shapes political outcomes enriches decision-making analysis and, more broadly, our understanding of how politics actually works. Applying sociological group theories to the case of EU enlargement is a theoretical innovation that should foster European studies even beyond the cases analyzed in our research. Concerning enlargement research we add a process dimension and a new focus on mechanisms. By enriching rationalist decision-making models with sociological process variables we clearly engage in broader theory development. Empirically, our research fosters our knowledge about how enlargement has impacted on the decision-making capacity of the EU. By testing a range of hypotheses raised by different social scientific theories we empirically addresses important claims made by the literature. In addition, this is significant since enlargement as a major step in recent European integration is often said to have put the EU in a state of crisis. Beyond the concerns raised by political scientists, analyzing whether there are important changes in the functioning of the EU is therefore of interest for the public at large – and this should hold even for a non-EU member state such as Switzerland. Additionally, our research project is relevant from a methodological perspective. The use of agent-based models underlines the analytical rigor but also the innovative character of our research. Agent-based modeling has only rarely been applied to the study of the EU and we think that enlargement is an excellent subject on which to test the usefulness of agent-based modeling. All in all, the project thus offers a theoretical, empirical, and methodological value-added to the existing literature.