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REVISITING THE QUESTION OF EU INTEGRATION

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REVISITING THE QUESTION OF EU INTEGRATION: UNDERSTANDING
ENLARGEMENT TOWARDS THE WESTERN BALKANS

A Master's Thesis

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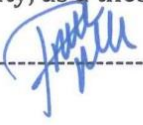
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ABSTRACT

REVISITING THE QUESTION OF EU INTEGRATION: UNDERSTANDING ENLARGEMENT TOWARDS THE WESTERN BALKANS

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European integration has been an important theme for the International Relations discipline since the end of World War II, and the European Union (EU), formerly called the European Economic Community (EEC), has remained at the heart of European integration studies since then. Currently, the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda presents an intriguing case for European integration studies. Although issues such as Brexit, the refugee crisis and the effects of the European debt crisis are fostering the rise of Euroscepticism, the EU maintains its enlargement perspective towards Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia which are known as Western Balkan states. This thesis seeks to find the main reason behind the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda, and for that purpose, it presents an explanation through the security community theoretical framework. This thesis presents the analysis of the official EU documents and the discourse analysis of the statements of EU officials to provide an explanation of the integration process of the Western Balkans. It argues that the idea of expanding the European security community to the region and including the region in the common European identity is the driving force behind the EU's enlargement agenda. The EU recognises the Western Balkan region as the missing part in the European puzzle and believes that the region's future lies within the European community. Nonetheless, the rising Euroscepticism and the growing geopolitical rivalry between the EU and Russia function as intervening variables and affect the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda in a contradictory manner.

Keywords: European Identity, EU Integration, European Security Community, Rising Euroscepticism, Russia/EU Geopolitical Rivalry



ÖZET

AB ENTEGRASYON 'UNU YENİDEN GÖZDEN GEÇİRME: BATI BALKANLARA DOĞRU GENİŞLEMİYİ ANLAMAK

İmamođlu, Ali Volkan

Yüksek Lisans, Uluslararası İlişiler Bölümü

Tez Danışmanı: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Seçkin KÖSTEM

İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nın bitiminden bu yana Avrupa entegrasyonu Uluslararası İlişkiler disiplini için önemli bir konu olmuştur ve Avrupa Birliği (AB), ya da eski adıyla Avrupa Ekonomik Topluluđu (AET) Avrupa entegrasyon çalışmalarının temelinde yer almıştır. Bugünlerde, AB'nin Batı Balkanlar genişleme politikası Avrupa entegrasyon çalışmaları için ilgi çekici bir vaka sunmaktadır. İngiltere'nin AB üyeliğinden çıkış süreci, mülteci krizi ve Avrupa borç krizinin etkileri gibi sorunların Avrupa şüpheciliğinin yükselişini güçlendirmesine rağmen, AB Batı Balkanlar ülkeleri olarak bilinen Arnavutluk, Bosna Hersek, Kosova, Karadađ, Kuzey Makedonya ve Sırbistan'a yönelik olan genişleme politikasını sürdürmektedir. Bu tezin amacı AB'nin Batı Balkanlar genişleme politikasının arkasındaki en önemli sebebi bulmaktır. Bu amaçla, güvenlik topluluđu teorik çerçevesini kullanarak bir açıklama getirmektedir. Bu tez resmi AB belgelerinin analizlerini ve AB bürokratlarının söylem analizlerini sunarak, Avrupa güvenlik topluluđunu Batı Balkanlar bölgesine genişletme ve bölgeyi ortak Avrupa kimliğine dahil etme düşüncesinin AB'nin genişleme politikasının arkasındaki itici güç olduğunu savunmaktadır. AB, Batı Balkanlar bölgesini Avrupa yapbozunun eksik parçası olarak görmektedir ve bölgenin geleceğinin kendi topluđu içerisinde aldığını düşünmektedir. Bununla birlikte, yükselen Avrupa şüpheciliği ve AB ile Rusya arasında büyüyen jeopolitik rekabet AB'nin Batı Balkanlar genişleme politikasını birbirine zıt şekilde etkilemekte ve ara deđişken olarak işlev göstermektedirler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: AB Entegrasyonu, Avrupa Güvenlik Topluluđu, Avrupa Kimliđi, Rusya/AB Jeopolitik Rekabeti, Yükselen Avrupa Şüpheciliđi

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ÖZET.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Methodology	4
1.2 Outline of the Chapters	8
CHAPTER 2: THEORIES ON EUROPEAN INTEGRATION	11
2.1 Federalism	13
2.2 Neo-Functionalism	18
2.3 Intergovernmentalism/Liberal Intergovernmentalism	24
2.4 Multi-Level Governance	28
2.5 Social Constructivism	31
CHAPTER 3: SECURITY COMMUNITIES AND CONSTRUCTIVIST FRAMEWORK.....	37
3.1 Deutschian Framework	39
3.2 Adler and Barnett's Reconstituted Security Communities Framework.....	45
3.3 EU as a Security Community	51
3.4 Constructivist Framework.....	53
CHAPTER 4: WESTERN BALKANS ENLARGEMENT.....	61
4.1 Earlier Enlargements of the European Security Community.....	61
4.2 Timeline of the Western Balkans Enlargement	63
4.2.1. European Partnerships and Stabilization and Association Agreements (SAA)	65
4.3 Literature on the Western Balkans Enlargement	67
4.4 Discourse Analysis of the EU Documents and Officials' Speeches	72
4.4.1. Discourse Analysis of the Official EU Documents.....	73
4.4.2 Discourse Analysis of the Speeches of the EU Officials	84
4.5 Conclusion	89
CHAPTER 5: RISING EUROSCEPTICISM VS GEOPOLITICAL RIVALRY	91

5.1 EU Conditionality, Rising Euroscepticism and the EU ‘s Western Balkans Enlargement Agenda.....	92
5.1.1 Accession Criteria (Copenhagen Criteria)	93
5.1.2 EU Conditionality in the Western Balkans	94
5.1.3 Increasing Euroscepticism in the EU Member States and its effect on the Western Balkans Enlargement	97
5.2 Russia’s ties with Western Balkans and the Geopolitical Rivalry between Russia and the EU over the Sphere of Influence.....	106
5.3 Conclusion	112
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION.....	116
REFERENCES.....	121



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: The dependent variable, the independent variable and the intervening variables	7
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since the end of World War II, European integration has been an important subject for the International Relations discipline. The European Union (EU), formerly known as the European Economic Community (EEC), turned out to be the centrepiece in terms of the European integration project. The first step towards the integration of Europe came through economic partnerships in the 1950s that later would lead to the formation of the EEC in 1957. Since then, there have been various enlargement rounds of the EEC/EU, and consequently, scholars have presented a great variety of theories and perspectives on European integration. Furthermore, the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda provides an interesting case for the studies of European integration. Because the EU still suffers from the effects of the European debt crisis and tries to handle the refugee crisis and Brexit. Moreover, the increasing Euroscepticism threatens the future of the European integration project. Also, the Balkans is a region that is usually associated with instability, insecurity and bilateral conflicts. In other words, it is perceived as a troubled region. Nevertheless, despite its internal crises, the threat of growing Euroscepticism and the region's problems, the EU vows to continue its enlargement agenda towards the Western Balkan region.

The name Western Balkans emerged as a result of a shift in terminology with respect to the Balkans. Following the end of the Kosovo crisis, Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria dissociated themselves from the other countries in the region and gained their separate EU membership paths (Economides, 2010, p.115). Currently, Western Balkan states refer to six countries: Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Albania and Kosovo. The EU firstly confirmed the European future of the region in the Thessaloniki Summit of the European Council in June 2003. Since then, countries in the region have approached the EU membership at different paces. Croatia completed its process and joined the EU on 1 July 2013 and is no longer perceived as a Western Balkan state. Serbia and Montenegro have started their accession negotiations, whereas North Macedonia and Albania are expecting to start theirs. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo are still potential candidates for EU membership.

This thesis aims to provide an answer to the following research question: What explains the European Union's enlargement agenda towards the Western Balkans at a time of rising Euroscepticism? By answering this question, this thesis seeks to find the main reason behind the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda.

Several studies had the EU's perspective towards the Western Balkan region as their focal point, concentrating on the EU's differentiated integration perspective towards the region, either through the context of state-building or the perspective of political conditionality (Chandler, 2007; O'Brennan, 2008; Bieber, 2011; Woelk, 2013; Keil&Arkan, 2015; Anastasakis, 2008; Freyburg&Richter, 2010). There are also studies that focus on the national states' perspectives on the European future of the

region (Töglhofer&Adebahr, 2017; Lindsay, 2017; Wunsch, 2017; Frontini&Denti, 2017; Ioannides, 2017). However, there is a need to explain the EU's motivation to enlarge its borders towards the Western Balkans, especially while facing internal crises and the growing threat of Eurosceptic parties and groups throughout Europe.

Furthermore, this study takes the EU as a single entity with respect to the integration of the Western Balkans. Instead of focusing on the nature of the relationship between the EU and the states in the region, this thesis aims to explain the main driving force behind the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda. For that purpose, this thesis presents an explanation through the security community theoretical framework (Adler&Barnett, 1998) by embracing a constructivist approach. This thesis analyses the EU as a security community that relies on shared values and a common European identity, and argues that EU has been a secure, peaceful and stable order due to its members' shared understandings of a community and mutual identity.

The thesis uses a security community theoretical framework to analyse the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda. In doing that, it relies on the discourse analysis of official EU documents as well as the discourse analysis of the statements of EU officials. This study intends to present a theoretical framework to explain and analyse the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda. Leading theories of European integration such as liberal intergovernmentalism (Moravcsik,1998) or neofunctionalism (Haas,1958) are insufficient to unravel the true reason behind the EU's enlargement agenda toward the region. As a result of its discourse analysis of the EU documents and the statements of the EU officials, this thesis argues that the idea of expanding the European security community, or the idea of expanding

“Europe/We” identity that the community is based on is the main reason behind the EU’s Western Balkans enlargement agenda. The EU believes that the states in the Western Balkan region should be included in their community on the ground that they share the same understandings and possess strong historical and cultural linkages. The EU perceives Western Balkan region as the missing part in the European puzzle and recognises the region as an integral part of Europe. For that reason, the EU believes that the future of the countries in the region lies in the European community because, without the Western Balkans, the European order cannot be complete and stable. At the same time, there are two other factors that have serious effects on the integration process of the Western Balkans: the rising Euroscepticism and the growing geopolitical rivalry with Russia. These two factors are affecting the idea of expanding the European security community, in a contradictory manner, as explained in detail in the methodology section.

1.1 Methodology

The work of Jonker and Pennik (2010) on research methodology provides a research pyramid that consists of four levels: paradigms, methodology, methods and techniques. They define the research paradigm as the total of the premises and presuppositions regarding how reality can be known, in other words, how a researcher perceives reality (Jonker&Pennik, 2010, pp.25-26). The theoretical framework that this thesis rests on embraces a constructivist approach that emphasises the identities, shared understandings, and ideas, which are the foundations of the European security community. This study investigates the effects of the idea of expanding the European security community on the EU’s Western Balkans enlargement agenda. This study conducts a qualitative study, which tries to

gain an understanding of the underlying reasons of the Western Balkans enlargement and interpret them.

In terms of its methodology, this thesis presents a case study, which takes the particular case of the EU's Western Balkans enlargement and employs process-tracing. George and Bennet (2005, p. 2016) argue that "the process-tracing method attempts to identify the intervening causal process - the causal chain and causal mechanism - between an independent variable (or variables) and the outcome of the dependent variable". The studies of European integration are familiar with the process-tracing method. Schimmelfennig (2015, pp.108-109) indicates that many studies of European integration employ it as an important part of their analyses, giving examples of Andrew Moravcsik's *The Choice for Europe* (1998) and his own book *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe* (2003).

George and Bennet (2005, pp.210-211) identify the varieties of process-tracing method: detailed narrative, analytic explanation and more general explanation. However, Beach and Pedersen (2013, p.10) criticise George and Bennet's study. Beach and Pedersen (2013, p.10) state that George and Bennet identify several varieties of process-tracing but regard it as a singular method and fail to illustrate the differences of process-tracing with respect to different uses. Beach and Pedersen (2013, p.11) indicate that there are three types of process-tracing methods. Of these three types, the useful one for this research's purpose is the explaining outcome process-tracing, "which is a case centric method that attempts to attain a minimally sufficient explanation of an outcome using an eclectic combination of theoretical mechanisms and case-specific mechanisms" (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, pp.18-19). In

the explaining outcome process-tracing, the purpose is to attain “a minimally sufficient explanation” of a particular outcome in a specific case study (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p.19). Beach and Pedersen (2013, p.19) articulate that there are two alternative paths in explaining outcome process-tracing to reach the best possible explanation of outcome: deductive and inductive paths.

This thesis chooses the inductive path; it uses empirical evidence to produce a good explanation of the integration process of the Western Balkans. In this path, the study can explore through empirical evidence in order to find a reasonable sufficient causal or constitutive mechanism that generated the outcome (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p.20). Beach and Pedersen (2013, p.20) indicate that this is a bottom-up type of analysis, as it employs empirical data for building a logical causal (or constitutive) mechanism in which the independent variable (or variables) generated the outcome. Consequently, this thesis embraces an inductive approach as it uses the analysis of the EU documents and the speeches of EU bureaucrats to build its main argument.

In terms of method for data analysis, this thesis uses discourse analysis. It examines certain EU documents and offers a discourse analysis of the speeches of EU officials as primary sources. I have read various official EU documents and transcripts of the speeches of the EU officials. I had an extensive literature review of the EU’s perspective towards the region and how the Western Balkans enlargement process has evolved. I have studied the primary studies and theoretical frameworks on European integration and analysed them in terms of their explanatory power with respect to the EU’s Western Balkans enlargement agenda. Relying on the comparability between the features of security community theoretical framework and

the analyses of the EU documents and EU officials' speeches, this thesis takes the EU as a security community and the EU's enlargement towards the Western Balkans as the expansion of the European security community.

This thesis, based on its analysis of official EU documents and the EU officials' speeches, produces the best plausible explanation for the outcome: the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda. The main independent variable, the driving force behind the EU's commitment towards the region's European future, is the idea of expanding the European security community to the Western Balkan states. There are also two intervening variables that work in stark contrast to each other in terms of putting pressure on the EU's enlargement agenda. While increasing Euroscepticism inclines the EU to be more careful about the future enlargement and slows down the integration process of the Western Balkans, the geopolitical rivalry between the EU and Russia prompts the EU to maintain its commitment and advance its engagement towards the region, thus accelerating the integration process.

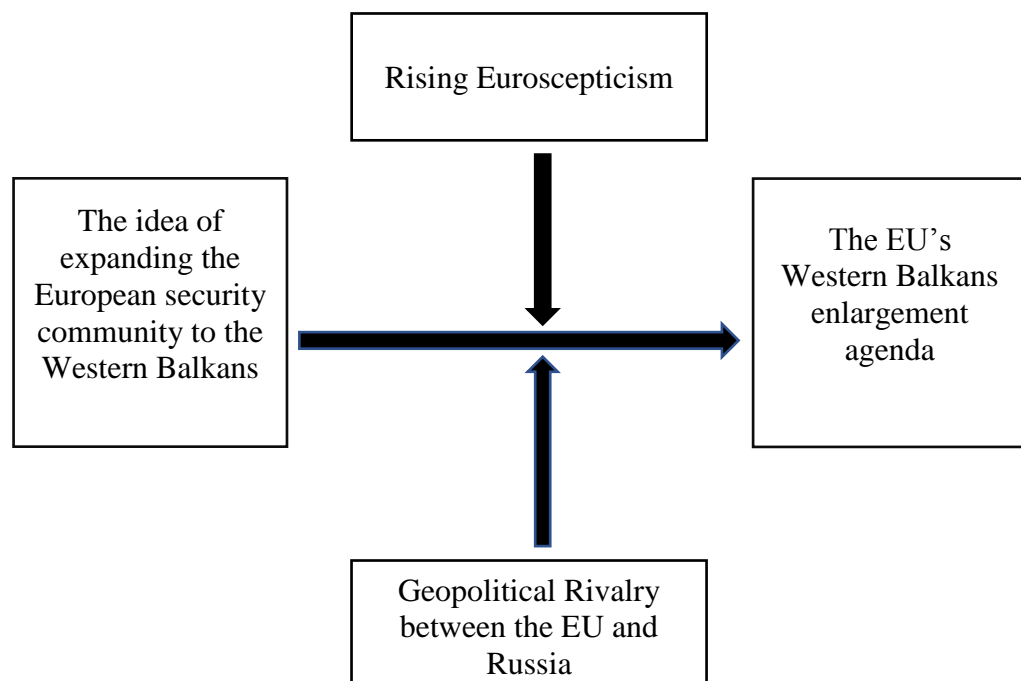


Figure 1: The dependent variable, the independent variable and the intervening variables

1.2 Outline of the Chapters

The second chapter presents the review of the major European integration theories and the analysis of explanatory power of the theories with respect to Western Balkans enlargement agenda of the EU. This is done in chronological order. The chapter firstly examines federalism; the first conception with respect to European integration, which enjoyed its prime years during the 1940s while experiencing a resurgence after the mid-1980s. Secondly, the chapter focuses on neo-functionalism, which was prominent in the 1950s in the initial phase of European integration. Thirdly the chapter presents a review of the intergovernmentalist and liberal intergovernmentalist approaches that respectively became prominent in the 1970s and 1990s. Fourthly the chapter provides a brief analysis of the multi-level governance approach with respect to the EU's integration. The second chapter concludes with the review of the social constructivist approach to European integration, arguing that social constructivism presents fruitful opportunities to analyse the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda. This thesis mainly relies on a constructivist explanation of the enlargement process, which sees the process as the expansion of the European security community that is based on common European identity, shared understandings and values.

The third chapter, building on the second chapter, presents the literature review of the security community theoretical framework developed by Karl Deutsch and his associates (1957), which were later expanded and reformed by Emmanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (1998). Then, it offers a literature review of the studies that treat the EU as a security community. It also presents the thesis' constructivist theoretical

framework that argues expanding common European identity that the European security community is built on is the primary driving force of the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda.

Following the establishment of the theoretical foundations of the thesis, the fourth chapter provides the discourse analysis of the official EU documents and the speeches of the EU officials to support its central argument. The chapter also displays a short evaluation of the earlier expansions of the European security community, especially focusing on Eastern enlargement of the EU, to show the connection between different rounds of the enlargement. In addition to that, the fourth chapter provides a review of the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda and positions itself among the existing studies while presenting the timeline of the Western Balkans enlargement.

The fifth chapter comprises two main parts; the first part concentrates on the impacts of concurrent and important crises of the EU, especially increasing Euroscepticism, on the Western Balkans enlargement agenda. The increasing Euroscepticism and the EU's internal crises incline the EU to be careful about the future enlargements and to increase the strictness of the application of EU conditionality to Western Balkan states. As a result, this thesis treats rising Euroscepticism as an intervening variable that works as anticatalyst to the ongoing integration process of Western Balkans. The second part of the chapter focuses on the geopolitical rivalry between the EU and Russia over the sphere of influence of the Western Balkan region as another intervening variable to the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda. Russia's enthusiasm towards the region led to concerns

within the EU because the EU acknowledges the vitality of maintaining the commitment towards the region. As a result of this, the EU's geopolitical rivalry with Russia has become an accelerating factor in the Western Balkans' integration process to the EU.

The sixth chapter concludes the thesis with a short analysis of its main points and its findings. It also presents the limitations of the argument, its possible implications, and recommendations for future research.



CHAPTER 2

THEORIES ON EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

World War II remains to be a highly important reference point in the International Relations discipline. A vast, catastrophic war not only produced the Cold War era as a result and changed the nature of global politics, but it also served as the source of motivation for European integration. The war devastated the nations of Europe and its people in an unprecedented way. That is why the states of Europe have found the urge to build stronger relations, starting from the early 1950s through economic partnerships. Following Robert Schuman's Declaration on 9 May 1950, six countries (West Germany, France, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg) constituted the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951 with the Treaty of Paris. Schuman believed that such an arrangement would not only forestall another war between the historical rivals Germany and France, but it would also make war unimaginable (The Schuman Declaration, 1950). Schuman and other founding fathers of the European Community such as Jean Monnet assumed that regional integration was the key for the prevention of another destructive war. The regional integration trend continued through the formation of the European Economic Community (EEC) by the Treaty of Rome and the formation of European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC) by the Euratom Treaty on the same day, 25 March 1957. Treaty of Rome (European Union, 1957) would later be accepted as the

founding treaty of the European Economic Community. This is the beginning story of the political and economic entity that would be later become the European Union (EU) as we know today.

Therefore, following the end of World War II, European integration has become a substantial part of the International Relations discipline. Since then, we have observed various rounds of enlargement of the EEC/EU and the academic literature has witnessed different scholars producing a wide range of theories and perspectives on European integration. As the EU continues to enlarge, the questions around the European integration continue to arise as well.

European integration theories spread from early federalist ideas to the more-recent social constructivist framework, including giants like neo-functionalism developed by Ernst Haas, and liberal intergovernmentalism developed by Andrew Moravcsik. Different theories and theoretical frameworks can explain various enlargement rounds. Because of that, the initial question this thesis aims to answer is: How to select the best conceptual framework that is suitable for the Western Balkans Enlargement case? Kenneth Waltz's theory understanding comes to rescue on that issue. Kenneth Waltz (1997, p.913) defines theory as "a picture, mentally formed of a bounded realm or domain of activity" and states that "a theory depicts the organisation of a realm and the connection among its parts". Waltz argues in his famous piece *Theory of International Relations* (1979, p.9) that theories construct a reality, and that they are not the reality itself. Therefore, according to Waltz (1997, p.913-914), they do not have an obligation to obtain one to one correspondence with the existing reality. Waltz (1997, p.916) states that theories' strength lies in their

explanatory power. He argues that when comparing theories in terms of their capacity to predict and to explain, explaining capability carries higher importance (Waltz, 1997, p.916). Following the traces of Waltz' understanding of theory, this thesis treats existing theories and theoretical frameworks on European integration with respect to their explanatory power regarding the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda. As a result, this thesis chooses its theoretical framework based on its analysis of the various theories' explanatory power on the Western Balkans Enlargement. This is highly crucial in order to grasp a firm understanding of the enlargement process of the Western Balkans and to interpret its effect on the European integration general. This chapter explores the main theories of European integration in a chronological order. Firstly, it overviews the federalism, the oldest framework in terms of European integration, which became prominent mostly during the 1940s. Then it moves on to neo-functionalism, which was highly influential during the early stages of integration in the 1950s. Thirdly, the chapter analyses intergovernmentalism/liberal intergovernmentalism theoretical frameworks which respectively became popular in the 1970s and 1990s after Moravcsik's highly acclaimed work. Then the chapter moves on to analyse the multi-level governance approach developed by Hooghe and Marks (2001) which came to surface in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The chapter concludes its analysis of major European integration theories with constructivism, which would be elaborated more in detail in the second chapter.

2.1 Federalism

From the perspectives of European integration, federalism has been an appealing and crucial concept. In terms of the initial efforts en route to European integration, the

idea of establishing a federal Europe was one of the driving forces (Burgess, 2009, p.31). Today federalism remains as an influential idea in the context of the EU. For that reason, it is crucial to analyse federalism with respect to case of Western Balkans enlargement. Before analysing federalism with respect to European integration and Western Balkans case, it should be mentioned that it is a much bigger and general idea that not only affects Europe but also other parts of the world. However, with respect to its purpose, this thesis solely focuses on the European side of the story and federalism's explanatory power concerning Western Balkan enlargement.

Federalist ideas are not new to European society. These ideas have a long history within the European civilisation. Michael Burgess (2009, p.27) states that the roots of federalist ideas can be found in Europe as early as the 16th and 17th centuries around the rise of the modern state. However, in terms of European integration, early signs of the federalist ideas can be located during World War II. Although the idea of forming a Federal Europe after World War II was short-lived and never found the chance to be implemented, the federal idea continued its existence throughout Europe (Burgess, 2009, p.31-32).

Jean Monnet and Altiero Spinelli, both accepted as founding fathers of the European Community, are well influenced by the federalist ideas in a different density (Pinder 1985, p.42,48; Burgess 2009, p.32). Monnet believed that small, material economic steps are key to achieve a federal Europe, whereas Spinelli had embraced a radical strategy, which introduced political institutions and a popularly backed treaty that has language close to a constitution (Burgess, 2009, p.32).

Despite the fact that federalist ideas have a long history in Europe that and they have shaped the views of prominent figures in EEC/EU history like Jean Monnet and Altiero Spinelli in the 1940s and the 1950s, in terms of academic work on European integration with the rise of the neo-functionalism- developed by Ernst Haas in late 1950s- federalism had gone into shadows. Scholarly pieces that connect federalism to European integration start to show themselves after the mid-1980s (Burgess, 1986; Pinder 1985) and the academic interest in federalism continued to grow in the 1990s (Burgess, 1996; Elazar, 1996; 1998). This renaissance of federalism in scholarly pieces reasoned out from the perspective change towards it. Instead of treating federalism as an ultimate goal for Europe, scholars started to consider federalism as a tool for explaining the structure of the EU (Börzel & Hosli, 2003; Majone, 2006; Benson & Jordan, 2011). Benson and Jordan (2011, p.14) specifically argue that cooperative federalism can be a useful instrument to analyse European Integration. Indeed, some scholars produced works in line with the future generation of a federal Europe. Elazar (1996, p.425) states that since the 1970s, there is a paradigm shift from nation-states to a state type which has the characteristics of federalism; curtailed state sovereignty and more and more binding-constitutional like connections. According to Elazar (1996, p.422), this is a general trend in world politics, and the EU is the flag-bearer of this trend as it evolved from consultative agreements to a confederation with the enactment of the Maastricht Treaty in 1993. Elazar (1998, p.130) argues that with the Maastricht Treaty the powers of the community has expanded which transformed it into a union, “but it is a confederation of states, not a federation”.

This thesis measures federalism's capacity as a tool for explaining European integration and specifically as an instrument to interpret EU's enlargement policy towards Western Balkans enlargement. The first major question is over the EU's acceptance as a federal entity. As mentioned before, Elazar (1996, p.422) argues that the EU is a flag-bearer of the trend of federalism in global politics, that a possibility of a federal Europe is not that slight. On the other hand, Moravcsik (2001, p.186) claims that the EU does not have strong qualities to be accepted as a federal entity. Moravcsik (2001, p.163) highlights that the EU does possess no role or at best minor role in particular significant areas of policy. Fundamental issues areas such as defence, education, and taxation, social welfare provision continue to fall under the authority of the member states. That is why it is hard to picture the EU as a federal entity in the near future (Moravcsik 2001, p.163). As a result of that, it is wise to conclude that defining the EU as a federal entity would be deciding early. It is well beyond the purpose of this thesis to determine whether the EU is a federal entity or not.

In terms of the explanatory power of federalism with respect to Western Balkans enlargement, this thesis concludes that federalism does not offer a rich explanation for the Western Balkans case. The most significant weakness of federalism in explaining the Western Balkans enlargement as well as the whole European integration process is that it lacks a clear, specific theoretical framework compared to other theories of European integration. Indeed, federalist ideas were highly crucial in the initial steps of European integration, yet scholarly pieces on federalism have risen only after the 1990s and continued in the 2000s. In its highly influential period in the 1940s and the 1950s, federalism did not obtain a theoretical framework. In a

way, federalism failed to go beyond certain ideas and to build a robust theoretical framework. That is the reason why federalism remained behind of the giants in European integration theories such as neo-functionalism and liberal intergovernmentalism. Surely federalism's effect on European integration is undeniable; however, its inadequacy of providing a complete theoretical framework decreases its explanatory power.

Another reason for the weakness of federalism in terms of explaining Western Balkans enlargement lies in the core of federalism. Burgess (2009, p.26), defines the federal union as a "voluntary union whose principal purpose is to recognise, preserve and formally accommodate distinct interests, identities and cultures." However, according to Burgess (2009, p.28), it is also crucial to keep in mind that the act of establishing such a pact is based on the core principles of "equality, partnership, reciprocity, mutuality, toleration, recognition and respect". However, it is not possible to consider the EU's enlargement process, same as the establishment of a federal entity. The most important feature of a federal entity is that each constituent is imposed on similar or same conditions. However, differing from the constituent members of the federal entities, prospective members of the EU do not share the same association process. In terms of the Western Balkans enlargement, Western Balkan countries are facing new criteria that are never imposed on any other country before (Economides, 2010; Keil&Arkan, 2015; İçener&Phinnemore, 2015)

David Chandler (2006) goes a step beyond and argue that the EU is empire in denial in terms of Western Balkans enlargement a point taken further by Keil and Arkan (2015), who argue that the EU is not only an empire in denial, but also it is a state-

builder in denial with respect to the Western Balkans enlargement. Furthermore, Economides (2010) articulates on EU's differentiated enlargement agenda, arguing that the EU embraces distinctive approaches to some states than others. These arguments are important while analysing federalism because with these criticisms on EU's enlargement policy it is hard to utilise federalism, which is characterised by the equality between its units, as an explanation to Western Balkans enlargement.

Due to the shortage of federalist theory mentioned above and because of the problematic nature of the relationship (state-building issue) between EU and Western Balkan states, this thesis concludes that federalism does not provide necessary explanatory power to analyse Western Balkans enlargement. The next section presents functionalist and neofunctionalist approaches, which differ from federalism with their focus on the format of integration rather than the final destination. In contrast to federalism, according to functionalist and neofunctionalist approaches, the function of the organisation carries a higher significance than the format of the organisation.

2.2 Neo-Functionalism

There is no doubt that neo-functionalism is one of the leading theories of European integration. Neo-functionalism has been an essential part of the extensive debate between supranational and intergovernmental approaches to European integration. Surely the name Ernst Haas is inseparable from neo-functionalism. Haas's famous work, *The Uniting of Europe* (1958) became the foundation stone of neo-functionalism in which he introduced the core concept of neo-functionalism: spill-over.

However, before looking at the giant neo-functionalism, it is a good idea to take a look at where it takes its name, the functionalism. The ideas of David Mitrany developed functionalism in his piece *A Working Peace System* early as 1943. Haas (2004) stated that Mitrany's work profoundly influenced him. As it can be understood from the date 1943, Mitrany firstly drafted his piece in the middle of the Second World War, when aforementioned federalist ideas were developing as well. According to him, federalist ideas were not the solution. Mitrany (1994, p.95) argues that federations are going to be still national federations. He questions the cause of war and conflict and states that: "If the evil of conflict and war springs from the division of the world into detached and competing political units, will it be exorcised simply by changing or reducing the lines of division?" (Mitrany, 1994, p.95).

This the clearest point that separates Mitrany's functionalism from Haas's neo-functionalism, in contrary to Haas, Mitrany does not believe in regional integration. Mitrany (1994, p.95) states that any new world design that proposes individual units eventually would run into similar problems, and he states two solutions are theoretically possible to avoid the problems of war and conflict. The first solution is a world government which seems practically impossible. The second solution, which is the central proposal of Mitrany is to bury political divisions "with a spreading web of international activities and agencies, in which and through which the interests and life of all the nations would be gradually integrated" (Mitrany, 1994, p.95). His ideas were conflicting with federalist ideals of the time, which were proposing regional structures, a federal Europe in terms of the European context. Mitrany clearly (1994, p.95) states that these types of structures contain the hazard of

repeating similar conflicts, but this time at a broader regional level. That is why he proposes the functional alternative, a model based on cooperation on selected activities regarding the needs of the time and the conditions through technocratic agencies that would eventually cause backing of these agencies by the citizens instead of nation-states (Mitrany, 1994, p.95). In the model he proposes, it is easy to observe the ideas- such as technocratic agencies replacing nation-states- that would later influence the neo-functionalism of Ernst Haas and his colleagues.

As mentioned before, Erns B. Haas's influential book, *The Uniting of Europe* (1958) generated the rise of neo-functionalism in the field. The theory was prevalent in the academic environment until French Empty Seat crisis of 1965-66, which was a massive blowback for it (Niemann&Schmitter, 2009, p.45). In the middle of the efforts of scholars of neo-functionalists to revive it, Ernst Haas himself calls the theory as obsolete (Haas,1976, p.208). Despite this, with the recovery of European integration itself in the mid-1980s, neo-functionalism regained its prominence among the theories of European integration (Niemann&Schmitter, 2009, p.45).

How do neo-functionalists approach integration? The most prominent theorist of its Ernst Haas defines integration as “the process whereby political actors in several, distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities towards a new centre, whose institutions process or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states “ (Haas, 1958, p.16 as cited in Wiener&Diez, 2004, p.2). Ernst Haas may be the biggest name in terms of neo-functionalism; however, he was not alone in terms of developing neo-functionalism. Schmitter (1969) and Lindberg (1963) also contributed to the early development of

the neo-functional literature. Niemann & Schmitter (2009, p.47) state that, Lindberg's definition of integration contrary to Haas, does not indicate any endpoint for the integration process which shows that Lindberg (1963) acknowledged that the width and depth of integration could be in the constant flow.

So, what are the underlying principles of neo-functionalism? Haas (2001, p.23) claims that neo-functionalism dismisses the ontological assumptions of realism and is distinct from Marxist theories by maintaining interest groups would be the core actors, not classes with fixed interests. According to Haas (2001, p.23), there is no permanent national interest that is resulting from dynamic national struggles for influence. Regional integration happens when societal actors determine that supranational actors are more capable of realising their demands with respect to their calculated interests (Haas, 2001, p.23).

Similar to functionalism, neo-functionalism underlines the mechanisms of technocratic decision-making. Niemann and Schmitter, (2009, p.48) stress this point and the difference of emphasises of Haas and Lindberg. While Haas (1958) focuses on the role of non-governmental elites including the officials of trade associations and the spokesmen of organised labour, Lindberg (1963) pays attention to governmental elites (Niemann&Schmitter, 2009, p.48). Neofunctionalists assume that regional integration is characterised by "multiple, diverse, and changing actors who are not restricted to the domestic political realm but also interact and build coalitions across national frontiers and bureaucracies" (Niemann & Schmitter, 2009, pp.47-48).

The concept of spill-over is generally accepted as the cornerstone of the neo-functional framework. Spill-over indicates that integration in one sector generates the conditions and pressures for integration in other related sectors (Niemann & Schmitter, 2009, p.49). In terms of European integration in order to attain maximum benefit from the cooperation in coal and steel sectors, close collaboration was also needed in other areas such as transportation (Rosamond, 2000, p.60). This can be classified as functional spill-over (Schimmelfennig & Rittberger, 2006, p.85). The second type is political spill-over. Political spill-over happens as a response to initial integrative moves once “interest groups, bureaucrats and other domestic political actors direct their expectations and activities at the new, supranational level of decision-making” (Schimmelfennig & Rittberger, 2006, p.85). The third type of spill-over is generated by the supranational actors of the EU, such as the Commission, the European Court of Justice and the European Parliament (Niemann & Schmitter, 2009, p.50). These supranational entities begin to seek schemes to deepen integration in already integrated sectors and expand integration to other areas. A highly famous and important critic of neo-functionalism Andrew Moravcsik (1998, p.13) explains this spill-over process by stating “neo-functionalists believe in that unintended consequences of integration once launched would be self-reinforcing which assure the continuance of the integration.”

Comparing the explanatory power of neo-functionalism to federalism in terms of Western Balkans enlargement, one can conclude that it produces a comparatively rich explanation. The neo-functional argument of enlargement as a self-initiating process can be well extended to Western Balkans enlargement. The argument that technocratic elites in supranational institutions becoming more influential in

decision-making instead of nation-state officials is also in line with Western Balkans case because this thesis observes that strong statements that favour enlargement come from the technocratic elites in the EU from the supranational organisation, the European Commission. However, it is very vital to use these arguments of neo-functionalism while connecting it to the constructivist framework. Because without the constructivist framework neo-functional framework remains inadequate to explain the motive behind EU's enlargement agenda towards Western Balkans. This thesis argues that the idea of enlarging the security community of Europe is the main reason behind the Western Balkans enlargement agenda. This security community rests on a shared identity and values, and security itself has broadened meaning which embodies economic stability, migration, and terror under its meaning. The emphasis of the Commission and other European officials on Western Balkans being an integral part of Europe and belonging to the European community shows the importance of using a constructivist framework.

Haas (2001) himself tries connecting neo-functionalism with constructivism in his piece *Does Constructivism Subsume Neo-functionalism?*. Haas (2001, p.25) argues that as constructivism, neo-functionalism recognised the importance of ideas and values shaping the actors' preferences and values forms interests. According to Haas (2001, p.25), his neo-functional theory remains to be a soft-rationalist perspective, which does not comply with all the constructivist framework, but to a certain group of constructivists, it does. Haas (2001, p.26) divides constructivism into three types of schools: the systematic school, the norms and culture school and the soft rationalist school. He rejects the notion that rationalism and constructivism are always contradicting and conflicting with each other. Haas (2001, pp.28-29) argues

that neo-functionalism shares a decent portion of similarities with Soft-Rationalist Constructivism while accepting that Soft Rational Constructivism displays more interest in a possible interaction between structural and agential forces than neo-functionalism does. Haas (2001, p.29) concludes that while neo-functionalism cannot extend its focus to the more general interest of Constructivism, Constructivists can easily include NF's concern with political community formation under their more general interest in the process of international cooperation and value integration. With respect to Haas' point, this thesis indicates that the premises of neo-functionalism can be useful to explain the Western Balkans enlargement agenda of the EU if they are used in a constructivist framework. That is why this thesis presents a constructivist framework while not objecting to some of the premises of neo-functionalism.

2.3 Intergovernmentalism/Liberal Intergovernmentalism

Intergovernmentalism and its successor Liberal Intergovernmentalism (LI) has been one of the prominent theories of European integration. LI constitutes a substantial part of the aforementioned debate between supranational perspective and intergovernmentalist perspective on European integration.

Intergovernmentalism came into existence as a response to neo-functionalism, by criticising it heavily. It is developed by the ideas of Stanley Hoffman as early as the 1960s. Hoffmann (1966, p.882) argues that European integration can work for economic integration which he defines as low politics, however in terms of high politics area such as foreign policy integration will face a barrier by the nation-states that it cannot overcome. Hoffmann (1966, p.901) indicates that in the case of

supranational entities intervening to the high policy areas, they will be halted by the nation-states.

Michelle Cini (2016, p.87) states that intergovernmentalism is characterised by its state-centric approach and that it emphasises on the role of nation states in determining European integration. Intergovernmentalism sees integration as a zero-sum-game where the winner takes all, arguing that it works only in areas it does not infringe the central affairs of national sovereignty and indicates that the interests and actions of nation-states drive European integration (Hix 1999: 15 as cited in Cini, 2016, p.87). Cini (2016, p.87) states that intergovernmentalism has its roots in classical theories of International Relations, most significantly in realist/neorealist analyses of interstate bargaining. Schimmelfennig & Rittberger (2006) categorise Hoffman's (1966) and Milward's (1992) perspectives as traditional, realist intergovernmentalism while juxtaposing Moravcsik (1998) as liberal intergovernmentalist.

Intergovernmentalism enjoyed its prime years in the 1970s during the stagnated years of European integration (Wiener & Diez, 2009, p.6). However, intergovernmentalism shared the same fate just like its rival neo-functionalism. With the Single European Act in 1986 and the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, intergovernmentalism lost its explanatory power. Nation-states were no longer blocking supranational organisation intervening their high politics. Just in the time, Andrew Moravcsik (1998) came for the rescue of the intergovernmentalist framework and created a brand-new version of it. As of today, LI remains to be a cornerstone of European integration theories.

Schimmelfennig (2004, p.76) states that as result of being ‘single-author theory’ LI presents a coherent set of assumptions and propositions, also giving credit to Moravcsik (1998) because he clearly expresses his assumptions of LI.

Andrew Moravcsik presents the liberal intergovernmentalist framework in his famous book *The Choice for Europe* (1998). The main argument of the book can best be summarised as follows:

European Integration can be best explained as a series of rational choices by national leaders. These choices responded to constraints and opportunities stemming from the economic interests of powerful domestic constituents, the relative power of each state in the international system and the role of international institutions bolstering the credibility of interstate commitments (Moravcsik, 1998, p.18).

His theory tested throughout the book by five cases he selected: the negotiation of Treaty of Rome, the consolidation of the customs union and Common Agricultural Policy, the establishment of European Monetary System, the negotiation of the Single European Act and the Maastricht Treaty on the EU (Moravcsik, 1998, p.18). Moravcsik uses a rationalist framework which divides international negotiation “into a causal sequence of three stages: national preference formation, interstate bargaining and institutional choice” (Moravcsik, 1998, p.20). Schimmelfennig (2004, p.75) states “at the highest level of abstraction LI is a variant of rationalist intuitionism in International Relations theory”. The first stage is the national preference formation, which is a result of the competition among domestic political groups with respect to their economic interests as positions of the groups change by country and by particular issue (Moravcsik 1998, p.24). Moravcsik positions his perspective against the security externalities perspective. In the second stage, this

time, Moravcsik dismisses the neo-functional idea that supranational actors played a decisive role in European integration. He articulates that efficiency is not a problem without transnational actors because interested states can serve as their own political entrepreneurs (Moravcsik, 1998, p.52). The focus is generally on the distribution of benefits, which are framed by the relative power of the national governments - asymmetrical policy interdependence (Moravcsik, 1998, p.52).

The third stage is the choice to delegate decision making to international institutions. Moravcsik (1998, p.73) states that the reasons behind the governments' decision to delegation can be: "to assure that other governments will accept agreed legislation and enforcement, to signal their credibility or to lock in future decisions against domestic opposition".

Analysing LI's explanatory power in terms of the Western Balkans enlargement, this thesis concludes that it does not offer a very rich explanation. Moravcsik's framework undermines the role of the Commission and does not give enough attention to the officials of the EU. However, in terms of the Western Balkans enlargement, the most unambiguous support for it comes from the supranational actors and entities of the EU. This is a significant criticism that is raised to the LI framework (Schimmelfennig, 2004, p.82). Individual scholars have argued that supranational organisations of the EU will pursue to increase their autonomy and influence inside the European community (Stone Sweet and Sandholtz 1998:26 as cited in Schimmelfennig, 2004, p.82).

Schimmelfennig (2004, p.81) states that Moravcsik's framework can be compatible with ground bargains of the EU, however, remains inadequate to explain the day to day working of the European or following rounds of interstate bargaining where we observe changes in governments preferences. Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2005) raise another criticism to rationalist perspective explanation in terms of the Eastern enlargement of the EU. According to Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2005), a rationalist framework is not enough to explain the reason behind the Eastern enlargement of the EU. Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2005, p.24) state that "for a long time the theoretical study of the enlargement has been the domain of economics", which assumes that membership and expansion are results of economic costs and benefits analyses. In response, Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2005) present a constructivist framework, which brings ideational factors such as national identity and collective identity. To sum up, even though Moravcsik's framework does not offer a rich explanation for the Western Balkans enlargement, it is still highly important to position and to construct this thesis's theoretical framework. Moravcsik's theory continues to be highly significant in the European integration literature, but this thesis needs a framework that gives more emphasis on ideational factors and supranational actors.

2.4 Multi-Level Governance

Multi-level governance theory can be considered among the more-recent theoretical frameworks in terms of European integration. It was introduced by Gary Marks, Liesbet Hooghe and Kermit Blank in the second half of the 1990s (Hooghe & Marks & Blank,1996). In their well-attributed piece *Multi-level Governance and European Integration*, Hooghe and Marks (2001, p.1) express that the recent developments in

the EU prompted them to provide a new model for European integration to explain the changes in the structure of the EU' decision making. Hooghe and Marks (2001, pp.2-3) position their new model "multi-level governance" against what they call "state-centric governance".

Hooghe and Marks (2001, p.2) state that the main argument of the state-centric model is that national governments are the primary decision-makers and supranational institutions powers are delegated under their discretion. In this model, transnational actors enjoy small autonomous powers. However, Hooghe and Marks (2001, p.3) argue that the EU's decision-making process is influenced by different actors at different levels rather than remaining under the domination of national governments. Supranational institutions, especially the European Parliament, the European Commission and the European Court, have their impact on the decision-making process of European integration. Hooghe and Marks (2001, p.28) claim that national governments' power on the EU's decision-making has decreased by the changes in the EU institutions structure, which came with increasing European integration after the 1980s. Hooghe and Marks (2001, pp.27-28) do not deny the importance of national governments determining the EU' decision making, but they insist that since the 1980s the multi-level governance model started to correspond to the EU's decision making. The multi-level governance model implies that decision making in terms of European integration is shared by supranational EU institutions, nation states and sub-national actors (Hooghe & Marks,2001, p.27). The multi-level governance approach criticises intergovernmentalist/LI premise that national governments are the main decision-makers in terms of EU integration. Hooghe and Marks (2001, p.28) indicate that national governments even collectively do not

dictate the European agenda completely due to the fact that they cannot control the supranational institutions which are formed by them. Certain issues such as growing mistrust among the Council of Ministers, the increasing variety of concerns in the Council's agenda, the high number of national principals, and the expanded specialisation of policy-making caused Council of Ministers to depend on the Commission to determine the agenda, produce compromises, and handle agreements (Hooghe & Marks,2001, p.28).

The Multi-level governance approach has important notions in terms of Western Balkans Enlargement, especially its premise that supranational institutions such as the European Commission or European Parliament can independently influence the EU's decision-making process. This premise is in line with the fact that the European Commission supports the Western Balkans enlargement visibly more than any national government in the EU. However, the Multi-Level Governance theory is not sufficient enough to explain the motivation behind the EU's enlargement agenda towards Western Balkans. It is useful to understand the complexity of the EU's decision-making process and the relative importance of national governments and supranational actors in determining European integration. However, Multi-level governance does not focus on the origins of the EU integration or the political developments in the EU and that is why it remains short of being a complete theoretical approach (Nugent, 2003, p.474). That is why this thesis states that the premises of the multi-level approach are inadequate to explain the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda. However, in a constructivist framework which this thesis presents, some notions of the multi-level approach can be helpful to describe the main reason behind the Western Balkans enlargement agenda.

2.5 Social Constructivism

Compared to neo-functionalism, federalism or liberal intergovernmentalism, constructivism is a relatively new theoretical framework among the European integration theories. Thomas Risse (2004, p.159) defines the entrance of constructivism into European integration field as a spill-over from the International Relations discipline. Haas (2001, p.24) emphasises the point that constructivism “was devised as an explicit theory of general international relations” on the contrary to the other theories of European integration, such as neofunctionalism that has a more limited purpose of explaining political integration at its origins.

Adler (1997, p.332) argues that constructivism holds the middle ground between the rationalist approaches and interpretive approaches in the International Relations theory. Constructivism distances itself from interpretive approaches such as postmodernism, poststructuralism and critical theory and from rationalist approaches such as realism and liberalism as well (Adler, 1997, pp.323,333). On the other hand, Christiansen, Jorgensen and Wiener (2001, p.9), argue that rather than seizing, constructivism establishes the middle ground. They agree that all constructivists disassociate themselves from rationalist and reflectivist perspectives, and that is why all constructivists approaches have a distinguished starting point (Christiansen et al. 2001, p.9). However, “they do not share one epistemological position” (Christiansen et al. 2001, p.9). All constructivist approaches have a gap from the two other main sides, rationalism, and reflectivism respectively, but there is variation among themselves and each of them positions itself in the middle ground, in other words establishing the middle ground (Christiansen et al. 2001, p.10). On the basis of this,

one can conclude that each constructivist approach can be specific with respect to its position in the theoretical spectrum. In explaining the EU's enlargement towards the Western Balkans, this thesis uses a conventional constructivist theoretical framework.

Christiansen et al. (2001, p.2) articulate that constructivism has a lot to offer for European integration because European integration has altered the European state system and it has experienced a transformation itself throughout the years. This transformation process also caused shifts in the agents' identities and their interests (Christiansen et al. 2001). That is why they foresee a "constructivist turn" in the study of European integration (Christiansen et al. 2001).

Risse argues that constructivism is based on a social ontology that indicates "human agents do not exist independently from their social environment and its collectively shared systems of meanings" (Risse, 2004, p.160). In this aspect, constructivism goes against the methodological individualism of rational choice (Risse, 2004, p.160). In terms of structure-agency debate, constructivist scholars maintain that there is mutual constitutiveness of social structures and agents (Adler 1997; Wendt 1999).

According to Risse (2004, p.161), constructivism presents a middle ground between individualism and structuralism. Risse (2004, p.162) argues that while there are apparent differences between constructivism and liberal intergovernmentalism in terms of European integration, it is much harder to identify dissimilarities between constructivism and neo-functionalism. According to Risse (2004, p.165), there are three means that constructivism can contribute to attaining a better understanding of the EU. First one is that the mutual constitutiveness of agency and structure presents

a deeper understanding of Europeanization. Second, by focusing on the constitutive effects of European law, rules and policies, European integration's shaping of social identities and interest of actors can be understood. Third, the emphasis on communicative practices enables us to grasp how the EU is constructed discursively (Risse, 2004, pp.165-166). The importance of communicative and discursive practices comprises another essential aspect of the social constructivist approach; it is needed to take words, language, and communicative expressions seriously in order to understand and explain social behaviour (Risse, 2004, p.164).

Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2005) present a significant study that uses a constructivist approach to explain the enlargement of the EU. They propose a sociological institutionalist perspective instead of a rationalist institutionalist framework in order to explain Eastern enlargement of the EU, which perceives that applicants and members construct each other and their relationship based on the ideas that frame the community (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2005, p.14). On the other hand, in his approach to the EU 's enlargement, Schimmelfennig (2001, p.48) does not turn entirely to rationalism; he presents "rhetorical action" which means the "strategic use of norm-based arguments". Schimmelfennig (2001, p.76), finds the middle ground between rationalism and constructivism by providing "rhetorical action". Schimmelfennig (2001, p.77) argues that "in the institutional environment of an international community, state actors can use community identity, values and norms strategically in order to justify and advance their self-interest" which was the case in Eastern enlargement of the EU.

Schimmelfennig (2002, p.598), in another piece of his on the EU enlargement, argues that “regional organisations represent international communities of values and norms, correspondingly their enlargement will depend on whether outside states identify themselves with the values and norms of the community”. With respect to this perspective, the EU represents “a liberal community sharing liberal norms of domestic and foreign policy conduct” (Schimmelfennig, 2002 p.598).

Schimmelfennig (2002, p.598) claims, “the more a state adheres to these norms, the more likely its enlargement to the organisation.” That is why he indicates that “enlargement is value and norm-driven” (Schimmelfennig, 2002, p.599).

Another essential name that can be cast under constructivism is Karl Deutsch; despite the fact that Deutsch’s works existed well before the rise of constructivism in International Relations theory. Deutsch et al. (1957, p.5) define security community as a community where “states become integrated to the point that they have a sense of community” and have the assurance that “they will solve their disputes without resorting to war” (Adler & Barnett,1998 p.3). The Deutschian perspective relies on the development of shared understandings, transnational values and transaction flow for community building (Adler & Barnett,1998, p.4). Deutsch and his associates contribute to the literature by emphasising “that states can become embedded in a set of social relations that are understood as a community” (Adler&Barnett,1998, p.6). Later Deutsch’s ideas and the security communities theoretical framework were developed by Emmanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (1998) in which Deutsch’s thoughts are connected to the constructivist framework.

Conclusively, in terms of understanding European integration, constructivism is very fruitful as it presents ideational normative structures that actors reside, which affects their decisions. In terms of explanatory power with respect to Western Balkans enlargement, a constructivist framework presents a rich explanation.

As this thesis argues that the idea of expanding European security community, -the idea of expanding “Europe/We” identity that European security community rests on, along with a “broadened security idea” - lie at the heart of the enlargement agenda towards the Western Balkans, it embraces a constructivist approach that emphasises identities, shared understandings, and ideas, which are the foundations of a security community.

Embracing a constructivist theoretical framework does not mean that this thesis will disregard the premises of other theories mentioned above. For example, the argument of neo-functionalism that the technocratic consensus in supranational entities is pushing for integration is highly valuable for the case of the Western Balkans enlargement. However, without a constructivist framework expressing that enlargement towards Western Balkans is indeed an enlargement of European security community which rests on shared European identity, neofunctionalist explanations remain insufficient.

All theories of integration are highly critical to understand European integration, and it is hard to separate one framework from the rest. However, this thesis asserts that in terms of the integration of the Western Balkans to the EU, a constructivist theoretical framework offers the richest explanation. This is due to fact that this thesis, based on

its analysis of the official EU documents and speeches of the certain EU officials, argues that the main driving force behind the EU's enlargement agenda is the idea to expand the European security community and the common European identity that the community is built on towards the Western Balkan countries. That is why a constructivist framework was chosen in the first place.

To confirm that constructivism presents the richest explanation in the following chapter, a more thorough analysis of constructivism in terms of the Western Balkans enlargement is provided. This analysis is well connected to the thesis's constructivist framework introduced in the second chapter. Before providing thesis' constructivist framework, the second chapter also displays the security community literature in detail and analyses the EU's position in the security community literature. This enables to build a strong connection between the security community literature with a constructivism perspective which lies at the heart of the main argument of this thesis, that the Western Balkans enlargement is the expansion of the European security community which rests on the shared European identity.

CHAPTER 3

SECURITY COMMUNITIES AND CONSTRUCTIVIST FRAMEWORK

This chapter begins with the introduction of the concept of security community and analyses the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda with respect to it. Security community is a term which the International Relations discipline is highly familiar with while its origin does not have the same popularity as its usage in the IR discipline. The concept came under the scrutiny of the academic environment following the work of *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area* (1957) by Karl Deutsch and his collaborators. Deutsch et al. (1957, p.3) search the possible ways to avoid war, and for that purpose, they focus on the political communities, specifically on "security communities". In their piece, Deutsch et al. (1957, p.5) present a set of definitions of "security community", "integration", "sense of community", "peaceful change" in the given order. First, Deutsch et al. (1957, p.5) define a security community, which is "a group of people which has become integrated". Integration indicates the realisation of "a sense of community" in a particular territory along with the stable institutions and practices that ensure the dependable expectations of "peaceful change" among its population for a long period. The sense of community indicates that individuals share a belief that the common social problems must and can be solved by the process of "peaceful

change". Lastly, they describe the peaceful change which represents the settlement of disputes using institutionalised methods instead of employing large physical force. Thus, a security community indicates that there is a real guarantee that the members of the community will not solve their conflicts through war (Deutsch et al. 1957, p.5). The aforementioned piece also acknowledges that these terms and definitions first appeared in the *Research in the International Organization Field* (1952) of Richard W. Van Wagenen who is also one of the authors of the *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area* (1957). Deutsch and his associates provided the foundations of the security community concept, and their work influenced many studies on the notion of the security community.

Up until today, the International Relations discipline witnessed various studies on the notion of the security community that are different with respect to their focus on regions and organisations. There are scholarly pieces that treat North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) as a security community, (Risse;1996; Williams & Neumann, 2000; Risse, 2003; Cox, 2005; Pouliout, 2006; Adler, 2008) whereas there are also studies which consider European Union itself as a security community (Hallenberg, 2000; Kavalski, 2008; Laporte 2012; Simão, 2018). As this chapter presents in the following part, the origin of the concept lays in North Atlantic area; however, this does not hinder the notion of security community from applying to other regions such as South East Asia (Acharya, 2014). This thesis treats the EU as a security community with respect to Western Balkans enlargement agenda. However, before providing the analysis of EU enlargement agenda towards Western Balkans with respect to the concept of security community, in order to grasp a firm understanding of the notion of security community, this chapter presents the Deutschian framework

that brought security community concept into to the International Relations discipline.

3.1 Deutschian Framework

Deutsch et al. (1957, p.5) state that in case the entire world compromises of a single security-community, there will be no possibility of war. Deutsch et al. (1957, p.6) present two types of security community: “amalgamated” and “pluralistic.”

Amalgamated security community suggests the formal unification of two or more formerly independent units into a single larger constituent under a common government. Deutsch et al. (1957, p.6) give the example of the United States, which became a single governmental constituent encompassing former sovereign states.

Under a pluralistic security community, differing from the amalgamated one, individual states maintain their sovereignty, which Deutsch et al. (1957, p.6) present the example of the United States and Canada as a pluralistic security community where two separate governmental units operate and retain their sovereignty.

Independent states within a pluralistic security community enjoy the harmony of core values derived from shared institutions. Deutsch et al. (1957, p.7) also pinpoint that if amalgamation takes place without integration, there is no possibility of a security community to exist such as the Habsburg Empire in 1914. However, according to Deutsch et al. (1957, p.6) “integration is a matter of fact, not of time”. They state that it carries little importance how much time has passed to come to this phase if both parties no longer retain a fear of war nor prepare for it. On the other hand, the length of time can support the consolidation of integration after it took place (Deutsch et al. 1957, p.6).

Deutsch et al. (1957, p.9) choose the North Atlantic area as their focal point of inquiry of a security community. According to them, North Atlantic area consists of all the countries bordering the North Atlantic Ocean or the North Sea, along with their immediate land-neighbours in Europe, except the Soviet-dominated countries and excluding NATO members Greece and Turkey. In terms of method, Deutsch et al. (1957, p.14) argue that the use of analytical concepts to direct historical inquiry can be beneficial as well as the use of outcomes of the historical inquiry to alter the concepts with respect to present issues. They suggest a combination of historical inquiry and theoretical concepts in order to attain the best analysis of the political communities.

Deutsch et al. (1957, p.16) choose various historical cases such as the union of the American colonies into the United States, to investigate integration and amalgamation of political communities. They aim to use the analyses of historical cases to find out the sufficient conditions that security communities need to exist and to acknowledge what processes will have to take place under those conditions in order to achieve this result (Deutsch et al. 1957, p.17). Deutsch et al. (1957, p.20) acknowledge that their focus on the North Atlantic area, lay aside other political communities or contemporary East-West challenge between two blocks, but they argue that they are trying to attain “a level of generalisation high enough so that findings could eventually be applied to a wide range of situations, including the gap between East and West”. Deutsch et al. (1957, p.58) identify the twelve essential requirements for the establishment of an amalgamated security community; however, they state that only three of these requirements are fundamental for the establishment of pluralistic security communities (Deutsch et al. 1957, p.66). These three

conditions are the unity of the primary values in political decision-making, the capacity of the governments within the community to respond to each other's needs, messages, and actions quickly, adequately while not employing any kind of violence and the final one is the mutual predictability of behaviour. In terms of the second essential condition, the capacity of the governments, that is conditioned upon individual states having established political habits, functioning political institutions and favouring mutual communication and consultation (Deutsch et al. 1957, pp.66-67). Deutsch et al. (1957, p.70) define integration as a process, stating that “the transition from background to process is fluid”. The fundamental background circumstances do not appear in a fixed sequence or arise all at once.

In their conclusion, Deutsch et al. (1957, p.199) state that mutual responsiveness in the North Atlantic area developed and the area is on the way to evolve into an integrated community. The authors indicate that pluralism is the most efficient way to boost integration, which increases the instruments and practices of mutual consultation, communication, and cooperation. They also acknowledge that aiming at pluralism would not forestall amalgamation, whereas a sudden search for amalgamation might well suspend pluralistic integration. Deutsch et al. (1957, p.200) illustrate that increasing responsiveness among North Atlantic countries is vital for achieving integration and the eventual goal of eliminating wars between states. Intensification of responsiveness among states requires an increase in four conditions:

- the efficiency of the states with respect to the fields of administration, policy formation, decision-making, and action;

- sphere and amount of communication and other transactions between the countries;
- the strength of the social groups, institutions, and organisations that ensure social communication between the countries;
- the mobility of persons all over the North Atlantic area.

Deutsch et al. (1957, p.201) argue that both conservatives and liberals usually endorse successful integration attempts and states that broad support of the public has become essential with mass participation in politics. As a result of their findings, Deutsch et al. (1957, p.202) also stress that military alliances are not a promising way to achieve integration or amalgamation; instead, they should be combined with non-military steps. Deutsch and his co-authors also state that foreign military threats also do not carry high importance in terms of integration as one might expect despite acknowledging their role to boost the unity among states such as in the case of the Soviet threat. As a result, Deutsch et al. (1957, pp. 202-203) state that two policies are required, first to test functional organisations within the North Atlantic area, such as the European Coal and Steel Community, second to preserve and further develop the chief international organisation in the North Atlantic area - NATO - but with more focus on the economic and social aspect of the organisation that would make NATO more than just a military alliance.

After Deutschian framework, the Transatlantic relationship and NATO has been one of the focal points of studies on security communities. Several authors treat the transatlantic relationship and NATO as a security community (Risse,1996; Williams & Neumann, 2000; Risse, 2003; Cox, 2005; Pouliout, 2006; Adler,2008). Risse

(1996, p. 395) state that “the Western alliance represents an institutionalisation of the transatlantic security community based on common values and a collective identity of liberal democracies”. Risse (1996, p.396) argues that the end of the Cold War does not indicate the end of the Western community of values rather demonstrates the extension of values and community into Eastern Europe and potentially into even successor states of the Soviet Union. Williams and Neumann (2000, p.358) state that from Risse ‘s (1996) perspective, the enlargement of NATO perceived as a natural and gradual expansion of “NATO’s essential identity as a democratic security community”. Williams and Neumann (2000, p.358) analyses the enlargement of NATO and states that it is hard to view enlargement as a straightforward expansion of the Western democratic security community due to two main difficulties: the criticism raised against enlargement within the traditional members and the Russian opposition to NATO’s eastern enlargement. Their main focus is Russia with respect to NATO’s enlargement, and they argue that Russia’s frustrations about the eastern enlargement of NATO may hinder the extension of the Western democratic security community (Williams & Neumann, 2000, p.386). That is also the case in the Western Balkans enlargement. As the thesis presents in the oncoming parts, Russia plays a crucial role in the acceleration of the EU’s Western Balkans enlargement agenda. Cox (2005, p.205) states that the security relationship between European and American continents “is a perfect illustration of a security community”; however, he indicates that especially after 2001, the alliance started to experience turbulent times. Cox (2005, p. 209) articulates that on the contrary to a few years ago, the term of security community cannot be expressed with the same degree of confidence referring to West, arguing that turbulent times lie ahead of Europe and the United States which will serve as litmus test for them (Cox, 2005, p.210). In direct response

to Cox's (2005) piece, Pouliout (2006, p.119) states that recent tensions between Europe and the United States do not indicate the collapse of the transatlantic security community; rather they display how alive and well it is. Pouliout (2006, p.120) argues that Cox's (2005) perception that deep disputes between members of security communities indicate a crisis in the community is misleading. Pouliout (2006, p.120) articulates that "security communities are not characterised by the absence of conflicts" between its members; rather, its distinctive feature is the peaceful resolution of such conflicts. That is why there is no sign indicating the demise of the transatlantic security community, and it is alive and well in the post 9/11 era (Pouliout, 2006, p.125). Risse (2003, p.1) also argues that despite structural changes in world politics such as the end of the Cold War, the 9/11 attacks and the rise of trans-national terrorism, "the transatlantic security community is still intact, that depends on the collective identity based on common values, economic interdependence based on common material interest, and the common institutions". Adler (2008, p.216) argues that the Western security community successfully expanded from a core of NATO states to Central and Eastern European countries through NATO's cooperative security community practices that are necessary for the spread of self-restraint. As seen by the aforementioned pieces on NATO as a security community, the points raised by Deutsch and his co-authors sixty years ago are still relevant to the study of political communities. It is also relevant to the EU, as this chapter will display in its incoming parts. According to their criteria regarding pluralistic security communities, the EU can be considered as a pluralistic security community. The EU fulfils all the requirements set by the Deutsch et al. (1957) in terms of mutual responsiveness between countries and the necessary conditions to be a pluralistic security community. However, before dealing with other pieces treating

the EU as a security community (Hallenberg,2000; Kavalski, 2008; Laporte, 2012; Simão, 2018) and presenting an analysis of EU as a security community, this chapter displays the theoretical revival of the Deutschian framework.

The Deutschian contribution to the International Relations discipline is only not limited to studies on political community, as Vesa (1999) stated the ideas and framework raised by Deutsch et al. are still relevant to peace research as well. Vesa (1999) indicated that the value of the work of Karl Deutsch and his associates is realised following the end of the Cold War because of the popularity of power politics and realist approach against the idea of the community during Cold War. He argues that the value and relevance of the perspectives and framework provided by Karl W. Deutsch and his associates remain high in terms of the International Relations discipline (Vesa, 1999). Tusicisny (2007) also states that security communities concept gained prominence in International Relations discipline following the end of the Cold War. However, Adler and Barnett (1998) delivered the real revival of the concept and the security communities' framework. Adler and Barnett (1998) acknowledged the value of the concept and need for its improvement. That is why they presented a reconstructed framework for the study of the security communities. In the following part, this thesis reviews the aforementioned framework by Adler and Barnett and analyses its relevance to European integration and the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda.

3.2 Adler and Barnett's Reconstituted Security Communities Framework

Following the end of the Cold War and with the rise of social constructivism in the International Relations discipline, Deutsch and his colleagues' framework started to

gain prominence. This is because the end of the Cold War signifies a shift in global politics, as well as a change in the meaning and purpose of both power and security. Security, under its meaning, encompasses not only military security but also new security issues related to economic and environmental and social welfare concerns (Adler&Barnett, 1998, p.4). With “the constructivist turn” (Checkel, 1998) in International Relations theory, social forces, identities, norms and social interactions among states became important in explaining global affairs. That is why Deutschian framework’s characteristics “shared understandings”, “transnational values” and “transactional flows to encourage community building” caught the attention of constructivist scholars (Adler&Barnett, 1998, p.4).

Emmanuel Adler and Michael Barnett present the most comprehensive study on the framework of Deutsch et al. (1957). In their well-attributed piece, *Security Communities* (1998) Adler and Barnett build their work on Deutsch and his colleagues’ conceptualisation of security communities, address its problems and provide a reformed framework on security communities. Adler and Barnett (1998, p.4) state that the Deutschian research appeared to be more significant due to changes in international politics and International Relations theory. Adler and Barnett (1998,p.4) indicate that it is not strange that following the end of Cold War, there is an attempt to construct a more peaceful and stable global order, what is strange is that many policymakers are giving attention to the social forces and state interventions raised by Deutsch et al. back in the 1950s. According to Adler and Barnett (1998, p.5) “community” concept poses a straight challenge to security models that dominated the International Relations discipline. However, they acknowledge that Deutsch’s framework also presents theoretical and methodological

difficulties; that is why it needs resuscitation. Adler and Barnett (1998, p.6) point out that the Deutschian contribution is to illuminate that countries can be set up in a collection of social relations, in a community and that community can produce stable expectations of peaceful change. Adler and Barnett (1998, p.7) assert that the premise, communication is the bond that puts together social groups and political communities, lies at the heart of Deutsch's transactionalist approach. They argue that whereas most of the International Relations theory relies on material forces, the Deutschian perspective depends on "shared knowledge, ideational forces and a dense normative environment" (Adler&Barnett, 1998, p.8).

According to Adler and Barnett (1998, p.29), the "security communities" theoretical framework despite its potential theoretical and practical importance, at no time developed into a powerful research discipline. For this reason, Adler and Barnett (1998, p.29) present a reconstructed, modified framework of security communities which fixes the problems of the Deutschian framework. Starting from Deutsch's distinction on security communities, Adler and Barnett (1998, p.30) express that their focal point is pluralistic security communities, not amalgamated ones. They define a pluralistic security community as "a transnational region comprised of sovereign states whose people maintain dependable expectations of peaceful change" (Adler & Barnett, 1998, p.30). Pluralistic security communities can be classified as of whether loosely or tightly coupled with respect to their depth of trust and the degree of institutionalisation of their governance system (Adler & Barnett, 1998, p.30). Loosely-coupled security communities can be summarised as a transnational area where people of independent states hold dependable expectations of peaceful change and do not expect aggressive actions from other states based on their shared structure

of meanings and identity. On the other hand, tightly-coupled security communities are more demanding, having “mutual aid society in which they construct collective system arrangements and possess a system of rule that lies somewhere between a sovereign state and a centralised regional government endowed with common supranational transnational and some form of collective security system” (Adler & Barnett, 1998, p.30). Adler and Barnett (1998, pp.30-31) claim that a distinctive feature of a security community is the presence of permanent peace depending on the supranational community. They state that security communities are “socially constructed” and are “permanent international (transnational) actors whose boundaries are determined by shared understandings rather than geography” (Adler & Barnett, 1998, p.58). They argue that security communities are relatively unusual incidents, and the primary challenge is to identify the conditions where security communities emerge (Adler&Barnett, 1998, p.37).

Following that purpose, Adler and Barnett (1998, p.17) present a framework for the study of development of security communities which is organised around three tiers: “(1) precipitating conditions; (2) process variables (transactions, organisations, and social learning) and structural variables (power and knowledge); and (3) mutual trust and collective identity”. Precipitating conditions that push states towards each other to coordinate can be various matters. Technological changes, alteration in demography, economy or environment might compel states to harmonise their policies. Another reason might be an external threat which causes states to establish an alliance. New interpretations of social reality can also urge countries to organise their policies to their mutual benefit (Adler&Barnett, 1998, p.38). The second tier consists of factors that are essential to the development of mutual trust and collective

identity. These factors are structural variables: “power and knowledge”; and process variables: “transactions”, “organisations” and “social learning” (Adler & Barnett, 1998, p.38). The effective and progressive interactions between process variables and structural variables support the evolution of trust and collective identity. These, mutual trust and collective identity, which comprises the third tier, are also the necessary conditions for the emergence of dependable expectations of peaceful change among member countries (Adler & Barnett, 1998, pp.39,45). As aforementioned, dependable expectations of peaceful change is the most important characteristic of a security community.

Adler and Barnett (1998, p.49) describe their understanding of security communities as “social constructivist and path-dependent”, and they state that security communities are socially constructed and display an evolutionary pattern developing through a path-dependent process. To trace back how dependable expectations of peace are formed in security communities, Adler and Barnett (1998, p.17) present three phases of the evolution of the security communities: “nascent” “ascendant” and “mature”.

In the “nascent” stage states do not specifically seek to form a security community, they start to acknowledge that they might coordinate their relations to enhance their mutual security (Adler & Barnett, 1998, p.50). This first stage can be compared to the European integration during the 1950s, the formation of ESCS and EEC respectively in 1952 and 1958. Adler and Barnett (1998, p.50) indicate that in this stage, states create third-party organisations and institutions to expand their cooperation.

Phase two is named as ascendant and is characterised by a greater density of connections and new institutions that display the expansion of mutual trust and development of collective identities that start to spur dependable expectations of peaceful change (Adler & Barnett, 1998, p.53). At the nascent level, interaction channels are broadened and strengthened compared to the initial nascent phases. Adler and Barnett (1998, p.55) name the third stage as “mature” where member states’ peaceful expectations become institutionalised in domestic and supranational settings. At this stage, a common identity among countries comes into existence, and it becomes nearly impossible for states to maintain their threat perceptions to each other.

Adler and Barnett (1998, p.55) at this point, identify two different security communities, loosely and tightly coupled alternatives and present various indicators to differentiate them from one another. Five of them only apply to loosely-coupled security communities. These are “multilateralism”, “unfortified borders”, “changes in military planning”, “common definition of threat” and “discourse and the language of the community” (Adler&Barnett, 1998, pp 55-56). Multilateralism indicates that decision-making procedures in a security community are more consensual than other types of interstate relations, while changes in military planning correspond to the notion that in security communities “worst-case” scenarios do not contain those within the community. Discourse and the language of community illustrate that member states’ normative discourses are in line with each other, and they share common norms. In addition to these indicators, tightly-coupled security communities possess a few more aspects: “cooperative and collective security”, “a high level of military integration”, “policy coordination against internal threats”, “free movements

of populations”, “internationalisation of authority”, and “a multiperspectival polity” (Adler & Barnett, 1998, pp 56-57).

3.3 EU as a Security Community

This thesis builds on Adler and Barnett’s framework and perceives the EU as a security community. However, before providing a detailed analysis of EU as security community relying on Adler and Barnett’s framework, it would be better to mention other studies which also treat the EU as a security community (Hallenberg, 2000; Kavalski, 2008; Laporte, 2012; Simão, 2018). Hallenberg (2000, p.3) states that his piece especially does not target the United States, stating that there are too many studies of European security that focus on the policies arising from Washington. Hallenberg (2000, p.4) articulates that in the contemporary European political system, countries take into account not only traditional aspects of military security, but also concern over economic security issues. Simão (2018), in his piece, analyses the expansion of European security community to South Caucasus through the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). Simão (2018, p.5) defines the aim of security community is “to develop dynamics of positive integration with other polities in order to create the conditions for the development of common expectations of peaceful change” and states that the EU enjoys being a security community. Simão (2018, p.245) articulates that the civilian nature of European integration played a crucial role in establishing a European identity, stressing the importance of structural and societal dimensions as opposed to military ones.

Kavalski (2008, p.5), indicates that the development of a security community is an outcome of the process of extending an already existing one. Kavalski (2008, p.6)

presents the concept of “elite security community” as the early phase of the security community establishment. He argues that the socialisation of policy-making practices of states (the state elites) is fundamental to the emergence of security-community frameworks (Kavalski, 2008, pp.6-7). Kavalski (2008, p.8) argues that the introduction of peace in the Balkans assures the extension of the European zone of peace into the region. He claims that security community building in the Balkans is not autonomous from the wider community-building project of the EU and NATO (Kavalski (2008, p.8).

Laporte (2012, p.4), articulates that the European security community, which has the EU in its core, encompasses the EU and its neighbours because it is progressively expanding towards its peripheries. Laporte (2012, p.5) perceives the EU as tightly-coupled mature pluralistic security community’ differing from this thesis’ argument that it is a loosely-coupled security community. Laporte (2012, p.10) also states that the EU has the strongest motivation towards Western Balkan region to expand its security community, to fulfil the aim of creating a European zone of peace and to become a regional security actor.

With respect to the theoretical framework provided by Adler and Barnett (1998) and concerning their classifications, this thesis treats the EU as a mature pluralistic loosely-coupled security community. While EU has aspects that are exclusive to the tightly-coupled security communities such as the free movement of population or policy coordination against internal threats through the Common and Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), it would be early to regard the EU as a tightly-coupled security community. From one perspective, the EU may seem on the way towards

becoming a more integrated tightly-coupled security community, but it would be necessary to pay attention to crises faced by the EU in terms of both deepening and widening of the community. That is why this thesis asserts that the EU is a mature pluralistic loosely-coupled security community in which its members share a common identity and maintain dependable expectations of peaceful change. Adler and Barnett (1998, p.59) argue that a constructivist approach is convenient to explain how dependable expectations of peaceful change can be formed through mutual identification, transnational values and shared identities. As this thesis regards EU as a security community based on Adler and Barnett's framework and argues that enlargement towards the Western Balkans is the expansion of the European security community, a constructivist framework is presented to explain the main reason behind EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda. The constructivist framework enables us to analyse the presence of shared understandings and mutual identity as well as the absence of mutual threat perception of states with respect to each other, which are the foundations of a security community. The following part explains in more detail the reason behind the selection of constructivism as the theoretical framework of the thesis and presents a constructivist theoretical framework for the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda.

3.4 Constructivist Framework

Before the end of the Cold War realism/neorealism and liberalism/neoliberalism theories and their debate on global politics dominated International Relations discipline (Wendt,1992, Hopf,1998; Reus-Smit,2005). A challenge raised against the domination of these theories with the end of Cold War when International Relations theory witnessed a new approach: constructivism. The term constructivism initially

created by Nicholas Onuf (1989). Onuf (2013, p.36) argues that in the simplest manner, constructivism indicates that “people and societies construct, or constitute, each other”. Reus-Smit (2005, p.188) claims that the axes of debate in international relations have been shifted due to the emergence of constructivism. Before that, the main debates were between neoliberals and neorealism and in between rationalist and critical theorists. With the rise of constructivism, two new debate areas have emerged, first between constructivists and rationalists, and second is between critical theorists and constructivists (Reus-Smith, 2005, p.188). Reus Smith’s point is valuable in terms of understanding the position of the constructivist approach in International Relations theory. Adler (1998, p.330) argues that constructivism remains in the middle ground between rationalist approaches (liberalism, realism) and interpretive approaches (postmodernist, post-structuralist and critical), and it presents the opportunity to work in new areas for theoretical and empirical investigation. Reus-Smith (2005, p.195) states that due to its emphasis on empirical analysis, constructivism divides itself from first-wave critical theory. Contrary to the first wave critical theorists, constructivist does not completely reject the neo-positivist methodology of liberal and realist perspectives (Reus-Smith, 2005, p.195; Fierke, 2013, p.189). Hurd (2008, p.299) in his piece presents four aspects of constructivism that differs it from other approaches. These are: social construction in world politics in contrast to materialism, social formation of state interests, mutual constitution of structures and agents, and multiple logics of anarchy (Hurd, 2008, pp.300,302-304). Fierke (2013, p.189), states that “constructivists underline the social dimensions of international relations, and show the importance of norms, rules, and language at this level”.

Hopf (1998, p.172) on the other hand, distinguishes constructivism into two versions: conventional and critical. Both conventional and critical constructivism acknowledge “mutual constitution of actors, anarchy as a social construct, power as both material and discursive, and state identities and interests as variables” (Hopf, 1998, p.185). However, while conventional constructivism recognises there are certain identities and aims to interpret their reproduction and impacts, critical constructivism utilises critical social theory in order to find out the origins of the identities (Hopf, 1998, p.185). Hopf (1998, pp.184-185) articulates that two versions of constructivism perceive identity differently; that critical theorists focus on how the identities are formed at the first place, but conventional constructivists take identities as “possible causes of action”. This thesis embraces a conventional constructivist approach as it employs ideas and identities as reasons to explain the EU’s Western Balkans enlargement agenda, rather than investigating their origins.

The emergence of constructivism in International Relations discipline also paved the way for the resurrection of the concept of the community, because constructivism is well suited to analyse how social process and an “international community might transform security politics” (Adler & Barnett, 1998, p.12). Ulusoy (2003, p.20) states that constructivism, in comparison to mainstream approaches, is the most useful theoretical framework to explain the essentials of a security community because it focuses on how identities are constructed.

Adler and Barnett (1998, p.12) state that “constructivist scholars have been most prominent in resurrecting Deutsch’s concept of security community”:
encouraging IR scholars to acknowledge the social character of international politics

and the significance of state identities. Adler and Barnett (1998, p.59) also express that constructivism provides the understanding of interactions between institution, norms and identities that generate the social construction of security communities. Amitav Acharya, in his piece *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia* (2014, p.3) states that constructivism has become the dominant theoretical framework for the study of security communities. Acharya (2014, p.3) argues that constructivism framed the “new discourse on security communities” in three aspects. The first aspect is the “social construction of security communities” (Acharya, 2014, p.3). Constructivists assume that cooperation among governments is a social process that reshapes the interest of the actors in terms of conflicts and peace. Acharya (2014, p.3) indicates that the practice of stable peace in security communities is the result of the “interactions, socialisation, norm-setting and identity-building, rather than from forces outside these processes (such as the international distribution of power)”. Secondly, Acharya (2014, p.3) expresses that constructivism recognises the deeper impact of norms in framing global politics, asserting that in contrast to neo-liberal institutionalism in which norms only regulate state behaviour, constructivist perspective assumes that norms redefine the state interest, form state identities and support the establishment of collective identities. Moreover, Acharya (2014, p.3) articulates that norms have an essential role in the socialisation process that influences the establishment of stable peace among countries, which is the core of the security communities. Thirdly Acharya (2014, p.3) stresses that constructivism presents the insight to look beyond the influence of material forces in the formation of global politics. Constructivism asserts that even though material forces maintain their significance, intersubjective factors, such as ideas, culture and identities, “has a determining, rather than a secondary, role in foreign policy interactions” (Acharya,

2014, p.3). Acharya (2014, p.3) maintains that “constructivism provides important insights into the role of socialisation and identity building (the emergence of we feeling) that Deutsch identified as a central feature of security communities”.

This “we feeling” is highly important for this thesis’ main argument. This thesis claims that the Western Balkans enlargement is in fact, the expansion of the European security community and of the shared European identity, which the security community rests on. The argument presented here is that the main reason behind the EU’s enlargement agenda towards Western Balkans is the idea of expanding Europe/We identity that is the cornerstone of the European security community. This argument is based on the findings from a discourse analysis of EU officials and supported by an analysis of EU papers and more detailed discourse analysis of the statements of EU officials. The following chapter presents a detailed analysis of the papers and the discourse analysis of the EU officials and official EU papers. However, in order to connect the theoretical framework to the analyses in the oncoming chapter, it would be better to give a statement from an EU official while presenting the framework. Donald Tusk, president of European Council, at the EU-Western Balkans summit which took place in Sofia, on 17 May 2018 stated in his speech that:

The summit is the best illustration that the integration with Western Balkans is a top priority for the EU. I don’t see any other future for the Western Balkans than the EU. There is no other alternative, there is no plan B. The Western Balkans are an integral part of Europe and they belong to our community (Council of the European Union, 2018a).

This statement of Tusk presents that from the EU’s perspective Western Balkans is an essential component of Europe and shows the EU’s aim to integrate Western

Balkans under collective European identity, both of which are supportive for the central argument of this thesis.

This thesis also analyses what the meaning of the concept of security encompasses. Ole Waever (1998, p.69) states that “Europe has become a security community” that rests on the identity and traditional security concerns are perceived for “Europe” not individual states. Waever (1998, p.69) argues that mutual military fears are absent at the state-to-state level in Europe; however, other issues started to be included in security terms such as economy, environment and migration. Waever (1998, p.88) indicates that after 1989, new aspects were added to the security discourse of Europe: migrants, ethnic conflict, organised crime, terrorism, environmental security. From this point of view, this study defines a “broadened security concept/understanding”, which encompasses economic stability, migration, terrorism, organised crime besides just armed conflict. This thesis argues that the meaning/understanding of the concept of “security” has changed. We need a broadened security understanding that embodies economic stability, migration, terrorism, organised crime, environment, corruption along with same old military fears and armed conflict. This is quite in line with the EU’s Western Balkans enlargement agenda. At the last Western Balkans summit which took place in July 2018, increasing economic stability, strengthening regional security cooperation to help tackle common threats such as migration, organised crime and facilitating political cooperation in order to help the region resolve bilateral disputes were the focus points (European Commission, 2018c).

This indicates that the EU perceives these issues as part of its security, meaning that the EU's security understanding has been enlarged and that the EU wants to expand its security community towards the Western Balkans.

As this thesis' central puzzle is to explain the main reason behind the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda at a time of rising Euroscepticism, it presents independent, dependent and intervening variables. The main independent variable or explanatory factor of this thesis is the idea of expanding the European security community to the Western Balkans. The dependent variable is the EU's enlargement agenda towards Western Balkans. Increasing Euroscepticism and geopolitical rivalry between the EU and Russia over the sphere of influence of the Western Balkans are the two intervening variables that affect EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda. These two intervening variables work in stark contrast to each other in terms of putting pressure on the EU conditionality. While growing Euroscepticism works as an intervening variable that affects the integration process negatively, the geopolitical rivalry between EU and Russia over the sphere of influence of Western Balkan region, as another intervening variable that affects the process positively, accelerating the integration of Western Balkans.

In terms of rising Euroscepticism, one of the most important aspects of Western Balkans enlargement is the EU conditionality "EU's yes, but approach" (Waever, 1998, p.99). The "Yes" part consists of the main argument of the thesis – the idea of expanding the European security community. The "But" is all about Western Balkan states fulfilling the EU conditionality. The growing Euroscepticism increases the strictness of the application of EU conditionality to Western Balkan states. That is

why it is taken as an intervening variable, which is an anticatalyst to the ongoing integration process of Western Balkans. In terms of geopolitical rivalry between EU and Russia over the sphere of influence of Western Balkan region, Russia has become an important actor once again in Western Balkan regions, by forging alliances with political leaders and appealing to domestic populations (Bechev, 2017, p.84). Russia's activism in the region caused concerns among EU members, which has so far worked as a catalyst for the EU's enlargement agenda regarding the Western Balkans. The fourth chapter analyses these intervening variables more in detail.

This thesis asserts that the idea of expanding the European security community, the idea of expanding "Europe/We" identity that European security community rests on is the most important factor to explain the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda. It connects the discourse analysis of the EU documents and the statements of EU officials to the security community theoretical framework by offering a "broadened security" understanding/idea, which encompasses issues such as economic stability, migration, and organised crime, that are the focal points of the Western Balkans enlargement. The oncoming chapter displays the aforementioned analyses of EU documents and discourse analysis of EU officials. The next chapter also offers a brief review of the existing literature on EU's Western Balkans enlargement and studies on Western Balkan region itself and positions the thesis among the existing studies while presenting the timeline of the Western Balkans enlargement.

CHAPTER 4

WESTERN BALKANS ENLARGEMENT

This Chapter initially provides a brief assessment of the earlier expansion of the European security community specifically on Eastern enlargement of the EU, before completely moving on to the Western Balkans enlargement, arguing that it is crucial to show the connection between different rounds of the enlargement. Secondly, it offers a review of the existing literature on the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda and the studies on Western Balkan region and positions itself among the existing studies while presenting the timeline of the Western Balkans enlargement. Lastly, this chapter presents the analyses of the official EU documents and discourse analysis of the EU officials to support its central argument that the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda is driven by the idea of expanding European security community, which rests on common European identity.

4.1 Earlier Enlargements of the European Security Community

As already mentioned in the previous chapter, this thesis treats the EU as a security community, which rests on collective identity and, perceives the Western Balkans enlargement agenda of the EU as the expansion of the European security community. However, as the EU experienced prior enlargements, the European security community also experienced prior expansions. For instance, the inclusion of the

Central and Eastern European countries after the end of the Cold War, is significant in terms of the EU, because of its broad scope. On May 1, 2004, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia officially joined to EU. Later Romania and Bulgaria followed the trend and joined the EU on 1 January 2007. Croatia became the last member of the EU on 1 July 2013. The significance of these enlargement rounds is that they encompassed many countries that used to be part of the Eastern Bloc or the Soviet Union itself. With these enlargements, the EU actively participated in the construction of the new order in Europe in the post-Soviet space. As Europe is increasingly defined in terms of the EU and the countries' "Europeanness" started to be evaluated by their adherence to the EU's norms and rules (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005, p.3), it makes sense to consider enlargement rounds of the EU as the expansion of the European security community.

In terms of Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs) enlargement Schimmelfennig (2001, p.47) states that liberal governmentalism is insufficient to explain the process. That is why he proposes "a sociological perspective" which presents "enlargement as the expansion of the international community" (Schimmelfennig, 2001, p.47). According to Schimmelfennig (2002, p.599) "enlargement is value and norm driven." Schimmelfennig (2002, p.598) states that the EU, as one of the European regional organisations, displays a liberal community that has shared liberal norms of domestic and foreign policy conduct. The organisation "expands to outside states to the extent that these states share its collective identity, values and norms" (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005, p.16). Schimmelfennig (2002, p.599) also emphasises that the enlargement of a regional

organisation is in harmony with the extension of the international community that the organisation rests on. Schimmelfennig (2001, pp.47-48) articulates that on the presumption of the EU as the organisation of the European liberal community of states, the decision to enlarge towards Central and Eastern Europe can be interpreted as the inclusion of those countries in the European community that started to share the liberal values and norms. Schimmelfennig (2001, p.50) indicates that “enlargement can be seen as an instrument to stabilise Central and Eastern Europe, to control the negative externalities of political and economic transformation in the East and to expand the borders of the EU zone of peace and prosperity”.

Schimmelfennig’s constructivist approach to the eastern enlargement is highly compatible with this thesis perspective on European security community because both views rely on the shared norms and common values, identities in the European community to explain the EU’s enlargement agenda.

4.2 Timeline of the Western Balkans Enlargement

Keil and Arkan (2015, p.5) state that during the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the EU was unprepared in terms of its foreign policy and therefore was unable to stop the fighting. The EU decided to increase its commitment to the region in the 2000s following the success of Central and Eastern Europe integration process (Noutcheva 2012:1 as cited in Keil & Arkan, 2015.p.5). Economides (2010, p.115) indicates that due to Yugoslavia’s bloody disintegration through ethnic conflicts and the region’s economic, political and constitutional issues, the Balkans region attained a negative perception. The EU preferred containment policy as the primary policy towards the region until the end of the 1990s (Economides, 2010, p.115).

That is why the EU treated Balkans differently from other European regions and preferred a differentiated integration for the countries of the region (Economides, 2010, pp.112,117). Economides (2010, p.116) asserts that following the end of the Kosovo crisis, there is a shift in terminology from a general Balkan region to a specific policy-relevant region known as the Western Balkans. This is mainly because three countries in the region, Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria distanced themselves from the “problematic” Western Balkan states and attained their tracks in terms of European integration and achieving membership to the EU (Economides, 2010, p.115). That resulted in a shrinking region to be known as Western Balkans, which encompasses Albania and the states of former Yugoslavia except for Slovenia (Economides, 2010, p.116). Differentiated integration policy of the EU towards the region continues today, as the EU set different timelines for different countries. Croatia was the last country which experienced the differentiated integration policy of the EU and entered the union in 2013 before the other countries in the region. Serbia and Montenegro are current front-runners in the membership route, as they expected to have joined by 2025. Economides (2010, p.121) argues that “spatially and temporarily differentiated integration is taking place in the Balkans, with different parts of the region moving closer to EU membership at different paces”.

The Cologne European Council in June 1999 witnessed the first direct remark of the possible accession of Western Balkan countries that Council expressed a prospect of membership on the basis on Amsterdam Treaty and fulfilment of the Copenhagen criteria (İçener & Phinnemore, 2016, p.34). In the following years, the engagement of the EU towards Western Balkans intensified with the Zagreb Summit in November 2000 Stabilisation and Association Process established (Economides,

2010, p.120). The Thessaloniki Summit of European Council in 2003, is highly significant in terms of Western Balkans integration process. At the summit, the Council indicated that “future of Balkans is within the European Union” (Council of the European Union 2003b, point 2). With the European Council summit took place Thessaloniki in 2003 integration of the Western Balkans became a priority of EU expansion. Dimitar Bechev (2017, p.54) argues that with the promised membership at the Thessaloniki Summit in June 2003, in exchange for political and economic reforms for the re-establishment of friendly relations, the EU took over responsibility for the Western Balkans from the United States. In 2006 with the European Council in Brussel, the EU reconfirmed the European perspective of Western Balkans and repeated the EU membership as the final goal (İçener & Phinnemore, 2015, p.35).

4.2.1. European Partnerships and Stabilization and Association Agreements (SAA)

European Partnerships and Stabilization and Association Agreements (SAA) are stepping stones on the path to potential candidacy which produces a different route than the one taken by the other Balkans states Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria.

SAAs, which provided the contractual relationship between the EU and the Western Balkans, are now in force in all six countries (Džankić, Keil & Kmezić, 2019, p.1).

The First two signatories of SAAs were Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Croatia in April and October 2001, respectively (Economides, 2010, p.120). Croatia gained candidate country status in June 2004 and began its accession negotiations in October 2005 eventually being admitted to EU on 1 July 2013.

However, for FYROM despite gaining candidate status in December 2005, the accession negotiations have not been started yet. The Biggest challenge in terms of

FYROM was its name dispute with Greece over the use of Macedonia, which is also a region in northern Greece. Greece argues that Macedonia is a genuine part of Hellenic heritage and opposed to recognising the use of the name Macedonia, thus blocked Macedonian accession to the EU because of the naming conflict. Tziampiris (2012, p.153) states, that is why Greece had a determining role in terms of FYROM's European path. However, following the Prespa agreement with Greece on 12 June 2018, the name of the country became "The Republic of North Macedonia" and Greece withdrew its opposition to North Macedonia accession to EU. Without any Greek opposition anymore, the EU approved the beginning of accession talks on 27 June 2018. The accession talks are expected to start in 2019 depending on the fulfilment of certain conditions.

Montenegro and Serbia respectively signed SAAs in October 2007 and April 2008. Montenegro gained candidate country status in December 2010, and accession negotiations started on 29 June 2012. Montenegro is enjoying being the front runner of the enlargement among other Western Balkan countries (Džankic, 2015, p.83), as 32 of 35 chapters have been opened as of May 2019 (European Commission, 2019). Serbia, on the other hand, gained its candidate status a bit later than Montenegro in March 2012 and accession negotiations started on 21 January 2014. Both countries are expected to be members in 2025 as the European Commission, in its Western Balkans strategy paper, which is published in 2018, asserts that both countries have the potential to become member states by 2025 based on their merit-based process (European Commission, 2018a).

Albania signed SAA in June 2006 and gained candidate country status in June 2014. Both North Macedonia and Albania are waiting for the commission recommendation to open accession negotiations. North Macedonia and Albania are likely to begin talks by the end of 2019 and be able to enter the Union by 2025 (EU to start membership talks, 2018). The Council decided to open the path towards starting accession negotiations with Albania as a result of progress made by it (European Commission, 2018a, p.2).

Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo are the other two potential candidates for EU membership. Bosnia and Herzegovina signed SAA on June 2008 and submitted an application to join the EU in February 2016. Kosovo unilaterally proclaimed its independence from Serbia on 17 February 2008, as a result of which it has become a partially recognised state. Thus, Kosovo has a disputed status, as five members of the EU, Slovakia, Spain, Greece, Romania and Cyprus and the candidate country Serbia do not recognize Kosovo as an independent state. However, despite its disputed status in April 2016 SAA with Kosovo entered into force. Džankic et al. (2019, p.2) state that because of national political gridlocks, fragile state structure and issues with several EU members, EU bids of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo currently encountering problems. That is why these two countries are the latecomers of the Western Balkans enlargement.

4.3 Literature on the Western Balkans Enlargement

The existing studies on the integration of Western Balkans into the EU can be divided into two; the first concerning EU perspective and the second regarding viewpoints of the candidate or potential candidate countries. Because the primary

purpose of this thesis is to analyse how to explain the EU's enlargement agenda towards Western Balkans in the time of rising Euroscepticism, this part will summarise the studies on the EU perspective. However, this does not mean there is not any division in terms of EU perspective-based studies on Western Balkans enlargement. First of all, some studies are approaching EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda from the perspective of EU-state building (Chandler, 2007, O'Brennan, 2008, Bieber, 2011, Woelk, 2013, Keil & Arkan, 2015). Chandler (2006, p.8) argues that the EU is an empire in denial. Chandler (2007, p.606) states that in terms of the Western Balkan region, EU's primary aim is not enlargement, rather it is to exercise power over the region while lacking the responsibilities of an empire. State-building is a temporary solution to this dilemma (Chandler 2007, p.606). O'Brennan (2008, p.517) in direct response to Chandler (2007) states that Chandler's perspective is not appropriate to understand the enlargement agenda of the EU towards Western Balkans. O'Brennan (2008, p.517) claims that instead of a neo-colonial approach, the EU aims to use its revolutionary soft power to convey its norms and values to Western Balkans and prompt the region to integrate further with the EU. Bieber (2011, p.1783) states the EU become the main actor in state-building in the Western Balkans as of the early 2000s. According to Bieber (2011, p.1783), EU embraced a dual strategy comprised of state-building and European integration. However, he argues that there is a gap between the highly technical accession process and the security-based EU state-building, and the main challenge for the EU to close this gap (Bieber, p.1800). Woelk (2013, p.479) analyses the EU's member state-building effort and argues that due to the problems with the integration, a refreshed engagement of EU is needed. Keil and Arkan (2015, p.6) extend Chandler's (2006) argument, claim that the EU is also a state-builder in denial. They

argue that the EU emerged as a key actor in essential political reforms in the region and actively endorse particular modes of change and transformation, becoming an active state-builder in the countries of the Western Balkans (Keil & Arkan, 2015, p.16). This thesis embraces an approach closer to the views of O'Brennan (2008) in arguing that the EU aims to expand its norms and values with the goal of creating a broader security community based on identity.

Secondly, there are studies which are concerned about the EU's political conditionality towards Western Balkan countries during the integration process (Anastasakis, 2008; Freyburg&Richter 2010). Anastasakis (2008, p.366), analyses the nature of EU's political conditionality in the Western Balkans and argues that it has become a complex, difficult phenomenon to analyse due to EU's differentiated political conditionality with respect to state capacity and lack of clarity in terms of its intentions. Freyburg and Richter (2010, p.263-264) state that it is doubtful for EU that the same success story in Central and Eastern enlargement will repeat itself in the future enlargement agenda. They argue that a successful political conditionality approach must consider the national identities because contradicting criteria to national identity curb the effectiveness of EU political conditionality (Freyburg&Richter, 2010, p.264). The next chapter analyses EU conditionality in more detail and explains that how can it be the anticatalyst factor to the integration process.

Thirdly, particular studies advance EU's enlargement agenda towards Western Balkans, from the perspective of Europeanisation (Anastasakis,2005; Börzel, 2011; Džankic et al.2019). Börzel (2011, p.14) articulates that the Western Balkans case

illustrated that the consolidated statehood is as substantial as a democracy to generate Europeanisation. Anastasakis (2005, p.80) indicates that Central and East European case illustrated that Europeanization is an externally driven process of alteration designated by the EU central powers. He claims that however, Europeanization in terms of South-East Europe is an even more exhausting and challenging process, that needs extra endeavour and engagement for an ambiguous result (Anastasakis, 2005, p.86). Džankic et al. (2019, p.6) on the other hand, analyses how Europeanisation shaped and transformed the political spaces of the candidate states during the EU accession process.

Fourthly, certain studies exist that are focused on the national perspectives of members states of the EU (Lindsay, Armakolas, Balfour, Stratulat, 2017; Töglhofer&Adebahr, 2017; Armakolas&Triantafyllou, 2017; Lindsay, 2017; Wunsch, 2017; Frontini&Denti, 2017; Ioannides, 2017). Lindsay et al. (2017, p.512) state that among the members of the EU, there is a range of approaches with respect to enlargement. Töglhofer and Adebahr (2017, p.523) analyse Germany's attitude towards Western Balkans enlargement, stating that Germany is both critical and a firm supporter of the enlargement agenda. They indicate that Germany has strong economic and political ties with the region, being among top trade partners and most prominent foreign investor in the region in addition to 1.4 million people originating from region living in Germany (Töglhofer&Adebahr, 2017, p.524). Despite high engagement with the region and identifying the strategic significance of drawing Western Balkans into EU as a way to reconstruct and stabilise the region, Germany remains committed to the strict accession conditionality (Töglhofer&Adebahr, 2017, p.525-526). Wunsch (2017, p.547,552) analyses the French approach to Western

Balkans enlargement and articulates that despite its principled support for enlargement, region's integration does not carry high importance for France, due to its general hesitancy with respect to EU enlargement and the little political and economic relevance of Balkans for itself. Lindsay (2017, p.566) asserts that the UK used to be one of the ardent advocates of the EU enlargement and specifically of the Western Balkans enlargement, as a result of its traditional policy favouring widening instead of deepening of the EU. However, especially after 2013 under Conservative-led government along with growing Euroscepticism, United Kingdom stops to be the driving force in terms of EU enlargement, the 2016 referendum was only the final nail in the coffin (Lindsay, 2017, p.567). Frontini and Denti (2017, p.586) argue that Italy despite its strong belief in enlargement, its close ties to the regions because of economic and security concerns and being a vocal proponent of Western Balkans enlargement, yet fail to attain a strong political significance in terms of region's integration to the EU. This is mainly due to the lack of knowledge of the matter and the limited interest and increasing Euroscepticism of everyday citizens (Frontini&Denti, 2017, p.585). Armakolas and Triantafyllou (2017, p.611) state that Greece is one of the prominent advocators of the Western Balkans enlargement, due to its geographical proximity to the region which is not included in the European zone of stability. Despite its eagerness for integration, Greece obtains substantial conflicts with the region, becoming a candidate for future hindrance and putting itself in an awkward position (Armakolas and Triantafyllou, 2017, p.612).

On the contrary to Greece, Cyprus is very indifferent to enlargement agenda of the EU, despite supporting EU integration in principle (Ioannides,2017, p.643). Lastly, Hungary contains nearly national consensus towards Western Balkans enlargement, despite the rising EU scepticism in governing parties (Huszka, 2017, p.594). Factors

such as historical ties and geographical proximity with the region and Hungarian national minorities in the Balkans make enlargement agenda a vital national interest of Hungary (Huszka, 2017, p.594-595). On the other hand, because of the illiberal turn and move from the EU's fundamental values and norms Hungarian regime experienced under Victor Orban's rule, Hungary becomes isolated from the EU's core countries, thus having a minor influence over the enlargement agenda (Huszka, 2017, p.604).

These studies, which focus on separate member state attitudes, are highly substantial to grasp an understanding of the EU's enlargement agenda towards Western Balkans. However, this thesis perceives the EU as a single legal entity, and as a result, it analyses the official EU documents and speeches of the EU officials. The oncoming section presents a discourse analysis of the official EU papers and the EU officials' talks.

4.4 Discourse Analysis of the EU Documents and Officials' Speeches

Keil and Arkan (2015, p.17) state that all leading institutions of the EU take part in the process of integration. European Commission possesses substantial role over the enlargement process, as it presents annual progress reports and strategy papers for the candidate and the potential candidate states. On the other hand, European Council has a determining role in terms of integration to EU, because of its the decision-making mechanism that decides on the time when the membership negotiations will start, and it also takes the final decision with respect to membership of a country (Keil & Arkan, 2015, p.17). The final decision regarding the membership of a new state has to be ratified by the European Parliament and all member states with respect to

their national law (Keil & Arkan, 2015, p.17). The General Affairs Council (GAC), a configuration of the Council of the EU, inaugurates and oversees the EU enlargement process and accession negotiations. In the case of a membership application, the Council calls to the European Commission to submit its opinion on this application.

Hence European Commission and European Council obtain critical roles in determining the Western Balkans enlargement agenda of the EU, while not forgetting the part of the Council of the European Union. That is why this thesis analyses speeches of the presidents of the European Commission and the European Council, speeches of the vice president of the European Commission, conclusions of the European Council, reports and statements of the European Commission, and the conclusions presented by the Council of the European Union with respect to the Western Balkans enlargement agenda.

For the selection of data, this thesis chooses 2003 Brussels/Thessaloniki Summits, respectively in March and June, as its starting point. This selection is based on the premise that in these two summits the EU has clearly shown its determination for the region's integration and promised to region future membership to the EU. However, the bulk of the data analysed here are especially from the last three to five years, where EU's enlargement agenda of Western Balkans became more prominent despite the growing Euroscepticism in Europe.

4.4.1. Discourse Analysis of the Official EU Documents

2003, was an important year for the Western Balkan countries in terms of their integration to the EU. This year has witnessed two crucial European Councils, that

assured the EU's perspective on the future of the Western Balkan countries. That is why this thesis firstly analyses Presidency conclusions of the Brussels European Council (20 and 21 March 2003) and Thessaloniki European Council (19 and 20 June 2003).

In the Brussel summit, European Council articulated that the future of the Western Balkans lies inside of the EU and promised complete support for the states that are trying to solidify their democracy, stability and economic development. (Council of the European Union, 2003a, point 82). This is highly crucial in terms of the enlargement agenda, because, the EU confirms that it acknowledged the Western Balkans should be the part of their community. The European Council also states that EU's taking control of the police operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the military operation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia present the concrete proof of the EU's commitment to the region (Council of the European Union, 2003a, point 83). This is the indication of the importance of security aspect in EU's enlargement agenda towards the region.

In the Brussel summit, that is why the European Council emphasised that the Western Balkans had high importance in terms of the EU agenda, and that is why European Council invites Council of the EU and EU Commission to investigate methods and ways to enhance the Union's stabilisation and association policy with respect to the region (Council of the European Union, 2003a, point 84). This shows the eagerness of the European Council towards the enlargement of the Western Balkans since it makes other institutions of the EU as a part of the process.

In the Thessaloniki Summit, European Council stressed out its dedication to entirely and efficiently endorse European perspective of the Western Balkan states, which will be included as an essential part of the EU, on the condition that they satisfy the identified criteria (Council of the European Union, 2003b, point 40). European Council also stated that enhancing the privileged relations between the EU and the region is a priority for the EU, that is why EU's improved Stabilisation and Association Process would continue to be the framework for the European course of the Western Balkan states (Council of the European Union, 2003b, point 41).

Another highly important theme in the Thessaloniki Summit conclusions was the emphasis of the Council on the wider Europe. European Council indicated that "Enlargement is expanding the borders of our European Union and is bringing us closer to new neighbours". (Council of the European Union, 2003b, point 44). European Council announced that they are pledged to establishing, even more, "deeper ties and bridges of cooperation" with their neighbours to share "the future of the community of values" with others, because their stability and prosperity is inseparably connected to the EU (Council of the European Union, 2003b, point 44). European Council also articulated that to strengthen their shared values and advocate their common interest with the future member states; they are generating new policies toward Wider Europe, their New Neighbourhood (Council of the European Union, 2003b, point 44). These points are highly valuable in terms of this thesis' central argument that Western Balkans enlargement is the expansion of the European security community, based on shared values and common identity. In the conclusions of the Thessaloniki summit, it is obvious that extending Europe to the Balkans is a

prominent idea, with the aim to share the common values of EU with the future enlargements.

Secondly, this thesis analyses the Presidency Conclusions of the Brussels European Council (15/16 June 2006) and Salzburg EU/Western Balkans Joint Press Statement (11 March 2006), in which EU reaffirmed that Western Balkans enlargement agenda remains to be a priority for itself. The joint statement emphasises that to increase stability and security continues to be a common European interest and indicates that the EU should carry on supporting the countries in the region through practical methods to make the European perspective more tangible, as it is committed to carrying out the assurances that are given in Thessaloniki ultimately (Council of the European Union, 2006a).

In the Brussel European Council conclusions (Council of the European Union, 2006b, point 56), it is stated that, the European Council affirmed the Western Balkans' future is within the EU and articulates that each state's advancement towards the EU is going to continue to lean on the basis whether and how well each country meeting the conditions and requirements that are determined by Copenhagen criteria and in the Stabilisation and Association Process. Also, the European Council acknowledged that all states in the region produced significant advancement in their road to the EU, in conformity with the final aim of EU membership (Council of the European Union, 2006b, point 56). Furthermore, the European Council articulated enlargement displays "a historic opportunity contributing to ensure peace, security, stability, democracy" (Council of the European Union, 2006b, point51).

There are important themes and keywords in all of these summit conclusions.

Stability is the most common and recurring theme. There is always a reference to the stability of the region, and how essential it is to the EU. Security is another repeated matter in the conclusions along with the stability. These two themes are interrelated and continue to appear in later documents and speeches of EU officials and leaders analysed by this thesis. Another important notion in the conclusions is to promote peace and democracy in the region, which can also be considered as a part of ensuring stability in the region.

İçener and Phinnemore (2015, p.35) state, the European Council conclusions since 2007, narrowly mention enlargement of the Western Balkans. However, narrow mention of the enlargement does not mean EU obtains a weak commitment to the region. It is true that the Western Balkans enlargement agenda of the EU appears less in the presidency conclusions of the European Council, between 2007 and 2014; however, this does not indicate that the Western Balkans enlargement agenda of the EU froze in this period. Instead, enlargement agenda continued through Stabilisation and Association Process, as many countries in the region have signed Stabilization and Association Agreements (SAAs) after 2007, which played a fundamental role in terms of region's integration to the EU. Also, Montenegro and Serbia gained candidate country status respectively in 2010 and 2012, as mentioned in the timeline section of this chapter. Furthermore despite, Western Balkans enlargement agenda lost its presence in the presidency conclusions of the European Council during this period, it continuously appears in the conclusions of the Council of the EU, specifically in the conclusions on Enlargement and Stabilisation and Association Process.

In the Council conclusions on the enlargement and stabilisation and association process respectively on 5 December 2011 and 11 December 2012, The Council states it perceives the European perspective of the Western Balkans is vital for the stability, reconciliation and future of the region, that is why it maintains its indisputable commitment to the region (Council of the European Union, 2011, point 31; Council of the European Union 2012, point 33). In these conclusions the Council also stated that with the pre-condition of fulfilling the necessary conditions and requirements, European Union membership is the ultimate goal for the countries in the region and Stabilisation and Association Process plays a huge role in determining the speed of the path to the membership, which is highly affected by the good neighbourly relations and potent regional cooperation (Council of the European Union, 2011, point 31; Council of the European Union 2012, point 33).

In the conclusions of Council of the European Union on 17 December 2013, the Council states that it maintains its indisputable commitment to the “European perspective of the Western Balkans, which remains essential for the stability reconciliation and future of the region” (Council of the European Union, 2013, point 23). The Council also articulates that matters related to war crimes, missing persons, refugee, and the protection of all minorities are fundamental challenges to stability and that is why countries in the region should focus on (Council of the European Union, 2013, point 25). In 2014 version of the same conclusion of the Council of the EU, the Council asserts that good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation are vital aspects of the Enlargement process, as they strengthen the prosperity, stability and the harmony of the region (Council of the European Union, 2014, point 11)

In these conclusions of the Council of the EU, stability is again the recurring theme and continues to be a key point of the enlargement perspective for the Western Balkan states, as the Council articulates that integration of the region to the EU carries vital importance for establishing and maintaining stable order in the Western Balkans.

In the last five years, especially with the Berlin Process that started in 2014, the EU has shown a greater interest in the integration of the region. With the Conference of Western Balkans took place in Berlin on 28 August 2014, which is initiated by German Chancellor Angela Merkel, a series of summits took place on the future enlargement of EU towards Western Balkans. These summits played a significant role in bringing the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda forward. This thesis, in the oncoming section, presents discourse analyses of High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini, from the last two summits that took place respectively in 2017 and 2018, in which there are explicit remarks on the certainty of the future enlargement perspective of EU towards the region.

However, before moving on to those analyses, this thesis continues its assessment chronology with the European Commission report on Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2014-15 and European Commission 2015 report on EU enlargement, which show the strategic importance of the Western Balkans enlargement for the EU. In the 2014 report, Commission (European Commission, 2014, p.3) states that there are three strategic benefits of enlargement, first and related one to the purpose of this thesis is the reference to “make Europe a safer

place”. With the accession process, the EU endorses democracy and fundamental freedoms and strengthening the rule of law in the candidate or potential candidates. Commission indicates that the current enlargement agenda is bolstering peace and stability in the Western Balkans and endorsing restoration and reconciliation after the wars of the 1990s (European Commission, 2014, p.3).

In its 2015 report on EU enlargement strategy, the European Commission (2015, p.4) asserts that “the clear perspective of EU membership is a key stabilising factor for Western Balkan states”. EU enlargement agenda in the Balkans reinforces the progress with the attainment of necessary conditions, including those of the Stabilisation and Association Process (European Commission, 2015, p.4).

Commission argues that enhancing stability and prosperity in the Western Balkans is actually in the EU's own interest, and not just an investment in the future of the region (European Commission,2015, p.4). These two reports illustrate the strategic significance of the EU enlargement agenda towards Western Balkans, and they are going along with this thesis’ main argument, indicating enlargement means enhancing the security of Europe.

This thesis also evaluates the European Commission 2016 and the 2018 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy reports, in which the Commission makes analyses of the aspirant countries in wide issues, such as the rule of law, fundamental rights and the economy. In the 2016 report, European Commission indicates that the Western Balkan six initiative, especially regarding the EU’s connectivity agenda and the Berlin process, generated a force, which supports “regional cooperation and thus

political stabilisation and economic opportunities” (European Commission, 2016a, p.7).

In its 2018 report, European Commission (European Commission, 2018b, p.8), indicates that “The Commission's Western Balkans strategy, adopted in February 2018, provides a historic window of opportunity to firmly and unequivocally bind the region's future to the European Union”. The Commission states that Western Balkan countries should act with dedication and permanently progress forward in their transformation process while responding and solving their existing deficiencies with respect to fundamentals of the rule of law, fundamental rights, democratic institutions and public administration reform, and the economy (European Commission, 2018b, p.8). These two reports showed that despite their shortcomings, the EU has determined policy towards the Western Balkan countries and expect from them to address their existing problems before being admitted to the EU.

All of these EU Commission reports have an emphasis on the stability in terms of Western Balkans integration. Also, it clear that Commission perceives EU membership perspective for countries in the region, is substantial to make Western Balkans more secure, a stabilised region. That is why it can be argued that there is continuity in terms of EU's enlargement agenda towards the region.

On 6 February 2018 European Commission presented a strategy paper on Western Balkans. In the paper which is titled as “a credible enlargement perspective for an enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans”, European Commission (2018a, p.1) states that “ Western Balkans are part of Europe, geographically

surrounded by the EU Member States and the peoples of the EU that the region have a common heritage, history and a future defined by shared opportunities and challenges”. EU has been committed to the region and perceives the future of the region as a substantial part of the EU since the EU-Western Balkans Thessaloniki Summit in 2003 (European Commission, 2018a, p.1). European Commission (2018a, p.1) claims that EU membership for the countries in the region with respect to merit-based prospects, is actually EU’s very own political, security and economic interest, because “it is a geostrategic investment in a stable, strong and united Europe based on common values”.

This last sentence is highly compatible with the thesis’s main argument. The emphasis on common values and strong united Europe is supporting the idea that Western Balkans enlargement is the expansion of the European security community that is based on collective European identity. This point also demonstrates that for the EU, geopolitics and identity are interrelated and inseparable. Geostrategy means the combination of geopolitics and other strategic factors. In this case, the strategic factors are ideational, the idea of establishing a strong united Europe based on common identity and shared values influences the geopolitics of the region. The EU commission also articulates that a secure, stable Europe is possible through the expansion of the EU to the Western Balkans by becoming a united Europe based on shared identities and common values, which fulfils the EU’s own interests.

The EU-Western Balkans summit took place in Sofia, Bulgaria, on 17 May 2018, and was attended by the heads of state or government from the EU member states and leaders from the 6 Western Balkans partners. Following the summit, the EU

published the Sofia declaration to present the conclusions of the summit. In the declaration, EU leaders, express that their satisfaction with the “shared commitment of the Western Balkans partners to European values and principles, and to the vision of a strong, stable and united Europe” (Council of the European Union, 2018a, point 2). EU leaders indicate that this shared commitment is based on their historical, cultural and geographic ties and their mutual political, security and economic interests (Council of the European Union, 2018a, point 2).

In the Sofia declaration, it is also stated that the EU and the Western Balkans partners recognise the importance of “fighting corruption and organised crime for the region's political and socio-economic transformation and also for regional stability and security” (European Council, 2018, point 12). This point in the declaration illustrates a sign of broadened security understanding in the EU’s perspective. Organised crime and corruption are included as matters that are important for the region’s stability and security. This is another point that backs up the thesis’s argument that the EU’s security understanding is broadened and the expansion towards Western Balkans is the expansion of the European security community.

In the Council conclusions on 26 June 2018, the Council states that it is committed to the enlargement, which is a key policy of the EU that portray a strategic investment in peace, democracy, prosperity, security and stability in Europe (Council of the European Union, 2018b, point 2). The Council articulates that it anticipates that aspiring states to entirely devote themselves to the European values (Council of the European Union, 2018b, point 2). The Council also welcomes the results of the Sofia Summit and articulates that EU is resolute in enhancing and deepening its

engagement at all levels to support the region's political, economic and social transformation (Council of the European Union, 2018b, point 2).

As the final document in this section, this thesis analyses the most recent paper by this date, which is the 2019 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy paper. This document describes the Western Balkans Strategy of February 2018, as a huge improvement to the region's European path and articulates that EU leaders demonstrated explicit signs to Western Balkan states in the last year, by responding positively to progress made by North Macedonia and Albania and layout the way towards accession negotiations with the two countries (European Commission, 2019, p.1). In this paper, the EU Commission (2019, p.2) also indicates that EU accession is a vital choice based on values, which each country in the region should embrace those more eagerly. This is another point in the EU documents that is compatible with argument that European Union is a security community that is based on shared values and common identity, and the enlargement of the EU is the expansion of the EU security community. The next section introduces the discourse analysis of the EU officials, in which remarks, and points can be found to support this argument furthermore.

4.4.2 Discourse Analysis of the Speeches of the EU Officials

In this section, the thesis provides the analysis of the speeches of the EU officials; president of European Commission Jean Claude Juncker, president of the European Council Donald Tusk and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission Federica

Mogherini. These speeches carry critical importance to understand how Brussels views the EU's Western Balkans enlargement.

The thesis starts its analysis from the various speeches of Federica Mogherini the High Representative/Vice-President. The first one is the speech that she gave at the Montenegro Parliament on 1 March 2017. In her speech, Federica Mogherini articulated that (European Union External Action Service, 2017a):

I believe the European Union will not be complete as long as this region won't join our community. The Balkans lie at the heart of Europe: no political boundary can change this reality – a reality based on geography, on history, on culture and on the precise awareness we share: that our future will be a better one if it will be a common one. The people of the Balkans are European: they want and deserve the same opportunities, the same safeguards and rights as all other citizens of this continent.

Her emphasis on the completion of the EU with the Western Balkans enlargement is worthwhile because of the reference to the community. Mogherini (European Union External Action Service, 2017a) states that the European community is incomplete without the Western Balkan countries that share not only awareness but also historical and cultural ties with the EU. This is very clear support for the Western Balkans enlargement agenda from the EU side, and this support is based on the shared understandings, awareness and common identity which are also the foundations of this thesis' theoretical framework, EU as a security community.

Secondly, there are the speeches Federica Mogherini gave in the Western Balkans Summits Trieste and London, respectively in 2017 and 2018, as the representative of the EU. Following the Trieste summit, Mogherini indicated the perspective of European integration of the Western Balkans is confirmed, that all six countries

showed their eagerness to be integrated into the EU, and she promised to be consistent from the EU side as long as the countries in the region continue with the right reforms (European Commission, 2017a).

In the 2018 London Summit, Mogherini (European Commission, 2018c) this time asserted that EU and aspiring countries together have been working to bring the region closer to the EU in terms of politically, economically and security-wise. On the summit, she states that the EU reasserts their commitment to move forward the integration process towards their common future (European Commission, 2018c). In these two speeches at the Summits by Mogherini, the EU confirms its determination to include Western Balkan states into the EU, as long as they maintain their European perspective.

In another speech, following the Foreign Affairs Council on 6 March 2017, Mogherini answered to a question on the Russian interference in the Western Balkans and articulated that the region can be easily affected by global tensions and quickly turn into a chessboard where the big power game is played (European Union External Action Service, 2017b). Mogherini states that this is concerning because Western Balkan countries have experienced tremendous progress on their European integration path (European Union External Action Service, 2017b). This speech stresses out the significance of the EU integration process of Western Balkans which is not only caused by the region itself but also originates from the outside factors such as Russia that are a threat to region's stability.

As a summary of these speeches, this thesis states that Mogherini emphasises the importance of the integration of Western Balkans to the EU, pointing out that the region is a part of Europe as they share the common understandings and have strong historical and cultural ties, without forgetting that Russia as a threat to the region's stability and to its European perspective.

This section also analyses the speeches of Jean Claude Juncker in his 2017 and 2018 State of Union, and the Donald Tusk's speeches at the European Council on 9 March 2017 and at the EU-Western Balkans summit in Sofia on 17 May 2018. Donald Tusk, in his speech on the European Council meeting of 9 March 2017, just after his re-election as the President of the European Council for another two and half years, stated that Western Balkan region is essential for Europe, and the region has been affected recently by unhealthy external influences that make region destabilised (European Council, 2017). That is why Tusk suggests to the EU to step in and assure the Western Balkan countries that the EU keeps its promise of a European perspective for the region and should show that it is committed to the region's stability and prosperity (European Council, 2017). As it is in the previous analyses of the official EU documents, the stability of the Western Balkans is again the central point in the Tusk's speech, and the source of stability for the region is acknowledged as EU integration.

Donald Tusk reiterated the significance of the EU enlargement agenda towards Western Balkans at the EU-Western Balkans summit took place in Sofia, on 17 May 2018 and stated in his speech that:

The summit is the best illustration that the integration with Western Balkans is a top priority for the EU. I don't see any other future for

the Western Balkans than the EU. There is no other alternative; there is no plan B. The Western Balkans are an integral part of Europe, and they belong to our community (Council of the European Union, 2018a).

This “community” emphasis of Donald Tusk is highly valuable. As Donald Tusk stressed out, Western Balkans are an essential part of Europe, the missing piece in the European puzzle. The integration of Western Balkans to the EU serves the purpose of completing the European security community, which is based on collective identities and shared values, and it cannot be complete without the Balkans. That is why, as pointed out by Tusk, “the integration with Western Balkans is a top priority for the EU” (Council of the European Union, 2018a).

European Commission President Jean Claude Juncker in his 2017 State of the Union address, stated that “If we want more stability in our neighbourhood, then we must also maintain a credible enlargement perspective for the Western Balkans” (European Commission, 2017b).

In his 2018 State of the Union Address, Juncker reaffirmed the European future of Western Balkans and emphasised again on stability by declaring:

Europe can export stability, as we have done with the successive enlargements of our Union. For me, these are and will remain success stories – for we were able to reconcile Europe's history and geography. But there is more to be done. We must find unity when it comes to the Western Balkans – once and for all. Should we not, our immediate neighbourhood will be shaped by others (European Commission, State of the Union, 2018d).

In these speeches, Juncker stresses the necessity to continue having a credible enlargement agenda towards Western Balkans, that are key to Europe’s stability. He also covertly signals the threat of Russia by stating that the region can be shaped by

“others” if the EU does not maintain reliable enlargement perspective. This is another indication that geopolitical priorities and identity work together. EU has geopolitical concerns over the region, but this combined with the identity aspect, perceiving Russia as “other” while trying to include Western Balkan countries into an enhanced common European identity. Russia’s and EU’s geopolitical rivalry over the sphere of influence of the Western Balkans puts the EU in an awkward position because of its emphasis on strict EU conditionality in terms of enlargement. In the next chapter, there will be a more detailed analysis of Russia’s effect on Western Balkans enlargement as a catalyser to process. The stability emphasis, on the other hand, is a recurring theme whether with Russian reference or not. Juncker in these speeches underlines how vital is the European perspective for Western Balkan countries, that it is the determinant factor in the region’s stability. So, there is continuity in the stability discourse throughout all of the EU papers and speeches of the EU officials analysed in this chapter, revealing that stability and security are the key themes of the EU’s Western Balkans enlargement agenda.

4.5 Conclusion

This thesis perceives EU as a security community that relies on shared values and common European identity and argues that EU has been a secure, peaceful and stable order due to its members’ shared understandings of a community and mutual identity. On the other hand, Western Balkans has been a region associated with instability, insecurity and bilateral conflicts. As a result of the discourse analysis of the EU documents in the first section, this thesis initially finds out that following Brussels and Thessaloniki European Councils in 2003, the EU has taken responsibility towards the region and promised a European future to the region.

Moreover, as a result of the discourse analysis of the EU documents and the speeches of the EU officials, this thesis identifies that the stability and security have been the main concern of the EU, with respect to Western Balkans enlargement, from initial Summits to this day.

Furthermore, the EU perceives the region as an integral part of Europe, that the countries in the region belong to the European community, believing without Western Balkans that Europe cannot be complete or stable. The EU thinks that the Western Balkans should be part of their community because they share the same understandings and have powerful historical and cultural connections.

That is why this thesis argues that the main driving force behind the EU's enlargement agenda is the idea of expanding European security community towards Western Balkans, which is the missing part of the European puzzle.

EU also assumes that the European perspective is the source for the stability of the region. Without the common future with the EU, the region and Europe cannot be secure or stable. This is not only because of the internal conflicts arisen from the Balkan states, but it is also because of Russia, who wants to be an influential actor in the region. The next chapter analyses the effect of Russia on the integration process of the Western Balkans to the EU, along with the effect of growing Euroscepticism on the enlargement process. The next chapter investigates the dilemma of the EU, which finds itself in a position between adhering to strict conditionality and accelerating the integration process because of the geopolitical rivalry with Russia over the Balkans.

CHAPTER 5

RISING EUROSCEPTICISM VS GEOPOLITICAL RIVALRY

In the previous chapter, this thesis presented the main reason behind the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda as the idea to expand the European security community to the countries in the region. However, there are other factors that affect the integration process of the region to the EU. The EU desires to enlarge the European security community, but due to the certain challenges that this chapter discusses, apparently, it is not going to be an easy and smooth process. EU's internal crises, especially increasing Euroscepticism, hampers not only the prospects of the expansion of the European security community but also endangers the future of the community. On the other hand, the growing Russian influence over the Western Balkan region, despite being a threat to future of the community, reminds the EU the vitality of including Western Balkan states into the European security community.

Therefore, this chapter is going to consist of two parts. First part will focus on the effects of contemporary and significant crises of the EU, especially the rising Euroscepticism, on the Western Balkans enlargement agenda. The most serious impact of the increasing Euroscepticism on the Western Balkans integration process to the EU is its influence on the EU conditionality. The growing Euroscepticism causes the EU and the member states to be careful about the Western Balkans

enlargement, and that is why it increases the strictness of the application of EU conditionality to Western Balkan states. As a result, this thesis treats rising Euroscepticism as an intervening variable that affects the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda. It works as anticatalyst to the ongoing integration process of Western Balkans.

The second part of the chapter covers the geopolitical rivalry between the EU and Russia over the sphere of influence of the Western Balkan region, as another intervening variable to the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda. Russia has become an important actor once again in the Western Balkan region, by forging alliances with political leaders and appealing to domestic populations. Russia's activism in the region caused concerns among the EU, which works as a catalyst for the EU's enlargement agenda towards Western Balkans. The EU, with respect to Russia's activism in the region, acknowledges the vitality of maintaining the commitment towards the region. The EU perceives the Western Balkan region as a future integral part of their community and sees European perspective for the region as the source for the stability both for itself and the region. That is why the EU does not favour Russia to be influential in the region. As a result of this, the EU's geopolitical rivalry with Russia became an accelerating factor in the integration process of Western Balkans to the EU.

5.1 EU Conditionality, Rising Euroscepticism and the EU 's Western Balkans Enlargement Agenda

EU conditionality indicates that the countries that are aspiring to become members of the EU should meet specific requirements and fulfil certain conditions.

Consequently, in their way towards EU membership, Western Balkan countries like all other candidate states experience the EU's conditionality approach. However, there are differences in terms of the application of the EU conditionality to the states in the region with respect to the previous enlargement rounds. First, there are additional conditions for Western Balkan countries, that are operating through Stabilisation and Association Process. Secondly, there are concerns over the EU's conditionality because of the previous enlargement round experiences, especially in the cases of Romania and Bulgaria. Thirdly, the increasing Euroscepticism in the EU countries hampers the integration process of the region because Euroscepticism generates a stricter application of the EU conditionality towards Western Balkans and induces concerns in the region with respect to EU integration. In the oncoming sections, this thesis presents the accession criteria of the EU, the additional conditions for Western Balkans enlargement and the effect of the growing Euroscepticism on the region's integration to the EU.

5.1.1 Accession Criteria (Copenhagen Criteria)

The Treaty on the European Union sets the rules and standards for the enlargement of the EU. Article 2 indicates the values that the EU is built on, while Article 49 states that any European country can join the EU that respects those values and maintains a commitment to advance them. These values are: "respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities" and they can prevail in a pluralistic society in which non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men are accepted (TEU post-Lisbon art. 2). In addition to this, a candidate country should also fulfil the accession criteria. In the

Copenhagen European Council in June 1993, the European Council presented the accession criteria which identify the necessary conditions for aspiring countries to join the EU, generally known as the Copenhagen criteria. The Copenhagen criteria establish several economic and political conditions and institutional requirements for states who desire to become a part of the EU (EU Enlargement, 2019). These criteria are:

- “stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities”;
- “a functioning market economy and the ability to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the EU”;
- “ability to take on the obligations of membership, including the capacity to effectively implement the rules, standards and policies that make up the body of EU law (the *acquis*), and adherence to the aims of the political, economic and monetary union” (Council of the European Union, 1993).

Furthermore, the EU also should be ready to incorporate new countries, and it keeps the right to determine when a candidate state has fulfilled these criteria, in other words, the time of the enlargement (Council of the European Union, 1993).

However, in terms of Western Balkan states, the EU laid down additional requirements for membership, especially on regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations (European Commission, 2016b). That is why the next section analyses the additional conditions set forth by the EU with respect to Western Balkans enlargement and how these new requirements affect the integration process.

5.1.2 EU Conditionality in the Western Balkans

European Commission (2016b) acknowledges that there is a special process for Western Balkans, and it indicates the relations between the EU and Western Balkan states occur in a distinct framework, which is established through the stabilisation and association process. European Commission (2016b) states that this selective process for Western Balkan region contains three aims: firstly, ensuring political stability and the establishment of a market economy, secondly advancing regional cooperation and finally to include Western Balkans into the EU. İçener and Phinnemore (2015, p.38) point out the fact that the European Council asserts that aspiring countries should have an adequate track record for fulfilling the SAA obligations in order to be considered as potential members by the EU. This indicates that the EU presents a new criterion that has not applied to any member state during their accession process. İçener and Phinnemore (2015, p.37) also argue that countries in the Western Balkans not only require to illustrate a greater level of conformity with the accession conditions but also, they should perform their conformity more frequently. Economides (2010, p.112) perceives the EU's enlargement policy towards Western Balkans as a differentiated integration in terms of European enlargement. Because the EU identifies the Balkans as a problematic region that needs a certain amount of time before the integration to the EU, there is a differentiated integration policy towards the region (Economides, p.116-117). In brief, it is clear that the EU's conditionality approach in Western Balkans differs from the earlier expansions of the EU. This does not mean that the EU members are against the integration of the Western Balkans. For example, Germany represents a supportive approach with a strong emphasis on conditionality. Töglhofer and Adebahr (2017, p.524) claim that Germany ensures the application of strict accession conditionality in order to bolster domestic reforms and to encourage finding a

solution to bilateral conflicts in the region. They argue that Germany embraces a “yes but” approach towards Western Balkans enlargement, indicating that Germany insists on a strict but a fair conditionality with respect to the region’s integration to the EU (Töglhofer & Adebahr, 2017, p.525-526). The EU officials also emphasise the importance of the fulfilment of the necessary requirements by the aspiring states. Following the Trieste Summit in 2017, Federica Mogherini stated that the EU would keep its promise as long as the countries in the region continue with the right reforms (European Commission, 2017a). This illustrates that the European perspective of the Western Balkans depends on the EU conditionality.

The EU conditionality does not only mean certain accession criteria but as it is presented in the second article of the Treaty on the European Union, aspiring states also embrace and maintain the values of the community. This is compatible with the thesis’ constructivist framework that shared understandings and common identity lie at the heart of the European community. As Schimmelfennig (2002, p.598) claims, “the more a state adheres to these norms, the more likely its enlargement to the organisation”. As a result, the integration process of the Western Balkans is highly affected by the states’ conformity with the EU’s common values and the region’s unique conditions.

However, there are other aspects that have an impact on the EU conditionality in the Western Balkans. Past experiences from previous enlargement rounds, some of which carries concerns over their success such as 2007 enlargement of the EU towards Bulgaria and Romania, also causes the EU to be more careful in enlargement process (İçener&Phinnemore, 2015). Anastasakis (2008, p. 367-368) on the other

hand, asserts that the additional new criteria for the Western Balkans enlargement represent the altering international environment, the EU's inner concerns and issues specific to the region. This way, Anastasakis (2008, p.367-368) acknowledges that the distinguished policy towards Western Balkans in terms of European integration is not only caused by region-specific problems but also generated by the changes in the international conditions and the EU's internal politics. The most significant change in the international environment that also influences the EU's inner policies is the rising Euroscepticism throughout the member states of the EU. Euroscepticism is highly substantial in terms of the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda because it raises the strictness of the EU's conditionality towards candidate states and works as a huge anticatalyst to the integration process of the Western Balkans. That is why the next section analyses the growing Euroscepticism in the EU and how the Western Balkans enlargement process is affected by it.

5.1.3 Increasing Euroscepticism in the EU Member States and its effect on the Western Balkans Enlargement

Euroscepticism can be considered as the most significant challenge for the EU recently, as it affects nearly all member states' politics. As of today, it remains to be a hot topic for European politics. The possibility of the increasing composition of the Eurosceptic parties in the European Parliament was one of the critical debates before the recent European Parliament elections that took place between 23 and 26 May 2019. Led by Federal Secretary of the Northern League Matteo Salvini and President of National Rally Marine Le Pen, the populist and Eurosceptic alliance known as Identity and Democracy (ID), became the fifth-biggest group in the European

Parliament. However, they could not reach their aim to become the third-largest group and become influential over the EU law-making (Rankin, 2019).

The traces of Euroscepticism go back to the 1990s when the integration process of the EU speeded up, and the EU started to become a more complex community.

Euroscepticism emerged as a response to the increasing European integration in the first place (Taggart, 1998, p. 363). Taggart (1998, p.366) states that Euroscepticism signifies the ideas of both unsteady and total opposition to the European integration process. He indicates that Euroscepticism includes separate approaches to the EU,

while some approaches are totally against the European integration process, some of them endorse integration in principle, but have concerns over the practice (Taggart, 1998, pp.365-366). Later, Taggart and Szczerbiak (2004) identify two types of Euroscepticism: hard and soft Euroscepticism. Hard Euroscepticism indicates the total opposition to political and economic integration and the resistance to the country's current or potential membership (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2004, p.3). In

contrast, soft Euroscepticism implies an unsettled objection to the European integration, and it consists of two varieties, "policy Euroscepticism or national-interest Euroscepticism" (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2004, p.4). Taggart and Szczerbiak

assert that (2004, p.4) policy Euroscepticism is caused by certain policies that are aimed to intensify European political and economic integration, such as the Economic Monetary Union. The national-interest Euroscepticism, on the other hand,

is triggered by protecting national interests in the middle of debates on the EU and using national rhetoric while doing it (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2004, p.4). However,

both varieties of soft Euroscepticism, in contrast to hard Euroscepticism, comprise of ideas that support European integration in principle but possesses concerns over the practice (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2004, p.4). Bertoncini and Koenig (2014, p.1)

both varieties of soft Euroscepticism, in contrast to hard Euroscepticism, comprise of ideas that support European integration in principle but possesses concerns over the practice (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2004, p.4). Bertoncini and Koenig (2014, p.1)

articulate that the Euroscepticism represents an over-inclusive category and present another classification of the concept, indicating that the parties which demand an exit from the EU constitute a smaller and extreme group defined as Europhobes, while Eurosceptic refers to political parties which produce criticism against the EU policies or European integration, however maintaining their commitment to the EU. They state that political parties such as National Front in France and UKIP fall into the Europhobe category, whereas Conservative Party in the UK and Five Star Movement in Italy are part of the Eurosceptic category (Bertoncini & Koenig, 2014, pp 8, 14).

In this way, it is clear that Euroscepticism is an idea that incorporates multiple views about the EU, and it contains distinct approaches to European Integration.

Nevertheless, another important puzzle about Euroscepticism is to identify the sources of it, which factors generate Euroscepticism. Hooghe and Marks (2007, p.125) articulate how Euroscepticism arises from the interaction between identity and economic interest. They state that Euroscepticism has two separate sources, generating from politically right or politically left approaches. While right-wing ideas criticise the EU for undermining national identity and national independence, left-wing ideas contain concerns about the influence of European integration on social protection and the European social model, but both ideas perceive the EU as a danger to the existing state of affairs (Hooghe & Marks, 2007, p.125).

Bertoncini and Koenig (2014, pp.5-6) on the other hand, identify four primary origins of Euroscepticism. The first root of Euroscepticism is generating from the concerns over the EU's decision-making process, that Eurosceptics believe in that the EU does not possess enough transparency while having an elitist, technocratic

and costly bureaucracy (Bertoncini & Koenig, 2014, p.5). Secondly, Eurosceptics perceive that the EU causes loss of national sovereignty because of the transfer of power from domestic governments to the EU (Bertoncini & Koenig, 2014, p.5). The focal point of the third main reason behind Euroscepticism is the economy; several member states are resisting to take the financial burden of indebted members and blame the EU for creating the issue (Bertoncini & Koenig, 2014, p.5). The fourth main cause of Euroscepticism features a more emotional meaning and hinge on national identity; Eurosceptics accuse the EU for the migration flow both from within and outside of the EU borders (Bertoncini & Koenig, 2014, p.6). Bertoncini and Koenig (2014, p.6) articulate that increasing Euroscepticism is resulting from the worries over national identity that is believed to be undermined by different ethnic groups.

In recent years, however, the increasing Euroscepticism is mostly growing from the national identity dimension and the economic dimension. Significant changes in these two dimensions of Euroscepticism caused a tremendous increase in Eurosceptic movements and parties throughout Europe. Torreblanca and Leonard (2013, p.1) indicate that Euroscepticism was formerly observed “as a British disease”, but now it has dispersed over the European continent “like a virus”. They state that former issue lying at the heart of Euroscepticism was the confrontation between EU institutions and national governments, but the more recent problem is the conflict between democratic wills of citizens the northern and southern Europe due to Eurozone debt crisis (Torreblanca & Leonard, 2013, p.1). Following the Eurozone crisis, people living in creditor states started to oppose taking responsibility for the debts in the absence of a control mechanism to oversee the spending of indebted

countries (Torreblanca & Leonard, 2013, p.1). Whereas citizens in the indebted countries felt that the EU had infringed their national sovereignty through the demands by the European Central Bank for extensive national reforms that are encompassing areas such as taxes, salaries, the labour market, and public jobs (Torreblanca & Leonard, 2013, p.1). These feelings from both sides of the crisis enhanced Euroscepticism throughout the European continent.

However, the Eurozone crisis is not the only major crisis that the EU faced in the last decade. Following the Syrian Civil War and the UK's EU membership referendum in 2016, EU has been dealing with two other major issues. Pirro, Taggart and Kessel (2018), focus on all three major crises EU has experienced over the last decade: debt crisis, the migrant crisis and Brexit, all of which have presented opportunities for populist parties. Pirro, Taggart and Kessel (2018, p.387), points out that there is a difference between left-wing and right-wing populist Eurosceptic parties. However, the debt crisis provided both spectrums to criticise EU socioeconomically.

Nonetheless, during the migrant crisis, the right-wing Eurosceptic parties easily turned back to their "ideological comfort zone" and incorporated anti-immigration right into their policies (Pirro, Taggart & Kessel, 2018 p.381). These policies revived the Eurosceptic sentiments throughout Europe, while Eurosceptics perceive the EU's attempts to find a common solution to migration flow as imposing more immigration and multiculturalism upon its member states and criticises the EU for it (Pirro, Taggart & Kessel, 2018 p.380).

Pirro, Taggart and Kessel (2018 p.380) articulate that on the contrary to the other two crises, Brexit has unique conditions and particular to one-member state EU relationship. However, the complicated and problematic process of the UK's withdrawal from the EU, caused other Eurosceptics to reconsider their rhetoric and approach towards the EU (Pirro, Taggart & Kessel, 2018 p.380). In other words, the Brexit process hampered the Eurosceptic movement throughout Europe.

Cormaic (2019) articulates that rather than being a sign for European disintegration, the UK's withdrawal process has become a warning for the other member states.

The important question needed to be analysed under this thesis' framework is how growing Euroscepticism and internal crises of the EU affect the European integration process of the Western Balkans. First of all, rising Euroscepticism is not a trend that is exclusive to the EU member states. It is easy to see the signs of the growing Euroscepticism in Western Balkan countries. Belloni (2016, p.531) indicates that the reason behind this trend is the economic and financial damage in the region caused by the Great Recession and the European debt crisis. Because states in the Western Balkans are heavily economically integrated to the EU and have a huge dependency on international developments, the impact of the crisis was tremendous in the region and especially caused the significant increase of unemployment (Belloni, 2016, p.536). That is why there was a decline in the endorsement of reformist policies brought by the EU integration process in the region and protest happened in Western Balkan states against the EU's approach that does not regard the needs of the citizens of the region (Belloni, 2016, p.537). As a result, it is obvious that Euroscepticism is also occurring in the Western Balkans as well and has a negative impact on the region's progress towards EU membership.

Secondly, from the EU perspective, along with the experiences of the past enlargement rounds, the increasing Euroscepticism prompts the EU and the member states to be more careful in terms of the application of EU conditionality on the Western Balkan states. In order to prevent that populist Eurosceptic parties, gain more power and become a serious threat to the EU's future, the EU acknowledges the vitality of the success of the Western Balkans enlargement. Any incomplete, unsuccessful and premature enlargement of the EU can cause more distress and disputes in the EU member states. That is why the EU officials while stating that the future of the Western Balkans lies in the EU, also emphasise that the European future is possible as long as the countries in region fulfil certain conditions and comply with the proposed reforms (European Commission, 2017a).

Nadibaidze (2019a) indicates that there is disunity within member state countries in terms of their approach to the EU enlargement due to experiences with the earlier enlargement rounds that have failed to consolidate the EU norms completely. The cases of Romania's and Poland's judicial reforms, Bulgaria's corruption issues and Hungary's illiberal turn under Victor Orban illustrate the unsuccessful examples of the incorporation of the EU values to the newly added states (Nadibaidze, 2019a, para.12). Nadibaidze (2019a, para.12) indicates that this generates a fear that Western Balkan countries will share the same fate if they join the EU too early. Nadibaidze (2019b, para.1) indicates that enlargement does not hold a priority in EU's agenda in the short term while the EU deals with the Brexit deadlock and focus on the formation of new European Parliament and Commission. Nadibaidze (2019b, para.3) articulates that Eurosceptic parties incorporate the threat of enlargement discourse in their anti-EU and anti-immigration rhetoric. That is why the EU

institutions, and the main centre-right and centre-left parties abstain from raising the enlargement topic before the European Parliament elections (Nadibaidze, 2019b, para.3).

Member of the Balkans in Europe Policy Advisory Group (BĪEPAG) Tena Prelec, before the European Parliament elections, indicates that the EU's Balkan enlargement agenda can be hampered by the rise of the Eurosceptic parties despite they do not retain a single and consistent approach towards the region (Prelec: the Western Balkans, 2019, para.10). Hansel and Feyerabend (2018, p.4) assert that due to internal challenges in the EU; namely the growing Euroscepticism, the migration crisis, and the Brexit stalemate, the expected reforms in the Western Balkan region advance in a slow speed.

The most significant result of the increasing Euroscepticism is the 2016 UK's EU membership referendum and the subsequent Brexit process. In order to respond the pressures from the UKIP which obtained 12.6% per cent of total votes and came as the third party in terms of total votes in 2015 UK general election, and the pressures from the Eurosceptic wing of the Conservative Party, David Cameron started the process which led to the referendum. The referendum resulted in a narrow majority of Leave votes with 51.9% per cent. The UK's exit from the EU is significant in terms of the Western Balkan countries and their European path. Butler (2016, para.16) states that Brexit generates a predicament for the region since it eliminates a strong ardent supporter of the Western Balkans enlargement process. The UK' role was very critical in terms of the region and their integration to the EU because the UK is perceived as a fair and measured voice of support for the Western Balkans

enlargement agenda within the EU. Without the UK, Germany and to some degree, Central European countries will be left as the main supporters of the Western Balkan enlargement (Butler, 2016, para.18). Butler (2016, para.4) also indicates that the UK's absence in the region as a critical actor will present more opportunities for Russia to be influential in the region, that has strong ties with the region. The next section will analyse more in detail the effect of Russia on the enlargement process of the Western Balkans.

Stryker (2019, p.48) articulates that Eurosceptic and far-right parties increased their support and popularity by the using the migrant crisis to their benefit, inducing ruling and centrist parties in the EU member states to alter their position with respect to enlargement. In Germany, CDU decreased its public advocacy for Western Balkans enlargement, while French took a sharper turn by blocking the start of the accession process for North Macedonia and Albania, in order to maintain their national votes against the rising Eurosceptics parties (Stryker, 2019, p.48).

To sum up, the EU conditionality does indicate not only certain criteria that need to be fulfilled by aspiring countries but also the EU's readiness to absorb and incorporate new members. Along with the region-specific concerns, the EU's own problems and issues play a huge role in determining the pace of the Western Balkans enlargement. The European debt crisis and migrant crisis generated challenges that paved the way for the rise of Eurosceptic and populist parties, as well as created concerns over the enlargement. Because the EU faces the rise of Eurosceptic ideas, the Brussels and the member states tend to be careful about the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda. On the other hand, because mainstream parties in

power in the member states and the bureaucrats in the Brussels perceive Western Balkan region as the future part of the EU, they acknowledge the danger of Russia gaining more influence and power in the region if EU fails to maintain a credible enlargement perspective for the Western Balkans. That is why while the Euroscepticism and the other internal issues affect EU's conditionality approach towards Western Balkans negatively, the threat of Russia once again forces the EU to preserve and advance the integration process of the region. The next section deals with the Russian effect and analyses how the geopolitical rivalry between the EU and Russia plays the accelerator role in terms of the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda.

5.2 Russia's ties with Western Balkans and the Geopolitical Rivalry between Russia and the EU over the Sphere of Influence

Russia has strong historical and cultural ties with the Western Balkan region. Bechev (2017, p.3) states that scholars quickly fall into the attractiveness of explaining the Russian influence in the region with shared identities, religious and cultural connections. However, history and culture only show one side of the picture. Bechev (2017, p.4) articulates that pragmatism and calculation of interest explain Russia's approach to the region as well as the reactions of the countries in the region.

Bechev (2017, p.5) also states that the difference between Russia and the Soviet Union as well as the Tsarist Empire is the hard-nosed pragmatism and the lack of ideological uncertainty that Russia possesses currently. Bechev (2017, p.17) further indicates that in contrast to the EU, Russia does not maintain a grand plan and does not embrace an ideological vision. Conversely, its policy is to rival the West using

the advantages of the other's deficit, embracing an opportunistic approach and aims to strengthen its position in European politics. Since the Ukraine crisis of 2013-2014, Russia has sought to weaken EU policies in the Western Balkans, as a response to NATO enlargement and Western sanctions (Bechev, 2017 p.18).

Bechev (2017, p.52) states that Serbia possesses a special place for Russia, as it signed the Strategic Partnership declaration, and also is an observer in the Collective Security Treaty Organisation led by Russia. On the other hand, Montenegro is a lost friendship for Russians. Montenegro government accuses Russia of taking part in the 2016 coup d'état attempt in the country and also Montenegro complies with Western sanctions against Russia in 2014, in contrast to Serbia (Bechev, p.70). In the Western Balkans, Russia enjoys the closest relationship with Republika Srpska (RS), one of two legal entities constituting Bosnia and Herzegovina, as its alliance with RS presents Russia a significant pressure point against the West (Bechev, p.74). Russia was able to form economic and practical relations with Croatia and North Macedonia while lacking a strong relationship with Albania (Bechev, pp.78-79-80). Bechev (2017, p.84) articulates that after a short break, Russia has returned to influence the Western Balkan region, through establishing alliances with political leaders, co-opting governments and attracting domestic populations.

Nadibaidze (2019a, para.7) indicates that other actors such as Russia found the encouragement to engage in the Western Balkans because of the slow European integration process of the regions. Nadibaidze (2019a, para.8) asserts that Russia aspires to form greater relations with the Balkans since it feels threatened because of the EU's enlargement towards its traditional spheres of influence in Eastern Europe.

Despite Russia's enthusiasm towards the region, compared to the EU, its political and economic appeal is limited, and the EU has more benefits to offer for the region (Nadibaidze, 2019a, para 8). However, after the 2008 economic and financial crisis, Russia has started to assume a greater and aggressive role in the region (Belloni, 2016, p.541). Johnson and Köstem (2016, p.208) argue that the 2008 global financial crisis and its consequences provided opportunities to the Russian government to oppose and criticise the Western-led international economic order. This criticism and opposition of Russia are in line with its long-time strategic aim to advance its global economic leadership (Johnson & Köstem, 2016, p.208). As the Western Balkan region has been deeply affected by the results of the 2008 global financial crisis, it makes sense for Russia to promote its economic leadership in the region.

Lasheras, Tcherneva and Wesslau (2016, p.1) articulate that geopolitics returned to the Western Balkan region as the rivalry between major powers once again started to dominate the region's politics. The EU, due to internal crises, could not react efficiently to this emerging geopolitical rivalry, causing a feeling in the region that it does not maintain its European integration perspective for the region (Lasheras et al. 2016, p.1). The failure of the EU to respond to Russia's return to the region generated a power vacuum, and in the absence of decisive action, the EU faces losing its influence over the region and yielding its long term plan of integrating and democratising the states in the region (Lasheras et al. 2016, p.1). Lasheras et al. (2016, p.2) indicate that after the annexation of Crimea in 2014, Russia switched to a more proactive approach towards Western Balkans as it attempts to change the dynamics of the European security order with actively disrupting the integration

process of the Western Balkans to the EU. Clark and Foxall (2014, p3) also assert that following the Crimea conflict, Russia evolved into an explicitly revisionist power, which aims to change the European power structure that was settled after the Cold War. Russia uses the favourable circumstances to its benefit to hamper the EU's interest through meddling in domestic politics in Western Balkans and advocating anti-Western populist rhetoric in the region (Lasheras et al. 2016, p.2). Moscow may not have a grand strategy for the Western Balkans (Bechev, 2017; Lasheras et al. 2016), but it is certain that Russia seizes the opportunities to obstruct the region's integration to the EU, as Russian approach is reciprocated within several political and social groups especially in Serbia, RS and even to some extent in Montenegro (Lasheras et al. 2016, p.2).

On the other hand, the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014, and the emergence of geopolitical rivalry with Russia in the region reinstate the EU's focus on the Western Balkans (Hansel&Feyerabend, 2018, p.5). The Berlin Process that started in 2014 and the announcement of the EU's Strategy for the Western Balkans in 2018 illustrate that the EU is maintaining its attention to the Western Balkans against the Russian threat (Hansel&Feyerabend, 2018, p.5). In the strategy paper, the EU reaffirms its commitment to the European perspective for the region and presents a potential date (2025) for Serbia's and Montenegro's accession to the EU (European Commission, 2018a). Consequently, the EU maintains its enlargement perspective for the Western Balkans and responds to geopolitical rivalry with Russia by giving important political messages (Hansel&Feyerabend, 2018, p.5). Continuity and persistence of the EU's engagement with the Western Balkans are highly substantial for the region's European and stable future. Belloni (2016, p.543) articulates that

Russia's new aggressive approach towards the region generated worries for EU policymakers, who perceive the region as a vital part of Europe as it is surrounded by EU states. That is why Belloni (2016, p.544) suggests that the EU should investigate and analyse the region deeply rather than base its policies on a surface level of analysis. This way, the EU supports the re-politicisation of important questions for Western Balkan citizens and decrease tension between national governments and the EU requests, consequently preventing the rise of Euroscepticism in the region and forestalling Russia's rise in the Balkans (Belloni, 2016, p.544). Furthermore, Clark and Foxall (2014, p.19) call for active policy reaction from the EU and the member states in order to block the region from becoming an area of geopolitical rivalry and obstruct the "Putinism" methods to gain more influence in the region. Because in case the probability of the EU accession of the region remains slim, the Western Balkan states especially Serbia can approach Russia, who presents energy, military and cultural policies towards the region (Clark and Foxhall, 2014, p.19).

Assenova (2014) also indicates that the Ukraine Crisis caused Bulgaria and Romania to become more determined to support the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda because they realised the danger that Russia's assertive policy generates for the region. Hansel and Feyerabend (2018, p.38) also point out that Russia will attempt to exercise its influence, wherever the EU leaves space, indicating Russia will move forward in the region with a growing appearance, in case the EU could not sustain high engagement with the region. Lasheras (2016, p.2) states that in order to prevent the Western Balkan region from drifting apart, the EU and individual member states should aim to decrease the destabilising effects of the migrant crisis by working together with Western Balkan states and incorporating them to the

decision-making process. In order to block Russian attempts to undermine the European integration of the Western Balkans, the EU needs to take action to respond to Russia such as demonstrating to aspiring states that “strategic alignment is not optional but mandatory for joining the Union” (Lasheras, 2016, p.2). Because the Western Balkans, which is unstable both in terms of security and economic reasons, provides an alluring opportunity for Russia to increase its influence, especially while the EU faces several significant internal issues. That is why the EU needed to maintain a credible European path for Western Balkan states in order to achieve economic and political stabilisation of the region, consequently attaining a broadened European security community. This idea can also be seen in the speeches of several EU officials. For instance, in his 2018 State of the Union Address, Juncker pointed out to the Russian threat and its relation to the region stability, argued that without having credible enlargement agenda towards the region, their immediate neighbourhood would be under threat of other powers (European Commission, 2018d).

In another speech, following the Foreign Affairs Council on 6 March 2017, Mogherini answered a question on Russia’s meddling in the Western Balkans and expressed that the region can be easily affected by global tensions and quickly turn into a chessboard where the big power game is played (European Union External Action Service, 2017b). Mogherini finds this issue very concerning for the region because it threatens the enormous progress that Western Balkan states have made so far in terms of European integration and endangers the future stability of the region as well as the EU’s own stability (European Union External Action Service, 2017b). With these speeches, the EU acknowledges the Russian threat to the European

perspective of the Western Balkans. Thus, to maintain the high prospects of the integration of the region, the EU and the member states tend to accelerate the integration process to respond to Russia's attempts to increase its influence in the region and to impair EU's interests in the region. As of result this, geopolitical rivalry between the EU and Russia works as a catalyst to the EU's Western Balkans enlargement, impelling the EU and the member states to maintain and to increase their engagement and focus on the European perspective of the Western Balkans.

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter presented the two intervening variables of the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda, which affect the EU' agenda and work in contrast to each other. Firstly, the chapter provided an analysis of the effect of the latest and major crises of the EU on the EU's conditionality approach. The most significant of the crises, in terms of Western Balkans enlargement, is the increasing Euroscepticism throughout Europe. This is because the other two crises, the European debt crisis and flow of migration produced challenges that give rise to Eurosceptic and populist parties. As the EU and the mainstream parties do not want to see that Eurosceptic movements are gaining more power and influence, they are inclined to be cautious in terms of Western Balkans enlargement. The EU acknowledged that any immature, incomplete enlargement of the Western Balkans would cause more distress and doubt over the EU within the member states. That is why Euroscepticism works as anticatalyst to the integration process of Western Balkans as it causes the EU to be more cautious about the application of the EU conditionality.

Secondly, this chapter presented the analysis of the effect of geopolitical rivalry between the EU and Russia over the Western Balkans. Russia, despite lacking a grand vision for the region, once again aspires to become an influential actor in the Western Balkans, while hampering EU's interest and European perspective of countries in the region. By establishing alliances with certain political leaders especially in Serbia and RS, and attracting citizens of the region, Russia endangers the region's future stability and damage the prospects of the European future of the Western Balkans. However, the EU is aware of Russia's activity in the region, and this has created concerns within the EU. Because the EU identify the Western Balkans as a future integral part of their community and perceives the European perspective for the region as the source for the stability both for itself and the region, it recognises the significance of preserving and advancing its commitment and engagement towards the region and does not want to see Russia becoming influential in the region. Consequently, the EU's geopolitical rivalry with Russia works as a catalyst to the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda, causing the EU and the member states to increase their focus and to advance their efforts towards the region.

Both variables discussed in this chapter have implications for the European security community. Although they work in contrast to each other in terms of their effects on the speed of integration process of the Western Balkans to the EU, both rising Euroscepticism and growing Russian influence in the region are threats to the future of the European security community. However, they incline the EU in opposite directions with respect to its approach towards the region. While increasing Euroscepticism causes the EU to be more cautious in terms of enlargement, rising

Russian influence in the region reminds the EU about the importance and urgency of the integration of the region.

Increasing Euroscepticism in the EU member states and prospective countries endangers the future of the European security community as it undermines the common values and shared identities the community is based on. Eurosceptic parties and movements are against the common European identity and the shared values and norms, which are the foundations of the security community. Instead, they promote the national identities of their countries. Some of the Eurosceptic parties, such as the National Rally in France and the Party for Freedom in the Netherlands, are against the EU and the whole European project. The growing influence of these parties inclines the EU to be more careful in terms of enlarging its security community because any unsuccessful enlargement attempt will give more leverage to Eurosceptic movements that will disrupt the European security community's integrity.

Growing Russian influence over the region also jeopardises the future of the European security community because it disrupts the European perspective of the Western Balkan states. Russia's influence in the region also hinders the spread of the European values and norms across the region, which are substantial for the expansion of the security community towards the region. However, in contrast to Euroscepticism, the Russian threat over the region causes the EU to be more conscious about the significance of the Western Balkans enlargement agenda. Against the Russian danger, the EU acknowledges the importance to maintain a credible enlargement perspective with respect to the region in order to maintain its

purpose of expanding its security community to the Western Balkan region. As a result, the geopolitical rivalry with Russia in the Western Balkans inclines the EU to be firm and resolute about the region's integration.



CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This thesis aimed to find the main reason behind the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda. Firstly, this thesis analysed the main theories of European integration in terms of their explanatory power concerning Western Balkans enlargement. The aim was to find the most suitable theoretical framework in order to explain the region's integration to the EU. As a result of the analysis, the thesis found that many of the leading theories of European integration remain inadequate to present the driving force behind the EU's enlargement agenda towards the region.

This thesis asserted that a constructivist theoretical framework offers the richest explanation for the Western Balkans enlargement agenda, and the main argument of the thesis relied on ideational factors as key driving forces of EU enlargement towards the region. This selection is also based on a discourse analysis of the EU documents and EU officials. As a result, this thesis found out that the security community theoretical framework is the most convenient framework to explain the driving force behind the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda.

Consequently, the third chapter provided a review of the security community literature and the studies that treat the EU as a security community. Based on the framework offered by Emmanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (1998), this thesis

perceived the EU as a mature pluralistic loosely-coupled security community. The EU is a security community the members of which have a common European identity, mutual values and understandings and maintain dependable expectations of peaceful change. The thesis perceives the Western Balkans enlargement as the expansion of the European security community and the common European identity. After the determination of the theoretical foundations, the fourth chapter presented the connections of the Western Balkans enlargement to the earlier expansions of the EU and argued that eastern enlargement of the EU is also an expansion of the European security community. The fourth chapter also indicated in its review of the timeline of the Western Balkans integration that the countries in the region have their independent tracks in terms of EU membership. While Serbia and Montenegro enjoy being the frontrunners of the enlargement as their membership negotiations have started, Albania and North Macedonia are still waiting for theirs to start. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo are the problematic pair in the region in terms of their road to the EU membership because of their weak state structure and domestic political issues. As a result, those two countries are lagging behind the other states in the region in terms of European integration and remain to be potential candidates for EU membership.

Later the thesis presented the discourse analysis of the EU documents and the discourse analysis of the EU officials' speeches to support its main argument. Through the analysis of the official papers and the speeches of certain EU officials on Western Balkans enlargement, this thesis argues that the idea of enlarging the European security community is the driving force behind the EU's enlargement agenda. The inclusion of the Western Balkan states into the community completes

the European puzzle. This thesis asserts that the EU believes Europe cannot be complete without the inclusion of the Western Balkan region, which shares the same understandings and has huge cultural and historical connections with Europe. The discourse analysis shows that the region's integration is a high priority for the EU and the EU recognises that the future of the region resides in their community. This thesis articulated that the main underlying factor of the agenda towards Western Balkans is the idea of expanding Europe/We identity, which is the core element of the European security community.

The fifth chapter provided the two other major variables that are affecting the EU's Western Balkans enlargement agenda and that work in contrast to each other; the rising Euroscepticism and the geopolitical rivalry between the EU and Russia. This thesis articulated that although they have contradictory effects on the speed and prospects of the integration process of the Western Balkans, both growing influence of Eurosceptic parties throughout Europe and the rising Russian influence and efforts over the region are jeopardising the future of the European security community. This thesis also found out that these two factors incline the EU in reverse directions. The increasing Euroscepticism prompts the EU to be more careful in terms of the region's integration and causes a stricter application of EU conditionality because another unsuccessful enlargement of the EU would give more power to Eurosceptic parties. The geopolitical rivalry with the Russia over the sphere of influence in the Western Balkans inclines the EU to be firmer and more determined about the region's integration, because the Russian efforts in the region reminds the EU about the importance of the region's integration and its belief that the region's future lies within their community.

This thesis gives an answer to the following research question: What explains the European Union's enlargement agenda towards the Western Balkans at a time of rising Euroscepticism? This thesis claims that the main theories of European integration remain inadequate to find the underlying reason behind the EU's enlargement agenda. Instead, this thesis revived the security community literature and presented a different outlook on the studies of European integration. With its constructivist approach, this thesis emphasised the importance of the ideational factors in European integration. The shared values and common European identity make the EU a good example of a security community. This security is based on shared identities, transnational values and common norms. The EU member states are successfully integrated to the point that the armed conflict between countries is unimaginable. This thesis asserts that now the EU aspires to export its success story to the Western Balkan region, which is perceived by the EU as an integral part of Europe and the missing puzzle in the European community.

This study takes the EU as a single entity with respect to the integration of the Western Balkans, rather than focusing on individual member states' perception towards the region's integration. This indicates a certain limitation because the member states are also powerful in determining the prospects of the enlargement process. As Germany showed by initiating the Berlin process, the national governments can be influential in maintaining and advancing the integration process of the region. A future and more comprehensive research that focuses on the national perspectives of the member states can enrich the findings of this thesis. This thesis also does not focus on the perspectives of the countries in the region. Further

research can also focus on how the countries in the Western Balkans perceive the EU and their potential European path, in order to understand whether the countries in the region see themselves as part of the European security community or not. Western Balkan states' perceptions are also significant in terms of the prospects of the region's EU integration and a study on their perceptions can present a better understanding of the future expansion of the European security community.



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