Rhetorical Entrapment in EU–Turkey Relations

Frank Schimmelfennig

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Rhetorical entrapment is a causal mechanism that induces self-interested and strategic actors to behave in line with the norms of their community. International communities define common standards of appropriate behavior to which their member states commit themselves. When member states violate the community standards, they can be shamed into compliance by exposing the inconsistency between normative commitment and actual behavior. The rhetorical entrapment mechanism synthesizes key elements of rationalist institutionalism as we find it in neoliberal or liberal-intergovernmentalist theories of international politics and European integration (see Tsarouhas, Chapter 2) and sociological institutionalism, the foundation of many constructivist approaches (see Aydın-Düzgit & Rumelili, Chapter 3).

In the context of European Union (EU) enlargement, and EU–Turkey relations specifically, rhetorical entrapment refers to a process through which member and candidate countries are induced to abide by the EU’s

F. Schimmelfennig (✉)
ETH Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland
e-mail: frank.schimmelfennig@cup.gess.ethz.ch

membership norms—above all, its liberal democratic values. In line with the rhetorical entrapment mechanism, the better a candidate state meets the membership norms of the EU, the more likely rhetorical entrapment is to occur, and the more likely the opponents of membership are compelled to accept enlargement against their national preferences. Candidate countries are more easily entrapped the more they identify with the EU community and its fundamental values.

This chapter has two main parts. First, I present the theoretical assumptions, scope conditions, and propositions of the rhetorical entrapment mechanism in contrast to alternative mechanisms of international cooperation. Subsequently, I apply the mechanism to EU–Turkey relations with a focus on the period between 1999 and the start of accession negotiations.¹

6.2 THEORY: STRATEGIC ACTORS, COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTS, AND RHETORICAL ACTION

The causal mechanism of rhetorical entrapment draws on both rationalist and sociological institutionalism. In line with rationalist institutionalism, it assumes that international actors interact strategically based on exogenous policy preferences. In line with sociological institutionalism, it assumes that this interaction takes place within a community environment defined by a common ethos (a collective identity based on fundamental common values and norms) and a high interaction density.

6.2.1 *Rationalist Institutionalism and Enlargement*

Rationalist institutionalism conceptualizes the international system as an anarchical environment characterized by the predominance of material structures like the distribution of power and wealth.² These material conditions are the most important explanatory factors for the processes and outcomes in international relations. Ideas and institutions are mostly treated as intervening variables between the material interests and the

¹The chapter builds on earlier studies, in particular Schimmelfennig (2001, 2003a, b, 2008, 2009). Please confer to these publications for further references and data.

²A classical statement is Waltz (1979).

material environment of the actors, on the one hand, and the individual actions and collective outcomes, on the other (see Goldstein & Keohane, 1993). They provide constraints and incentives, not reasons, for action. Rationalist institutionalism further assumes that actors act egoistically. They choose the behavioral option, which promises to maximize their welfare, or at least satisfies their selfish goals, under the given circumstances.

These premises provide the theoretical foundation for the rationalist analysis of international organizations and their enlargement. In the rationalist account, international organizations help states pursue their foreign policy goals more efficiently. These assumptions can be applied easily to issues of EU membership and enlargement. A member state favors the admission of a non-member state—and a non-member state seeks membership—under the condition that it will reap positive net benefits from enlargement and that these benefits exceed the benefits it would secure from a different kind of relationship (such as simple cooperation or association). Enlargement then takes place if, for both the member states and the candidate countries, marginal benefits exceed the marginal costs.

6.2.2 *Sociological Institutionalism and Enlargement*

The assumptions of sociological (or constructivist) institutionalism differ from rationalist institutionalism with regard to both structures and actors. Sociological institutionalists regard the environment of social actors as a cultural or institutional environment structured by collective schemata and rules. Collective ideas and institutions shape the identity and the interests of the actors. Social actors are assumed to internalize or habituate institutional rules and rule-following behavior.

Accordingly, sociological institutionalism assumes that social actors act on the basis of internalized cultural values and social norms rather than their self-interest. The most widely assumed logic of action is the ‘logic of appropriateness’ according to which ‘political institutions are collections of interrelated rules and routines that define appropriate actions in terms of relations between roles and situations’ (March & Olsen, 1989: 160). Actors judge alternative courses of action not by the consequences for their own utility but by their conformity to institutional rules or social identities.

Whereas rationalist institutionalism emphasizes the instrumental, efficiency-enhancing functions of international organizations in the service of state actors, sociological institutionalism sees them as autonomous and potentially powerful actors with constitutive and legitimacy-providing effects. International organizations are ‘community representatives’ (Abbott & Snidal, 1998: 24) as well as community-building agencies. Whereas in the rational-institutionalist perspective, the EU serves the economic or security interests of its members, in a sociological-institutionalist perspective, it represents an international community of values, it upholds these values *vis-à-vis* the member states, and it disseminates them among non-members. The EU’s institutionalized collective identity is that of a community of European, liberal democratic states. In its current version, the Treaty on European Union states in Article 2 that the ‘Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities’.

According to sociological institutionalism, enlargement is shaped by ideational, cultural factors, too. The most relevant of these factors is ‘community’ or ‘cultural match’, that is, the degree to which the actors inside and outside the organization share a collective identity and fundamental beliefs. Studying enlargement in a sociological perspective, then, primarily focuses on the analysis of social identities, values, and norms, not the material, distributional consequences of enlargement for individual actors. Whether applicants and member states regard enlargement as desirable depends on the degree of community they perceive to have with each other. The more an external state identifies with the international community that the organization represents and the more it shares the values and norms that define the purpose and the policies of the organization, the more it aspires to membership and the more the member states are willing to admit this country. If enlargement decisions are contested, we expect to see an arguing process to determine which decision is most in line with the collective identity, the constitutive beliefs and practices of the community, and the norms and rules of the organization.

The organization’s enlargement decisions follow its membership rules and practices rather than expedient interest-based calculations and the distribution of material bargaining power among the member states. The membership rules of a community organization oblige the EU to grant membership to all states that share, or aspire to, the collective identity of the community and are committed to their constitutive values and norms—even in the case of net costs.

6.2.3 *Rhetorical Action and Enlargement*

Rhetorical action is the strategic, self-serving use of arguments. Rhetorical entrapment denotes the mechanism by which actors are compelled to act in conformance with their prior argumentative commitments in a situation in which conformance runs counter to their current preferences.

Rhetorical action and entrapment start from a strategic view of norms and normative action. In this view, norms are not motives for action nor are they merely constraints; they are ‘resources for human strategies’ in social interactions (Edgerton, 1985: 12–14). In the same way, Erving Goffman’s theory of ‘dramaturgical action’ views individuals as performers. As performers, ‘individuals are concerned not with the moral issue of realizing standards but with the amoral issue of engineering a convincing impression that these standards are being realized’ (Goffman, 1959: 251). Performers do not internalize the values and norms of their community but understand that conformity is expected from and beneficial to them. Communities exhibit a ‘veneer of consensus’ that is ‘facilitated by each participant concealing his own wants behind statements which assert values to which everyone present feels obliged to give lip service’ (Goffman, 1959: 9).

This strategic view of norms bridges rationalist and sociological institutionalism. In contrast to the rationalist focus on material bargaining power, social values and norms are theorized to produce strong effects on actor strategies and collective outcomes. In contrast to sociological assumptions of internalization and appropriate action, they are seen to do so among strategic actors. Rhetorical action assumes that the actors involved in EU policymaking have self-centered preferences and act strategically to achieve an outcome that maximizes their utility. The actors follow a logic of consequentiality, not appropriateness, and they do not change their identity or learn and internalize new, appropriate preferences as a result of the interaction.

At the same time, rhetorical action assumes that the EU constitutes a community environment for actors. A community environment affects interactions and outcomes in four important ways. First, it triggers arguments about the legitimacy of preferences and policies. In a rhetorical action perspective, actors are able—and forced—to justify their preferences on the basis of the EU’s community ethos. They choose ethos-based arguments to strengthen the legitimacy of their own preferences against the claims and arguments of their opponents. Second,

the community ethos is both a resource of support for legitimate actions and a constraint that imposes costs on illegitimate actions. It adds legitimacy to and thus strengthens the bargaining power of those actors that pursue preferences in line with, although not necessarily inspired by, the community ethos. Third, community membership forces actors to be concerned about their image. This image not only depends on how they are perceived to conform to the community ethos but also on whether their arguments are perceived as credible. Credibility is the single most important resource in arguing and depends on both impartiality and consistency (Elster, 1992: 13–50). If inconsistency and partiality are publicly exposed and actors are caught using the community ethos opportunistically, their standing as community members suffers. As a result, their future ability to argue successfully will be reduced. Finally, community members whose preferences and actions violate the community ethos can be shamed into compliance by other community actors who (threaten to) expose the inconsistency between their earlier commitment to the community ethos and their current actions.

This is rhetorical entrapment. Because rational members of a community are concerned about their image of legitimacy, a community environment has the potential to modify the collective outcome that would have resulted in an anarchical, material environment. In a community environment, norm-based collective outcomes are possible even among strategic actors and in absence of coercive power or egoistic incentives to comply.

There are a number of scope or facilitating conditions for rhetorical entrapment to work. First, rhetorical entrapment depends on the existence of an international community and the strength of its community ethos. Technical or global international organizations are less likely to have a strong community ethos and exhibit rhetorical entrapment than community-building regional organizations. Second, rhetorical entrapment depends on the density and permanence of the community. Participating in a community with a long-term horizon, actors' standing and credibility matter more than during a short-term interaction. And the more densely the community members interact, the higher the likelihood is that inconsistencies and partiality in the use of community standards are detected. Whereas permanence makes it costlier for actors to argue opportunistically in their own favor, density makes it more difficult to do so. Third, the more constitutive a policy issue is or the more it involves fundamental questions of community purpose, the easier it is for interested actors to bring in questions of legitimacy and to frame it as an issue of

community identity that cannot be left to the interplay of self-interest and bargaining power. Controversial questions of EU constitution making or membership will therefore engender a more ‘value-laden’ policy process than issues of technical regulation or subsidy distribution. Fourth, even among issues that are constitutive or can be linked to constitutive issues, community effects may vary according to the values and norms in question. According to Thomas Franck, the degree to which an international rule ‘will exert a strong pull on states to comply’ depends on four properties that account for its legitimacy: determinacy, symbolic validation, coherence in practice, and adherence to a norm hierarchy (Franck, 1990: 49). To the extent that the relevant community norm possesses these qualities, it becomes difficult for the shamed member to circumvent the practical implications of the norm rhetorically.

These conditions are all present within the EU and in the EU enlargement process. From its start, the EU has been designed to build an ‘ever closer union’ of the peoples of Europe. Over the course of time, and especially since the ratification of the Treaty of Maastricht, the density of integration has increased strongly. Moreover, the EU has developed, explicitly formulated, and institutionalized its European, liberal democratic community ethos and linked the issue of enlargement to this ethos. Article 49 (TEU) explicitly links EU membership to the liberal democratic values and norms proclaimed in Article 2 of the Treaty.

In sum, the hypotheses on EU enlargement decisions based on the rhetorical action/entrapment approach borrow from rationalist institutionalism with regard to the preferences and behavior of the actors and from sociological institutionalism with regard to the outcomes. Accordingly, member states’ initial enlargement preferences are divergent and reflect individual concerns and cost-benefit calculations. Actors use their bargaining and veto powers in EU decision-making to push enlargements they prefer and prevent those they reject. If the bargaining outcome based on the intergovernmental constellation of preferences and power is in line with membership norms, rhetorical action is unnecessary. If the two diverge, however, and the preferences of the less powerful member states match the community norms, they will use rhetorical action to shame the more powerful member states into conformity with their ethos-based obligations. The better a candidate state meets the ethos-based membership norms of the EU, the more likely rhetorical entrapment is to occur, and the more likely the opponents of membership are compelled to accept enlargement against their national preferences. In contrast, if

the candidate does not meet the ethos-based conditions for admission, or if the proponents of enlargement lack credibility in arguing the case for enlargement, rhetorical entrapment will fail.

6.2.4 Eastern Enlargement: The Original Context of the Rhetorical Action Argument

In the EU context, the rhetorical action argument was first used to explain Eastern enlargement (Schimmelfennig, 2001). When the Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs) demanded EU membership in the early 1990s, this demand was met with divergent member state preferences. The distribution of preferences largely corresponded with member states' strategic and financial self-interest. Member states that neighbored the CEECs generally favored Eastern enlargement because of higher interdependence. In contrast, the main recipients of the EU budget's infrastructure and agriculture subsidies as well as low-tech producers among the member states feared budgetary and trade competition with the relatively poor, agricultural, and low-tech producing CEECs. Geopolitical interests also had an influence. The Southern member states were concerned that the community balance of power would shift east and in favor of Germany.

The pro-enlargement member states such as Germany, the UK, or Denmark represented not only a minority of member states but also wielded less bargaining power than their opponents. Even for Germany, the greatest potential beneficiary of Eastern enlargement, the CEECs were of far smaller economic and political importance than the other EU member states. Under these circumstances, the supporters of enlargement had no attractive outside options and could not credibly threaten the opponents with exit or alternative agreements. In the absence of material bargaining power, they, therefore, turned to rhetorical action.

The rhetorical strategy of the proponents of enlargement constructed enlargement as an issue of identity, values, and norms and opposition to enlargement as a betrayal of the community's principles, purpose, and past promises. The CEECs invoked the pan-European, liberal identity of the community and claimed to share this identity. According to this line of argument, the CEECs have traditionally shared the values and norms of European culture and civilization, confirmed their European identity in the revolutions of 1989, and 'returned to Europe' after the Cold War period of artificial separation. Advocates framed enlargement as an issue

of EU identity, arguing that it ought not to be seen and decided from the vantage point of national interests and material cost–benefit calculations. They accused the reticent EU member states of acting inconsistently and betraying the fundamental values and norms of their own community if they continued to prioritize their individual economic or geopolitical interests.

It was difficult for the enlargement skeptics to rebut these arguments without, at the same time, casting doubt on their own commitment to the institutionalized identity and fundamental norms of the EU. They were thus rhetorically entrapped. Consequently, they did not publicly reject Eastern enlargement for instrumental reasons. When the European Commission presented its report on enlargement based on the Community’s vision of a pan-European liberal order and proposed accession criteria focusing on liberal democratic political and institutional conditions at the Copenhagen summit in 1993 (European Council, 1993), the skeptics acquiesced to Eastern enlargement. CEECs that met the liberal democratic accession criteria were invited to accession negotiations.

6.3 RHETORICAL ENTRAPMENT AT WORK: THE WAY TO EU MEMBERSHIP NEGOTIATIONS WITH TURKEY

6.3.1 *A Hard Case*

The opening of accession negotiations with Turkey in 2005 is a particularly ‘hard case’ for the rhetorical entrapment explanation developed in the context of the EU’s Eastern enlargement. While the initial conditions were similar in both cases—such as divergent member state preferences and net costs for the EU in comparison with the status quo of association—the opposition to Turkish accession ran deeper, and the potential costs of Turkish membership were higher.

Four conditions inhibited Turkey’s membership prospects in the second half of the 1990s, when Eastern enlargement started. First, Turkey was poorer and more agricultural than any member state. Turkish membership was thus likely to increase the divergence of living standards in the EU, create high potential for labor migration, and instigate demand for high net payments from the structural and agricultural funds. Second, the impact of socio-economic divergence was magnified by the size of Turkey’s population. With more than 70 million inhabitants and a rapidly

growing population, Turkey was projected to be the largest member state by the time it joined. Third, as a large Muslim society, Turkey would have strongly increased cultural diversity in the EU. Fourth, Turkish democracy was unstable and illiberal. It is thus no small wonder that Turkey's membership had the lowest approval rating in public opinion surveys among all candidates and was strongly contested among the member states. And yet, the EU decided to accord Turkey official candidate status in 1999 and to open accession negotiations in 2005.

EU member states held intense and highly divergent preferences on Turkish membership in the period from the late 1990s to the opening of accession negotiations (Schimmelfennig, 2009: 413–431). In 1997, the opponents of granting Turkey candidate status were the clear majority. Principled opposition based on cultural grounds was strong among the Christian Democrat and conservative parties. In March 1997, the group of the European People's Party in the European Parliament framed the EU as a Christian community and categorically excluded the membership of a Muslim country. The conservative heads of government of Belgium, Germany, Ireland, and Spain supported this declaration. Because of its territorial conflicts with Turkey and the Turkish occupation of Northern Cyprus, Greece was another principled opponent of Turkish membership. Other member states, in particular in Northern Europe, stressed the deficient human rights situation in Turkey. France and Italy appeared to be most inclined to grant Turkey a more concrete membership perspective. As in the case of Eastern enlargement, the UK was the member state most consistently in favor of Turkish accession. Member state preferences on Turkey differed somewhat from the pattern in the Eastern enlargement case in that they had a strong party-political component and in that Turkey's EU neighbors, Greece and Cyprus, had generally not been supporters of Turkish membership. In both cases, however, member states had conflicting enlargement preferences.

Even though Turkey was a difficult candidate and gave rise to strong controversies among the member states and societies, the EU opened accession negotiations in 2005. How was that possible? From a rhetorical action perspective and in analogy with the Eastern enlargement case, we can formulate the following expectations. First, the EU officially judged and decided on Turkey's eligibility in accession negotiations based on the democratic and human rights situation in the country. Conversely, all other criteria that shaped member states' preferences and the debate on Turkey's membership—be they religious-cultural, economic, geographic,

or military-strategic—were of lower legitimacy and therefore not part of the official discourse of EU institutions. Second, EU member states were obliged to consider Turkish candidacy for membership based on the (Ankara) Association Agreement of 1963, which acknowledged Turkey as a ‘European’ country and committed the EU to ‘examine the possibility of the accession of Turkey’ (EEC–Turkey Association Agreement, 1963). Blocking candidate status became more difficult to sustain the more countries in a similar situation were granted membership perspective. Third, the opening of accession negotiations depended on Turkey’s compliance with the constitutive political norms of the EU. Blocking accession negotiations becomes more difficult to sustain the more Turkey complies and the more the European Commission, the authoritative EU organ for reviewing the fulfillment of accession criteria, confirms compliance. Advocates of accession negotiations with Turkey would point toward Turkish progress in meeting the EU’s criteria and call on the EU to keep its conditional promise of membership. Progress in accession negotiations equally depended on compliance with the constitutive political norms of the EU. Only a breach of these norms (or the promises made to respect them) constituted legitimate grounds for suspending or canceling these negotiations. The historical record of the process leading to the start of Turkish accession negotiations in 2005 largely supports these expectations of the rhetorical action approach.

6.3.2 *From No to Yes on Turkish Candidate Status*

At the meeting of the EU–Turkey Association Council in April 1997, the EU reaffirmed that Turkey was eligible for membership and that the country would be judged on the same criteria as the other applicants. In December 1997, however, the European Council at Luxembourg followed the Commission’s recommendation to exclude the country from the list of candidates for membership. The Commission justified its recommendation on the grounds that Turkey did not fulfill the Copenhagen criteria. Given the political situation in Turkey at the time, and in comparison with other (potential) candidate countries, this assessment was not discriminatory and in line with community norms.

In 1999, however, the EU surprisingly reversed its 1997 decision and granted Turkey official candidate status, even though the political and human rights situation had not significantly improved. Thus, the EU decision cannot be explained by rhetorical entrapment. It may have

been motivated in part by the fact that Turkey's non-candidate status became more and more awkward as an increasing number of countries in Turkey's neighborhood (Bulgaria, Romania, and the Western Balkans) obtained a membership perspective. More importantly, however, the decision resulted from a combination of the perceived need to upgrade the Turkish status for strategic reasons and a change in pivotal member state preferences.

For one, the member states were concerned by the Turkish government's harsh reaction to their 1997 decision. Turkey refused to participate in the European Conference set up in Helsinki for the 'European states aspiring to accede to the EU', blocked meetings of the EU-Turkey Association Council, suspended talks on the solution of the Cyprus conflict, and threatened to veto the use of NATO facilities for EU military missions. There was a widespread perception that the EU had to make an accommodative gesture to safeguard the strategic partnership and to ensure Turkey's cooperation on these important security issues (Öniş, 2000: 470).

The most consequential change between 1997 and 1999, however, was the softening of the German and Greek positions due to predominantly domestic causes (Müftüler-Baç & McLaren, 2003: 17–31; Öniş, 2000: 473). In Germany, the center-right government was replaced by a coalition of the Social Democrats and the Greens in 1998, which did not share the religious-cultural concerns of its predecessors and advocated a proactive strategy to bring Turkey in line with European norms and closer to membership. In Greece, the hardliner foreign minister Theodore Pangalos was replaced with George Papandreu in 1999. He stood for a new foreign policy outlook advocating the inclusion of Turkey as a way of cooperatively solving the security problems in the Aegean Sea.

6.3.3 *Rhetorical Entrapment and the Opening of Accession Negotiations*

Even though the 1999 decision cannot be explained by compliance with community norms, it opened the path to rhetorical entrapment. First, it considerably strengthened the rather vague membership commitment of the Association Agreement. Second, it strengthened the role of the European Commission in the process. It was now up to the Commission to assess Turkey's progress with regard to the Copenhagen criteria and to recommend the opening of accession negotiations. Third, it constrained

the EU to use the same criteria for Turkey that it had used for the CEECs. Consequently, Turkey's application would be judged primarily on the merits of democracy, human and minority rights, and the rule of law. Cultural, religious arguments were excluded from the assessment, and economic criteria were of secondary importance. This meant that Turkey could be certain to enhance its prospects for accession negotiations by improving its dismal human rights record. It would become difficult for the principled opponents of Turkish membership to block the opening of accession negotiations if Turkey fulfilled the political criteria.

Encouraged by its candidate status and credible membership perspective, the Turkish government undertook significant reforms. The European Council meeting in December 2002 welcomed 'the important steps taken by Turkey towards meeting the Copenhagen criteria' (European Council, 2003: 5). It concluded: 'If the European Council in December 2004, on the basis of a report and a recommendation from the Commission, decides that Turkey fulfils the Copenhagen political criteria, the European Union will open accession negotiations with Turkey without delay' (European Council, 2003: 5). This tangible goal prompted the Turkish government to accelerate the pace of reform—in particular, since the new Justice and Development Party (AKP) government had its own self-interested reasons to constrain the power of state institutions dominated by the Kemalist establishment through these reforms.

After far-reaching reforms in sensitive issue areas such as judicial reform, civilian control of the military, Cyprus, and Kurdish minority rights, the Commission in 2004 positively assessed the political criteria and recommended the opening of accession negotiations. In December 2004, the European Council followed the recommendation under two conditions. First, Turkey needed to adopt six additional pieces of legislation. Second, and more controversially, the Turkish government agreed to sign an Additional Protocol to the Ankara Agreement that would extend the Customs Union (CU) to all new member states including Cyprus. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan refused to sign the Additional Protocol at the summit but promised to do so before the actual opening of negotiations on October 3, 2005. At the same time, he insisted that this signature would not be tantamount to recognizing the Republic of Cyprus.

In 2005, the EU context deteriorated. First, the failed referendums in France and the Netherlands were widely interpreted not only as a negative vote on the Constitutional Treaty but also on the enlargement

of the EU. The opponents of Turkish accession used the referendum results as evidence for the need to change course. More directly, the referendum further weakened French President Jacques Chirac. Second, the early parliamentary elections in Germany resulted in the defeat of the Social Democrat-Green government. The Social Democrats stayed in government with the Christian Democrats but had to accept Angela Merkel as chancellor, who had campaigned for 'privileged partnership' rather than full membership. Thus, two key advocates of accession negotiations had become neutralized. Third, the Republic of Cyprus, which had the strongest stake in Turkey's decision on the Additional Protocol, had become a member state. Thus, while the pro-Turkey camp was weakened, the anti-camp was reinforced through the membership of a country with particularly intense preferences.

Thanks to rhetorical entrapment, however, the opponents of Turkish membership could not deny Turkey's progress on its way toward liberal democracy and could not legitimately call into question the Commission's report and recommendation to open accession negotiations. However, they brought up alternative routes to block or prevent the talks and eventual membership. For one, they tried to include alternatives to full membership such as 'privileged partnership' into the Negotiating Framework. In addition, they sought to exploit the Turkish reluctance to recognize Cyprus. Both attempts failed in 2005. The Negotiating Framework of the Commission listed accession as the only 'shared objective' of the negotiations (European Commission, 2005). Moreover, the Commission reiterated that, in contrast to the extension of the CU, the recognition of Cyprus under international law was not a precondition of accession talks. Turkey signed the Protocol extending the CU in July 2005.

The opponents of Turkish membership only acquiesced in accession negotiations as long as Turkey continued to comply with EU norms and keep its own promises. Otherwise, they could seize the opportunity to block the path to Turkish accession. This became obvious in 2006. With accession negotiations secured and parliamentary elections approaching, the reformist zeal of the Turkish government weakened. The Commission's regular report revealed a mixed picture, with small progress in many fields and stagnation in others. The main bone of contention, however, was Turkey's refusal to fully extend the CU to Cyprus. It continued to deny access to Cypriot vessels and aircraft (or those coming from Cyprus). The opponents of Turkish membership (such as Cyprus and

France) promptly demanded sanctions. Now, the supporters of Turkey were entrapped. On 29 November 2006, the Commission presented its recommendations on the continuation of Turkey's accession negotiations: eight chapters relevant to Turkey's restrictions on Cyprus should not be opened, and no chapter should be declared provisionally closed until Turkey lifted the restrictions against Cyprus. At their meeting on 11 December 2006 the foreign ministers of the EU accepted the recommendations.

The decision of 2006 demonstrates that rhetorical entrapment cuts both ways. As long as Turkey complied with EU norms, it backed the supporters of Turkish accession and constrained the skeptics. However, when Turkey failed to comply, it gave legitimacy to the skeptics' demands to slow down the accession process and forced the supporters of Turkey's membership bid to join in. The events of the first half of the 2000s thus demonstrate the typical actor constellation of rhetorical entrapment in enlargement. To overcome the standoff between proponents and opponents of enlargement among the member states, the Commission plays the role of a referee enforcing the community rules. Whereas the member states take the ultimate decisions on enlargement issues, they are constrained by the norms of enlargement to the extent that the accession country abides by these norms and the Commission is perceived as an impartial arbiter.

6.4 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter introduced the mechanism of rhetorical entrapment and applied it to EU–Turkey relations. The theoretical approach is best suited to explain the period between the granting of candidate status (1999) and the start of accession negotiations (2005), which is positioned against the backdrop of Turkey's unfavorable starting position as a candidate country and increasing opposition to membership among EU member governments and publics. As long as Turkey progressed on meeting the official political criteria for EU membership, the supporters of Turkish membership could legitimately argue in favor of the EU's obligation to heed past promises and include all European countries willing to adopt the EU's core values and norms. In contrast, the opponents were silenced. The rhetorical entrapment mechanism also elucidates why accession negotiations began to stall soon after their start. The opponents of Turkish membership were released from the rhetorical trap when Turkey failed

to heed its own promises and honor its own obligations as a candidate state.

However, rhetorical entrapment fails to explain the earlier and later periods of EU–Turkey relations. Before Turkey conformed to the liberal democratic norms and conditions of EU membership, it could not entrap the member states. As explained above, the 1999 decision to grant candidate status to Turkey was not due to entrapment but to geopolitical considerations (and a favorable ideological constellation of EU member state governments). Similarly, rhetorical entrapment did not help Turkish membership prospects after 2006. A vicious cycle developed between Turkey’s stagnating liberalization (and, later on, increasing authoritarianism), on the one hand, and the shrinking credibility of the EU’s accession perspective, on the other. The more the Erdoğan government and presidency ignored the liberal democratic community norms of the EU, the less the member states felt obliged to uphold a credible membership promise for Turkey. Because the Turkish government lacked a sincere commitment to the community norms, the decreasing credibility of the membership perspective could not prevent democratic backsliding.

Geopolitical and strategic interests have come to dominate EU–Turkey relations again, as before 1999. These interests also explain why the accession negotiations that started thanks to rhetorical entrapment continue formally. The return of rhetorical entrapment depends on two conditions that appear unlikely in the near future: a credible return to liberal democracy in Turkey and a credible membership perspective for Turkey in the EU. In the meantime, the dominant mode of interaction between the EU and Turkey has shifted from arguing to bargaining, from the use of values and norms to the exchange of threats and promises. Characteristically, the most recent—but ultimately empty—agreement on re-energizing the EU–Turkey accession process did not follow from an improvement in Turkey’s compliance record with EU membership norms, or from a credible signal of EU commitment to Turkish membership. Rather, it was part of a *quid pro quo* in the context of the March 2016 EU–Turkey refugee ‘deal’.

REFERENCES

- Abbott, K. W., & Snidal, D. (1998). Why states act through formal international organizations. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 42(1), 3–32.
- Aydın-Düzgit, S., & Rumelili, B. (2021). Constructivist approaches to EU–Turkey relations. Chapter 3, in this volume.
- Edgerton, R. B. (1985). *Rules, exceptions, and social order*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- EEC–Turkey Association Agreement. (1963). Agreement establishing an association between the European Economic Community and Turkey. *Official Journal of the European Communities*, L 361/29–43, 31.12.1977.
- Elster, J. (1992). Arguing and bargaining in the federal convention and the assemblée constituante. In R. Malnes & A. Underdal (Eds.), *Rationality and institutions: Essays in honour of Knut Midgaard* (pp. 13–50). Oslo: Scandinavian University Press.
- European Commission. (2005, October 3). Negotiating framework. *Luxembourg*. https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/turkey/st20002_05_tr_framedoc_en.pdf. Accessed 25 Nov 2020.
- European Council. (1993). European Council in Copenhagen (21 and 22 June 1993)—Conclusions of the presidency. SN 180/1/93 REV 1. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/21225/72921.pdf>. Accessed 29 Nov 2020.
- European Council. (2003, January 3). Copenhagen European Council, (12 and 13 December 2002), Presidency Conclusions. 15917/02. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/20906/73842.pdf>. Accessed 9 Apr 2021.
- Franck, T. M. (1990). *The power of legitimacy among nations*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor Books.
- Goldstein, J., & Keohane, R. (Eds.). (1993). *Ideas and foreign policy: Beliefs, institutions and political change*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- March, J. G., & Olsen, J. P. (1989). *Rediscovering institutions: The organizational basis of politics*. New York: Free Press.
- Müftüler-Baç, M., & McLaren, L. M. (2003). Enlargement preferences and policy-making in the European Union: Impacts on Turkey. *Journal of European Integration*, 25(1), 17–31.
- Öniş, Z. (2000). Luxembourg, Helsinki and beyond: Towards an interpretation of recent Turkey–EU relations. *Government and Opposition*, 35(4), 463–483.
- Schimmelfennig, F. (2001). The community trap: Liberal norms, rhetorical action, and the Eastern enlargement of the European Union. *International Organization*, 55(1), 47–80.
- Schimmelfennig, F. (2003a). *The EU, NATO, and the integration of Europe: Rules and rhetoric*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Schimmelfennig, F. (2003b). Strategic action in a community environment: The decision to enlarge the European Union to the East. *Comparative Political Studies*, 36(1–2), 156–183.
- Schimmelfennig, F. (2008, July). *Entrapped again: The way to EU membership negotiations with Turkey* (UCD Dublin European Institute Working Paper 08–8). https://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/wp_08-8_schimmelfennig.pdf. Accessed 29 Nov 2020.
- Schimmelfennig, F. (2009). Entrapped again: The way to EU membership negotiations with Turkey. *International Politics*, 46(4), 413–431.
- Tsarouhas, D. (2021). Neoliberalism, liberal intergovernmentalism and EU–Turkey relations. Chapter 2, in this volume.
- Waltz, K. (1979). *Theory of international politics*. Reading: Addison-Wesley.

Frank Schimmelfennig is professor of European politics and member of the Center for Comparative and International Studies at the ETH Zurich. He also chairs the scientific board of the Institute for European Politics (IEP), Berlin. His research focuses on European integration and, more specifically, integration theory, EU enlargement, differentiated integration, democracy promotion, and democratization.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.