Contested Neighbourhoods
Addressing aspects of "predictive unpredictability"

A fragile, contested and complex world characterised by "predictable unpredictability" demands according to the European Union Global Strategy (2016) a stronger Union, able to promote peace and stability across its borders. In the neighbourhood the strategic priority rests on state and societal resilience, where resilience is defined as "the ability of states and societies to reform, withstanding and recovering from internal and external crisis". The Union is aware that different paths to resilience to the east and south are necessary, as it demands "focusing on the most acute dimensions of fragility and targeting those where we can make a meaningful difference". But which dynamics decide about whether the Union can make a difference? Does its "power of attraction" hold against other powerful actors like the Russian Federation, China and the United States, in contested regions of the European Neighbourhood? How do these actors differ in their strategies and approaches towards the region and how do the countries in the "shared" neighbourhood cope with their contestedness? What can we learn about "normative", "realist" or "pragmatic" powers, about hegemony, actorness, and dynamics between different powerful actors in the European neighbourhood?

The workshop shall provide a forum to discuss different aspects of research on the issue of contested neighbourhood and how common and new research agendas can be developed, but also how these aspects can be included in the teaching of International relations, European integration, but also comparative politics. Among others the following questions might be addressed:

1. Actorness
A multitude of actors engages in the European neighbourhood with various goals and employing different strategies: the Russian Federation aims to preserves specific relations in its "near abroad", China holds ambition with its "one Road – one belt" initiative, strategic interests drive American engagement and besides the European Union itself, single member states have their own stakes in the region. To evaluate EU performance in its external relations Bretherton and Vogler employ the interrelated concepts of presence, opportunity and capability (Bretherton and Vogler 2013). While presence conceptualises the ability of an actor, "by virtue of its existence" to exert influence (what the EU refers to as "power of attractiveness"), opportunity refers to the context of ideas and events that enable or constrain action. While presence and capability focus on the external context, capability takes into account internal EU policy processes that govern the Union's ability "to capitalise on presence or respond to opportunity". Can this concept be applied provide us with better insights about the effectiveness of other actors? Does it allow us to compare the "actorness" of different players in the region?

2. Europeanization, Russification, Chinafication….

We have learned about the transformative power of Europe in its neighbourhood extensively from Europeanization literature ((Grabbe 2006; Gawrich, Melnykovska, and Schweickert 2010; Börzel and Lebanidze 2017). By building on conditionality and social learning ("more for more" as formulated in the concept of European Neighbourhood Policy") the European Union aims to promote democracy and transfer its rules beyond its borders (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2004; Freyburg et al. 2011). Russia and also China are sometimes regarded as "counter-actors" promoting autocracy rather than democracy (Melnykovska, Plamper, and Schweickert 2012; Babayan 2015) and relying on coercion and "hard power" rather than on the "power of attraction" and soft power of the European Union. Still a number of authors hold, that this is a too simplistic outlook on these actors. Russian "neighbourhood policy" also commands over a whole tool-box of soft and hard power instruments, building on the attractiveness of political concepts like "sovereign democracy", access to labour markets and often being perceived as holding the "more credible commitment" in comparison to the EU (Wilson and Popescu 2009). Can we enhance our analytical understanding of the differences in method, strategy, effectiveness and dynamics between Europeanization, Russification, Chinafication? Which conditionalities are applied and what are the effects within the countries of the contested neighbourhood?

3. Sensitivity and vulnerability

Ademmer draws on the work of Keohane and Nye (Keohance and Nye 2012) to apply their concepts of sensitivity and vulnerability to analysis of the European Neighbourhood to get a better understanding of the conditions under which interdependence with Russia constrains or incentivizes EU-demanded policy change. Finding that interdependence with Russia in specific policy areas incentivize compliance with EU policies, if neighbourhood countries are sensitive, but nut vulnerable to Russia (as they have further policy choices at their disposal). This analysis draws our attention on the dynamics between different actor in the region. How can this concept be applied to different cases (different countries, different policies)? Which other theoretic approaches can be applied to analysing the effects of the presence of different actors and the incentives or constraints for policy change arising from this?

4. Integration dynamics

Especially in the Eastern Neighbourhood of the European Neighbourhood it is not only different states competing for influence in the region, but we also find dynamics resulting from different "integration" regimes. While the European Union makes offers for deeper co-operation within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy, the Russian Federation has actively sought to attract new members for the Euroasian Economic Union and the experience of recent years has highlighted how these different integration processes contribute to the contestedness of the region, but als have an influence on power struggles of national elies (Wetzel 2016). This is even further complicated by NATO aspirations of countries in the shared neighbourhood between the European Union and Russia. Ademmer et. al. highlight that questions to address are not only about the receptivity of the "in-between" countries for reforms, but also about domestic factors guiding rule adoption and implementation, as political elites in countries develop their own strategies to trade on the offers from different sides (Ademmer, Delcour, and Wolczuk 2016, 5). The integration projects differ in the incentives they set (positive and negative), thus create different "push" and "pull" factors in one or another direction. How

can we analyse the effects of incentives from different integration projects in the region? How do national elites take decisions for or against specific project? Which "push" and "pull" factors are decisive? How can we understand discrepancies between norm adoption and norm implementation?

5. International Identities

Drawing on constructivist approaches, Manners and Whitman have argued, that the identity of the EU has an impact on foreign policy, as identity refers to the way the EU is constituted, constructed, and represented internationally. The EU is constructed through 'pacifism rather than aggression; principles rather than pragmatism; slow, consensual and structural rather than rapid, confrontational action; networking rather than hierarchical; open rather than closed. "Normative power Europe" aims at shaping a global order based on norms and values and building on consensus and conciliation (Manners and Whitman 1998; Manners and Whitman 2003). Can this concept of "international identity" help us understand the activities of the European Union in the neighbourhood? Is it providing a possibility to better understand the often stated tensions between "interests" and "values"? Can – and if, in what ways – Russia be understood as the EU's "alter" (Wendt 1995), often being characterised as aggressive, rapid, confronting, hierarchical and closed? Can it provide us with a basis for explaining different approaches to the "contested areas" by the EU, Russia, the U.S. and China?

Call for papers and aims of the workshop 4-14 April 2019 in Salzburg

We welcome papers addressing aspects of contestedness in the European neighbourhood, using one of the approaches highlighted above to conceptualize the effects of different actors engaging in the region or highlight other conceptual approaches to varieties of actorness in contested regions. Of specific interest are also case studies and comparative analyses applying these theoretic approaches, also allowing us to build new hypotheses.

The aim of the workshop is the development of a research agenda which can be further developed into a joint research project (Horizon 2020?).

During the workshop two sessions will be opened for students to build experience on research based teaching and how the different concepts can be employed for teaching.

Abstracts for the participation in the workshop should be submitted until December 20th, 2018. Decisions on paper acceptance will be taken by January 10th, 2019.

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