

EU ENLARGEMENT 1989-2009

INTRODUCTION

On 1 May 2004 at a historic, if understated, signing ceremony in Dublin the European Union (EU) formally recognized the accession to the Union of ten new states. These were the Mediterranean ‘micro’ states of Cyprus and Malta, and eight new members from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) –the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia – which, for more than fifty years, had been cut off from the European integration process by virtue of their geopolitical imprisonment behind the Iron Curtain. The eastern enlargement was completed via the ‘coda enlargement’, with the accessions of Bulgaria and Romania in 2007. At that point the EU completed its extraordinary and cumulative geographic sweep: the first enlargement in 1973 was ‘west’ (UK, Ireland and Denmark), the emphasis in the 1980s was on the ‘south’ (Spain, Portugal and Greece); in the 1990s the Union expanded ‘north’ (Finland, Sweden and Austria).¹

The history of European integration has been one of successive and successful enlargement rounds; ‘widening’ has proved as potent a force as ‘deepening’ in determining how the European Union has evolved as a post-national inter-state and supra-state zone of peace and relative prosperity. For more than three decades after World War Two, the Cold War stood in the way of the realization of the oft-stated ambition to unite ‘east’ and ‘west’ in a single European constellation of states. But with the demise of the Soviet Union and the loosening of its post- War grip on its Central and Eastern European satellite states in the wake of 1989’s so-called ‘geopolitical earthquake’, Jean Monnet’s ambition of a European construction stretching from the Atlantic to the Urals suddenly seemed possible. Thereafter, enlargement quickly made its way to the top of the European Union’s political agenda. Two decades later the EU has applied the successful model of ‘Europeanization East’ in negotiating with states in the Western Balkans and Turkey, though with less than

¹ I do not include the accession of the old East Germany (GDR), which formally acceded to the EU after its absorption into the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in 1991. This is considered a purely domestic matter. I treat the 2007 ‘coda’ accessions of Bulgaria and Romania as part of the eastern enlargement round.

successful results to date. Thus a process which was instituted in the aftermath of the dramatic events that defined the 1989 revolutions and had brought the EU population up to 500 million people now sought to consolidate democracy and European integration in Europe's most fragile and contested political space.

This chapter analyzes the European Union's enlargement process in the two decades that followed the '*annus mirabilis*' of 1989. The 1989 Revolutions opened up the possibility of a vast and voluntary framework of economic and political integration extending to a genuinely pan-European scale. At the centre of this historic project the European Union initially demonstrated great hesitation in response to what Jacques Delors termed the 'acceleration of history', but gradually found its stride as the European Commission assumed responsibility for the practical implementation of, if not a utopian 'Return to Europe' by 'Yalta Europe', then a process whereby gradual 'catchup' could be pursued and adaptation of CEE states to existing legal and procedural norms of the European Union could be achieved.

A RATHER HESITANT AND UNGENEROUS RESPONSE

For the Central and East European states emerging from the shadow of the Soviet monolith, the central aspiration was clear: a 'Return to Europe'; the Europe from which, it was frequently asserted, these states had been forcibly separated for over four decades.² The new CEE governments from the beginning framed their endeavours and aspirations with explicit reference to the core values of the European integration.³ They sought freedom, prosperity, and a secure place in the international community of nation states, and especially within European organizations. Opinion polls in the newly independent states pointed to massive popular support for 'joining Europe'.⁴ For the European Union, however, the aftermath to the peaceful revolutions would produce a period of intrinsic questioning, firstly, of what the term 'European' actually meant, and, more pragmatically, how the Community might respond to the CEE states' stated desire for membership of the club. For the first time, Article 237 of

² The 'Return to Europe' quickly emerged as the central foundational pillar upon which membership bids by the CEE states were framed around. The 'Return' has been the subject of an exhaustive range of academic analysis. See Iver B. Neumann, 'European Identity, EU Expansion, and the Integration/Exclusion Nexus', *Alternatives*, Volume 23, 1998, pp. 397-416.

³ Ulrich Sedelmeier and Helen Wallace, *op.cit.*, p.433.

⁴ See, for example: 'Poll finds yearning to join Community', *The European*, 30 November 1990.

the Treaty of Rome, which simply stated that ‘any European State can apply’ for membership of the Community, began to be seriously scrutinized.⁵

Even at this early stage, however, a division between EC/EU ‘drivers’ (advocates) and ‘brakemen’ (obstructionists) was in evidence. On one side British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher unashamedly made the case for an EC commitment to enlarge. The question of what motivated her advocacy is usually answered with the assertion that she saw a wider Europe as a tool for slowing down the integration process and forestalling, if not derailing, any moves to embrace federalism. It was undoubtedly the case, however, that she also admired the CEE states for overthrowing communism and embracing the dual freedom of the market and the ballot box. At the Aspen Institute in Colorado on 5 August 1990 she called for a pan-European ‘Magna Carta’.⁶ Her foreign minister Douglas Hurd was equally supportive, as was John Major once he became Prime Minister.⁷ For some European leaders, however, the idea of a speedy enlargement was just too big a leap of either the imagination or the purse strings. French President Francois Mitterand, for example, declared in Prague that it would be several decades before the CEE states could become members of the Community.⁸ The European Commission for its part took a middle path at this time, urging closer links but seeking to deflect the question of membership.⁹ Later the Commission would become a key institutional driver of the process, whilst attending to the concerns of member states about one or other area of policy. This division between ‘drivers’ and ‘brakemen’ was one that would characterize enlargement politics for long periods to come.

The atmosphere was captured in the European Council’s declarations at the Strasbourg summit in December 1989 where it specifically acknowledged a ‘special

⁵ ‘EC dilemma over Eastern Europe’, *Guardian*, 10 April 1990.

⁶ See: ‘Thatcher urges closer EC ties with East bloc nations’, *Financial Times*, 15 November 1989; ‘Thatcher seeks commitment on EC entry for Eastern Europe’, *Financial Times*, 6 August 1990; ‘Thatcher defies EC over East bloc members’, *Independent on Sunday*, 12 August 1990.

⁷ See, for example: ‘Hurd pushes for EU expansion’, *Guardian*, 1 May 1995; ‘Major promises to help Poland join the twelve’, *Independent*, 27 May 1992. Major visited Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland between 26 and 28 May 1992 and pledged support for early entry to the Community.

⁸ ‘Eastern Europe ‘threatens to destabilise EC’’, *Financial Times*, 7 November 1990. On Mitterand’s position see Jean-Marc Trouille, ‘France, Germany and the Eastwards Expansion of the EU: Towards a Common *Ostpolitik*’, pp.50-64. On differences between Thatcher and Mitterand see: ‘Umpteen ways to spell Europe’, *Independent*, 22 September 1990.

⁹ ‘Delors frames EC ‘Ostpolitik’’, *Independent*, 16 November 1989; ‘Brussels urges wider links with East bloc’, *Financial Times*, 2 February 1990.

responsibility' for Central and Eastern Europe and suggested that the Community was the only point of reference of significance for the CEE states.¹⁰ This was despite the fact that the revolutions had caught the Community off guard. For the EU this was as much a question of adjusting the cognitive and ideational, as well as the physical and geopolitical map of Europe. EU policy, according to Sedelmeier and Wallace, was characterized at this time by, amongst other things, hyperactivity, enthusiastic pledges of support, and consensus that the EU should play a leading role in the transformation process in CEE, even if it was unclear what this might involve.¹¹

It seems instructive, however, that despite the soaring rhetoric from EU leaders, there emerged nothing like a Marshall plan for Central and Eastern Europe. Indeed EU Funding levels to CEE in the two decades that followed compared very unfavourably even with the 'poorest of the rich' within the EU – Ireland, Portugal, Greece and Spain. The Delors Package of 1988 had significantly expanded the existing redistributive arrangements in favour of these countries; similar pressure during the Maastricht negotiations yielded the Cohesion Fund, which provided further more targeted financial assistance. Cross national comparison of aid figures between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' demonstrates the extent to which EU policy favoured these existing members. In 1992, for example, the four poorer, peripheral EU countries received fifteen times more per capita aid subvention than did the CEE countries.¹² Ten years later the gap had narrowed but was still very significant. Poland would receive €67 per capita, Hungary €49, Slovenia €41, and the Czech Republic €29 in the period up to the end of the 2006 financial framework. By contrast, in 2000, Greece received €437 per capita, while Ireland got €118, Spain €116 and Portugal €111. Further, it was stipulated that aid to individual CEE states was not to exceed the imposed 'absorption capacity' figure of 4 per cent of GDP. This threshold was set much lower than had been the case in previous enlargement rounds. It is little wonder that the CEE states gazed wistfully at the Cohesion states and their very generous levels of EU support.¹³

¹⁰ European Council, Presidency Conclusions, Strasbourg European Council, *Bulletin of the European Communities*, EC 12-1989.

¹¹ Ulrich Sedelmeier and Helen Wallace, op.cit., p.432.

¹² Hubert Leipold, 'The Eastwards Enlargement of the European Union: Opportunities and Obstacles', *Aussen Politik*, Volume 46, Number 2, 1995, p.131.

¹³ The figures are cited by Heather Grabbe, op.cit.

The point is further put in perspective when one considers that Ireland, although already by 2000 one of the richest states in the Union, was still in receipt of almost six times more aid than was envisaged for Poland. Between 1989 and 1999 regional aid to Ireland amounted to approximately 3 per cent of GDP per annum; in some years the receipts amounted to in excess of 5 per cent of GDP, a supranational transfer of wealth unprecedented in European history.¹⁴ To further emphasize the lack of support offered CEE, a comparison can be offered with German transfers to its Eastern Laender after unification: in 1993, these amounted to \$5900 per capita.¹⁵ In the decade after unification, net fiscal transfers from the German Federal Government to the former East Germany amounted to some 1.2 trillion DM. This figure amounted to ten times what the EU allocated in aid to all the CEE candidate countries put together in the run up to accession in 2004. The impression of the CEE countries remaining the poor relations is difficult to refute and is reflected in the opinion of some that the Oder-Neisse line quickly transmuted into a new and lasting economic divide, separating Europe's haves and have-nots.¹⁶

Iver T. Berend showed that had the Marshall Plan been emulated for Central and Eastern Europe, even on a limited basis, with, for example, a Western contribution of only one half of one per cent of GDP, this would have yielded up to \$100 billion annually for reconstruction and transition in Central and Eastern Europe. If one shifts the focus to EU aid alone, in 2004 the combined EU15 GDP amounted to over € trillion. A Marshall-style financial aid programme would have delivered approximately €0 billion per year to CEE. Even a contribution of one half of one per cent of EU GDP would have yielded a figure of €45 billion annually for a limited period. The total package of financial aid, however, amounted to only €0.8 billion (2004 to 2006). But given that the new member states would also contribute to the budget something approaching €15 billion, the net figure was reduced to about €25 billion. The Commission thus suggested a net cost for ten countries over three years of just €10.3 billion per annum, which amounted to just one-thousandth of EU GDP.¹⁷ This was by any estimation a pale imitation of the Marshall Plan.

¹⁴ John O'Brennan,

¹⁵ See: *Economist*, 17 June 1995.

¹⁶ Arnuf Baring, *Germany's New Position in Eastern Europe: Problems and Perspectives*, (Oxford: Berg, 1996), p.68.

¹⁷ Peter Ludlow, *op.cit.*, p.299.

This hesitant and rather ungenerous response to CEE on the EU's part was predicated on a number of factors. Firstly, the Union's self-absorption for most of the twenty years after 1989 stands out. Perry Andersen argues that, paradoxically, the demise of Communism acted to the disadvantage of the CEE associated countries because it triggered an intensification of Western European integration efforts.¹⁸ Indeed in this interpretation, Maastricht is singularly identified as the *quid-pro-quo* for German Unification; the assurance of a united Germany's renewed commitment to its EU partners and the European integration system. Suspicion of German hegemonic or aggrandizing intent was not slow in materializing. Eastward enlargement, it was widely thought, would benefit Germany economically and geopolitically much more than any other EU member state. Thus, fear of the putative German giant caused some of the present member states to steer enlargement along the 'slow lane'. The gradual realization, on the part of EU leaders, of the daunting institutional and policy implications of enlargement also encouraged caution and inertia. Analysis of the micro implications of enlargement was provided by a wide range of commentators and by the European Commission and European Parliament.¹⁹ The shadow of enlargement thus hovered over every major internal EU debate from the early 1990s onwards.

For the CEE states this meant that, at precisely the moment of their return to the mainstream European inter-state arena, they were effectively locked out of the central political processes that would shape the future Europe. Their absence from the Maastricht and Amsterdam constitutional negotiations, for example, was striking.²⁰ Exclusively the incumbent members would determine the shape of the new European compact without any input from the Central and Eastern European states. Throughout that period growing concern about the direction of EU policy towards Central and Eastern Europe manifested itself on a regular basis. Indeed, a European Commission official was quoted as saying: 'The level of seriousness about enlargement is not

¹⁸ See *Independent*, 29 January 1996.

¹⁹ See, for example, Richard E. Baldwin, Joseph E. Francois, and Ricardo Portes, 'The Costs and Benefits of Eastern Enlargement: the Impact on the EU and Central Europe', *Economic Policy*, Volume 24, April 1997; Karen Hendersen (ed.), *Back to Europe: Central and Eastern Europe and the European Union*, (London: University of London Press, 1999).

²⁰ 'Absent friends frozen out of unity talks', *Guardian*, 7 December 1991; 'Eastern Europe keeps half an eye on the EC', *Financial Times*, 12 December 1991.

minimal, it simply does not exist'.²¹ The initial euphoria of 1989 then soon gave way to muted resignation as the EU found that its response to the emerging democracies became increasingly affected by the economic and political vicissitudes of both EU and global politics.

A second problem arose from the impact of a Europe-wide recession on the member states, and – later - the deflationary policies employed in many countries in order to conform to the EMU convergence criteria. Budget deficits, increased unemployment and attendant social strain resulted in the subordination of enlargement to domestic policy issues in many member states throughout the mid 1990s. Sclerotic growth and a fiscal climate governed by relative austerity rendered it more difficult to respond to the extraordinary economic and social ‘gaps’ in CEE with imagination and generosity. One might also at this point cite the existential fears which existed in some member states about the emergent competitive threat from CEE in important industries such as motor manufacturing and electronics: notions of solidarity and ‘we-ness’ often gave way to narrowly-based EU sectoral interests, intent on maintaining competitive advantage.

A third issue emerged in the logistical problems encountered by the Commission in its efforts to coordinate aid programmes for the CEE states. Dependent on outside expertise, and handicapped by a severe lack of resources, the Commission soon ran into implementation difficulties and voluble criticism. Sedelmeier and Wallace assert that the EU found it easier to devise *ad hoc* policy than to design a more balanced and rounded approach. This was a common charge, though mostly levelled with the benefit of hindsight and with little regard to the problems relating to speed, timing, and staff and expertise shortages.²² In addition rivalries within the Commission (principally between DG I and DG’s III (industry) and VI (agriculture) and within national administrations (typically foreign ministries against sectoral ministries) contributed to the problems of coordination and implementation in the early stages of the enlargement process. Sedelmeier and Wallace presented this as a ‘macro/meso’ divide among policy makers, with macro policy makers (usually located within the

²¹ Quoted by Lionel Barber, *Financial Times*, 16 November 1995.

²² Ulrich Sedelmeier and Helen Wallace, *op.cit.*, p.435. See also Ulrich Sedelmeier, ‘Sectoral Dynamics of EU Enlargement: Advocacy, Access, and Alliances in a Composite Polity’, *Journal of European Public Policy*, Volume 9, No.4, August, pp. 627-34.

foreign ministries of national administrations) typically taking the long term view and being more sympathetic to the CEE concerns while meso policy makers (usually to be found in sectoral ministries) engaged in narrowly-constituted short-termism and were very susceptible to the claims of special interests in their own domestic economic spheres. Even within DG I there was significant division along similar lines.²³ Thus at both the horizontal and vertical levels within the EU, opposition to, or at least different forms of obstructionism towards, enlargement, came over time to characterize a process that had been instituted with such utopian fanfare in 1990.

THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF ENLARGEMENT AND THE ENLARGEMENT 'CANON' WITHIN EU STUDIES

If the 1989 Revolutions launched a continental scale institutional re-engineering of Europe, it seems clear that eastern enlargement also catalyzed a renaissance in scholarship on and interest in EU external affairs. In conjunction with a deepening of intra-EU cooperation in the external relations field heralded by the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) provisions of the Maastricht Treaty, the geopolitical recalibration set in train by 1989 provided a dynamic of its own within the world of scholarship: from Fukuyama's *End of History* thesis to Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations*, to declarations of the return of Realism by John Mearsheimer and others, almost every geopolitical question of the 1990s revolved around security realignments within and beyond the EU and the 'new Europe'; enlargement studies developed an identity of its own within the world of scholarship whilst also drawing upon and adding new dimensions to existing literatures within International Relations (IR) and the ever-more diverse smorgasbord that was European Integration studies. This section assesses the literature on enlargement and what each element contributed both to this 'enlargement canon' and what one might call the (looser and more recognizable) political history of the enlarged and enlarging Europe. We can divide this political history into three separate sections: how the external impacted on the internal (institutional and policy domain within the EU); the economic dimension of enlargement, and the geopolitical phenomena associated with expansion. Each section is explored via the literature which emerged to help define and shape the 'enlargement canon'. Finally, a specifically theoretical literature is analyzed from the perspective of

²³ Ulrich Sedelmeier and Helen Wallace, *op.cit.*, p.439.

rational institutionalism on the one hand and social constructivist and normative understandings of enlargement on the other. The spirited debate between these two ‘camps’ to some extent reflected polarized conceptions of what kind of EU emerged from the 1989 revolutions and the fundamental dynamics of the unfolding continental-scale framework of institutional and policy interaction taking shape under the aegis of Brussels.

The external and the internal

In the first place we can trace the internal European Union debates on eastern enlargement and thus both the political history of the accession process and the institutional division of labour as it played out in Brussels and in member state capitals. From the beginning of the period of internal debate, which we can identify as coinciding with the European Council meeting at Copenhagen in June 1993, which produced a (rather loose and ambiguous) set of membership criteria for candidate states to work towards as they engaged in different degrees of reform of their domestic economic and political structures, the serious nature of the institutional and policy challenges facing the Union was underlined by both official documentation and scholarly analysis that clearly marked out this enlargement as historically unique in scope and scale. Two types of approach in particular stand out: those that focused on the complex re-calibration of EU institutions which would have to accompany a ‘big bang’ accession process, and the myriad policy challenges thrown up by expansion, most especially those of agriculture and regional funding (the policy areas which accounted for approximately 85 per cent of EU spending). Such studies revolved largely around in depth empirical work on institutional and policy change and also sought to outline the gradual development of EU relations with the CEE states. Of particular importance here are the contributions of EU ‘insiders’ such as Graham Avery, Fraser Cameron, Anna Michalski and Peter Ludlow, all of whom worked in different periods for the European Commission, and whose work contains valuable accounts of the internal EU deliberation on enlargement and especially the inter-institutional context in which the actors, interests and identities at play within the regime of enlargement politics was played out.²⁴ These works allow us to peer into

²⁴ Graham Avery, ‘The Enlargement Negotiations’ in Fraser Cameron (ed.), *The Future of Europe: Integration and Enlargement*, pp.35-62; Graham Avery and Fraser Cameron, *Enlarging the European Union*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998); Michael J. Baun, *A Wider Europe: The Process*

the EU structure of power and how it responded to and itself was changed by the great challenges of enlargement to the east. The clash between ‘drivers’ and ‘brakemen’ emerges as a consistent theme of insider accounts and can be traced right up to (and even beyond) the successful conclusion of negotiations at Copenhagen in December 2002.

The enlargement of such a complex and multifaceted international entity necessarily entails an important internal institutional dimension. Enlargement both arises out of specific forms of institutionalized cooperation and subsequently produces a reconfiguration of those institutionalized norms, practices and structures: thus the myriad (and frequently contested) modes of ‘internalization’ of the external by insiders constitute an important locus of analysis for scholars of enlargement politics. Enlargement is a policy domain which involves each of the main EU institutions in a distinctive way. This was clearly reflected in the institutional division of labour laid down in the treaties, which would govern CEE accession decisions:

Any European state which respects the principles set out in Article 6(1) may apply to become a member of the Union. It shall address its application to the Council, which shall act unanimously after consulting the Commission and after receiving the assent of the European Parliament, which shall act by an absolute majority of its component members.

The conditions of admission and the adjustment to the treaties on which the Union is founded, which such admission entails, shall be the subject of an agreement between the Member States and the applicant State. This agreement shall be submitted for ratification by all the contracting States in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements.²⁵

and Politics of European Union Enlargement, (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000); Peter Ludlow, *The Making of the New Europe: the European Councils on Brussels and Copenhagen 2002*, European Council Commentary Volume 2, Number 1, (Brussels: EuroComment, 2004); George Vassiliou, (Ed.), *The Accession Story: the EU from 15 to 25*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007);.

²⁵ Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU). Article 6 (1) (Ex Article F) effectively codified the Copenhagen criteria for membership of the Union. It reads: ‘The Union is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights, and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law, principles which are common to the Member States’.

Thus the *formal* hierarchy of power with respect to an enlargement decision appears very clear: the Council, consisting of representatives of the member state governments, takes the decision, having consulted the Commission. The decision seems then to be purely a matter for the member states operating in an intergovernmental mode. But a more substantive contextual analysis of Article 49, informed by an understanding of how the EU system works (and has evolved) in practice, reveals a more complicated and nuanced picture of the decision-making process. The European Commission effectively acts as principal interlocutor with the candidate states and has an important influence on both the content and shape of the process, as it develops. The treaty articles also bestow an important role on the European Parliament, in that no accession decision can be taken without the Parliament's assent.²⁶ And, in the final instance, the outcome of the process rests on the ratification procedures in both the acceding states and the member states. All of this suggests that it is quite wrong to identify the Council as the *only* EU actor that counts in the process.

The eastern enlargement is particularly noteworthy for the way in which the European Commission carved out a distinct institutional and political role for itself within enlargement politics. The Commission's influence flowed principally from two sources. The first was its *formal power* to initiate policy proposals, which helped it to set and shape the enlargement policy agenda. Although, as in the general integration framework, as a rational actor, it sought to anticipate, incorporate and adjust for the specific concerns of member states (and increasingly the EP), it often found itself to be (almost by default) the sole *policy entrepreneur* and thus the most active, visible and best placed EU institutional actor within the enlargement process. It is important to understand that much of this particular dynamic evolved out of the early response by the EU to events in CEE in the early 1990s. Facing the challenge of managing relations with the new democracies and the imperative of moving quickly and decisively to embed the democratic transitions taking place in CEE, the EU very quickly became dependent on the Commission for both political leadership and policy advice. It was the Commission which took responsibility for managing the initial aid programmes for CEE such as PHARE and SAPARD, produced the Opinions on the ability of the candidate states to meet the criteria for membership and oversaw the

²⁶ This procedure is now known as 'Consent' after changes introduced through the Lisbon Treaty, enacted in December 2009.

screening process, that is, the analysis of efforts by candidate states to transpose and implement the *acquis communautaire* into their bodies of domestic law. Even in the latter stage of negotiations in 2001-02, where the member states were (in theory) in the ascendancy and the Presidency played a crucial role, the Commission continued to cajole, deliberate, and persuade both insiders and outsiders of the merits of its ‘community-centred’ enlargement strategy and thus to put aside narrow partisan interests.

The experience of eastern enlargement also demonstrates that where *formal prerogatives were absent* the Commission used what developed as ‘customary enlargement practice’ to carve out a substantive informal agenda setting role for itself outside of the formal treaty structure, framing policy problems and urging consensus where difficulties arose. Individual commissioners such as Gunter Verheugen and Ollie Rehn very often acted as political entrepreneurs, and proved themselves both proactive and integral to enlargement outcomes. In its policy documents and public pronouncements the Commission frequently resorted to a specific normative enlargement discourse, deploying a series of moral arguments in its efforts to accelerate the negotiation process. The Regular Reports on candidate state progress, for example, just as they stressed the importance of enlargement as a vehicle for securing EU values across Europe, also presented eastern enlargement as one with ‘an unprecedented moral dimension’. The speeches of Romano Prodi and Günter Verheugen in particular were studded with references to Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland as ‘an integral part of Europe’, or part of the ‘extended family of European nations’.²⁷ Jacques Delors similarly, in retrospect, presented enlargement as an act of historical and moral justice:

Active peace is not the “peace of cemeteries” we experienced during the Cold War. We must not forget that we west Europeans found ourselves on the right side of the line drawn by the Yalta agreement and that our East European

²⁷ See, for example, Prodi’s 2001 speech to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The title is indicative of the ‘drivers’ inclusive approach – ‘Bringing the Family Together’. Romano Prodi, ‘Bringing the Family Together’, Speech to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Speech/01/158, Budapest, 4 April 2001.

relatives were less fortunate. I consider we have a debt toward them from a historical point of view.²⁸

At the broader institutional level the Commission, through its capacity building and compliance functions within the process, was (and remains) the EU institutional actor closest to the candidate states throughout the process, providing advice and pragmatic engagement, urging broader and deeper transposition (and internalization) of EU norms, and actively socializing candidate state public representatives into EU practice. Viewed by the candidate states as ever-demanding and frequently unreasonable in its insistence on full and unconditional implementation of the *acquis*, viewed by the member states as frequently too accommodating of candidate state preferences, the Commission often threaded a thin line between bureaucratic process manager and political entrepreneur, between agent of the member states and separately constituted political actor. And although it might seem decidedly unfashionable to describe what is sometimes misidentified as the ‘Brussels Bureaucracy’ as the unsung hero of the enlargement process, much of the evidence suggests that this is exactly how the Commission emerges from eastern enlargement. In its engagement with the candidate states, imaginative framing of policy proposals within the EU, and not inconsiderable diplomatic skill in pushing the sometimes reluctant member states toward completion of the negotiations, the Commission performed the type of role which, if indeed unglamorous and hidden from the European public, was integral to consolidating the gains of the 1989 revolutions. It is thus quite inarguable that the Commission acted as the primary internal EU ‘driver’ or ‘motor’ of the eastern enlargement process.

The Economic Dimension of Enlargement

Given the scale of the devastated economic landscape in the east, and the nature of the restructuring of the industrial base which took shape in CEE after 1989, the economic dimension of the enlargement process took on a highly significant importance for both insiders and outsiders. EU member states were fearful of new competitive threats emerging from the ashes of the moribund socialist economies, whilst in CEE the most common complaints related to EU obstructionism on market access and difficulties in adopting costly single market legislation. The obvious weaknesses of post communist

²⁸ Jacques Delors, op.cit.

legal systems and public administration rendered doubtful the capacity of many CEE states to compete effectively in the single market. Thus a primary focus of the Commission as accession drew closer was that of market oriented juridical and administrative transposition of EU law and compliance with EU rules.

Whilst some approaches to the economic dimension of eastern enlargement focused on the nature of productivity growth and capital and investment flows into Central and Eastern Europe, the prospect of enlargement also compelled the EU to focus on extending its existing framework of regional and structural funding whilst also reforming key policy areas such as agriculture.²⁹ Perhaps the most influential of the academic contributions was that of Alan Mayhew whose *Recreating Europe* analysed the political economy of eastern enlargement and bridged the divide between academic analysis and policy-making and between inside and outside perspectives.³⁰ Similarly, Richard E. Baldwin's work sought to combine analysis of the costs and benefits of enlargement for both insiders and outsiders³¹

Enlargement promised gains for both incumbents and applicants, though considerably more for the latter than the former, and spread very unevenly amongst the member states. The scale of the economic challenge was also evident in the fact that the level of economic development of the CEE countries, measured by GDP per capita was not just significantly below that of existing members, but in a majority of cases, much lower than any previously successful entrant to the EU. Income per head in 2002 ranged from 60 per cent in the case of Slovenia to as low as 30 per cent for Poland and 25 per cent for Bulgaria and Romania.³² Enlargement clearly implied a re-balancing of EU regional policy in favour of the poorer, less developed and infrastructurally deficient states to the east: subvention would have to be found to

²⁹ Richard E. Baldwin, Jean E. Francois, and Ricardo Portes, 'The Costs and Benefits of Eastern Enlargement: the Impact on the EU and Central Europe', *Economic Policy*, Volume 24, April, 1997, pp.125-76; Fritz Breuss 'Macroeconomic Effects of EU Enlargement for Old and New Members', *WIFO Working Papers* 143/2001, (Vienna: Austrian Institute of Economic Research (WIFO), 2001); Terry Caslin and Laszlo Czaban, 'Economic transformation in CEE' in Mike Manin (ed.), *Pushing Back the Boundaries: The European Union and Central and Eastern Europe*, pp.70-98;

³⁰ Alan Mayhew, *Recreating Europe*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Alan Mayhew, 'The Financial and Budgetary Impact of Enlargement and Accession', *SEI Working Paper* No.65, (Brighton; Sussex European Institute, 2003).

³¹ Richard E. Baldwin, *Toward an Integrated Europe*, (London: Centre for Economic Policy Reform, 1994);

³² Nickos Baltas, 'The Economy of the European Union', in Neil Nugent (Ed.), *European Union Enlargement*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004).

underpin new motorways, airports, ports and sewage systems, whilst high levels of unemployment, at least outside most capital cities, compelled investment in human resources and re-training. Although it is now clear that the new member states have received substantially less than did earlier, poorer entrants such as Ireland and Greece, what is remarkable is that disputes about redistribution did not come to dominate the enlargement agenda. CEE leaders seemed to understand that economic renewal would come mainly from within and from adaptation to the established market system and not from the EU as a rich external benefactor. And indeed trade between the 'old' and 'new' member states tripled in the decade prior to 2008, from around €150 billion to €450 billion.³³

By far the most important policy area to come under scrutiny, however, was that of agriculture, which despite the professed urgency which often accompanied official pronouncements on the need for reform of the CAP, managed to survive more or less intact (and thus unreformed), until very late in the negotiation process. The fear of extending the financial largesse of the CAP to Poland and Romania, to identify those candidate states most dependent on agriculture, motivated a stream of policy proposals centred on reform and sustainable adaptation on both sides.³⁴ And whilst the new member states in CEE would not benefit nearly to the same extent from CAP as earlier entrants such as Ireland, Portugal and Spain, the eventual regime that would emerge at least provided a much more secure footing for transition in the countryside than might otherwise have been available.³⁵ But even after securing the partial extension of CAP after 2004, the new eastern members could not avert the familiar 'flight from the land' which had so characterised the experience of both earlier entrants and established producer countries alike.

The Geopolitical Dimension of enlargement

Enlargement both developed out of and encouraged new thinking about key geopolitical and security considerations, sometimes linked to the parallel process of NATO expansion, and also complicated the search for consensus on the EU's

³³ European Commission, 'Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2010-2011', *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council*, COM (2010) 660 final, Brussels: 9 November 2010.

³⁴ Alan Mayhew, *Recreating Europe*,

³⁵ Karen Hendersen (ed.), op.cit. Marc Maresceau, *Enlarging the European Union*, (Harlow: Longman, 1997).

emerging security and defence policies.³⁶ From the outset geopolitical issues featured strongly in the calculus of EU leaders. Enlargement increased both the size of the EU population and the territory it covers by a significant degree (about one third in each case). In terms of area that meant the European Union now stretched from the Atlantic in the west to within miles of St. Petersburg in the east, and after 2007, to the Black Sea coast in the south east. Enlargement thus brought with it new dangers and new geopolitical opportunities for the Union. Some saw it as a vehicle for turning the EU into a global geopolitical power that would match the EU's power in the economic realm. But other commentators feared the messy entanglements that might arise from moving EU borders to an eastern geopolitical space which remained contested and fragile, and where border demarcations were both physically porous and, potentially, catalysts of inter-ethnic conflict. Enlargement gradually threw open the question of where Europe's eastern and south eastern borders might lie. Although Russia was much more suspicious of NATO enlargement eastward, in time the EU also got drawn into a more tense relationship with Russia, mainly because of the tensions provoked by new borders and disputes such as that over Kaliningrad. While eastern enlargement may have been a vehicle for containing both Russian power and the consequences of Russian state weakness, EU policy toward Russia was both assertive *and* conciliatory.

Eastern enlargement helped stabilize and then normalize inter-state relations in Eastern Europe and ensure a peaceful transition from communism to European integration. Security considerations were especially important in both moving the enlargement process forward at critical junctures and also changing the contours of enlargement in specific ways. The Kosovo war of 1999 especially stood out in this regard. Kosovo was a warning shot to the EU about the dangers of excluding the Balkans from the integration process. This not only accelerated the eastern enlargement process, it also produced a much more sure-footed and concrete EU model for the integration of the Balkans. The same political-institutional mix employed for eastern enlargement began to be deployed in South East Europe also, thus ensuring that analysis of EU relations with the states of the Western Balkans and Turkey proceeded from a starting point of 'learning lessons from' the eastern

³⁶ John O'Brennan, 'Bringing Geopolitics back in: Exploring the Security Dimension of the 2004 Eastern Enlargement of the European Union', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Volume 19, I, March 2006, pp.155-169;

enlargement.³⁷ Geopolitical factors certainly counted in the timing and nature of enlargement policy-making, even if they were frequently superseded by economic and normative considerations on the part of the EU.

Theoretical approaches to Enlargement

In the years after 1989, as the integration of Europe gathered pace, a theoretical literature began to develop; this drew on two juxtaposed bodies of thought from the sub-discipline of International Relations (IR), and conceptualized eastern enlargement from those perspectives. Rationalist scholars argued that enlargement proceeded from a materialist and utilitarian understanding on the part of both internal and external actors; the main motivation of the key actors lay in concerns about securing both economic and security benefits from expansion. In contrast, scholars approaching the phenomenon from a normative perspective argue that enlargement emerged out of common and shared norms, principles and understandings of what the European integration process represented and the natural right of all European states to participate in the unique institutional and policy-making structures as full and equal members. Where rationalist scholars highlighted so-called ‘logics of consequentiality’ which allegedly governed enlargement decision-making, sociologically-grounded scholars instead argued for ‘logics of appropriateness’ as the key cognitive templates which informed and guided the behaviour of decision-makers. This disciplinary clash was both a product of and contributed significantly to the rationalist/constructivist divide which had come to define a large part of the academic conversation on EU public policy-making.

On one side of the theoretical divide a rationalist literature grew up around the study of the constitutional and institutional dimensions of the enlargement process. The study of national decision-making and supranational bargaining which accompanied specific aspects of the eastern enlargement framework drew attention to a part of the

³⁷ Othon Anastaskis, ‘The EU’s Political Conditionality in the Western Balkans: towards a More Pragmatic Approach’, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Volume 8, Number 4, 2008, pp.365-377; David Phinnemore, ‘From Negotiations to Accession: Lessons from the 2007 Enlargement’, *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, Volume 10, Number 2, pp.240-252, June 2009, pp.240-252; John O’ Brennan, ‘The EU in the western Balkans: Statebuilding as Empire? A Rejoinder to Professor David Chandler’, *Global Society*, Volume 22, Number 4, October 2008, pp.507-18; A. Elbasani (2008), EU Enlargement in the Western Balkans: Strategies of Borrowing and Inventing, *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, Volume 10, Number 3, 2008, pp.293-307;

process which was at least as important as the (largely asymmetric) inside-outside bargaining between the EU and the candidate states.³⁸ In particular, scholars sought to determine the likely impact of enlargement on EU decision-making by focusing on changes to the rules governing the use of Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) within the Council and the general costs of institutional adaptation. Perhaps the most important theoretical template for analyzing enlargement from a rationalist perspective was Andrew Moravcsik's *The Choice for Europe*, which offered a view of the European integration process as one characterized by intergovernmental bargaining and dominated by the powerful economic interests of the larger member states. *The Choice for Europe* had very little to say about eastern enlargement (or indeed any previous enlargement of the EU), but in other contributions Moravcsik applied his liberal intergovernmentalist framework to argue that enlargement did not fundamentally re-order any of the important features of the integration process and that the EU bargaining which accompanied the enlargement process resulted in typical compromises which protected the structural interests of the larger member states whilst buying off potential losers with compensatory 'side payments'.³⁹

On the other side of the theoretical divide constructivist scholars highlighted the importance of ideas, identity, and social interaction within the eastern enlargement process. This literature, although itself increasingly diverse, sought to highlight the normative importance of different features of the process, and especially the cumulative and net effects of CEE exposure to EU norms and values in multiple and cross-cutting arenas of mutual activity.⁴⁰ One school of thought focused on EU motivations for enlargement deriving from a sense of historical obligation, such as 'uniting Europe', or 'undoing the historical injury wrought on the CEE states at Yalta'. Other approaches analyzed eastern enlargement from different identity

³⁸ Stefanie Balier and Gerald Schneider, 'The Power of Legislative Hot Air: Informal Rules and the Enlargement Debate in the European Parliament', *Journal of Legislative Studies*, Volume 6, Number 2, Summer 2000, pp.19-44; Bernard Steneunberg (ed.), *Widening the European Union*, (London: Routledge, 2001).

³⁹ Andrew Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press); Andrew Moravcsik and Milada Ana Vachudova, 'National Interests, State Power, and EU Enlargement', *East European Politics and Society*, Volume 17, Number 1, 2003, pp.42-57; Andrew Moravcsik and Milada Ana Vachudova, 'Preferences, Power and Equilibrium: the Causes and Consequences of EU Enlargement', in Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeir (eds), *The Politics of the European Union Enlargement: theoretical approaches* (London: Routledge, 2005);

⁴⁰ See John O'Brennan, *The Eastern Enlargement of the European Union*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006).

perspectives and sought to determine whether enlargement practice produced identity transformation.⁴¹

This debate revolved in particular on the role and impact of the EU's conditionality regime on candidate states. The effort to bridge the divide between the rationalist and normative camps was led by Swiss scholar Frank Schimmelfennig. His work became by far the most cited work on enlargement; and sought to contribute to existing debates on the nature of European integration and the EU as an external actor.⁴² As the enlargement process developed and measurement of EU 'successes' and 'failures' became possible, a growing number of scholars sought to analyze the use of various types of conditionality, and especially political conditionality, by the EU, as scholars sought to determine the extent to which Central and Eastern Europe was becoming (alternatively) 'Europeanized', 'modernized', and 'democratized' through the enlargement process.⁴³ And under what conditions could the EU really make a difference in penetrating the domestic realm of governance in candidate states?⁴⁴ The conditionality debate juxtaposed those who saw EU policy as efficient and transformative against more sceptical voices which argued for the minimal impact of conditionality on the domestic politics of candidate states. In a particularly nuanced

⁴¹ Iver T. Berend, 'The Further Enlargement of the European Union in a Historical Perspective', *European Review*, Volume 7, No.2, 1999, pp.175-81; Iver B. Neumann, 'European Identity, EU Expansion, and the Integration/Exclusion Nexus', *Alternatives*, Volume 23, 1998, pp. 397-416; Ulrich Sedelmeier, 'EU Enlargement, Identity and the Analysis of European Foreign Policy: Identity Formation through Policy Practice', *EUI Working Papers*, RSC No.2003/13.

⁴² Frank Schimmelfennig, *The EU, NATO, and the Integration of Europe*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Frank Schimmelfennig, 'The Community Trap: Liberal Norms, Rhetorical Action and the Eastern Enlargement of the European Union', *International Organization*, Volume 55, Number 1, 2001, pp.47-80; Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier, 'Governance by Conditionality: EU Rule Transfer to the Candidate Countries of Central and Eastern Europe', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Volume 11, No.4, August 2004, pp.661-79; Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier (eds), *the Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005a); Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier (eds), *The Politics of the European Union Enlargement: theoretical approaches* (London: Routledge, 2005b);

⁴³ Marise Cremona (ed.), *The Enlargement of the European Union*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Antoaneta L.Dimitrova, 'Enlargement, Institution Building and the EU's Administrative Capacity', *West European Politics*, Volume 25, Number 4, pp.171-90; Marc Maresceau, 'The EU Pre-Accession Strategies: a Political and Legal Analysis', in Marc Maresceau and Erwan Lannon (eds), *The EU's Enlargement and Mediterranean Strategies: A Comparative Analysis*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001);

⁴⁴ Tim Haughton, 'When does the EU Make a Difference? Conditionality and the Accession Process in Central and Eastern Europe', *Political Studies Review*, Volume 5, Number 2, 2007, pp.233-46; See, for example, Antoaneta L.Dimitrova, 'Enlargement, Institution Building and the EU's Administrative Capacity', *West European Politics*, Volume 25, Number 4, pp.171-190; Antoaneta L.Dimitrova (Ed.), *Driven to Change: the European Union's Enlargement viewed from the East*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

and widely-read study Milada Ana Vachudova emphasised the *promise* of membership as the key facilitator of real adaptation to EU norms, and for rule-following in advance of accession.⁴⁵ Similarly, in a systematic study of international networks, Beate Sissenich argued that the transposition of EU rules through enlargement was to say the least very uneven. Rule transfer depended on many factors including underlying patterns of cultural accommodation and the congruence of local interests with EU norms. Sissenich especially identified the domestic arena in candidate states where EU rules would sometimes be contested quite robustly and where the capacity to implement the EU *acquis* was frequently lacking.⁴⁶ EU Rule transfer was also analyzed under the rubric of existing literatures on democratization and democratic transitions. The EU's role as an 'agent of democratization' in its immediate neighbourhood and beyond provoked important arguments about the nature of EU democracy promotion and its effects in candidate states and (post eastern enlargement) in neighbouring states.⁴⁷ In particular this theoretical analysis drew on the existing EU-centred 'Europeanization' literature; and would produce an important mutation of this strain of theory in a specific approach termed 'Europeanization East'. Thus the empirical work on 'Europeanization' patterns was accompanied by much more sustained theoretical attempts to measure and analyze the exact degrees of 'Europeanization' to be found within the enlargement process.⁴⁸

CONCLUSIONS

⁴⁵ Milada Ana Vachudova, *Europe Undivided: Democracy Undivided: Democracy, Leverage and Integration after Communism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)

⁴⁶ Beate Sissenich, *Building States without Society: European Union Enlargement and the Transfer of EU Social Policy to Poland and Hungary*, (Lanham MD: Lexington Books, 2007).

⁴⁷ Richard Youngs, 'European Democracy Promotion Policies: Ten Years On', *European Foreign Affairs Review*, Volume 6, Number 3, 2001, pp.355-373; Geoffrey Pridham, *Designing Democracy: EU Enlargement and Regime Change in Post-Communist Europe*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005); Richard Rose, 'Evaluating Democratic Governance: a Bottom-Up Approach to European Union Enlargement', *Democratization*, Volume 15, Number 2, April 2008, pp.251-271;

⁴⁸ Heather Grabbe, 'Europeanization Goes East: Power and Uncertainty in the EU Accession Process', in Kevin Featherstone and Claudio Radaelli (eds), *The Politics of Europeanization*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, pp.303-331; Heather Grabbe, *The EU's Transformative Power: Europeanization through Conditionality in Central and Eastern Europe*, (Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2006) Dimitri Papadimitriou and David Phinnemore, 'Europeanization, Conditionality and Domestic Change: The Twinning Exercise and Administrative Reform in Romania', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Volume 42, Number 3, 2004, pp.619-39;

Enlargement, as Desmond Dinan reminds us ‘has been a central and quasi-permanent element in the EU’s history’.⁴⁹ The first set of new members (UK, Denmark and Ireland) had hardly been assimilated when the second set (Greece, Spain and Portugal) applied to join. Similarly, the Community was still assimilating the second set when the third set of ultimately successful applicants (Austria, Finland, and Sweden) requested accession. There followed the absorption of the old GDR, and, in the aftermath of the 1989 revolutions, after a protracted period of sometimes very heated negotiations, the ‘Return to Europe’ of the ten CEE states to emerge from the *annus mirabilis* of peaceful transition.

It seems clear in retrospect that from early on in the emerging dispensation enlargement cast a clear and discernible shadow over every important aspect of internal and external EU activity. Thus even if the eastern enlargement differed significantly from previous rounds in terms of scale and diversity, academic literature and political commentary continued to focus on the established preoccupation with widening and deepening. The questions related to the *finalité* of integration were of course intimately connected with the EU’s ambitions for further widening. This is because, as Jan Zielonka reminded us, one cannot study the question of enlargement without reference to that of more or less integration, or at least the impact of enlargement on the process of integration.⁵⁰ Now that the EU is negotiating with the states of the Western Balkans and Turkey this relationship between widening and deepening is back on the political agenda and many of the polarizations familiar from the eastern enlargement process have returned to structure conversations about the future of Europe.

Looking back it also seems clear that there was nothing inevitable about the outcome of negotiations: the 1989 revolutions did not in and of themselves constitute anything but a necessary condition – a starting point if you will - for the successful realization of the dream of a voluntarily embraced system of intra-European integration. The recurring clashes between national interests and the collective interest of ‘Europe’ that

⁴⁹ Desmond Dinan, ‘The Commission and Enlargement’ in John Redmond and Glenda Rosenthal (eds), *The Expanding European Union: Past, Present and Future*, (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 1998), p.20.

⁵⁰ Jan Zielonka, ‘Ambiguity as a Remedy for the EU’s Eastward Enlargement’, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Summer/Fall 1998, Volume XII, No.1, 1998, p.15.

characterized the negotiations, both on the 'inside-outside' level and amongst insiders, brought a familiar element of the existing integration framework into the EU-CEE relationship, and represented a good training ground for 'doing business' within a post-accession context. If indeed the early idealism that flowed from the 1989 revolutions was diminished rather rapidly by the slow progress on negotiations this was counter balanced by Poland, Hungary and other states learning to play the game of both inter-state negotiations and supra-state institutional politics. The successful adaptation to existing EU modes of decision-making can be demonstrated in the smooth functioning of those (enlarged) institutional structures after 2004: those who argued that enlargement would lead to chronic institutional failures have been proved very wrong.

In the final analysis one should acknowledge the asymmetric nature of this analysis: it remains far too early to make judgments about how eastern enlargement has changed the European Union and the existing integration process. It is much easier to analyze the micro-impact of the EU on Central and Eastern Europe than to offer judgments about the European Union that has evolved out of the 1989 revolutions. Rather, the chapter focused on the different elements of the enlargement process that quickly took shape after 1989 and how each of these elements triggered diverse conversations about the nature of the evolving EU. Enlargement may have been completed successfully in 2004 and 2007 but the process remains a partial and incomplete one, both in the geographic and normative senses. The current Europe-wide academic and political preoccupation with democratic deficits of one variety or another, and the obvious shortcomings of the EU as a welfare-enhancing entity on the one hand, or global geopolitical force on the other, may have led to a failure to properly appreciate the nature of the European achievement in consolidating the gains of the '1989 moment'. The EU may be bureaucratically cumbersome and politically enigmatic, but in supervising a framework for the renewal of meaningful pan-European inter-state cooperation, not to mention the reconstitution of the democratic impulse across the continent, it may have contributed in some small way to making 1989 at least as important a historical juncture as 1789 and 1848 in the rich tapestry of European collective experience.

